

KINDS OF FEMINISM IN RUPI KAUR SELECTED POEMS

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Abstrak

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui jenis feminisme apa saja yang terdapat dalam puisi-puisi pilihan Rupi Kaur. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah penelitian kualitatif deskriptif dengan menggunakan penelitian kepustakaan. Sumber data penelitian ini adalah buku Milk and Honey karya Rupi Kaur, artikel dan jurnal atau website yang terkait dalam penelitian ini. Hasil penelitian ini peneliti menemukan dua macam feminisme berdasarkan teori Abbot dan Wallace; Yaitu 9 data Feminisme Liberal dan 3 puisi Feminisme radikal. Dalam penelitian ini terdapat 7 puisi yang mengandung feminisme, pada halaman 22,157,166,173 terdapat feminisme liberal, dan pada halaman 16,27, dan 28 terdapat feminisme radikal.

Kata Kunci: *Abbot dan Wallace, feminisme, puisi*

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to find out what kinds of feminism in Rupi Kaur selected poems. The method used in this study is descriptive qualitative research using a library research. The data sources for this study is Milk and Honey book by Rupi Kaur, articles and journals or websites that related in this study. The results of this study researcher found two kinds of feminism based on Abbot and Wallace's theory; They are 9 data of Liberal Feminism and 3 poems of radical Feminism. In this research there are 7 poems contains kinds of feminism, In page 22,157,166,173 there are contains liberal feminism, and in page 16,27, and 28 there are contains radical feminism.

Keywords: *Abbot and Wallace, feminism, poetry*

INTRODUCTION

Most people find difficulties when studying or reading poetry. Any difficult vocabulary in the poems is either explained or given special attention. Poetry is full of meaning and symbol. It is very important to understand about poetry when someone reads poetry. When readers read poetry, they will find meaning of poetry, because poetry have deep meaning. Poetry is one of the

oldest forms of literature. Poetry is the expression of ideas and feelings through a rhythmical composition of imaginative and beautiful words selected for their sonorous effects. Poetry is the most considered and concentrated form of literature (Perrine in Siswanto, 2010). According to Hariratul (2018). A poem is composed of words. The poet conveys information to us in them using a unique format. The poet wants us to pay attention to what they are saying and how they are saying it. Both the poem's content and its structure are essentially various perspectives on the same idea. Because every time a word or word location changes, the meaning also changes.

Moreover, poetry uses fewer words than other literary works, but with fewer words, a poem can explain more cases. Poetry is one of the pieces of literature that can be studied from various aspects. For poets, a poem is a medium to express their feelings based on the situation, condition, and imagination. All poets have their own characteristics in writing. Some of them usually use nature as the object of their poem. Some of them also use love, affection, and friendship as objects. On the other hand, there are some poets who use their life experiences in their writing. Whether it is a good or bad experience in their life. The poets sometimes use poems as a social critique of the Society in that era. In this study, the researcher chooses poetry to be analyzed because poetry is a literary work full of imagination that is very entertaining. Nowadays, there are so many poems that are written using discrimination and segregation as the subject because of the condition which appears in society. Besides, there are some women poets who write poems using feminism touches.

Rupi Kaur is a poet and feminist from Canada. She is known as "Instapoet" because most of her poetry is uploaded via one of the leading applications. She was born on 5 October 1992 in Punjab, India. She moved with her parents to Toronto, Canada when she was 4 years old. At that time, she was inspired by her mother to draw and paint. Previously, she used to write poems for her friends at their birthday parties or a message to someone who has she never liked in junior high school. She studied at the Department of Rhetoric and Professional Writing at the University of Waterloo, Ontario. Currently, she lives in Brampton, Ontario with her parents and four siblings. Kaur and her family moved often, a total of seven times before a stay in Brampton (El-Safty, 2016).

