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**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

## Deconstruction in the Novel *the Jilbab Traveler* by Asma Nadia, et al: A Feminist Perspective

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**ABSTRACT**

The study aims to observe the deconstruction of people's thoughts on Muslim women contained in the novel *The Jilbab Traveler* by Asma Nadia using a feminist perspective. The background of this study is to reveal that there is gender equality in society between men and women. In general, society still considers that the degree of a woman is considered lower than that of a man. The method used in this study is descriptive qualitative because the object is in the form of writing in novels which becomes contextual research data. The research data is in the form of all lingual units in the form of words, phrases, clauses, and sentences that contain elements of feminism and gender equality in the novel. Data retrieval with read and record techniques. The reading technique is carried out by reading the novel *The Jilbab Traveler* by Asma Nadia et al. effectively to search for research objects. The important points that are the subject of this study are marked and recorded in the data card to be classified according to the type of gender equality feminism studied. The analysis of the study was carried out by the technique of content analysis. This analysis focuses on the content and context of the research object in accordance with the formulation of the problem. The result of this study is gender equality between women and men in everyday life. In the novel, it is found that there is a deconstruction that occurs about beliefs or levels or levels intended for Muslim women.

**KEYWORDS**

Feminism, gender equality, women, deconstruction

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### 1. Introduction

Criticism sastra feminism is the criticism or assessment of a literary work using a feminist perspective or understanding. This literary critique of feminism focuses on the power of a woman or female figure in a literary work. Suharto & Sugihastuti (2002) state that feminist literary criticism is a strong basis for unifying the stance that a woman can read as a woman, compose as a woman, and interpret literary works as a woman. Wiyatmi (2012) argues that feminist literature is one of the varieties of literary criticism that utilizes the theoretical framework of feminism in interpreting and providing evaluations of literary works. From the opinions of the above experts, it can be concluded that feminist literary criticism is a literary criticism that assesses the strength of a woman who stands out in a literary work.

Mulyaningsih (2015); Pratami (2021); Suharso & Retnoningsih (2011) stated that feminism is a women's movement that demands complete equal rights between women and men. Another opinion was expressed by Wiyatmi et al. (2021), which state that feminism is one of the schools of thought in the social sciences of the humanities that try to understand why society occurs gender injustice, what causes it, and what consequences it causes. The injustice that afflicts women will give rise to the perception that women are born to do much more limited work in number with low employment status as well (Wibowo, 2011). In society, there are several traits that are attached to both women and men. Women are considered to be meek, beautiful, emotional, maternal, and passive figures. While men are considered to be strong, rational, active, and assertive figures. This is in line with the opinion

of Mujiono & Zalhairi (2015), which state that social instruction defines women as women who are weak, have a soft character, are chatty, participate as mothers, and are very emotional, while men are strong and rational.

Based on the various opinions of the experts above, feminism is a movement carried out by women to get their rights or equalize gender between women and men. So far, society thinks that women have a lower degree than men; they also consider women to be weak, so they have a perception or assumption that women should not travel far alone without a companion. Moreover, they are women wearing hijabs who are still considered taboo by the wider community. As a result, women feel constrained and cannot freely choose the path of life they want. They cannot freely achieve their dreams because of the perception of the wider community. The culture and history of male leadership over women in religious rituals have turned into satisfaction, then into an unwritten legal tradition in society that men are superior beings to women (Mubarokati, 2022; Susanto et al., 2022).

The change in beliefs and efforts made by women is a form of deconstruction of society's beliefs about women. Suhartini (2013) argues that deconstruction is more of a stimulus to not see the truth that is believed to be the only truth. There are many truths, and they can be chosen as needed, so it can be said that the truth itself will never be achieved in a rounded totality. Although the truth is a possibility, it is essentially an impossibility unless it is embraced in *différance* with all plurality.

The theme that this novel display is quite interesting. The author makes the story in the novel very well so that it can attract the reading interest of readers. *The Hijab Traveler* novel is a straight or forward-looking novel. In addition, there are many more that will be discussed in this literary criticism, such as characters, characterization of characterizations, settings and time settings, settings of places and tools, social settings, and relationships between elements. Feminist literary criticism will be discussed about gender prejudice and the adoption of women, the biography of the character and his emancipation ideas, profeminist figures, counterfeminist figures, gender-prejudiced characterizations, gender backgrounds and prejudices, and the relationship between language style and gender.

The novel *The Jilbab Traveler* also provides tips when going abroad for women who want to go abroad alone so that they can be safer. Because the world out there is very dangerous, there are so many bad people who target women. This can happen because criminals think that women are weak and cannot fight these criminals. If we read this novel, there are so many lessons that can be taken from the novel *The Hijab Traveler*. Readers can learn several languages from different countries that have been explored by the characters told in the novel.

Research related to women has also been carried out by Wardiani & Ajistria (2016) with the title *Thought and Action of Feminism of Female Figures in the nature of Abidah El Khalieqy's Mataraisa Novel*. The purpose of this study is to describe the form of thought and action of feminism of female characters in Abidah El Khalieqy's Novel "Mataraisa". From the results of the study, it was obtained that the form of thought and action of feminism carried out by female figures was solely because they wanted to obtain equality of position and position between men and women. Concretely the desired equality is in the field of free speech, the field of education, the field of workload, and the sphere of social life.

