

**WOMEN'S POSITION AND ROLE IN SOFIA
COPPOLA'S *MARIE ANTOINETTE* MOVIE:
A LIBERAL FEMINIST APPROACH**



RESEARCH PAPER

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Marie Antoinette is a movie directed by Sofia Coppola. It is produced by Sofia Coppola, Ross Katz, and Francis Ford Coppola. Distributor of this movie is Columbia Pictures. It was released on October 20, 2006 in the United States. Run time of this movie is about 123 minutes. The genre of this movie is biographical film. This movie is performed by Kirsten Dunst as Marie Antoinette, Jason Schwartzman as King Louis XVI, Rip Torn as King Louis XV, Rose Byrne as Duchesse de Polignac, Asia Argento as Madame du Barry, Jamie Dornan as Count Fersen, and more cast.

([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marie Antoinette \(2006 film\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marie_Antoinette_(2006_film))).

This movie tells about a sympathetic account of the private life of the last queen of France before the Revolution, Marie Antonia Josepha Joanna, affectionately known as Antoine or Antoinette. She is beautiful, charming, 14 year old youngest daughter of Austria's empress Maria Theresa. She is selected by her mother to marry her second cousin, the Dauphin of France, Louis XVI, and seal an alliance between the two rival countries.

Marie Antoinette soon meets Louis XV, and his aunts Mesdames Tantes, Aunt Victoire, and Aunt Sophie. After very little time spent getting used to her new surroundings, Marie Antoinette and the Dauphin Louis are married in person. On their wedding night, after the consecration of their

marriage bed, the royal household leaves, waiting in anticipation. The next day it is reported to the King that nothing happened.

The Court in France is full with gossip. The king has a mistress, Madame du Barry, the least liked among the ladies at court. The king had also created her a *comtesse*. Marie Antoinette is encouraged by Mesdames Tantes not talk to her. Rumor also has it that Marie Antoinette has no love for her husband. Marie Antoinette ruffles more feathers by defying the high formality of the French court. She accompanies her husband and his friends on hunting excursions, passes out food to them and to the animals, claps at the opera, and often snubs other members of the aristocracy and royal family. She received a letter from her mother, Maria Theresa, the Holy Roman Empress, warning her that an unconsummated marriage could be easily annulled and encouraged her to inspire the Dauphin to sexual fervor. That night, Marie Antoinette attempts to seduce her husband but her advances are rebuffed.

Time passes in the same fashion and Marie Antoinette's mother continues to write to her giving advice on how to impress and seduce the Dauphin; also telling her to stop snubbing Madame du Barry as this is akin to criticize the King's behavior. The Court continues to snipe at Madame du Barry, criticizing her fashion and her behavior. As she leaves with her husband, she remarks that those would be the last words she would ever say to du Barry.

Marie Antoinette finally surrounds herself with a few confidantes and begins to adjust to her new life. One night, she, her husband, and some

friends go *incognito* to a masked ball in Paris, where they continue in their frivolity. There she meets Count Axel von Fersen for the first time.

After Louis XV passes away, the new king Louis XVI and his wife knelt down and asked for God's help because they feared they were too young to reign. Louis XVI is crowned King of France and Marie Antoinette accompanies him to Reims for the coronation ceremony. The new King is young and inexperienced and begins spending more money on foreign wars, sending France even further into debt.

Marie Antoinette's brother, the Holy Roman Emperor Joseph II comes to visit, counseling her against her constant parties and associations, but she fails to heed his advice. Joseph then meets the King at the Royal Zoo and explains to him the mechanics of sexual intercourse in terms of "key-making" – as one of the King's favorite hobbies is lock smiting. That night, the King and Marie Antoinette have sex for the first time. On December 18, 1778, the young queen gives birth to a girl, Marie Theresa. Although she would prefer to breastfeed the child herself, this is not socially acceptable. The baby princess grows older and Marie Antoinette spends much of her time at the Petit Trianon, her own private sanctuary on the grounds of Versailles. It is also at this time that Marie Antoinette is shown entering into a romantic affair with Count Axel von Fersen, which is only alleged in history.

France continues to subsidize the American Revolution, despite the enormous expense. Food shortages grow more frequent. Marie Antoinette's image with her subjects has completely deteriorated at this point. Her

luxurious lifestyle and apparent callous indifference to the common people result in unflattering and obscene political cartoons and earn her the title Madame Deficit. Beginning to mature, she focuses less on her obligations as a socialite and more on her family, and tones down her opulent lifestyle, including a decision to stop purchasing diamonds. A few months after her mother's death in November 1780, Marie Antoinette gives birth to a boy, Louis-Joseph, the new Dauphin. Next she gives birth to a second boy who dies.

