

BUTLER'S GENDER PERFORMANCE ON *SCARLET LETTER* MOVIE

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Abstract

Movies are shown on television or in movie theatres contain strong mediated messages, norms and values related to gender. This paper presents the protagonists who dominant have gender performance in *Scarlet Letter* movie. The objective of the study is to explain the problem faced by Hester Prynne as woman in Puritan, to analyze the factors cause the problems and to examine some solution done by Hester Prynne in the *Scarlet Letter* movie. It is a qualitative paper. There are two types of data, the first primary data consisting texts of the movie relating to the topic and secondary one covering the data that support the analysis. Technique of the data collection is carried out as follows watching and examining the movie, selecting the proper data suitable with the topic and presenting the data for the analysis. Technique of the data analysis is done through library research using descriptive method and applying the theory of gender performance by Judith Butler. The result of the study as follows firstly problem faced by Hester Prynne, she has problems to adapt the culture in Puritan community such as her activities, dress style, her principles and others. Secondly, the most factor appears in this movie is the different stereotype between Hester and Puritan society. The rules of Puritan society also impact in the equality of gender performative. Hester always behaves independent self to solve the problems faced in her life. The last, Hester and Arthur fall in love, because they have same hobby. Arthur is proud of Hester's knowledge; it's different with other women in Puritan. Woman and man have same equality, chance, and feeling. Culture develops in country should obey with people. Gender manages work as people should do. People have to respect and tolerant each other without distinguish their gender.

Keywords: Gender Performance, Equality, *Scarlet Letter* movie.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the globalization era, media has big role in influencing the people daily life and it also effects in the view of people generally. There is wide range of media such as television shows, movies, the radio, newspaper, advertisement, and many more. Movies shown on television or movie in theatres contain strong mediated messages, norms and values related to gender. Many forms of media, there are videos and images of man and woman. They are illustrated in different ways with different characteristics and have different meaning. Gender role stereotype has developed in society that man and woman are inequality in any opportunities. In this paper researchers analyzed the role of gender applied in the Scarlet Letter movie.

Scarlet Letter is a movie adapted from a novel by Nathaniel Hawthorne, the theme is given in this movie is pride, sin, isolation, gender conflict and vengeance. In this movie tells about the passions and gender conflicts belong to the essential of life. The Puritan setting also becomes an important element to present way for the gender conflict. The society of Hester is unforgiving and hypocritical in nature. Scarlet Letter movie shows about the alienation of Hester Prynne, Pearl, and Arthur Dimmesdale. They suffer and get pains to cover their problem. Scarlet Letter also casts the condemnation of society.

Hawthorne portrays the fate of Hester Prynne, a woman who is condemned by Puritan law to wear the letter A on her bosom as a punishment for her adultery. It also tells the rules of the Puritan's principles which Pearl doesn't have identity in society. In this movie, Hester Prynne is presented with character ambiguously. She is a strong woman. She also hides her real self behind her mask of the scarlet letter with her smiling face. She does it because she has to live for her daughter Pearl.

Gender is socially constructed; the ideas and norms properties such as clothing, color, sports are part of a certain gender change over time. In certain period, they were seen as typical for one gender but in different period, they were seen as a typical for the same gender. Rubin in Mikkola (2017) states that the difference of gender is caused by social interventions sometimes people don't behave a certain way because it does not match their gender. Kimmel 2000: 87-88 states what is part of a gender role depends on the context. "Definitions of masculinity and femininity have variation," he mentions variation amongst cultures, time, race, sexuality education and more. Millet (1971: 98) says that gender has a cultural character. Butler (1999: 6-7) explains that gender does not stay the same over time and varies with race, class and region, the reason that it is impossible to view gender separately from the "cultural intersections" that "produced and maintained" gender.

Butler states that gender is performative. Gender "is real only to the extent that it is performed." Performative gender gives explanation how gender identity is formed through a set of acts. She writes that "gender is proved by performative, constituting the identity which it is purported. In this sense, gender is always doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to preexist the deed. Butler (2011: 86) calls "being a man and being a woman internally unstable affairs." She also writes that gender "ought not to be construed as a stable identity. Gender is an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a stylized repetition of acts. Butler's view on gender should not be generalized to the claim that gender is equal to behavior.

