

# FEMINISM: EQUALITY GENDER IN LITERATURE

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**Abstract:** Men and women have their own background and culture, the community has separated the notions of the two genders. Most of the world community assume that men as superior and women as inferior, So, feminist theory is a tool for women to fight for their rights for freedom in the world of politics, social, economic and literature. Feminism is born because women are tired of being subordinated to everything, through feminism women are able to show themselves. Women are no longer dangerous creatures and creatures that have been in the minds of men. But women are also able to work and be productive with men.

**Keywords:** *Feminist, Gender, Equality*

Literature is a depiction of life as outlined in written. There is a close relationship between literature and life, because the social function of literature involves the people.

Through literature, the mindset of a person or group of people can be affected, because literature is culture, while one element of culture is as a value. Therefore, in a literary work there will certainly be images that are a value. The existing values are considered as rules that are believed to be true, so the mindset of society can be formed through literary works.

Literary works are human personal expressions in the form of experiences, thoughts, feelings, ideas, enthusiasm, beliefs in a form of life description, which can described in writing. Jakop Sumardjo in his book entitled "Literature Appreciation" said that literary work was an attempt to record the contents of the literary soul.

Literature is an old science. It has started in the 3rd century BC, when Aristotle (384-322 BC) wrote his book entitled *Poetica* which contained the theory of drama. The term *poetica* as a literary theory is gradually used by several literary theorists such as *The Study of Literature*, by W.H. Hudson, *Theory of Literature* Rene Wellek and Austin Warren, *Literary Scholarship* Andre Lafavere, and *Literary Knowledge (literature)* by A. Teeuw.

Men and women have differences in terms of biological, psychological and cultural. There are describes differences, namely: male and female that refer to sex, and masculine and feminine referring to gender. Male and female is something natural, biologically distinguish male and female physically where men are stronger than women, women menstruation, pregnancy, childbirth, but not men. While the feminine and masculine culturally determined human psychology which is not born 'as' male or female but 'be' men and women. From the very beginning, the community has distinguished the assumptions about the genders.

In societies throughout the world, men are often regarded as superior and women as inferior. "Boys, more in the family system of partisanship is always the only hope in continuing the descent." (Ratna: 2004: 183).

Men are considered authority figures while women are known as gentle, loyal, and devoted creatures. Cultural differences are also indicated by the language in which there is a certain position that seems only to be a male, for example the landlord says, but there is no landlord, chairman and no chairwoman. Similarly, the greeting of 'master' can be used when greeting men who are married or single. In contrast to the call 'miss' or 'mistress' to different women as a result of their dependence on men.

Natural biological often used as an excuse to view women as second-class citizens. Women are considered as weak are always subject to male power. According to Dagun (in Ratna: 2004: 187) there is no research that shows a correlation between biological conditions and differences in behavior. Conversely, it can be ascertained that behavior is influenced even determined by certain cultural characteristics.

The sides of literature, literary works often show men's hegemony against women and that women are male erotic objects. "In Old Javanese literature, especially in *wiracarita* and

*kakawin* are clear if the image of women tends to be a figure of idolatry. Women are figures that should be contested by men, especially their beauty and skill. The important point: women must be loyal to men (Endraswara: 2011: 144).

The Cultural symptoms often differentiate the genders on the basis of certain group interests, in this case the male group, and the literary work often makes women as objects and merely weak beings who are under male domination. The feminist theories try to give way middle so that both have a balanced position in their conditions in society.

Feminist theory is a tool for women to fight for their rights to obtain equal position with men in the political, social and economic fields. When linked to literary research, literary feminism is a literary study with a feminist theory approach. In conducting research with this approach, the point of view that should be used by researchers is reading as women or reading as women, so there is a growing awareness that gender differences will influence literary meaning. The following will discuss the theory of feminist theory and the focus of the study of feminism in a literary work.

### **The Origin of Literary Feminism Theory**

Feminism was born in the early 20th century pioneered by Virginia Woolf in her book entitled *A Room for One's Own* (1929). This understanding experienced rapid development in the 1960s, which is one aspect of contemporary cultural theory with an analytical model covering the social, political and economic fields.

