

GENDER INEQUALITY AND FEMINISM IN ARUNDHATI ROY'S *THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS*

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ABSTRACT

This research aimed to analyse feminism and gender inequality in the novel *The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy. The writer aims to reveal the types of feminism, gender inequalities are reflected in the novel. In this research, gender inequality theory is used to determine the types of gender inequality experienced by the characters in the novel *God of Small Things*, beside of that, feminism theory is used to show how women can overcome gender inequality. Furthermore, this paper uses a qualitative descriptive method. The data is gathered through quotations from the book, and the analysis is backed up by the book and the journal. The base theory is based from what types of feminism type and what kind of gender inequality, the type of gender inequality that experienced by woman including stereotypes, violence, marginalization, double burden and subordination and there are four feminism movements ideology, which are liberal feminism, radical feminism, Marxist feminism, and socialist feminism. Besides that, in this research the author discovered three kinds of gender inequality experienced by women: violence as the part of radical feminism, marginalization as the part of liberal feminism, and subordination as the part of socialist feminism. As the result of this research is to show and identifying what kind of gender inequality and feminism according to the theory.

Keywords: Feminism, Gender inequalities, patriarchy

INTRODUCTION

The term "Gender" has been introduced by society to describe the differences between men and women. Udry (2008) states that gender is the relationship between biological sex and behavior. From the definition above, we can say that gender refers to men and women's social and cultural roles. As adults, women and men usually take on gender roles as husbands, fathers, wives, and mothers. In our culture, the man and woman are connected as family starts with marriage, which both have related to social roles. The man will be the husband, and the woman will be the wife. In this relationship, they will affect each other. Gender concepts that are socially different have revealed the differences in roles between men and women in their society. The term Gender actually refers to a cultural concept that serves to differentiate the roles, mentalities, and emotions that women and men develop in society. Gender, according to Rokhmansyah (2016), is a trait that is used to identify differences between men and women, which are assessed in terms of culture, social conditions, mentality, emotional, and other non-biological factors. Gender plays an important role in a person's life because it influences the life experiences that person has. In genders, Men and women have their own places and one of the genders is usually treated unfairly. Men are typically more active than women. As a result, most people believe that women are weak.

However, in this relationship, sometimes one of them has much power, which will cause an imbalance. In social construction, men have more power than women, even in the relation between husband and wife or father to daughter.

This power usually leads to unfair things but nowadays in a relationship ideally equal. The inequality between man and woman is called gender inequality. The social construction created men with much power and being dominated in the relationship with the women. According to Tyson (2006), traditional gender roles depicted men as rational, strong, protective, decisive and women as emotional, weak, nurturing, and submissive. What is stated above shows that women are placed in a powerless position. The differences make the inequality in gender, especially for women. Hidayah (2006) quoted in Fakhri defines gender inequality as a system and structure in which either male or female becomes a victim of the system. Inequality against women persists throughout the world. This is because of the patriarchal system, in which the male is the dominant person and the female is the dominated person. The culture based on patriarchy defines this biological-based difference, which is the benchmark in limiting rights, control, participation, and limited information.

Along with the many gender inequalities and patriarchy in society, the feminist movement has appeared. Feminism is the idea that recognizes equality. Fiss (1994) stated that feminism is the idea of social and political movements to reach women's equality. Feminism is a desire that stems from the injustice of women's rights not being equal to those of men. According to Lorber Feminism is a social movement whose primary goal is gender equality. Feminists are supporters of feminism. Feminism has classified as liberal feminism, radical feminism, Marxist feminism, and socialist feminism. Feminism begins with the perception of inequity in the position of women in society in comparison to men. As a result of this perception, various attempts have been made to investigate the causes of the inequality and devise a formula for equalizing the rights of men and women in all fields, in accordance with their human potential. Feminism refers to understanding as a female ideology, because all of its approaches are based on the belief that women face injustice because of their gender. According to Sutanto (2017) which quoted in Subhan Women faced negative stereotypes in society. Women are viewed as weak, emotional, and housewives, and they are even viewed as sexuality tools in a relationship. This is why women are regarded as second-class to men, and women are denied the right to control their own lives. Feminism is a movement that seeks equality for men and women. Several actions were taken to support the feminist movement. One of them is the Swedish government's transformation into a feminist government.

