

**SHAPE OF FEMININITY IN THE TEXT OF *GEGURITAN* (PHILOSOPHICAL VERSE)
IN BALI:
ANALYSIS OF FEMINISM**

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ABSTRACT

The object of this study is Balinese traditional literature which is the form of *geguritan* (philosophical verse). The reason why such texts are used as the object of the study is that they contain very complex and interesting narrations about feminism. The objectives of this study are to find out the formal and narrative structure of the texts and to describe the shape of femininity in the texts and its relevance to the lives of Balinese women who are Hindu followers in the society. The objectives are all at once the answers to the problems of the study.

The theory applied is that of feminism which emphasizes the concept of Radical-Cultural Feminism. This study is a qualitative one of which the data were collected by documentation method, that is, by the techniques of note taking, observation and interview. The data were analyzed using the formal method in accordance with literature studies.

There were nine *geguritan* (philosophical verses) which were used as the object of the study. From the formal structural analysis, the *pupuh* (strophe) used, its function and literary style could be identified. From the content, religious and amusement functions could be identified. From the narrative structural analysis, it could be identified that the plot was chronological and *sorot balik* (backward directed); the characters and characterization were described to express extraordinary ability, which was based on Hinduism, while the theme was described to express the application of *panca crada* (the five principles in Hinduism). There were seven findings as far as the analysis of the text is concerned: they are: (1) the educated women could determine their attitudes, make decisions, show prestige and maintain their dignity; (2) the women in the texts had extraordinary power. This means that the women were not weak. Therefore, the stereotype that women were weak was neglected; (3) the educated women who used Hinduism as the reference could become the men's power; (4) the women who could become the men's power could be the centre or the subject of the events undergone during their lives; (5) the women's ability was similar to the men's and they could show their ability; (6) the shape of femininity in the texts was in accordance with *wadhu tatwa* (a type of philosophy) and the struggle of Radical Cultural Feminism; (7) it turned out that the theory of feminism could be used for analyzing the traditional literature.

Key words: shape of femininity, *geguritan* (philosophical verse), feminism

Introduction

Basically, literary work constitutes one of the human activities which is based on imagination, and is useful to the human life. Literary work *presents* the pictures of life and culture in a particular era. The cultural aspects presented in literary work are: religion, language, literature, arts, and the environmental tradition of the literary work created.

The object of this study is the texts of *geguritan* (philosophical verse) which were analyzed using the approach of feminism. The reasons on which this study is based are as follows: (1) there are many *geguritan* (philosophical verses) which describe women and their lives. The women are used as the centre and object of narration related to situation, condition and experience. The problems faced by each female character are different, but in the solutions the women's roles are more dominant; (2) in *geguritan* strong and educated women are described to be able to determine attitudes, to make decisions, to do heavy jobs, to be able to maintain their image, to be well tested, to be patient and faithful, which contrasts with the current assumption (stereotype assumption) that women are weak, only busy with household chores, and are *nerimo* (receptive); (3) so far, the contents of many *geguritan* are neglected and are paid less attention to by the public, but the case is that they contain thoughts relevant to the movement of gender equality if observed deeply.

Based on the background above, there are four problems in this study; they are: (1) how are the formal and narrative structures of the texts of *geguritan* used as the object of the study?; (2) what situation and problems are faced by the female characters in the texts of *geguritan* used as the object of the study?; (3) what is done to solve the problems faced by the female characters in the texts of *geguritan* used as the object of the study?; and (4) what is the shape of femininity in the texts of *geguritan* used as the object of study based on the analysis of feminism like and what is its relevance to the lives of Balinese women who are Hindu followers in the society?

Based on the problems above, the specific objectives of this study are : (1) to find out the formal and narrative structures of the *geguritan* used as the object of the study; (2) to find out and present the situation and problems faced by the female characters in the texts of *geguritan* used as the object of the study; (3) to describe what is done to solve the problems faced by the female characters in the text of *geguritan* used as the object of the study; (4) to describe the shape of femininity in the texts of *geguritan* used as the object of the study based on the analysis of feminism and its relevance to the lives of Balinese women who are Hindu followers.

Literature Review, Concepts and Theory

The works which are concerned with the women in texts which are referred to in this study are written by I Dewa Gede Windhu Sancaya (1966) and Yeni Hayati (2006), and those which are concerned with the women in the real world referred to are written by Ketut Sudhana Astika (2002), Ni Luh Arjani (2002), and Gde Made Swardana (2002).

The concept of the shape of femininity in this study refers to the description of the characters and the personality of the female characters who are able to appreciate their femininity and to carry out their noble responsibilities, and of the grown up women. The concept of Balinese *geguritan* refers to traditional

Balinese literature, which uses Balinese language and Latin characters as the medium and is in the form of poems as well as narration using *sekar alit*, formed by *pupuh* (strophe) and bound with *padalingsa*. In this study, the concept of text is similar to that of discourse, while the concept of feminism intended in this study refers to the humanity movement which struggles for equality between men and women. Because feminism is not monolithic ideology, this study refers to the concept of Radical-Cultural Feminism commented by Alice Echols and Linda Alcoff.

