

Women's Experiences in *Kompas* Selected Short Stories: Transformative Ecofeminism Review

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Abstract : Women have relationships not only with nature but also in the ecosystem such as cultural, social, and spiritual aspects. Ecofeminism transformative influences feminism and ecology movements that give access to gender issues about male superiority. The method used in this study is qualitative content analysis. The objects of the study are fourteen short stories in an Indonesian newspaper, *Kompas*, from 2010-2015. The selection of the short stories is based on (1) the short stories that have ecology content (2) the short stories that prioritize female leaders; (3) the short stories that are written by the authors who have been actively involved in literary writing for long time; (4) the short stories that are written by the authors who write the story with emphasises on gender perspective; and; (5) the short stories that have morality themes that represent human relations. The data were analyzed using data reduction, data presentation, and data conclusion or interpretation based on the relevant theories and themes. The results of this study indicate that the various women's experiences are not only related to human beings but also related to social and natural environment. This result of study is expected to enrich literature that related to language and socio – culture.

1 INTRODUCTION

This problem is related to the role of the characters based on their functions and it will determine the gender (male or female) of a nonbiological perspective. Dials (2017: 187) states that women in a number of short stories have certain characteristics that change a lot in terms of their roles and images as independent, intelligent, assertive and strong figures that are able to control emotions and regulate their lives. They are no longer burdened by domestic or traditional roles as a wife / mother. Meanwhile, Harvester and Blenkinsop (2010: 122) revealed that women are identified as individuals who play an important role in education, social and natural terms for their generations.

The problems of women which are related to discrimination that caused various forms of resistance are no longer the main discussion. This happens because when such things are compared to the issue of ecology, it can create a caring relationship between nature and its surroundings.

Women are symbolized as natural carers, fighters, while men are of as natural destroye

Regarding to the environmental issues, ecofeminism as a part of feminism leads to environmental aspects as a movement which is dominated by women in managing, caring, and maintaining nature as an access to a better human that is free from the impact of the environmental crisis.

Ecofeminism focused not only on women and nature but also on the relationship of the entire ecosystem. The word 'transformative' refers to a situation or condition that changes or is not static. Therefore, transformative ecofeminism leads to a movement of feminism and ecology that gives access to gender issues. Women accept the presence of men as a counterweight in maintaining the integrity of the ecosystem. The form of women's resistance to men is a reaction to actions that harm and damage the environment.

Ecofeminism transformative has a key role in reconstructing gender (male or female). As for a

number of statements regarding ecofeminism transformative, there are limitations to the problems women's experiences; (3) reject the logic of domination; (4) rationality of women's relations with nature; (5) feminine ethics; and (6) representation of knowledge and technology. However, this study only focuses on the variety of women's experiences because women have distinctive characteristics compared to men in their life with all the responses towards their feelings.

The variety of women's experiences in *Kompas* selected short stories from 2010 until 2015 was examined. They are chosen because *Kompas* is one of the newspapers in Indonesia that acts as a barometer in publishing literary works. Akun (2010: 14) states that *Kompas* had become a consistent media in publishing short stories periodically. There were about 50 short stories that had been published and around 15 short stories were selected as the best choice stories. Then, the best one was chosen as the collection title to be organized and published.

Kompas has the excellence of publication and became one of the leading media that was widely approached by the writers of short stories. Since 1992 *Kompas* has presented selected short stories based on the published year as a form of documentation of creativity to readers and writers.

Fourteen short stories are selected out of 130 short stories then published from 2010 until 2015 were analyzed with the provisions of (1) ecology short stories; (2) female figures domination short stories; and (3) productive writer.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Ecofeminism is formed from the concept of feminism which refers to a thought or ideology that supports justice and gender equality. Meanwhile, ecology has meaning is that related to the reciprocal relationship between living things and the surrounding conditions (environment). Ecofeminism not only discusses women as people who experience discrimination and have resistance to liberation but women also have a major role in environmental issues. The issue of discrimination is related to environmental damage done by men. Ross (1990: 23) mentions that women and ecological or environmental issues expand their views on behavior or act with other ecosystems in life. Meanwhile, in some cases men are related to the environment exploitation such as logging and burning forests. This is as expressed by Clara (2018: 583) that when

revealed, including (1) oppressive relations system; (2) the variety of women exist in environmental issues, women as conservationists are different from men as destroyer.

