

AN ANALYSIS OF “WORK OF MIRACLES IN HELEN KELLER” FROM SOCIAL PERSPECTIVE AND MORAL VALUE

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Abstract

This study was carried out based on the problems faced by the writer as a English teacher. Most of students have no motivation when they found difficulties especially in learning English. Furthermore, the reasons why the researcher used The Miracle worker film to be investigated: Firstly, this movie was made based on the true story. Secondly, it transferred moral values. Thirdly, it told efforts of a teacher, Annie Sullivan. The research problems were “What are social perspective of Helen Keller and what are moral values found in The Miracle Worker film?” The study employed a qualitative research which was intended to analyze Helen Keller’s social life, social life at the society illustrated in that movie, and moral values found in the movie. The research instrument was investigator triangulation which referred to the use of more than one audience in the field to gather and interpret data. In conclusion the Miracle Worker was an inspirational movie because it told about a blind deaf woman to reach her goals. It delivered Helen Keller’s experience detailing her early life. Moral values of the film were motivation, kindness, responsibility, honesty, empathy, and respect.

Key words: *Social perspective, the Miracle worker, moral value*

1. INTRODUCTION

Literature is a crucial part in learning English. Students can get more complete knowledge through literature. The purposes of literature for students are to express their ideas and to convey a message from works of art. A Literature consists of some forms. A literature has been divided into five forms. They are a short story, a poem, a play, a novel and an essay (Burton, 1967:1). In literature, a play is one of interesting scopes and one of the examples of a play is a movie.

In fact, Films are everywhere now. Teachers of English can use a film as a media to teach English and give motivation for their students. Films not only take us through experiences with character we come to care about, but films might also develop an idea and values which are useful for students. Besides, Vassilou (2006:7) states that a film, otherwise known as a movie, moving picture and motion picture. A film brings to a story based on some experiences that will engage our minds and emotions. A film tells a story and

events. According to Makamani (2007:1), A Film is a source of information and entertainment in the modern world. Consequently, our life styles have increasingly been associated with the film in one way or the other.

Indeed, there are so many good films and gives us many values of life. One of wonderful films is *The Miracle Worker*. *The Miracle Worker* movie was made based on the true story of Helen Keller and Annie Sullivan. It is a wonderful film because it gives us moral and education values. Besides, it also gives us experiences and big motivation to learn and to get the successful. In fact, Most of students have no motivation when they found difficulties especially in learning English. Students need motivations, interesting ways of learning English, and they also need an interesting media. The *Miracle worker* is one of films which give motivation and education message for students.

Furthermore, there are three attractiveness of *The Miracle Worker* movie. That is why; they make the writer choose this movie to be investigated. Firstly, this movie was made based on the true story. It was made based on Helen Keller's life story and it is real. Keller's

life story is well known, inspirational, and well documented. It tells about Helen Keller's effort to know and understands about languages and meanings. It can be experienced by the other people. Consequently, from this movie everyone can learn how to reach something although there are some struggles and problems.

Secondly, this movie was made to give motivation for people. It transfers moral values through *The Miracle Worker* film. The film tells about a woman that is blind and deaf, like Helen, can be taught so she can be independent and do not depend on others.

Thirdly, this movie tells efforts of a teacher, Annie Sullivan. Although her student got difficulties in learning languages and meanings, faced many problems but Annie Sullivan did best to make her student, Helen Keller, could learn language and how to behave. Annie Sullivan showed both intelligent and emotional control. She was a kind teacher and had a very big responsibility to guide Helen to learn. She was still spirit and confident to make Helen know about languages and meanings. The film gives moral message for everyone who wants to reach their ideals.

This research is focused on analyzing *The Miracle Worker*, a film of Helen Keller.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study is a qualitative study with descriptive method because the object of the research is a film. According to Donald (2010: 440) descriptive method is used to describe events as they naturally occur. In line with the definition above, this research described about social perspective of Helen Keller and moral values found in the *Miracle Worker*, a film of Helen Keller.

