



Literary Studies

Sexist Socialization Experienced by Female Protagonists in Anthology Short Story Translated by Dayla Cohen-Mor

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ABSTRACT

Sexism over women is deeply entrenched in society. It becomes a worldwide issue evinced by multiplicity of literary works narrating discriminations of society against women where women's position is often exploited, humiliated, and even cornered. This article is designed to analyze the sexist oppressions experienced by female protagonists in Anthology Short Story Arab Women Writer translated by Dayla Cohen-Mor, the sexist socializations in the short stories as well as their responses towards the sexism. In analyzing this data, the writers scrutinize ten short stories selected and apply feminist theory: from margin to center by bell hooks (1984). The result imparts that sexism is socialized through behaviour and culture in society.

I. INTRODUCTION

Sexism as the discrimination over women becomes a polemic in society because it generally places women to be ruled by men that makes the position of women is very detrimental. Men are considered as the dominant who are strong, authoritative, and powerful while women are regarded as the recessive ones who are weak and whose jobs are related with chores: sweeping, mopping, washing, and other housework. This epithet makes men act arbitrarily against women so that violence frequently occurs mentally or physically. Even as women, they tend to be imputed by society whenever they get oppression or sexual harassment by the dominance, namely men. This act of sexism has been deeply rooted in society, and it is socialized indirectly through the habits, values, and culture of the surroundings which tend to standardize behavior patterns between men and women in which the position of women is the most disadvantaged.

There are a great deal of sexist actions against the position of women in society. One of which is indicated by the existence of women who are always required to agree with the choices that have been determined, even the choice of their own fate. Unfortunately, most women are not aware that they

are being oppressed and exploited, even they do not know about sexist actions over them because these actions are so ingrained and socialized for a long time as an early childhood socialization.

Gloria Jean Watkins, often known by the pseudonym bell hooks, is an American feminist theorist and activist who has always been involved in the fields of race, class, gender and sexual oppression. In her book entitled *From Margin to Center* (1984), she states that a family has a crucial role in sexist socialization in which a child learns the meaning and practice of hierarchies for the first time by absorbing every actions and values represented by adults in the family, such as father, mother, grandfather, and grandmother. hooks (1984:38) also mentions that the current family deteriorates sexist socialization because the family structure mostly applies a patriarchal system. Even every individual, particularly women, is taught to accept sexist treatment by the dominance. Moreover, this is defined as a natural form in the order of life or household.

The issue of sexism is not a new thing and non centralized only within a country. This is evidenced by the existence of various literary works from around the world in both old version and the modern one which shows the oppression

of women, the patriarchal system in a family, as well as the abuse over women. Furthermore, The literary works have been researched by academic researchers to be analyzed and investigated. Several sexist literary studies that have been discussed, included in the journals entitled (1) "Women Writers in India: Tracing Feminism", (2) "The Theme Of Literary Realism In Saadat Hasan Manto's Short Story Licence", (3) "Representation Of Patriarchal Motherhood In "Silsilah Duka" By Dwi Ratih Ramadhany", (4) "Analyzing The Portrayal Of Patriarchal Oppression Towards The Female Characters In J.K. Rowling's The Casual Vacancy: A Reflective Post-Feminist Critics", (5) "The Angry, Abusive and Controlling Men in K.S. Maniam's Short Story 'Mala'", (6) "Feminism in Rabindranath Tagore's "Haimanti" and Mahbuba Sarkar Shama's "Rosina's Dilemma": A Comparative Study", (7) "Gender Phenomenon in Short Story by Fanny J. Poyk in Media on Line, Indonesia", (8) "Marginalization of Women in Higuchi Ichiyou's Nigorie Short Story", (9) "Subordination of Women in Short Story of Kompas Newspaper", and (10) "Feminism Analysis on Dewi Ria Utari's "Topeng Nalar" Short Story).

Most of the previous research in those academic journals only focus on feminism and sexist behaviors in literary works, while as far as my observations, scientific explanations of sexist socialization in literary works are still rarely researched. Therefore, this article aims to identify the sexist socialization against women, which will be focused on the female protagonists in an anthology book of short stories entitled Arab Women Writers translated by Dayla in 2005. Besides that, this article will also discuss the socialization of sexism in the short stories, as well as the female protagonists' reactions to it.

