

# A Critical Discourse Analysis of Gender Discrimination on Ratih Kumala's *Gadis Kretek* Novel

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**Abstract** – This paper presents the text analysis on gender discrimination toward the role of woman in Ratih Kumala's *Gadis Kretek* Novel. The novel was published in 2012. It tells about the history of cigarette industry in Indonesia. The Javanese culture on the novel reflects the patriarchal system in life of Javanese. The text analysis is based on Sara Mills' critical discourse analysis model. The study includes an analysis of subject-object position and reader position of the text. The gender discrimination is based on inequality of gender stated by Faqih, namely gender and subordination, gender and stereotype, gender and violence, gender and workload, gender and marginalization. The result shows that in Ratih Kumala's *Gadis Kretek*, women become the second class in Javanese culture. The patriarchal system adopted by the Javanese, gives the man the authority towards the woman. The public role is dominated by the men and women are only allowed to be in the domestic role. Women are being marginalized in this novel. The female writer unconsciously did gender biased in her literature work. The gender biased expressions in this novel reinforce the patriarchal system adopted in the society.

**Keywords** : gender discrimination, javanese culture , patriarchal system, Sara Mills

## I. INTRODUCTION

Sex and gender have different interpretation. Sex is a state of being male or female and its deals with different physical appearance between male and female. It deals with the biological feature of women like vagina, breast and womb and for the male like sperm, penis and adam's apple. Those biological features cannot be interchangeable. Gender speaks about different characters between male and female based on their social construction in society. Women are portrayed as calm, sweet, week and emotional, but men are portrayed as tough, strong and wise. Unlike sex, gender characters are interchangeable in the society. The gender differences will not lead to any problem if it is not developed into gender inequality. Gender inequality generates gender biased and discrimination in the society. The parties being discriminate are usually the one who have less power on the society while in the other hand, the party who has the strong power and ideology, will become the party who did the discrimination.

Patriarchal system which adopted in one region usually leads to discrimination toward women. Patriarchal system puts the men in higher position above women. The men have the authority over the women and have role in public area, while women have no authority even over themselves and only play role in domestic area.

*Gadis Kretek* Novel written by Ratih Kumala tells about the cigarette industry under the perspective of a cigarette producer. The main character is Idroes Moeria, a man who struggle for his cigarettes business, from just a poor labour until he finally succeed on having his own cigarette brand. The setting of the novel is a small city called 'kota M' in Central Java, Indonesia. The Javanese culture strongly influences its social background. Under the patriarchal system adopted in the society, there are women characters, Roemaisa and Dasiyah, a mother and a daughter who portrayed differently. Roemaisa is described as a typical Javanese lady, quiet, feminine and obedient. While Dasiyah, her daughter, is represented differently; bright, smart and confident. The setting of the novel took around the period of Indonesia's Independence (around 1945) until 1960's. What makes it is interesting to be discussed is that even though the novel is written by a female writer, but without her conscious, she is

implementing gender biased in how she described the women characters in the novel. This paper discuss about the gender discrimination in the *Gadis Kretek* novel using Sara Mill's Critical Discourse Analysis perspective. How the women character are presented on the novel, and how women character are being discriminated in the Javanese culture that adopts patriarchal system in the society.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Novel

According to Kusmayadi (2006) a novel is a literature work formed into narrative prose, imaginative, an imitation of human life, longer than short stories and involving many figures. Novel is also a long prose of life journey of a person with his surrounding companions and give notice on their character (KBBI, 2002 :788). The plot in the novel is distinguished by chapters. The sentences in the novel evoke the reader imagination to dive into the story. A novel is built by intrinsic and extrinsic elements. The intrinsic element is all components of the text that support the story, such as plot, theme, character and characterization (Nurgiyantoro : 2013). The extrinsic elements is the elements outside the literary work which affect the story, such as the condition, the belief and the mission of the author

