



## THE IMPACT OF LIBERAL FEMINISM MOVEMENT IN A PROMPTBOOK *HE AND SHE*

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### Abstract

Liberal feminism is a universal approach in which women and men are equal in basic rights such as education, work, financial security, voting and many more. This research aims to find out the impact of liberal feminism in a promptbook entitled *He and She*. The method used in this research is a descriptive qualitative method. The results show that society in this era is divided into two categories: conservatives and modernists. Conservatives are people who oppose liberal feminism. This is found in one of the characters, Keith. Modernists are those who support the movement. This is found in Tom, Remington, and Ruth. This movement can have a good or bad impact on society or surroundings, especially on men. For those who have old-fashioned thinking, this can be a threat..

**Keywords:** impact, liberal, feminism, movement

### 1. Introduction

There are still many women who suffer from discrimination, which invites many feminists to speak for equality because women deserve it (Connerly & Wu, 2016). This discrimination that leads many feminists to create a movement. Among the movements created, one of the most interesting one is liberal feminism. The liberal feminism movement consists of three waves (Tong & Botts, 2017; Pollis, 2010). The first wave occurred in the 18th century which stated that this movement was really needed because there were many injustices that were felt by women such as the retention and restraint of women's rights. For example, many churches reject the existence of female priests and even congregations can only be occupied by men. The second wave of liberal feminism movement is to achieve equal rights. This movement began around 1960. The end of the second world war marked by the birth of new countries free from European occupation then the phenomenon developed where women participated in the voting rights of the parliament, this was the beginning for women to get suffrage and can participate in state politics. The third wave is liberal feminism for intersectionality. A nonexhaustive list of the various forms of oppression encompassed by intersectionality includes those based on gender, sex, sexuality, race, ethnicity, disability

status, and socioeconomic status. As part of its self-restructuring, liberal feminism currently, deals with its historical racioethnic and socioeconomic exclusivity and actively attempts to include the experiences and perspectives of women historically marginalized from its ranks.

Thus, it can be concluded that liberal feminism movement prioritizes the fulfillment of freedom that women will achieve, which means that women are equal to men in social society. Women can be free to express themselves without having to be afraid of what people think about them, women can be what they want without any coercion from any party, and women also do not have restrictions to act as they wish in social society as is often done by men. Women must prepare themselves to compete in aligning their position with men by taking every opportunity that can benefit her and must be well educated, which can be a provision to become intelligent women. Women should have as much chance to succeed in the public realm as men do (Tong, 2009). This theory is also consistent with how women should be treated at work.

The liberal feminism can have impacts based society who has old fashion thinking or conservatives and modernist (Percy & Kremer, 2015). They stated that a conservative society hold traditional views on issues of social justice. Austin et.al (2006) also stated that it created a backlash against progressive, and especially feminist, social values and practice. While modernists are people who consider the human existential status and arguing his individual liberty Herouac (2019).

By witnessing social phenomena, literary works can be a mirror that reflects the condition of society and the place where the literary work was created. It is not just a reflection of life, but it can also be a reflection of the expression of one's heart on the reality of life that is seen, heard, experienced, or felt. One of the literary works is a promptbook. It is a drama script entitled *He and She*, written by Rachel Crothers. The setting of this promptbook is in a workplace in 1911, where the first wave of liberal feminism occurred. This promptbook is very special because it deals with a problem created by some demand of woman's nature. It represents the drama of married life in which the relations of husband and wife are modified by the rival claims of professional jealousy. It is one of the most striking of the plays which deal with the general question of woman's rights and responsibilities. Therefore, based on this background, the researchers will find out and depict the impact of liberal feminism in the workplace based on the setting in the *He and She* promptbook.

