

# FEMINISM OF THE MAIN CHARACTER IN THE BIRD BOX MOVIE

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## Abstract

Feminism is a movement that fights for women's rights to have an equal position with men without any differences in all areas of life. A movie is a popular mass medium that lucidly presents images to audiences. The main character is the most important character who is the core of the story or the story's point of view. The purpose of this research is to find: 1) the kind of feminism that exists in the main character; 2) the feminism values contained in the main character; and 3) the characterization of the main character. This research uses a qualitative descriptive method. In collecting data, researchers watched the film, read and viewed all the sources, then recorded and analyzed them. This research found two types of feminism, namely liberal feminism and existential feminism, and then four feminism values, namely independence, gender equality, freedom, and solidarity. Finally, four characterizations were found, namely firmness, leadership, toughness, and personality.

**Keywords:** Feminism; Main Character; Bird Box Movie

## INTRODUCTION

Literary works are works that are usually expressed in beautiful and orderly language. According to Syainit and Hayati, Ismail Nasution (2018), literary works are one of the creations and human works expressed in written or oral form, using the author's imagination for aesthetic purposes. According to Ratna (2015:35), in theory, contemporary literary works are defined as creative activities that are dominated by aspects of beauty by including various problems of human life, both concrete and abstract, both physical and spiritual. Literary works are the result of creative language arts regarding ideas and thoughts to be conveyed to readers.

A film is one of the works that we hear or watch very often. According to Yusuf and Dadabhoy (2013), a movie is able to show the audience an image and therefore can present itself to the viewers lucidly. Films are enjoyed by people of various ages and social backgrounds, often addressing current life problems or events.

According to Rosalinah and Subroto, Lestari (2022), feminism is an ideology and social movement in an attempt to achieve equality for women in various areas of life. Feminism can be interpreted as meaning that women also have the right to obtain their rights and justice in all matters, whatever the circumstances. Feminism is a social movement aimed at achieving equal rights for women in various aspects of life, aiming to combat gender injustice in both family and societal environments, regardless of circumstances.

In this research, researchers will analyze the feminism contained in the film Bird Box. Bird Box is a film produced in 2018. This film from the United States is in the post-apocalyptic genre. This film was directed by Susanne Bier with a script written by Eric Heisserer that was adapted from the novel by Josh Malerman, which was published in 2014. The main character in this film is Sandra Bullock as Malorie. Bird Box is a film that uses a forward-and-backward plot. In the film Bird Box, there is an entity that will make people who see it immediately want to

commit suicide, so they have to wear a blindfold for safety. These entities, whether aliens or ghosts, can manipulate their voices to become those of known people and take any form.

## **METHOD**

In this research, qualitative research was used. In qualitative research, this type of descriptive research is a very popular type of research. According to Sugiyono (2013), qualitative research is often called naturalistic research because it is carried out in a natural setting. It is also known as the ethnographic method because it is mostly used in the field of cultural anthropology. Qualitative methods are research conducted based on reality that is used to understand or explain the meaning of descriptive data, which refers to research documents used as material. The data sources for the research were taken from various sources and journals related to the film *Bird Box* which is being studied. The data obtained is in the form of writings and quotations from story fragments that are related to the problem being studied and are the object of research.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Results**

The researcher analyzed three issues of feminism in the *Bird Box* movie. They are kinds of feminism, the value of feminism, and the characterization of the main character in the *Bird Box* movie. There are many kinds of feminism, for example, liberal feminism, radical feminism, Marxist feminism, social feminism, existential feminism, psychoanalytic feminism, postcolonial feminism, and postmodern feminism. But in this research, there are two kinds of feminism, namely existential feminism and liberal feminism. Existentialist feminism is the struggle of women through individual movements within the domestic sphere and usually tends to differ from other schools of feminism that fight for the public sphere. Liberal feminism is based on the liberal concept that emphasizes that women and men are created equal and have the same rights or opportunities; there is no difference. Humans are different from animals because of their rationality.

Likewise with feminism value, there are many types of feminism value, such as independence, gender equality, solidarity, care, freedom, and many more. However, in this research, there are four feminist values: independence, gender equality, solidarity, care, and freedom. Independence means being able to do something without expecting the help of others. An independent person is someone who is used to doing things on their own because they will continue to learn not to depend on others. Gender equality can be interpreted as the existence of equal conditions between men and women in obtaining and enjoying their opportunities and rights as human beings to realize their human rights in order to play a role and participate in all fields of life. Solidarity refers to feelings of solidarity and support for women in the feminist movement. Solidarity arises when individuals feel compatible with other individuals, which ultimately leads to a mutual agreement to commit to each other for a cause. Freedom can belong to anyone. Women who want freedom will feel free when they decide to choose a life path to realize their existence. Not all can claim freedom in the same way because freedom is subjective and humans are freedom itself.

