

WOMEN'S FREEDOM IN ALICE HOFFMAN'S *THE RED GARDEN*

An Article

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Abstract

This article analyzes women's freedom in Alice Hoffman's *The Red Garden*. There are four characters analyzed, namely, Hallie Brady, Mary Starrs, Emily, and Hannah Partridge. Using the theory of liberal feminism as well as descriptive and dramatic method, the researcher finds that all the characters mentioned above gets their freedom through their efforts, respectively.

Key words: liberal feminism, freedom

I. INTRODUCTION

Literary work as a portrait of social life is a literary work that can be enjoyed, understood, and can be used by the community (Wellek, 1990:20). Literary works are sometimes also created because of experiences that have taken place in the life of the author, occur in the form of events, or related to the interesting world according to him interesting to tell (Little, 1966:02). Therefore, the ideas of imagination expressed in written form or literary works will contribute to the order and demands of society, this is a reciprocal bond between literary works and society, even though literary works are a form of fiction, literary works are also able to provide benefits in the form of moral values and social for the readers (Abrams, 1953:15). Millar (1970, p. 18) states literature can also increase human knowledge or insight, enrich their spirits, and make them more civilized. Literary works will always present a picture of life and life itself is a social reality. In this case, life will include the relationship between community

and individuals, individuals and their God, and it could be an event that occurs in a person's mind. The article analyzes the relationship between the community and individuals and the individuals analyzed refer to women.

Women have certain positions in literature. Women can be writers, readers, and figures in literary works. Feminism is one of the topics related to the existence of women meaning the living conditions of women in society. Further, feminism happens because there are gaps in society between man and woman, gaps that posit woman below man: enslavement of woman (Tyagi, 2013:28), patriarchal oppression (Cohen, 2014:04, see also Taylor, 2014:11), patriarchal power (Dolezal, 2015:105, see also Savigny, 2015:03), sexual relations (Lynes, 2012:10), sexual violence (Healicon, 2016:03, see also Snitow, 2015:07), sex oppression (Hooks, 2015:26), and women's exploitation (Hay, 2013:54). Such kinds of gaps lead the women to struggle to get their equality with men (Reger, 2012:05). Feminism, then, is women's donations to economies and societies (English, 2015:03), women's right to education, women's right to vote, women's right to assistance and women's right to work with reasonable salaries and kindly work circumstances for women (Sica, 2016:26). Besides, Feminism is about women's equal opportunity, women's history, and women's culture (Gerhard, 2013:04), women's fight against patriarchy (Martin, 2014:02).

Feminism, then, is a plan that strives for question biological savings in women's reproductive bodies as the motors of national development (Nadkarni, 2014:12), eliminate sexual aspiration from the female presence to get a more serious, earnest equivalence with men (Nally, 2015:07). Likewise, Feminism is a global, political movement for the freedom of women and society based on equivalence for all people (Mackay, 2015:03) with the feature of feminism and its positive ability to remove sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression as well as women acquisition of equal rights (Hooks, 2015:i-xii) as well as with the position of women in a political movement with specific political goals and objectives. It is a group combined by its political benefits, not its common practices (Whelehan,

2014:25). Thus, through feminism theory, the article analyzes women's freedom in responses of the unfair treatment of men.

There are many types of feminism such as Marxist feminism, liberal feminism, radical feminism, socialist feminism, etc. However, the researcher uses liberal feminism to examine the women's freedom. Every human being is created to have the same rights. Men and women have the same rights and opportunities to develop their future. There is no difference between men and women. Rosemarie Tong (2009, p. 34) states that Liberal feminists wish to free women from oppressive gender roles—that is, from those roles used as excuses or justifications for giving women a lesser place, or no place at all, in the academy, the forum, and the marketplace. Therefore liberal feminism proposes women and men to determine their own future independently, freely, and equally.

The researcher chooses *The Red Garden* as it is a New York Best Seller novel created by a writer named Alice Hoffman. In the novel, Alice Hoffman not only features one female character but Alice Hoffman can bring to life many female characters in a very independent novel. This literary work can be analyzed through a feminist approach because the literary work is related to a woman as one of the characters in the story and to find out how the female characters get their freedom in this novel.

