

Daisy Buchanan's Liberal Feminism in the Novel the Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald

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Abstract

Literary works no longer aim to entertain, but more than that, a literary work can be intended as a study of writing. The purpose of this writing is to conduct a study on the issue of feminism or gender inequality in a patriarchal society. The title "Daisy Buchanan's Liberal Feminism in The Novel the Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald" this research wants to show the domination and discrimination of women's position and women's rights in society. Analyzed by using the theory of Feminism, it was found that there was the oppression of Daisy Buchanan by Tom, her husband. Daisy Buchanan is described as a woman with an indifferent character who gives the image of a modern woman, however, what she displays is not like the reality in her life. Living in a patriarchal society made Daisy unable to escape the values of patriarchal culture, namely the tendency of male superiority over women. Tom Buchanan is the main character who is described as the main subject of bullying, while the main character Gatsby in his role is a man who has a true love for Daisy. The complicated and long story in this novel is a representation of patriarchal domination in society.

Keywords: *Feminism, patriarchy, discrimination*

INTRODUCTION

The novel as a product of literary works describes various problems that occur in the social order. Various stories are carried in the writing of a novel; however, a quality novel certainly has something special, and the evaluation of the features of a novel is given by the reader. Some of the things that make a novel special are the plot and strong characters, apart from these two things the right choice of words and a unique style of language also make a novel look good. Of the many themes that are carried out in a novel, women's issues are still the theme that most writers bring up, and women's issues are often used as a critique of the disparities that have befallen the lives of men and women that have occurred so far.

In every culture, men are considered superior to women, both physically and psychologically. Physically and psychologically, there are clear differences between men and women. Society perceives this difference as an unequal position. Society places

women in a weak (inferior) position because they do not have strong energy or a competent soul to deal with complex life problems. This point of view is the basis for creating the concept of patriarchy. The concept of patriarchy places men in a dominant position over women.

The phenomenon of violence and harassment experienced by women in their social life is proof that male hegemony over women is so strong. Thus, the concept of women as number two is getting stronger and becoming understood in society. Although many efforts have been made by women's organizations who want to eradicate the old Javanese paradigm that women are in charge of "macak, masak and manak" (dressing, cooking, and giving birth to children). However, this gender inequality continues to occur in life.

All forms of gender inequality originate from the same source of error, namely male and female gender stereotypes. Stereotyping itself means giving a standard picture or label/stamp to a person or group based on false or misleading assumptions. Labeling usually occurs in two or more guises and is often used as an excuse to justify the actions of one group over another. The label also refers to the existence of an unequal or unbalanced power relationship, the purpose of which is to conquer or control the other party. Negative signs can also be made based on gender assumptions. However, women often get a negative stigma.

Gender inequality is an old problem in people's lives. There are many studies and studies on this matter because the restrictions on all aspects placed on women in society make women shackled and unable to develop. Studies of scientific disciplines (social, legal, and religious) raise this issue a lot. Several literary genres, especially novels, raise this issue a lot.

The novel *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald was written in 1925 in the United States. This novel was written after the end of the first world war. Set in New York and Long Island, this novel has become one of the best literary works because it can write down various facts and bitter realities about complicated life in language and literary works that can be read and understood by all people with the main characters Gatsby, Tom Buchanan, and Daisy Buchanan. In this novel, Fitzgerald describes in detail the various events that occurred during the 20th century, this novel makes so many references to events, objects, literature, theater, and others that the reader can only imagine what the author called with the illustrations mentioned. Going deeper, *The Great Gatsby* does not

only talk about male characters with strong characters but also describes a lot about the nature and behavior of the female characters in this novel, women who at that time were considered modern women. It is said that these women wore glamorous clothes and liked to go to parties, smoke, get drunk and say harsh words. This illustrates that the lives of these women were so negative, they played the roles of high-class women but were not happy in their social life at that time. Physically, the women in this novel appear to have freedom, but deep down, women are still controlled by men. There is an attempt to build a patriarchal system in which women are the target of marginalized representation as second-class targets and men.

METHOD

In every culture, men are considered superior to women, both physically and psychologically. Physically and psychologically, there are clear differences between men and women. Society perceives this difference as an unequal position. Society places women in a weak (inferior) position because they do not have strong energy or a competent soul to deal with complex life problems. This point of view is the basis for creating the concept of patriarchy. The concept of patriarchy places men in a dominant position over women.

Violence experienced by women in social life is proof that male hegemony over women is so strong. Thus, the perception of women as number two is increasingly rooted in society. On the other hand, without realizing it, traditional concepts and those that are considered modern make gender differences even more pronounced. An example of a traditional concept that seems to benefit women is ownership of a house in the name of the wife. This concept is like giving respect to women, but instead, it makes people think that a woman must take care of the house by taking care of it so that women are always at home or on the margins. Furthermore, the existence of rules regarding the requirements of a job that differentiates between women and men is also a form of gender equality that has unwittingly developed in this modern era.

Recognition of the unequal ability and position of women both in society and in their own lives occurs in almost all world societies. A strong belief that men and women should be equal, namely the belief that knowledge is written not only about men, but also women, and the belief that all streams of knowledge must be re-examined and understood to reveal

the extent to which they have ignored or distorted gender. become a study of feminism based on analysis in writing.

