



Representation of Feminism in the Movie *Hi, mom!*

《你好！李焕英》 by Jia Ling

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Abstract. A movie is an 'artificial world' or 'replica world' of what is happening in society as well as a projection of socio-cultural phenomena that are being experienced by society. Thus, what is depicted in movies is the reality experienced by everyday people. One of the most interesting and uplifting social phenomena is the movie *Hi, mom* 《你好！李焕英》. This movie is very thick with the values of filial piety. Parents and the value of close kinship from a woman's perspective, namely a daughter and a mother. How regretful and deep is the desire of a daughter to give the best for her mother, to repay all the kindness and love of the mother, especially when the mother is weak and sick in the hospital. Feminism in every region, culture, and ethnicity will certainly differ depending on where the woman or group is. The woman was raised and grew up, so the movie *Hi, mom* 《你好！李焕英》 certainly became one of the movies that can depict the feminism of Chinese women as well as the chic Chinese background. This research aims to describe the representation of feminism in the movie *Hi, mom!* 《李焕英》.

Keywords: Representation, Feminism, Film.

1 Introduction

Literature is the window to the human soul because it can present humans with various actions (actions) to achieve their intended desires. Through literature, we can see the condition of a person's psyche and the psychological condition of humans both directly and indirectly. Literature can also be a way for humans to express their feelings. Through literature, humans can pour out the life experiences they have gone through, and each person goes through different life experiences. With these diverse life experiences, literature becomes a reflection of human social life that is more honest, real, and closer to the readers of literature.

There are various types of literary works, namely novels, movies, poetry, prose, etc. Film is a national creative expression, a cultural interest, and a significant part of the world's entertainment [1]. A movie is an 'artificial world' or 'replica world' of what is happening in society as well as a projection of socio-cultural phenomena that are

being experienced by society so that what is depicted in movies is the reality experienced by everyday people.

One of the most interesting Chinese films highlighting social phenomena is the movie *Hi, mom* 《你好!李焕英》/nǐ hǎo! Lǐhuànyīng/. The movie is adapted from a 2016 sitcom sketch by Jia Ling with the same title. The movie is also based on the story of Jia Ling's mother, who passed away in 2001, shortly after Jia started college. Jia made this movie as a tribute to her mother.

This fiction and comedy movie tells the story of Jia Xiaoling, who is devastated because her mother has an accident. She feels she has been unable to provide her mother with filial piety. Jia Xiaoling wants to give her best if her mother is still alive. Her wish came true when she returned to 1981 when her mother was still young. That year, Xiaoling became an excellent friend of her mother and tried hard to change her mother's life to be happier.

This film is fascinating because it is one of the Chinese films directed, produced, and scripted by a woman. Jia Ling wrote the sketch comedy script herself and directed the film production. Even the story of this film is based on Jia Ling's personal story with her mother, so the main story is the relationship between mother and daughter. The film earned 12 trillion dollars, officially unseating *Wonder Women (2017)* as China's highest-grossing female directorial film.

Films can be a forum for socializing societal values [2]. This film is very thick with devotion to parents and the value of close kinship from a woman's perspective, namely a daughter and a mother. How regretful and deep desire a daughter to give the best for her mother repay all the kindness and love of the mother, especially when the mother is weakly ill in the hospital. The movie also depicts the mother giving her best support to the child in any condition selflessly and lovingly.

Feminism is a set of social movements and ideologies that aim to fight for women's rights by establishing equality in all aspects. Feminism incorporates the position that society tends to emphasize the male point of view and that women are treated unfairly in society. Efforts to counter this include combating gender stereotypes and assumptions and working towards creating equal professional and educational opportunities. Feminism in the movie *Hi, mom* 《你好!李焕英》/nǐ hǎo! Lǐ huànyīng/ is visible and frequent, considering who wrote the script. Directing and acting are Jia Ling, a native Chinese woman who tells the story of a mother and daughter relationship in China. Of course, this movie is full of Chinese society's family, social, and cultural values, as seen through a woman's eyes. Jia Ling raises social and cultural issues regarding women, especially mothers, and children, in the form of conversations between characters, how to solve problems, and the mindset of a Chinese woman.

Feminism in each region, culture, or ethnicity will undoubtedly be different depending on where the woman or group of women was raised and grew up, so the movie *Hi, mom* 《你好!李焕英》/nǐ hǎo! Lǐhuànyīng/ certainly is one of the films that can illustrate the feminism of Chinese women and the chic Chinese background. Therefore, the research is interested in reviewing how feminism is shown and represented in the movie.

The film is a work that has specific characteristics that distinguish it from others. These distinctive characteristics include comprehensive and widescreen shooting,

requiring total concentration and psychological identification [3]. Movies, as social criticism, often reflect various issues encountered in social life. Through movies as works of art, these social issues can be projected in more straightforward ways and through video shoots so that the audience easily enjoys them. Various social issues can be social, economic, or historical themes or influential public figures. An interesting issue that is currently being raised is the issue of feminism.

