

FEMINISM APPROACH IN NOVEL SALAH PILIH BY NUR ST. ISKANDAR

Fitriani Lubis

*Medan State University
E-mail: rianiavandi@gmail.com*

Abstract: Feminism began to develop in society, especially women who have higher education. Even so there are also some people who do not understand the understanding of feminism. Feminism is born from the unfair treatment felt by women. Through literary work, feminism was born as a thought to change the unfavorable situation for women. This paper examines the approach of feminism in the novel *Salah Pilih* by Nur St. Iskandar.

Keywords: *Literary Criticism, Feminism, Novel*

Feminism is a movement that demands the emancipation or equality and justice of rights by men. Feminism comes from Latin, *femina* or female. This term began to be used in the 1890s, referring to the theory of equality of men and women and the movement to obtain women's rights. The widespread definition of feminism is the advocacy of equality of women's rights in political, social, and economic matters.

The feminist movement began in the late 18th century and flourished throughout the twentieth century beginning with the equality of women's political rights. Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* is considered one of the earliest feminist writings containing criticisms of the French Revolution which applies only to men but not to women. A century later in Indonesia, Raden Ajeng Kartini co-authored his thoughts on the criticism of the situation of Javanese women who were not given the opportunity to attain equal education with men other than criticism of Dutch colonialism.

Basically the content of a literary work contains human behavior through characters of story characters. Very diverse human behavior that can be published in the story. Sometimes this happens when it is carefully observed. It is this pattern or repetition that is captured as a phenomenon and so is further classified into certain categories such as psychological, social, and community phenomena. For example, behavior related to psychiatric symptoms is a phenomenon of frustration or disappointment.

Feminism is a notion that opposes cultural and political policies that do not benefit women. This understanding then developed into a movement in western countries around the 1970s. In those days, a handful of women who claimed to be feminists, struggled to gain her rights as citizens. One of the things emphasized from this feminist movement is that women want to get access to decent work, women want to get access to education, and women want to get their rights to politics. In short, women demand the same rights as men get. This struggle continues, along with the development of women's movement in various countries, including in Asian countries.

In Indonesia, the idea of feminism is only driven by a few women. This is because not all women understand the true meaning of feminism. Today's women are not born in an era that women are second. Women now do not need to feel what Kartini felt like a 'dipingit', deprived of the right to education, although there are still some small communities that apply this culture. The woman who now claims herself as a feminist is born through a woman's thoughts and experiences. This thought is heavily influenced by books of literature study of feminism as well as books that highlight the experience of women oppressed by patriarchal culture. It is also possible that the thoughts and experiences of women do not result in a common interpretation. Thus, feminism often evolved into other understandings such as; radical feminism, Marxist feminism, lesbian feminism and others.

Novel *Salah Pilih* by Nur Sutan Iskandar is an old romance novel that witnesses the history and development of Bahasa Indonesia as well as traces of modern Indonesian thinking. To find out how the existence of women in the novel *Salah Pilih*, the author focuses the object of study on the feminist approach contained in the novel.

Feminism Approach

The theory of feminism departs from the basis of gender differences in which women are often treated differently from those who are gendered men and this is the basis for the movement of feminism. Feminism has the origin of the word *femme* which means female, which is a movement or activity of women who struggle for gender balance between women and men in getting their right in social society. The purpose of this feminism movement is the achievement of equality and equality of rights and obligations applied to all gender. Najmah and Khatimah Sa'ida in his book entitled "*Revisi Politik Perempuan*" (2003: 34) states that feminism is an awareness of the oppression and exploitation of women that occurs both in the family, at work, and in society and the existence of conscious action will both men and women to change the situation lexically. Feminism is a women's movement that demands equal rights between women and men.

Feminism was born in the early 20th century, pioneered by Virginia Woolf in his book *A Room of One's Own* (1929). Etymologically feminist comes from the word *femme* (woman), meaning women who aim to fight for the rights of women (plural), as a social class. Feminist goals are gender balance and interrelation. In a broader sense, feminists are women's movements to reject everything that is marginalized, subordinated, and demeaned by dominant cultures, both in the political and economic spheres and social life in general.

Feminist theory as a tool for women to fight for their rights is closely related to racial class conflict, especially gender conflict. In contemporary literary theory, feminism is a women's movement that occurs almost all over the world. This movement was triggered by the awareness that women's rights are equal to men. The diversity and difference of objects with their theories and methods are typical of feminist studies. In relation to literature, the relevant field of study, including: the literary tradition of women, female authors, female readers, the characteristics of the female language, female characters, etc.

