

REPRESENTATION OF INDEPENDENCE WOMAN IN CHARACTER RACHEL CHU: CRAZY RICH ASIAN MOVIE 2018

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to analyze the character of Rachel Chu in Crazy Rich Asian movie as a representation of independent modern women, using the Liberal Feminism in showing the independence of Rachel Chu's character in her interactions. The method that used in this research is descriptive qualitative. Liberal feminism involves gender equality through individual freedom, independence, and also self-empowerment, which is depicted in several actions and decisions of the main character Rachel Chu in her narrative as a representation of modern women. This research reveals based on analysis of the main character Rachel Chu in Crazy Rich Asian Movie who is identified as an independent woman through her bravery in confronting those who wronged her, her freedom to choose her own decision, and also her courage to use assertive language in her interaction

Keywords: Liberal Feminism, Independence, Crazy Rich Asian, The Main Character

INTRODUCTION

Independence means free, independent, self-reliant, self-initiated, or self-made. Independence can also be interpreted as a mental attitude that is free from the influence of other parties. According to the Article 'Women's Independence Theory in Feminist Thought' (2015) is that independence for women is not only about economic independence, but also about the freedom to make choices without the limitations of patriarchal norms. This also seen in Liberal Feminism ideology proposed by Wollstonecraft and Betty Friedan focuses on women's efforts to achieve equality through education, careers, and freedom in determining their own destinies, and also Tong (2009) argue that Liberal feminism as it is known is about equality how women have the right to be able to choose their way of life, the principle of individual freedom and gender equality, which emphasizes women's ability to make rational decisions and actively participate in the public sphere without discriminatory barriers.

In Crazy Rich Asian, these values are seen in the way Rachel faces a complicated conflicts with her boyfriend family who is strongly holds on to Chinese cultural traditions and norms. The main character depicting a woman who has independent and courage in showing herself to people who demeaning on her, even though she faces strong social and cultural pressures. In this context, the approach through Liberal Feminism ideology becomes very relevant in analyzing how Rachel Chu can reflect her values of independence.

This research builds from previous studies that have also highlighted the representation of feminism in modern literary works and novel. Such as Suwastini et al. (2020) who analyzed the main character Rachel Chu in the novel Crazy Rich Asian as a representation of liberal feminism who found that Rachel Chu showed a character of independence through her rational attitude and self confidence. Then there is Vijay (2019) who highlights the

issues of neoliberal feminism and political feminism that represented in the same movie. In this paper by expanding view of the issues from previous research by adding how the main character can represent her independence not only through her action but also from assertive language in her interaction.

In modern times, movies have developed as the one of the media of literature works that can significantly influence other significant life. Also looking at the global phenomenon where the issue of gender equality and the representation of women in media is a major concern among the general public. It make this research have a significant impact in understanding how modern literary works can provide representation in empowering women. This research contributes in adding some point of view from previous studies, so that the view of these issues can becomes wider.

With the data sources as an information are applied for discussing and choosing the response to the inquiring research. Research can also be expected to provide more complex insights into how a women character can present a representation in empowering and highlighting the importance of effective communication strategies to build more harmonious social relations as well as in enhancing the narrative of independence in women.

THEORETICAL RIVIEW

The theoretical approach that used in this study that is Liberal Feminism. The theoretical approach is used to analyze how Rachel Chu can show her independence as a representation of modern women. In a method similar to Freedman J (2001) he analyses the evolution of liberal feminism and the movement's effort to attain gender equality through societal structure changes, including an explorations of how Rachel Chu represent an independent and empowered modern woman.

Theory of independence according to the Article 'Women's Independence Theory in Feminist Thought' (2015) is that independence for women is not only about economic independence, but also about the freedom to make choices without the limitations of patriarchal norms, and also Mill S (2003) analyses the connection between gender and politeness in language, offering insight into how women can employ polite language to navigate their power and identity in social situations. This all is relevant to the character analysis of Rachel Chu in how she can represent her independence through action and assertive language in her inetaction. As a retrieved from *The Power of Assertive Communication* (2018) that implies "Assertive communication is the ability to express positive and negative ideas and feelings in an open, honest, and direct way. It allows us to take responsibility for ourselves and our actions without judging or blaming others." Also the method that used this time is Descriptive Qualitative which focuses on analyzing the dialogue and also the actions that the main character choose in certain scenes in the movie Crazy Rich Asian.