Men are motivated by their masculinity which demands firm, independent and courageous attitude as a source of morality that represents social relations that prioritize men in society. However, in an environmental or ecological context, men are dominated by destructive roles. Whereas, women with their femininity attitude become superiority in carrying out their responsibilities as the person who are closest to nature and the surrounding environment. As for women doing a resistance against men is as a protection and contribution to solving ecological problems. However, feminism in general women is considered as the ideology of women's liberation against male domination.

Hannam (2007: 22) divides the definitions of feminism into three parts, namely (1) imbalance recognition between women's roles and men's roles; (2) belief that women's conditions are socially formed and can be changed; and (3) women's autonomy. Meanwhile, Banerjee (2017: 275) argues that women's identity in the 20th century was ordered to protect other people (men) and leave their freedom as women while men learned about independence.

The concept of feminism that presents women as a whole is a movement in shaping women based on the hope that feminism movement opens the view of society that women can be equal with men through all their potential.

The recognition of equality is due to the condition that women experience discrimination by men. One of the aims of feminism is to fight for the rights and dignity of women above the dominance of patriarchy. When feminism believes in equality, ecofeminism believes that in women there is an attitude of ecosystem caring.

Shiva and Mies (2005: 128) mention that in their point of view if ecofeminism prioritize the role of women to be more "sensitive" and "close" to nature. In society, the relationships that are created not only about material but also intimate connections between the earth and its people. However, Tong (2006: 350) argues that ecofeminism views women as culturally associated with nature. There are conceptual, symbolic, and linguistic relationship between feminism and ecological issues.

Women's issues that become the center of feminism attention, in this case, are related to ecological issues including issues on women's oppression. Then, it is associated with the issue of

ecological oppression. Thus, it forms a concept of eco-feminism based on women and the environment.

Women have a very big duty and role in maintaining family survival, including family's food stock. In a family, a woman (i.e. mother) is responsible to provide whole family members' need. Therefore, water and air pollution will greatly disturb women in carrying out their duties. The dominance of women in ecological issues becomes the advantage for women to have an important role in concept of ecofeminism. The involvement can be stated as part of a change or transformation.

According to Mezirow (2000: 11), transformative is defined in four stages, namely (1) *disorienting dilemma*; (2) *critical reflection*; (3) *reflective discourse*; dan (4) *action*. Relevant with this statement, the first stage is a personal dilemma or crisis experienced by someone in facing the reality of life that is not in line with expectations. The second stage is a critical reflection on himself and his surroundings. The third stage is conducting reflective dialogue with other people or communicating to get new things or solutions to the problems that are happening to them. Then, the fourth stage is carry out understandings that have been obtained from various problems in the surrounding environment to be applied as new perspectives in life.

Ecofeminism transformative is determined as a problem of women, nature, and its relationship with the transformation process in the realm of life problems when women and nature experience oppression from men. In other words, when women experience the ecological crisis. Through this transformation process, characteristics of women as feminine even masculine can be identified.

Among the concepts of ecofeminism, women have a relationship with nature and the surrounding environment. Tong (2006: 353) classifies the concept into four parts namely (1) natural ecofeminism; (2) spiritual ecofeminism; (3) social eco-feminism; and (4) transformative ecofeminism.

Ecofeminism transformative is related to demand of changes in human lifestyles. The oppression that occurs is not something that should be continually maintained but it should be reduced and changed into a better direction. In ecofeminism transformative, the focused aspect is about the variety of women's experiences. It can be interpreted that this aspect is a representation of various experiences of women as carers of nature, family and their role in social relations.

3 RESEARCH METHOD

The purpose of this study is to comprehend and have a deep understanding about women's experiences that are found in Indonesian contemporary short stories that were published from 2010 until 2015. The short stories were reviewed based on transformative ecofeminism approach. The procedures are described through the stages of identification, exploration, and presentation. To determine the morality which exists in the stories as the focus of this study, this study employs qualitative method specifically content analysis by using transformative ecofeminism theories relevant to this study. As a qualitative study, data were obtained from the morality which exists in the short stories published in *Kompas* newspaper from 2010 until 2015. There were fourteen short stories selected by the researcher out of 130 short stories. The selection of short stories is based on (1) the short stories that have ecology content (2) the short stories that prioritize female leaders or women's role that is more dominant than men; (3) the short stories that are written by authors who have been actively involved in literary writing for a long time; (4) the short stories that are written by the authors who write the story with emphasises on gender perspective which are published every year in *Kompas* newspapers; and; (5) the short stories that have morality themes that represent human relations (women and men) with the nature or environment.