In Scarlet Letter movie, there are assumptions and expectations how woman and men should act. This study focused on examining how gender functions and how gender roles are perceived for the female protagonist and the male protagonists' action. The theoretical approach used gender performance by Judith Butler. Butler claims that gender is a performance, which means that gender is not what a person is; it is what that person does. She also claims that society has a desire to keep gender binary. Based on the focus, it is broken down into some questions as follows:

1. What problem is faced by Hester Prynne as woman, in the Puritan?
2. What factors cause the problems?
3. How does Hester Prynne handle the problems?

Looking at the above questions, objective of the study is to explain the problem faced by Hester Prynne as woman in Puritan, to analyze the factors cause the problems and to examine

some solution done by Hester Prynne in the *Scarlet Letter* movie. The significance of the study is theoretically to accumulate the research on *Scarlet Letter* movie. By doing this, we get many perspectives on literary study. Practically the study can give many advantages for the reader in understanding the gender performance.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

Research method of the study can be explained as follows. Type the study is qualitative one with descriptive approach through the gender performance by Judith Butler on *Scarlet Letter* movie. Type of the data consists of primary and secondary data. The primary data derive from the texts of the movie focusing on gender performance. The secondary data covers some data that support the analysis. It can be criticism of *Scarlet Letter* movie, Journals of the movie. Technique of the data collection is done through library research with the following steps; to watch the movie, to sort the texts of the movie that relate with gender performance. Technique of the data analysis is carried out by applying the theory of gender performance by Judith Butler.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Butler (1999: 6-7) explains that gender does not stay the same over time and varies with race, class and region, the reason that it is impossible to view gender separately from the “cultural intersections” that “produced and maintained” gender. She states that gender is performative. Gender “is real only to the extent that it is performed.” Gender is performative gives explanation of how gender identity is formed through a set of acts.

3.1 Finding

This paper analyzed the data with the theory of gender performance by Judith Butler. Butler claims that gender is a performance, which means that gender is not what a person is; it is what that person does. In *Scarlet Letter* movie present about assumptions and expectations about how woman and men should act. This paper shows the scene that protagonist present the gender performance.

3.1.1 Hester Prynne arrives in the Massachusetts Bay Colony



Fig. 1. Hester hope in the new world would come the freedom to worship without fear of persecution. The following is their expression of introduction.

“3 months at sea will either take away your faith, or harden it to iron. Allow me to introduce a woman who's been travelling with us.” “Mistress... Hester Prynne.” Introduce Governor Bellingham.

3.1.2 Reverend gives advice to Hester

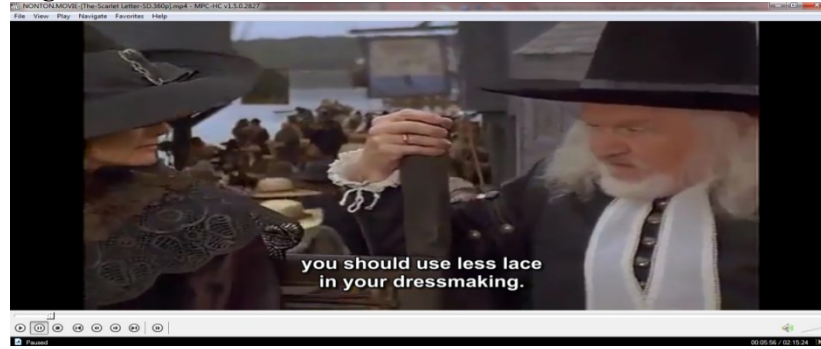


Fig. 2. Reverend asks Hester use less lace in her dressmaking.

The following are their dialogues.

“Madam, you should use less lace in your dressmaking.” Ask Reverend. “Indeed, Reverend.” Replay Hester.

3.1.3 Wife’s Reverend asks Hester to stay.



Fig. 3. Hester refuses wife’s reverend request to stay because she is a woman.

The following description Hester conveys her argument.

