

A FEMINIST APPROACH IN 'A ROOM OF ONE'S OWN' BY VIRGINIA WOOLF

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ABSTRACT

This research is to discuss Virginia Woolf's views on gender equality as well as the strengths and weaknesses of feminist theory. For feminist ideas, Woolf's debut novels *A Room of One's Own* and *Orlando* are crucial works. I'll attempt to focus on Virginia Woolf's book *A Room of One's Own*, which is regarded as her most significant work, especially in this study. Virginia Woolf produced several books and essays regarding gender discrimination. She focused mainly on equality. Woolf delivered several lectures on women in literature. In 1928, Woolf published *Orlando*, and in 1929, she published *A Room of One's Own*, her first work of feminism. She focused mainly on women and literature in this book; also, she described the difficulties they had encountered. In *Orlando*, she describes the struggle between genders.

Keywords: A room of one's own novel, feminist approach, gender equality, Virginia Woolf novel

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini dibuat untuk membahas pandangan Virginia Woolf tentang kesetaraan gender serta kekuatan dan kelemahan teori feminisme. Untuk ide-ide feminisme, novel debut Woolf, A Room of One's Own dan Orlando merupakan karya yang sangat penting. Saya akan mencoba untuk fokus pada buku Virginia Woolf yang berjudul A Room of One's Own, yang dianggap sebagai karyanya yang paling penting, terutama dalam penelitian ini. Sepanjang hidupnya, Virginia Woolf telah menghasilkan beberapa buku dan esai mengenai diskriminasi gender. Dia berfokus terutama pada kesetaraan. Woolf menyampaikan beberapa kuliah tentang perempuan dalam sastra. Pada tahun 1928, Woolf menerbitkan Orlando, dan pada tahun 1929, ia menerbitkan A Room of One's Own, karya feminisme pertamanya. Dalam buku ini, ia secara khusus berfokus pada perempuan dan sastra; ia juga menggambarkan kesulitan-kesulitan yang mereka hadapi. Di Orlando, dia mendeskripsikan konflik antar gender.

kata kunci: Novel A room of one's own, Pendekatan feminisme, Persamaan gender, Virginia Woolf novel

I. INTRODUCTION

Gender refers to socially learned behaviours and expectations that distinguish between masculinity and femininity. The power system privileges men over women where the qualities of masculinity (rationality, ambition, and power) are given more value than the qualities of femininity (emotionality, capacity, and weakness). This perspective investigates the low position of women in the international economic and political system, and analyses what tends to cause gender hierarchy.

Feminism is a theory based on the principle of equality of women and men in both social and economic spheres; both socially and economically. Like every sect, feminism has two faces; good and bad. However, feminism should not be understood as an event that threatens the social structure. As with every movement, it is natural to have good, weak and strong sides, and feminism is no

different. As it is well known, when analysed, women are seen as commodities of entertainment and are utilised as such in the process of history, more or less. So, can we call this process freedom in the name of women?

Today many feminist writers agree that feminism is not in the interests of women, but hides behind a big lie to use women as slaves. For example Christine Delphy agrees that women are the play things of capitalism. Christina Hoff Sommers states that feminism is a movement of women who are unable to see the truth. Of course, there have been periods that men and women do not have the equal rights in history. From time to time, they have struggled a lot to use these rights; which should be treated with respect.

Many feminist writers made a bid for protecting the rights of women and to be able to set up the system based on the equality of principle. One of the important points that they dwell on is, women cannot have the equal work environment and rights. David Conway says 'It is true that the number of working women is less; but the reason for that is not the men dominance. This is based on the physical and mental structure between sexes' (Conway, 2000).

Virginia Woolf is a significant feminism-related author. In 1929, she published 'A Room of One's Own'. This book is acknowledged as one of the foundational primers on feminist critique. Mostly Virginia Woolf, who is best known for her novels, gained a lot of attention with her experiment work. In certain aspects, Virginia Woolf's intellectual journey and the link between women and fictitious letters have been covered in the book, which was dramatized as a reaction to a speech demand regarding women and fictional letters.

