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Patriarchal Domination in the Novel *Cinta Suci Zahrana* by Habiburrahman El Shirazy: A Sara Mills Feminist Discourse Analysis

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Abstract

Because of its feminist nuances, the novel Cinta Suci Zahrana is an interesting one to study from a gender perspective. Sara Mills scrutinizes the portrayal of women in various texts, including novels, pictures, and news. Sara Mills' writing focuses on the injustice and poor portrayal of women. This research aims to describe and gain an in-depth understanding of patriarchy in Habiburrahman El Shirazy's novel Cinta Suci Zahrana. Additionally, it examines the value of feminism by examining the subject-object position and the reader's position in Sara Mills' work. This type of research employs descriptive qualitative methodology, as it takes the form of detailed observations. The novel Cinta Suci Zahrana by Habiburrahman El Shirazy. Reading and note-taking are the data collection techniques used. The outcome of this research reveals the role of the narrator, specifically the author, in the novel Cinta Suci Zahrana by Habiburrahman El Shirazy is the character Zahrana. The reader's position in the novel Cinta Suci Zahrana by Habiburrahman El Shirazy is determined by the events revealed by the author.

Keywords: Feminist; Patriarchy; Sara Mills

Introduction

The author's desire to express his existence as a human being with specific ideas and messages inspired by his imagination and socio-cultural reality gives birth to literary works through the medium of language. Literary works are texts written based on the author's experiences and expressed in written form that have denotative meanings. The existence of literary works makes it easier for readers or researchers to obtain the subject matter they want to investigate because there are many studies on literary works such as novels, poems, short stories, and so on (Andriana & Manaf, 2022). The public is particularly interested in literary works. An author creates literary works with his creativity and intriguing ideas. In literary works, every word and sentence written will have various meanings. The novel is one form of literary work that many audiences find interesting.

A novel is a long prose work that contains a series of stories or descriptions of the problems of human life in its interactions with the environment, self, and God. The author crafts novels with utmost beauty and intrigue to immerse the reader in the described atmosphere. Novelists write various things that

reflect the reality of life. Social life's dynamics are very diverse in terms of social, economic, and political structures. However, even in this era of progress, some individuals continue to hold outdated views about the social environment, such as gender differences. Often these differences become very difficult to avoid. Since long ago, these gender issues have all restricted individual rights or freedoms in expressing the dynamics of their lives. Cinta Suci Zahrana is a novel that explores the gender context of relationships between men and women. Habiburahman El Shirazy's Indonesian religious novel, Cinta Suci Zahrana, has become a best-selling book. This novel became a best seller due to its rich blend of religious values and a romantic love story, which also explores the concept of patriarchy.

One issue that frequently arises in literary works is women's subordination. Women often experience conditioning that places them in a subordinate position compared to men. This condition is closely linked to gender inequality, which oppresses women and denies them self-determination. Fakih (via Novitasari, 2018: 152) contends that socially and culturally constructed traits link gender to men and women. We can interpret gender as a social concept that discriminates by "choosing or separating" roles between men and women. Discussions about gender encompass a variety of topics, including the power dynamics of men and women, as well as the injustice or discrimination experienced by women.

Adherents of the culture, specifically men, control the patriarchy, a system that dominates, oppresses, and exploits women (Walby in Candraningrum, 2014: 1). Patriarchy is not a physical difference between men and women. Women and men occupy the same and equal position; patriarchy is a social construction that should change. Men's role in social life and society should be exchangeable, changeable, fluid, and contextualized at a specific locus, tempus, and focus. The way we visualize and interpret the terms "men" and "women" serves as a focal point and site of power and control struggles and disputes. According to Bennett in Candraningrum (2014), the terms "women" and "men," which delineate gender roles in society, should not be associated with natural, biological, or objective reality. This focus will be the locus of patriarchy theorization, as well as the starting point of gender relations in people's lives that gave birth to the feminism movement.