Feminists argue that women's rights are severely limited in the social realm. The culture of society requires women to care for the household and family, so they spend the majority of their time only at home. Furthermore, women are denied the opportunity to pursue higher education, the highest positions, or professions traditionally associated with men. Women's social limitations have an impact on their economic lives as well. The majority of the labor force is not reserved for women, and if they do work, their wages will be significantly lower than those of men. As a result, feminists are present in the political path to find a way out for all rights that the government does not fulfill.

Gender and feminism are some of the social issues that can appear in novels. Literature is always related to human life. Real-world concepts are redefined in the novel. The novel depicts the marginalization of women as being unable to work, not receiving an education, always being a slave, not having a strong physique, and having a double workload. Gender inequality is a common theme in novels. One of the literary works has

been raised about social issues, gender inequality, and feminism in the novel *The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy. The book told about gender, sexuality, religion, and Indian culture. The story is from a third-person perspective and Rahel's perspective. This novel told the story of an honorable family in Ayemenem and having a candied fruit factory named *Paradise Pickle & Preserved*. The family members are Rahel and Estha, the twin who has sexual harassment in the cinema when they were child, Ammu is Rahel and Estha mother who had miserable life because her husband is temperament. Mamachi is Rahel's grandmother who always survived by being hurt by her husband, Papachi. Rahel's uncle Chacko who married England woman but divorce, Baby Kochamma is Rahel's aunt who lost her love and made her converting religion. This novel very detailed depicted India in British colonialism, the patriarchal life, and how parents treated the girls and boys, and violence.

To find out more about the issue, this research focuses on finding what happened to the character issue that refers to gender inequality and feminism. This study uses gender theory to answer the issues.

METHODS

According to Wildemuth (2016), which quoted in Hsieh & Shannon, a research method is used for research subject and interpret the data and text. It means that the method is used to search the meanings, concepts, and understanding of the research subject. This research used the qualitative descriptive as the primary method. Descriptive method used to describe or analyze research, according to Aritonang and Heryati (2022), as quoted in Sugiyono. The theories used in this study are the gender inequalities and feminism theories. This research examined the gender inequalities occurred to the female characters in this book.

The theory proposes to provide understanding and guidance on aspects of research. In this section, the author will explain some theories that are related to the study. In this study, there are two chapters as the explanation of gender equality and feminism. In traditional gender, Tyson (2006: 85) stated that Men are Rational, Strong, Protective, and Decisive. Because of the stigma that exists in society, men are dominant and women are powerless. The patriarchy grants men a privilege, and these men become a source of power within the family. Gender inequality favoring one gender, either male or female. Gender inequality is a system and structure that allows both men and women to become victims of it. When there are differences between men and women, this gender inequality occurs. The patriarchal culture begins in the family and becomes the source of gender inequality at the family level before spreading to the social level. As a result, women are frequently the victims of gender inequality. Women are frequently subjected to various forms of gender inequality, such as:

1. Marginalization

The process of marginalization leads to poverty. Hillary and Winchester (1989) stated marginalization has shown certain groups are an exile from Capitalist-patriarchal society. There are so many ways to marginalization the groups. Marginalization is the process of intentionally or unintentionally marginalizing a specific gender in order to gain access and benefits in life. One of the examples is by the differences in gender. This process aimed at impoverishing a specific gender, include the woman. There are some differences in type, place, and time and the mechanism of marginalization of women because of gender differences.

Marginalization afflicts women who are working, the society will assume as the men or husband helper in financial matters. Besides, in the workplace, women's marginalization happens in a bound family, such as the distribution of parents' legacy. Usually, women have low portion than men. Marginalization can result from a variety of factors, including beliefs, culture, government regulations, and habits. Marginalization has occurred at the most basic level, namely the family, which is typically marked by an unequal distribution of rights for each boy and girl.

2. Stereotype

Stereotypes present in society to give the label to someone or something. In general, stereotypes are labeling into a certain group. Also, Stereotype is appearing in gender. Kite, Deaux & Haines (2008) stated gender stereotypes affect the way women and men think and know how they behave and this behavior they know since childhood. Stereotype is a gender labeling that always has a negative connotation towards women, causing discrimination issues. Stereotypes are very often used as an excuse to justify form one group over another group. Also, Stereotypes are divided into good or negative labeling. However, women always relate to the negative label. For example, women as a weepy and sensitive person and man as strong person. There are societal stereotypes that men are strong and rational, whereas women are soft, beautiful, and emotional. This leads people to believe that women are only meant to serve their husbands.