The author divides this relationship into three interconnected dimensions: women and what they look like, women and literature they reveal, and women and writings about them; additionally, she presents the reasons why she chose to write about feminism in her book from the very beginning and explains them throughout the book by the relationship between women and fictional literature, a woman's desire to write in order to support herself as a writer, and having a family.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research on the feminist approach of Virginia Woolf's *A room of one's own* is qualitative. Qualitative research is a study where the presentation of data is not in the form of numbers, and the writer only provides an explanation without showing the process of processing numbers (Allo, K and Nuryanti, 2022). Furthermore, in the design of qualitative studies, a logical strategies should be developed by the writer and are asked to build and reconstruct the research designs (Pragita and Nuryanti, 2022), (Nuryanti, 2019), (Azyzah and Nuryanti, 2023). In addition, descriptive analysis is the research methodology employed in this research. In the descriptive technique of analysis, the facts are first described before the analysis is done (Ratna, 2006, p. 53).

In doing the research, the writer also needs technique to support her analysis process. Documentation study is a data collection technique by collecting and analysing documents, both written, pictorial and electronic documents, Sukmadinata (2007: 221). The data collection technique in this research is in the form of literature study, namely the activity of examining books and literature related to this research. The author does not use research techniques other than literature study.

In research, data analysis happens concurrently with data collection. Among them are the data reduction, data presentation, and verification phases of the water model. Working with data, organizing it, breaking it down into manageable pieces, synthesizing it, searching for and identifying patterns, selecting what is significant and what can be learned, and deciding what can be shared with others are all steps in qualitative data analysis.

III. DISCUSSION

A Woman Should be Herself

The situation is shown in the book's principal instances, which may be cited repeatedly, illustrate the drawbacks of the privileges that males enjoy at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, but which women do not. Since it was against the rules for female students and professors to stroll on the grass in Oxbridge, our writer came across an irate and amazed beadle while she was doing so. They only needed to go the gravel path. The officer instructed her to turn around when she reached the end of the walk since young females might access the library with a student companion or letter of recommendation.

A Room of One's Room, written in 1929, is a classic feminist novel. The women's movement (feminism) fixated on 'A Room of One's Room' is probably Virginia Woolf's most readable book. The topic is too concrete: "Women and Literature. There is a timeless and marvelous question, asked of women by men constantly. Since you say so, why can't you have a genius like Shakespeare?" (Woolf, Virginia: 1945) That is why Virginia Woolf gives a drastic answer to this offending question after discussing historical relationships and looking through books in the library. And told these women: "Make money, have own room and create free time. And write, without thinking about what the men say!" Afterwards, the women were told: "Make money, have your own room and create free time. say!" After that, it is known that there is a dog's point of view in Flush written by Virginia Woolf.

In this book, the food served at Fernham College, which looks like Woolf's aunt's women-only Newnham College, where the author will make a speech, is truly humiliating compared to the one served to the men at Oxbridge. Woolf thought that if one could not eat good food, she would neither love nor sleep well. In other words, "the good side of life will have to wait" Woolf believed that money spent on for religion but was sent to the university base when age or reason comes. Just because of the small number of people who wanted women to get cause universities to become boys' schools. However, if only mothers could bring good fortune, there and in the girls' schools, the

subject would be science and wisdom. Unfortunately, not only is it difficult for women to earn money, but also women are not allowed to have it.

Woolf, then, talks about the difficulties women face due to social conditions. It is clear that the most difficult are the limitations within family. The home/family world confines women to the house and isolates them from the public sphere. In this regard, the most important one of them is the issue of motherhood. For most of the time, while the husband continues his life outside, women have to look after their children. Woolf compares writing a text (with the metaphor of giving birth) and biological motherhood. But most of the time, this decision is not in women's hands. For a woman who has no rights or money, it is impossible to dream of a better life than to marry a man and be confined to the house and being locked up in the house. Inside the house, women have so many things to do such as cooking, cleaning, and childcare. And while doing these things, it is impossible for women to be creative.

If we go deeper in this issue, we can conclude that Woolf is trying to destroy the bond between the author and the authority and try to cripple the bond between the authority and the males in the means of literary. Because of these reasons we talked about, Woolf has a strong and extraordinary bond between her readers. Maybe, because of that reason, reading *A Room of One's Own* makes the reader feel like chatting with Virginia Woolf herself about her identity and beyond the time. Woolf, first gives us the answers for why being an author is harder for women than it is for men. We can put what she said about this on this order: The difficulties of getting education for women and the limitations brought by the family life.