Representation is an appropriate depiction or meaning through a symbol or code. Representation is also a social construction that requires us to analyze the formation of textual meaning and examine how meaning is formed in various contexts [4]. Representation is a concept that involves the human mind in that it refers to an image that humans see concerning the language that is mastered. With this, others can understand the contents of our minds. The concepts or ideas that exist in our minds must be poured into the form of language so that our interlocutors understand and have the same classification so that we can communicate with each other both orally and in writing.

Feminism in linguistic terms comes from the Latin word 'femina', which means femininity. The term feminism was initially popularized by Koyama, who defined feminism as a women's movement by women from diverse backgrounds [5] [6]. Initially, feminism focused on the unequal position of women and men in society. As a result of this inequality, several experts and efforts were made to analyze and find the causes and factors of inequality to reduce the gap and increase the equality of women and men in various fields. According to Tong, feminism is an approach, a view, and an attempt to explain inequality in women and solutions to reduce this inequality [7]. Feminism is an ideology of women's liberation and a belief that women experience injustice because of their gender [8].

Rosemarie Putnam Tong develops several division systems and theories of feminism. Tong divides feminism into Marxist feminism, liberal feminism, radical feminism, multicultural feminism, socialist feminism, psychoanalytic feminism, existentialist feminism, gender feminism, global feminism, and ecofeminism. One of the most well-known feminist theories is socialist feminism, which concludes that injustice is not the result of biological differences between men and women but rather the difference in values and assumptions about these differences. The manifestation of this injustice is a social construction. This theory focuses on resistance to the construction of society's vision and ideology and unfair structures and systems to women and men [9]. This theory has gained a lot of support because, in some societal groups, women and men physically complete some of the same work or activities. Although some activities are a little more difficult for women, by practicing or getting the same opportunities, women can do the same, for example, lifting weights and some sports. It supports the socialist feminism theory that this inequality comes from a mindset formed from society preserved through generations, eventually becoming a mutually agreed value.

Liberal feminism refers to equality with men based on the essential capitalist human being as a reasoning moral agent, so gender inequality is the result of patriarchal patterns of division of labor. Gender inclusion will be achieved if it can change the division of labor through re-patterning certain institutions [10]. Strategic

institutions can be an initial reference for reducing gender inequality. If large and strategic institutions can be an example, it is hoped that other institutions will follow gender equality efforts. While psychoanalytic feminists view patriarchy as a system of men conquering women, this universal system permeates various other social organizations, lasting long enough from generation to generation so that it can survive for a long time. This theory feels that the patriarchal system is a system where men in their daily lives work hard every day and preserve the system.

2 Methods

The data collection of this research uses a qualitative descriptive method, whose research results are in the form of data analysis results to understand the meaning and uniqueness of a particular femonema [11], with primary data sources including speech issued by the character and the movements of the character who will be used as an informant. The descriptive method used for this research provides a concrete and thorough explanation of the data under study to achieve research objectives. This approach is suitable for researching facts or phenomena studied empirically live on speakers and their speech [12]. Meanwhile, informants obtain secondary data sources indirectly, such as documents (tables, notes, minutes, stationery, and others). The data source for this study is a movie titled *Hi, mom!* 《你好！李焕英》/nǐ hǎo! Lǐhuànyīng/. Meanwhile, the data in this study are as follows: The research is primary data, which is data obtained directly from the data source. Primary data is obtained by watching the movie, recording data in speech, and taking screenshots representing feminism.

The data in this study are in the form of pictures and text of speech acts between the characters. The research data is divided into two types: visual and verbal. Visual data includes images in the movie that will be taken with the screenshot method. Meanwhile, the verbal data consists of speech act texts in the movie relevant to the research topic. These data are the basis for researchers to conduct an in-depth analysis of the representation of feminism. In this study, the author used data collection techniques in the form of listening and note-taking techniques. The steps of collecting research data are: 1) Watching the entire podcast titled, 2) Recording speech acts and taking screenshots of scenes that contain forms of signs following the research theme; 3) Translating the verbal data collected into Indonesian to facilitate the analysis process; 4) Performing data tagging of the collected data; 5) Coding the data found and collected according to the relevant types, concepts, or aspects; 6.) Indexing data. Indexing data. At the data identification stage, the researcher records the collected verbal data along with the data code and then writes down the translation of the data; 7) clarifies the data. The steps taken to analyze the data are 1) Reading the overall results of data collection that have been coded and classified according to the form, type, and context of the research data; 2) Analyzing data following the formulation of the problem using the theory that is following the research topic; 3) Writing down the results of the research, the results of the research are written with a paragraph-shaped data description model.