Concept of Feminism

Feminism is a women's movement that demands equal rights with men (Novia, 2008: 115). Feminism studies serve to reveal aspects of inequality and oppression experienced by women in social life. In simple terms, feminism can be understood as a school of thought that wants equality between men and women (Zulfanhur et al: 8.40).

In addition, feminist theory seeks to develop a critical understanding of society to change a just and humane life. From most sociological theories, feminist theory is very different in addressing various things. This theory is the product of multidisciplinary societal thinking, which has been studied not only by sociologists, but also by researchers in other fields, such as writers and political activists. Next, feminist sociologists work with multiple agendas, expanding and deepening their original knowledge (Ritzer, Goodman, 2010: 404). From here, the study of feminist literature can lead to two goals, namely: (1) how do men view women, (2) what is the attitude of women in limiting themselves. Both will revolve widely into literary texts that are intertwined with the culture of each region (Endraswara, 2008: 147).

Cathy Reisenwitz (N.D., p. 1) defines Feminism as "the belief in the social, political, and economic equality of the sexes." She further identified 5 items that constitute the core beliefs of Feminism which are: (1) sexism is reality, (2) misogyny is cultural, systemic, rooted, enduring and all-encompassing, (3) equal rights and opportunities for men, and women, (4) intellectually and socially, men and women are equal, (5) recognition and treatment of women are equal to men.

According to Rosemarie Putnam Tong (1998), feminist thinking is divided into (1) liberal feminism, (2) radical feminism, (3) socialist Marxist feminism, (4) psychoanalytic feminism, (5) existentialist feminism, (6) postmodernist feminism (Kasnadi and Sutejo, 2010: 86). Bem, 1993; Friedan, 1963; Lorber, 1994; Pateman, 1999; Rhode, 1997; Schaeffer, 2001 in Ritzer and Goodman (2010: 420) explains:

1. Liberal Feminism

Liberal feminists argue that women can claim equality with men based on their essential human capacity to be carriers of moral reasoning, that gender inequality is the

result of sexist and patriarchal patterns of division of labor, and that gender equality can be achieved by changing divisions. Labor force through factory renewal.

Liberal feminism is a variation from John Stuart Mill's thoughts in *The Subject of Women*. Alison Jaggar argues that liberal political thought understands human nature as defining our uniqueness as human beings in our ability to think. The reason is the basis of thought developed by liberal feminists. Therefore, for liberals, rights must take precedence over benefits. Everyone as an individual has their rights as long as these rights can be considered both socially and legally.

Liberal feminism gives women complete and individual freedom. This school of thought argues that freedom and equality are based on reason and the separation of the private and public worlds. According to them, everyone can think and act rationally, this also applies to women. The roots of women's oppression and backwardness are due to the mistakes of women themselves. Women must be prepared to compete in the world and have equal status with men. Women claim the right to gender equality with men in their way of thinking, but they are still limited differences in several respects.

2. Radical Feminism

George Ritzer and Goodman (2010: 432) describe that radical feminism sees that in every institution and the most basic structure of society, there is a system of oppression in which certain people dominate others – oppression occurs across sex (gender), class, and caste, ethnicity, age, and skin color.

3. Socialist Marxist Feminism

Socialist Marxist feminism develops a portrait of social organization in which public economic structures, government, and ideology interact with the processes of human reproduction, domestic life, sexuality, and subjectivity to perpetuate a multifaceted domination system (George Ritzer and Goodman, 2010: 441).

4. Psychoanalytic Feminism

Psychoanalytic feminism seeks to explain the patriarchal system by using Freud's theory and its intellectual legacy (George Ritzer and Goodman, 2010: 427).

The theories above the map and emphasize the emotional dynamics of personality, emotions, which are often buried under the conscious or unconscious psyche; these theories also highlight the important role of childhood in patterning these emotions (George Ritzer and Goodman, 2010: 427 – 428). Finally, George Ritzer and Goodman

(2010: 448) describe that post-modernism is important for feminist theory, especially as "oppositional epistemology," a strategy for asking truth or knowledge claims that are preceded by a particular theory (in P. Collins, 1998).

Data Analysis

The type of research used in this research is library research, while the research approach used is descriptive qualitative. The data in this study are phrases, clauses, and sentences found through story facts and liberal feminism by John Stuart Mill. The data sources in this study are the novel *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald and several journals and articles that discuss the novel *The Great Gatsby*. Data collection techniques used are reading techniques, listening techniques, and note-taking techniques. Data analysis techniques using data reduction techniques, data presentation, and concluding.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Great Gatsby is one of America's most-read and popular books. After 15 years of publication (after Fitzgerald's death), this novel is recognized and loved by many people around the world. In this novel, patriarchal culture becomes the main story setting because it happens everywhere. A complicated storyline drew by conflicting ideas and multiple interpretations of the characters and their true intentions.