Characterization is the process of producing a character by typifying its actions, words, and thoughts. Characterization is the representation of people in stories and dramatic works. Characterization is the process of conveying information about characters in fiction. Characterization is also a description of the story's characters. Through this characterization, the author can reveal the logical reasons for the character's behavior. Characterization is divided into two methods, namely the telling method and the showing method. The author's telling

method describes the characters directly. Meanwhile, the showing or indirect method ignores the presence of the author so that the characters in literary works can present themselves directly through their behavior. In this research, there are four characterizations of the main character in the Bird Box movie: firmness, leadership, toughness, and personality.

## Discussion

### 1. Kind of Feminisme

#### a. Existential Feminism

Existential feminism is a school of feminism popularized by Simone de Beauvoir.

1) Jessica and Malorie discuss Ryan leaving Malorie. (06 : 32 – 06 : 44)

Jessica: "and ever since Ryan left, you've gotten a lot more work done. But, so fine, so no more roommates

Malorie: "Ryan was not a roommate."

In this scene, Jessica is quite worried about her cousin, Malorie, who is heavily pregnant and seems to be working more after being left by her husband, Ryan. Malorie deliberately does this so that she can forget about her husband as soon as possible and her mind is not only on Ryan. Malorie wants to appear independent, because she wants to prove that she can survive without a man in her life.

2) Olympia felt like a burden to others (01 : 09 : 41 – 01 : 11 : 10)

Olympia: "I feel such a burden."

Malorie: "You are no more a burden than I am. Okay?"

In this scene, Olympia tells Malorie that she feels like a burden to the other members because she's weak and she's pregnant, and it makes her feel very guilty for not contributing anything. And Malorie denied it because she also felt like a burden here. However, in the end, they both strengthen each other and try to show that they can be equal to the men in the group by being assertive and brave women.

3) Malorie saves Olympia's baby (01 : 20 : 21 – 01 : 20 : 52)

In this scene, Olympia and Malorie give birth simultaneously. However, Gary suddenly came and opened all the shutters around the house, so that Olympia, who was still sitting limp, was hypnotized by an invisible creature and intended to kill herself. Fortunately, Malorie tried to convince Olympia to give up her baby girl before she died.

#### b. Liberal Feminism

Liberal feminism wants a just society, all rules imposed by coercion must be abolished, the hierarchical gender system and the imposition of traditional gender roles must be stopped (Baehr, 2017).

1) Malorie doesn't really like her pregnancy (07 : 14 – 09 : 47)

In this scene, Malorie doesn't really like her pregnancy, she doesn't feel happy. Then, Dr. Alpham suggests and gives her the option to give her child to parents who want to adopt, rather than Malorie ignoring the presence of her child after being born.

2) Lydia help Malorie (13 : 27 – 14 : 00)

Douglas: "Lydia, what are you doing?!"

Lydia: "She's pregnant."

Douglas : "Lydia, not now. Come on in!"

Lydia : "She's pregnant!"

Douglas : "You can't help it."

People were running in fear because of the chaos caused by an invisible being, who was spreading terror by inciting suicide. While Malorie was running, pregnant, she fell. A woman named Lydia saw her from inside the house. She intends to save Malorie who is struggling to get up, even though her husband Douglas forbids her to go out, she still runs to Malorie until

herself accidentally sees an invisible creature that makes her get into a burning car and eventually burns.

3) Malorie offers to loot the supermarket for food (38 : 24 – 38 : 43)

In this scene, their food supplies are running low. Charlie suggests that the supermarket where he works has a lot of food. It can also be seen that some of the male actors in the movie looked scared and refused to go out to loot food at the supermarket, but Malorie casually offered to come along, even though she was heavily pregnant.

## 2. Feminisme Value

### a. Feminism in Independence

According to Steinberg (in Damayanti & Ibrahim, 2011: 155) Independence is the ability of individuals to manage themselves, characterized by not depending on the emotional support of others, especially parents, being able to make decisions independently and being consequent to these decisions, and having a set of principles about right and wrong, important and not important.