According to A Teeuw the feminist movement in the Western world was triggered by several factors (Ratna: 2004: 183, 184), namely:

1. The development of contraceptive techniques, which allows women to free themselves from male power.
2. Political radicalization.
3. The liberation movements and traditional ties, such as church ties, American black ties, student ties, and so on.
4. Secularization, decline of religious authority in all fields of life.
5. Educational development specifically enjoyed by women.
6. Reaction to literary approaches that alienate work from social structures, such as New Criticism and structuralism.
7. Dissatisfaction with the theory and practice of orthodox Marxist ideology.

The liberation movement as mentioned above raises the feminist movement that wants to fight for the rights of women, deconstruct the system of domination and hegemony, and engage in conflict between weak groups and stronger groups.

Feminist theories are closely related to class and racial conflict, especially gender conflict. Feminism is generally associated with emancipation, the women's movement to demand equal rights with men, both in the political, economic and socio-cultural fields. In the late 20th century, especially in the West, feminism was one of the most important symptoms.

In Indonesia, emancipation began to be considered since Repelita III, marked by the appointment of the Minister of State for the Role of Women. Academically it was marked by the opening of the Women's Study Program at Gadjah Mada University and the University of Indonesia. In literature, it has been considered since the 1920s, marked by the presence of the Balai Pustaka, by addressing the problem of forced marriage, which was then continued in the 1930s period which began with *Layar Terkembang* by Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana by not forgetting the R.A. pioneering services.

Kartini. Historically, the existence and struggle of women in Indonesia was marked by the convening of the Indonesian Women's Congress I in 1928 in Yogyakarta, the Indonesian Women's Congress II in 1935 in Jakarta, and the Indonesian Women's Congress III in 1938 in Bandung, which at the same time set December 22 as the day Mother. (Ratna: 2004: 191, 192). The entry of feminist theory into Indonesia was brought by Ateeaw, an Indonesian literary and cultural expert from the Netherlands.

Based on the background the origin of this theory, as a political, social and economic movement, feminist analysis thus includes multi-disciplinary research, involving various sciences. In relation to literature, relevant fields of study include: literary traditions of women, characteristics of women's language, female figures, popular novels and women, and so on. In relation to cultural

studies, women's problems are more related to gender equality (emancipation) and the deconstruction of a literary assessment system that is usually only seen from a male perspective.

### **Feminist figures**

As explained above, feminism arises because of demands for equal rights between men and women. Feminism is not just born, there are some figures behind the emergence of feminism theory. So, the following will be discussed by several important feminist figures, such as: Luce Irigaray, Julia Kristeva, Helene Cixous and Donna Haraway.

#### **1. Luce Irigaray**

Luce Irigaray, was born in Belgium on May 3, 1930, is one of the famous feminist figures by arguing by rejecting Freud and Lacan's opinion that women are real creatures, symbolic beings and imaginary creatures for men. Irigaray himself focused his attention on schizophrenia, which was considered a personal language or dialect focused on symbolic order.

In order to reject Freud's argument and reject male domination, Irigaray also focused her attention on the role of language, especially women's language. According to him because men have a language house, women also have to build their own language house, a house that frees them from male prison, a house that will be used as a place to carry out a total improvement of fate. So that later women do not speak like women but speak as women (Sarup in Ratna, 2004: 198).

Irigaray also stated that to match the male phallus, women must speak through language. And to shape her own image, women must be able to appear for themselves, in a way that is different from what men do.

#### **2. Julia Kristeva**

This Bulgarian woman born on June 24, 1941 gave rise to feminism through the display of text as a production material which was a deconstruction of western cultural hegemony. One of the most well-known concepts is semanalysis, a method that focuses not only on the function of language as a means of communication, but also on language material, such as: sound, rhythm and graphic features. Kristeva is a linguist like Irigaray who plunged into the world of feminist criticism. And his interest in feminists also departed from Freud and Lacan's theory which considers women to be weak.

Kristeva pays attention to subjectivity and the social historical aspects of the world of tagging (semiotics). Semiotics is called a feminist. According to him the language is not a monolithic system, but a complex, heterogeneous signification process that exists within and between subjects, from homogeneous structures to language as heterogeneous processes.

#### **3. Helene Cixous**

Helen Cixous (June 15, 1937) was a feminist novelist, drama writer, and critic. There are two kinds of attention to feminism, namely: binary hegemony problems in Western culture and Practices Feminine writers who dispose of their bodies. Binary opposition directed for example: father / mother, sun / moon, culture / nature, which often occurs in the context of men and women.

