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## Feminist Approach in Understanding the Main Character in Jane Austen's Persuasion

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### Abstrak

*Studi ini berjudul "Feminist Approach in Understanding the Main Character in Jane Austen's Persuasion" dan berfokus kepada permasalahan feminisme yang dialami Anne Elliot sebagai karakter utama di dalam novel. Anne Elliot juga menghadapi konflik dengan karakter lainnya yang membuat ceritanya menjadi lebih menarik; karakternya dari sudut pandang fisiologis, psikologis, dan sosiologi membuat karakter menjadi lebih nyata.*

*Data penelitian ini diambil dari sebuah novel berjudul "Persuasion" karya Jane Austen. Novel ini pertama kali dipublikasikan pada tahun 1818 di Inggris. Data dari penelitian ini dikumpulkan dengan menggunakan metode dokumentasi. Teknik pengumpulan data melalui dua tahap; membaca dan mencatat. Metode kualitatif digunakan dalam menganalisa data. Teori yang digunakan dalam menganalisa karakter dalam aspek fisiologis, psikologis, dan sosiologis menggunakan teori karakter dari Egri (dalam Sukada, 1987). Konflik yang dihadapi karakter utama dianalisa menggunakan teori literature dari Kenney (1966). Teori tentang feminisme oleh Alison Jaggar (1983), adalah teori untuk menganalisa masalah feminisme seperti kesamaan dalam dunia kerja, dalam pendidikan, atau dalam hak politik.*

*Hasil yang didapatkan dalam penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa karakter Anne Elliot dapat diobservasi secara fisiologi, secara psikologi, dan secara sosiologi, dan melalui konflik internal dan eksternal yang dihadapi dalam hidupnya. Karakter utama juga merefleksikan nilai feminisme di dalam hidupnya melalui kepintarannya di dalam cerita; dia berhasil mengatasi perbedaan gender, ketidaksetaraan gender, dan penindasan gender.*

*Kata kunci: Karakter utama, konflik, feminisme, ketidaksetaraan, penindasan.*

### 1. Background of the Study

Studying literature is like studying the beauty of the world. It can be perceived from the written literature that human has made. Literature is the art of written word that introduces the reader to something new, or shows them a different side of a familiar

perspective, whether in the form of a novel, poem, memoir or short story. The word "literature" has different meanings depending on who is using it. It could be applied broadly to mean any symbolic record, covering everything from images and sculptures to letters.

In literature, there are several points that can be analyzed, for example, feminist literature. Feminism is one of human movements that fight for equality between male and female. Feminist is not always female, male also can be a feminist. The main purpose of this movement is to raise the female level and esteem to be equal with male level. Feminism was born in early 20th century, feminist is etymologically derived from the word femme (woman), meaning that women who aim to fight for the rights of women, as social class. Feminist goal is to balance, and gender interrelation. In a broader sense, feminist is the movement of women to reject everything that is marginalized, subordinated and demeaned by the dominant culture, in the political and economic and social life in general.

## **2. Problems of the study**

The problems in this study could be stated as follows:

1. How is the main character presented in terms of physiological, psychological and sociological aspect?
2. What sorts of conflicts are faced by the main character in the Persuasion?
3. How is feminism reflected in the main character in Persuasion?

## **3. Aims of the Study**

1. To analyze the main character in terms of physiological, psychological and sociological aspects.
2. To analyze the conflicts faced by the main character in Persuasion.
3. To analyze the feminism reflected in the main character's life in Persuasion.

#### **4. Research Method**

Research method refers to the ways to get information in succeeding this study. The research was carried out through some aspects under concern, data sources, methods and techniques of collecting data, and data analysis methods and techniques. The methodology in this analysis is categorized into three; they are; Data Source, Method and Technique of Collecting Data, and Method and Technique of Analyzing Data.

#### **5. Result and Discussion**

a) Analysis of the three dimensions

More specifically the analysis deals with physiological, sociological and the psychological aspect of the main character.

1. Physiological dimension

Anne Elliot is a single woman; she was born on August 9<sup>th</sup> in 1787; she is twenty seven years old and seemingly a confirmed spinster. Anne had been a very pretty girl, but her bloom had vanished early. This made her the least favorite daughter of Sir Walter's. But for some people, Anne Elliot is still a very pretty girl, even the prettiest among the other Elliot girls. Anne Elliot has a pair of mild dark eyes that came from her father, it became the only thing her father proud of. Anne Elliot was looking remarkably well with her very regular and pretty features, having the bloom and freshness of youth restored, and by animation of eye which it had also produced. It is evident that the gentleman admired her exceedingly.

