

# Feminist Existentialism as Portrayed by the Main Characterization in the Movie Entitled Enola Holmes

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**Abstract** This study entitled Feminist Existentialism as Portrayed by the Main Character in the Movie Entitled Enola Holmes. There are two aims in this study; analyze the characterization of the main character, conflicts faced by the main character, and how the conflicts faced by the main character correspond to the feminist existentialism ideologies. This study used Enola Holmes movie as a primary data and the transcript of the movie as the supporting data. This study applied documentation as a method and note taking as the technique of collecting the data. This study used a qualitative method to analyze the data and descriptively present the data by using informal method. Two theories were applied in this study. First is the theory of characterization and conflict proposed by Kenney (1966) and the second is theory of feminist existentialism proposed by Beauvoir (1949). The analysis found that there are two methods of characterization used in the movie to describe the personalities of Enola Holmes as the main character, there are dramatic method and character on the other character method. These two methods of characterization showed that Enola Holmes described as a smart and independent young woman. Based on the analysis of the conflict, it was found that the main character faced internal conflict within herself and external conflict between herself and the other characters in the movie. The conflicts she faced also correspond to the ideologies of feminist existentialism that said women have to go beyond the boundaries and limitations, and woman can become intellectuals.

**Key Terms:** *Characterization, Conflict, Feminist Existentialism.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Literature is a media to express emotional state, experiences, and thoughts in an arty way. According to Wellek and Warren (1949), literature is a kind of art and not a science, so there are numerous aspects of humanity are involved. Life, culture, and human behavior can all be reflected in literature. We may learn a great deal from literature as well. Literature is not only about what is written; it is also about the lesson we might take away from it. A movie is regarded a part of the numerous existent literary works. The movies we see, according to Barsam and Monahan (2016), shape who we are. That suggests the film could be based on a factual story. Although a film is a work of fiction, it is still based on events that occur in our lives on a daily basis. The film may address social concerns, morality, events, or human relationships in the context. Women frequently become an essential figure in literature and film, and women's issues are included.

Gender stereotypes and inequality are one of the difficulties that women face. Women, according to de

Beauvoir (1949), should have the same freedom to choose their own lives as men. Feminist existentialism is the name given to this concept.

Feminist existentialism is a second-wave feminist movement that emphasizes free will, interpersonal interactions, and the experience of life as a human being. Nasution et al., (2013) also stated that many women are still imprisoned in domestic sector and unable to get their rights to manage their own lives in their own way. Enola Holmes is one of the movies that depict women's difficulties that still occur in our lives. Enola Holmes is a mystery movie set for release in 2020, based on a young adult novel by Springer. This movie tells about Enola, the younger sister of the legendary detective Sherlock Holmes, on her search for her missing mother in London. Enola is a brilliant, perceptive, and intuitive adolescent. She disobeys the social norms for women at the time. Her mother pushed her to be a strong-willed, self-reliant young woman. Learning to fight and being self-sufficient without the help of a man is a stark contrast for Victorian women. The objective to study feminist existentialism portrayed by the main character, Enola, in the Enola Holmes film is because gender

stereotyping has been an issue for years and will continue to be an issue in the future.

Based on the background that explained above, the problems of the study were formulated as follows:

- 1) What are the methods of characterization used to present the main character in Enola Holmes movie?
- 2) What are the conflicts faced by the main character in the Enola Holmes movie?
- 3) How does the conflict within the main character correspond to the ideologies of feminist existentialism?

## II. METHOD AND THEORY

### A. Method

As this study is analyzing the ideology of feminist existentialism in the movie, the primary data was Enola Holmes movie and the supporting data was the transcript of the movie. Enola Holmes is a 2020 mystery film. The movie was directed by Harry Bradbeer. Millie Bobby Brown plays as the main character and also as a producer of the film.

The data of this study was conducted in the concept of library research and applied documentation as method and note taking as the technique of collecting the data. The study used a qualitative method to analyze the data. After the data was obtained and analyzed, informal method was used to presenting the analysis.

