Representation of Women’s Inequality in The Book Entitled “Cerita Pendek Tentang Cerita Cinta Pendek” By Djenar Maesa Ayu

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Abstract

The injustice issues which happen to women in Indonesia is a common problem. It includes rape, sexual harassment, and gender inequality. Ayu brings out the issues of feminism and the injustice of women's rights in her books. The result shows that there are a lot of the representations of injustice women's right because the patriarchy system dominated the relationship between men and women, it can be said that the feminist movement or resistance is relatively passive and fails in the stories. There is a gap between superior and inferior, it also pointed out most men might stand still holding the honor instead of women in gender inequality issues.

1. Introduction

The book by Djenar Maesa Ayu titled “Cerita Pendek Tentang Cerita Cinta Pendek” tells three main topics about women, sexuality, and love which is loaded with the injustice relationship between men against women in their love life; infidelity, father to child sexual harassment, as well as the domestic violence experienced by the wives.

Djenar work of the anti-mainstream, outspoken and raised the issue of sexuality can be considered as unique and eccentric in the middle of Indonesian literature and culture as Indonesia (eastern) based high-context cultures, especially speaking the relationship between men and women in the patriarchal system of Indonesian society. A feminist, Sandra Harding in her book The Science Question in Feminism, 1986, argued that feminists are united with the goal to knock suppression mechanism (Gamble, 2004).

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Feminism movement in Indonesia, initiated by RA Kartini has lasted a long time, but in most cases women are still underestimated by men. Minister of Women Affairs, Linda Amalia Sari Gumelar, said there are more than 10,000 women working and living as a single parent (due to divorce or death of the husband). She also stated that women are still being undervalued when it comes to career and reaching the highest positions. Data from the Kompas.com (January 28, 2013), according to the Chairman of the IPW (Indonesia Police Watch), Neta s. Pane, recorded up to 25 January 2013 there are 25 cases of rape and 2 cases of adultery. While Republika stated that there are 919 cases registered in the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights as of January-March 2013. The percentage indicates that 25% of victims are women and the number still has a tendency to rise (Purwadi, 2013, May 28).

According to the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection that fall into the category of gender inequity are stereotypes, violence both physical and non-physical, double burden, marginalization, and subordination. Legislation governing to prevent acts of violence and injustice that occurs in women exists. Still, there are still cases involving women as victims.

The injustice is a problem in every short story is displayed, whether there is resistance to change the position of women who do not dominate. If something goes wrong, it is a nature that someone will do a defense. Closely related to feminism, how women retain their rights to equality. Such issues included Djenar in short story.

2. Theoretical Frameworks

Theoretical framework of women injustice and feminism theory can be seen as this chart:

![Radical Feminism Cycle](image)

The above radical feminism cycle was created by Alison M. Jaggar (Hidayat and Ma'ruf, 2004). In the cycle, patriarchy showed his power by way of oppression against women. Jaggar split type of oppression, namely sexual and gender system. Radical feminism succeeded when women do the opposition and produce a change in their position becoming similar to the male.

3. Methodology

This based on qualitative approach and focuses on the analysis unit in the form of the book “Cerita Pendek Tentang
Cerita Cinta Pendek” by Djenar Maesa Ayu taken four short stories dominant injustice with the following titles: 1) Suami Ibu, Suami Saya; 2) hA... HA... Ha...; 3) Pasien; 4) Hangover as well as using discourse analysis by Sara Mills (many well-known examine feminism) will be focused on the subject-object-level position and the position of author-reader (Eriyanto, 2009).

4. Data Analysis

This In the first story, entitled “Suami Ibu, Suami Saya”; the position of the subject-object mother and daughter became the object of father's oppression. Injustice of violation and repression: father physically beat up the mother, while the daughter received sexual violence from the father. Judging from the position of author-reader; the author wanted to show the weakness of mother (not put up a fight when she was abused by the father). His daughter just learned from the mother acts, did not fight and tend to shut up when his father have intercourse with her and could not do anything when her own father to marry her.

In the second story titled “hA ... HA ... Ha ..”; the position of the subject-object form Sera (wife), a female character who has always been the object of her husband oppression. Injustice formed as the following: 1) violence: Sera’s body often becomes targets of violence 2) stereotypes; women should have beautiful and good stature (but Sera does not meet the standard) 3) double burden: Sera become the backbone of the family, her husband only knows how to spent money (spree). Judging from the position of the author-reader; Patriarchy that is in the short story makes Sera cornered herself from patriarchal dominance. Rough treatment makes Sera afraid of the husband. Sera, tend to be silent (no defense), she was willingly accepted any kinds of treatment done by the husband. The dominance of patriarchy is also blinding Sera from the fact that she actually has the power and advantages that was not owned by the husband. In this case, Feminism is still quite passive.

