

## Representation of Liberal Feminism in Character of Lady Diana in *Spencer* Movie

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### Abstract

This study is intended to analyze the representation liberal feminism in the character of Lady Diana in the *Spencer* movie based on the theory of liberal feminism by Mary Wollstonecraft focusing on the elements of marginalization, subordination, mental or physique violence and domestication. The objective of this research is to describe “how the representation of liberal feminism in the character of Lady Diana in the *Spencer* movie”. The researcher used Liberal Feminism by Mary Wollstonecraft to analyze the data. This research used a descriptive qualitative method. The source of the data in this research was taken from the movie entitled *Spencer*. The data was collected through watching movies repeatedly, screen-shooting and note-taking, identifying and classifying, and then analyzed by presenting, describing, and interpreting as well as concluding the analysis result. As a result of the analysis, the researcher discovered 14 data of the movie that has a marginalization, subordination, and mental or physical violence. Meanwhile, there is no domestication that the character of Lady Diana founded. The data found referring to showing the struggle of the character Lady Diana in the movie against marginalization, subordination and mental violence. Therefore, mental violence becomes the most dominant that Lady Diana faces in this movie.

**Keywords:** *character of lady diana, liberal feminism, representation, spencer movie*

### INTRODUCTION

Man and woman have equal opportunity to determine their life path, accessing education, fields of employment, social, economic, political as well as in various aspects of life. Nareswara in her thesis argued that: Self-discovery, equal opportunities and freedom are basic human rights and including women have the right to that matter, to make choices without pressure from certain people and society in general (Nareswara, 2019). The representation of women's struggle in facing various treatment of inequality, building equal access, proving themselves to be free from the stigma of the second gender in the social system and struggling to determine their own way of life (Hall, 1997). This is also reflected in one of the literary works in the form of a movie entitled *Spencer*. *Spencer* (2021) is a film that tells the life of Lady Diana, she wanted to be an ordinary woman, to blend into ordinary society like before she met Prince Charles, she also showed the character of a woman who could live independently, freely and live a happier life

with a way of life that she chooses instead of having to be pressured to follow various royal rules (Maharani, 2021). The character of Lady Diana in the movie is then seen through the perspective of Marry Wollstonecraft which includes (1) marginalization of women in various areas of family, work and community life, (2) subordination that harms women, (3) various violence against women, whether physically or mentally, caused by the assumption that women are weak, and (4) women's domesticity in household work (Fakih, 2006).

The importance of this research is to investigate marginalization, subordination, various violence against women whether physically and mentally, and domesticity of Lady Diana character that have not been answered in the previous research, so it is considered important to study. Second, this movie is the adoption of the true story of a pair of British royal aristocrats so that they are figures which of course many people make of them as one of the influencers in their lives so that it indirectly has the effect of influencing values on society including Lady Diana's decision bravely to live as an ordinary citizen with his two children, uncertain future, living independently and struggling individually and then leaving the luxury of life in the palace.

This research is to complete previous research that have been researched on feminism such as “Power Feminism of Victoria as the Main Character in the Young Victoria Movie Directed by Jean-Marc Val e (Application of Naomi Wolf’s Feminism)” by Nurhalifah (2020),” Liberal Feminism Seen Through the Main Character in Educating Rita Movie” by Nareswara (2019). Another research project is “The Representation of Hindi Women in English Vinglish Movie” by Priskila (2022). This research is to complete aspects of liberal feminism of Lady Diana character in Spencer movie that have not been researched in previous research.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

In this research, the researcher used a qualitative descriptive method. Qualitative research is a research method that provides descriptive data in spoken words from various sources and observes behavior (Bogdan, R; Taylor, Sj, 1975). Analyzing qualitative data allows us to explore ideas and further explain qualitative data, whereas descriptive qualitative research seeks to provide an explanation using data in the form of words or pictures in preference over number (Obara & Were, 2020). Based on the explanation above, the researcher used a qualitative descriptive method because the data in the form of qualitative is words, phrases, sentences,

utterances, images and not in the form of numbers, to describe how liberal feminism in the terms of marginalization, subordination, again violence both mental and physical, and domestication in *Spencer* movie

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

In this section, the researcher discuss elements of liberal feminism in *Spencer* movie where the researcher describe the findings will explain the meaning of the findings as in the point below:

### **Liberal Feminism in *Spencer* Movie**

The purpose of this section is to present the result and discuss the research findings that aims to answer the research question of this research, that How is the representation of liberal feminism in the character of Lady Diana in *Spencer* movie based on Marry Wollstonecraft perspective. The source of data in this research, which is the *Spencer* movie, was being analyzed using the theory of liberal feminism described in the terms of marginalization, subordination, again violence mental or physical, and domestication. The data presented below are based on the aspects of marginalization, subordination, again violence both mental and physical.