In the novel, there are several stories and all the stories are related to each other. There are four characters to be analyzed. Hallie, who follows her husband on an expedition but is trapped in the forest and runs out of food, is underestimated by her husband and rumored by women because they want to go out to look for food. Hallie wants to show that she can replace William as the leader of the expedition. Emily who has a free soul and feels free when in the wilderness. Ostracized, not valued at school, wants to show that she also deserves respect at school. Emily likes wildflowers and travels far to feel freedom. Mary, forbidden to follow the expedition to search for her sister who is lost by her father and brother because the woman should be at home. But she still follows the search

and finds his missing sister. Hannah Partridge, who lives alone and does not want to get married and maintain a tomato garden in her yard. Hannah sees many married women but still lives alone because they are left by her husband to the battlefield. Therefore, she wants to live freely and alone throughout her life. From the facts, women's freedom is raised to analyze in this article.

II. THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

Liberal Feminsm

According to Rosemarie Tong in her book entitled *Feminist Thought*, she states that liberal feminism is about some women who can do whatever they want, not about women doing things that men can do. Liberal feminism is feminism that emphasizes the freedom that can be obtained by women. In this case, women can also do what men do, exercise equal freedom with men, and can express themselves in society. Women can do whatever they want to do, because women are free to express themselves with what they choose because women can have equality with men.

Liberal feminism also focuses on justice and guarantees for each individual so that women can do what they want without being disturbed because everything that women will do is guaranteed.

“Our entire system of individual rights is justified because these rights constitute a framework within which we can all choose our own separate goods, provided we do not deprive others of theirs” (Tong, 2009, p. 19)

Everyone has the right for themselves to choose something they want; the choice made is of their own accord without any interference from others, because humans as individuals should be able to choose their own choices purely from within themselves. Although we have the right to make our own choices, we as humans must be able to respect and respect the choices of others. Everyone can exercise their right to vote without interfering with the choices of others. So it can be concluded that everyone has the same right to make choices. As Wandell states:

“Committed to major economic reorganization and considerable redistribution of wealth, since one of the modern political goals most closely associated with liberal feminism is equality of opportunity” (Tong, 2009, p. 12)

Since Wendell talks about feminism, especially liberal feminism in the opinion that equality of opportunity is related to the opportunities possessed by men and women who focus on politics and the economy, which means that every man and woman must have equal opportunities in various aspects, especially in the political field. and economy. Tong also makes it clear in her argument which reads as follows:

“The overall goal of liberal feminism is the worthy one of creating "a just and compassionate society in which freedom flourishes. Only in such society can women and men thrive equally” (Tong, 2009, p. 13)

Tong argues that in liberal feminism, women and men should have the same equality in various aspects. But many people argue about it, the many cases of harassment that occur against women caused by men make people think that there is no equality between women and men. Wollstonecraft argues as follows:

“A woman is not a "mere means", or instrument, to one or more man's pleasure or happiness. Rather, she is an "end her self", a rational agent whose dignity consists in having the capacity of self-determination. To treat someone as a mere means is to treat her as less than a person, as someone who exists not for herself but as an appendage to someone else” (Tong, 2009, p. 16)

Women are often used as objects to please men. In this case, women are despised and oppressed by society as if women were worthless. Many women feel inferior to men because of this case. Due to the many cases of harassment of women perpetrated by men, this is also one of the reasons why many people want to make women and men equal.

The equality that should be owned by women and men is not only in the economic and political fields, but also in the field of education. Many people demand equality in the field of education, because women also have the right to get the same opportunities in education as men. Rosemarie Tong (2009, p. 18) by receiving the same education, women can become partners for their husbands in

earning a living when married, including in earning a living to meet household needs. Because to be partners rather than servants of her husband, the wife must earn a living outside the home.

Efforts to get equality obtained by women in order to get equality with men are still ongoing until now, one of the gender equality movements is called NOW. There are several rules that can be obtained by women in order to get equality with men. Tong (2009, p. 25) the purpose of the Bill of the Rights for women NOW is to make women have the same rights as men.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

The writer uses descriptive and dramatic method in analyzing the novel through liberal feminism by which the researcher means to present the character mainly through description and discussion as well as through reporting the character's speech and action. Thus, from describing, discussing as well as reporting the character's speech and action, the writer presents and analyzes the women's freedom of the supporting characters. Further, to get clear data to analyze, the writer uses liberal feminism to be a primary method to analyze women's freedom of the main characters in Alice Hoffman's *the Red Garden*.

Previous Studies

The researcher manages to find previous studies that use the same theory as that in this article, liberal feminism to provide insight into the differences from the previous studies. First, Dewi Artika (2016) with the title *Liberal Feminism Values Seen Through The Main Character in Kinberg's Mr. and Mrs Smith*. The purpose of this study is to find out what is meant by liberal feminism as the main character. Reaske's theory of characterization is used to analyze the main female character in the script, Jane Smith. Furthermore, to analyze liberal feminism, the main character of the researcher uses the theory of liberal feminism by Madsen.

