

**The Failure of William Shakespeare's Titus Andronicus in
Supporting Feminist Movement: An Application of Cheri Register's
Prescriptive Feminist Critique**

A THESIS

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ABSTRAK

Skripsi yang berjudul *The Failure of William Shakespeare's Titus Andronicus in Supporting Feminist Movement: An Application of Cheri Register's Prescriptive Feminist Critique* bertujuan untuk mengungkap gerakan pembebasan wanita dalam menentang tekanan dari kaum pria dalam budaya patriarki seperti yang tergambar dalam drama *Titus Andronicus*. Dalam hal ini, penulis akan mengurut upaya pembebasan diri wanita dalam menentang budaya patriarki di mulai dari penggambaran awal karakter wanita dalam drama tersebut, bangkitnya pembebasan diri wanita, kesuksesan sementara, dan akhir dari pembebasan diri wanita.

Penelitian ini bersifat kualitatif, dimana data yang dipakai adalah berupa kutipan-kutipan dari drama tersebut di atas. Dengan menggunakan teori feminis preskriptif dari Cheri Register, penulis ingin mengungkap penyebab kegagalan tersebut melalui penggambaran karakter wanita dalam rentetan usaha mereka untuk membebaskan diri dari tekanan kaum pria di budaya patriarki.

Berdasarkan analisis kritik sastra feminis preskriptif oleh Cheri Register, penulis menemukan sebab terjadinya kegagalan dalam usaha pembebasan diri wanita dalam drama tersebut. Melalui penggambaran upaya Tamora dan Lavinia dalam membebaskan diri, maka penulis menyimpulkan karya tersebut tidak memenuhi standar yang "baik" untuk karya feminis. Disebabkan oleh karya tersebut (1) tidak memberi ruang untuk wanita, (2) tidak mendukung kesetaraan gender, (3) tidak menampilkan sosok wanita teladan, (4) tidak mengembangkan rasa persaudaraan antar wanita, dan (5) tidak meningkatkan kesadaran diri terhadap wanita. Dengan demikian penulis menyimpulkan hal-hal tersebut sebagai penyebab terjadinya kegagalan wanita dalam upaya membebaskan diri dari tekanan kaum pria dalam budaya patriarki.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1. 1. The Background of the Research

Gender has always been an interesting issue to be discussed and is still often debated today. One issue about gender is women oppression by men. Through out the human's history, women have always been in a disadvantaged position socially, economically, and politically. It is because men always underestimate women in many ways. As Aristotle declares, that "the female is female by virtue of a certain lack of qualities" (Quoted by Selden & Widdowson, 1993: 203). In line with this, St. Thomas Aquinas believes that "woman is an 'imperfect man'" (203). These statements illustrate that based on men's viewpoint; woman is imperfect man with lack of qualities of human, and the role of women becomes unimportant in society because they cannot do things like men do due to their weaknesses. As a result, this issue has hampered the effort of women to be independent in society.

Besides that, men promote a patriarchal system that supports all men's interests. Abrams defines that "patriarchal system as a system which is ruled by the father, it is male centered and controlled, and is organized and conducted in such a way as to subordinate women to men in all cultural domains; familial, religious, political, economic, social, legal, and artistic" (1999: 89). This system directs the society, including women, to follow the rule of men in the process of being

socialized. By the reasons, feminist comes to challenge the world which is dominated by men by promoting women's liberation movement.

In literature, as one of cultural productions, feminist appears to analyze women in literary text. According to Tyson in her book Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide, "feminist criticism examines the ways in which literature (and other cultural productions) reinforces or undermines the economic, political, social, and psychological oppression of women" (2006: 83). Here, the writer will investigate the gender issue about oppression of women by men through the portrait of female characters by using feminist literary criticism in a play Titus Andronicus by William Shakespeare, since the play shows a lot of oppression toward the female characters.

In this analysis, the writer applies the feminist literary criticism that proposed by Cheri Register to analyze Titus Andronicus by William Shakespeare. Register (in Donovan, 1975), defines that "feminist criticism has three distinct subdivisions, each with its own target: (1) the analysis of the images of women, nearly always as it appears in works by male authors; and (2) the examination of existing criticism of female authors, and (3) it is a prescriptive criticism that attempts to set standards for literature that is good from a feminist viewpoint" (p.2). The writer focuses her analysis to the number three to reveal the play's categorization based on feminist perspective, whether it is a good or not.

Shakespeare is one of the famous playwrights in his history until now; his works are the best in world of literature. Titus Andronicus was written in very early of his career. It is one of the most tragic plays of Shakespeare; it confronts murder

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

Titus Andronicus is one of the most tragic play by Shakespeare; it confronts murder and other crimes. The play is considered as affected by the patriarchal culture which constrains the female character to be dominated by male characters. Since male is expected to be the most powerful person in the world to make women inferior than men.

Shakespeare has unique ways to express his feeling through the tragedy on the play which concerns on the challenge between men and women in power. He creates two female characters; Tamora and Lavinia, in which Tamora is the presentation of major female character and Lavinia is the minor one. The writer reveals the women's liberation movement through the portrait of female characters Tamora and Lavinia, which is directly or indirectly, performs the opposition upon male. Shakespeare creates that the female characters do the trial to release themselves from the restriction of men, but it does not succeed. Firstly, Shakespeare presents his female characters as weak and submissive women, so that they are dominated by the male power. Secondly, they are given a chance to challenge the oppression. Thirdly, however, they are made surrendered to the power of the man, in this case Titus.

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