Habiburrahman El Shirazy's novel Cinta Suci Zahrana is a literary work that depicts forms of patriarchal power. This novel was published in 2017. The patriarchal culture that society has embraced deliberately and consciously emphasizes the story of a woman's struggle to fight for life in the novel Cinta Suci Zahrana." In this novel, Habiburrahman El Shirazy describes how patriarchal power leads to gender injustice against women. The oppression of women is one form of gender injustice. Gender injustice occurs because society still adheres to a patriarchal culture. Researchers have conducted numerous studies on Habiburrahman El Shirazy's novel Cinta Suci Zahrana, including Andhika Afifah Nurjannah's 2022 study, The Struggle for Gender Equality in Habiburrahman El Shirazy's Novel Cinta Suci Zahrana as a Gender Education Model. This research aims to identify a form of struggle for gender equality and its implementation in the gender education model. In 2021, Singgih Wicaksono conducted the research under the title "The View of Feminism in Habiburrahman El Shirazy's Novel Cinta Suci Zahrana." This study aims to describe the forms of feminism as seen through the characters in the novel Cinta Suci Zahrana. Ridzky Firmansyah Fahmi (2020) titled his next research "Women's Equality and Polemics of Patriarchal Culture in the Novel Cinta Suci Zahrana." The study's results reveal a patriarchal culture that forms a social construction, leading to the assumption that the most educated and career women will eventually handle domestic matters. The author's research utilizes the same objects and data sources as these studies. The distinction between this research and its predecessors lies in the method or analytical tool employed to scrutinize the novel.

The novel Cinta Suci Zahrana by Habiburrahman El Shirazy serves as the object of this study. Sara Mills' theory forms the basis of this research. This theory enables readers to understand how the novel marginalizes women, focusing solely on the negative aspects of women's portrayal, such as closing the gap through action. In daily life, people often misconstrue the term feminism as a call for women's liberation. In reality, women and men engage in a social movement to elevate the status and role of women, advocating for their equal rights (Hidayati, 2018: 23-29).

Sara Mills (via Kristina, 2020) says that feminist stylistics provides an avenue for those concerned with the representation of gender relations. Linguists can develop their own tools to expose how gender works at various levels in texts. Feminist analysis necessitates a meticulous scrutiny of the text's boundaries, given the infiltration of discourses and ideologies that blur the line between textual and extratextual. Social and cultural norms, ideologies, history, economic forces, gender, racism, and other factors inundate texts. Writers are interrogated and interact with discursive forces, but they still control their work.

Sara Mills is an expert in critical discourse analysis. Sara Mills primarily focuses her discourse on feminism. Consequently, people often refer to Sara Mills' model of feminism as the feminist perspective. Sara Mills' feminist perspective concentrates on the portrayal of women in texts, emphasizing their frequent misrepresentation and marginalization in comparison to men. This injustice is at the center of Sara Mills' feminist discourse. Sara Mills' thinking also scrutinizes the portrayal of actors' positions in texts, particularly their treatment as subject and object. Sara Mills also scrutinizes how the text portrays the reader. The narrative style, coupled with the positions of the characters in the text, will establish both legitimate and illegitimate parties.

Because of their often marketable portrayals, women continue to face significant marginalization in the media today. Representation can distort positive portrayals, as the author shapes them according to his personal perspective of what they wish to convey. In portrayals, mistakes or inaccuracies are common.

The author's interest in researching Sara Mills' feminist analysis in this novel stems from the fact that many literary works depict female characters, often portraying them in a negative light and subjecting them to numerous injustices. The author intends to elicit a response from the readers that aligns with her intentions. The author's interest in this research stems from her desire to uncover the hidden intentions within the novel. The purpose of this research is to describe, analyze, identify, interpret, and conclude the position of subject, object, and reader in Habiburrahman El Shirazy's novel Cinta Suci Zahrana's depiction of women.

Research Methods

This research employs a qualitative method and presents its findings in a descriptive manner. Qualitative research has several characteristics, namely data collected in the form of words and images. The study will include quotations from the collected data. This research aims to use Sara Mills' feminist discourse analysis approach to tell, describe, provide, analyze, and interpret from the subject-object and reader perspectives. Based on the objectives, the researcher wants to use a qualitative descriptive method.

The research utilizes words or sentences that demonstrate Sara Mills' theory of subject-object position and reader position, as found in Habiburrahman El Shirazy's novel Cinta Suci Zahrana, published in 2017. Habiburrahman El Shirazy's 2017 novel Cinta Suci Zahrana, spanning 257 pages, serves as the data source for this study. Based on the novel, the researcher analyzes the position of the subject-object and the position of the reader.

This study employs reading and note-taking techniques. The collection of data is the most crucial step in research, as this is the study's primary objective (Sugiyono, 2016: 388). Researchers conducting this research are reading the entire content of the novel and recording information related to the focus of the study of research problems in the novel Cinta Suci Zahrana by Habiburrahman El Shirazy.

