

**Review**

**Religiosity Reception of Feminism Ideology Texts  
SAMAN, TARIAN BUMI, GENI JORA, and NAYLA**

**Suyitno<sup>1</sup>**

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Some experts considered Indonesian people were "new" to the topic of feminism. In fact, many literatures proved that feminism has long existed in Indonesia. As the biggest Moslem country in world and a country which gives priority to it, how religiosity viewed feminism in Indonesia is important. This study discussed how religiosity viewed feminism in Indonesia. Four Indonesian novels considered as feminism ideology based novel that was *Saman*, *Tarian Bumi*, *Geni Jora*, and *Nayla* were the objects of this study. This study used 25 informants as the subject of the study who read, interpreted, and received religiously the novel based on their own perspective. The result of this study showed that the readers did not receive religiously well some of the novels and the disparity level of religiosity acceptance of the novel were different among the readers.

**Keywords:** *reception, religiosity, feminism, dominance, patriarchal.*

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## INTRODUCTION

On behalf of women writer community in Indonesian literature of twenty-one century, Djenar Maesa Ayu voiced her desire to be the bearer of patriarchal expressions:

I took that thick white liquid in my body. Flowing along the vaginal cavity until it was sticky, the awoken ovary has been loamy. Took it. Fertilize it. Then my body felt different. Nausea was going rampant. My stomach began to resemble a hill. When I was at a gynecologist, has already been half past a month old fetus in my womb.

The opening expression of a short story entitled *Air* (Eng: Water), written by Djenar Maesa Ayu, is a woman language that cannot be reproduced originally by men. The expression can only be brought by women and fulfills the function of language as an instrument to find and to expose the truth, to express things that are artistic, and to persuade the public (Latif and Ibrahim in Latif and Ibrahim, 996:7).

Although it was considered that Indonesian people have not received feminism (Awuy, 1995: 84 and Waluyo, 1997: 1), feminism has clearly presented in the Indonesian literature as a hegemonic countermeasure against patriarchal culture. This culture, according to French (in Lasmina, 1998: 58), was regarded as a value system that put men on the institutional system, embodied in human life, and run systematically to conquer women.

Patriarchy, according to Walby (1998: 20), is a system of social structures and practices that put men as a group that dominates, oppresses, and exploits women. As a system, patriarchy has two forms, namely private patriarchy and public patriarchy. Private patriarchy emphasizes household chores forming the stereotype that portrays what women are for. Public patriarchy generates pressure on women through systemic provisions in the workplace and government or state. The dominance of patriarchy is still producing various portraits of women, which are very apprehensively gloomy (Subono, 2003: 164).

Foulcher, an observer of Indonesian literature from the University of Sydney, testified that since 1967 Toeti Herati, the author of *Sajak-sajak 33*, had criticized the masculine ideology in bold and vibrant ways. Bias or gender imbalance in Indonesian literature was questionable. Gender bias or masculine point of view might appear everywhere, whoever the author, male or female (publisher preface in Oka Rusmini's *Tarian Bumi*). In recent years the dominance of masculine ideology has been conclusively criticized by a number of new works that unlikely be neglected (Foulcher in Herati, 2000: 74-75). Explicitly, Toeti Herati composed a folklore entitled

*Calon Arang* into a prose entitled *Calon Arang: Kisah Perempuan Korban Patriarki* (eng: Calon Arang: Stories of Women, Victims of Patriarchy).

The following quote reflects other evidence of the presence of feminism phenomenon in Indonesian literature:

My name is Nayla. I am a woman, but I am not inferior to men. Because I do not suck mother's breast. I suck father's penis. And I do not suck mother's milk. I suck father's semen.

I wear shorts or trousers. I play marbles and toy cars. I climb up a tree and fight. I pee standing up. I do all the things that boys do.

My hair is short. My skin is black. My face is ugly. My body is unattractively scrawny. My boobs are flat. However, I am not too concerned about the boobs. It's not important to me. Boobs are not used to breastfeed, it is only to be enjoyed by men, so my father said. I do not want to be enjoyed by men. I want to enjoy them, just like when I was a baby, when I breastfeed my father's penis (Djenar Maesa Ayu, 2004: 36-37).