“Mistress Prynne, I hope you'll stay with us until your husband's arrival.” Request wife’s reverend. “You're most kind, but I intend to find a house of my own as soon as possible.” Explain Hester. “On thine own?” Ask Reverend. “Why, yes.” Replay Hester firmly. “It's not considered fitting for a young woman to live alone.” More explanation wife’s reverend. “I've come first to prepare place for his arrival, so that is what I intend to do.” Argument’s Hester. “Mistress Prynne, The rules we live by may seem arbitrary to a newcomer, but we have learnt the hard way that without absolute order. we cannot hope to survive here.” Explain Governor.

3.1.4 Hester goes to the forest after seeing the red bird.



Fig. 4. Mr. Bobbin does not allow her to forest by herself.

The following are their dialogues.

“We'd best accompany you if your going to the forest.” Say Mr. Bobbin. “Don’t worry Mr. Bobbin. I shan't go far.” Explain Hester.

3.1.5 Arthur Dimmesdale is surprise if Hester has hobby reading.



Fig. 5. Hester has read many kinds book

The following are their dialogues.

“What are you reading?” Ask Hester. “Comus”, it's by John.” Replay Arthur. “John Milton.” Cut Hester clearly. “I know it. I've read it.” Answer Hester. “Have you?” Doubt Arthur. “I'm not all counterpanes and coverlets.” Explain her. “I'm the same.” Replay Arthur Clearly.

3.1.6 Sometime, women in Puritan have in the free time. They have some gossip and sewing together.



Fig. 6. Women in Puritan are waiting her husband with gossip and sewing.

The following are their conversation.

“I could tell you a thing or two about your husband before he tied the knot with you.” “Stupid slut!” “Harold would never had nothing to do with no whore!” “You think not?” “I've even seen one of your windy ministers poking' an Injun girl was standing' on a bible so he could roger her better.”

3.1.7 Hester is judge by the governor and the society of Puritan.

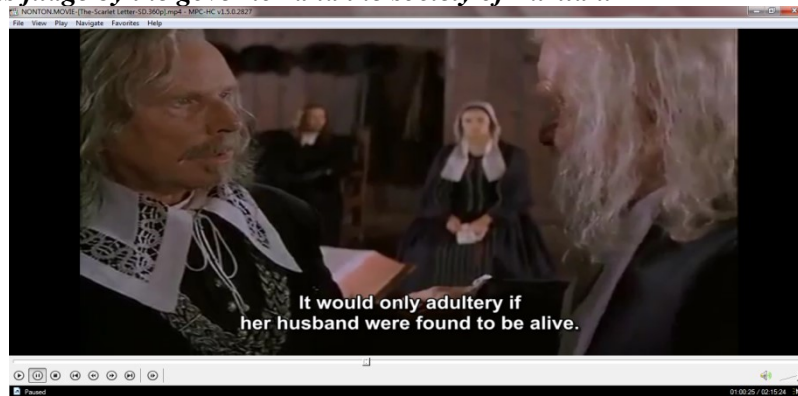


Fig. 7. Hester has adultery then she is pregnancy. She does not mention the name of the man. The following are their dialogues.

Governor asks to Hester, "Are you with child? Answer your betters, woman! Do you carry a bastard child in yur womb?" "Yes." Answers Hester. Governor continues his investigation, "Who is the father? You are innocent next to the one who would hide behind your skirts. We would hang that fornicator!" "I'll not reveal the name, sir." Replies Hester.

3.1.8 Arthur Dimmesdale worries with Hester.



Fig. 8. Hester is strong to handle the problem, but Arthur worries to her. The following are their dialogue.

"Do you believe we've sinned?" ask Hester. "I know not." Answer Arthur. "What happen between us had consecration. Have you forgotten?" Remember Hester. "I've not forgotten!" replay Arthur clearly. "Arthur, I know you want to speak out. Your nature cries out for it. But you risk your own ruin and deny me. My right to stand up to this hypocrisy. If I need you to speak, I'll tie this handkerchief from the window." Explain Hester. "I love thee woman, but your strength frightens me. I'll do what you ask. Amen." Close Arthur.