3. Subordination

In the society, have separate gender roles man and woman. Gender assumption will make subordinate to woman, subordination due to genders occurs in all forms, Winchester (1989) states that female gender roles are considered to be subordinate to man. The society assumption women are irrational and emotional so they cannot be in higher position such as a leader. For this era, many subordination happens to woman in education sector, many people think the education are unimportant for woman because one day when they got married they job only to serve and obey her husband or taking care of her children. Beside that everyone has a right to get higher educational. Subordination is a condition in which one person or group is regarded as unimportant in decision making or as being in a lower position in comparison to others. Even when women do Good, subordination to women is usually not important because the society thought woman as emotional human. Gender subordination occurs in all aspects of life.

4. Violence

The existence of harsh treatment or actions that originate from the violence. Violence is the act of hurting both Physical and non-physical (mentality). Violence appears in gender caused gender inequality. Begum (2014) has stated violation is the most direct expression of the imbalanced power between men and women. Gender roles have differences between men as the masculine and woman as the feminine that characteristic have seen on psychological traits such as men with strong and brave while women are soft and weak because of that statement created the violation, assuming women as a weak person, that assumption interpreted as a reason to be mistreated. This violent occurs in family and in social place. For the example physical, sexual or psychological violence in family, include beating and sexual violent include rape and sexual harassment. In social life is prostitution and sex exploitation. Essentially, the presence of violence is the presence of power attached

to a gender, which makes that gender feel powerful. In other words, power allows to exert control over others.

5. Double burden

Double burden can be defined as someone who work much than other person, in gender perspective double burden is someone who have more job to do according to their social gender roles. This assumption make the woman job seem so easy and related to her gender role. Nowadays, men and women have to help each other to build their life especially in marriage. Double burden usually related to women who working outside the home and inside the home. For the example women who working in the office she still have another task to clean the house, taking care of her children. Nevertheless, the responsibility still on the women hands and that caused women have double burden. Domestic work performed by women is heavier than public work performed by men. People generally consider women's domestic work to be much easier than men's work in the public sector.

In the second section, the author will explain feminism.

Feminism happens because of gender inequality and patriarchy. Mostly this movement is dominated by women. Mitchell (2015) has stated feminism was organized to improve women's legal rights and social opportunities. Also, Swirsky & Angelone (2016) stated feminism work to fix the social gender imbalance. In that definition, we can conclude that feminism is the social movement that aims to make gender equality in social, political scope. Feminism is an effort by women to fight for equal rights to gender injustice in the family and social environment. Feminisms goal is to elevate and equalize the rights of women. The early presence of the women's movement received much sympathy, not only from women themselves but also from men, but over time, this movement divided into several ideologies and types

There are several types of feminism:

1. Liberal feminism

Liberal feminism defined women and men as born equally and having the same right. Jagger (1983: 37) has stated liberal feminism is concentrates on acceptance, and this argument proves that women are capable and rational. For the concluded liberal feminism is to placing the women into complete freedom. Liberal feminism more observes aspects commonly encountered in social life, such as equality in the workplace, education, and political rights. Liberal feminism appeared in 18 centuries. Mary Wollstonecrat founded this ideology. Liberal feminist belief, women have the ability to determine their own destiny. Liberal feminism attempted to make women aware of inequality. The point of this liberal feminism is freedom and equality. The goal of liberal feminist ideology is to change laws to place women in equality. Women are rational, and their abilities the same as men, so they must be given the same right as men. Liberal feminists view unfair treatment of women as discrimination. Women should have equal opportunities to succeed in society as men. Women should have equal access to and opportunities in society as men.

2. Radical feminism

Radical feminism noticed that overpowering in the relationship between men and women. Also, it focused on the sex class system. This ideology emerged as a reaction to the culture of sexism and social domination by type of gender in 1960. Radical feminism is an ideology that focused on gender inequality based on patriarchal and social domination by men. Jagger (1983: 113) stated that oppression of women is the

root of all other oppression systems. Therefore, radical feminists oppose all forms of patriarchy and against the sexual objectification of women. Radical feminism recognizes the diversity of sexuality as evidence that every woman has the right to her body. However, this ideology have so much criticize from woman also from man. According to Sutanto (2017) which quoted in Tong Power, dominance, hierarchy, and competition are characteristics of the patriarchal system, according to radical feminists. This system cannot be reshaped, instead, it must be uprooted by its roots and branches. Radical feminism assumes that there is an oppressive system in every institution and structure of society in which certain people dominate others.