Second, Ika Puspitasari (2017) with the title *Liberal Feminism Values of The Main Character in Suffragette (2015) Film*. The researcher wants to know

how Maud is the main character depicted in the film *Suffragette* and how the film reflects the values of feminism through Maud's character. The author uses the theory of character and characterization, as well as the feminist theory of Betty Friedan. The finding in this study is that the researcher finds that Maud reflects liberal feminist values which are reflected in her life without feeling tired or even hopeless. But in the end, Maud had to leave her husband and son to get the right to vote.

Third, Laudita Kanana (2019) with the title *Liberal Feminism Seen Through The Main Female Character in Educating Rita Movie*. This study just focus with one character, namely Rita, the main character. The reasecher uses theory of Joseph M. Boggs and Dennis W. Peteie's characterization to analyze Rita's character. The findings show that Rita has four characters, namely determined, rebellious, smart, hard-working, and independence. The second the reasecher analyze about liberal feminism and found that Rita's characteristics belong to liberal feminism. Rita's desire and determination to get a higher education looks very strong, therefore Rita has lied to her husband to make his wish come true.

From the three studies above, they both analyze the theory of liberal feminism in films or movies. Likewise, this article uses the same theory to analyze a novel. The difference between this research and previous research lies in the liberal feminism theory used. The first research uses the theory of liberal feminism by Madsen, the second research uses the theory of liberal feminism by Betty Freidan, the third theory does not mention whose theory is used because it only mentions the theory of liberal feminism in general. Meanwhile, this research in this article uses liberal feminism theory by Rosemire Tong.

IV. RESULT

Women's Freedom

In this analysis, the researcher analyzes women's freedom from four characters: Hallie with her effort to be independent, Mary Starr with her efforts for equal liberty, Emily with her efforts for education, and Hannah's choice.

Hallie's Efforts to Gain Independence

Sustika (2018) argues that being independent does not mean that we as humans can live alone and do not need the intervention of others in life. Humans are social creatures with a mutualistic symbiosis. As social beings, humans need the role of others in everyday life within reasonable limits. In the 18th century a married woman or a wife could not do things freely because everything was done under the will of the husbands. However, Hallie was not completely obedient to her husband. It can be seen from the whole story that Hallie always puts her opinion first and does whatever she wants without asking her husband's permission. When asked to stay indoors, Hallie stays out of the room to look for food alone because her husband is just silent and irresponsible when the group starts to starve.

William Brady laughed at her when she set off. He said women weren't hunters and that she'd freeze her fingers off in the cold, but she went out into the snow, the poorly made door wobbling on its nailed hinges as it slammed shut behind her. (Hoffman, 2011, p. 10)

William even laugh at Hallie when Hallie is about to hunt. William also says that Hallie is just a woman which means that women could not be relied on. According to what is written by Mary Wollestonecraft (1792) that one of the most universal and striking characteristics is the subordination of women over men. At the same time, there are a lot of political and cultural progress, society still places women as subordinate to the position of men. Women in the 18th century did not have freedom and the feminist movement in the 18th century aimed to create a just society and care about freedom. Hallie here seems to want to use that freedom, regardless of William and the group around him Hallie came out and left the group who are starving. Hallie's actions can show that femininity is not a weakness, it can even prove the strength of her femininity. Hallie's act of femininity is a method to save her and the rest of the group for the starvation.

Although already married but Hallie very clearly has the power to fight for her life. Hallie always looks for independent ways to fight for a better life. Nothing can change Hallie's will even though it is her husband. Even Hallie strongly drags a carcass without the help of others. The groups should be grateful and help Hallie to find food next time but instead the group actually moves away and fears Hallie.

“The women stopped speaking when she came near. The men made certain to avoid her, including her own husband. She didn't complain or seem put out. She took every chance to escape their company” (Hoffman, 2011, p. 14)

It is based on Rosemarie Tong, “The overall goals of liberal feminism are the worthy ones of creating" a just and compassionate society in which freedom flourishes (2009, p. 13). That statement means that between women and man, they have the same chance in society even to fight for life and take responsibility for each other. Hallie does not care what other people think of her. She isolates herself by doing what she likes, which is to go on mountain adventures and walks through the darkness. The activity keeps repeating itself and makes Hallie and the group settle where they are all trapped. They build livable houses and a city on the land. From this incident it can be seen that Hallie's independence has been seen and appreciated. Over time the group has realized what Hallie is doing is to save them from starvation.

