

NASKAH PUBLIKASI

**ECOFEMINISM REPRESENTED IN SYMBOLS AND MYTH IN THE
MOVIE “DANCES WITH WOLVES.”**

Undergraduate Thesis

**Submitted as a Partial Fulfilment of Requirements
to Obtain Sarjana Sastra Degree English Literature Department**



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2024

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ABSTRACT

Women’s and environmental issues have been a continuous discussion among the researchers. Both women and nature are getting unfair treatment. This issue is also faced by the Native American tribe, especially Sioux women. Women from the Sioux tribe often get unfair treatment in their environment. This aligns with the oppression of their nature. This situation has led Sioux women to want to protect and preserve their environment by taking several appropriate actions.

In conducting this research, the researcher used a movie entitled “Dances with Wolves” as the research object, which was analyzed using a qualitative descriptive method. The data was collected through two steps: the main data taken from a scene in the movie "Dances with Wolves" and supporting data taken from websites, journals, and theses on the internet. The data was analyzed using ecofeminist theory to analyze the role of Sioux women in preserving and protecting their nature. Additionally, the researcher also used Roland Barthes' semiotics theory to analyze the meaning of cultural symbols reflecting the preservation embodied by Sioux women.

The results of this research show that there are two roles of Sioux women in preserving the environment. These roles are reflected in the daily activities of the Sioux community, such as the role of women in utilizing natural resources, the role of women in giving education, and the role of Sioux women in protecting the environment, which is depicted through resistance against the Pawnee tribe. The preservation efforts of women are also reflected through the several cultural symbols found in the movie "Dance with Wolves." These symbols include bison, teepee, clothing, and jewelry.

Keywords: Sioux women, nature, cultural symbols, dances with wolves.

A. INTRODUCTION

Women's and environmental issues have remained subjects of conversation for researchers for a long time. Various environmental conflicts are consistently felt by people in different countries. One example of an environmental issue is territorial disputes and environmental destruction. The environment becomes a place on which all living creatures depend (Bernadus Wibowo Suliantoro, 2019). The environment is often interpreted as a source of livelihood that is needed by humans for their survival, starting with clothing, food, and shelter. However, if the environment is damaged, it will have the impacts that not only harm the ecosystem but also threaten the welfare of living creatures, especially humans (Reflita, 2015). It is important to raise these issues because they are closely related to human life, especially for women.

Likewise with women's issues, women are always an interesting topic of conversation because they often get unfair treatment in their environment, such as not being allowed to voice opinions, being used as objects of sexuality, and carrying out activities as housewives. Women are considered as the guardians of life who have the ability to produce whatever is in their environment. They not only collect and consume what grows in nature, but they make everything grow. That way, a close relationship arises between women and nature. If their nature is damaged, women will come forward to protect their environment (Rinoza, 2016). Women's issues, which are often a concern, are related to the oppression of the environment.

The combination of both creates a concept of ecofeminism that emphasizes attention to women's and environmental issues. Ecofeminism is a feminist movement that expresses the connection between all types of oppression against humans, especially women, and the natural environment (Wiyatmi, Maman suryaman, 2017).

Based on the explanation above, the researchers are interested in analyzing this issue through a film entitled "*Dances With Wolves*". *Dance with Wolves* is a film that talks about the journey of a white man during the Civil War in America. He was assigned to the western frontier, where he had to live and build relationships with the Native American tribe, Sioux. This film shows how Sioux women carry out their daily activities. Women always carry out their roles as housewives, cooking, mixing medicines, making blankets, etc. Even so, the Sioux women always get unfair treatment from their environment. They are not allowed to give their opinions when a tribal meeting is being held, women are seen as objects of sexuality by men, and even when their territory is taken over and destroyed by the Pawne tribe, they can only be silent and are prohibited from fighting back. Therefore, this research are conducted to find out what are the role of women in preserving and protecting the nature and what are some cultural symbols and myth that reflect the preservation embossed by women in this movie.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

In conducting this research, the writer used the descriptive qualitative method to analyze this research. The sources of data are categorized into two parts, main data and supporting data. The main data of this research is a movie entitled *Dances with Wolves* (1990) produced by Kevin Costner. The data consists of screenshots taken from the movie. While the supporting data of this research was obtained from references that support the main data, such as the website, book, journal, and thesis that are relevant to this research.