Results and Discussion

This research discusses the struggle for gender equality in the novel Cinta Suci Zahrana as a model of gender education. The research focuses on the novel Cinta Suci Zahrana, which narrates the story of an educated and accomplished woman named Zahrana. However, her education and achievements cannot make her parents proud because she is unmarried at the age of 34. Being called 'old maid' due to her unmarried status places significant pressure on her and her social life. This novel vividly depicts the reality of gender injustice that has become entrenched in society. This novel significantly contributes to the discussion of gender injustice, a topic often dismissed as a minor social issue. Gender-responsive education is an effort to shape knowledge, skills, and attitudes without discriminating against women or men. This shows that gender education aims for equality in non-natural situations between men and women.

Gender-responsive education is an effort to shape knowledge, skills, and attitudes without discriminating against women or men. This shows that equality related to non-biological aspects between men and women is the goal of gender education. Gender education lacks a fixed model, but according to Gazali (2012), it exhibits visible characteristics such as fairness in the learning process between men and women, the absence of gender bias in the taught content, and equality in active participation. This research emphasizes the various forms of equality struggles and their integration into the gender education model.

1. Subject-Object Position Analysis

The subject-object position refers to the viewpoint from which one perceives events. Who takes on the role of the storyteller (subject) and who acts as the object of the story? Other groups or individuals display ideas, regardless of whether each actor and social group has the chance to showcase themselves, their thoughts, or their presence. roups or people.

a. Subject Position

The author, as seen in the following quote, is the one who narrates the series of events that occur in the novel Cinta Suci Zahrana by Habiburrahman El-Shirazy.

"Wow, sir, we will receive honors if Rana succeeds as a doctor." Oh, the joy of having a doctor's son." Her mother's eyes lit up. But his father responded coldly, "Have fun; don't think about where the money comes from! "Have fun; don't think about where the money comes from!"

His father said, "Just enter IKIP; you'll become a teacher." But he felt less challenged (El Shirazy, 2017: 5).

So he felt even more challenged and decided to continue his studies at UGM's Faculty of Architecture Engineering, majoring in architecture. Her father disagreed, but Rana kept going and gave a thousand reasons until her mother agreed" (El Shirazy, 2017: 6).

Based on the aforementioned quote, Zahrana's character demonstrates her ability to make independent decisions, rather than simply adhering to her father's belief that her daughter is suited for a teaching career due to her gender. Zahrana also took the lead in advocating for gender equality, demonstrating that all professions hold equal rights and are accessible to all, regardless of class or gender.

"Yes, that's fine, but please tell him the decision is in Zahrana's hands. We cannot pressure or force her." (El Shirazy, 2017: 154).

The quote above describes Pak Munajat's character, who shows that he tries not to limit or reduce his daughter's right to an opinion. He allows his daughter to participate in decision-making, despite his desire to encourage her marriage immediately.

"Yes, Zahrana. It's best if you just drop out. That's my advice as someone who understands the political map on campus."

"No, Mum. I will fight injustice until the end! (El Shirazy, 2017: 180). "He resembled a boxer who successfully eliminated an opponent; unexpectedly, he also lost the fight." He simply did not calculate that Zahrana would make such a reckless decision" (El Shirazy, 2017: 189).

The quote above demonstrates Zahrana's unwavering determination to resist violence in the form of threats at her workplace by Mr. Sukarman. Zahrana declines, understanding that Mr. Sukarman's repressive behavior towards her stems from personal issues, and she cannot endure his disregard for her as a woman. Zahrana vowed to be the subject of initiation. According to Rokhmansyah (2014), feminism positions the subject as the one who initiates the struggle. According to this feminist theory, Zahrana's efforts are a form of resistance-based struggle for justice.

b.Object Position

The main character, Zahrana, in Habiburrahman El-Shirazy's novel Cinta Suci Zahrana, is a woman who experiences unfair treatment in her environment, endures injustice in her life, and serves as an object of storytelling. The following quote illustrates this point.

"I know that for you, academic achievement is everything. There's nothing wrong with women like us achieving the highest education possible. But you must not forget other achievements that are very important."

"What is it?"

"Giving birth to a generation that will become the leaders of this country" (El Shirazy, 2017: 22).

The quote above describes the character Lina (Zahrana's best friend) convincing Zahrana that the task of women to give birth to generations that will become leaders of the country is a noble task and achievement. The phrase "giving birth to a generation" in Lina's dialogue has the connotation of "educating children to become great individuals." Zahrana thinks that even though she is a woman, she must excel in the academic field, and that has become her priority. Zahrana thinks that birthing and educating children is not something special when compared to academic achievement. This indirectly demonstrates that she underestimates the domestic work that women often do. We encourage women to pursue higher education as a means of producing a moral and intelligent generation. This is not an effortless task and is a success for women (Nabila, 2020). Educated women will give birth to superior generations, so the achievement of producing superior generations is part of the pursuit of academic success by women.