The data were collected through selective stages including data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion or verification. These stages started from the process of selecting, determining, simplifying, summarizing, and changing raw data. Dealing with a large number of data sources, only the most adequate and relevant data are analysed (Miles & Huberman, 1992). Meanwhile, there are four steps in analysing data including doing intensive reading, identifying the motives in the stories, sorting all of the data, and interpreting research findings and drawing conclusion.

4 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The variety of women's experiences is interpreted as events that occur only to women in various situations and in each short story the role of women are dominant. There were 14 short stories of *Kompas* from 2010 until 2015 which were analyzed. The titles are (1) *There is a Story at the Tuak Martohap*'

Store by Timbul Nadaek (2010); (2) *Gemblong Cake Mak Saniah* by Ana Mardjani (2010); (3) *At the Foot Hariara Twenty Years Later* by Martin Aleida (2010); (4) *Soliloquy Frangipani Flower* by Cicilia Oday (2010); (5) *Pray of Leaves* by Yanusa Nugroho (2011); (6) *Miss Ros* by Gus Tf. Sakai (2011); (7) *Mother's Patchwork* by Andrei Aksana (2011); (8) *When the Tree Blooms* by Doni Jaya (2011); (9) *Tree of Life* by Mashdar Zainal (2012); (10) *Angel Caller* by Noviana Kusumawardhani (2012); (11) *Madam Sobir* by A. Mustofa Bisri (2012); (12) *Nobel's Oath* by Gde Aryantha Soethama (2013); (13) *The Striped Tigers* by Guntur Alam (2014); and (14) *Judge Sarmin* by Agus Noor (2015). The results of the analysis are presented based on its' publication year.

a. Soliloquy Frangipani Flower – Cicilia Oday (2010)

This short story focuses on frangipani flower that can talk to itself. It is cared by a woman. Every day the woman is always watched by frangipani flower. Every flower that blooms always looks beautiful. Its beauty becomes an encouragement for the woman's heart. This can be seen in the following quotation.

Every morning in the terrace of this house, the woman always opens the door for the first time with the watering can in her hand, with the passion of giving me food. Several weeks ago, the scene never looked again, but I guarantee this morning my decision to bloom again can restore her passion that had dimmed (SFF, 2010: 90).

From the quotation above, the treatment of women in caring for frangipani flowers is very good. Every day she is always eager to water her frangipani flowers. The women's experiences in this short story is a woman who is always faithful, full of affection, being gentle towards the plants (frangipani flowers) that she has on the terrace. The woman's treatment was revealed by frangipani flowers when she was watered and cared for every day.

b. Miss Ros – Gus Tf. Sakai (2011)

This short story focuses on a female character named Ros. She owns a boarding house for students and has a number of plants in her yard. A student always pays attention to what is done by her. She always waters the plants every day and takes care of them. Before he met her, Miss Ros already had had various plants. Then, one day, his friend said about

his admiration towards Miss Ros. This can be seen in the following quotation.

That I, for three years, have also planted and cared for many plants. Like and love various leaves. Yes, like Miss Ros (SR, 2011: 30)

Admiration of Miss Ros seems to be the inspiration for the man in caring plants and even a number of plants he has like Miss Ros. This can be seen in the following quotation.

All plants in this yard, "tapak dara", "sangitan", "salam", "sinyo nakal", "tempuyung", "suruhan", "sidaguri", "srikaya", "tahi kotok", I also have. Also various other plants, "temu giring", "siantan", "sosor bebek", "daun dewa", "sente", "sereh wangi", "senggani", and many more. Yes, I like Miss Ros (SR, 2011: 30)

The quotation above explains that a man can also like herbs plants that can be used as medicine for any diseases. The variety of women's experiences in this short story is a middle-aged woman who admired the variety of herbs she planted on the porch of the house. Her admiration for plants makes a man fond of similar things.

c. Madam Sobir – A. Mustofa Bisri (2012)

This short story focuses on a woman named Madam Sobir. She is a wife of a *Kiai* (Islamic leader) who is respected by the villagers and owns an Islamic boarding school. The death of *Kiai* Sobir left a wound for the family, the students and the villagers. So far, his presence has benefits a lot. Madam Sobir does not want her husband death but fate cannot be prevented and be regretted. She should accept it sincerely. Among the thousands of mourners, Madam Sobir felt alone. She received less attention than *Kiai* Sobir did. This can be seen in the following quotation.