### ***Marginalization***

#### **Data 1: Marginalization of Female Workers**



Pict.1 Male dominance in the world of work is depicted through the royal chef  
Duration 05:09

In this movie, the marginalization of women cannot only be seen and understood through verbal or non-verbal forms of communication and is focused on the main character, Lady Diana. However, restrictions on women in the family, community and access to the world of work can

be seen in the early scenes of the film when the entire royal chef's compound is filled entirely by men. This is in line with Wollstonecraft's idea, which was written back by Fakih, that discrimination against women often occurs in the work environment as a consequence of the masculine understanding that women are weak creatures so they are given restrictions in accessing employment opportunities. Furthermore, for researchers, this is also an inseparable part of the unequal role of women in the social system, regardless of their inability to fill these positions or not being given space to actualize themselves. Education is not enough to be given but also to be given the opportunity to play a role including job field (Arivia, 2003).

### **Data 2: Marginalization**



Pict. 2 Lady Diana cut the stitching of the palace curtains  
Duration 01:16:17

The peak of Lady Diana's resistance to one of the royal traditions that gave her limitations was when she decided to open the seams of the curtains using scissors. Restrictions on rights, including enjoying the natural beauty of the kingdom, can be seen as a form of limiting individual basic rights, as was felt by Lady Diana, so in the end she decided to open them. This is a form of resistance to work traditions. However, what was disturbing was another discovery that when she managed to open the curtains, Lady Diana cut the skin on her own arm. These findings indicate that apart from the desire to free herself, the actions of Lady Diana's character are indicated to have so much mental pressure that it is then released through the act of mentally injuring herself.

## ***Mental and physical violence***

### **Data 3: Mental Violence**



Pict 3. Lady Diana's negotiations with the royal servants  
Duration 15:47 – 16:14

Diana : *No Gary usually let me off*  
Page : *Gary, your royal highness?*  
Diana : *The normal page, the usual Christmas page, we have thing between us, an understanding, I don't usually do the getting weight thing, I'm half of jewelry anyway.*

The scene above shows the tradition of weighing before and after Christmas celebrations at the British royal palace. Lady Diana is depicted as not really liking this tradition and even refusing to do it. Basically, weight measurements are carried out to ensure that all royal members enjoy the Christmas celebrations as evidenced by the increase in body weight of royal members after the celebration. However, Lady Diana argued that half of her body weight came from her decorations. Researchers think that in this scene, Lady Diana was trying to say that weight is not a symbol of happiness. In this position, Lady Diana was really uncomfortable with the traditions in the palace, and because she couldn't negotiate it so he tried to fight and didn't do it, he had succeeded in doing this before when he was still accompanied by the old guard, the old guard was still trying to make Lady Diana comfortable with the rules provided by the palace by relaxing the rules in line with Humm that liberal feminism is a movement that is reflected in every struggle done by women to demand the right to freedom (Humm, 2002). This was against Lady Diana and did not report these incidents to the palace, Lady Diana called it "understanding", but it turned out that the palace knew about this and immediately replaced the special guards with guards who were more obedient and more favorable to the palace. It is known that the previous guard was a woman, and Lady Diana said that she always skipped the

scale tradition because she was not forced to by the previous guard, of course this was because there was "understanding" between women in this condition, the old guard also hated this tradition and agreed with Lady Diana.

#### **Data 4: Mental Violence**



Pict 4. Lady Diana's debate with royal administrators  
Duration 16:13

The three data above show that there was an argument between Lady Diana and the palace staff whose job it was to weigh her before entering the royal palace to take part in the Christmas celebrations. In this conversation, the royal employee gave confirmation and defense in carrying out his duties by saying that "there is no one above tradition." Indirectly, he wanted to express that everyone is obliged by law to submit and obey royal rules or traditions without exception, including Lady Diana. At this point there was a conflict with Lady Diana's wishes and understanding. So, referring to one of the categories of liberal feminist struggle proposed by Wollstonecraft, women's resistance in opposing established rules in a community and family group because they feel disadvantaged is the entry point seen by researchers because traditions cannot be criticized, contested and tested. repetition is a form of arrogance from tradition itself. Examples of the traditions in question include: weighing yourself before and after Christmas celebrations and expecting your weight to increase after participating in the celebrations at the palace for several days as a form of happiness. Second, they are not allowed to turn on the water heater while bathing. Instead, to overcome the cold after bathing, they will be given thicker and more blankets to combat the feeling of cold. This is something that Lady Diana questioned and opposed.