"Customs and norms without a scientific basis no longer govern women." She even intends to postpone marriage until she gets her doctorate" (El Shirazy, 2017: 23).

The quote above reflects Zahrana's thoughts on the customs and norms that require women to marry at a certain age or be labeled as old maids. Zahrana considers these beliefs unfair to women. Zahrana appears to aim to challenge these beliefs by postponing marriage and demonstrating that women can fulfill their desires free from unscientific customs. The findings of Qibtiyah's research (2015) reinforce this, revealing that fear of labeling as a "old maid" is a factor in Indonesian women marrying at a young age, with 50% expressing this fear and 6% expressing extreme fear. This demonstrates that customs, lacking a scientific basis, still influence women's marriage decisions in society.

"I've thought about it too, Lin. But now that I'm thirty-four years old, what young man would want to be with me?"

"If you can work hard to get your academic degree, why can't you work just as hard to get a life companion?" (El Shirazy, 2017: 97).

The aforementioned quote portrays Lina as the subject and her best friend, Zahrana, as the object. Lina endeavors to dispel Zahrana's misconception that no young man desires a woman known as an "old maid." The dialogue between Lina and Zahrana shows that men and women have equal value and opportunity in finding a partner. The nickname "old maid" is just a result of the partiarchal culture in Indonesia. The stigma of "old maid" stems from partiarchal tendencies, demonstrating the equal value of men and women.

"It was even Zahran who paid the electricity and water bills. That's why Pak Munajat doesn't need to force himself into business or dabble in it like his retired friends do" (El Shirazy, 2017: 128).

The quote above depicts Zahrana as the story's object. Zahrana challenges the societal presumption that females are incapable of taking charge of a household or serving as the foundation of the family. Zahrana, as the focal point, demonstrates her empowerment and ability to serve as the pillar of the family, despite the presence of a father figure.

"What else do you think? He's a dean. Must be smart. Educated. Big salary. What else? Just accept it."

"It's simple to say 'just accept'. You don't know who he is or what his morals are like" (El Shirazy, 2017: 119).

"A fifty-five-year-old widower. Status and age don't really matter to him. He already has the title Hajj. His intellectual credibility is not in doubt. There's no need to ask about material things. In Semarang alone, he owns three or five petrol stations. But when it comes to his moral credibility, it is difficult for Zahrana to forgive him" (El Shirazy, 2017: 167).

"What are you still waiting for, Nduk? Mr. Karman is a bit old, but he's educated and rich. He can also look young."

"I'm not waiting for anything, Mum. I'm waiting for a pious man who fits my heart, that's all" (El Shirazy, 2017: 173).

The quote above illustrates Zahrana's character, who opposes the stereotypical expectations of ideal men adopted by characters such as Wati and Bu Nuriyah, who think that men only need to have high positions, large salaries, and higher education. However, Zahrana opposes this assumption and prioritizes moral values in choosing a partner. The understanding that such stereotypes will harm others fuels this opposition. In essence, stereotypical actions will always be detrimental, especially when it comes to gender stereotypes. According to Saguni (2014), stereotypes create labeling that leads to injustice and harm to others. Zahrana aims to eliminate the stereotype that men only need wealth and the responsibility of providing, as it perpetuates the negative stereotype of women as passive beings who do not need education and are financially dependent on men. Furthermore, Zahrana views the emphasis on moral values as a crucial factor in selecting a partner, aiming to disrupt the negative stereotypes associated with men.

Despite his past as a traveling cracker seller, he remains a person of good character and reverence. He is a person of upright character and worship. He is reliable in his responsibility (El Shirazy, 2017: 209).

The quote above shows Zahrana's awareness that a man is more than just the height of a position; attitude and character are also key factors in building a household. There has been a shift in Zahrana's attitude and mindset about how to view men and women without underestimating their role or profession based on gender. There is a large burden of role expectations on men, often related to power and high positions due to labeling from society (Syamsu & Milla, 2014). The inconsistency of results with expectations can lead to gender subordination and injustice. Zahrana's attitude of realizing the labeling is inappropriate and not underestimating her future husband's profession as a cracker seller is one of the steps to break the chain of injustice.

"Perhaps your headscarf is a cover for old flesh that has rotted in a swarm of flies!"

"... He finally chose silence. He chose silence without ever considering the existence of the SMS. He felt that silence was the most powerful weapon. Responding to the attitude of a fool means becoming a fool" (El Shirazy, 2017: 198).