To support this research, the researchers will provide some researchers that have been conducted the same research. The first is Saunders (as cited in Connerly & Wu, 2016) who discussed about the potential impacts of feminism in workplace. The result showed that

women who were more feminist may negotiate more assertively at work for a higher salary, as well as assert themselves at home so there is a better balance in housework and childcare between them and their spouses. In addition, women who are feminist are more likely to break outside traditional gender roles to find a career that is the best fit for them, notice and report sex discrimination in the workplace, and work together to elicit change in the workplace where it is needed. These qualities can improve the home and work life of women and increase mental health and job satisfaction.

The second is Simorangkir (2015) who discussed a research about the impact of the feminization of the Public Relations Industry in Indonesia on Communication Practice. Based on the findings, she concluded that there are seven impacts of the feminization of the PR industry in Indonesia such as, degradation of the public relations industry, appearance as a job prerequisite, male practitioners are regarded as gay, encroachment, low budget allocation on PR programs, low remuneration for PR practitioners, and sexual harassment in the workplace.

The third is Herouac (2019) who discussed a research entitled *Liberal Feminism Impact on Moroccan Educated Women: Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences, FLDM, as a Field Study*. It was found that here is a tendency and flexibility towards gender liberation as well as there standing a set of obstacles against woman social emancipation and political empowerment. Generally, his findings proved that there are still forms of conservative gender perception persist, mainly through male's oral and physical behavior. Religion is demonstrated to be one primary factor against women's emancipation and against the acceptance of western liberating notions. In this regard, religion perpetuates traditional and conservative treatment of gender relations. Illiteracy, one of the obstacles, may push further reinforcement of women subordination. Oppositely, literacy and education may lead to a raise in awareness that may subvert such gender perceptions and question their pretended legitimacy.

Based on the previous researchers above, the impacts of liberal feminism are based on reality by conducting in-depth interviews and the use of questionnaires, while in this present research, the data are taken from a promptbook entitled *He and She*.

## **2. Research Method**

This research employs a descriptive qualitative method. Kumar (2011) stated that qualitative research is a research with a purpose to describe situation or phenomenon with the use of qualitative measurement scales and if the analysis is done, it is to create the

variation the situation without quantifying it. The data to be described are sentences about liberal feminism of an educated female character, which are taken from a play script entitled *He and She*, written by Rachel Crothers.

To collect the data, the researchers followed some steps, such as: comprehending the theory of liberal feminism and the impacts, reading the play script entitled *He and She* thoroughly in order to understand the story, highlighting the dialogue that contains liberal feminism about the educated female character because not all dialogues contain liberal feminism, and the last step is classifying the data that has been identified. After the data had been gathered, the researchers then followed some steps in order to analyse the data, such as reading the theory and the part of the dialogue that contained liberal feminism, and describing the data.

### **3. Result And Discussion**

The promptbook entitled *He and She* is mainly about two couples who have different views about the nature of a woman. However, for this research, the data taken are based on the impact of liberal feminism in the workplace from all characters in the promptbook. The time period set was during the fall of 1911, or in the early 20th century. The period in which women's suffrage (voting), working conditions, and educational rights were primarily addressed. In this era, society is divided into two categories: conservatives and modernists. Conservatives are people who oppose liberal feminism. In this promptbook, it is Keith. While modernists are those who support it. In this promptbook, they are Tom, Remington and Ruth. The following depictions are data representatives that contained the impact of liberal feminism.

While Keith is talking with Tom in the office, he asks if Tom is regretting having her wife be a career woman.

**KEITH**

“Have you ever been sorry that Mrs. Herford is a sculptor—instead of just your wife?”

**KEITH**

“How can she keep on at that and keep house too?”

**KEITH**

“I want a home. I want children.”

**(ACT I, pp. 8-9)**

From the data above, it can be concluded that Keith is a conservative man who does not care about the feminist movement. As the setting is in the early 20th century, the first

wave of the liberal feminism movement, it does not affect the way Keith thinks about women. He is persistent about his opinion that a woman should stay at home after marriage.

The following lines are other evidence that proves Keith degraded and judged women who have careers.

**KEITH.**

“You all think you're superior beings.”