3 Results and Discussion

The movie *Hi, mom!* 《你好！李焕英》 /nǐ hǎo! Lǐhuànyīng/ by Jia Ling tells the story of a daughter named Jia Xiao Ling who feels that she has disappointed her mother, Li Huan Ying, so she hopes to return to his mother's past to help her change her fate for the better. The son travels back in time and lives when Mom was still a girl, unmarried and without her daughter. The movie's plot goes back and forth, primarily set in the early 1980s, when China was developing all its industries and transitioning from a closed socialist country to a typical Chinese open socialist country. Industry was booming, and many young people at that time worked in factories, including the main character's mother. Whereas the son is from 2001, China is already a world-recognized country with a developed economy and a much more modern life for young people. To analyze this representation of feminism, we can compare how young women were in the early 1980s and 2001 because there are differences and similarities between young women in these two eras.

The representation of feminism in this film is analyzed from several aspects: appearance, behavior, and mindset. First, in terms of appearance, there is a pretty striking difference between Jia Xiao Ling, who came in 2001, and the 1980s. Different appearances can be seen in the makeup and fashion of these two main characters. Jia Xiao Ling and Li Huan Ying have straight black hair, which is typical of Chinese women. Still, Li Huan Ying and most women in the movie in the 1980s extended their hair at least below the shoulders, especially Li Huan Ying, who looks simple but feminine, always combs her long hair neatly and is often seen braiding her hair sweetly, not only that Li Huan Ying and other women of her age often use accessories on the head. It contrasts to Jia Xiao Ling, who, despite having the same type of hair, chooses to have short hair above the shoulders and rarely uses head accessories. It is also often encountered and was not unusual in 2001. In terms of dressing, women in the 1980s wore simple clothes. Still, they gave a strong feminine impression, especially Li Huan Ying, who often wore mini dresses in various models and pastel or soft colors. Meanwhile, Jia Xiao Ling went everywhere, preferring to wear jeans and t-shirts that seemed sporty but tomboyish. The footwear that the two of them often wear is also different. Li Huan Ying, who lived in the 1980s, often wears flat or feminine sports shoes, while Jia Xiao Ling always wears sporty sneakers. The difference in the appearance of these two women could be because, in the 2000s, society began to open up about women's rights to appear freely according to their own will, and women's appearance did not reduce their value as a woman.

From a behavioral aspect, Li Huan Ying and most women then were calmer and tended to be cautious when expressing their feelings or the difficulties they faced. It can be seen when Li Huan Ying could not participate in the volleyball competition at the factory where she worked because the other team members refused to participate. Li Huan Ying initially resigned and respected their decision despite being very sad, unlike Jia Xiao Ling, who advised Li Huan Ying not to give up so quickly and to meet the other team members to find out the cause of their refusal. After meeting each member, Li Huan Ying still looked confused, as some women at that time did not openly disclose their problems.

Naturally, on several other occasions, Li Huan Ying seemed very resigned and accepted whatever others said, unlike Jia Xiao Ling, who dared to question loudly, ask for confirmation, and seek reassurance from other people and other men at that time. It shows that Chinese women in that year were quite introverted and not free to express themselves, unlike Jia Xiao Ling, who represented women in the early 2000s who were quite outspoken in expressing their ideas and feelings.

The mindset of women in the 1980s and the early 2000s is also slightly different, as experienced by Li Huan Ying. When facing difficulties, she tends to surrender and accept the situation, unlike Jia Xiao Ling, who is persistent in trying to solve problems to achieve the desired goals. Jia Xiao Ling solved the personal issues of each of Li Huan Ying's friends to join the volleyball competition. Even though there were obstacles in the middle of the match, Jia Xiao Ling's enthusiasm inspired Li Huan Ying to try her best and be as passionate as Jia Xiao Ling. This difference in persistence can be influenced by several factors, including the education received by women in the 1980s and 2000s is different. Women in the 1980s received a more relaxed education compared to women in the 2000s who were forged by a more challenging education; tougher social competition experienced by women in the 2000s because starting in the 2000s, China began to have an open economy which went hand in hand with open competition between students, this indeed formed women who were more persistent and more ready to compete.

4 Conclusion

The representation of feminism is found in the movie *Hi, Mom!* 《你好！李焕英》/nǐ hǎo! Lǐhuànyǐng/ by Jia Ling can be seen from several aspects, namely appearance, behavior, and mindset. Appearance is represented by the clothes worn, hairstyle, and makeup between mother and daughter; behavior and mindset are reflected in the behaviors, motivations, and ways of solving problems, which are different between the two female characters. The main factor influencing this difference is the social environment in which the two characters live. The mother, who presents a Chinese woman who grew up in the 1980s, is accustomed to living with more difficult social conditions and more conventional feminist values, while the daughter, who is in the 2000s and will step into college, lives in a more modern era, the feminist values adopted are also more open than the mother.

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