To reject male hegemony, according to Cixous it must be done with the practice of feminine writing, the practices carried out in the body with one of the uniqueness are proximity to the voice. Women must write about themselves, write videos and bring women into writing. Because writing is considered a special space for self-exploration.

Cixous further discussed the relationship between women's texts and mothers as the origin of the sounds heard in all women's texts. The femininity in writing is a voice, writing and voice cannot be separated, the whole talk of women is the voice of women. Physically, women materialize what they think, they interpret it in the body. Women, with other words and writings in their voices, and their writings are the freedom of their identity as acts of words.

#### **4. Donna Haraway**

Donna Haraway has a different perspective on feminism. One aspect raised was her enthusiasm in supporting and utilizing modern technology, namely cyborg. although it has a negative impact, but in order to achieve gender redefinition, as a characteristic that is replaced by women, cyborg is considered as one way to fight for gender equality. Cyborg can be used to break through the biological nature and determinism of human history that has been launched throughout the centuries by the male world.

Feminism Literary in Indonesia was first by A. Teew who was an Indonesian literary and cultural expert from the Netherlands.

### **Feminism Studies**

In literature, feminism is related to the concept of feminist literary criticism, namely literary studies that direct the focus of analysis on women. Feminist literary criticism does not mean female critics, or criticism of women, or criticism of female authors. The simple meanings contained are critics who view literature with special awareness; awareness that there are sexes that are related to culture, literature and life.

Reading as a woman means reading with the awareness of uncovering the prejudices and ideologies of the power of androcentric or patriarchal men, who until now still master writing and literary reading. Sex differences in the poets, readers, elements of work and external factors that influence the situation of literary communication systems.

Endraswara (2003: 146) revealed that in analyzing literary works in a focused study of feminism are: a. position and role of female figures in literature, b. lags of women in all aspects of life, including education and community activities, c. pay attention to the literary factor, how does the reader respond to women's emancipation in literature.

Kolodny in Djajanegara (2000: 20-30) describes several objectives of feminist literary criticism, namely: a. with feminist literary criticism are able to reinterpret and reassess all literary works produced in the past century; b. help us understand, interpret, and assess the stories of women writers.

Kuiper (Sugihastuti and Suharto, 2002: 68) also reveals the objectives of literary feminist research as follows: 1. To criticize canon literary works and to highlight things that are standard based on patriarchy; 2. To display underestimated texts made by women; 3. To establish gynocritic, which is the study of texts centered on women, and to strengthen women's canons; 4. To explore the cultural construction of gender and identity.

The important target in the analysis of literary feminism as far as possible relates to the following:

1. Revealing the works of past and present female writers to make it clear that women are depressed by tradition. The dominance of the particular culture must be clearly revealed in the analysis.
2. Revealing pressure on female characters in literary works written by male authors.
3. Reveal the ideology of female and male authors, how they view themselves in real life.
4. Reviewing the aspects of ginokritik, namely understanding how the feminist creative process. Whether female writers will have a specificity in style and expression or not.
5. Revealing aspects of feminist psychoanalysis, which is why women, both characters and authors prefer things that are smooth, emotional, loving and so on.

Meanwhile, Selden (Pradopo in Endaswara, 2011: 147) classifies the focus of literary feminism studies into five:

1. Biology, which often places women inferior, gentle, weak and low.
2. Experience, often women are seen as having only limited experience, problems with menstruation, childbirth, breastfeeding and so on.
3. Women have lower mastery of language, while men have "strong demands". As a result of all this, it will lead to negative stereotypes in women, women just winking.
4. Unconscious process, feminist writers have tacitly undermined male authority. Women's sexuality is revolutionary, subversive, diverse and open. However, this is still less realized by men.
5. Feminist authors usually often present different social and economic demands from men.

From these various focuses, feminist-oriented literary researchers can focus on just a few choices to be more profound.