**KEITH.**

“(Beginning to walk about.) Yes, you do. You're just as bad as the rest them—worse. The minute a woman makes enough to buy the clothes on her back, she thinks she and God Almighty are running the earth and men are just little insects crawling around.”

**KEITH.**

“Oh, you can laugh. It's so—and you know it. Every one of you that have got the bee in your bonnet of doing something — doing something, are through with the men. Look at you. You've cut men out entirely and you think you're too smart to marry one. Now, don't you? Isn't that the reason?”

**KEITH.**

“I tell you it's all rot—business for women. It spoils every one of you. Why aren't you in a home of your own instead of hustling for your bread and butter? It's because you're too damned conceited. You think you know than any man you ever saw and think you don't need one. You wait—You'll see—some day.”

**KEITH.**

(Soothed for a moment.) “How does it happen you're so handy with a needle? I thought you were all for business.”

**KEITH.**

“I tell you it changes all women —business. They make a little money themselves and want luxury and won't live without it.”

**(ACT II, pp. 65-67)**

From the dialogue above, it can be concluded that for Keith, emancipation has spoiled all women and made them superior. It is not fair if women have a higher position than men. Being conservative towards emancipation means that it gives a bad impact on him.

The following data representatives are lines how the characters show their modernist towards women.

**KEITH**

“Have you ever been sorry that Mrs. Herford is a sculptor—instead of just your wife?”

**TOM**

“Not for a minute.”

**(ACT I, p. 8)**

From the conversation above, it can be concluded that Tom does not mind or even regret if her wife has a career. Tom also support that after marriage, it does not necessary for a woman to leave or quit from her job. It is shown in the following line:

**TOM.**

“Of course. But that doesn't mean she'll have to give up her profession forever.”

**(ACT I, p. 10)**

Ruth knows how hard it is to work in Woman’s Magazine. To be an editor is impossible to achieve. However, she finally gets it and be an editor.

**RUTH.**

“They had decided to make me Editor of the Woman’s Magazine (*Fighting back her tears.*) Isn't it funny?”

**(ACT II, p. 63)**

From this line, it can be seen how her boss supports liberal feminism. Ruth is the first woman to be an editor. It can be concluded, too, that her boss is a modernist. In addition, it shows that women are also capable of doing what men can do. She also shows how supportive she is by knowing that one of her friends is a genius. She wants Ann to rise. However, Ann does not want to humiliate her husband because of her capability.

**RUTH.**

“And she never will be if she's held back and told she's limited. I think she has genius and the sooner she makes a bold dash and tries for something big the better.”

**(ACT I, p. 22)**

Remington is Ann’s father (Tom’s father in law). He also agrees that a woman can work after marriage especially when the woman is a genius one.

**REMINGTON.**

“Of course. You haven’t any more right to ask that clever little woman to throw away half her life and to be the tail to your kite than you have to ask her to cut her throat.”

**(ACT II, p. 72)**

From the line above, it can be concluded that if a woman is capable of doing something, a man must support her. A man should understand his woman except that she is willing to quit her job.

#### 4. Conclusion

Liberal feminism movement can give good or bad impact for the society or surroundings, especially the men. For those who are old-fashioned thinking, this movement can be a threat. This research discusses the impact of liberal feminism on the characters in a promptbook entitled *He and She*, written by Rachel Crothers. From the findings, it can be concluded that there are two types of society when it comes to liberal feminism. They are conservatives and modernists. Keith is categorized as a conservative man because he fully opposes liberal feminism. He wants all women to know their place, especially after marriage. Thus, it has a bad impact on him because it really matters if a woman is better than him. In addition, Tom and Remington do realize that liberal feminism does exist. It does not matter to them if their spouses work after marriage. However, no matter how brilliant their wives are, wives must not humiliate their husbands. They can still be classified as modernists. They support women to have careers. This play has a very interesting story. Other researchers are encouraged to investigate the liberal feminism movement from a male perspective in future research.

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