### B. Discrimination

Gender concerns with the different character of male and female which resulted from social construction and culture of the society. (Fakih, 1996:8). Men assumed to have strong, brave and rational characters, while women are assumed to have weak, sweet and gentle character. Those characteristics are interchangeable in different society and in a different time. Nowadays, there is a misleading paradigm, gender which actually a social construction is considered as God's will. Domestic chores such as house cleaning, taking care of the children are stated as women's nature, but actually it was a result from a social and cultural construction in that society. It is also possible that those chores become men's nature since they can be done by men. Gender differences may leads to gender inequalities ( Fakih, 1996 : 13) especially gender inequality towards women. Gender inequality is a structure and a system which lead to either male or female become the victims of the system. Gender inequality is manifested through marginalization, subordination, stereotype, violence, social burden of a certain group. Fakih (1996:8) mentioned five types of gender inequality, which may leads discrimination towards women; there are gender and marginalization, gender and subordination, gender and stereotype, gender and violence and gender and work load. Women being marginalized means that she is treated unimportant in the society. Sometimes social culture strengthens this discrimination. Subordination deals with the assumption that women are irrational and emotional, therefore women are placed in an unimportant position in the society especially in political position. Gender and sstereotype concerns with giving labels towards women or certain group in the society, and usually leads to inequity. Violence is an assault to body part or mental psychological of a person or group in the society. Kinds of violation can be rape, domestic violence, genital mutilation, prostitution, pornography, molestation, and enforced sterilization. Gender and workload is a state that situates women to work in domestic area, while men work in public area. The domestic area is considered not productive when it is compared to public area.

### C. Sara Mills' Critical Discourse Analysis

According to Fairclough and Wodak (1997), critical discourse analysis sees discourse, or language uses in speech and writing as a form of social practice. The social practice means that there is a relationship between particular discursive event and situation(s), institution(s) and social structure(s) which frame it. In critical discourse analysis, the analysis is not merely deals with language. The language in the discourse is associated with the context; it means that language use in any situation always has purpose(s).

In terms of methodology, Sara Mills' discourse analysis model uses Foucault's theory as her ground theory for her critical discourse analysis model. Mills sees a discourse as how the actor is represented in the text. Who become the subject to tell story and who become the object of the story. The subject- object position determines how meaning and text structure being treated in the text (Darma : 2014). Sara Mills' model focuses on how women being represented in text, novel, media, advertisement and photo. Often, women are represented negative in text, being the object and being marginalized in the society. The unfairness and the nasty portrayal of the women is the main focus on her model. The analysis is based on two points, the subject-object position and the reader position.

Representation is the major focus in the analysis. How a certain group, person, idea or event is portrayed in the text in order to convince the reader to be the same position with the writer (Eriyanto:2000). In relation to subject –object position Mills (1992) stated that discourse is not a neutral media. It tends to represent a distinct group or person as a subject of the text and describe the other actor of the text. The group or person with the power will define will represent an event or a group into a certain form of discourse structure (Mills: 1992) Every actor in the text has the same opportunity to define herself, but for some specific reason, some actors are represented by another actor in the text. The actor who cannot define herself becomes the object position of the text. The subject-object position is used in the analysis to define the dominant ideology of the text. In many texts, women are often represented as object rather than subject. As the object of the text, women are easily marginalized by the dominant group.

A text is resulted from negotiation from the writer and the reader, therefore the reader position must be considered in the text. The choice of pronoun (I, he, she) that the writer uses in the text places the reader to be integrated in the text. The pronoun *I, you, we, she, he* are used to define reader position so that the reader will identified themselves as the subject or object in the text.

### III. METHOD

This is a qualitative research using Critical Discourse Analysis approach. To analyse the data, the researcher uses Sara Mills' model. This model is based on two important points, the Subject- Object position and the reader position. The subject position deals with who tells the story. The object position deals with who becomes the object of the story, the actor are represented by another actor. The reader position deals with how the reader is being represented in the text, how the reader is positioned in the text (Eriyanto, 2001). The instrument of this research is the writer herself, by reading the novel and the reference needed. The unit analysis is the utterances of the actors in *Gadis Kretek* Novel by Ratih Kumala

### IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The analysis is focused on how women are portrayed in the *Gadis Kretek* novel. The utterances of the characters in the novel indicate that there is gender discrimination in the novel. *Gadis Kretek* novel tells about the cigarette industry in central Java under the perspective of Idroes Moeria, a poor cigarette labour who finally succeeds to manage his own cigarette factory. On his way to build his own business, he is facing many conflicts from his rival, Soedrajat. Idroes Moeria doesn't have any son as his heir, at first he feels disappointed with the reality. But later, he finds out that Dasiyah, his daughter, grows as smart and intelligent lady, she manage to help Idroes Moeria in his business. There are two main women characters in the novel, Roemaisa (Idroes' wife) and Dasiyah (Idroes' daughter). The mother and daughter have very different character. Roemaisa, is portrayed as typical Javanese female gender character; sweet, obedient and weak. Dasiyah's character is portrayed opposite to Roemaisa's. The analysis is based on Sara Mill's model. It will discuss about subject-object position, the reader position and how the women is being discriminated in the novel.

