

**OPPRESSION AGAINST WOMEN IN MARSHALL  
HERSKOVITZ'S *A DESTINY OF HER OWN*:  
SOCIALIST FEMINISM APPROACH**



**Research paper**

**Submitted as Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for Getting Bachelor Degree in English Department**

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**2008**

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Background of the Study

*A Destiny of Her Own* movie is directed by Marshall Herskovitz (*A Destiny of Her Own* VCD Part 1, 05:19). He was born on February 23, 1952 in Philadelphia. He is an American film director, writer and producer ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marshall\\_Herskovitz](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marshall_Herskovitz)). *A Destiny of Her Own* is the real-life movie that was released by Twentieth Century Fox in 2006. The screenplay was written by Jeannine Dominy (*A Destiny of Her Own* VCD Part 1, 04:33). This movie has duration 112 minutes.

Catherine McCormack who plays role as Veronica Franco and Rufus Sewel who plays role as Marco Vernier are the major characters in *A Destiny of Her Own* movie. They are the protagonist characters in the movie while, Maffio is the antagonist character. The movie theme is women's oppression that happened in Venice especially the courtesan Veronica Franco during the fifteenth century (*A Destiny of Her Own* VCD Part 1, 01:02). At the time, Courtesan is familiar and accepted in society. They become the symbol of Venice "beauty and pleasure" (*A Destiny of Her Own* VCD Part 1, 01:56). Unfortunately, the patriarchal system still existed. Men had authority in all aspects of life includes social, economic, politic, religion, etc.

In *A Destiny of Her Own* movie Herskovitz takes Venice women in patriarchal custom especially Veronica Franco who has to feel the oppression

against her. She is falling in love to Marco Vernier but they cannot be married. It is because Veronica's family status is unequal to Marco. Veronica is from poor family while Marco is from high class status. Besides, Marco has engaged to other women by his father. Thus, he goes on to marry another woman of his status (*A Destiny of Her Own* VCD Part 1, 15:11). It makes Veronica broken heart deeply. Besides, she has financial problem. So, Veronica's mother suggests Veronica to be a courtesan like her mother and grandmother before (*A Destiny of Her Own* VCD Part 1, 17:03).

At first time Veronica is less enthusiastic about the idea of becoming a courtesan, but she becomes excited by the pleasures and freedom of the lifestyle (*A Destiny of Her Own* VCD Part 1, 34:33). She is able to socialize with kings and royalty, and influence them politically. However, she is the great poet. Her literary works are loved by the people and soon reaches success. Unfortunately, Venice was attacked by diseases (*A Destiny of Her Own* VCD Part 2, 01:04). Hence, thousands people died. The church explained that it because of the Venetian's life in sin. So, the courtesan must be end. Furthermore, all of the courtesan face inquisition. However, although she faced unfair accusation in inquisition by her smart and braveness, she able to win in court inquisition. This movie rakes up the effort of women in her life with all of the complex problems.

*A Destiny of Her Own* movie is interesting to view. There are several reasons why the movie is very attractive to view. The movie is based on the real story of Veronica Franco written by Margaret Rosenthal of Bibliography

“the Honest Courtesan” (*A Destiny of Her Own* VCD Part 1, 04:29). Veronica Franco is a courtesan in fifteenth century of Venice. This movie opens the history of scandal in Venice where a courtesan could influence all aspects of life including the political aspect. This movie describes the true story about courtesan who is not only viewed from the negative version but also from the positive version.

The setting of *A Destiny of Her Own* movie on fifteenth century is presented in detail. The dominant environment is viewed in Europe classical architecture especially in Venice. The designs of Europe classical architectures that is beautiful and unique. It supports the movie more artistic. Moreover, supporting arrangement music which is appropriate makes us like in the real condition in fifteenth century of Venice.

The movie talks about the oppression against women. The movie describes the stereotype customs that are completely dominant. Men are powered toward women both socially and economically (*A Destiny of Her Own* VCD Part 1, 12:59). It is considerable evidence that women have been in oppression condition. Hence, the movie shows the effort of women struggle to free from oppression. This case becomes the primary reason that makes the movie is interesting to view.

As everybody knows, oppression against women almost has been done in every centuries of the world. It is not only in domestic sphere but also in public sphere. Women are always in suffering condition (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patriarchy>). However, oppression against women is more dominant in

patriarchal system. Patriarchal system made women have inferior position. Men have more authority than women in every aspects of life. Therefore, the concept of patriarchy is “often used, by extension, to refer to the expectation that men take primary responsibility for the welfare of the community as a whole” (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patriarchy>).

Generally, in patriarchal system the stereotype customs clearly happened. Women are always under the men authority as long as their live. Women when they are young were under their father authority (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patriarchy>). Furthermore, married women are under their husbands’ authorities. Besides, other women oppression that happens in women life is women always have responsibility in domestic sphere (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patriarchy>). They spend their activities for serving their husband’s need, caring their children intensively, and keeping their house perfectly. In contrast, men could step out to work in public. Automatically, men are economically powered than women.