They all mourn themselves. Only my parents and some family members kept guarding me so I would not faint like many students who were not at all ready to be left behind by the deceased (MS, 2012: 95).

Someone who is left by the family member will be sad, especially a wife or husband who always live together. Madam Sobir remembers her past memories with *Kiai* Sobir since she was a student in his Islamic boarding school until she was favored by *Kiai* Sobir. The role of a wife should be appreciated from others even after her husband death. This is

what is felt by Madam Sobir that she is not being appreciated anymore. This is found in the following quotation.

40 days commemoration after the death of the deceased man, thousands of people came to our school. After that, visitors who visit the pilgrimage decreased. I don't know whether people began to remember me as Madam Sobir, their companion or not; what is clear is that I myself remember when the first wife of my husband, died. I remember that a few months later, I, who was at that time attending the Islamic boarding school and was only 20 years old, was proposed by him who was a leader in my village (MS, 2012: 97).

Memories are one of the things that are always used as comforting for someone's departure in life. Madam Sobir dissolves in the memories of the past when she was favored by *Kiai* Sobir. Since she was 20 years old, her feelings was chaos but she can no longer did anything instead of obey her parents' decisions. Then, she became a well-known and respected wife of a great *Kiai* in many cities. This can be seen in the following quotation.

My feelings are mixed up. Shocked, distrustful, proud, and whatever else. However, because my parents seemed to be supportive, I ended up just following it like a stupid one. As a result, I became Madam Sobir. The wife of a respected great kiai, not only in our city but also in many other cities. Eventhough, a great person from other cities will never be forget to visit Kiai. (MS, 2012: 97).

Since she was left by *Kiai* Sobir, she always lived in loneliness and solitude. One night she remembered the memories with *Kiai* Sobir. There will be no shoulder to lean on, listen to stories, and provide solutions to every problem. It is found in the following quotation.

Everything is like usual, dear. Only every night when I'm alone, I always remember you. It was painful not to have a man to talk like you; the faithful listener to my talk even though it was trivial, who was ready to help solve the problem that I have. Oh, dear. Now I have a big problem and you are not here beside me (MS, 2012: 99).

A year after her husband's departure, Madam Sobir got temptations from men who were ready to marry her. Men from various professions approached her by attaching a proposal and a complete CV. However, she refused the men who came because there were no men who were

comparable to *Kiai* Sobir in her life. This is found in the following quotation.

Only a year after you left, there was already a temptation that I had to face. An ustadz who already has two wives, openly proposed to me. Then a rich widower sent a proposal, complete with his CV. Later a bachelor police officer also expressed his serious desire to marry me. I refused everything smoothly (MS, 2012: 99).

Madam Sobir's refusal towards a number of men who came to propose her proved her loyalty to her husband. The variety of women's experiences in this short story is the experience of a woman who is a wife of a great *Kiai*. The death of *Kiai* caused various problems, one of which was that many men approached and even made her his second wife. Many memories in her life with the *Kiai* after he died that there was no male figure to share stories even she remembered when she was 20 as a student in his islamic school. As a child who is devoted to parents, she is finally willing to marry, and she became the wife of a great *Kiai* who is respected.

d. Noble's Oath – Gde Aryantha Soethama (2013)

This short story focuses on a woman named Ayu Meriki, a child of Biang Buni, who is forced to marry a noble man. Ayu cannot refuse Biang Buni's decision because Ayu is a only daughter who always obeys the wishes of her parents. At the time of this problem, Ayu remembers her father who is gone. She wants to talk about all the problems she is facing. This can be seen in the following quotation.

Father, if you are still alive, you might be able to help, maybe you don't. They are very conservative fanatics, taking refuge behind masks of dignity, and feel as humans are most responsible for the prosperity and power (NO, 2013: 40).

The quotation above explains about a woman who always gets trouble with others people because she always thinks that she is right. She missed her father so much and wanted him to help her.

e. The Stripped Tiger – Guntur Alam (2014)

This short story focuses on women who believe that if a striped tiger who lives in the forest is hunted by humans, bad fate will come to their families, especially a woman who is pregnant. This can be observed in the following quotation.

The twenty-six-year-old woman still believes that if someone is pregnant, she may not do anything to animals (ST, 2014: 12).