The French Revolution comes into full fruition and an angry mob begins a march from Paris to Versailles. As most of the nobility flees the country, the royal family resolves to stay. The rioting *sans-culottes* reach the palace and the King and Queen are forced to leave the following morning. The film ends with the royal family's departure from Versailles.

([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marie_Antoinette_\(2006_film\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marie_Antoinette_(2006_film)))

There are many responses toward Marie Antoinette movie. The film, marketed for a teen audience, is an impressionistic retelling of Marie Antoinette's life as a young queen in the opulent and eccentric court at Versailles. The film focuses on Marie Antoinette, as she matures from a teenage bride to a young woman and eventual queen of France. Written by Kristie M.

Based on Antonia Fraser's book about the ill-fated Archduchess of Austria and later Queen of France, 'Marie Antoinette' tells the story of the

most misunderstood and abused woman in history, from her birth in Imperial Austria to her later life in France. Written by David Gunning and Aimee Black

The film won an Academy Award for Best Costume Design, Nominated for three BAFTA awards, for Best Art Direction, Best Costume Design and Best Makeup & Hair. At the 2006 Cannes Film Festival, *Marie-Antoinette* was entry for Official Selection of Golden Palm and won the Cinema Prize of the French National Education System. Won Best Art Direction at the Washington DC Area Film Critics Association Awards. Won Best Art Direction and Best Costume Design at both the Las Vegas Film Critics Society Awards and the Phoenix Film Critics Society Awards. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Academy_Award_for_Best_Actress).

Based on the explanation above, the writer is interested in analyzing this film by using A Liberal Feminist Approach. In this study the writer encourages herself to give a title “WOMEN’S POSITION AND ROLE IN SOFIA COPPOLA’S *MARIE ANTOINETTE* MOVIE: A LIBERAL FEMINIST APPROACH.”

B. Literary Review

The writer found one study using feminist approach conducted by Indri Wahyu Amarwati on 2005. Her research entitled “Woman’s Position and Role in Arthur Golden’s *Memoirs of a Geisha*: A Feminist Approach”. Her study focused on the woman’s position and role that reflected in Arthur Golden’s *Memoirs of a Geisha*.

Here, the writer will analyze *Marie Antoinette* focusing on woman's position and role in Sofia Coppola's *Marie Antoinette* by using liberal feminist approach.

C. Problem Statement

Considering the idea that has been explained above, the major problem in this study is "How is women's position and role reflected on the characters in Sofia Coppola's *Marie Antoinette* movie?"

D. Limitation of the Study

The writer will focus on analyzing the women's position and role of Marie Antoinette as a major character in Sofia Coppola's *Marie Antoinette* movie.

E. Objective of the Study

The objectives of the study are:

1. To analyze the movie based on its structural elements.
2. To analyze the movie based on A Liberal Feminist perspective.

F. Benefit of the Study

This study is expected to give benefit as follows:

1. This study can improve the reader's knowledge in understanding feminist.
2. This study can be used as a reference for who are interests in feminist.

G. Research Method

1. Type of Study

The method that use in this research is qualitative method.

2. Object of the Study

The object of the research is Marie Antoinette movie by Sofia Coppola, released in 20 October 2006, USA, and running time: 123 minutes.

3. Type of Data and the Data Sources.

Type of data of the study is literary taken from two data sources, namely primary and secondary.

a. Primary data source.

The primary data source is taken from Marie Antoinette movie

b. Secondary data source.

The secondary data source is other sources related to the primary data such as information about the director's biography, websites about the film, and the social historical background of French society in the late eighteenth century and other source supporting the analysis.

4. Technique of the Data Collection.

a. Watching the movie repeatedly.

b. Finding out and taking notes the important data.

- c. Arranging the data into several classification of parts based on its category of elements of literary study.
- d. Looking for the supporting data in the library and internet.

5. Technique of the Data Analysis.

In this study, the technique which is used to analyze the data is descriptive analysis.

H. Paper Organization

This paper is divided into six chapters. The first chapter is introduction, which explains the background of the study, literary review, problem statement, limitation of the study, objective of the study, benefits of the study, research method, and paper organization. The second chapter is underlying theory of a liberal feminist approach. The third chapter consists of the social historical background of French society includes social, economic and political, science and technology, cultural and religious aspect. The fourth chapter consists of structural analysis of the film and discussion. The fifth chapter consists of analysis based on a liberal feminist approach. And the last chapter is the conclusion and suggestion.