#### A. Subject Position

The novel is written in several points of view. The subject position is seen from whose point of view an event is being told. Subject position is positioned from the actor who tells the story. In this novel, the narration from the writer becomes the subject. She uses several points of view to explain the subject-object position of the novel. The writer mostly uses men's character point of view in describing the social situation. The subject position is described in the data below :

*"Iki anakmu wedhok." Perempuan. Dua detik hati Idroes Moeria timbul semacam penyesalan yang tak diakuinya." (GKN:104)*

Translation :

"Here is your baby girl." A girl. Idroes Moeria felt a stab of disappointment that he didn't want to acknowledge.

The above data shows that the writer uses one of the male actor, Idroes Moeria's point of view. 'Idroes Moeria felt a stab...' it shows that the point of view uses the male actor

*"Setelah itu, Dasiyah punya ide, daripada mempekerjakan penjaga laki-laki, ia mempekerjakan para gadis teman-teman Rukayah. Dasiyah memberi mereka upah layaknya penjaga laki-laki untuk menawarkan Kretek Gadis". (GKN:153)*

Translation :

'Then Dasiyah had an idea; rather than hiring men to promote Lady Cigarettes, she would hire Rukayah's friends, who were all girls, at the same rate.'

The data above shows that Dasiyah is the subject, from the phrase 'Dasiyah had an idea.' Dasiyah represent herself in the text. The writer uses female actor, Dasiyah's point of view.

#### B. Object Position

In *Gadis Kretek* novel, the object position is based on the description from the subject's perspective. The object position is seen from the narration of the subject, since the object of the text is not representing herself. The object position in this novel is the women's characters.

*'Seperti orang-orang pada zaman itu, Idroes Moeria makin percaya, bahwa anak laki-laki akan menjadi lebih kuat, bisa diandalkan, dan bakal jadi kepala keluarga yang lebih tangguh untuk jadi pemimpin (ketimbang anak perempuan)' (GKN : 104)*

Translation :

'Like many people at that time, Idroes Moeria believed that a son would be stronger, more reliable, and would become the head of the family, growing into a tougher leader than a woman could ever be'

The utterance from Idroes Moeria above shows that the women are become the object, the women are represented from Idroes Moeria's point of view.

*'Dengan nama dagang Kretek Gadis, orang-orang diajak berfantasi tentang perempuan muda nan cantik, yang membuat mereka serasa lebih jantan. (GKN :152)*

Translation :

'With the name Lady Cigarettes, people were invited to fantasize about a young and beautiful woman, which made them feel more masculine.'

The phrase '*diajak berfantasi*' (invited to fantasize), the women become the object of the text. Women representation is based on the male perspective. The women are not representing themselves in the text. They are being described by the men.

*'Ia (Roemaisa) berbeda dengan gadis lain yang lebih suka bergerombol dan cekikikan. Roemaisa lebih sering bepergian sendiri, bahasa tubuhnya senada dengan seekor kucing betina yang tengah mengulet manja' (GKN:51)*

Translation:

'Roemaisa was different from the other girls who were always giggling together in groups. Roemaisa was quiet and pretty and she usually went out alone, her body like that of a pampered cat.'

The above utterance is said by the male character to retell the women position. The use of pronoun '*ia*' and the phrase '*gadis lain*' show that the woman position is being described by another party.

### C. Reader Position

The reader position is represented in Sara Mills' model. The text is a product of negotiation between the writer and the reader. The reader is positioned not only as a consumer but it is involved in the text. The reader will be placed in certain position in order to be involved in the text. This subject-object position, the reader position and the way the writer present her story makes one party become legitimate and another party become illegitimate. The reader in this text is positioned as the subject of the text, it can be seen in the narration belows :

*'Dengan nama dagang Kretek Gadis, orang-orang diajak berfantasi tentang perempuan muda nan cantik, yang membuat mereka serasa lebih jantan. (GNK: 152)*

Translation :

'With the name Lady Cigarettes, people were invited to fantasize about a young and beautiful woman, which made them feel more masculine.'