Belief in it becomes stronger when it has taken tolls. For example, there is a child who was born with a paralyzed body and a four-year-old child who has cleft lip. It can be observed in the following quotation.

This belief is stronger because this taboo is not a myth. Ceok's first child was born with a crippled body, unable to move, lying on the bed even though he was five years old. In the past, when his wife was pregnant, Ceok had a chance to beat the black snake he met in his rubber garden. The snake fled, did not die but was battered by a wooden blow from Ceok. When his child was born, his child was paralyzed. People say, Ceok is cursed because of the black snake. Not only Ceok's child. Genepo's daughter who is now four years old also suffered unfortunate fate. Her lips are cleft and her tongue slightly split at the end, and a beautiful child is mute (ST, 2012: 12).

The quotation above explains a woman who believes in myth, that if hunting and killing a striped tiger, the family members will get hurt and have bad fate. Children who are born and are still toddlers will experience a sad fate such as a disability in their parts of body.

f. Judge Sarmin – Agus Noor (2015)

This short story focuses on a woman who was sentenced for two years in prison because she murdered five men who raped her. A Judge named Sarmin felt sorry for a woman who has been accused of being the defendant. This can be observed in the following quotation.

Justice is easier to obtain outside the court, judge Sarmin thought as he looked at the woman sitting in the defendant's seat. During the trial the woman was only silent, as if convinced that whatever she said would not make her get justice (JS, 2015: 33).

Justice in that woman's view is revenge that must be resolved. However, even if you are a victim, if you kill the defendant you will certainly get a risk. For her, that was a way to survive and ask for justice. The murder was planned for two years. This can be seen in the following quotation.

No one would have thought she killed five men, after holding her grudge for so long. The murder was so neat, with details of a near-perfect plan, lasting for two years, from the

murder of the first man to the fifth man (JS, 2015: 37).

Her revenge to the five men who raped her then ended up making her as a defendant. She was sentenced for two years in prison. Judge Sarmin did not think that she would do so. In addition, Judge Sarmin gave a decision to a 70-year-old woman. She was sentenced for two years when she stole a packet of biscuits at a convenience store. She stole because she did not have money for her grandson who had not eaten for several days. At the trial, she begged not to be punished. However, for Judge Sarmin, the law can not be broken, someone will be given a punishment due to his actions. Even though, Judge Sarmin was deeply sorry. It can be observed in the following quotation.

Judge Sarmin ever adjudicated a 70-year-old grandmother who stole a packet of biscuits at a convenience store. During the trial the grandmother kept crying and begging, wailing, and even prostrating for mercy. She was forced to steal the biscuit for her baby grandson and who had not eaten for two days. Judge Sarmin always remembered the old woman's helpless eyes when he finally sentenced her to two years in prison (JS, 2015: 37).

The quotation above explains the women's experiences as a victim who were raped by five men. She was sentenced for two years in prison because she had killed the five men. Then, a grandmother was sentenced for two years in prison because she stole biscuits at a store. She had to steal the biscuit for her baby grandson that had not eaten for a long time.

5 CONCLUSION

The role of women is proof that their duty is not only as ordinary women. The variety of women's experiences takes the form of a variety of experiences experienced by women in relation to the social and natural environment.

Through this aspect, women's experiences various kinds of problems that occurred in the past or present. Based on the short stories that have been analyzed, the women's experiences are as follow: a woman who has experienced long solitude; live a simple life and continue to struggle by selling cakes; teaching honesty to others; compassion and caring for plants; the sincerity of a grandmother in cleaning the mosque's yard from fallen leaves; a woman who becomes an inspiration for a man in caring plants; tradition passed down in one family by bequeathing

kebaya (Indonesian traditional cloth) to the first daughter and storing clothes from deceased family members; a wise grandmother and her philosophy to her grandson about human age and fallen leaves; a woman who is in charge as an Angel caller for the inhabitants so that they can live happily; a wife who is left by her husband (a great *kiai*) who owns a Islamic boarding school; a woman who works as a rubber tapping gum who has long been abandoned by her husband; daughter who refused to be betrothed by her mother to a noble; a woman who believes in myths about striped tigers that if it is hunted and killed they will get punishment; the woman who was raped received a two-year sentence and a grandmother was sentenced for two years in prison because she stole biscuits at the mini market.

The women's experiences in the story tell not only tells the role of women in general but also women that can break the morality. Women as characters who are categorized as gentle, loving, and caring can also be antagonist figures because of the treatment from others (men).

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