In one of discussion about the novel *Saman*, Ayu Utami expressed some disclosures that reinforced such indicator:

First it was women's issues. The issue that not only makes me observe it from a distance, but also makes me wrestle and grapple. Because I was born as a woman (Ayu Utami, 1998: 1).

The feminist critics argued that feminism will not exist without social or political bonds, feminism is always formed in the ideological frames, as claimed by Kaplan that masculinity and femininity are always raised, presented and reproduced through social and cultural practices (Kaplan, 1986: 198). Feminism deals with the efforts of answering the questions that concern about the identity that has not been discussed as a pre-theoretical, a form of utopia world of femaleness (Schor, 1992: 276). Feminism is a mean to encourage women towards a post-patriarchal society, a society that no longer makes the patriarchal ideology as a dominant ideology that is repressive and causing injustice. Post-patriarchal society is a society that, according to Illich, as retold by Omi Intan Naomi, thinks the relationship between women and men in all places are essentially complementary and not competitive (Illich 2005: viii).

It turns out women in everyday reality are often impoverished, because her job duties are doubled compared to men. The task of pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding, keeping the baby, and raising children are

heavy. Whereas, the women body is much more complex than the body of men, so from the point of view of women, women should not be impoverished.

Clearly she had two advantages that is  
Can bear children, and at any time  
Does not wait for erection, ready for intercourse  
at anytime  
Those are what every man envies of... (Heraty,  
2000:17)

The following quote reflects phenomenal case of residual cultural treasure that contains expression of restlessness heart of a woman, a daughter of a district head:

... at the time the word 'emancipation' did not have any meaning to me and writings about it were far out of my reach, but something has appeared in my heart a desire that get bigger and bigger: a desire for independence, freedom and to stand on my own...  
... a woman's heart already has had enough bleeding ... misled by the men who do not know humanity, the devil that has hurt and trample women for centuries. Up until they (women), because of having been accustomed to being tortured, do not feel it as an injustice, but accept it as a reasonable right from men, as a legacy of suffering from every woman ... which become a curse for women ... (Soeroto, 1977: 46, 72).

In Indonesian literature, long before the 1967, issues of feminism had been represented in the novel *Layar Terkembang*, a masterpiece of Sutan Takdir Alisyahbana (Kayam in Esten (ed.), 1998: 125). In terms of the theory of literary criticism, Junus proposed the development of feminist theory since the early 1988 (Junus in Esten (ed.), 1998: 85-86). In 2000, emerged a tiny book relating to the introductory understanding of feminist literary criticism entitled *Kritik Sastra Feminis: Sebuah Pengantar* (see Djajanegara, 2000: 1- 63) and later on another book entitled *Kritik Sastra Feminis: Teori dan Aplikasinya* (see Sugihastuti and Suharto, 2005: 1-350).

Knowing the world of women in a literary works written by women is important to understand the obsessions, aspirations, as well as women's perceptions of their own existence. In the period of the 2000s, women enlivened Indonesian literature. The roar of the feminism in Indonesian literature was mainly echoed by the women authors of 2000s period, they were Ayu Utami, Oka Rusmini, Abidah El Khalieqy, and Djenar Mahesa Ayu.

Research on feminism of those female authors, in their four novels, is important because it can reveal (1) the language of the four novels, the object of this study, as the representation of women when they wrote about

themselves, when they talked about the relationship between women and men, and when they talked about the world from their own perspectives (see Sunardi in Bandel, 2006:xi), (2) affective data of the recitation of four study objects as the representation of decoding act of readers as the study subject, (3) feminism idea specification of the four novels as a once in a decade phenomenon of Indonesian literature history, (4) reader's acknowledgement about specification of feminism idea through affective data, (5) fundamental *avant garde* thought reflected from genetic data of the four novels, (6) assertive attitude of reader's acknowledgement through affective data, (7) the cultural key code of the four novels, (8) recitation liquidity of the text through affective data, (9) values of life refracted into four novel as a comparison to overcome the problems of life that always comes up repeatedly, cyclically, and universally, (10) affection level of recitation through affective data, (11) the possibility of the four novels as a polyphonic text and transfer instrument of life attitudes and cultural attitudes through verification, falsification, and education, (12) dominance or dominance-proof that is the effect of recitation through affective data.