In the third story, entitled “Pasien”; the position of the subject-object figure: woman experienced sexual violence in childhood. The impact of past traumas still lasting into adulthood. The raper got a decent place in public. While she received the following injustice: 1) violence: being abused in childhood; 2) the stereotype of the negative stigma attached to women who are victims of raping cases (not a good girl). Judging from the position of the author-reader: a woman portrayed as powerful and successful figure in her adult life. In fact she was not able to recover from the trauma of the past. Consequently, she has problem trusting anyone and tend to try healing herself without the help of others.

In the fourth story entitled “Hangover”; subject-object status, Nayla was sexually assaulted by her mother's boyfriend in childhood to adolescence: 1) violence: She was raped as a child; 2) stereotype: the judgement created by the man who raped her and also her boyfriend that she is not more than just a minx. Judging from the position of author-reader: Nayla fight the fed up feeling by killing the rapist. Changes that occur from the sensitive becoming the apathetic Nayla due to the trauma of her past. The author described that the impact of the past will affect the adult life badly. Indeed, what she did is a defense, but not feminism, as what she got in return is not equality. Therefore, radical feminism did not happen in this short story.

4.1. Discussion: Representation of Gender Injustice

Feminism focuses on social position of women and women's desire to stop the persecution and pressures they experienced because of differences in gender (West, 2007). While Hooks (2000) stated that feminism is a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation and oppression. Women activists named Kristeva distinguish feminism in 3 stages published in her essay "Women's Time" in 1976 (Lestari, 2006), and they are liberal feminism, views of feminism who want equality in all respects and radical feminism, fighting for the right power to be not dominated by men; and the third is a feminism that already understand and be aware of the diversity of cultural backgrounds and races. Stacey in Sunarto (2009) stated that there are four oppression faced by women, namely patriarchy, subordination, category and implication of feminism ideology itself.

Representative of women injustice from 4 short stories from the book 'Cerita Pendek Tentang Cerita Cinta Pendek' dominated by the physical violence suffered by women, especially sexual violence. Radical feminism focuses on the main problem faced by women which is inflicted oppression that was caused by the patriarchal system, where the
main suppression object is the victim’s body. This is a major issue that was highlighted by the radical feminism, how the victim could fight to win back the right over their bodies. Mostly, women still prefer to be silence and depend on men as stronger parties. They did not realize that the strong energy of men could be a great threat. Meanwhile, The outside threat such as scorn and stereotype aggravated the silence, as the victim would be afraid of what people say.

Patriarchal culture in Indonesia already embedded from a long time and rooted to the present. Within the family, the man become head of the family and have the power to make decision. Jaggar declared men also control the economy situation as they are appointed to be the backbone of the family. Men are considered more powerful figure than women, for example, heavy work usually preferred for men. That way, women are considered as the weaker party than men. The simple thing leads to a thought that men are stronger than women. The Stereotypes of women also shared by Tilaar (1999), that the women portrayed as a gentle, graceful, and full of compassion. Women also known as a figure that is best at handling the domestic affairs and household needs, including caring the children and the husband. The figure of women that was created by the press and men are physically beautiful and proportional body. Those criteria set as the standard how an attractive woman should be. Thoughts are already embedded in the public’s mind as a benchmark of how women and how men should be. This construction produces a patriarchal culture that increasingly thickens. Although today are increasingly open, some people already know how to balance between the rights of men and women in family life. In the example, they share duties between domestic tasks and earn a living. Even, some women play a big role in earning for a family living.

But, to open the mouth of the women themselves when they experience injustice; women prefer silence on the issue. Injustice such as sexual assault or domestic violence is considered as disgrace. Early stereotype that women are the first to bring the issue into the rumors point to themselves as victims. Bullying does not only come from the victim, but also the community perceptions of themselves as the cause of a disaster. Domestic violence that happened when women simply can not satisfy her husband and give poor service. This silent condition has been implanted unconsciously from the past, women better be silent if they did not want to receive the insult that will make them feel worse. Hidayat and Ma'ruf explained that there was a public perception that the suppression in the form of rape, pornography, domestic violence and sexual harassment linked because the fault lies in women themselves who provoke the men.

Feminism which women do still tend to be passive, as the struggle against injustice encountered failures and resulting in strengthening the patriarchal system itself. Therefore, the movement of active, massive and strategic feminism was needed.

5. Conclusion

In the feminism view that there is resistance to reclaim women rights were suppressed, but feminism made women still tend to be passive, the struggle against injustice in failure, the cause is a very dominant patriarchal system between men and women, also women who prefer silence and surrender all decisions to men. This tends to reinforce the patriarchal system itself. It required active, massive and strategic feminism movement.

References