### B. Characterization by Kenney (1966)

In order to understand the character properly, characterization is needed. Characterization also important in order to know what kind of person the character is, and how his or her characterization may impact the conflict happens in a story. According to Kenney (1966), the author must choose the way they will present the character in the story. There are five methods of characterization; the first one is a discursive method. By using a discursive method, the author simply tells us about the character. The author as an observer will count the qualities and may even state approval or disapproval of the characters. The second method is the dramatic method. In this method, the characters will reveal themselves through their own words and actions. We must observe what the character does and in order to conclude what kind of person the character wants to portray. The third method is the contextual method. By contextual method, we mean the device of suggesting character by the verbal context that surrounds the character. The fourth method is character on the other character. In this method we can analyze the characterization by analyzing what one character says about another. The last method is the mixing method. The combination of one method with another is more effective to portray the characterization of the character.

### C. Conflict by Kenney (1966)

Conflict is one of the literary devices. It is a necessary element because it provides crucial tension in any story that can compel the reader to keep following the story. For example, a conflict may happen because of the difference of character's opinion or personality that may cause

misunderstanding. Without the conflict, a story would not be interesting, and it cannot attract the reader to read or the viewer to watch the story. According to Kenney (1966) conflict in the story may happen because there is a deal within a single man (e.g., desire vs. duty), a conflict between men, a conflict between men and society, a conflict between man and nature, and so on. Conflict could be divided into two; there is internal and external conflict.

### D. Feminist Existentialism by de Beauvoir (1949)

Feminist existentialism is the second-wave feminist movement proposed by de Beauvoir (1949). This idea emphasizes on free-will, interpersonal relationship, and the experience of living as a whole human being. Feminist existentialism accepts radical change, but aware issues such as the anxiety and self-deception triggered by the possibility of change can limit it.

Women are compared to getting approval from the masculine world in society. However, if women want to stop being the second sex or the other, they have to overcome the forces of environments; they must have their own words and their own actions as much as men do. According to de Beauvoir, there are four strategies to get the transcendence.

1. Woman should go to work in order to reclaim her superiority, so she can completely affirm her status as a subject. Beauvoir believes that no matter how hard the work is, it provides possibilities for women to get the superiority and rights to live their lives. This idea believes that women will lose that opportunity altogether if they do not get their own jobs. By working outside the house alongside with men, women can reclaim their superiority and completely declare their status as subjects, as someone who wants to create their own destiny.
2. Woman can become intellectuals, members of the group which encourage women to do the change. Intellectual activity is to thinking, seeing, and defining. It means that woman should actively think, look, and define everything according to her intellectual and own thoughts, not being an inactive object of thoughts, observations, and definitions.
3. Woman can work to regain socialist transformation of society. Sartre and Beauvoir agree that one of the keys to get the liberty for women was the power of economy and being an independent woman in financial. Beauvoir also reminded women that the surroundings would bind them to defining themselves. The freedom of women would also be limited by the amount of money that they earn and own.
4. To go beyond the boundaries and limitation, women can deny internalizing their obligations to identify themselves through the viewpoints of the society. Women could do anything, become anyone they want to become, and do not mind what society says and what the stereotypes are. Beauvoir emphasizes that every woman

has the right to define their own existences rather than work under some vague notion of – femininity.

### III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

#### A. *Method of Characterization*

There are two approaches of characterization that are used to describe Enola as the main character in the Enola Holmes movie. There are dramatic method and character on the other character method.

Dramatic method is the method in which the characters will express themselves so the reader can know the personality of the character. Through this method, it is clarified that Enola is a smart young woman. It can be shown through the dialog of Enola:

(0:21:14-0:21:20)

Enola : [train whistles] “I couldn't go to my local station, of course, so I chose a different line altogether. With my brothers after me, there's no telling where they'd search.”

The dialogue above is in the scene when Enola went London to search for her mother. Enola tricked her brothers by going to another train station so that her brothers could not find her and could not track her. She had an amazing idea to deceive her two brothers so she could leave the house without her brothers noticed. From the dialogue and the explanation it can be concluded that Enola is a smart girl.

Character on the other character is the method to present the character's personality through other character's opinion. Through this method, it is clarified that Enola is an independent girl. It is shown through the dialog of other character in the movie.