The next research was conducted by Pramesti & Widayanti (2019) with the research title *I Am Malala: A Woman's Struggle for Her Rights in Education*. This study aims to describe women's rights in education using Liberal Feminism. The results of the analysis of the novel show the struggle of the main character, Malala, who received many wrong perceptions of society, family, and traditions about her position as a woman. The wrong view is the reason why he experiences educational inequality between men and women.

The writing of this article aims to observe the deconstruction of people's thoughts on Muslim women contained in the novel *The Jilbab Traveler* by Asma Nadia using a feminist perspective. This study describes how the forms of deconstruction occur in the novel. It describes the struggle of a Muslim woman to get her rights as a woman. The deconstruction was carried out to fight for women's rights and gender equality among men and women. In general, society still considers that the degree of a woman is considered lower than that of a man.

## 2. Method

This research uses descriptive qualitative research methods. The technique used to collect data in this study is by reading books related to feminism, reading the novel *The Hijab Traveler*, and then recording the important things. Data collection in this study used reading and recording techniques in data analysis techniques to support research using interactive data analysis techniques. This method strongly supports the research carried out to analyze the forms of deconstruction present in the novel *The Hijab Traveler* by Asma Nadia et al.

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### 3.1 Gender Equality

The novel *The Hijab Traveler* raises the issue of the story of the character's journey while abroad without a companion. The character in the novel seeks to equate gender equality between women and men by the way she struggles to pursue her dreams all the way abroad without a companion, even though she is a Muslim woman wearing a hijab. At that time, people assumed that a Muslim woman, while traveling, should be accompanied by her companion. This view comes from the thinking of those who think that women are weak creatures. So women are not allowed to travel alone. In addition, there is also an influence from religion that states that a woman has a position below the male. So a lot of people are misrepresenting that. Many of them think that women are of a very low degree.

Many people also think that a Muslim woman wearing a hijab will not be safe if she goes out of the house alone. As a result, many Muslim women wearing hijabs cannot freely leave the house because of this perception. If we wear a hijab, we as women will be more valued for our dignity because by wearing a hijab, we close ourselves and protect ourselves from people who want to do the no-no. By wearing a hijab, people will value our dignity as women more. This is evidenced by the following quote.

"And thank God, the hijab is not an obstacle for me to wander on His vast earth. Of course, there are certain conditions that sometimes must be considered. Moreover, kika walks alone. Ideally, we are accompanied by a husband or a relative. But in the present situation and conditions, often the opportunity to travel comes to individuals." (TJT, p. 7)

In the past, people argued that in domestic life, the one who should work to make ends meet is a man. Women are not allowed to work outside the home. In the past, women were only in charge of taking care of children and taking care of the house. Completely a woman must serve her husband. Unlike the characters told in the novel in the novel, the character named Asma et al. continue to work even though they already have a husband. In fact, they even went abroad to do the job they chose. In addition to their work, they also continue to fulfill their obligations as a wife and a mother. They can still take good care of their husbands and children even if they are busy with their work. This is shown in the following quote.

"That's how it is when the child sleeps, I start writing. Waiting for Caca to play, I wrote. And when the child is hungry... yes I am suapin dong hehehe." (TJT, p. 6)

They choose to work not only to fulfill their desires but also to think about helping the family economy. So that they can help and ease the burden on their husbands; it's not that they want to replace their husband's position as the backbone of the family. They work as a book writer, which is their hobby, so they can live their hobby happily while also earning money from the books they write. By becoming a writer, they can realize their dream of going abroad without having to trouble their husbands. This is evidenced by the following quote.

"But maybe because I am a wife, I did it not in the name of the obligation to make a living... but more because of hobbies." (TJT, p. 6)

Even so, they still asked their husbands for permission in the matter of work. However, in religion, it has been explained that a wife must ask her husband for permission when she wants to do something and even leave the house. If the husband allows it, then a wife can carry out her intentions; if the husband does not allow it, then a wife cannot carry out her intentions. Although the novel tells the story of a woman's struggle to equalize gender equality with men, the novel still has boundaries in describing a character as the nature of a woman.

Although in this day and age, emancipation is something that is no longer considered taboo by society, we must also not forget our kodrat asa women. Nor should we forget our obligations as women. We also still have boundaries; we must not cross or exceed existing boundaries. If this happens, the positions of a man and a woman will be reversed. Women become leaders, and men become their subordinates. The degree of the male will be below the degree of the female. Whereas in the Quran, it has been explained that the position of the man is higher than that of the female. Even so, in religion, it is also explained that women must be looked after, valued and respected. Not to be demeaned. What is called gender equality is equality or similarity of degrees between a woman and a man. So don't let it be just because of the emancipation of a woman to the point of exceeding her limits as a woman. We must be able to control ourselves so as not to confuse things that will harm us and violate applicable norms.