### **Analysis Theory of Feminism**

Feminism as a women's movement to gain autonomy or freedom of self-determination. Feminism fights for two things that women do not have in general, namely their equality with men and generally, namely their equal rank with men and autonomy to determine what is good for

themselves. (Yasa, 2012: 37). Analysis in the study of feminism should be able to reveal aspects of women's oppression of men. Feminist issues are always associated with the issue of equality and gender equality. However, it raises by feminists issues. In contemporary theory, attention is no longer focused on women's lives, but rather extends to gender analysis. How does gender influence in human social life. If we are able to see closely, international politics and international relations are only held by most men. Women are not much involved in making decisions and forming international political patterns. The following are the basic assumptions put forward by Feminists:

1. Feminists do not consider human nature to be unchanging.
2. From a feminist perspective, we cannot make a clear difference between 'facts' and 'values'.
3. There is a close relationship between knowledge and power and between our 'theories' about the world and our habits, how we engage with the physical and social environment around us.
4. The postmodern feminists themselves (postmodernists reject the claim of universality), feminists have a common commitment to the social progress and freedom or emancipation of women.

Nowadays, the national defense association or defense of national interests is always attached to the role of men. Meanwhile, only giving domestic roles such as being a 'giver of security' like a good mother, loyal wife, teacher, nurse, and social worker. Thus, a very strong and entrenched understanding emerged that international politics was identified with masculinity such as strength, strength, autonomy, freedom, and rationality.

Male domination of women has influenced literary conditions, including: (1) Literary values and conventions are often vital for men, bordering women are always in a position to struggle constantly towards gender equality, (2) male writers Men are also biased, including women are fantastic objects that are interesting. Women always use objects at a glance by men. Works that are always siding, namely women who provide people who are useful for venting lust alone, (3) women are figures who become literary flowers, or so-called men, rape, and the like that seem to cornen women in weak position (helpless).

In other words, there are indeed different visions of male and female writers. Both camps often have resistance to each other with no end to the base. That is why, the analysis of feminism should assess Barret (Pradopo, 1991: 142), namely: (1) researchers want to use separate material that is worked on by male and female writers, (2) frequent ideologies influence the work of the author. The ideology and beliefs of men and women are of course in principle, (3) ways that are far from texts that can be used to describe their cultural conditions. Gender differences often affect the customs and culture that are revealed. The traditions of men and women naturally have differences that must be learned in gender analysis.

In detail, according to Sholwater (1988) there are three phases of the tradition of literary writing by women, namely:

1. Women writers, such as George Eliot, often imitate and live the aesthetic standards of dominant men who want women to remain in a respectable position. The main background of their work is the household and community environment.
2. Women writers who have been radical. At this time women have the right to choose which method is appropriate for expression. Likewise the themes are also increasingly complex.
3. The results of women's writings in addition to following the previous pattern, are also increasingly self-aware. Women have realized that they are not "angels of the house" but that there must be emancipation.

Sholwater also emphasized that in the analysis of literary feminism it is necessary to explore further about: (1) the essential differences between the language of male and female writers, the differences will be influenced by the different cultural contexts. Do women use more aesthetic language that is full of sense, full of mystical power, old-fashioned, and so on. On the contrary, maybe men are more open in highlighting negative things, (2) how far the cultural influence that attaches to women and men in a sense of creation. Do men tend want to maintain a culture that hegemony women, and on the contrary women are just being resigned, is a very significant picture in the analysis of feminism. There are several misconceptions in understanding Feminism Theory, namely:

1. Men cannot become feminists, they can only be sympathizers or supporters. Gender is the same as gender. Gender refers to the biological anatomy between women and men. Whereas gender explains the social interests or understanding referred to in those differences.
2. Gender studies in HI are about women. The position and status of women cannot be understood without referring to general ideas about gender and how gender relations have been arranged in society in particular, meaning that gender patterns have taken root in society and that is the measuring point where women's position in HI studies.
3. Studies on gender and HI are only important for women. In fact, in analyzing gender issues, we still have to look at the side of masculinity that is found in men to see how women should be.
4. Feminism is a worldview or paradigm like the others.
5. All feminists are lesbians, except male haters. Feminism is more about understanding and resistance to certain aspects of power and inequality than narrow-minded denunciation.

Feminists fight for how women are not made subordinate to the behavior of international relations and social society. But more to how women are involved and made the main focus. Feminists believe that if policy makers do not merely make women only live in domestic coverage. However, there are those who miss this theory. Feminists only concentrate on gender relations, more precisely on women. Women use ideas about gender to legitimize unequal status aimed at women. Feminists also universalize women. That is, feminists forget other aspects such as culture, race, class, and so on. Whereas all of these aspects are closely related to social and international dynamics. Meanwhile, there are still many women who do not have the same interests or ideas as what feminist activists say.

