

E-Journal

**THE STRUGGLE OF GENDER EQUALITY  
IN FIVE NOVELS OF Nh. DINI**

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**ABSTRACT**

This study explores the problems of women , patriarchal culture and the fight for gender equality as exposed in Nh. Dini's novels. There are still many women who are trapped in domestic sector and loose their rights to manage their own lives with their own way. There have been many women who are successful working in public sector, but the number are still very small compared to the number of men who are successful. This study tends to expose the problems of women to reach gender equality for women.

This study is importantly conducted because Nh. Dini's literary works reveal the problems of women related to patriarchal culture which hampers the progress of women. The present study is different with the previous one, because this study explores feminism ideology which is against patriarchal culture and tradition which is still adopted by people as portrayed in five novels of Nh. Dini.

The theory of Dinamic Structuralism is used to explain the interconnection of all aspects and components of the novels to get the complete meaning. The theory of Sociology of Literature is used to relate the social problems in the novels to the realities in the real world. The theory of Feminism is used to understand the novels related to women problems, patriarchal culture and gender equality.

Text analysis based on the problems of the study revealed that many women are still trapped in domestic sector, still dominated by patriarchal culture. They loose their fundamental rights to manage their own lives and to improve their lives quality to become qualified women. Consenquently the women are so dependent on other people.

Analysis about the factors which caused the poverty and misery of women revealed that the main cause of the women problems in the novels is patriarchal culture. The women are not permitted to work in public sector to earn their own lives. Consequently many women become poor for being jobless.

The fight for gender equality that revealed in five novels are in agreement with the thought of feminism ideology, among others is the fight to get education and job. Feminism ideology also fight to free women from patriarchal domination by living without marriage or claiming for divorce from the husband who can not protect their wives anymore.

Keywords: Women problems, patriarchal culture, gender equality, feminism ideology

## 1. Introduction

This study observes women problems related to tradition and patriarchal culture. There are still many women placed in domestic sector and loose their rights to manage their own lives. The men are regarded superior and and dominate the women who are inferior. The five novels which are observed are *La Barka* (1975), *Jalan Bandungan* (1989), *Dari Parangakik Ke Kampuchea* (2003), *Dari Fontenay Ke Magallianes* (2005), *La Grande Borne* (2007). The novels are importantly conducted for the following reasons.

- 1) Nh. Dini reveals women problems related to tradition and patriarchal culture in the five novels.
- 2) Nh. Dini's ideas and thoughts contained in the novels are mostly in agreement with feminism ideology which figth for gender equality for women.
- 3) Nh. Dini was awarded *Sea Write Award* in literature by the goverment of Thailand. Some of her novels are so popular that they are reprinted so many times.
- 4) As an Indonesian feminist, Nh. Dini has her own ideas and thoughts which are different from the West feminist. Based on her ideas and thoughts it is posible to find a new concept about Indonesian feminism that can be adopted in Indonesia.

The problems analysed in this study are (1) How is the picture of women's lives in the novels of Nh. Dini ? (2) Why do the women in the novels live in

poverty and misery? (3) How is the relation between the struggle for gender equality in the novels with feminism ideology?.

## **2. Research Method**

The method applied in this study is hermeneutic method which is used to understand the five novels well and in detail by using the principle of interpretation and explanation. The meaning contained in the texts is tried to be revealed by focusing on the “inner and outside” elements of the novels. And this is also conducted to find the message and the purpose of the writers in creating her novels.

In qualitative analysis, there are three stages that can be accomplished they are data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing or verification (Miles dkk, 1984: 21). In the stage of data reduction, the text is divided into three parts they are the picture of women's lives, the factors which cause the poverty and misery of the women, the relation between the struggle of gender equality contained in the novels with feminism ideology.

In the second stage, the three groups of the data are interpreted and explained based on their substance and information. The third analysis is conclusion drawing and verification, the data is continued to be explained, noting regularities, causal flows and propositions.

In this study, the major theory applied is theory of feminism, because most of the problems deals with womens problems related to tradition and patriarchal culture and also the struggle for gender equality. The thoughts and ideas from Liberal, Radical, Marxists and Socialist, Multicultural and Global Feminisms are mostly used in the process of analysis.

## **3. Discussion and Results**

Texts analyses based on the problems of study revealed that the life of women in the novels are still in the bad condition. They are trapped in domestic area, can not free themselves from patriarchal domination. As a wife in the family, a woman has no rights to manage her own life with her own way. The rights to own

properties and money in the family is dominated by the husbands while the responsibility for the house work is given to the wives.

Analyses about the factors which cause the poverty and the misery of women in the novels is revealed that the main cause is tradition and patriarchal culture. The women are not allowed to work in public sector, to earn their own living. Consequently there are many women become poor for being jobless and no money. They spend all the time working in the house without salary.

The fight for gender equality revealed in the novels of Nh. Dini are in agreement with the ideas and thoughts of feminism ideology. Among others are the fight for education and work. By improving knowledge and ability, it will be easy for the women to find better work and enough salary. Feminism ideology fight for women's freedom from patriarchal domination by living without marriage or claiming for divorce from the husbands who can not give protection and safety for the wives.

The result of the study shows that the picture of the women's lives revealed in the novels is intended to make readers understand the women's problems related to tradition and patriarchal culture. Consequently to reach the freedom and gender equality for women, tradition and patriarchal culture should be refused as proposed by feminism ideology. The struggle revealed in the novels shows that it is high time for women to have their rights to become the real women, never become dependent on anyone as proposed by feminism ideology.

## **4. Conclusions and Suggestions**

### **4.1 Conclusions**

From the analyses of the picture of women's lives, it is found that there are still many women trapped in domestic area, they can not free themselves from patriarchal domination. They lose their rights to work in public sector and only work as a house wife without salary, consequently they become dependent on somebody. At the present time, there have been so many women who are successful working as skilled workers or professionals, but the number are still very small compared to the number of men who are successful.

From the analyses of the factors that cause the poverty and misery of the women, it is revealed that the man cause is tradition and patriarchal culture which is still adopted by the society. The freedom is limited for the women, they can not be active as free as the man, thats why the women can not reach the optimal success. Thats why tradition and patriarchal culture which hampers the progress of women should be refused.

From the analyses of relation between the struggle of gender equality in the novels with feminism ideology, it is found that both ideas above are in agreement one another. Feminism ideology proposed that women should improve their knowledge and ability as the modal to face the hard life. It also stresses on the rights of autonomy for women to manage their own lives with their own way.

#### **4.2 Suggestions**

The next observer may continue to analyse women's problems related to tradition and patriarchal culture, by studying the problems, it can be understood the issues that may hamper the progress of women. By relating the problems with feminism ideology, it is expected that the new concept for Indonesian feminism can be constructed to adopt in Indonesia. Feminism analyses on literary work can enrich dimension of Sociology of Literature and strengthen the study of literature.

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