In the movie, the character of female independence is very prominent. Malorie is a woman who is firm in making decisions. She shows assertiveness and courage to protect herself and her two children from an invisible threat that turns people into a dangerous psychotic state if they see it. Malorie also demonstrated independence and the ability to adapt quickly to dangerous situations. She used her creativity and intelligence to navigate the invisible threats that threatened her life. In a highly stressful and threatening situation, Malorie showed great emotional strength. She does not let her emotions inhibit her ability to act and protect herself and her children.

### b. Feminism in Gender Equality

According to Puspitawati (2013:5), gender equality is the condition of women and men enjoying equal status and having the same conditions to fully realize their human rights and potential for development in all fields of life.

In this movie, gender equality is depicted in the characters, where both men and women can work together equally in a threatening situation to survive. There are no assumptions that suggest a particular gender's superiority in survival or decision-making skills. Gender equality is shown through how these characters support each other, work together, and rely on their individual skills to survive.

### c. Feminism in Freedom

According to Prameswari, et al., (in Illa: 2019) women should have the awareness to determine their freedom; women have the right to be able to work according to their wishes, have the right to pursue the highest education, and have the right to refuse themselves to be used as objects.

In this movie, freedom for women is depicted through the main characters. In some moments, it can be seen how the Malorie character is releasing fear and letting go of past trauma. This can be interpreted as a struggle to achieve mental freedom from a painful past. The female characters have the freedom to act and make decisions in difficult situations; this can be interpreted as an attempt to gain freedom for the female characters in the movie.

### d. Feminism in Solidarity

According to Soejono Soekanto (2017), solidarity is the cohesion or ability to unite that exists among members of a group, association, social class, or social caste. Solidarity also sometimes arises in cases of conflict, oppression, injustice, and the process of expressing a particular identity.

In this movie, solidarity is depicted in several moments where female characters support each other and work together in difficult situations that can be interpreted as a form of feminist solidarity. The movie shows moments where the female characters support each other and work

together in the face of great challenges. This reflects the idea of solidarity in the context of equal rights, independence, and courage among the female characters in "Bird Box".

### 3. Characterization

Here are the characters in this movie that researchers will describe:

#### *Malorie Hayes*

Malorie is the main character in the movie Bird Box. She is a single mother who is determined to protect her two children in a world infected by mysterious creatures and entities. Malorie is an important character in the story who develops over time from a woman initially shaken by the situation to someone who is calmer and able to face fears and challenges with wisdom.

##### 1) firmness (07 : 06 – 09 12)

This section shows that Malorie honestly doesn't care much about her pregnancy. Even when her sister invited her to drink wine together, she agreed, but the doctor disapproved of it because it was not good for a pregnant woman. Malorie was quite distraught when her husband left her pregnant, as she had to face an uncertain future alone. This moment shows how difficult the situation was for Malorie who had to face her pregnancy alone in the midst of frightening uncertainty, Malorie's determination was scattered from her determination to continue living.

##### 2) leadership (00 : 49 – 03 : 32)

In this section, Malorie teaches her children the skills needed to survive, as well as providing them with the knowledge they need to make sense of a world without sight. She is faced with the difficult choice of survival. As their surroundings become increasingly dangerous, Malorie makes the decision to escape from an unsafe place. She took her children on a dangerous journey to find a safer refuge, without being able to see or rely on visuals in a threatening environment. Malorie's decision shows that she is a strong mother, ready to do everything necessary to protect her children from the dangers that lurk in a world full of unseen threats.

##### 3) toughness (01 : 42 : 12 – 01 : 44 : 55)

In this section, Malorie's journey with her two children shows the struggle for survival. During their journey, they face many challenges and great risks. They had to stay alert to the possibility of seeing something that could harm them, while looking for safer shelters. Malorie kept telling her children to keep their eyes closed and never look, even when the situation became dangerous. During this risky journey, the emotional connection between Malorie and her children became stronger. They depended on each other, building deep trust in their quest for survival.

### CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion, it can be concluded that the main character (Malorie Heyes) in the film Bird Box wants readers to know about feminism. Liberal feminism focuses on the individual and freedom. Existential feminism emphasizes that women are able to be whatever they want and make themselves equal to men. In this film, women can prove that they can be equal to other people, especially men. These values teach everyone that all humans are in the same position. All humans are born with the same position and rights, and that is a gift that must be understood and appreciated by everyone without exception.

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