II. METHOD

This article uses a descriptive qualitative approach to examine the sexist socialization experienced by female protagonists that occurs in ten short stories selected in the anthology book entitled Arab Women Writers, namely (1) The Slave, (2) Fragments from a Life, (3) That Summer Holiday, (4), (5) A Virgin Continent, (6) Sun, I Am the Moon, (7) The Dreadful Sea, (8) Half a Woman, (9) Heir Apparent, and (10) I Will Never Forfeit My Right. This article is delved based on the collection, sorting, and interpretation of the writers by analyzing them with theoretical data

from both online journals and E-books related to the topic brought up. The form of data taken from the research subject is in the form of monologue, dialogue and narration from the author.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

An Arab Women Writers Anthology short story translated by Dayla Cohen-Mor describes women's experiences regarding the actions given by their environment. The discussion of this article will be organized based on the short stories elected, centralizing on unveiling the sexism experienced by female protagonists, the sexist socialization in the short story and the protagonists' responses. Besides, the writers reveal these by aligning it with feminism theory: margin to center bell hooks (1984).

That Summer Holiday

"Dalal, from now on, you are absolutely not to go out into the street. That's what your father said. Also, from now on, you are forbidden to wear shorts. You can give these clothes to your brothers." Thunderstruck, Dalal tried to protest. "But Mother, I like to play, and I like to wear shorts. What's the connection . . ." The mother interrupted her resolutely: "The discussion is over. I don't want to hear another word." And she left the room. (2005:31)

This quote indicates a mother who declared a prohibition on her daughter, Dalal, from playing and wearing short clothes as her body has already shown her growing biological maturity, namely breasts that have started to enlarge. What the mother does is no other than as a form of protection of a mother against the protagonist so that she is not seduced by men and her appearance does not interfere with them. As a matter of fact, her mother is afraid her daughter will be the object of male sexual desire (Nurliana F & Erni S, 2016). Unfortunately the mother of this protagonist instead of advising all her children, she only focuses on judging her daughter. While her sons are not given any advice such as lowering their gaze and respecting women. Apart from that, she does not even give Dalal space to express what she feels and happens to her before.

The socialization about sexism, that is sexist inequality towards her children is carried out by the female protagonist's mother in the form of family socialization. bell book (1984:36) states that family is a group that is bound by blood relations in which sexist oppression often occurs.

“She remembered that Abu Mahmud had tried to touch them during the previous week. Unable to control her feelings, she covered herself with her shirt and burst into hot tears.” (2005:31)

The quotation depicts the female protagonist's feelings as she responds to her inequality and sexist oppression, namely sexual abuse performed by Abu Mahmud that he tries to touch her private area. By this case, She opts to remain silent because she knows that her parents' decision will never change whether or not she argues. She is embarrassed to reveal the incident and afraid of making things worse. Moreover, she is just a part from children where as stated by bell hooks (1984:118) that they are powerless.

Fragments from a Life

“The sight of the chief doctor makes me laugh. He has maps on his face that I drew with my fingernails. One day he wanted to break my pride. I tried to break his nose, but I could not. All I did was paint his face with his blood.” (2005: 53)

The quotation shows that sexist oppression over women not only occurs in domestic life. It also occurs in all fields of social life (Aji Pamungkas Siddiq et.al, 2019), including in the atmosphere of hospitals. It is portrayed by a female hospital patient who gets sexual abuse; she is almost ravished by a doctor in which the doctor acts arbitrarily and forces her to have physical contact involving penetration or sexual intercourse. For bell hooks (1984) this action manifests how a man places himself as the dominant to harass and harm a woman. The sexist action in this short story is forcibly socialized by the doctor so that the victim is compliant. However, his action fails. The female protagonist on the contrary tries to turn it down by breaking his nose and spreading his blood on his face as explained in the passage as her refusal. She holds the perspective that approving to perform such acts with a man who is not bound by marriage to her will lower her dignity.