3. Marxist feminism

Marxist feminism concern about women's problems in a capitalist environment. In capital-patriarchal society, this ideology assuming that women's oppression came from class exploitation. Also, this ideology assuming capitalism is the most influential in woman oppression. Marxist feminists claim the way to reach gender equality is destruction the capitalist society. Jagger (1983: 52) stated Marxists prioritize to criticize and overthrow the capitalist society. They concern with women and focusing on women's situation under capitalism. Gender differences in the realm of work is a significant issue of this ideology. Marxist feminists take a different stage from other ideologies, namely the capitalist mode of production and productivity. They concern about how gender is in free or unfree labor.

4. Socialist feminism

This ideology concerns about oppression, racism, social and economic injustice. Jagger (1983: 340) stated feminist socialists believe the woman's condition is determined not only by the ruling class also by men. Same as Marxist feminism, this ideology realizing the oppressive structure of capitalism. Women served as workers and wives to capitalists and did not receive the wages from these jobs. Socialist feminist has two focused things on women: the patriarchal system and capitalism. According to Socialist feminism, the patriarchal system and capitalism are the things that caused the oppression and gender inequality of women.

RESULTS

Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* is the primary data source. Random House published the book in 1997 in New York, United States of America. This book was chosen because it depicted many issues in India since the British colonial era. The author of the book focused on the Indian class system, but it also depicted gender inequalities at the time. Because the data is the narrative text, it is represented by a quote from the book. The quotes chosen contain the issues of feminism and gender equality. The Data was analyzed based on the text and related to the social issue found in the novel. In analyzing the data, journals and books were implemented to assist the description.

DISCUSSION

In this section, the author will analyze the issue found in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*. To analyze the issue, it is crucial to know where and how this issue happen. The story of this novel is set in India during the British colonial era. India is one of the countries In Asia that reinforce the culture from the ancestors. According to that, India has several issues. One of them is gender inequality.

Subordination as part of liberal feminism

Researcher found kind of inequality between Estha and Rahel. Ammu which is Rahel and Esta's mother, giving their different name based on gender.

"Estha's full name was Esthappen Yako. Rahel's was Rahel. For the Time Being they had no surname because Ammu was considering reverting to her maiden name, though she said that choosing between her husband's name and her father's name didn't give a woman much of a choice." (Roy, 1997: 37)

Ammu naming Estha Esthappen Yako, and Rahel simply Rahel. Ammu, Rahel's mother, did not give her a surname because including the name of the father or the name of the husband will not change the situation or make her equal with the man, as seen in the line "a choice," the word can refer to the right or equality. This implies that women are powerless to choose what will benefit to them.

In this case, it was shown how women did not have the same option as men to have a surname. Women have no choice to put husband or father name because there is no different between them. They'll be one step below the men. This quotation depicts how women are subordinated in families and are unable to choose their surname. Aside from that, this subordination is part of gender inequality, which is linked to liberal feminism, because women are supposed to have the same rights as men, including the right to give their last name, which has an impact on women's lives.

Another evidence

"Ammu finished her schooling the same year that her father retired from his job in Delhi and moved to Ayemenem. Pappachi insisted that a college education was an unnecessary expense for a girl, so Ammu had no choice but to leave Delhi and move with them. There was very little for a young girl to do in Ayemenem other than to wait for marriage proposals while she helped her mother with the housework." (Roy, 1997: 39)

Ammu's father, Papachi, did not allow her to attend college, despite the fact that she is educated, her father believes that attending college is unnecessary for a girl, and Papachi believes that attending college for a girl is a waste of money because the girl will eventually marry. Papachi believes that getting married is more important than going to college. He believes Ammu should learn about Household from her mother, Mamachi.

However, Papachi more concern to Ammu's Brother Chacko. Papachi treated Chacko different with Ammu, since he is a man, he have privilege that he can get higher education than Ammu. *"Chacko had been a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford and was permitted excesses and eccentricities nobody else was."* (Roy, 1997: 38). According to that quote, Chacko has a higher education in Oxford, and everyone, including Papachi, is proud of him. This is a significant difference between Chacko and Ammu, their parents did not treat them equally and resulting in gender inequality. All of this evidence points to gender inequality and subordination to Ammu.