METHODOLOGY

In analyzing the character of Rachel Chu in Crazy Rich Asian movie through the perspective of Liberal Feminism, this research employs a Descriptive Qualitative method. This method was selected due to the research aim of understanding and explaining how Rachel Chu's independence is portrayed in the movie. According to Creswell (2014) the Descriptive Qualitative method is an approach for understanding social phenomena through the interpretation of data collected from texts, conversations, or even action. The approach is used to describe and analyze how Rachel Chu character can show her independence through action and her assertive language that used in her interactions. The data collection technique used is through documentation analysis which is collected by watching, analyzing, and transcribing key scenes and dialogues that focuses on where Rachel has the ability to make her own decisions and stand up for herself. The data chosen is divide into characteristic of independence women that are brave to confront people to do her wrong, able to choose her own decision, and able to use assertive language that is pertain to men language. It is then examine to dissect the representation of an independent woman who does not rely on other people. It shows the character of Rachel Chu that have the elements of liberal feminism and independence.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Focuses on how Rachel Chu can display her independence and courage in order to maintain her identity and her ability to deal with social structure hierarchical and patriarchal in Nick's family. According to the Article 'Women's Independence Theory in Feminist Thought' (2015) is that independence for women is not only about economic independence, but also about the freedom to make choices without the limitations of patriarchal norms.

In the film where Elanor openly mentions that Rachel is not worthy of being in their family, because Elanor thinks Rachel is a selfish woman and will only think of herself rather than her family in the future, is just because Rachel is a career woman who is a professor that teaches in a college. With the degree and achievement possessed by Rachel at the age of 29 she became an economics professor at the age of not even 30 years old, it is a great achievement that make Rachel Chu a woman who has high qualifications. She was emphasized as an overachieving female academican, and according to the findings of Ridwan & Adji (2019), her success as an economic lecturer represented her feminist character. Like from the scene when Nick finally introduce Rachel to his mother, Elanor. Nick proudly tells Elanor that Rachel is a professor and one of the smarter in there, type of woman who's not give up on her dream. As seen from the following scene:



Figure 1. Nick introduce Rachel to Elanor

Definitely very much different from the Chinese tradition that when married, women are willing to give up their dreams and careers to support their husbands and families, As Ebrey PB (1993) says "Confucian ideals of womanhood emphasize submission and domesticity, with women's roles largely confined to the interior of the home." As seen bellow,



Figure 2. Elanor tells about her story when marrying her husband

The strong Asian culture seems to be defending Rachel because she's not that kind of woman. It is further highlighted that Rachel Chu held a public, pain profession by explaining her role as a Professor at New York University, which is ranked among the world's top 50 Universities. She in this way achieved financial independence, rejecting traditional roles that confined women to private spheres and made them financially dependent on their husbands (Sumar 2015).

Rachel Chu Bravery in Confronting People that Wronged Her

In scene where Rachel appears bravely to Araminta's wedding, she confidently shows her face to the media and people there, even though she knows she has been rejected by the mother of her boyfriend. Even though she was indirectly expelled by Elanor, she did not give up and looked for ways to keep participating in that wedding. It can be seen from picture 3 below,



Figure 3. Rachel appear at Aramita Wedding

Until finally she met someone named Princess Intan, and with her courage and knowledge, she became close with Princess Intan until finally she had her own place for seat at the wedding. This shows in picture 4 that she does not give up and brave to face things that degrade an individual. Rachel realizes she has freedom, and she has the right to make decisions from it. As seen bellow



Figure 4. Rachel have a conversation with Princess Intan

Rachel wants to remove the idea that women are only considered worthy if they fit the social standards and traditions of a rich family. Rachel feels that it is not Elanor who can judge whether or not she is worthy of being in the family, she will prove it herself. Brave itself according to the dictionary is an adjective word meaning '*having or showing the mental or moral strength to face danger, fear, or difficulty, having or showing courage*'. Yet, liberal feminism believes that women and men are equal, they can be independent and free to deciding their own future (Suaidi, Rusfandi, & Wilujeng, 2016). As liberal feminism is about independence and rights in freedom at determining their own destinies and emphasizes the importance of women to maintain their independent, freedom and to make rational decisions.

Representation of Rachel Chu Freedom in Choosing her Own Destinies

Yet, as Liberal Feminism believes that women and men are equal, they can be independent and free to deciding their own future (Suaidi, Rusfandi, & Wilujeng, 2016). As liberal feminism is about independence and rights in freedom at determining their own destinies and emphasizes the importance of women to maintain their independent, freedom and to make rational decisions.

In picture 5, it shows the scene when Rachel finally show Elanor her worthiness, that what Elanor did never gonna make her doubt about what she deserve. ***"I didn't leave because I was scared, or because I'm not enough.. but maybe because for the first time in my life, I knew that I was worthy"***



Figure 5. Rachel play majhong with Elanor

Here Rachel reaffirms her worthiness which is not measured by how rich or high her social status is, but as an individual who has far more self-worth than that kind of stuff. Her actions this time show that Rachel is able to have a decision for herself, she bravely makes that decision even though she knows it's hard for her emotionally. Being independent, especially emotionally, is one of the traits of a liberal feminist (Tong, 2009). The liberal feminism reflected in Rachel's courage in speaking out and showing her strong character and confidence in her value as an individual and how she prioritizes her freedom of choice and courage at deciding her own destiny.