3.1.9 Arthur Dimmesdale is angry with Hester.



Fig. 9. Arthur is angry with Hester, but he still holds his anger.

The following are their conversation.

“What's the crime in that?” Asks Arthur. “The crime is they had nothing! Don't you see this is some malevolence? What has become of you?”Replay Hester. “God, woman! What are your demands? I've given up everything I own sacred! I'm in Hell! In the eye of your husband, who lurks at my side day and night. In the eye of all who come to me to unburden their soul! I'm a pollution! I'm a lie! They are the pollution! They are the lie!” Harshly Arthur.

3.1.10 Hester is followed by drummer boy.



Fig. 10. Hester is followed by drummer boy when she does activities in public places.

The following are their dialogue.

“What is your duty, boy? Asks Hester. “Follow you around, Mistress.” Explain drummer boy. “Well, at least they'll make a path for me.” Answers Hester. “God will punish you, sinner!” shout the people of Puritan.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Movie contains strong mediated messages, norms and values related to gender including Scarlet Letter movie. Gender role stereotype have developed in society that man and woman are inequality in any opportunities. Sometime, woman and man have same chance and feeling in their life. This film created based the novel, it tells about the romantic relationship between Hester Prynne and Arthur Dimmesdale. There are some obstacles in their relationship, especially in their culture developed in Puritan. The inequality of gender almost centered in the starting story in movie, but in the finally the problems solve itself. Butler says that gender formed from set acts. The stereotype of gender appears based on the culture developed in the area.

In the starting story on the movie, Hester Prynne has problems to adapt the culture in Puritan community such as her activities, dress style, her principles and others. When she visited from her travelling in Puritan harbor, many people give more attention to her. Because she have traveled about 3 months by ship, it's impossible if Puritan's women do it. Governor also gives advice to her about her dress to less lace in her dressmaking. Hester also has different principles in her life with the law in Puritan, such as a woman could not live lonely in a home without husband. A woman also could not go to forest lonely, she has to accompany with other people. There are some factors made Hester gets problems in equality of gender performative. The most factor appears in this movie is the different stereotype between Hester and Puritan society. The rules of Puritan society are also impact in the equality of gender performative. One day, Hester falls in love with a pastor in Puritan, and then they have adultery. Finally they have a daughter, the name is Pearl. In this case Hester is judge by governor and the people of Puritan. She does not admit who name his man, so she gets to jail. Hester also uses scarlet letter on her bosom to compensate her sin. Hester also is followed by drummer boy when she does activities in public places.

Butler says that gender is performative gives explanation of how gender identity is formed through a set of acts and gender formed by culture developed in the area. Women stereotype knows that in the free time they do some gossip and sewing together. It's also developed in the

society. Other sides, woman and man have same hobbies and feeling also influence with their act. In *Scarlet Letter* movie, Hester's hobby is reading book, it is also the same with Arthur's hobby, so they are falling in love at the time. Arthur proud of the knowledge of Hester, it means that woman and man also have same rights. When Hester is in jail, Arthur feels sad because he can't do anything to her. Arthur always finds solution to make Hester go out from the jail. In the climax of the story Arthur is tired to face many problems of the adultery. He angry with Hester, but he still holds his anger to respect Hester. Hester always behave independent self to solve the problems faced in her life. It seems that the equality of gender performance is important to men and women.

From the above explanation, gender performance is important in daily life. Woman and man have same equality, chance, and feeling. Culture develop in country should obey with people. Gender manages work as people should do. People have to respect and tolerant each other without distinguish their gender.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the above analysis, it can be concluded as follows. Firstly problem faced by Hester Prynne, she has problems to adapt the culture in Puritan community such as her activities, dress style, her principles and others. Secondly, the most factor appears in this movie is the different stereotype between Hester and Puritan society. The rules of Puritan society also impact in the equality of gender performative. Hester always behaves independent self to solve the problems faced in her life. The last, Hester and Arthur fall in love, because they have same hobby. Arthur is proud of Hester's knowledge; it's different with other women in Puritan. Woman and man have same equality, chance, and feeling. Culture develops in country should obey with people. Gender manages work as people should do. People have to respect and tolerant each other without distinguish their gender.

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