Background reasons of study interests above may be reflected in the answers to the questions covering the issues associated with the ideology of feminism as hegemonic counter of patriarchal culture and subject's reception horizon of feminism ideology of the women authors in Indonesian literature in 2000s. Disclosure of answer to dimensional aspects regarding above issues should be preceded by efforts to open up attachment of polyphonic properties of the object study novel by women author of 2000s period. An instrument to open the attachment of its polyphonic nature is gynocritics study with sociological literary approach because gynocritics study describes an overview of literature that discusses the differences in the writing written by men and women. Gynocritics study describes the relation between women and texts written by women authors, the relation between women writing and women's bodies, the relation between women's writing and the language of women, the relation between women's writing and women's mental, and the relation between women and women's culture (Selden et. al., 1997:129, 134-137).

## THEORETICAL REVIEW

This study departs from the approach of readers' religiosity reception. This study uses analysis of reception because essentially the readers actively receive the text and they cannot be separated from the view of their religiosity, at the level of observing, feeling and or in making conclusions. Reception study is based on subjects' consciousness or the way they understand the objects and events with their individual experience.

Analysis receptions can see why readers interpret the texts differently, what psychological and social factors influence the difference, and what the social consequences that will arise. Among the psychological and social factors, there is a perception of religiosity. The premise from the analysis of religiosity reception are that literary texts acquire meaning at the time of reception event, and that the readers are actively producing meaning to receive and interpret literary texts in accordance to their perception of their religiosity. In other words, the readers subjectively construct the messages of literary text individually. This approach tries to open and elaborate readers understanding about what they have experienced and what they have felt. The analysis of reception can be interpreted as a textual comparative analysis from the viewpoint of author perception with the viewpoint of the readers that generate understanding in the context of the readers meaning.

Assessment of literary reception of text celibates with the essence of the presuppositions that a reader has against something. The understanding and interpretation of an object is very dependent on the historical situation of the object with its interpreter. Perceptions of aesthetics, appreciation, and the meaning are greatly dependent and cannot be separated from the construct of the historical situation because no static textual interpretation. Everything is contextual, it is conditioned by 'time' when object and subject intersect.

Perception of beauty has interpretive overview and reviews symbolic activity of a man by the subjective approach (Ting-Toomey in Gudykunst and Kim, 1997: 170) with the object of discourse literature as part of a culture (Koentjaraningrat, 1987: 15). Literary symbolic activities as a cultural product reflects the universe of the revealed objects that will affect the universe of the affectivity of its readers. The social function of a text intertwines with the function of social life, economic life, political life, trust life, and others life. Hence, throughout its history, literary approach moves at four paradigms: the universe, reader, writer, and works (Abrams, 1979: 6-29 and Atmazaki, 1988: 2). The theoretical basis of religiosity reception as an approach involves: theories of positivistic, reflection, dialectical, and post-structuralism (Ratna, 2003: 20-23). Linkage of the basic theories of religiosity reception approach involves supporting theories network of the approach, including: mimetic, socio-geographic, genetic, class structure, interdependency, reception, dominance, a work trilogy of author-reader, refraction, reaction, patronage, rhetoric of history, anomymity, dialogic, and deconstruction (Ratna, 2003: 21-23).

In the mist of ambiguity, the literary text offers a cathartic effect through the experiences of humanity that is impregnated (Suyuti in Subyantoro et al. (Eds.), 2011: 12) into the soul to heal mind and heart (Darma, 1984: 274). Feminism text in the four study object novels can

play a long-term role; it can share the burden of the load capacity of national education that is stated to be greater than that of the burden of the developed countries. Education in Indonesia plays the roles not only as a means of knowledge transfer, but also as a broader enculturation which of course covers a very wide field (Azra, 2002: xiv), not just eighteen values in character education as formulated by the Indonesian Education Ministry (Hasan et al., 2010: 9-10). Literary text that has the potential value of education is an urgent need for the civilizing nation. The strengthening position of women in society structure requires justification of teaching values through a text. Widiyanti (2008: 6-8) assumed that there is an urgent need for sorting and selecting to canonize literary texts that can provide the values of gender equality education.