#### **Strongly Determined and Unyielding**

Asma is a character and author of *the novel The Jilbab Traveler* who becomes an agent or pointer to improve the degree of women while changing society's view of women. In the novel, Asma is depicted as a female figure who has a strong determination and never gives up. This is shown when Asma faces various problems that corner her. Among them is when he has to face difficulties

to achieve his dream of being able to go abroad because of the economic difficulties he faces. But in the midst of that difficulty, he still has the spirit and determination to keep pursuing his dreams. He never gave up on achieving his dream. This is evidenced by the following quote.

"Long story short, as a young couple, we are very money-saving. It's more crisis time. Being able to eat daily plus buy milk for Caca is already good... boro-boro thought of traveling abroad." (TJT, p. 5)

"But an almost forgotten dream found shape when one day, the husband brought home a one-door refrigerator. Small but rekindling toejar dreams. The shadows of the magnetic souvenirs on some of the refrigerator doors that I spelled as a child danced back in my head." (TJT, p. 5)

Asma has dreamed of traveling the world since childhood. Then in the last seconds of the 3rd grade of junior high, she decided to wear a hijab. It was from *sisni* that she had thoughts about whether her space would be limited and whether she could still travel the world even though she was cursing at the hijab. Then where did the money come from to be able to realize his dream? He himself was born in a very simple family environment. He lives in a small rented house, the meal is mediocre, and everything is all about eating.

"Understandably, I come from a very simple family, who for twenty years in Jakarta, contracted from one small house to another, eating mediocrely... everything is an all-rounder." (TJT, p. 1)

Given these conditions, it seems that realizing his dream is impossible. In fact, he had fantasized that if he had been born in a wealthy family environment, he would have very easily achieved his dream. Awal to the appearance of the dream was from a refrigerator door of the deceased Omany. On the refrigerator door, there are souvenir magnets from various countries. It was from there that he began to have dreams of traveling the world.

Although he was born in a simple family environment, he still attended school. But his journey stopped until he was in high school. He couldn't continue his studies for one reason or another. When he learned of the fact that he couldn't go to college, he thought again about whether he could still realize his dream. Because he has a very strong determination, he remains excited and strives to realize his dream. After he could not go to college, he took a kindergarten teacher's school, and he also briefly studied Arabic.

With his very hard struggle, finally, the dream of traveling around his world one by one can be realized through his work as a writer. She started writing because of the support of her husband. Thanks to his hard work and family support, he was able to realize his dream. This is evidenced by the following quote.

"God flew me... initially to Brunei, then to Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Korea, Egypt, Hong Kong, Beijing, Macau, etc. Countries and cities that I originally only saw on maps, in newspapers, in magazines, or on television. Almost everything is free. Thank God." (TJT, p. 6)

But his struggle is not over there; as long as he carries out his work abroad or not, he still faces various obstacles. When abroad, he must be able to adapt to the people there who have different cultures and languages. Moreover, she had to leave without her companion or her husband. She must be able to take care of herself as long as she is away from her husband. Plus, she is also a Muslim woman who wears a hijab. There must be a lot of obstacles that he has to face. Just an example of the differences in dress culture he faced is the following quote.

"The tourists who come are mostly white people from France, England, and surrounding areas. Because of the coastal area, those tourists dressed very openly. Bikinis became a very common sight. Even many female tourists swim and sunbathe in a *topless* state. So, imagine their reaction to seeing the appearance of me dressed in Muslim women-covered from top to bottom. 'Oh my God, Madame Theresa!' someone exclaimed when they saw my state of affairs... I blushed." (TJT, pp. 13-14)

In addition to the cultural differences faced by the figure while abroad, namely language differences, this is evidenced by the following quote.

"There was a father who was reprimanded in the city transport. First of all, the question is still easy around the name, from everywhere I can still answer. But then all of a sudden he spoke at length and none of the words I could understand... *senyum* they are so sincere and friendly." (TJT, p. 15)

The above quotes are a small sample of evidence of the obstacles and challenges that the character must face. But, despite the myriad of obstacles he had to face, he never gave up. He remained struggling and grateful for what God had given him. And his struggle turned out not to be in vain. He can realize his dream of traveling the world with strong determination, unyielding and relentless struggle.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Based on the above findings, it can be concluded that the women's emancipation movement and feminism actually aim to overhaul the old-fashioned custom. Profeminist leaders wanted to change the customs that confuse and bruise women into customs that recognize the existence of women. Custom, however, is a powerful system, while the movement of the new profeminist figures is an individual movement. It is indeed not easy to fight against the customs that have been attached to society for a long time. But with the determination and intention of the character, which is very kuat, the character is able to visit the customs that have been attached to the community. She was able to equalize the gender that society had always assumed that women who wore hijabs while traveling should be with companions; thanks to her efforts, society's view of women wearing hijabs has changed. Society began to open up with them women wearing hijabs.

Based on the story of the novel, there are many lessons that can be taken to live daily life. One of them is that we are taught never to give up on achieving dreams. We must continue to fight to achieve our dreams even though we have to pass even very difficult obstacles because there is no struggle in vain. Every struggle will definitely have a result. In addition to trying, we must also remember that we must also pray that our efforts can get good results. So our efforts must also be accompanied by our prayers so that we can get the best for us.

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