

WOMEN REPRESENTATION IN DENIS DIDEROT'S

MEMOIRS OF A NUN

A THESIS

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## ABSTRAK

Skripsi ini menggambarkan tentang tokoh-tokoh wanita yang memiliki dua tipe yang bertolak belakang, yaitu aktif dan pasif. Meskipun sebagian tokoh wanita tersebut bersifat aktif, mereka masih berada pada posisi kedua setelah kaum laki-laki. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mencari representasi karakter wanita yang tergambar dalam Memoirs of a Nun. Representasi ini meliputi karakter wanita yang aktif dan karakter wanita yang pasif.

Dalam penelitian ini penulis menganalisa novel dengan menggunakan pendekatan objektif dari Abram yang menyatakan bahwa karya sastra merupakan sebuah kesatuan yang berdiri sendiri. Artinya, penulis hanya fokus membahas karya tanpa membicarakan tentang penulis novel atau membandingkan kejadian yang benar-benar terjadi di dalam novel itu. Maka, penulis juga menganalisa unsur-unsur intrinsik seperti tema, karakter, plot dan setting yang terdapat di dalam novel Memoirs of a Nun. Untuk menganalisa novel ini penulis menggunakan kritik sastra feminis yang dikemukakan oleh Hélène Cixous dengan teori Patriarchal Binary Thought, yaitu sebuah pemikiran yang melihat perbedaan antara kedudukan wanita dan pria secara binari opsisi. Dengan kata lain, wanita bersifat pasif dan pria bersifat aktif.

Setelah menganalisa novel ini, penulis menyimpulkan bahwa wanita digambarkan sebagai sosok yang lemah dan dibatasi oleh sistem patriarki. Peran aktif wanita dalam novel ini hanya berlaku pada hubungan antara tokoh wanita. Karena, dalam mengambil sebuah keputusan kaum laki-laki sangat berperan aktif. Sehingga, ruang gerak kaum wanita dalam mengambil keputusan sangat dibatasi.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. The Background of the Research

Feminist is known as one of literary theories which can be used to analyze literary work. Even though feminist was born as an issue and was not seen as a theory, it is accepted as a criticism to refresh the cultural mind-set about women's and men's position in the society. Historically, feminist emerges step by step as the time goes by. The movement of feminist is supported by women. Most of women's movement commonly happens in the West. In essence, the movement is to voice the issue of feminist around women's daily life. So, most of theories were popped up during 1960s in the patriarchy system.

Generally, the patriarchy system is like a cultural mind-set that places female as the second sex. It means that women are not allowed to explore themselves in the society. If one of them does as what men do, she will be considered a stranger as long as other women are still trapped in that cultural mind-set.

A woman is a unique creature. If we compare them with men, in fact women are faced with oppression of their society. We can see it from patriarchy society. Long time ago, the representations of women in patriarchy society were weak, evil, and had no place to voice their argument. As time goes by, this way of life decreases from day to day. It was caused by most of women's movement in fighting the system that humiliates themselves. Nowadays, we can see that women can show

their ability and potency in the society. This is the goal of the feminist movement. Based on this reason, women want to produce their own works. The writers try to send their message by using their own ways. In this case, the reason why women want to fight against the patriarchal system is to make women know their own room. In general, the women movements have a long political history. If we look back to the historical background of feminist theory itself, it has three major periods; first wave, second wave and third wave feminist criticism (Selden and Widdowson, 1993: 206). Each of these periods consists of different feminist's experts with their own theory. The purpose of feminist theory is to find the equality between men and women.

The writer is interested in analyzing Diderot's novel entitled Memoirs of a Nun. This novel was published in 1760. It is one of Denis Diderot's collections. This story tells about the life of Suzanne Simonin. She is a French girl who lives in eighteenth century as a Nun. Then, she begins to undergo her religious life in a convent. She gets enlightenment and religious experience. It makes her know about everything in the convent. She also tries to express her experience through writing. So, from this description, Suzanne's action in the convent can be regarded as a feminist movement.

The writer of this novel is a man. He makes the story by showing female character as the centre. We can see it from this novel. We can also see another side of the writer that shows the spirit of woman in facing her real life. In here, woman is not only as an object but also a spiritual guide for her community. In patriarchal system, woman is still bounded by culture. However, there is a possibility for woman to open

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

Memoirs of a Nun is a unique novel that portrays about women representation in the Religious House. The patriarchal system binds the women in all aspects. We can see there is no place for women to make decision and create something. They must accept what the family wants, especially in marriage. The rules in the religious house are also isolated by patriarchal system.

After analyzing the novel, the writer finds there are two images of women; active and passive. Each of them is bound by the patriarchal system. Young Suzanne and Sister Ursula cannot do anything to their own life because they are intimidated by the patriarchal system, which is the rule in the family and in the convent. The active female characters; Suzanne Simonin, Madame de Moni and Sister Saint Christine can only show their activeness to other female characters. They cannot make decision in the convent because the decision maker is the Father. Thus, they can only show their activeness to the other women. Each of the female characters has their own problem in forcing the patriarchal system. The writer also finds there is patriarchal binary thought in the novel. The way of thinking between man and woman is quite different. The image of woman is weak and man is strong can be proved in the novel.

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