"He snarled back. May Allah's curse fall on you, old devil! "May you meet your death in a state of humiliation in men's eyes!" (El Shirazy, 2017: 222).

Zahrana experienced verbal abuse from the SMS sent by Mr. Sukarman, according to the quote above. The message Zahrana received contained insults against her. Pak Sukarman referred to Zahrana as an old maid, a rotten woman, and other derogatory terms, suggesting that Zahrana's vulnerability led to the violence. Initially, Zahrana thought silence was a powerful weapon against fools. However, Zahrana eventually returned the insults because she felt that Pak Sukarman's verbal violence was unjustified. As Sumera (2013) asserts, verbal violence, including harassment, has a wide scope, ranging from threats, difficulties, and other inappropriate remarks. Mr. Sukarman's actions fell under the category of verbal violence threats.

2. Reader Position Analysis

In Sara Mills' critical discourse analysis, the text is considered the result of negotiation between the author and the reader. Not only do readers receive the text, but they also actively participate in the transaction and experience the text's flow.

"Then Mr. Sukarman made a scene of kissing a hand, as if sticking it to Zahrana's lips." The students and lecturers who saw the scene applauded and cheered loudly."

"Suddenly a female student shouted, Dean is tacky!" (El Shirazy, 2017: 89-90).

The quote above depicts Mr. Sukarman's violent harassment of Zahrana. The action is a form of humiliation disguised as seduction. The author does not explain the identity of the female student, who expressed her concern about this form of public harassment by shouting "dean norak" (rude dean). This statement confirms that Mr. Sukarman's behavior is unacceptable and unkind to Zahrana. Both the victim and those who witness such behavior must resist this form of harassment and violence. Ayyasi (2021) further emphasizes in her research that people, as witnesses or victims, must open their minds and not take gender-based harassment lightly because it is detrimental and a tragedy. The quote reveals that the female student, acting as a witness, did not remain silent like others, but instead expressed her concern as a form of resistance.

"Nina even told him with emotion that Mr. Karman likes to jowal-jawil at female students but pretends to shake."

"Nina told me about it. At first he didn't believe it, but Nina provided complete facts and data. Nina even dared to present her friends who could testify" (El Shirazy, 2017: 125).

The aforementioned quote portrays Nina, a female student, who courageously stood up against gender-based violence by testifying against Mr. Sukarman. In the quote, Mr. Sukarman engages in harassment by poking female students under the guise of a joke. However, this caused distress, and Nina's character dared to take action against violence against women in her campus environment. Nina's efforts are a movement demanding equality based on feminist theory. Nina wants to obtain the right to justice for the crimes committed, as well as the right to feel safe. Nina's character fights for a sense of security from Mr. Sukarman's gender violence.

You have the authority to inform your parents about Mr. Karman's identity. You understand that Mr. Karman's immorality will cause harm to you and your family. You tell Mr. Karman's wickedness so that others can avoid his danger" (El Shirazy, 2017: 176).

The quote above is a snippet of dialogue from Lina. The dialogue demonstrates her support for Zahrana's proposal to reveal the crimes committed by Pak Sukarman in exchange for her acceptance of his proposal. Her primary focus is on exposing crimes against women, specifically harassment and actions that treat women as mere objects. Lina persuaded Zahrana to take action because she did not want Zahrana to suffer the same consequences. Moral support, like Lina's, also contributes to the fight against violence.

Conclusions

Using Sara Mills' feminist discourse analysis approach, we conclude that the novel Cinta Suci Zahrana by Habiburrahman El Shirazy exhibits various forms of patriarchy in the subject-object position and reader position. Various characters, both men and women, carry out the struggle for gender equality. This demonstrates that anyone can experience gender injustice, and anyone can engage in the fight for equality. We can use the forms of equality struggle described here as a model for gender education. The representation of women in Habiburrahman El Shirazy's Cinta Suci Zahrana novel is evident through the subject-object relationship and the reader's position in the Sara Mills model. The characters who occupy the position of subject or storyteller in the novel Cinta Suci Zahrana by Habiburrahman El Shirazy are Zahrana, Pak Munajat (Zahrana's father), and Mrs. Nuriyah (Zahrana's mother). The characters who occupy the object position are Zahrana, Lina (Zahrana's best friend), Mr. Sukarman, and Nina (a student). The portrayal of the text can alter the actors' positions, revealing the identities of powerful characters, leading to injustice and discrimination against the object. The readers in this study are individuals who have read the novel and hold a perspective on the characters depicted in Habiburrahman El Shirazy's Cinta Suci Zahrana.

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