

A Woman's Rights to Get Better Education
in A Border Passage by Leila Ahmed: A Feminist Study.

A THESIS

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ABSTRAK

Dalam penelitian ini penulis menganalisa karya Leila Ahmed, yaitu A Border Passage. A Border Passage adalah sebuah memoir (autobiografi) tentang seorang tokoh yang bernama Leila. Tokoh ini tumbuh dalam keluarga yang masih menjunjung nilai-nilai patriarky yang membuat kedudukan wanita lebih rendah dari pria terutama dalam keluarga ibunya. Berdasarkan data yang di dapat dari memoir ini terdapat isu feminis mengacu pada hak untuk mendapatkan pendidikan yang baik diperoleh Leila Ahmed dalam 2 aspek, yaitu: dengan pendidikan akan mendapatkan pekerjaan dan sektor publik yang baik.

Dalam membahas karya sastra ini, penulis menggunakan pendekatan ekspresif oleh MH.Abrams dan kritik sastra feminis oleh Elaine Showalter. Dalam hal ini penulis menggunakan teori Elaine Showalter yaitu wanita sebagai penulis, yakni gynocritics. Yang membahas bagaimana penulis wanita menggambarkan image wanita di dalam karya sastra tersebut dengan meperhatikan 3 kesempatan tersebut. Penulis menggunakan penelitian kepustakaan dalam pengumpulan buku-buku dan referensi yang berkaitan dengan topik analisis. Kemudian dilanjutkan dengan metode kualitatif untuk mengambil kutipan-kutipan yang mendukung analisa penulis. Hasil tersebut dipaparkan melalui metode deskriptif.

Setelah penelitian ini diselesaikan, penulis menemukan bahwa dalam karya Leila Ahmed ini menyuarakan tentang hak-hak wanita untuk mendapatkan pendidikan yang lebih baik. Melalui pendidikan secara tidak langsung wanita bisa terlepas dari sistem patriarki yang terdapat dalam keluarganya. Disini Leila menampilkan hal tersebut, pertama, Leila menekankan supaya wanita bisa mendapatkan pendidikan yang layak untuk mengangkat derajatnya sendiri supaya tidak lemah di mata laki-laki. Melalui pendidikan ini wanita akan mendapatkan pekerjaan yang membuat derajat mereka sama di mata laki-laki dan keluar dari sistem patriarki yang sudah lama mengukung di keluarga dan masyarakat. Kedua, dengan mendapatkan pendidikan wanita akan mempunyai keterlibatan dalam sektor publik. Jadi dapat disimpulkan bahwa Leila Ahmed menekankan supaya wanita setidaknya harus memiliki pendidikan sebagai tombak buat mereka keluar dari paham patriarki dan membuat derajat mereka lebih terangkat.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of the Research

Feminism is women's movement to struggle in getting equal rights and position to man. Feminist this movement comes from fact that women are oppressed. Moreover, feminist criticism in literature appears from the fact that position of observers or critics are dominated by men. As Barry in his book entitled Beginning Theory, An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory states that, "in the literary works present woman as the man theme, but most of them always present men's domination" (121). Furthermore, feminist critics want to define their own field, particularly in literary criticism that discusses about this issue and usually the works are based on their own perspective. Feminist literary criticism is a critic to examine literary works through women points of views as the result of development women life like autobiography or memoir in a literary work.

One of the writers who apply the feminist idea in their work is Leila Ahmed. She is an Egyptian and lecturer of Women's Studies in Massachusetts. The way of she expresses idea in works based on her personal experiences. One of her most popular works is A Border Passage, a memoir which tells many things about the woman opportunities in condition of patriarchal value particularly in religion perspective in the time inherently in her mother's family.

The writer chooses A Border passage written by Leila Ahmed telling about an Egyptian woman or Leila's memoir as an object, because first, this memoir implies

the side of woman's rights to get better education in condition of patriarchal value still adhered in Leila's mother family. At that time, the equal right did exist but her mother's family remains holding on the patriarchal value, while in the contrary to her mother's faith, Leila's father supports the equal right between men and women.

Secondly, this memoir also delivers about the inequality of gender between men and women that were appeared in term of education, job and public role. Which leila could not acquire easily because she must live against the traditional rule in her mother's family by breaking the rule that has existed and embraced by her mother's family. In this memoir Leila bluntly shows woman opportunities to be an intellectual and educational woman despite the condition of patriarchal value which till adhered in her mother's family.