In relation to cultural studies, women's issues are more related to gender equality. Feminists, especially women's issues, are generally associated with emancipation, the women's movement to demand equal rights with men, both in politics and economics, as well as in socio-cultural movements in general. In the emancipation literature has been questioned since the 1920s, marked by the presence of novels *Balai Pustaka*, with the issue of forced marriage, which then continued in the period of 1930s which begins with *Layar Terkembang* by Sutan Takdir Aliajahbana.

Examples of male dominance, both in the form of main characters of fiction contained in literary works as well as factual figures as authors can be seen both in old literature and modern literature. Consciousness changed since the 1970s, since the birth of popular novels, followed by the presence of a number of authors and women figures. As a female author it is rather rare. Throughout the course of Indonesian literary history there are several female authors, among others: Sariamin, Hamidah, Suwarsih Djojopuspito, Nh. Dini, Oka Rusmini, Ayu Utami, Dee, and others.

Feminism Approach in Literature Review

The approach of feminism in literary studies is often known as the critique of feminist literature. Sugihastuti (2005: 18) argues that feminism is a movement of equality between men and women in all fields of politics, economy, education, social and organized activities that defend women's rights and interests. Feminism is also an awareness of oppression and extortion of women in society, both in the workplace and in the household.

Sholwalter (in Sugihastuti and Suharto, 2002: 18) states that in literature, this feminism is related to the concept of feminist literary criticism, a literary study that directs the focus of his analysis to women. If it has been assumed by itself that what represents readers and creators in Western literature is male, feminist literary criticism shows that women bring perceptions and expectations into their literary experience.

Important targets in feminist analysis according to Suwardi Endaswara (2008: 146) are as much as possible related to: (1) revealing the works of past and present women writers; (2) uncovering various pressures on female characters in literary works written by male authors; (3) expose the ideology of female and male authors, how they view themselves in real life; (4) examine the ginocritical aspects, understand the creative process of feminists; and (5) revealing aspects of feminist psychoanalysis, why women prefer the subtle, emotional, loving and others. Next comes the term reading as a woman, reading as a woman, which is triggered by Culler, the intention is to read with awareness of presuppositions and ideology of patriarchate male power (Sugihastuti and Suharto, 2002: 19). Reading as women related to socio-cultural factors readers. In this case the attitude of reading becomes an important factor. The role of the reader by itself can not be separated from his reading attitude. The image of women in the work gets meaning.

Reading as women by Suwardi Endaswara (2008: 147) is reading as a woman. Researchers in understanding literature should use a special awareness, namely the realization that the sexes have much to do with the problem of belief, ideology, and life insight. The special awareness of reading as a woman is important in the critique of feminist literature. The analysis of novels with feminist literary criticism is related to the concept of reading as a woman, since all this time it seems as if the literary work is addressed to male readers, with this criticism there is renewed recognition of the existence of female readers. This can be said to reduce gender prejudices in literature.

Yoder (in Suroso: 2009) mentions that the criticism of feminist literature does not mean women's critics, or critics of female authors; the simple meaning of feminist literary criticism is that critics look at literature with special consciousness, the realization that there is a gender that has much to do with our culture, literature, and life. Feminist ideology was born and began to flare up in the late 1960s in the West, with several important factors influencing it. Simon de Beauvoir, Kathie Millet, Betty Friedan, and Germain Greer are writers who pay attention to feminist criticism. In its development these pioneers directed the form of feminist literary criticism which is a mixture of culture and literature. Qualitative research of literature with feminist perspective. The rationale in feminist perspective literature research is the effort to understand the position and role of women as reflected in the literary work. Qualitative literary research with a feminist perspective is usually an inductive study. This nature aims to develop a theoretical framework. The type of empirical data of literary works studied is a feminist perspective can be qualitative and quantitative. One thing that is demanded as in qualitative research is the quality of researchers.

Feminist literary criticism arises when the image of women in literature is almost always placed as a victim, sentimentalist, and has a spiritual sensitivity amidst the power of a confined man. According to Djajanegara (2003: 27) the emergence of literary criticism is originated from the first desire that encourages the emergence of feminism movement in the literature is the awareness of women that even in women's literature still appear as subordinated parties. Meanwhile, according to Sugihastuti (2005: 29), the critique of feminist literature that has a definition as a literary review that leads to the focus of women's analysis emerged from the fact that in the literary work there are gender issues.

The focus of the discussion on the issue of female existence in literary criticism is closely related to the five subject matter (Selden, 1991).