Then in the scene when Rachel talks to Elanor while playing majhong, after a long conversation which finally Rachel states that she will let go of Nick, it is for the best so that he can stay with his family, and also she didn't want Nick to choose between love or his family. Picture 6 shows her dialog she says *"I love Nick very much, but I don't want him to lose his mother again"*



Figure 6. Rachel explain about why she let go of Nick

Here when she finally sure that she will let go of Nick, but not because she doesn't love him anymore, but she knew that she also have to stand up for herself. Also it's not because she gave up and surrendered to what Elanor thought about her, but instead she showed her strong and brave side in this scene. That even though she had to sacrifice in letting go of the person she loved, she wanted to show that whether or not Nick was with her, it would not affect the values and worthiness she had. The way Rachel deciding to sacrifice her relationship so that Nick could keep his connection with his mother, which is by taking this action, Rachel shows her independence and ability to make choices for herself, without being influence by others, she can be free to deciding her own future (Suaidi, Rusfandi, & Wilujeng, 2016)

In her decision not to marry Nick, this is also a declaration of independence that she achieved by setting her feeling aside and choose to using logic to determine what would be best for life. As highlighted by Tong (2009), would act rationally and not rely on her emotion. Liberal feminism view feelings and emotions as feminine traits that could restrict emancipation from patriarchy (Suwastini, 2013).

Rachel Chu Independent from her Assertive Language

In some scenes, Rachel is seen using her assertive language to show her independence and show her courage. The picture 7 shows scene when she and her mother are preparing to go to Singapore, she confidently mentions her worthiness by boasting of her status as a professor at a renowned university, and herself as a Chinese.



Figure 7. Rachel confidently telling about her degree

In this scene Rachel confidently shows her independence, that she is an economics professor at a prestigious university. with assertive language showing that she is not just any ordinary woman, she can face Nick's family there later on, because she believes in the values she has.

As seen in picture 8 when talking with her best friend Piek Lin, she realized that she had to show that she was not like what Elanor think, she knew she's worthy.



Figure 8. Rachel have a conversation with Piek Lin

In her dialogue ***"She thinks I'll dodge like a chicken? No I won't dodge because of her"*** here she decides not to give up and be brave, show it with her assertive language that she's not easy to give up, it show her independence for what she gonna do next and that she does not want to depend on other people's opinions, how the definition of independent itself is to have the freedom to choose without being influenced by others.

Furthermore, when Rachel attended Aramita's wedding and crossed paths with Nick's ex-girlfriend who had previously dropped Rachel, with assertive language she confidently said ***"Amanda, you're on my way"*** showing affirmation that she was not that easy to drop. she showed her independence by being able to facing in that wedding and deal it with herself . As seen bellow,



Figure 9. Rachel passing Amanda at Aramita Wedding

She showed that she could deal with it even without Nick's help for dealing with his family. According to the 'How to be Assertive Without being Rude (2019)', using assertive language is necessary for personal and professional relationship because it helps create boundaries without causing an offense. As the assertive language she show, while still setting boundaries without causing offense, and also showing her strength as an independent woman who not easily put down.

Also in one of the scenes when Rachel plays Majhong with Elanor, after a huge conflict that happened to her and Nick's family, in here Rachel also shows her assertive language in emotional independence and rationality. As seen bellow,



Figure 10. Rachel telling Elanor about Nick's plan

In this scene where Elanor insists that Rachel is still not part of them, Rachel tells her that Nick proposed to her yesterday, but after then she calmly tells that she rejected him. Rachel let Nick go because she didn't want to force Nick as if he had to choose between love or his family. With Rachel's use of assertive language, she indirectly states that here even though she was dropped by them, she still sacrificed for the sake of Nick and also Elanor. With the clear and confident language that Rachel uses, she's also set the boundaries that make her look assertive but still not dropping the other. As a Assertive language from the article 'How to be Assertive Without being Rude' is "Assertiveness is not about being loud or domineering; it's about being clear and confident. It's the ability to articulate your needs and boundaries while maintaining respect for others." Highlight that assertiveness is frequently misunderstood with aggression. Rather, it concerns clear and confident communication.

This findings reveals insight on the way in which the portrayal of women in modern literary works can also serve an empowering framework that illustrates women's independence through its analysis of these movie scene.

CONCLUSION

From all the explanations above, this research can be concluded to analyze character of Rachel Chu in the movie Crazy Rich Asian as a representation of modern women who are independent, employing the theory of Liberal Feminism that shown in her action and assertive language that also used in her interaction. Rachel Chu, presented as a independent and self-sufficient woman, using the Liberal feminism theory approach, it can be seen how Rachel can firmly show her independence when facing various social pressures, especially from the family of her boyfriend, Nick. Rachel Chu is an example of a woman who shows her independence and rationality which is the characteristic of Liberal feminism.

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Nungki Heriyati is a passionate academic in the field of English literature, with a particular focus on contemporary narrative theory and literary analysis. With a keen interest in exploring the intersections of gender and storytelling, she guides her students through a deeper understanding of how literature reflects and shapes societal norms. Through her expertise, Nungki encourages critical engagement with texts, emphasizing the influence of gender dynamics on literary representation and helping students develop a nuanced perspective on the power of narrative in shaping identity and culture.