Kaur started her career in poetry online on social media like Instagram and Tumblr. Among essay photos about menstruation, which is described as part of visual poetry intended to counter the taboos about menstruation. Other common themes found in her works include abuse, femininity, love, and heartbreak. In October 2015, Kaur publishes collective works on milk and honey. Rupi has been contracted to release two books with Andrews McMeel Publishing and Schuster Canada, the first to be released in the fall of 2017 (Kassam, 2016). This study focuses on *Milk and Honey* by Rupi Kaur because this book serves poetry with simple understandable words in portraying women and femininity. Unlike other poems, Kaur's poems in *Milk and Honey* present familiar diction. However, McQuillan (2018) in the work entitled *Aesthetic Scandal and Accessibility: The Subversive Simplicity of Rupi Kaur's Milk and Honey* counters the simplistic style of Kaur's poetry because it confronts typical poetic difficulty. Kaur's work is considered to subversively allow simplicity and accessibility over complexity and difficulty (McQuillan, 2018). On the other hand, a study by Dr. Madhu Jindal (2017) also reviews Kaur's work in *Milk and Honey* as a modern work that performs the style of "confessional poetry", yet is often acknowledged as simplistic and trying too hard to attain modernist obscurity, *Milk and*

Honey pervade deeper meaning that will be obtained after comprehending the nuance (Jindal, 2017).

Additionally, "Milk and Honey" has a theme that focuses on women and feminists which is written with the perspective of straight women who are taught to obey and follow the roles that have been traditionally taught to them. Kaur understands that in general almost all men view women only as objects of sex and entertainment. He considers that women are not safe and that women should strive to protect themselves, their rights and a safe and secure life. Women must have an independent attitude, be independent and stop relying on men. Basically, feminism has tried to break into the world. However, for matters of insecurity, it is still inherent in the soul of women who believe in ugliness and shortcomings. According to Wilfred al Guerin (2005) in *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature Fifth Edition*, Feminism is an overtly political approach and can fight another approach for their false assumption about women. According to Abbot, Pamela and Wallace (2005) there are seven feminist perspectives: liberal/reformist, marxist, radical, dual-systems, postmodernist/post-structuralist, materialist and Black feminist.

Feminism occurs because women have always been in the lower part of the oppressive system over the years (Muhajir., 2018). One of the main purposes of feminist movement is to reach women empowerment. Empowerment, according to Kabeer (2001), is something that is closely tied to a state of powerlessness and refers to a process in which those who have been denied the ability to make choices to create a change. In this context, women who are empowered are ones who rise from adversity and make changes for their life. Empowering women involves an environment in which women can live without fear of oppression, exploitation, fear, discrimination and feelings of abuse that occur by being a woman in a traditional male-dominated structure (Dandona,2015). These aspects are prevalent in the work of Kaur, and thus they are worth discussing in this current study. There are several researchers who have discussed poetry, the theme of poetry or the values of feminism in poetry. The first research entitled "Analysis of Metaphors in Emily Dickinson's Poems" was conducted by Habib Syarwani (2017) from the Institute of Islamic Studies IAIN Ponorogo. In this research. This study describes the metaphor in Emily Dickinson's poetry. The researcher uses the metaphor theory introduced by Lakoff and Johnson. In this research, researchers found 36 metaphorical expressions which were divided into 3 types of metaphor, namely structural metaphor (17 data or 42.7%), ontological metaphor (15 data or 41.6%), and orientation metaphor (4 data or 11 data).). . ,1%). Previous research has shown that Habib Syarwani used Emily Dickinson's poetry as a research subject. we both use poetry as the subject of study but we examine different objects and issues. Habib syarwani chose the work of Emily Dickinson and the research issue was Metaphor, while this study used the work of Rupi Kaur by discussing the issue of feminism.