(1:01:30-1:02:01)

Sherlock : “Do you have any sense as to where my mother is?”  
 Miss Grayston : “How did you find me?”  
 Sherlock : “Letters hidden up her chimney. The ash on the sole of her shoe and the coal dust led me to them.”  
 Miss Grayston : “She always said you never missed anything.”  
 Sherlock : “She needs to be home. She has a daughter that needs her.”  
 Miss Grayston : “Enola seems to be surviving perfectly well on her own.”  
 Sherlock : “So you've seen her? Is she safe?”  
 Miss Grayston : “**She's had company, a useless boy. But clearly, she didn't feel like she needed him.**”

This is the dialogue of Miss Grayston, friend of Enola's mother. It was told that Sherlock also tried to find Eudoria. He came to the tea house to meet Miss

Grayston. There he got the information about Enola from Miss Grayston. From Miss Grayston's dialogue, it described that Enola is an independent girl because in the dialogue said that Enola did not feel like she needed a boy or a company.

#### B. *Conflict Faced by the Main Character*

In Enola Holmes movie, the main character faced both internal and external conflict. Internal conflict is a conflict within a character and his/her own feeling. The struggle takes place in the character's mind. Based on the data gotten from the movie, the main character, Enola, also faced an internal conflict.

(0:54:43-0:55:26)

Enola : “The truth is, I did not ask for Viscount Tewkesbury, Marquess of Basilwether in my life. I did not want the Viscount Tewkesbury, Marquess of Basilwether in my life. So why do I feel responsibility for the Viscount Tewkesbury, Marquess of Basilwether? Because... there are those that want to hurt him... and he has not the strength to stop them...” [yells] “and I do have that strength. She would have me leave him. He is foolish, and proud, and utterly ridiculous. But he's on the edge of a cliff. Mother, you will have to wait.”

The internal conflict faced by the main character, Enola, with her own mind could be deduced from the dialogue above. Enola denied that she cared about Viscount Tewkesbury, but she was concerned about his safety since she suspected that someone was plotting to harm him. It could be analyzed from the quotation: **The truth is, I did not ask for Viscount Tewkesbury, Marquess of Basilwether in my life. I did not want the Viscount Tewkesbury, Marquess of Basilwether in my life. So why do I feel responsibility for the Viscount Tewkesbury, Marquess of Basilwether? Because... there are those that want to hurt him... and he has not the strength to stop them... and I do have that strength.**

External conflict is a conflict between one character with another characters, environment, or society. The conflicts come from the external forces. In this movie, the main character Enola faced the external conflict with the other characters.

(0:09:00-0:10:14)

Mycroft : “No madwoman could compile the accounts she sent me over the last ten years. Perfectly clear and orderly, detailing a bathroom...”  
 Enola : “Which does not exist.”  
 Mycroft : “And a water closet.”  
 Enola : “Likewise.”  
 Mycroft : “And the constantly rising salaries of the footmen, the housemaids, the kitchen maids, - gardeners, under gardeners...”

- Mycroft : “You get the point.”  
 Mycroft : “And for Enola, a music teacher, a dance instructor, a governess.”  
 Sherlock : “Enola, you at least had a governess?”  
 Enola : “She wouldn't like you in here. This is her private space.”  
 Sherlock : “Tell me, she at least saw that you had an education? She valued education.”  
 Mycroft : [scoffs]  
 Enola : “**She taught me herself. She made me read every book in Ferndell Hall's library. Shakespeare, Locke, and the encyclopedia, and Thackeray, and the essays of Mary Wollstonecraft. And I did it on my own account. For my own learning. Which, Mother said, was the best way to become a young... woman.**”  
 Mycroft : “**Well, *this* is what she wanted you to become?**”  
 Sherlock : “Mycroft.”  
 Mycroft : “What?”  
 Enola : “I don't know what she wanted me to be. She's left me too.”

This scene depicts Mycroft and Sherlock returning to Ferndell Hall. They perceived the property as being unmanaged, despite Eudoria, the mother, sending the house maintenance account to Mycroft on a regularly. Enola also appeared ignorant to Mycroft, as she acts unlike the other women, being ungracious, ill-dressed, and misbehaving.. Then Sherlock asked Enola: **Tell me, she at least saw that you had an education?** Enola said: **She taught me herself. She made me read every book in Ferndell Hall's library. Shakespeare, Locke, and the encyclopedia, and Thackeray, and the essays of Mary Wollstonecraft. And I did it on my own account. For my own learning. Which, Mother said, was the best way to become a young... woman.** That was not a proper education for her, according to Mycroft. Because Enola was so misbehaving. It was uncommon for women to receive an equal education to males throughout the Victorian era. Women are expected to devote themselves to their husbands and children, thus they should focus on becoming good housewives rather than intellectuals. It is proved in Mycroft dialogue that said: **Well, *this* is what she wanted you to become?**