Literary texts provide a cultural experience that can last for a long time and provide a change of someone attitude and perspective about something (Collie and Slater in Acher, 2011: 4-5). Equality and egalitarian values between men and women represented concretely as what would happen to the community in the four study object novels is something potential that can make the readers to be enculturation affective. Subjects may be dominated and probably will dominate-proof. Dominance and anti-dominance arises due to the nurturant effect of educational texts values. Dominated readers are those who approve the concept of the feminism discourse of the four novels. Dominate-proof readers are those approve the concept of feminism discourse with notes, disapprove some, and or tend to disapprove the concept of feminism of the four novels. The readers' reference, dominated and dominate-proof readers, may be the educational values of the four novels that is opposed to the social values associated with religiosity perception. Educational values of the texts that protect and strengthen the existing social values that are in line with religiosity perception tend to bring up dominance. Otherwise, educational values of the texts that weaken the existing social values that are in line with religiosity perception tend to bring up dominance-proof.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study is a double case study because the reception of religiosity was against four novels and the study was conducted at the same time (Sutopo, 1998: 43 and 58). This study is explanatory descriptive study and uses embedded literary reception approach because it focused on several aspects of disaggregated interests (Waluyo, 1991: 46) related to the research sample. The sampling was carried out through information-oriented selection some of which based on readers religiosity perception (Flyvbjerg, 2006: 230; 2011: 307). This study uses hermeneutic method to reveal the reality of texts and the

meaning beyond the texts.

Data collection techniques used rely on in-depth interviews to obtain affective data in the form of appreciation from serious reader and the expert reader of the novels *Saman, Tarian Bumi, Geni Jora, and Nayla*. There were 25 informants in this study. In-depth interview was done face-to-face (Allmark et al, 2009: 3). Although in qualitative research there is no consensus regarding the exact number of interviewee regarded as valid, Bertaux (in Guest et al, 2006: 16) states that 15 is minimum number of interviewee. Meanwhile, Morse (1994: 225) provided a minimum range of numbers from 6 to 50 participants that are required in qualitative research depends on the complexity of the issue. Based on these opinions, the number of interviewee in this study is at least six for each novel, hence it is qualified to represent qualitative research.

The data collection technique is equipped with focus group discussion followed by 11 ADOBSI members (Association of Indonesian Language and Literature Lecturer) from various universities in Central Java, Yogyakarta, East Java and West Java. This amount is ideal because Sawson, Manderson and Tallo, 1993; Irwanto, 2006; and Morgan D.L, 1998, for example (in Yusuf, 2011: 1), states that the ideal number of participants in focus group discussion is 7 -11 people.

This research is a study of the religiosity reception on *Saman, Tarian Bumi, Geni Jora, and Nayla*, that is why this study requires measurements reflecting an attempt to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomena being studied, because the true reality will never be revealed (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994: 2). Knowledge of reality, whether it is achieved through observation, language, or memory, is the result of our effort beyond the available information (Wahab, 1991: 1). In order to maintain the validity of the data and obtain emphasis of cross check once with confirmation so the steps to examine the data validity in this research are as follows:

1. Triangulation, the researcher used various collecting data techniques (documents, in-depth interview, and focus group discussion), from various sources (using objective, genetic, and affective data), and used theories spectroscopy: feminism, hermeneutic literature reading, and literary sociological approach.
2. Member checks, the researchers conducted an interpretation check with informants as source of data acquisition, asked back the statements summarized in the elucidation of researchers to ensure the correctness of elucidation created by the researchers (in Lincoln and Guba, 1985: 373-378).
3. Audit trail, researchers adapted the instructions of Halpern (in Lincoln and Guba, 1985: 382-392) to examine research activities journal containing:

note of research steps that have been done to test the accuracy of the data (through field notes and the documents records), data analysis result (summary, concepts), synthesized data result, and the process used to get the data synthesis (the process approach and strategy issues the assessment).

4. The process of crosschecking and re-checking by investigator triangulation (Guion, 2002: 1-3) involved members checks and group discussion as well as utilized an audit trail so that the validity of the research data can be accounted for.

The focus of this research data analysis is on its content analysis emphasized on the religiosity reception on *Saman, Tarian Bumi, Geni Jora, and Nayla*. Because the data in a literature can be implicit and explicit, this research focused on the hermeneutical method in the analysis of interpretation. Hermeneutical method can reveal things beyond the literary text.

