Woman Representation in *Tangled* Film

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ABSTRACT

The present study aims at examining and making meaning of the representation of woman in *Tangled* film. Utilizing a qualitative research, particularly a descriptive method, the present study adopts Kellie Heintz and Mark Stracey's (2006) film studies theory and women representation theory by Brittany N Maggiore (2003). There are a lot of studies about women representation but only a few which discusses women representation using film studies. Therefore, this present study highlights women representation from different perspective because this study uses a film as the subject of the research to see woman representation by using the language of film, such as camera shot, camera angle and *mise en scene*. From the analysis, there are three aspects which shows woman representation in *Tangled* film, such as Rapunzel's physical appearance, personal traits, and her relation to other characters. Through the language of film, the woman representation in *Tangled* film is constructed in more detail because the element used by the filmmaker made the figure more highlighted. Meanwhile, the woman representation theory also strengthens the depiction of woman representation in *Tangled* film. This film offers a new portrayal of woman representation which shows a beautiful woman who has ability in language.

Keywords: *Camera Angle, Camera Shot, Film, Film Studies, Mise En Scene, Rapunzel, Tangled, Woman, Woman Representation*

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INTRODUCTION

Klarer (1998) theorizes that classical literary forms are classified into three; namely, epic (prose), drama, and poetry. The most recent contemporary literary theory says that film is included in the form of contemporary literature (Gunning, 2012). Films are often made to show and convey something in the real reality by using other ways, such as stories and character in the film. Similar to prose, a film also has an element of mimesis namely representation of reality (Heintz & Stracey, 2006).

There are three types of film namely, documentary, experimental, and animated film (Bordwell and Thompson, 2010). Each type has its own features. The present study chooses to use *Tangled* film as the subject of the research because it is a good example of an animated film which contains some aspects of women representation. *Tangled* is an animated film directed by Nathan Greno and Byron Howard from Walt Disney Studio. It tells about a young girl named Rapunzel who has a magical blonde hair. She was a daughter of the king. When she was a baby, she was kidnapped by an old woman named Mother Gothel and hid her in a tall tower for years. Until one day, she realized that Mother Gothel is not her biological mother. She tried to escape from Mother Gothel but failed. Eventually, she was rescued by a handsome thief, Flynn Rider and Mother Gothel died. Then, Flynn Rider accompanied Rapunzel to see her parents and they all lived happily.

Several theories have been chosen as the framework to analyze and categorize the data in the study. The study adopts theoretical framework from Heinz and Stracey (2006) which identifies how films express the woman representation through the language of film and women representation theory from Maggiore's to strengthen the woman representation in this film. According to Heinz and Stracey's (2006) theory, there are seven elements of the language of film but in this study the writer only uses three elements, such as camera shot, camera angle and *mise en scene*.

Furthermore, this study also highlights women representation from different perspective because this study uses a film as the subject of the research to see woman representation by using the language of film. Films have some elements that serve as film medium or cinematic techniques. These elements have different functions to convey the woman representation to the viewers. Therefore, an analysis of these elements can give an indication of what the filmmaker should do.

In addition to the language of film and its relation, the women representation theory also has important aspects. According to Maggiore (2003), women in fairy tales are often represented as a proper woman who is usually silent, passive, without ambition and beautiful. Being silent means a woman should not speak until she is granted permission to speak. Secondly, being passive refers to a situation where a woman must not question the rules that already exist. Thirdly, having no ambition means that a woman should not have an ambition or desire for power or

higher position. Lastly, being beautiful means that women who are selected to be represented are usually beautiful. However, it is important to note that the women's representation is not something that is fixed because woman's life is changing step by step and it is important to mirror this change.

METHODOLOGY

The study employs a descriptive qualitative method because it aims to investigate and make meaning of the representation of woman in *Tangled* film.

In terms of data collection, they are collected through watching *Tangled* film for several times. The data are in the form of shots and dialogues that are purposively selected to answer the research questions. The collected data such as scenes, shots, and dialogues are categorized and critically analyzed by using the framework of film studies as proposed by Heintnz and Stracey (2006). Further, the description and presentation of the analysis are interpreted by means of categorizing how the main woman

character in this film is represented through the language of film. The result of the study is expected to give the readers a new perspective of how a woman is represented through the main woman character in *Tangled* film using the theory of film studies.