The Slave

“Several young men came to ask for my hand in marriage, but they were refused on the pretext that they were unsuitable for me. My mother says, “Amina lacks nothing. She is pretty, tall, and well-mannered, and she can do women's chores skillfully. She is worthy of the son of a cabinet minister. She shouldn't act hastily because all those who have asked for her hand were beneath her.” “

(2005: 57-58)

According to the quotation above, it shows that the female protagonist, namely Anita, is not extended rights by her adopted mother to marry in which the mother insists to refuse all men that want to ask her hand without inquiring her consideration. It occurs because the adopted mother feels her life will be threatened if she marries because none will serve and do all chores in her household and her mother does not want to free her.

As stated by bell hooks (1984) this action is regarded as sexism between women in which the mother feels impeded by the marriage of the female protagonist. The sexism in this short story is implicitly socialized by the adoptive mother herself, that is by behaving as if a mother indeed has a stronger right over her daughter's life control and employing very delicate words in order to succeed doing the act of manipulation. As a result, the female protagonist does not have any excuses to resist the action and she specifies to accept it as her fate to be a servant. In addition, she becomes submissive as most women whenever they are exploited (Sarah Bushra,2020).

A Virgin Continent

“Don't provoke me. Say that you concocted the whole story.”

“I didn't concoct anything.”

“Then why do you mention this now?”

“I don't know. It has infuriated me at times to hear you talk about your experiences with such arrogance, as though you were speaking to a person with no right to experience anything nor to taste life's triumphs and defeats, a person who was not born until the day you met her.” (2005:105)

These quotes show how men, namely the female protagonist's boyfriend, loathes hearing the bad experience or behavior of her. He performs emotional abuse to blame her and presumes that women must not have a gloomy past. In other words, they should look like white rags that are clean of dirt. While men are allowed and more accepted than women in society to do bad things in their past. This sexist behavior proves the existence of a patriarchal system that is shown by the words of the man in which he forces his girlfriend to follow the standards of her social values which tend to show the inequality towards women. Moreover, it becomes a system that intimidates control over women (Zakiyatul Mufidah & Erika Citra Sari Hartanto, 2021). According to bell hooks (1984: 5)

patriarchy is the main root of women's oppression, and it is structured in such a way as to limit women's freedom in various fields, particularly in their behavior.

"This, then, is an act of revenge."

"You can call it that as long as you insist on stripping the issue from its moral aspects. I call it frankness and openness." (2005:105)

The quotation above points out the resistance of the female protagonist. She reveals that everyone, either men or women, have the right to his past. Apart from that, people do not need to judge what has happened in the past and relate it to the moral aspect of the present. And it can be concluded that the female protagonist rejects the socialization of the perpetrator.

Sun, I Am the Moon

"Are you really only sixteen, Qamar? My God, you look older." Qamar didn't reply; instead, she moved her hand from her cheek, dropped it onto the reed mat, and began to scratch at it with her fingernails. Fatima continued, "Just sixteen years old, a damned girl, and you make the man want you every night. Maybe you have something we don't. Or maybe your mother has taught you how to attach a man to you." She laughed until her body shook." (2005:138)

"Sun I Am the Moon", tells the story of a woman who is married to a man who already has two wives, named Qahtan. And this quotation describes the hatred expressed by Qahtan's second wife, Fatima, to the female protagonist, Qamar. Fatima does verbal abuse by gibing and even mocking her as a damned girl. This sexist behavior is considered as a form of sexism between women in which Fatima feels competitive and afraid of being rivaled by her husband's third wife, so her husband will always spend the night with her. bell hooks (1984:47) argues that this negative competitive action can lead to conscious or unconscious feelings of malice every day in domestic life

Apart from that, the sexist action is socialized by attacking the victim, Qamar through hate speech to make her compliant. As with most persecution, this abuse also makes her oppressed psychologically and mentally (Andhika Dyah Puspitasari & Else Liliani, 2018).

"Qamar was silent, as if waiting for the last torture of the night to come, so that the fatigue and fear of the day would vanish." (2005:138)

From the quotes above, it shows the response

of Qamar when she gets sexist tyranny from Fatima. Instead of replying with more harassing words, she prefers to remain silent, so the condition is not severer. She even makes no protests at Fatima as if she has not heard any abusive words from her and lets her be content to utter his cruel words at that time so that her torment will soon end that night.