Woolf primarily explains that just because she is a woman, it is forbidden for her to have an education at Oxbridge at the beginning of the book. At that point, it is important to state that Oxbridge is derived from the names of Oxford and Cambridge universities. This information reveals the impossibility of a girl having an education at university in that period. Then, Woolf asks this renowned question: "What would have happened if Shakespeare had had a wonderfully gifted sister, called Judith?" It is not difficult to imagine the following scenario: Judith is not sent to school while Shakespeare continues his schooling and carves out a career for himself in theater and writing. When her family wants to marry her, she flees to pursue her skill. When she seeks for a position at a theater in the hopes of attaining her ambition, like Shakespeare did, she is met with the response that no woman can be an actor. Finally, she gets pregnant by a manager who feels sorry for her. She is unable to preserve her poet's spirit locked in a female body and commits suicide! Instead of not being able to find a means, what would be the cause for Judith's suicide? instead of not being able to find a way to gain power at intellectual, professional, social, and political fields just because of being a woman? (Squier, 1985) This imaginary sister displays explicitly the possible end of a gifted woman's life.

Then, Woolf mentions of inequalities and some difficulties that women have because of social conditions. It has been seen that these social conditions include specifically and mostly family life restrictions. Domestic/family life confines woman to the home and isolates her from public

sphere. In this framework, the most important issue is probably motherhood issue. Since the woman is supposed to take care of her child at home whereas her husband maintains his life mostly at outside. Woolf sees writing/production processes as biologic motherhood with respect to the metaphor of giving birth to a text. (Abel, 1993). But mostly, this selection is also beyond women's power. It is impossible even to desire another option apart from marrying a very nice man, confining herself to the domestic life for a woman not having enough money and rights. And the woman undertakes the domestic responsibilities such as cooking, cleaning and child caring attributed to them. After all, that the woman can be creative is out of the question due to these domestic tasks. Also, Virginia Woolf expresses at her book, *A Room of One's Own*, as: "...For all the dinners are cooked; the plates and cups washed; the children sent to school and gone out into the world. Nothing remains of it all. All has vanished" (Woolf, 1945).

Woolf concludes that women have just one chance to overcome all of the inequalities and challenges outlined above and make something new that goes beyond emptiness. A woman's own room, first and foremost, is a location and time when she may undertake intellectual studies without being disturbed, away from troubles and duties, and that is directly related to economic independence. The crucial element is that Woolf advises the ladies to be free in their minds before writing. "According to Virginia Woolf, writing itself is a crucial part of feminism transited from private sphere to public sphere." (Snaith, 2003). So, Woolf has a crucial advice for women at that point. To write, write not giving up, without taking the current situation into consideration, thinking on whether your writings would be successful, considering other people's thoughts about your writings! As she expresses the following at one of the last pages of *A Room of One's Own*: "So long as you write what you wish to write, that is all that matters; and whether it matters for ages or only for hours, nobody can say. But to sacrifice a hair of the head of your vision, a shade of its color, in deference to some Headmaster with a silver pot in his hand or to some professor with a measuring-rod up his sleeve, is the most abject treachery, and the sacrifice of wealth and chastity which used to be said to be the greatest of human disasters, a mere flea-bite in comparison."

IV. CONCLUSION

In this research, I emphasise the contribution of feminism to women's life and what women should do to gain equal rights. Women's life and the things that women must do to gain equal rights. As I stated at the beginning of my research, it is good to state the good and bad sides of feminism when evaluating it. Good and bad sides of feminism when evaluating it. Of course, there are some people and groups who use feminism to gain privileges and also writers who are sincere in what they say. Who are sincere in what they say on the subject of feminism. I concentrated on *A Room of One's Own*, an important work, among the great works of Virginia Woolf, a prominent feminist writer, as a reference in this research. A woman will definitely write and publish her writing if she is truly willing to express herself and fight for the idea that women should have the same rights as men. equal

rights with men. It is true that women are behind men in some fields, so it's inevitable for them to produce things that are equal to men. It is inevitable for them to come up with new things in academia instead of blaming the opposite sex for this situation.

Therefore, I would like to say that I agree with Wolf on many points. Especially on education, career opportunities and the subject. It deserves the same respect in the community. Moreover, as Wolf points out, women and men should not be against each other, they should be creating something Get your head together. Women and men are like two sides of the same face. It is impossible for a woman to succeed by eliminating him. Alienating her in the 21st century might make the man successful.

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