Readers as affective data source are greatly possible to be synergistic but may also be too controversial when trying to determine meaning with the construction of cultural discourse. Affective data of four novels by Ayu Utami, Oka Rusmini, Abidah El Khalieqy, and Djenar Maesa Ayu were explored through in-depth interviews and focus group discussion that led to the confirmation of the readers' appreciation issues as the meaning source. Focus group discussions was organized to find out confirmation of the expert readers' assertions related to the dominance and dominance-proof of subjects by feminism discourses of the four novels by Ayu Utami, Oka Rusmini, Abidah El Khalieqy, and Djenar Maesa Ayu.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS

1. The dominance of feminism pronunciation in *Saman, Tarian Bumi, Geni Jora, and Nayla*. The results of the study explained that the texts verification of four novels contained pronunciation in ideological feminism. There are some reasons why *Saman, Tarian Bumi, Geni Jora, and Nayla* contain ideological feminism pronunciation:
  - a. *Saman, Tarian Bumi, Geni Jora, and Nayla* contained provocation to reject rights inequality between women and men that was reinforced by patriarchal culture.
  - b. *Saman, Tarian Bumi, Geni Jora, and Nayla* shook women identification of their bad stereotype and marginalization of women position in the world ruled by men.
  - c. *Saman, Tarian Bumi, Geni Jora, and Nayla* shook women identification of their stereotype as weak, submissive, teasers, appendages of men,

- d. always demanding, talkative, and emotional. *Saman, Tarian Bumi, Geni Jora, and Nayla* affirmed the need for the involvement of women in demanding equality through written culture because all along women have been made lower by the texts created by men and then received it as a truth that women are low by nature.
- e. *Saman, Tarian Bumi, Geni Jora, and Nayla* awakened people, especially women, that up until now a lot of women have not been aware that position as the secondary sex, the other, or sub-alternative are bad ways to become human.
2. The acceptance horizon of the readers of *Saman, Tarian Bumi, Geni Jora, and Nayla* has different level of dominance.
- a. *Saman* was considered to have too much sexuality content. The novel described a very free life that did not suit social and religious norms. *Saman* viewed from its vulgarity, is doubtful.
- b. *Tarian Bumi* contained truth absurdity reality shaking. The novel intended to express that women body, as well as an idea, is too precious and too important to be imposed in patriarchal culture. Telaga (character in the novel) is a portrait of Balinese women rebellion against the practices of Balinese culture that oppressed women. Living on the edge of acceptance and obedience, between submission and freedom, Telaga provided a social reality worthy as research materials of religiosity reception of a figure judged from her value of life.
- c. *Geni Jora* ignited the courage to be realistic in considering women Islamic boarding school, gender equality, discrimination of women in education, polygamy, lesbianism, patriarchal culture domination, domestic violence, and women sexuality. The author did not focus on the sexuality as the author of *Saman* and *Nayla* did, but explicitly gave values that women have the right to reject or start a relationship.
- d. *Nayla* provided the psychological struggle image of the imaginary characters that lived in a modern, free, harsh, also wild world. The novel told about the effect of child abuse. *Nayla* is considered to have exploited the character too much. The character wanted to break free from moral values, rules, and norms. *Nayla* has too much taboo for religious perception of the readers.

## CONCLUSIONS

There are three reasons why the acceptance horizon of

the reader of *Saman, Tarian Bumi, Geni Jora, and Nayla* have different level of dominance:

- a. the level of repository of religiosity in each reader is different,
- b. the level referential competence in each reader is different,
- c. the level of self-reflection competence in each reader is different.

Readers' religiosity reception of *Saman, Tarian Bumi, Geni Jora, and Nayla* is in different level because they come from different cultural background and each novel brings different feminism value configuration. The difference of feminism value configuration of *Saman, Tarian Bumi, Geni Jora, and Nayla*, is based on readers' perspective, because the religiosity background of the authors is different. Ayu Utami is not a devoted Catholics, Oka Rusmini is a new Muslim who had Hindu as her previous religion, Abidah El Khalieqy is a Muslim scholar, and Djenar Maesa Ayu was raised from a family whose parent had only been married for a year.

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