It's not just a debate about the tradition of weighing and the prohibition on using a water heater when bathing, in this section it can generally be read that royal regulations limit the choice and freedom of royal members, in this case especially women, because of these rules such as weighing and designing. clothes are the kingdom's choice and Lady Diana was not given the freedom to choose the designer she wanted, even when Lady Diana tried to make her own choice, the kingdom immediately replaced the person Lady Diana chose with another designer, of course this phenomenon is part of the amputation of a woman's freedom in the work environment experienced by Lady Diana.

### Data 5: Psychological Pressure



Pict 5. Lady Diana expressed her sadness to one of the royal administrators  
Duration 28:25-30:33

Page : *Remember, we used to talk*  
Diana : *They fill your eggs with princes and ride away, that's fine, it's just fine, oh, fuck it.*  
Page : *it will be fine*  
Diana : *yes it will be fine, you'll be in the world in some pub. Laughing. (looking at the mirror)*

Lady Diana's position as the main character in this movie does not indicate that she experienced physical violence. However, in this scene it is clear that she is experiencing mental pressure and violence within the kingdom caused by the issue of her husband's affair with another woman. From the conversation and expressions, it was clear that Lady Diana was experiencing severe physical pressure and she had to face it alone. The situation when she wore the same necklace as her husband's mistress made her feel even more confused. In line with this incident, this is a

phenomenon that Fakhri wrote about based on her conclusions from Wollstonecraft's writings which said that "one form of violence that many women experience is mental violence" (Fakhri, 2006). This image is seen by researchers as a form of oppression experienced by Lady Diana which is categorized as mental violence.

#### **Data 6: Mental Violence**



Pict 6. The royal dinner  
Duration 33:25-34:41

Scene above shows that Lady Diana was attending a royal dinner. At that dinner Lady Diana wore a very beautiful green gown. Apart from that, Lady Diana also wore a pearl necklace given to her by her husband. In this movie, it is depicted that Lady Diana knew about her husband's affair and she also knew that her husband had also given the same pearl necklace to his mistress. This makes Lady Diana feel insulted when she wears the pearls in front of her husband. When she wears the pearl necklace, she feels like she is shackled in a bondage.

In this scene, it is shown that Lady Diana imagines deciding and putting the pearl necklace on her plate and eating it. This seems to illustrate Lady Diana's resistance to humiliation of herself as a woman, wife and mother. Before attending the dinner, Lady Diana had time to confer with Gary, he was a page who served Lady Diana, he was one of several palace employees who were close and understood Lady Diana's suffering. During the preparations, Lady Diana did not want to wear the pearl necklace jewelry, but Gary believed that Lady Diana was being tested by members of the royal family, and Gary did not want Lady Diana to take part in the game that was



being played, if Lady Diana was still adamant about not wearing a necklace. This would make Lady Diana look like a rebel and not appreciate her husband's gifts.

### Data 7: Psychological Pressure



Pict 7. William emphasized Lady Diana to obey royal rules  
Duration 01:01:35

This scene is the ending of Lady Diana and William's conversation discussing royal traditions during the few days during Christmas celebrations. They argue with each other. The conclusion of the conversation shows that William emphasized to Lady Diana not to take actions outside royal regulations such as opening the curtains in the room, not visiting buildings outside the palace, allowing her children to take part in shooting practice, submitting to the royal designer's choice as well as Tong said that *Women should have the same opportunities as men to succeed in society including make a decision* (Tong, 2010).

Because, apart from being a component of royal traditions that have been carried out for many years, this activity also shows and wants to create exclusivity, differences in treatment and life between ordinary people and royal members, this is proven by William's words which said that "they want us to be different than other people" while on the other hand Lady Diana wanted to celebrate Christmas like people in general, this was one of the fights for individual freedom that Lady Diana wanted and she wanted her children to do the same.

## ***Subordination***

### **Data 8: Resistance to Restrictions on Individual Freedom**



Pict 8. Lady Diana drives alone while visiting the palace  
Duration 11:14-11:26

Darren : *Where is your driver? Where is your security detail?*  
Diana : *I don't know, I was in the café in Kensington giving some presents and I thought I might just drive.*  
Darren : *Do they know?*  
Diana : *No, I just drove*  
Darren : *Well anyway, hello again.*

For liberal feminism, there are two ways to achieve its goals, the first is by taking a psychological approach by increasing individual awareness, including through discussions about women's experiences in a society dominated by men (Ratna, 2004). In the picture and dialogue above, it is shown that Lady Diana is explaining why she was driving a car alone without an escort and a driver. This scene does not explain why Lady Diana left her bodyguards, but after watching the movie in its entirety it can be concluded that Lady Diana did not like being restrained by the palace's very strict security system. The scene above is just one of the forms of resistance that Lady Diana carried out against the existing system at the palace which she thought was very restrictive and did not favor her at all.

