



CONTRIBUTION OF INDIAN WRITERS IN LITERARY FEMINISM THEORY

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ABSTRACT

The Indian literature landscape has never been shaped equally by both genders, with the male perspective dominating. However, women India broke all the barriers and left their mark on Indian literature. The women in India have made notable contribution to literature, and their contribution is well appreciated in all literary circles. Feminist literary criticism knows as the critical analysis of literary works based on the feminist perspective. In other words, feminist literary criticism is a kind of literary criticism on the basis of feminist theory or the politics of feminism more precisely. In particular, it also can be explained as using ideological discourses and feminist rules to study language, structure and being of literature.

Keywords: Literary, Feminist, Writings, Theory, Gender.

I. OVERVIEW

Literature is the work of verbal and written creation regarding the author's intentions which communicated and is referred to as being aesthetics. Literature has three subjects; drama, poetry, and prose. The Prose is divided into two, namely fiction prose and nonfiction prose. Fiction refers to literature created from the imagination. Mysteries, science fiction, romance, fantasy, crime thrillers are all fiction genres. Meanwhile, nonfiction refers to literature based on fact, including biography, business, cooking, health, languages, religion, art, and music, history, etc. Cuddon (1998:471) stated that literature is a vogue term, which usually denotes works which

belong to the major genres: epic, drama, lyric, novel, and short story. Meanwhile, Klaler (2004:1) states in the most cases, literature is referred to an entirety of written expression, with the restriction that not every written document can be categorized as literature, in the more exact sense of the word. Therefore, the definition usually includes aesthetic and artistic to distinguish from other written document such as newspaper, legal document, brochure, and etc.

The feminist movement is usually divided into three waves. The first wave in the late 19th and early 20th centuries pushed for political equality. The second wave, in the 1960s and 70s, pushed for legal and professional equality



and the third wave, in the past couple of decades, has pushed for social equality. Handayani and Novianto (2004:163) stated that men are more competent, good orientation, strong, active, competitive and confidence than women. This condition is unfair for women, also portray that there is gender discrimination in the past. It happens from the generation to the next until they realize their injustice. It encourages the emergence a belief called feminism. The feminist movement related to women's nature particularly and in general it related to women's emancipation. Women's movement is in order to reach the equality of right with men in many aspects, such as politic, social, economy and culture.

In this era, women have same authority to do something like a man doing in system economic, social, and political, feminism urges the full integration of women into society, demanding women's equal right, equal work, equal pay, equal status and treatments in public and private relations. Rosenstand (2006:566) states, Women and men should have equal opportunities, that women should not be discriminated against based on their gender, and that women and men should get equal pay for equal work, chances are she will say yes and so will most men.

II. THEME OF FEMINISM

Feminism themes have also been used by authors like Nayantara Sahgal, Kamala Das, Anita Nair and Susan Viswanathan have a special place in Indian English writing by women. During the 1990s India became a popular literary nation as a number of women authors made their debut in this era. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Suniti Namjoshi and Anuradha Marwah Roy used realism as the main theme in their novels. The list of novelists also comprises popular names such as Bharati Mukherjee, Nergis Dalai, Krishna Sobti, Dina Mehta, Indira Goswami, Malati

Chendur, Gauri Deshpande, Namita Gokhale, Ruth Jhabvala, Shobha De, Arundhati Roy and Jhumpa Lahiri. They are known for the contemporary approach in their novels.

Many Indian women novelists have explored female subjectivity in order to establish an identity that is not imposed by a patriarchal society. Thus, the theme of growing up from childhood to womanhood, that is, the Bildungsroman, is a recurrent strategy. Santha Rama Rau's *Remember the House* (1956), Ruth Pravar Jhabvala's first novel *To Whom She Will* (1955) and her later *Heat and Dust* (1975) which was awarded the Booker Prize, and Kamala Markandaya's *Two Virgins* (1973) are good examples. As in poetry, the image of the New Woman and her struggle for an identity of her own also emerges in the Indian English novel. Such a struggle needs support structures outside the family to enable women to survive.

A number of Indian women novelists made their debut in the 1990s, producing novels which revealed the true state of Indian society and its treatment of women. These writers were born after Indian independence, and the English language does not have colonial associations for them. Their work is marked by an impressive feel for the language, and an authentic presentation of contemporary India, with all its regional variations. They generally write about the urban middle class, the stratum of society they know best.

III. 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, 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 strong 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.

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.

IV. WOMEN'S WRITING IN INDIA RELATED WITH LITERARY FEMINISM

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Women's writing in India is a memorable record of the triumph and tragedy of Indian people Involved in the most significant engagement in their history, the struggle for independence and the challenges that followed the achievement of the goal. Women novelists have played a crucial and momentous role in Enhancing the quality and quantity of the Indian English fiction. They have added the women's perspective and Feministic dimensions to the novels. The words by women writers constitute a major segment of the Contemporary Indian writing in English. Women writers in India are moving forward with their strong and sure Strides, matching the pace of the world. They are recognized for their originality, versatility and the indigenous flavor of the soil that they bring to their work. Indian women writers explore the feminine subjectivity and apply the theme that ranges from childhood to complete womanhood. These women writers say that Feminism



means putting an end to the silent sufferings of women. Feminism is a struggle for equality of women, a struggle against all forms of patriarchal aggression.

Literary feminism was concerned with the politics of women's authorship and the representation of women's Condition with literature. The feminist and feminist writers have been successful in achieving the legal rights for women, yet much has to be done at the social level. Feminist writers today proudly hold their cause of 'womanhood' through their writings. The Indian literature field is bold to represent feminism in the hands of Well-known writers. Who have transformed from theoretical theme to historic and cultural realities, levels of Consciousness, women's outlook and actions. The image of women in fiction has undergone a change during the last four decades. Women writers have moved away from traditional portrayals of enduring, self-sacrificing women toward conflicted female characters searching for identity, no longer characterized and defined simply in terms of their victim status. In contrast to earlier novels, female characters from the 1980s onwards assert themselves and defy marriage and motherhood.

Recent writers depict both the diversity of women and the diversity within each woman, rather than limiting the lives of women to one ideal. The novels emerging in the twenty-first century furnish examples of a whole range of attitudes towards the imposition of tradition, some offering an analysis of the family structure and the caste system as the key elements of patriarchal social organization. They also re-interpret mythology by using new symbols and subverting the canonic versions. In conclusion, the work of Indian women writers is significant in making society aware of women's demands, and in providing a medium for self-expression and, thus, re-writing the History of India.

V. 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. One of most arguable and observable social phenomena is gender inequality which is based on feminism thoughts. Considering how literature may portray human's life along with its values, this study is purposed to elaborate and compare how feminism thoughts and gender inequality take place in various literary works. Based on the importance of feminism thoughts and gender inequality in cross cultural literature, then there is a necessity to conduct a comparative literature study which focused on feminism thoughts.

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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