For literary works from the feminist aspect, researchers need to read the text as a woman (Reading a woman) in the term Culler. Reading as a woman will be more democratic and not take sides with men or women. From here, researchers will find the term diegesis and mimesis in literary texts. Diegesis is any event that is reported or narrated. The mimesis is the things that are done and performed. Both diegesis and mimesis are text sequences that can be understood by the reader.

According to Yoder (Sugihastuti, 2002: 139) feminism is likened to a quilt built and shaped from pieces of soft cloth. This understanding of feminism is indeed a matter of politics, meaning a politics that directly changes the relationship of life forces between women and men in literary communication systems.

So in literature, feminism is related to the concept of feminist literary crystals, namely literary studies that direct the focus of analysis on women. If all this time it is considered by it that which represents the reader and creator in western literature is male, then the feminist criticism shows that the female reader brings perceptions and hopes into his literary experience.

### **Criticism of Feminism Literature**

Literary criticism does not mean criticism of women or female critics. Feminism literary criticism is a criticism of literary work, which critics view literature with a special awareness that there are sexes that are much related to literary culture and life. It is this sex that makes the difference between all that also makes a difference to the author, reader, character, and external factors that influence the coral-fabricating situation. Literary criticism of feminism is a strong reason to unite the position that a woman can read as a woman, compose as a woman, and interpret literary work as a woman.

Even though women have experience, race and culture uniformity. But they have different views on feminist ideology. It could be a certain group of people, have the same race but have different perspectives on women, therefore, feminists raise awareness of ideology and racist practices that harm certain minorities. Feminist research cannot be done in one theory, because a feminist study must look at different perspectives and present a broad collection of methods and methodologies. In feminist research, the purpose of the study is not a particular group of people, but as a whole.

Gilbert in Yasa looked at women based on Freud's psychoanalysis that there was a revision or improvement that had to be made aware of by women, namely a complete change in all ideas

about the world of literature. Freud's opinion received strong protests from feminists, especially because Freud revealed shameless female genital deficiencies. Freud's psychoanalytic theory has been dramatized openly for criticism. Freud did not at all corner women. His theory is based more on the results of his scientific research. For this reason Freud's theory can actually be used as a foundation in developing the feminist movement in order to achieve gender justice. Therefore, refinement of this theory is needed so that the correct conclusions can be drawn. This criticism not only confines itself to the works of female authors, but extends to all the works of the author.

Feminism literary criticism, which is interpreted as reading as a woman, holds that this criticism does not seek a single conceptual model, but instead becomes a factor in theory and practice, using freedom in methodology and approaches that can help expand its criticism. This method is based on a point of view that is able to maintain and consistently maintain the readiness of readers that there are gender differences affecting the world of literature. It can be explained that literature as a product of illustration of all social life. For example a novel that can be considered as a cultural structure and process. Lexically, feminism is defined as a women's movement that demands full equality of rights between women and men.

Ratna in Yasa, (2006: 184 also states that feminism is associated with ways of understanding literary works, both in relation to the process of reproduction and reception. Therefore, femininity is a cultural psychological understanding, a person is not born "as" a woman but "becomes" Women. So the conclusion, which is rejected by feminist groups is the assumption that women are negative constructs, women as subjugated beings, women who are entangled into a marginal, superior inferior central dichotomy. Feminism criticism seeks to uncover the mistakes of human thinking about women.

## Conclusion

Feminism is born because women are tired of being subordinated to everything. This has traditionally been called women's emancipation, where women demand equal rights in the political, intellectual, cultural and even literary fields. As a literary work, feminism began when Balai Pustaka was continued in the New Poetry period as in the work of Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana through the novel 'Layar Tertembang'.

Feminism focuses its attention on women by building a theory that is considered capable of reducing male domination that is very strong. Irigaray (female language), Kristeva (semanalysis), Cixous (the practice of feminine writing) and Haraway (cyborg) with their respective interests make a significant contribution in sustaining the struggle of women.

Analysis in the study of feminism should also be able to reveal aspects of women's oppression of men. Feminist issues are always associated with the issue of equality and gender equality. And through feminism, women are able to show their authenticity. women are no longer as weak creatures and imaginary creatures that have been in the minds of men. But women are also able to work and be productive with men.

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