C. ANALYSIS

Based on the results of data identification, to answer the second problem formulation, the researcher found several data that represent the role of women in preserving and protecting nature.

1. The role of women in the utilization of natural resource.



Nature protection and conservation must continue to be carried out to maintain this balance by involving the role of women in it (Saleh, 2014). Ecofeminism believes that culturally, women are deeply connected to nature. Women and nature have one thing in common,

nature can produce so many resources that can be consumed by humans. Meanwhile, humans are considered as guardians of life who have the ability to produce or process whatever is in their environment. The close relationship between women and nature can be seen when women interact directly with the environment. This is evidenced by data found by researcher where one of the roles of Sioux women in environmental preservation is by utilizing natural resources as best as possible.

The Sioux women always gathered to process the bison leather. By using bison leather, the women ensured that every part of the hunted animal was fully used, so that nothing was wasted. Based on the the analysis of the researcher, this is a form of respect for animal and the environment, they ensure that natural resources are used wisely. Women have the task of processing bison leather, starting from smoothing it, washing it, and then drying it in the sun until dry. Sioux women have knowledge in processing natural resource in the form of animal, especially in processing bison leather. Through their knowledge, women are able to make typical Sioux clothing. In addition to being made into clothing, Sioux women also use bison leather as mats for storing food and coverings for their homes. Even though they do it in a forest, this does not reduce their enthusiasm for managing natural resources.

2. The role of women in giving environmental education.

Environmental education is an effort aimed to increasing awareness and concern for the environment. This cannot be separated from the role of the women who have the knowledge, skills, attitudes, behavior, motivation, and commitment to work together in solving various environmental problems (Marliani, 2015). Women must have adequate knowledge about the environment because they play an important role as the first educators for the children in the family. By instilling environmental education from an early age, women help familiarize children with the environment (Putri, 2020).

In the process of processing bison skin, Sioux women do not only work alone, they invite their children to get involved in the process. They teach the process of utilizing natural resources so they can be made into useful products, such as how to process bison leather into clothing. Children are also directly involved in this processing process. The children were given bison leather to use as their educational materials. They are taught skin cleaning techniques and the appropriate tools to clean it. Through this education, the researcher argue that children have been taught the importance of respecting nature, especially the living creatures in it. they learn that bison are an important part of their environment, it will give them the view that as women, they should be able to utilize nature as effectively as possible without destroying it.

3. The role of women in protecting their nature.



"Dances with Wolves" portrays the Sioux Women's struggle against the Pawnee tribe and embodies the concept of ecofeminism, highlighting the relationship between women and nature. It can be seen through the resistance carried out by Sioux women. This resistance began when the Pawnee tribe attacked the territory where the Sioux lived with the aim to destroy and seize their territory. Initially, the women just remained silent and followed the men's orders when the attack occurred. However, when a woman named Stand With A Fist attacked a man from the Pawnee tribe, all the women began to dare to fight against the tribe. This resistance was carried out by all Sioux women of various ages, from children to elderly women. Some of them were seen fighting using wood, weapons, and arrows.

The scene above shows the attitude of the Sioux tribe who are brave and care about the safety of the nature they live in. They dare to make decisions even though their lives are at stake. Their resistance is not only to defend their territory, but also to protect nature which is an important part of their lives. This is an accordance with the concept of

ecofeminism which states that women have a close relationship with nature.

Based on the results of data identification, to answer the second problem formulation, the researcher took four cultural symbols in a scene which felt symbolized the preservation embossed by women. The scenes are divided into three categories, there are cultural symbols found in animals, residences, and clothing.

1. Cultural symbol found in animal.



Denotation

the Sioux's men who are hunting bison by riding a horse and using arrow.