Looking further, Lady Diana's anxiety was the background reason for carrying out many activities herself without involving other parties, in this case the palace guard. Researchers see this reason in two forms, firstly as the instinct of independence which shows that women can do various things including taking long trips that have never been visited before, even though they have facilities that allow them to arrive at their destination with a driver and security forces, but

Lady Diana did not use these facilities, so this incident gave rise to the reverse logic that a woman's independence is not only born from limited conditions that force her to do such things. However, Lady Diana's actions were decisions made consciously and show us that women can also act, walk, determine attitudes and make decisions like men.

Lady Diana's actions symbolically show that men are not completely determined in the success of doing something. Even though several shows in the movie show that there was minor chaos arising from Lady Diana's rebellious actions because she did not comply with royal regulations, such as arriving late at the palace compared to the royal entourage, so that several palace officers seemed annoyed by Lady Diana's actions, her mental strength showed the ability to facing a situation that was actually a cold conflict between members of the royal family as a result of his attitude of not wanting to follow all the systems set by the kingdom during the holiday event.

#### **Data 9: Restriction of Freedom**



Pict 9 Lady Diana is in the royal kitchen and meets one of the royal guards  
Duration 38:28 – 39:19

Lady Diana : *and what do you watch?*  
New Guard : *Mostly in here because of the press, it's a fact that we need to be on guard because of all the silly attention*

The scene above shows that Lady Diana is in the presence of a new head of security who has been specifically assigned to monitor Lady Diana. From the statement made by the head of security it is known that the presence of the head of security is to ensure that Lady Diana is not photographed by the paparazzi. This happened because there were frequent photo shoots of Lady Diana and the royal family didn't like this, in a conversation the head of security warned Lady

Diana not to open the curtains on her windows. However, Lady Diana said that let the Paparazzi take pictures and find out the actual conditions and events. Through this conversation, it can be ascertained that the palace does not want the media to know about what is happening.

#### **Data 10: Constraints Determine Choices**



Pict 10. Lady Diana complaining to one of the work officers  
Duration 48:02 – 50:07

In the picture above it is shown that Lady Diana is wanting to change costumes, only it turns out that the page that usually accompanies her has been replaced, the page change occurred because the old page was very close to Lady Diana. Why is the closeness of Page and Lady Diana considered a problem by the royal family? Because this closeness gives Lady Diana the freedom to determine things that should be regulated by the palace, for example the dress code, the dress code is very strict, this makes Lady Diana even more stressed, but under Gary's supervision, Lady Diana always has the freedom to choose clothes that suit her. he likes it. Lady Diana's action of wearing clothes that did not comply with the dress color rules designated by the palace was an action that wanted to show that the clothes she wore had to match the atmosphere or at least that was what Lady Diana wanted to convey when she wore all black at Christmas mass.

## **Data 11: Involvement in Determining Decisions**



Pict 11. Lady Diana is in debate  
Duration 52:34

Liberal feminist understanding and movements do not only talk about women's freedom to think, behave and express their thoughts in public spaces. However, in general it provides possibilities and opportunities for women to take part and have the same role as men in household responsibilities such as child custody. So that everything related to children, such as: food, level of education, choice of games and activities in which children will participate, has the right to be known and considered together with the wife. In the scene above, Lady Diana shows emotion towards her husband (Prince William) because he did not listen to her wishes not to involve her child in shooting practice activities. As a mother, of course Lady Diana had her own thoughts and considerations regarding this decision. Regardless of whether the reasons for both parties are correct or not, the point that the researcher wants to emphasize is the involvement of women in joint decision making so that women's aspirations in all walks of life can be heard, acknowledged and accommodated for the sake of realizing overall gender equality.

## **Data 12: Movement Space Restrictions**



Pict 12 Firmness and regularity emphasized everyone to follow the schedule according to the specified time, including Lady Diana  
Duration 01:09:42

The series of conversations above shows how strict and inflexible the royal regulations are regarding the time and sequence of events so that every activity outside the royal agenda is also monitored in detail by work officers. While Lady Diana was still enjoying the natural scenery and talking to animals in the yard, she was approached by royal officers to immediately return to the palace to prepare for dinner at 08:00 pm while the time was still 05:00 pm.