This study is based on the theory of feminism labeled Radical Feminism which states that inequality results from sexism and patriarchal ideology. The women's fundamental oppression, according to Alison Jaggar and Paula Rothenberg, has something to do with sexism/gender. Criticism has led to the appearance of the thought of feminine essentialism which then results in dissension in Radical Feminism. Such a dissension contributes to the appearance of two ideologies. They are: Radical Libertarian Feminism which suggests androgyny that sexuality is dangerous and that natural reproduction is the main cause of oppression against women. The other one is Radical Cultural Feminism which is commented by Alice Echols and Linda Alcoff. This ideology disagrees with androgyny and therefore, it is replaced by "femininity" (women's essentials), which considers that sexuality can give great pleasure and that reproduction is the source of the women's perfect power. Based on the theory of feminism mentioned above, in this study the concept of Radical Feminism Radical is employed as the basic theory. In order to get the description of the shape of femininity in the texts, deconstruction reading whose distinctive feature is neglecting the binary opposition with the concept of difference/differance meaning that difference as well as deferment was applied.

Research Methodology

This study is a qualitative one. To realize the study, ethic and *emik* methods were applied. The main data were obtained by documentation method that is, by note taking supported by observation and interview technique. Then, the data were presented using the formal method which is in accordance with literature studies.

Text Determination

To find the texts which were used as the object of the study, library research was done at some formal and personal libraries. Based on the catalog available at the library of the Faculty of Letters Udayana University, four texts were found to describe the women's roles. Such a research was also done at the Bali Cultural Documentation Centre located in Denpasar. From the catalog, 16 texts were dominantly found to describe the women's roles. Then another research was done at Gedong Kirtya located in Singaraja. Based on the catalog available there, 14 texts were dominantly discovered to describe the women's roles. A similar research was also carried out at I Wayan Djapa's personal library, where two texts were dominantly discovered to describe the women's role. Altogether, there were 36 texts which were dominantly found to describe the women's roles. However, after they were carefully observed, there were some similar texts kept at the three libraries. Finally, 21 texts were decided to be chosen as the object of the study. They are : *Geguritan Sawitri*, *Geguritan Candrawati*, *Geguritan Cilinaya*, *Geguritan Diah Arini*, *Geguritan Luh Lutung*, *Geguritan Luh Laras*, *Geguritan Sri Wulan*, *Geguritan Anggreni*, *Geguritan Sakuntala*, *Geguritan Giri Putri*, *Geguritan Brayut*, *Geguritan Ni Sumala*, *Geguritan Ni Sewagati*, *Geguritan Tunjung Biru*, *Geguritan Istri Tanjung*, *Geguritan Ni Nyonya*, *Geguritan Liku*, *Geguritan Nilawati*, *Geguritan Dreman*, *Geguritan Saci* and *Geguritan Damayanti*. Next, the contents of the texts were thoroughly observed. It was found that some texts described love among adolescents, some described animal characters and some others described dissemination of diseases. The last were not used as the object of the study because they were not in accordance with the objectives of the study. Those which were in accordance with the objectives of the study were nine *geguritan* which were directly determined as the object of the study. After they were read and their contents were compared, the texts determined to be researched were: *Geguritan Dreman*, *Geguritan Diah Sawitri*, *Geguritan Damayanti*, *Geguritan Ni Candrawati*, *Geguritan Brayut*, *Geguritan Saci*, *Geguritan Diah Arini*, *Geguritan Cilinaya* and *Geguritan Dewi Sakuntala*.

The Formal and Narrative Structure of the Texts Determined as the Object of the Study

The analysis of the formal structure of the *geguritan* which were used as the object of the study showed the *pupuh* (strophe) used, its function and its literary style; from the content point of view, those *geguritan* were discovered to function as amusement and to reflect the basic framework of Hinduism and the five basic principles in Hinduism (*Panca crada*).

The analysis of the narrative structure of the *geguritan* used as the object of the study showed that the plot employed can be divided into two; they are: chronological and backward directed (*sorot balik*). The characters and characterization presented were those who had extraordinary ability in which Hinduism was used as the reference. The theme was found to reflect the application of *panca crada* (the five basic principles in Hinduism).

The Women in the Geguritan Used as the Object of the Study

Based on the analysis of the texts used as the object of the study, the situation, the problems faced by the women and the solutions to the problems could be identified. The problems faced by the women were different but they were similar in the solutions, that is, they all referred to the five basic principles (*panca crada*) in Hinduism. The shape of femininity in the texts used as the object of the study were still relevant to the lives of Balinese Women nowadays but the form was different due to the difference in situation and era.

Findings

The analysis of the texts used as the object of the study revealed seven findings; they are (1) the educated women could determine their attitude, make decisions, show their prestige and maintain their dignity; (2) the women prescribed in the texts had extraordinary power. This means that the women were not weak. Therefore, the stereotype that women are weak is neglected; (3) the educated women who referred to Hinduism as the reference could become the men's power; (4) the women as the men's power could become the centre and subject of the events undergone in their lives; (5) the women's ability was similar to the men's and the women could show their ability; (6) the shape of femininity in the texts was in accordance with *wadhu tatwa* as well as the struggle of Radical Cultural Feminism; (7) it turned out that the theory of feminism could be applied in analyzing the traditional literature.

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