The second research entitled "Analysis of Feminism in the Novel *Wanita Kecil* by Louisa May Alcott" was conducted by Eka Desmawati (2018) from Gunadarma University. This study describes the types of feminism in *Little Woman*. The types of feminism found in this novel are liberal feminism, Marxist feminism, existentialist feminism, and radical feminism. The research above has the same problem as this research, namely feminism. However, this research and Eka Desmawati's research use different objects. Eka Desmawati uses the novel as the object and this study uses poetry as the object. And the last research entitled "Depression in Rupi Kaur's Selected Poetry" which was researched by Septi Dwi Rahayu (2018) from Maulana Malik Ibrahim State Islamic University Malang. This study is intended to describe the causes and

symptoms of depression as described in Rupi Kaur's Poetry Options. The theory used in this study is the theory of depression by Namora Lumora Lumongga Lubis. Researchers used a psychological approach as a research design in this study. This study shows that Rupi Kaur's poems interpret the causes and symptoms of depression through nature as images. The causes of depression are illustrated in this study, Family Environment, Psychic Abuse, Sexual Harassment, and Psychological Factors. Symptoms of depression can be seen from Psychic Symptoms. Previous research showed that Septi Dwi Rahayu used Rupi Kaur's poetry as a research subject. we both use Rupi Kaur's poetry as study material but we don't have the same problem. Septi Dwi Rahayu's issue is Depression and the issue of this research is feminism.

This research and Habib Syarwani's research both use poetry as the object of research, but Habib Syarwani uses Emily Dickinson's poetry with the issue of metaphor. Eka Desmawati discusses feminism but in a novel entitled *Little Woman* by Louisa May Alcott. And lastly, Septi Dwi Rahayu also uses Rupi Kaur's poetry but he discusses the issue of depression. In contrast to previous research, in this study the writer will examine the values of feminism in poetry, and in this study the author will focus on the analysis of the types of feminist values from Rupi Kaur's poetry. The poem that will be used in this research is a poem from the book *Milk and Honey*. Based on the description above, the writer analyzed feminism in poems entitled *Feminism Values in Rupi Kaur's Selected Poems*.

METHOD

The researcher applied qualitative descriptive method which is suitable with the aims of this research. In this research. Qualitative research is a type of social science research that collects and works with non-numerical data and that seeks to interpret meaning from these data that help us understand social life through the study of targeted populations or places. The primary data of this research are Rupi Kaur's poems in the *Milk and Honey* books and the secondary data are essay, journals, articles and websites from the internet that relate to the subject that support this research. The technique of data collecting, the writer will use the documentation technique. According to Arikunto(2009), "Documentation is a method that searches data about things or variables like notes, transcriptions, books, newspapers, magazines, agendas, videos".

The technique of collecting data that used by the researcher as follows: The first step is the researcher finds the data. In this research, the researcher found Rupi Kaur's poems in Rupi Kaur's book *Milk and Honey*. The next step to collecting the data, the researcher read and understand whole the text of selected poems. In this step, the researcher did not read the text only once time. But the researcher read more than once in order to make sure that the researcher understands and implied meaning. After that the researcher marks the important word or sentence that has feminism values in the poems, then make a note of the data. And after the researcher finding the data, researcher identified and analyzed all data, after that the researcher arranged the thesis. After collecting the data, the researcher analyzed the data. The purpose of the technique of data analysis is to answer the formulation of the problem. In the process of analysis of the data, the researcher used a content analysis approach to finish the feminism values of the poems. The technique of analyzing the researcher used steps as follows:

- a. Identifying, the researcher identifies the data which has correlated with an object of research and made the problem was found after collecting the data.

- b. Classifying, the next step is to classify the data. Classifying is an activity to classify all data into their categories or classification. In this research the researcher classifying some important words from poetry. The researcher analyzed the data based on some theories related to the research.
- c. Describing, the next step in the analysis the data is describing the data. The researcher describes the data based on the research question and related the theory.
- d. Analyzing, after describing, the researcher analyzes the data by applying the theory and method that is used.
- e. Conclusion, the researcher concludes all of the materials analyzed based on the theory after the whole of data has been analyzing.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

From book Milk and Honey by Rupi Kaur that researcher used as the source of data, the researcher can found two kinds of feminism based on theory by Pamela and Claire's theory; They are 9 data of liberal feminism and 3 poems of radical feminism. In this research there are 7 poems contains kinds of feminism, In page 22,157,166,173 there are contains liberal feminism, and in page 16,27, and 28 there are contains radical feminism.