Researchers are of the view that this is a form of restriction on Lady Diana's freedom to manage her own time because she is still determined to take part in the dinner procession together, but she chooses not to prepare because time still allows her to enjoy the open air in the royal yard, in this scene Lady Diana put up a small resistance and would return to the palace to prepare according to the time she had estimated herself. This action is a manifestation of the form of liberal feminism defined by researchers in the literature review above.

## *Peak of resistance*

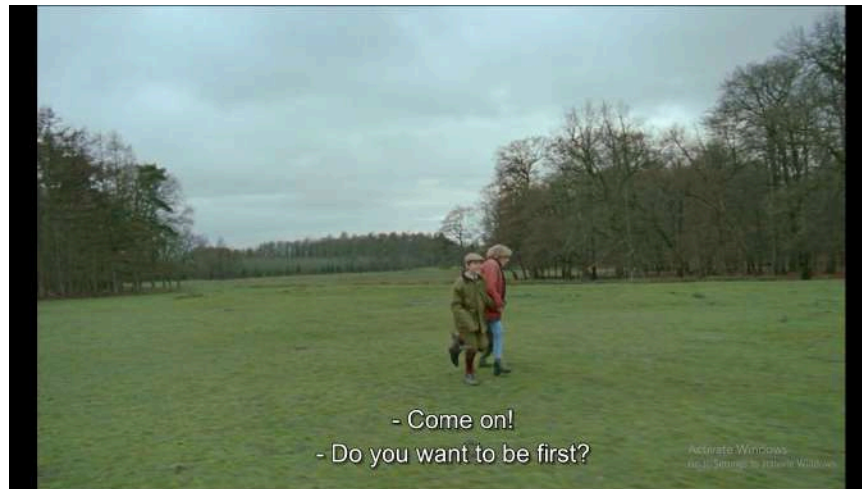
### **Data 13: Resistance Action**



Pict 13 One of the peaks of Lady Diana's resistance  
Duration 01:44:17

Researchers say this was the peak of Lady Diana's resistance to a series of royal traditions in celebrating Christmas, namely shooting a type of chicken in the palace forest. Lady Diana was standing right in front of the shooters who were about to carry out the shooting. Lady Diana's actions were triggered by two things: first, she did not want the bird to be shot every year. Second, he doesn't want his child to shoot anything, because the security and safety of his child is the most important thing, he doesn't want his child to get used to holding a gun and shooting. Researchers see this as a struggle for Lady Diana who had full rights to determine what activities her children would carry out because as Hidayat said that *Women are herded out of the house, have free careers and are no longer dependent on men so they are supposed to be free their willingness* Hidayat (2004). What Wollstonecraft calls the marginalization of women in their role in a community and/or family, in this case Lady Diana's voice was not heard by the kingdom so she then dared to fight dangerously by standing in front of the person who was about to carry out the shooting. Lady Diana threatened to remain standing and not be afraid to be shot, saying "you'll just have to shoot me" as a verbal bluff against the monarchy.

#### Data 14: Towards Liberation



Pict 14 The ending of Lady Diana's journey in the movie of Spencer  
Duration 01:45:43

In Spencer's movie the end of the peak of resistance Lady Diana's character shows freedom. After standing in front of the royal members and servants who were going to carry out the agenda of shooting the birds, he then ran with his two children and decided to leave work and start a new life in another city. Lady Diana's choice to leave the palace and indirectly sever ties with palace members in the researcher's view is the culmination of liberal feminist resistance carried out by Lady Diana's character against royal traditions and not giving her space to be heard. This action is in line with Wolf's statement that *women were aware of their liberties and limitations with men, as well as the culture at that time which limited them and emphasized the role of men more* (Wolf, 2002).

#### CONCLUSIONS

Based on the discussion above, a conclusion can be drawn that researchers discovered 14 data of the movie that has a marginalization, subordination, and mental or physical violence. Meanwhile, there is no domestication that the character of Lady Diana founded. The data found referring to showing the struggle of the character Lady Diana in the movie against marginalization, subordination and mental violence the representation of Liberal Feminism in the *Spencer* movie is depicted by including two phenomena among the four phenomena that were the aim of the emergence of the Liberal Feminism movement, namely marginalization and violence against women. It should be remembered that Lady Diana's position in this movie is not only as a



woman but also as a wife and mother, so that the struggle of liberal feminism that is depicted is very right on target, this movie also shows two ways that must be done to achieve the goals of liberal feminism itself, namely by holding discussions amidst the domination that occurs over himself, the second is by going against the regulations because it is impossible to change the regulations in his current position.

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