2. Sociological dimension

Anne was born as a daughter of a baronet. She lived in a big house named Kellynch Hall. Her father's greediness made them stuck in debt; the only way to solve the problem was to rent Kellynch Hall and move to Bath. Anne's relationship with her father and her elder sister was not very close. Her father was only proud of his first daughter Elizabeth as she had succeeded, at sixteen, to all that was possible, of her mother's rights and

consequence; and being very handsome, and very like himself, her influence had always been great, and they had gone on together most happily. Sir Walter considered Anne very inferior value. Anne once was engaged to Captain Wentworth but was broken off by Anne because he had nothing to offer. Anne Elliot didn't have many friends; her social life was only between her family, the Musgroves, and some acquaintances.

### 3. Psychological dimension

Anne was a loner, she preferred to spend some times being alone. To Mr Shepherd, Anne Elliot was described as the most attentive listener. She was a clever girl; Lady Russell always consulted Anne when she made a calculation of the Elliot financial, whilst nobody considered it. Her knowledge came from her father which she wished to have it less. Anne as a grown woman, made a choice to live separately from her father and sister who moved to Bath after the Kellynch Hall rented. Anne was capable of anything including nursing Mary's children. Almost everybody loved Anne and enjoyed the time when she was around, especially Mary's children who respected her more than their mother, they thought Anne as a friendly person.

#### b) Conflict faced by Anne Elliot

Internal conflict: Anne Elliot finally met her former fiancé Captain Wentworth again. They were engaged seven years ago but were broken off by Anne due to Wentworth's social status. Captain Wentworth became broken hearted then decided to leave the town and headed to war. His returned to town, becoming the nightmare to Anne Elliot as he was cold to Anne, and they pretended not to know each other. After a few weeks, Captain Wentworth realized that he still had feelings for Anne Elliot. Anne became confused because another man, William Elliot who was Anne's cousin also found Anne interesting. He liked Anne's personality and knowledge. They spent many times in Bath. William knew Anne from someone who gave him report about Anne.

External conflict: the external conflict happened between Anne Elliot as the main character and her former fiancé Captain Wentworth. Captain Wentworth and Anne Elliot got engaged 8 years ago but were broken off by Anne because she was persuaded by her friend Lady Russell that Captain Wentworth's wealth level didn't equal Anne's. After he found his fortune at war, Captain Wentworth comes back to town with his sister and brother-in-law who rented Kellynch Hall (Anne's family property). Anne Elliot and Captain Wentworth finally met again in Uppercross, but they pretended not to know each other. Anne became the witness of the intimacy between Captain Wentworth and the Musgrove's sisters especially Louisa. It gave her a strange feeling of jealousy. After Louisa fell from an accident in Lyme, Captain Wentworth realized that he still had feelings for Anne Elliot. After a few conversations at the party, Anne Elliot finally realized it too. Captain Wentworth was afraid to lose Anne one more time because Anne's cousin, William Elliot, seemed to be interested in Anne. Captain Wentworth then gave Anne a letter to declare his love to Anne.

c) Factors that causing feminism in the main character

Anne Elliot acted as a heroine who had a knowledge and ability more than any other woman in that era. Although Anne had them, she still received inequality from men in her surrounding, such as inequality that came from Captain Harville who bombarded Anne with a statement that men's bodies and feelings were the strongest, capable of bearing most rough burden. Anne showed her disagreement by disapproving Captain Harville's statement with her knowledge. Anne said that men's feeling could be the strongest but women's was the tenderest. Anne Elliot used to be persuaded by her family not to marry someone who's financially under the Elliot's level. Although she was a woman, she realized that she had to follow her own feeling, especially choosing the person she's going to marry with.

## 6. Conclusion

From the analysis in chapter three, it can be concluded that Anne Elliot's character can be emphasized through three aspects; physiologically, psychologically, and sociologically. Anne's physical appearance was described as delicate and pretty but not prettiest among the other Elliots' girls, with mild dark eyes which came from her father. Psychologically, Anne was a loner, a good listener, and an smart woman, almost everybody counted on Anne. Sociologically, Anne was the daughter of a baronet who lived in a big house named Kellynch Hall, she did not have many friends, her relation only with her family and the Musgroves.

Anne Elliot faced both internal and external conflicts. The internal conflict happened when Anne was trying to figure out what's right or wrong while confusion attacked her mind. Being the daughter of a baronet made Anne confused with who she should marry with. The external conflict happened between Anne and Captain Frederick Wentworth, who was long time ago engaged to Anne. Anne had to face the fact that Captain Wentworth hated her and tried to find another woman to be his wife. The conflicts influenced the relationship between them.

Feminism appeared in Anne Elliot when she stood up against Captain Harville's statement which oppressed women in general including Anne herself. Her actions included her refusal to no longer being persuaded by someone else to choose who she should be married to. In the end, Anne did what she always wanted to, marry someone she truly loved. Her intelligence as a woman was able to overcome the gender difference, gender inequality, and gender oppression which means that there was feminism in Anne Elliot.

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