

# Feminism and the role of women critical thinking sample

[Sociology](#), [Feminism](#)



## **Introduction**

Feminism has in the past, created different perceptions, notions and ideas. The major ideas that have been discussed in several platforms about feminism include the role of relationship between men and women, especially in terms of gender equality, where feminists seek to have equal opportunities with men (Martin, Wood and Little p, 10-24). These feminists believe that both men and women have equal responsibility and, therefore, should be given equal chances, which include equal pay for the same jobs, and equal considerations in employment opportunities. Secondly, the feminists have discussed in these platforms the privileges that are being taken for granted against women.

They believe that the privileges that women are entitled to are being taken for granted by the men, who they believe dominate influential positions. They also seek to evaluate the gender stereotypes that are either being promoted or criticized. Most importantly, they seek to reduce the gender disparities. This paper critically analyzes the movie ' Steel Magnolias', which was produced in 1989 and directed by Herbert Ross. The paper uses the feminist lens to critically analyze the feminist themes that are evident in the movie while relating them to the real life situation (Huber p 16 -18).

The movie comprises scenes where women have to deal with difficult situations without mentioning their husbands. These women support each other at all times, have shown love, and care for each other. The men in the movie, however, are less talked of since they are not the editor and writer's main point of reference - he intends to achieve his goal by making clear

indications of the things women can do against the general assumptions and misconceptions of gender stereotypes.

### **A brief summary of the movie**

The movie is majorly a comedy drama. In the movie, Sally Field, Daryl Hannah, Olympia Dukakis and Julia Roberts (Steel Magnolias) interacts so nicely in Dolly Patron's kitsch small-town salon as they discuss men, manicures, the menopause, and marriage. However, in the movie, Shirley MacLaine steals the show with a wonderful display of compassion, crankiness and some flirtatiousness. In this movie, these women draw up on each other's relationships when they are confronted by tragedy. One of the heart breaking tragedies in the movie includes a woman having to watch her adult daughter die in her arms. As the title of the movie suggests, women are usually thought of as weak and helpless; However, the movie reveals that situations can harden these women to become as strong as steel. The movie is both tear jerking and laugh getting. Additionally, it is partly affecting and partly appalling to the audience while manipulating them.

### **Discussion**

Sally field plays the major role of the self-sacrificing mother in the movie. She would do anything to see her daughter recover, including donating her kidney if that is what the doctor would consider saving her life. In this character in the movie, it is evident that women have been portrayed in the community have family commitment, especially to their children that their fathers do. According to the movie, by making the woman sacrifice her kidney for her daughter, the director intend to show the extents that women

would go to help their children. He views that some sacrifices are too difficult for men to undertake while women could simply agree to them without compromise.

In the societies, women are usually viewed to have more love and time for the family than men do. Men are usually concerned with other issues such as their jobs than they are with the families. In such cases, a man would easily be willing to have somebody paid to donate their kidney rather than doing it themselves. According to the title of the movie, Field has to be by her daughter to her death, which depicts that women have more care for their children than the men could. The underlying assumption in this notion is the fact that women bear the pain of having to carry the child in their wombs for nine months, which is biologically impossible for men. In this regard, they have more feelings attached to the child than their husbands do have. As the saying goes, only a woman knows the pain of bearing a child.

The other feminist view in the movie is related to the context and the setting of itself. The movie is majorly captured in a salon, where these six women gather to gossip, which is what they do best. One of the characters of the movie, Alice Roosevelt has a memorable line in the movie, she says, " If you have something bad to say, about somebody sit down right here beside me!"( Steel Magnolias). When anyone of them brings up a new idea or gossip, they hold their breath. This unveils the gossiping nature of women. Even in the current society, women have always used these beauty parlors to gossip. They spend a lot of time in these salons talking about each other's affairs. At times, this could be advantageous since they might support each other when they are confronted with tempting situations; however, most of

the gossips in these beauty parlors are destructive and are usually directed to their men.

Shirley MacLaine, who is also a member of the gossiping women at the salon is the richest among them, though the meanest in town. In this view, the editor uses this character to depict the mean nature of women in the society. Even though, they might possess equal wealth as men do, women are often less philanthropic to their fellow women. They would only gossip together in the salons, but not help the other in times of need. This character of the movie indicates that women might be viewed as loving and caring though very mean with their wealth. He also uses Olympia Dukakis. This woman has lost her husband but has a pot-bellied suitor wooing her. This indicates that the women in the society are never satisfied with their status and would always wish to have better things. Olympia is also interested in the man due to his wealth since she envies Shirley.

The women in this film struggle with problems related to their husbands who are either absent, depressed or even dead. On the outside, these women seem to be Dippy, but stronger on the inside. They are strong enough to face the challenges they encounter in everyday life with the support of their friends. The women in this movie are strong enough to laugh in the midst of trouble when they are in tears.

The women in this movie are also interesting in the sense that they have acquired official masks of beauty that they wear in social events such as funerals, weddings and parties. However, these women conceal their personal selves by having public faces different from their real faces. This indicates that women could always wish to impress despite the rough times

that they are going through, or the worse conditions that they face in reality (Susan p, 6 - 9).

In this movie, there are several gender stereotypes that are either being promoted or criticized. These gender stereotypes include both male and female gender stereotypes. The female gender stereotypes in the movie include the notions that women are not as strong as men in facing situations are. Women in this movie are even stronger than the men who are less mentioned in the movie. The other stereotype is that are supposed to make more money than the women (Steel Magnolias). For instance, Shirley is even richer than several men in the movie are; Patrons husband is depressed in bed because he does not have a job. Contrary to the usual assertion by many, women in this movie are viewed with much importance than men, and they perform more acts in the movie than men do.

The male gender stereotypes in the movie include the assumption that men are not nurses, but doctors while women are the nurses. The movie also criticizes the stereotype that husbands command their wives on the things they should do. Finally, the movie supports the idea that men are associated with dirty jobs, and they are often lazy and messy.

## **The tone of the movie**

### Conclusion

The movie ' Steel Magnolias' has a truly entertaining yet informative script that helps the audience understand the discussed themes easily. The movie majorly comprises of six women, whose husbands are absent, either depressed or dead. The movie gives little emphasis on men. The setting

itself, a beauty parlor, majorly comprises of women who go to make their hair and gossip (Walsh, Hickey, and Duffy p, 19). These women are supportive to each other even in hard times. They are also full of humor to make the reader enjoy the movie. In this movie, feminism is evidently used in addressing gender disparities. It majorly takes the stand for supporting the women, as opposed to the various notions that have supported the men. However, the mover does not ignore the weaknesses of women, despite describing them with the title of the movie as steel. For instance, Shirley is depicted as rich, though mean. Women are also shown as stronger emotionally than the men since they can deal with losing a daughter while a man struggles to deal with the issue of joblessness.

Finally, the movie majorly consists of occasions where women get the opportunities to show off. For instance, in the movie, we are presented with a wedding, funeral and party in which women have to meet at the beauty parlor before attending in order to wear the ideal faces.

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