In the novel *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald, Jay Gatsby is the main character, besides Daisy, Tom Buchanan's wife, and other characters. From the beginning of the story of this novel it is told that Daisy is the love of Jay Gatsby. They separated because Gatsby was transformed into a poor farmer. It was his love for Daisy that made Gatsby determined to become a wealthy man. Before Tom married, they had promised to live happily in the future. Even though Daisy married Tom in the end, at the beginning they were about to get married, even though Tom had bullied Daisy. Her decision to marry Tom was not her true desire, but the demands of her social life that forced her to carry out the marriage. The system forced him against his will to follow society's rules. The conversation that emerged the night before they were married indicates that Daisy regrets her decision to marry Tom. Imagine what will happen to life after she marries Tom. Daisy realized that the mistakes she made would make it impossible for her to escape and break away from society's value system:

'Here, dearis.' She groped around in a waste-basket she had with her on the bed and pulled out the string of pearls. 'Take 'em

downstairs and give 'em back to whoever they belong to. Tell 'em all Daisy's change' her mine. Say Daisy's change' her mine!'. 'She began to cry—she cried and cried.
(2004:82)

Daisy becomes a figure who is oppressed by Tom and the patriarchal system itself because she is forced to accept the system without being able to free herself. Tom is told as a character who is rude, racist, and likes to have an affair. Tom's rude behavior was not only carried out on the people around him but also on Daisy Buchman. Besides that, Tom is also cruel and likes to show off.

In addition to his postwar hedonistic lifestyle, Fitzgerald's compelling writing also directs our attention to a moral decline that focuses only on one's well-being and ignores others. This is reflected in the character of the female characters. The female character is told as a person who behaves negatively. The female characters in this novel tend to be moody, rough-spoken, and like to drink, party, and even smoke.

Daisy Buchanan, who became Tom's wife, often received bad and harsh treatment from her husband, so she took out her frustration by visiting parties or splurging. Not only that, Daisy even shows her surroundings that she is a high-class modern woman, but all of Daisy's actions are described as being under Tom's control. Tom limited Daisy to develop her personality, so that what appears to Daisy is only a negative personality. Tom's rough treatment made Daisy a fun-loving, drinking and smoking woman. The story in this novel clearly reveals Daisy's inability to escape Tom's control.

Illustrated Daisy committing treason with Gatsby. Daisy commits an affair based on Tom's rudeness towards her, apart from her great love for Gatsby. It's true she left him to marry Tom. However, his feelings for Gatsby are still the same. This is shown in the part of the story where he shows love when he reunites with her:

As he left the room again, she got up and went over to Gatsby and pulled his face down kissing him on the mouth.
'You know I love you,' she murmured.
(2004:123)

Expressed an amount of love for Daisy, and it turned out to be tit for tat, Daisy's real wish was to live with Jay Gatsby. However, she failed to reach her goal, Daisy couldn't make up her mind when given a choice between staying with Tom or being with Gatsby. Then he was forced to leave Gatsby, meaning he ignored his wishes and Gatsby's. The third character confrontation at the end of the story depicts Daisy's inferiority to Tom.

The incident shows that he is unable to free himself and demonstrates his transcendence. Tom's superiority over his will shows him as superior. This story shows how far the patriarchal system is very influential in male dominance over women.

Daisy's weakness as a woman and Daisy's inability to overcome Tom's dominance over her are also seen at the end of the story. In the final conflict, she decides to stay with Tom and leaves Gatsby. The form of being wrong about the problems she was facing because of her husband's pressure made Daisy in unstable emotions, until finally it was told that Daisy killed Myrtle Wilson with her car, she hit Myrtle Wilson and killed her instantly. Once again, this bad character is a negative impact that is shown because of the shackles experienced by women. Myrtle Wilson is one of the female characters who becomes one of Tom's mistresses. Myrtle is portrayed as one of the modern, flirtatious, extravagant bachelor women who is portrayed with negative character types: shallow, flashy, rebellious, and deceitful.

The Great Gatsby shows a complicated story and the oppression of women through its characters. Gatsby is described as ambitious, but loyal and wants to show his existence as a rich man, Tom Buchanan is presented as the main antagonist with negative traits, a symbol of patriarchy itself. He is described as a character who can control other people like Daisy Buchanan, Myrtle Wilson, and George Wilson. Daisy Buchanan and other female characters depicted as having negative traits and attitudes.

CONCLUSION

The recognition that patriarchal culture is believed by all cultures is the background of The Great Gatsby novel. The Great Gatsby tells the story of how women are oppressed through patriarchal domination.

The female characters in this novel, one of whom is Daisy, try to escape from the oppression of male power, but they fail to escape the strong shadow of men who distort them.

Daisy's character opposes male domination with negative actions such as having a spree, partying, smoking, and dressing glamorously. Daisy and the female characters hide their worries by acting to show that they are strong, modern women, but that's just a camouflage.

Even though Daisy is described as a woman who is ignorant of her own life, as a woman the character Daisy has the strength and courage to dare to love her ex-boyfriend Gatsby, even though in the end Daisy does not decide to choose Gatsby, Daisy's attitude shows that as a woman she has appreciated her rights as a normal woman who needs to be loved sincerely.

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