In Tangled film, Rapunzel is presented as a beautiful woman who has a bit different aspects than other women in fairy tales. The presentation like this represented a new portrayal of woman in Walt Disney animated film. This representation is presented through the language of film highlighting aspects such as Rapunzel physical appearances, personal traits and her relation to other characters. The first aspect is physical appearance. To describe how woman's physical appearance is presented in this film, the shots and dialogue evidences from this film are used as a key to explain it.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
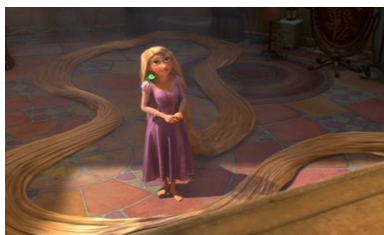
(a)

(b)

Figure 1: This shot presents Rapunzel's physical appearance in *Tangled* film

The shot evidenced above depicts Rapunzel's physical appearance, such as her long blonde hair, skinny face, big eyes, small lips, white skin, tiny waist, slim figure and her purple gown. The long shot technique creates Rapunzel's physical appearance and the environment around her is easily recognizable (1a & 1b). In other words, even the background in the long shot is still wide; it does not make the character of Rapunzel set aside. In addition, the filmmaker also uses the *mise en scene* technique– lighting, in this shot. The key and back light in this shot creates Rapunzel's physical appearance more highlighted and more natural (1a & 1b).

Besides the long shot technique, the filmmaker also uses

medium shot and close-up shot on the shot below. In figure 2a, the filmmaker uses a medium shot technique which creates more detailed parts of Rapunzel's physical appearance. Meanwhile the close-up shot focuses on the figure's face as the central attention and no background is visible (Heintz & Stracey, 2006). The camera on figure 2b shows a close-up shot of Rapunzel and gives the detail physical appearance of Rapunzel such as her big green eyes, natural pink lips, cute freckled nose, thin brown eyebrows and blonde hair. The back and key light make Rapunzel's physical appearance more outstanding (Figure 2a & 2b).
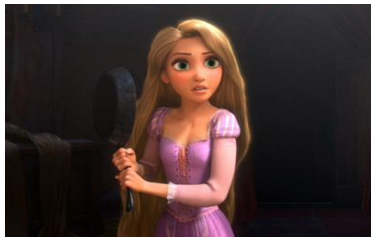
(a)

(b)

Figure 2: This shot shows Rapunzel's physical appearance in more detail

The next shot in figure 3 presents Rapunzel's meeting with a stranger for the first time in her house. At that moment a thief named, Flynn Rider came by accident and hid in Rapunzel's house. Even though her physical appearance succeeds in making Flynn Rider fascinated but she fails asking Flynn Rider to be her guide to see the lanterns. To realize her dream, she has to force Flynn Rider to approve an agreement and she would return his satchel if he accepts the offer. It means that her physical appearance has failed to make Flynn Rider accept her offering to be her guide.

(a)

76

(b)

**Figure 3**: This shot presents Rapunzel's agreement to Flynn Rider

Rapunzel's physical appearance not only fails to attract Flynn Rider but also other characters in this film. The shot below shows when Flynn Rider invites her to the bar, Snuggly Duckling (Figure 4). The filmmaker uses medium shot to express Rapunzel's terrified expression in more detail such as her bulging out eyes and lips which slightly parted (4a). The terrified expression is caused by Mother Gothel that for years she does not allow Rapunzel to see the outside world. Moreover, she told Rapunzel that the outside world is scary, full of ruffians, cannibals, poison ivy so it shows terrified expression.

The filmmaker uses point of view shot in order to show other's character expression when they meet Rapunzel at the first time. Unfortunately, most of the other characters' facial expressions on the shot show weird expression instead of fascinated expression to Rapunzel (4b). Point of view shot (POV) shows a view from subject's perspective (Heintz & Stracey, 2006).


(a)
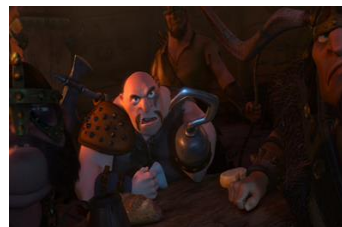
(b)

Figure 4: This shot shows the bad guys' facial expression when they meet Rapunzel

The next aspect is personal traits of Rapunzel. There are at least three traits owned by Rapunzel in this film, such as independent, brave, and Rapunzel's ability to protect herself as well as other characters. In this film Rapunzel is presented as an independent woman. The shot evidences below shows Rapunzel's daily activities in her house. In this shot, the filmmaker uses the long and medium shot technique. The long shot technique helps the viewers to get a specific setting which supports

for Rapunzel description traits such as setting of her house (5a). Meanwhile, the medium shot in figure 6b creates gesture and expression become more visible. Furthermore, the variety of lighting technique used in this shot above creates Rapunzel's trait as independent woman in more detail.
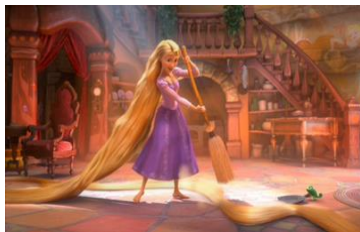
(a)
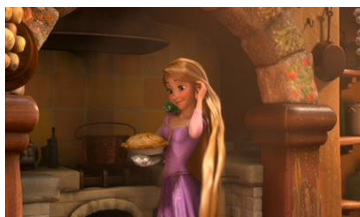
(b)