Connotation

The symbol in the scene above shows that bison is a game animal that is often used as best as possible by the Sioux tribe. Bison are said to be a resource animal because they have many benefits that can be used by Sioux tribes. The meaning of the symbol that is conveyed in the scene above is a bison which is identic with the preservation embossed by women. Based on the opinion of the researcher, because women are responsible in processing everything into new things. The Sioux women can process bison as well as possible, where the processed product can become an object that becomes their cultural identity.

Myth

In this case, the myth that want to convey is that Sioux tribes believed that bison contained powerful medicine, so they wore bison skins painted with symbols when they were sick (Isner, 2021). They regard bison as holy animals and a gift from God. In a PBS documentary about the American bison, elder Gerard Baker of the Mandan-Hidatsa tribe stated they consider bison to be our relatives. They are part of us (LaPier, 2023).

2. Cultural symbol found in residence



Denotation

The scene above shows the characteristics of the houses of the Sioux tribe, teepee.

Connotation

In the scene above show that teepee is a symbol representing a building that has functions as a residence for a certain period. In addition to residential, the tipi was used for ritual purposes including banquets, naming of children, warrior society meetings, and religious ceremonies. The part of the tipi house that depicts femininity is located

in the kitchen. A woman's character cannot be separated from a kitchen. because this is the place where women always spend their time in the kitchen cooking every day. With great affection, a woman can serve delicious dishes as an expression of love directed towards her family (Mulyasih, 2015)

Myth

The Sioux people build a cone-shaped house because of their belief in customs. They believe that the plains forged deep symbolic connections with the tipi, seeing it as a conduit to the spiritual realm. Within the tipi, the floor symbolized the Earth and the maternal presence, while the covering represented the vast expanse of the sky and the father. The poles, serving as conduits, bridged the earthly realm with the celestial, offering pathways through which prayers and communication could ascend to the heavens (Gadacz, 2017).

3. Cultural symbol found in clothing



Denotation

The picture above shows two women who are making handicrafts. They are seen wearing typical Sioux clothing with loose and braided hair. Their clothes are also decorated with accessories made of shells and wearing jewelry made of beads.

Connotation

The scene above shows the symbolism of the clothing worn by the two women, which is a traditional clothing typical of Native American tribes, especially the Sioux tribe, which is often worn by women there. This symbol means that clothing is not only a body protector from weather elements, but also a tool that is identic with a culture.

Myth

No myth were found in this data.

Based on the scene above, the researcher found several elements in clothing that show the characteristics of a woman, there are accessories and jewelry.



Denotation

The scene above shows a Sioux woman who is getting married. She looks very beautiful and elegant wearing white clothes and wearing earrings made of beads.

Connotation

Jewelry always gives women a sense of beauty and confidence. In all corners of the world, women wear various kinds of jewelry, whether in the form of necklaces, bracelets, or earrings. Jewelry can reflect a woman's personality and provide the best appearance when combined with clothing that is appropriate for each occasion. Therefore, jewelry plays an important role in a woman's life as it gives a special feeling, style, and beauty (Anonim, 2019).

The scene above shows the symbolism of the jewelry worn by the woman, which is the typical jewelry of the women of the Sioux tribe, which is made by themselves. The meaning that this symbol wants to convey is that jewelry is not only a woman's identity, but also a work that is identic with a culture.

Myth

No myth were found in this data.

D. CONCLUSION

1. Conclusion

An analysis of Kevin Costner's movie "Dances with Wolves" using ecofeminism and semiotic approaches revealed two key findings. First, the film depicts Sioux women playing significant roles in environmental preservation through the utilization of natural resources, environmental education, and actively protecting their environment by fighting against the Pawnee tribe. This challenges the stereotype of women as weak, showcasing their strength and courage. Second, there are the cultural symbols in the film, such as the bison, teepee, Sioux clothing, and jewelry, reflect the close relationship between women and nature, highlighting characteristics of femininity and environmental preservation.

2. Suggestion.

Based on the analysis that has been conducted, the researcher would like to offer some suggestions to the next researchers. The next researchers are expected to examine the movie "Dances with Wolves" by Kevin Costner from different perspectives and theories as a form of developing knowledge and renewing research.

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