The Dreadful Sea

"They told her many things, all of which emphasized that what her husband did abroad was within his legitimate rights, granted to him by the canonical law of Islam as well as by custom and tradition. There was no cause for self-questioning, bewilderment, or even blame. As for protesting, that was not one of women's rights, and we were born women." (2005:144)

The quotation shows the gender inequality between a female protagonist and her own husband where in society, most people assume that men have to be always praised for his actions, even actions that harm others, especially women. Moreover, it abuses religion as an excuse to manipulate and exploit women. This kind of behavior is classified as androcentrism in which all actions taken by men are right and accepted in society as a whole (Miliann Kang et.al, 2012). Meanwhile, women are imposed to accept and not protest against the decision. bell hooks (1984: 118) asserts that society puts men in the social hierarchy more than women.

"Yes, the village people told her many things. That was the reason that her only solace came through these hot tears, which she shed in agony. The tears were the balm she applied to the pangs of total deprivation, even of the right to protest." (2005:145)

This quotation shows that after the many heart-wrenching news she gets, the female protagonist prefers to express her sadness by crying sobbingly rather than protesting against her husband's domestic abuse. She firmly believes that she will be blamed for voicing what is on her mind as in front of society, women have no right to do that. In other words, society extends more privileges to men rather than women (Nurhafizah Ali et.al, 2021).

Half a Woman

"Rushdi was the man who had made her aware of her femininity, and then she had lost her equilibrium and good sense; she had surrendered control of her life to him. What would happen to her husband if he lost her? He would be sad for

a while, then he would be whipped up into the whirlwind of work and forget her, like a phantom that had passed through his life and vanished. He wasn't even aware of her existence; she was like a piece of furniture that he was used to seeing in its usual place. If he found the place empty, he would feel a lump in his throat, but it wouldn't be long before he consigned her to oblivion" (2005:183)

The quotation describes the feelings of the female protagonist who is tormented because of the domestic abuse she gets. She considers her existence only as a mere object of satisfaction in her family; she defines herself as an item that can be replaced by another when she is not around because her husband is workaholic that only puts his attention on his work. This is what makes her feel tormented and depressed, as if women's life is only limited to being within the scope of domesticity, in contrast to a man who obtains more rights to do something based on the fields he wants. In this case, the sexist form is denoted as male domination, in which only men dominate society lives. In addition, society expects women to remain confined in the domestic sphere (Bharti & Shriya Goyal, 2020). bell hooks (1984:126) argues that women incline to be seen as passive ones who do not receive any responsibilities to actively participate in the social system. As a consequence, the sexist oppression causes the female protagonist to have an affair with a male, named Rushdi whom she assumes will be more considerate of her existence as women.

Heir Apparent

"His words coursed through her body and wounded her.

"How barren your soil is, Khadija! Six girls one after another. If you had given me one son to watch over his sisters in my old age and after my death, then life would have been easier." She tried to placate him. "There's no distinction between girls and boys anymore. They all go to school and get jobs." "Believe me, mother of my daughters, girls cause a lot of worry and trouble." (2005:186)

This quotation shows the female protagonist getting verbal abuse from her environment: she is scolded for giving birth to daughters, even though it is beyond her control. She is not capable of forcing the gender of the fetus she was carrying. On the contrary, her husband has a very big desire for the presence of a son in his family because sons are considered to provide welfare for his life, as well as his family, yet daughters will incur many troubles

in his life, all the more he already has 6 daughters. The attitude of her husband shows sexist actions in which he distinguishes the presence of female children and male children. This however makes the female protagonist beleaguered and distressed. She does not accept her daughters being ridiculed by her own husband as if they are a burden in the family. furthermore, she was also tormented by the demands she takes in from her husband and family to immediately conceive and give birth to a son. The sexist socialization in this story is carried out by her husband by convincing the female protagonist that a girl as an adult tends to incommode her. However, she resists her husband's notion by saying that there is no difference between sons and daughters because they have the same right to go to school and get a job.