Furthermore, the stereotype custom toward women is “women treated like property” (*A Destiny of Her Own* VCD Part 1, 01:04). Men have right toward women in everything they have. It is not only their physic but also their thought and idea. Clearly, all what women do should be under the men decision. Women life is only for men satisfaction and pleasure.

Women are made systematically voluptuous, and though they may not all carry their libertinism to the same eight, yet this heartless intercourse with the sex, which they allow themselves, depraves both sexes, because the teste of men is vitiated; and women, of all classes, naturally square their behavior to gratify the teste by which obtain pleasure and power (Wollstonecraft, 1992: 26).

The strong conditions are when women must follow and receive all of the men's decision without their agreement. For instance, women will be arranged to marry with the men of their fathers' choose. Besides, women should face their husbands who have several wives. Here, women are oppressed psychologically. Ironically, in such condition women must oblige to be honor and respect to them.

Unfortunately, the religion concept supports gender inequality. It significantly takes women in oppressed condition. For example, the subordination of women in Christianity stated directly by God in Gen. 3:16 "I will increase your labor and your pain, and in labor you shall bear children. You shall be eager for your husband, and shall be your master" (Bonvillain N, 1995: 214). Besides, jurisdiction that popular place for justice still takes women in inferior position. Women face a lot of unfair decision toward law. It is because women were "subjected to masculine laws" (Beauvoir, 1993: 137). It is clear that patriarchal system becomes the big problems toward women for centuries.

Basically, women have instinct to solve their problem. The modern view is the great solution for women to free from patriarchal system. Modern view is closed to independent, educated, and smart. Women should be independent in life. For instance, they can work or looking for money in public. Besides, by education and smart thought women will have strong convictions. Furthermore, they can survive by them selves. They can reach

everything they need by them selves. As the result, women will be free from oppression and have their right completely.

Based on the background of the study above the writer is interested to analyze the movie within the Socialist feminism. The movie describes the oppression against women in patriarchal system completely. Hence, the research is entitled: **OPPRESSION AGAINST WOMEN IN MARSHALL HERSKOVITZ'S *A DESTINY OF HER OWN*: SOCIALIST FEMINISM APPROACH.**

## **B. Literary Review**

As seen in the library some researchers have interest to the analysis socialist feminist approach, but the writer did not find a research on *A Destiny of Her Own* movie, at least among the student in Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta and Sebelas Maret University of Surakarta.

## **C. Problem Statement**

The Problem of the study is how oppression against women is reflected in *A Destiny of Her Own* movies directed by Marshall Herskovitz.

## **D. Limitation of the Study**

The writer will focus on the oppression against women which is reflected in *A Destiny of Her Own* movies directed by Marshall Herskovitz. The writer investigates Veronica Franco as the major character by using an approach of socialist feminism.

## **E. Objectives of the Study**

Based on the problem that has stated above, the writer takes the objective of the study are:

- a. To describe the structural elements of *A Destiny of Her Own* movie.
- b. To analyze *A Destiny of Her Own* movie based on socialist feminist approach.

## **F. Benefit of the Study**

The study of oppression against women on *A Destiny of Her Own* directed By Marshall Herskovitz have several benefits, those are:

### **1. Theoretical Benefit**

The benefit of the study is expected to enrich the knowledge, particularly structural elements, and socialist feminism analysis on *A Destiny of Her Own* movies.

### **2. Practical Benefit**

This study helps the researcher to enrich her knowledge dealing with structural elements and socialist feminism and to get more understanding about the movie, especially *A Destiny of Her Own* movie.

## **G. Research Method**

The writer will describe the methods that use on research. There are four elements to support in research method they are:

### **1. Type of the Research**

This research will be a library research. The data used on the research have been collected with the library research.

### **2. Type of the Data and the data Sources**

- a. The primary data source will be every data of the *A Destiny of Her Own movies* directed by Marshall Herskovitz which is related to the study.
- b. The secondary data source including reference and materials related to the study, it can be from the books and internet.

### **3. Technique of the Data Collection**

The study is documentation in which the data are collected and recorded from primary and secondary sources as evidences and references.

### **4. Technique of the Data Analysis**

There are several steps in Technique of the Data Analysis

- a. Watching the film several times.
- b. Identifying important and relevant elements.
- c. Taking notes of relevant elements.
- d. Classifying the data into categories.
- e. Drawing conclusion to get the last result.

## **H. Paper Organization**

This research paper consists of six chapters. The first chapter is introduction, which contains the background of the study, literature review,

problem statement, objective of the study, benefits of the study, research method, and paper organization. Second chapter is underlying theory. The third chapter deals with Social Background of America in the end of twentieth and beginning of twenty first centuries. Fourth chapter deals with the Structural Analysis of *A Destiny of Her Own*. Analysis and discussion of *A Destiny of Her Own* movie is presented in fifth chapter. Finally, the sixth chapter consists of conclusion and suggestion.