1. Liberal Feminism

Liberal feminism has been concerned to argue for equal rights for women – for women to have the same citizenship rights as men. Equal Rights feminists have fought against laws and practices that give rights to men and not women, or which are designed to ‘protect’ women. Here are the analyses of Liberal/Reformist feminism:

“you tell me to quite down cause
my opinions make me less beautiful
but i was not made with a fire in my belly
so i could be put out
i was not made with a lightness on my tongue
so i could be easy to swallow
i was made heavy
half blade and half silk
difficult to forget and not easy
for the mind to follow”
(Chapter 1,page 22)

The first and second lines mean that women also have the right to have freedom of speech. As we all know, freedom of speech is everyone's right, but in reality we often encounter women's opinions that are not heard and are considered unimportant. The word “you” in the first line refers to people who think women don't need to have an opinion. In line 9,10 tells that woman is not easy to controlled and have their own choice and opinion. This poem states that a woman is free to have an opinion and is not easily to controlled. Liberal feminism here seen in the way the societies treated the women different as the men. The women have not their place to share everything, what societies wants is the woman only focus of men.

“i like the way the stretch marks
on my thighs look human and

that we're so soft yet
rough and jungle wild
when we need to be
i love that about us
how capable we are of feeling
how unafraid we are of breaking
and tend to our wounds with grace
just being a woman
calling myself
a woman
makes me utterly whole
and complete"
(Chapter 4, page 157)

In this poem, Kaur tells about how proud she is to be a woman and how woman portrays themselves as true individuals. Line 3,4, illustrates the strength of woman obtains of the perception of people about their shortcomings. It means that women do look soft but women are actually as strong as men. Although women are not as strong as men, they have another positive side that can make them look special. In line 10,11,12,13,14, tell about her confidence as a woman, and how she feels whole and complete by calling herself a woman. It includes liberal feminism because it describes the image of a confident woman. This poem said to be liberal feminism because liberal feminism shows that observed differences between the sexes are not innate but are the result of the socialization and conditioning of the sexes from the moment of birth. Men and women are treated differentially, so that this prevents women from developing their full potential as human beings.

“apparently it is ungraceful of me
to mention my period in public
cause the actual biology
of my body is too real
it is okay to sell what's between woman's legs
more than it is okay to
mention its inner workings
the recreational use of
this body is seen as
beautiful while
its nature is
seen as ugly”
(Chapter 4, page 166)

This poem tells of a woman who cannot carelessly talk about menstruation in public because it is considered impolite, in the first stanza line 1 and 2 talking about menstruation is considered a taboo subject, so women often feel embarrassed when they have to talk about it in public, especially if they are of the opposite sex. Then why is menstruation considered a taboo, this should be a natural and commonplace thing. In contrast to telling or talking about women's vital organs, this is not a taboo subject for most people, this is confirmed by line 3 and 4 in stanza 2.

Therefore, many men prefer the female body over the female reproductive system. This poem also agrees that “the recreational use of this body is seen as beautiful” in stanza 3. As we know when someone is talking about a woman’s body parts or even having sex with a woman, they often talk about it normally, not something strange. However, talking about menstruation is considered taboo and is seen as negative in stanza 3 lines 4 and 5 explaining that menstruation is seen as ugly. Menstruating people are considered dirty. In addition to being negatively stigmatized, they are often discriminated against while menstruating, such as getting bullied when they are “translucent” or having to go back and forth to the bathroom to change sanitary napkins. Bad stigmas and unequal against women who are menstruating are clearly related to liberal feminism. Liberal feminism here seen in the way the societies treated the women different as the men. The women have not their place to share everything, what societies wants is the woman only focus of men.