The narration above shows that the reader is put as a subject position, using a male point of view. It can be seen from '*orang-orang diajak berfantasi tentang perempuan muda nan cantik*', the 'people' in here refers to men, since it is an offer to have fantasy of beautiful woman.

*'Dia hanya perempuan yang rapuh, butuh punggung lelaki untuk bersandar' (GNK : 195)*

Translation :

'She was a vulnerable woman, she needed a man's shoulder to lean on'

The use subject pronoun '*dia*' (she) in the narration above, shows the position of reader. The reader position is represented as a subject. The reader is asked to see the woman as an object using male perspective.

### D. Gender Discrimination

Even though *Gadis Kretek* novel is written by a female writer, but the utterances and the narrations in the text proof that the novel are gender biased. The women become the side that being discriminate. The discrimination in this analysis is based on Fakhri (1996). From the subject-object position and reader position of the text, it can be seen that the novel narration is mostly based on the male character's perspective. The discrimination towards women in the novel is presented below :

*'Aku tak mau, calon suami Roemaisa lebih bodoh. Laki-laki akan menjadi pemimpin keluarga.'*(GKN : 71)

Translation :

‘I don’t want Roemaisa’s husband to be more ignorant than she is,’ the Scribe explained.’

The utterance above is said by male actor, Roemaisa’s father, as subject, the woman become the object since she is not represent herself. The woman is narrated by the man. The reader position is placed as a subject. Under the male’s perspective, it is discrimination towards woman. It can be interpreted that man is the leader and being stupid is something that a family leader (a husband) not allowed to be, but it is fine for a wife for being less smart. This is a kind of women stereotype; the women are given negative label. In this case, women are labelled under man’s power in the family and no need to be smart since women is placed in domestic area. The discriminative utterance from the actor above is because of the influence of patriarchal culture adopted by Javanese people that puts men in higher position towards women.

*‘Idroes Moeria merasa telah menjadi lelaki sejati, berhasil membuat istrinya hamil ( GKN : 75)*

Translation :

‘For his part, to know that he had been able to get his wife pregnant made Idroes Moeria now feels like a real man’

The utterance above is said by the male subject, Idroes Moeria. The context of the utterance is Idroes knew that his wife is pregnant after two months getting married. He feels proud of that condition. In this case, women are being the object of the situation, and the reader position is placed as the subject of the text. What Idroes said is a kind of discrimination toward woman since women become the object of a men to be like ‘real man’. Being able to make a wife getting pregnant is a kind of achievement for a man.

*‘Semua tahu, jika ada satu-satunya perempuan yang mengelola sebuah stan kretek dengan serius, maka dia adalah Dasiyah, atau Jeng Yah, demikian semua orang biasa memanggilnya kini. (GKN:153-154)*

Translation :

‘Everyone knew that if there was one woman who ran a professional cigarette stand it was Dasiyah, or Jeng Yah, which was what everyone called her now’

The context is when the writer describes Dasiyah, the daughter of cigarette brand owner, who runs his father business. It is something unusual in that time for a lady to run a business. The subject position is the writer, and ‘Jeng Yah’ becomes the object of the text. The reader is positioned as the subject. The phrase ‘*satu-satunya perempuan*’ (one woman) shows that the Dasiyah is being marginalized. Women are considered not having competency to run a business. The reader is directed to have the male’s point of view about the women competencies in running a business.

Most utterances in *Gadis Kretek* novel by Ratih Kumala are seen from men’s perspective. Gender biased that leads to discrimination towards women in *Gadis Kretek* novel occurred because of the patriarchal system which adopted by the Javanese society. From the analysis it is found that there are many utterance that discriminate women. Therefore it is not a guarantee that a female writers will not going to write something about gender biased and discrimination toward women. At the end of the story, the ‘powerful’ Dasiyah is described as ‘normal woman’ when she cries uncontrollably to hear that his fiancé decided to marry her business rival. After that incident, it took long enough for her to finally find someone else to get married.

## V. CONCLUSION

Gender inequity leads to gender biased in the society. Gender biased is manifested through discrimination. The patriarchal system constructs discrimination towards women. Men are assumed to have more power and dominant position compare to women. In a society that adopted patriarchal system, women representation is often being marginalized.

In *Gadis Kretek* novel, the way the writer tell the story often leads to discrimination towards women. The women representation in the novel is stengthen the position of patriarchal domination in Javanese society.

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