1. Biological: from a male's point of view, woman is "Tofa Mulier in Utero" 'woman is nothing but a womb'. So, judging from the role of a woman's body, she is the place of heredity. The feminist side, on the other hand, argues that women's biological attributes are more a source of superiority than inferiority.
2. Experience: there is a clear distinction in terms of women's and men's perceptions and emotions in important and unimportant matters.
3. Discourse: Foucault argues that what is "right" depends on who is in charge of the discourse. Thus, it is natural that there is male dominance in the "truth" contained in literary works written by men. There is an assumption (Robin Lakoff = sociolinguist) that the language of women seems rather low, has uncertainty, superficial, reckless, not serious, and full of feeling. In order for women to be more dominant, then must try to seize the discourse of men.
4. Awareness: The psychoanalytic theory of Lacan and Kristeva speaks of this. Female sexuality is revolutionary, subversive, diverse and open. Therefore there is an attempt to refuse to define female sexuality.

5. Social and economic conditions: women seek to balance the changes in social and economic conditions in the interaction of women and men.

There are several issues that can be studied with feminist criticism. Generally all literary works featuring female characters, both in fiction and poetry can be studied with a feminist approach. The things studied in relation to female characters are:

1. The role of female characters in literary works is either as a protagonist or an antagonist, or subordinate figure.
2. Relationship of female characters with other figures of male and other female figures.
3. Perform the female character, his ideals, his behavior, his words (speech of his language), and his views on the world and life.
4. The attitudes of female authors (authors) and authors of female characters.

Based on the above description, the essence of feminist criticism can be used to examine the literary works of male and female writers. A feminist critic (feminist reader) can see how According to Yoder (in Suroso, 2009: 5), "feminist literary criticism does not mean women's criticism or criticism of women, or criticism of female authors". Criticism of feminist literature is intended to criticize the view of literature with special conscience. The realization that there is a gender that has much to do with culture, literature, and life. Based on the description can be stated that criticism of feminism means when criticizing literature, one must position as a woman. The purpose of the criticism of feminism itself is to elevate women. In a drama script written by men, women as characters are always exploited. All the interesting things of women will be used as the appeal of the work. This shows that women are the second creature, after the man. For feminism, it is very painful. Therefore, it is necessary to defend women in literary works through literary criticism.

Results and Discussion

After analyzing the feminism approach to the novel *Salah Pilih* the work of Nur St. Iskandar, researchers found that the existence of an orphaned woman who is a foster child is despicable in the eyes of a respected person from the descendants of the aristocracy. But different in the eyes of the economically equivalent society, the assessment of women is not from possessed possessions, but the sincerity of his heart. Even if the woman came from a respected person, but still considered not to have density if not having manners. Even close neighbors also away from the family Asri after the presence of Saniah who is very arrogant and looked down on the village community in the gedang house. Asnah is a woman who is willing to save her sadness for the happiness of her brother, Asri. Feelings of inferiority as a foster child as well as people who are indebted to the family of Asri encouraged him to close his heart tightly, even support Asri meet the expectations of his mother to get married soon. Asnah who became the main character of the novel is often depressed by the treatment of his brother-in-law who often put jealous of him. But the gentle heart of Asnah just trying to cover it all from Asri who has been wrong wife.

Conclusion and Suggestions

Based on the analysis with the feminism approach to the novel *Salah Pilih* by Nur St. Iskandar, it can be deduced that the existence of an orphaned woman who is a foster child is despicable in the eyes of a respected person from the descendants of the aristocracy. But different in the eyes of the economically equivalent society, the assessment of women is not from possessed possessions, but the sincerity of his heart. Even if the woman came from a respected person, but still considered not to have density if not having manners. Even a nearby neighbor away from him. The reader can make this study as a consideration in understanding the approach of feminism, especially in the novel *Salah Pilih* by Nur St. Iskandar.

Bibliography

- Djajanegara, Soernati. 2003. *Kritik Sastra Feminis: sebuah Pengantar*. Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama.
- Endraswara, Suwardi. 2008. *Metode Penelitian Sastra*. Yogyakarta: Media Pressindo.

- Fakih, Mansour. 2007. *Analisis Gender dan Transformasi Sosial*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.
- Najmah, Sa'idah, dan Husnul Khatimah. 2003. *Revisi Politik Perempuan*. Jakarta: Idea Pustaka Utama.
- Nurgiyantoro, Burhan. 2010. *Teori Pengkajian Fiksi*. Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press.
- Selden, Rahman. 1991. *Panduan Pembaca Teori Sastra Masa Kini*. Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press.
- Sugihastuti dan Suharto. 2002. *Kritik Sastra Feminis (Teori dan Aplikasinya)*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.
- Sugihastuti. 2005. *Rona Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.
- Suroso, Puji Santosa, dan Pardi Suratno. 2009. *Kritik Sastra: Teori, Metodologi, dan Aplikasi*. Yogyakarta: Elmaterra Publishing.