“the name kaur
makes me a free woman
it removes the shackles that
try to bind me
uplifts me
to remind me i am equal to
any man even though the state
of this wotrld i’m not
that i am my own woman and
i belong wholly to myself
and the universe
it humbles me
calls out and says i have a
universal duty to share with
humanity to nurture
and serve the sisterhood
to raise those that need rising
the name kaur runs in my blood
it was in me before the word itself existed
it is my identity and my liberation”
(Chapter 4, Page 173)

This Poem talks about women empowerment and Sikh women. In 1,2 lines Kaur state that her name makes her a free woman this shows that she is proud to be a Sikh woman. In Sikhism, the Holy Scriptures have clearly stated that the Sikh woman has always been regarded as an equal to man and has all the rights and privileges enjoyed by men, Kaur states in lines 6,7,8,9,10, that her name reminds her that woman is equal to any man. In the last line, Kaur state that being a Sikh woman is her identity and liberation. Sikh women have played a glorious part in Sikh history and have proven themselves as equal in service, devotion, sacrifice, and bravery. Examples of their moral dignity, service, and self-sacrifice are and will remain a source of inspiration. Women are the backbone of the history of the Sikhs. This poem is said to be liberal feminism because this poem talks about Sikh women and women empowerment that shows equality between women and men.

2. Radical Feminism

Radical feminists argue that women's oppression is primary and fundamental. Patriarchy, an elaborate system of male domination which pervades all aspects of culture and social life, is seen as trans-historical. All women are oppressed irrespective of historical, cultural, class or racial differences. The family is seen as a key instrument of the oppression of women, through sexual slavery and forced motherhood – through male control of women's bodies. Here the analyses of radical feminism:

“there is no bigger illusion in this world
than the idea that a woman will
bring dishonor into a home
if she tries to keep her heart
and her body safe”

(Chapter 1, Page 16)

This poem talks about being a daughter and women in her family. Kaur as Indian-born tells how her culture is threatening women, downgrading women even your parents didn't much pleased when they have daughter. Kaur also explains how her surrounding expecting to her to get married by a certain age in line 4 and 5. As a Feminist, Kaur criticized those belief that woman is merely an objectification and society expects to control over women as she states in the first line of this poem. Women have a rights to determine what they choose over themselves without getting interrupting by society. In line 4 Kaur shows her position or her roles as daughter, a woman in her family and surrounding. In this poem Kaur also conveyed the values over her culture (Indian culture) that women in her country should be married as their parents choices.

“when my mothers opens her mouth
to have a conversation at dinner
my father shoves the word hush
between her lips and tells her to
never speak with her mouth full
this is how the women in my family
learned to live with their mouths closed”

(Chapter 1,Page 27)

This poem talks about how women should behave according to societal norms. Kaur used a feminist symbol which is her mother as a woman in her family, Kaur's mother lives her life as Kaur's father said to her mother Thus, Kaur criticized the way how her family life without no freedom to express what they really feel (what woman feels) this states in line 6 and 7. Here clearly explains that men have control over woman's life. It was said before that radical feminism states that the oppression of women is the main thing. in this poem, we can see that patriarchal society really dictates the life of a woman. When men have control over woman's life. It shows in this poem that in Kaur's family women didn't have the freedom to express their feelings.

“our knees
pried open
by cousins
and uncles
and men

our bodies touched
by all the wrong people
that even in a bed full of safety
we are afraid”
(Chapter 1, Page 28)

This poem talks about the sexual harassment that women experience and perpetrators of sexual harassment are their own family such as uncles or cousins. Lines 8 and 9 mean that there is no safe place for women. The oppression of women is shown in this poem which is included in radical feminism.

CONCLUSION

This research is designed to describe the kind of feminism in Rupi Kaur selected poems. In this research there are 7 poems contains kinds of feminism, In page 22,157,166,173 there are contains liberal feminism, and in page 16,27, and 28 there are contains radical feminism. There are two kinds of feminism values that is found in selected poems by Rupi Kaur: liberal feminism and radical feminism. They are 9 data of Liberal Feminism and 3 poems of Radical Feminism as describes in discussion.

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