All of this evidence demonstrates how gender inequality occurs in a female character named Ammu. All of the passages show that Ammu is treated differently by her family, with her brother Chacko, who is a man, receiving special treatment from the family so that he can attend university while Ammu should stay at home and learn about household. All of the evidence shows that Ammu is subjected because she cannot receive a better education because she is a woman, and her family believes that she should stay at home and learn about household for her future marriage. Aside from that, this inequality is linked to liberal feminism, which holds that women should have a better future, including education, and that women should have the same rights as men.

Marginalization as the part of Socialist feminism

Ammu does not have her own property, and she does not have a share of her parents' legacy, the pickle factory. After Papachi died and Chacko resigned from his position as a lecturer at *Madras Christian College*, he returned to Aymenem to run the pickle factory. Even though Ammu worked in the factory alongside Chacko, she was unable to claim her property.

“Though Ammu did as much work in the factory as Chacko, whenever he was dealing with food inspectors or sanitary engineers, he always referred to it as my Factory, my pineapples, my pickles. Legally this was the case, because Ammu, as a daughter, had no claim to the property.” (Roy, 1997: 57).

Ammu and Chacko are siblings, they share the same bloodline from Papachi and Mamachi, but Ammu cannot claim her property because she is a woman. Chacko owns all of the profits from the pickle factory, as well as the entire family property, because he is the man and all of the family property belongs to him. The sentence in this passage clarifies that statement,

“Chacko told Rahel and Estha that Ammu had no Locusts Stand I. “Thanks to our wonderful male chauvinist society,” Ammu said. Chacko said, “What’s yours is mine and what’s mine is also mine.” (Roy, 1997: 57).

It's a clear statement that all of the family property belongs to Chacko, the son, and Ammu, the daughter, has no claim to the property. In this part Ammu was showing she had gender inequality treatment and the data proves there is a marginalization to women and refer to Ammu within this family.

Nevertheless, the marginalization of women still happens in India.

“Their demands were that paddy workers, who were made to work in the fields for eleven and a half hours a day—from seven in the morning to six-thirty in the evening—be permitted to take a one-hour lunch break. That women’s wages be increased from one rupee twenty-five paise a day to three rupees, and men’s from two rupees fifty paise to four rupees fifty paise a day.” (Roy, 1997: 68).

According to all evidence, women are still being marginalized in society. The character Ammu and her daughter are an example of gender inequality in the working and family sectors. Ammu did not have a share of the family legacy because she is a woman, and because she did not have the same share, she cannot claim her property. According to evidence, even when men and women work at the same time, women earn less than men. It is evidence of gender marginalization, which primarily affects women. This gender inequality is related to socialist feminism, which holds that women should have the same portion as men, earning the same wages at work.

Violent as the part of radical feminism

“Every night he beat her with a brass flower vase. The beatings weren’t new. What was new was only the frequency with which they took place. One night Pappachi broke the bow of Mammachi’s violin and threw it in the river.” (Roy, 1997: 48). This happens to Mamachi's, Ammu's, and Chacko's mother, who was abused by Papachi. The phrase *"the beatings weren't new"* is clarified in this passage, indicating that she was subjected to them more than once.

Besides Mamachi, Ammu has experienced the violence from her former husband.

“Suddenly he lunged at her, grabbed her hair, punched her and then passed out from the effort” (Roy, 1997: 42).

The data proves of high level of violence against women caused by patriarchy. The character Mamachi and Ammu is having violence from their husband. These data also show that gender inequality between men and women leads to actions that are harmful to one gender. According to the data, this inequality is related to radical feminism, which holds that women are supposed to fight against male violence.

CONCLUSION

The author concludes that there are three gender inequality presented in this novel: subordination as the part of liberal feminism, marginalization as the part of socialist feminism and violence as the part of radical feminism, which shows the high rate of gender inequality in this novel. Some female characters have faced discrimination from their parents and husband. However, the circumstances and how the patriarchal system is already ingrained in the family cause Ammu and Mamachi to suffer from gender inequality. They have suffered from gender inequality, such as being unable to claim their property and experiencing violence from their father and husband. The social privileges men in taking power and having significant control over the family, while women are viewed as weak and subordinate. Women had no right to improve their lives in this position and condition. As a result, feminism's ideology is here to help improve the lives of women who are oppressed by gender inequality. In other words, this kind of inequality should be minimized for a right environment between man and woman. God creates Humans with advantages and disadvantages in each gender, better to respect and care for each other.

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