### C. *The Corresponds of the Conflicts Faced by the Main Character to the Ideologies of Feminist Existentialism*

The internal and external conflicts faced by the main character, Enola Holmes, within herself and the other characters in the movie correspond to feminist existentialism ideologies, and it is shown that there are two feminist existentialism ideologies that correspond to the conflicts that Enola faced:

#### *Women Have to Go Beyond the Boundaries and Limitations*

To break the boundaries and limitation, women can refuse internalizing their obligations to identify themselves through the viewpoints of the society. Women have the ability to do anything, to be anything they want to be, regardless of what society says or the prejudices that society has created. This ideology corresponds to the internal conflict that Enola is experiencing.

The internal conflict faced by Enola with her own mind that was studied from the quotation: **The truth is, I did not ask for Viscount Tewkesbury, Marquess of Basilwether in my life. I did not want the Viscount Tewkesbury, Marquess of Basilwether in my life. So why do I feel responsibility for the Viscount Tewkesbury, Marquess of Basilwether? Because... there are those that want to hurt him... and he has not the strength to stop them... and I do have that strength.**

From the quotation above, it can be concluded that Enola thought that she has the strength to protect people's life, even man. Women are stereotyped in society as sweet and fragile creatures. Because they are considered as weak human beings, they would hang their lives to the men. They are unable to fight and are incapable of protecting themselves. However, she believed that she possessed the strength and courage to defend others, even men, in the internal war she was experiencing between her own brains.

#### *Woman Can Become Intellectuals*

Women have the potential to become intellectuals, which motivates them to make a difference. Women must actively think, see, and define something according to their intellectuals and own concepts in order to engage in intellectual activity.

The external conflict of Enola with Mycroft and Sherlock Holmes, where shown that Sherlock questioning Enola's education because he saw Enola looked uneducated since she behaves differently from other women in that era. There, Enola said: **She taught me herself. She made me read every book in Ferndell Hall's library. Shakespeare, Locke, and the encyclopedia, and Thackeray, and the essays of Mary Wollstonecraft. And I did it on my own account. For my own learning. Which, Mother said, was the best way to become a young... woman.**

In the Victorian era, it is uncommon for women to equally educate as men. As stated by Hughes (2014) “In Victorian England, women were believed to only need to be educated in “accomplishments” such as artistic talents (singing and dancing), and the languages, essentially anything that would allow them to earn a husband and become the ‘Angels of the House’”

The majority of women at the time were preparing to be housewives. Learn a variety of arts and housekeeping skills so that they can blend into society and have a happy life with their husbands. Enola, on the other hand, was never educated to create art or prepped to be an "ideal" wife in this film. Her mother insisted that she read. As a result, she has had a proper and equal

education as men, having studied numerous literatures. She became a strong-will, sharp-mind, and independent young woman.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The conclusion can be outlined into three points founded on the analysis; the analysis of the first problem can be concluded that the movie used two methods of characterization to describe Enola's personality. There are dramatic method and character on the other character method. Enola described as a smart young woman through the characterization using dramatic method based on the dialogue of Enola talking to herself. Meanwhile, Enola described as an independent girl through the character on the other character method based on the dialogue of Miss Grayston, the friend of Enola's mother,.

The second problem is the conflicts faced by the main character. The result is in the movie, Enola faced both internal and external conflict. On the internal conflict, Enola was battling with her own thoughts. While on the external conflict, Enola confronted the conflict between with her two older brothers, Sherlock and Mycroft Holmes.

The third problem is how the conflicts faced by the main character correspond to the ideologies of feminist existentialism. The result showed that the internal conflict faced by Enola with her own minds corresponds to the ideology of feminist existentialism that believed women have to go beyond the boundaries and limitations. Enola showed that, despite the stigma of being a "lady," she was able to fight to protect people's lives. While the external conflicts that faced by Enola between Sherlock and Mycroft Holmes is correspond to the ideology of feminist existentialism that said woman can become intellectuals. Enola has a good education and has read a lot of books, which has made her intelligent; she has her own ideas and principles.

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