This sexist act delineates the existence of a patriarchal system that grows closely in the family as bell hooks (1984:14) argues that this system is what fosters the idea to many people that a person's fate is determined by what gender they possess. Moreover, this patriarchal system also engenders disreputable stereotypes about women in which they are judged as more immoral than men (Juanda, 2018).

I Will Never Forfeit My Right

"All of this was unimportant, for she was certain of her right. What judge would rule that a child should suffer by becoming a stranger in a distant land? Or that a child should fall victim to a tyrannical father who imagined that in this way he was avenging his manliness on a mother who insisted upon her right to work?"(2005:211)

The quotation above exhibits a wife suffering exceptionally for her husband's treatment that she determines to liberate from her husband by divorce and ask her right to rear her child in court. It occurs because she does not put up with her husband's domestic abuse in which he restrains her right to work.

In this case, patriarchy is very explicitly depicted oppressing women, meanwhile men are considered to have the power to control their wives thoroughly by limiting their space of movement so as to make the wife's position marginalized (Salma Nabila & Fajria Noviana, 2021). This sexist tyranny is socialized by refusing his wife's request to work and making his child a threat if she resists. According to Bell Hooks (1984:119), the dominant group in the patriarchal system will

maintain their authority in any way against the victim, either from actions that will repress the victim mentally or physically. The protagonist's actions reflect her response to the extortion carried out by her husband, namely by filing for legal action to divorce and asking for the right to take care of her child. She is aware of her authority and she admits that apart from being a mother, she also has equal opportunities to play a role in the world of employment.

The Beginning

"Oh, I really forgot to iron it in the crush of work. Iron it yourself while I take my bath." He exploded with anger. He cursed her, and accused her of being neglectful and stupid. She flew into a rage and accused him of being insensitive and inconsiderate. Then she lost her self-control and added, "My God, you have no shame!"

As usual, he jumped from his place and attacked her, slapping her hard across the face. She felt a blow on the head, and then her friend's derisive words about the necessity of going on a year-long hunger strike resounded in her ears." (2005:282-283)

Based on the quotation above, it depicts domestic violence over a wife. The protagonist is physically and mentally abused by her husband for refusing to do what he wants, that is ironing his clothes. Her husband feels entitled to dominate the victim; He deems as if a husband could treat his wife like a slave he could command, and if she resists or unlive up to his expectations, she deserves downtrodden. Women are appraised as objects who have to do what the dominance wishes without realizing that women's position is distressed and beleaguered.

It is able to perspicuously conclude that this short story contains sexist actions, in the form of patriarchy. This action is the result of the socialization of the patriarchal system which is generally recondite in a family in which the patriarchal family let men have more sovereignty, so that they feel entitled to get more honor and rights to their family members, including their wife (KM Wazed Kabir & Marjana Actors, 2020). The sexist violence in this story is socialized by her husband as he normalizes his rotten behavior. As for what her husband does nothing more to clarify himself as the dominance in the family. Bell hooks (1984: 120) argues that violence perpetrated by men against women is one of the clearest expressions to

maintain their authority over the victim by which is not only in the form of physical torture, but also mentally as he jibes her as an idiot.

"She didn't burst into tears as she had always done when this happened. She didn't withdraw to a corner of the apartment to weep bitterly, until her eyes swelled, for him to come later to pat her on the back and stroke her hair and say, "I'm sorry." (2005:283)

The quotes show how the female protagonist responds when she is slapped by her husband. She severs not to cry, unlike usual occurrences because she gets lethargic as well as being sure of what her husband will do after that; he will apologize profusely and repeat it at another time.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The female protagonists in ten selected short stories taken from the anthology of Arab Women Writers translated by Dayla Cohen-Mor, delineates the socialization of sexism in society, which is promulgated through the customs and behaviour of the local community. This elicits many acts of physical and mental violence that make women's position depressed, marginalized, and beleaguered by the dominating cluster. The great deal of negative impacts that have been exposed in this article are expected to be able to make all people aware of sexism so that they can participate in terminating sexist socialization in society.

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