Data and Source of the Data

Data

Data in this research are classified in two primary and secondary data source. Primary data source is the play of *The Miracle Worker* movie directed by Nadia Tass. The secondary data source consists of other data related to the research such as some books of sociological Perspective theory, movie script, internet and other relevant information.

Source of the Data

Main source of the data of this research is *The Miracle Worker*, a film of Helen Keller. Beside, the researcher used

books which has purpose to collect data and information from various materials about *The Miracle Worker*, a film of Helen Keller. It helps the researcher to find out the moral values of *The Miracle Worker*, a film of Helen Keller.

Technique for collecting data

Data is descriptive information. It describes the facts naturally. In this research, the descriptive data was gotten from words, sentences in every actions of *The Miracle Worker*, a film of Helen Keller so that the researcher found out moral values of *The Miracle Worker*, a film of Helen Keller.

Technique for analyzing data

This research was focused on social perspective of Helen Keller, social life of the society illustrated by the film and moral values found in the *Miracle Worker*, a film of Helen Keller by using qualitative study with descriptive method. Furthermore, Junus (1986:19) cited in Endraswara (2003:94) states that a literary can be influenced by social condition such as racial group, time and environment.

In line of the explanation above, the steps of analyzing are:

- a. Constructing a structural theory.

- b. Watching *The Miracle Worker*, a film of Helen Keller and writing the elements of the film. The film was watched by the researcher and her friends. Then, the researcher asked her friends to find out the meaning of the film.
- c. Determining the theme of the film. Theme is a soul of a literary which will flow other elements of the film (Endraswara, 2003:53).
- d. Connecting the social life of the author and social life of the society illustrated by the film.
- e. Concluding the elements of the film and get the message of the film.
- f. Connecting literary components in analyzing moral value of the *Miracle Worker*.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Helen is a daughter of Kate and Arthur. Helen lived in a high level family. In sociology, Social stratification is a concept involving the classification of people into groups based on shared socio-economic conditions, a relational set of inequalities with economic, social, political and ideological dimensions." When differences lead to greater status, power or privilege for some groups over

the other it is called Social Stratification. It is a system by which society ranks categories of people in a hierarchy. Social stratification is based on four basic principles: (1) Social stratification is a trait of society, not simply a reflection of individual differences; (2) Social stratification carries over from generation to generation; (3) Social stratification is universal but variable; (4) Social stratification involves not just inequality but beliefs as well.

Helen Adams Keller was born a healthy child in Tuscumbia, Alabama, on June 27, 1880. On her father's side she was descended from Colonel Alexander Spotswood, a colonial governor of Virginia, and on her mother's side, she was related to a number of prominent New England families. Helen's father, Arthur Keller, was a captain in the Confederate army. The family lost most of its wealth during the Civil War and lived modestly.

After the war, Captain Keller edited a local newspaper, the *North Alabamian*, and in 1885, under the Cleveland administration, he was appointed Marshal of North Alabama. At the age of 19 months, Helen became deaf and blind as a result of an unknown illness, perhaps

rubella or scarlet fever. As Helen grew from infancy into childhood, she became wild and unruly. By age seven, Helen had developed nearly 60 hand gestures to communicate with her parents and ask for things. However, she was often frustrated by her inability to express herself. With the help of her teacher, Anne Sullivan, Helen learned the manual alphabet and could communicate by finger spelling. Within a few months of working with Anne, Helen's vocabulary had increased to hundreds of words and simple sentences. Anne also taught Helen how to read Braille and raised type, and to print block letters. By age nine, Helen began to learn to speak and read lips, skills she continued to develop over her lifetime.

As she so often remarked as an adult, her life changed on March 3, 1887. On that day, Anne Mansfield Sullivan came to Tuscumbia to be her teacher. Anne was a 20-year-old graduate of the Perkins School for the Blind. Compared with Helen, Anne couldn't have had a more different childhood and upbringing. The daughter of poor Irish immigrants, she entered Perkins at 14 years of age after four horrific years as a ward of the state at the Tewksbury Almshouse in Massachusetts.