The last reason the writer chooses this topic and work because this memoir is written by woman's author and because this is the real experience or true story of the author herself. Through this memoir, the writer can observe how the writer as woman describes the woman as main character in her memoir. It makes the writer is aware of the women condition especially in the literary work in Leila's memoir.

Leila was born from the upper class family. In A Border Passage memoir Leila tells how she pursued her goal to be an educational and intellectual woman in the middle of a strong patriarchal value that still adhered in her mother's family. Despite the fact of modern era and the fact of decreasing gender diversity, in fact, patriarchal value still existed in Leila's mother family, but Leila settled to shape her knowledge as a woman that later makes her succeeds to gain the equal rights to man.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

A Border Passage is a memoir written by Leila Ahmed in 1999. This memoir tells how the Egyptian woman pursued her dreams to be intellectual and educational. Leila Ahmed shows by getting education that makes women can get a good job and good public role that makes women can go outside from patriarchal values cannot be achieved by her mother's woman family member such as mother, grandmother, and aunts. She has to deal with various obstacles to achieve all of rights that she wants. The struggle to be an intellectual and educational woman must go through a lot of efforts, some of which is by breaking the rule or lives outside from the patriarchal rule that inherently adheres in her mother's believe that is women must be passive and submissive and making men as superior than women. Although leila is not oppressed by man directly but she is oppressed by the rules or systems in her mother's family that is fundamentalist islam by regarding man as superior and it seems like unfair for woman.

In analyzing this research the writer focuses on three points, first in the patriarchal religious interpretation by seeking out women and education then women and work. As the result women role in education and work that lives under the patriarchal religion are still more inferior to men. Because people belief in the traditional rules in which patriarchal rule is regarded men as a superior being or god while women are expected to be more obedient with the all of rules created by male and they cannot reject at all, thereby these rules resulted the condition that women

position is regarded as a second sex such in giving opinion, complaint, argument and work. It is difficult for them to leave the traditional rule that inherently adheres in the society for many years because it seems like ingrained for them and also the society. Moreover, the circumstances when they live did not support the women in getting the equal right. Thus, the society will look down for women opposing and breaking the traditional rule.

Second, the writer focuses on the form of the stereotypes of women in this memoir who live under patriarchal that makes the stereotyped of women existed in this memoir in terms of submissive (willing to submit or showing such inclination) and passive (the form of expression that is ineffective or ambitious). Here, in term of submissive, the women in Leila's mother are more dependent on male role; in this case is the grandfather. This condition makes the women in Leila's mother to become inferior and regard men as superior such as grandfather and husband in family. Then, in passive term, women become unmotivated women to reach their opportunities as it is reflected in the behavior of women family member in Leila's mother family.

The last, the writer focuses on women's opportunities to live outside patriarchal rule as found in A Border Passage. Leila Ahmed does not want to be stereotyped as a submissive and passive woman such as her mother's family, so she get through the all of opportunities to reach the opportunity to be equal in term of education, job and public role. Later, Leila succeeds to prove with her mother's family that woman also can get the same opportunities as man by moving outside of the patriarchal rule in order to follow her dreams to have the same opportunities in the

outside of the rule. Although leila breaks the rule in her mother family traditional rule and deals with some contradiction from her mother family, she finally succeeds to prove to her mother family that women deserve equity in many aspects of life such as to be intellectual and educational woman and are not only responsible about women domestic duty at home. In the other hand society and at the time leila lives, early 20th century, is the time when the condition already can support leila to make some movements so that her family can accept her and belief of gender equity.

From all of the analysis above, the writers concludes that A Border Passage is closely related with Gynocritics theory since it is writing made by a woman. In this writing, women's represent the memoir about the author self and experience. Leila Ahmed as a female author has succeeded recounting her personal experience in her life through this memoir. She also supports the feminist idea in this memoir, in which she portrays the courageous women to break or live outside patriarchal rules. She shows her strategy to gain independence by getting education that makes women can get a good job and public role making them can go outside from patriarchal values that inherent by women. In the other hand, patriarchy uses a religion that is fundamentalist Islam as a place to make women to be inferior to men. In fact patriarchal values does not existed in Egypt but in America also has it that makes women position inferior than men.

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