Figure 6: This shot shows Rapunzel as an independent woman

The next trait is Rapunzel bravery. Maggiore (2003) suggests that woman is presented as weak, submissive and beautiful. As woman who never sees the outside world, Rapunzel tries to be brave in facing a stranger or dangerous situation. The

shot below shows Rapunzel's bravery when Mother Gothel tries to hold Rapunzel but she refused to put on hold. The conversation which was in the shot below strengthens Rapunzel's resist toward Mother Gothel. The filmmaker uses medium shot and high angle shots. The high angle shot creates Rapunzel who looks small and powerless (7a). The low angle in figure 7b makes Mother Gothel look powerful and dominant. So that it creates the viewers look up to her. The dialogue was in the medium and high angle shot strengthening that Rapunzel does not give up fighting for her life. The dialogue shows that the weak trait labeled to woman does not apply to Rapunzel because she fights for her life.

(a)

(b)

Figure 7: The high angle shot makes Rapunzel more highlighted

The last trait is Rapunzel's ability to protect herself and other characters. As a woman who needs to be rescued, Rapunzel can protect herself and other characters in this film. It also indicates that Rapunzel is different from other women because sometimes a woman is portrayed as weak and dependent. It means that Rapunzel's action to protect herself and other characters which is shown in figure 8a & 8b rejects the common portrayals of a woman in the fairy tales as has been suggested by Maggiore (2003). The use of a medium shot in figure 8a & 8b by the filmmaker strengthens the portrayal of Rapunzel that she has an ability to protect herself in dangerous situation. Meanwhile, the medium shot in figure 8b creates Rapunzel's expression of fear more clearly. Besides the camera shot, the *mise en scene* – lighting technique makes the figure natural. The back light makes the background of the shot appear darker and it creates a dramatic effect.

(a)

(b)

Figure 8: The shot presents that Rapunzel has an ability to protect herself and others

In the beginning of this section, it has been said that Rapunzel's physical appearance is not necessarily attractive to other characters. Even though her physical appearance cannot attract other characters' attention, but she has ability in language. So that Rapunzel's ability in language to other characters in this film becomes her power to gain other characters' attention. Some characters and dialogue in this shot below are shown to be concerned by Rapunzel's language. Rapunzel's ability in language to other characters is her power to captivate

other characters who listen to her. Even though she has a good-looking but it is useless because the other characters in this film are concerned to Rapunzel's language than her beauty.

The conversation in the shot shows that Flynn Rider is concerned with her language about the deal (Figure 9). The medium shot below presents Rapunzel facial expression in more detail in order to make sure Flynn Rider about the deal. Flynn Rider has no power over Rapunzel in figure 9b.


(a)
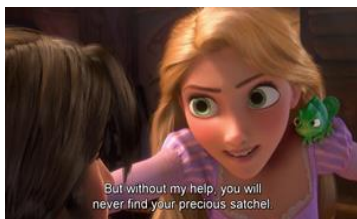
(b)

Figure 9: The shot presents Rapunzel's ability in language to other character

Therefore the depiction of Flynn Rider uses high angle shot. A high angle shot makes Flynn Rider

look small and lack of power. In addition, figure 9c & 9d show that Rapunzel has higher power and dominant than Flynn Rider; therefore, the filmmaker uses low angle shot to depict Rapunzel. A low angle shot makes Rapunzel more powerful, because the viewers look up at Rapunzel. So that it strengthens Rapunzel's language to Flynn Rider.

(c)
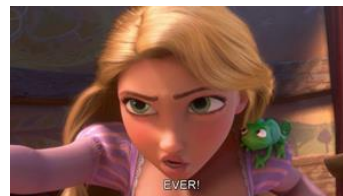
(d)

Figure 9: The shot presents Rapunzel's ability in language to other character

Generally, the language of film helps the viewers to get the specific goal of this film. Besides the film techniques used by the filmmaker, the other characters in this film also play important roles to create Rapunzel's representation in this film in clearly recognizable. In

this film Rapunzel is shown as a beautiful woman in general who has ability in language. Rapunzel ability in language is her power in this film to attract other characters. This means the filmmaker wants to offer something new of woman representation in this film.

CONCLUSION

Referring to the above explanation, it can be concluded that the representation of woman in *Tangled* film is constructed through the film language and another supporting element which are related to each other. All the techniques in this film used by the filmmaker encourage the woman to come out from the comfort zone. The ways of woman is represented in *Tangled* film show through some film techniques such as camera shot, camera angle and *mise en scene*. Those techniques create attractive representation of woman which has already existed. *Tangled* film has made Rapunzel as representation of women who succeeds not because of her beauty that she had but her ability in

language to other characters in this film.

The study suggests that more studies in field of film studies. Furthermore, the study may provide the suggestion for Indonesia student to increase their ability in analyzing film by using film studies theory. This study is also expected to motivate future readers and researchers to better understand about how film can produce a unique result through language of film technique to the viewer.

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