She was just 14 years older than her pupil Helen, and she too suffered from serious vision problems. Anne underwent many botched operations at a young age before her sight was partially restored. Anne's success with Helen remains an extraordinary and remarkable story and is best known to people because of the film *The Miracle Worker*. The film correctly depicted Helen as an unruly, spoiled but very bright child who tyrannized the household with her temper tantrums.

In 1890, when she was just 10, she expressed a desire to learn to speak; Anne took Helen to see Sarah Fuller at the Horace Mann School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Boston. Fuller gave Helen 11 lessons, after which Anne taught Helen. Throughout her life, however, Helen remained dissatisfied with her spoken voice, which was hard to understand. Helen's extraordinary abilities and her teacher's unique skills were noticed by Alexander Graham Bell and Mark Twain, two giants of American culture. Twain declared, "The two most interesting characters of the 19th century are Napoleon and Helen Keller."

In 1904, she graduated cum laude from Radcliffe and became the first deaf blind person to earn a Bachelor of Arts

degree. Later, Helen was the first woman to be awarded an honorary degree from Harvard University. She also received honorary degrees from Temple University and the Universities of Glasgow, Scotland; Delhi, India; Berlin, Germany; and Witwatersrand and Johannesburg, South Africa. Helen was an avid reader and follower of politics and world events. Among her favorite books were philosophy texts and volumes of poetry. She also enjoyed studying history and economics as well as foreign languages including French, Latin and German.

Helen used her education and influences to help improve the lives of others. She published several books and essays about her own life and views and spent much of her time lecturing and lobbying for important social issues including women's suffrage and assistance for people who were blind and deaf blind. Helen also performed vaudeville and had a taste of Hollywood, making two movies about her life, "Deliverance" and "The Unconquered." Much of Helen's later years were spent traveling around the world, raising money and awareness for the blind and other social issues.

While still a student at Radcliffe, Helen began a writing career that was to continue throughout her life. In 1903, her autobiography, *The Story of My Life*, was published. This had appeared in serial form the previous year in *Ladies' Home Journal* magazine. Helen saw herself as a writer first her passport listed her profession as "author." It was through the medium of the typewritten word that Helen communicated with Americans and ultimately with thousands across the globe.

Helen Keller was as interested in the welfare of blind persons in other countries as she was for those in her own country; conditions in poor and war-ravaged nations were of particular concern. Helen's ability to empathize with the individual citizen in need as well as her ability to work with world leaders to shape global policy on vision loss made her a supremely effective ambassador for disabled persons worldwide. Her active participation in this area began as early as 1915, when the Permanent Blind War Relief Fund, later called the American Braille Press, was founded. She was a member of its first board of directors.

In her social life, one of the most popular film was made to appreciate her effort to reach her ideal. The title of the movie is *The Miracle Worker*. The movie was made based on the true story of Helen Keller and Annie Sullivan of book, *The Story of My Life* that is written by William Gibson. The screenplay for *The Miracle Worker* was written by Monte Merrick. *The Miracle Worker* was a gripping and inspiring story of the battle to solve impossible obstacles and the struggle to communicate. *The Miracle Worker* movie tells about the life of family that was set in Keller's house in Tuscumbia, Alabama (Southern of USA).

C. Moral value found in the Miracle Worker

Morals pervade every aspect of our lives. Thus, moral value holds important roles for everyone. Moral values include motivation, kindness, responsibility, honesty, empathy, and respect.

Firstly, *Helen took a key from a door, left Miss. Sullivan and locked the door*. Helen lived in a kind family; her family loves her so much. They always guide Helen about everything at home. In her social life, she is a little girl that is always communicating with everyone at

home. She has a respectable mommy who always cares of her. That is why Helen grows to be a clever girl until one day it is so easy for her to lock Miss. Sullivan in a room because she can memorize everything at home include a key in a door. From the second dialogue, moral value that we can get is kindness. Helen is success in learning a language because everyone around her is kind and respectable.

Secondly, *Helen ate sup by using a spoon, a napkin, and sit down well*. It is showed briefly that blind deaf people are able to be better if there is someone who guide them well .Here, Helen is guided by her beloved teacher, Miss. Sullivan. Helen could not eat by using a spoon, sit down in a seat but step by step she is able to be a sweet girl and know how to have a good attitude. From the third dialogue, we can get moral value from a teacher, Miss. Sullivan. Because of her responsibility to her student, consequently Helen is able to have a good attitude although she is blind and deaf.

Thirdly, *Helen arranged her doll and all things properly into her bag before she went home*. When a blind deaf girl is able to arrange all things properly, it

means that the girl is clever and has a high motivation to learn about everything. Helen is not only a genius girl but she is also motivated to memorize what her teacher has taught to her. As the result, motivation becomes moral value that we can reach from this movie. Values and morals can not only guide but inspire and motivate you, giving you energy for living and for doing something meaningful.

There are also the differences expressions and meaning found in *The Miracle Worker* when four audiences watched the film. Firstly, the second audience tells that in the film, Step by step Helen becomes a calm girl and she always comes to Miss. Sullivan to ask the language of everything she touches. The meaning of the expression is life is a struggle. We are able to master everything if we want to learn. Besides, our environment also influences us in learning a language and the meaning. It is difficult for blind deaf people to master a language if they are not serious to learn a language.

Secondly, the fourth audience found that in the film, Helen can use her finger to express things around her except “water”. It is very difficult for her to use

her finger when she wants to express the word “water”. But in the last part of the film, it is showed that Miss. Sullivan let her to a pump and she put the water into a kettle and Helen feels the water. That is the beginning process for her to learn language. It is showed that blind deaf people will be easy to memorize a language if they are so close to the object that they want to understand. Besides, a responsibility from a teacher also helps them to learn and understand language. Consequently, they will be able to be better in learning and understanding language.

Thirdly, the third audience tells that Helen learn from a horse. It means that it will be easy for blind deaf people to learn by using realia. Although Helen does not only learn from a horse but she also learns from everything around her but the researcher agrees that it will be easy for deaf blind people to learn by using realia. Besides, Moral value is also gotten from Miss. Sullivan’s character. The way her teaching to Helen also influence Helen’s successful in learning and understanding languages. There are some similarities in getting the expressions and the meaning from *The Miracle Worker*. Firstly, When Miss. Sullivan said: “*She must have a*

language, *Language is more important to the mind*". It is showed that a deaf blind girl should have a language to make her to be able to communicate and learn everything. Language is the key. It is stated clearly that Miss. Sullivan is optimistic about Helen's ability although she did not know Helen yet at that time.

Secondly, Miss Sullivan said: "*Doll, will be your first word, it is as good as any, D-O-L-L, doll.*" A teacher holds crucial role for her student. In society, a teacher holds an important role for students. Students are strongly influenced by teachers' love and compassion, character, competence, and his moral commitment. A teacher becomes the model for his students. The students tried to follow their teacher in their behavior, dress, etiquette, conversational style, and he woke up.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the result of the research, it can be concluded that *The Miracle Worker* is an inspirational movie because it tells about a blind deaf woman to reach her goals. It delivers Helen Keller's experience detailing her early life. This study has explored and described the intrinsic analysis of *The Miracle Worker*.

The intrinsic elements are theme, plot, characterization, setting, and message. The theme of the film is the miracle of life because the film tells about the miracle worker, someone's effort to reach her goal. Plot of the film is linear because the story continues from the start to the end of the story. In this movie, we can understand what the main topic in the movie because the scenes run continuously. There are four characters in the film. The movie was made in 2000 in Tuscumbia, Alabama, Southern of USA.

Furthermore, this research also has explored and described moral value. From *The Miracle Worker*, it can be concluded that moral values of the film are motivation, kindness, responsibility, honesty, empathy, and respect. Helen motivates all audience through her experience. Helen is successful in learning language because of Annie's kindness, her parents' responsibility and empathy. Annie is a respectable teacher. She teaches Helen from all her heart. This film also transfers a character from a kind teacher, Annie Sullivan. She is an honest teacher. It is not easy to teach a blind deaf girl but she promises to teach

Helen until she is able to master language and meaning.

5. REFERENCES

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