But even so Hallie feels deep sadness over the death of her baby son. She is always gloomy and visits his son's grave all the time until one day Hallie is reunited with a bear who suddenly approaches her. Her gaze is still the same as before, which looks very happy and seems to see something that has to be tamed. In this incident Harry suddenly looks for his rifle and fires at the bear. Hallie's originally happy face immediately turns angry. The bear leaves quickly and Hallie follows him to Mount Hingtop and never comes back.

The important point that can be taken is that it can change the mindset of people today who still think that women are still dependent on men. This can lead

into changes in women according to the times. Strong women will not allow themselves to be dominated by men who have gender roles.

Mary Starr's Effort for Equal Liberty

Everyone has the right to do whatever they want to do, without any restrictions from others. Liberal feminism means that a woman really fights for their very limited rights to be able to do something they want to do, because women just do what is happening in the social environment. Women often do not have the freedom to do what they want. The emergence of liberal feminism to fight for the rights and freedoms desired by women. What is meant here is not that women want a higher position than men, but that women and men have equality in freedom, namely women can also do what men do.

Equal liberty between women and men can be seen from Mary's characteristics. Mary is a woman and as a woman she has a limited scope. She can not just do whatever she wants, but she tries to do what she wants. In society, a woman only has a private space for herself, but Mary Starr also has a public space and she can do whatever she wants to do. Like her brother William that has freedom that Mary does not.

“‘You shouldn’t be here,’ he said. ‘Go home.’
‘I’ll be where I like,’ Mary replied. She took Will’s hand in hers. They had been allies in all things, and they were once again on this baffling night”
(Hoffman, 2011, p. 33).

Rosemerie Tong (2009) states that the goal of liberal feminism is to create a just and compassionate society in which freedom thrives. This statement means that women and men have the right to get the same equality in life. In this case Mary also wants to get the same equality. If you look at the circumstances around Mary, Mary should not have participated in the search, but Mary refuses her brother’s wish to send her home. Mary chooses to stay on the quest and even confidently continues on. Mary loves freedom and here she has the opportunity to show that she can do what men does. Mary is a stubborn girl; she makes her choice to do something or not. She does not depend on his life to do things for

other people. William freely joins the quest and Mary wants the same thing. Mary looks for Amy with full responsibility and earnestness. Mary does her best in the search until she finally manages to find Amy who is drowned in the water with the help of Yaron and a sniffer dog.

From the beginning of the story to the end, Mary is described as a brave girl and among other women Mary stands out the most. Mary has private and public spaces where when in public she interacts other than with the people she meets when she is at home. Mary met many people, one of whom she just met is Yaron. Mary is also described as a curious girl, but her mother does not like about it.

“On more than one occasion, Rebecca had taken her eldest daughter aside to ask, ‘What good can ever come from a girl with so much knowledge?’” (Hoffman, 2011, p. 32)

Based on the quote above, what Rebecca says to her daughter is an act of gender discrimination. In a book entitled *Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction*, Rosemiere Tong (2009) states that the aim of Liberal Feminism is to oppose sex discrimination and improve the status of women. From Rebecca's words, it can be interpreted that women are not allowed to have high knowledge. But Mary seems very fighting for her rights. She happily sneaks and hides when he enters his father's reading room. The attitude of discrimination against women may have made many women at that time afraid and does not dare to go against the applicable law so that only Mary is seen as brave and the most prominent.

Emily's Effort for Education

Women's freedom is also concerned with education and liberal feminism also fights for women's rights in obtaining education so that women have the opportunity to go to school, not only men who have the right to education and schooling. Education also has the right to be enjoyed by women because education is not only given to men.

Rosemarie Tong states that, "Then society must provide women with the same political rights and economic opportunities as well as the same education

that men enjoy (2009, p. 16)". That statement shows that people demand equality not only in politics and economics, but also in education. Furthermore, Rosemarie Tong states that women are better as the partners of their husbands rather than only become their servants. In this context, women can also earn income outside the home (2009, p. 18). It means that women should get education so that they can earn income outside the home that also makes women have room outside the house.

Not explained in detail about Emily's education, however, Emily is forced to leave her school and help her parents at home. Emily needs at home and her parents always makes Emily unable to get out of the house. Emily leaves her school too because of the unfair attitude she receives from the instructors and no one wisely appreciates her opinion. Emily always learns from what happens in everyday life to increase her knowledge. To be critical and intelligent is needed extensive knowledge.

Her intelligence can be seen when she walks down the forest and reached the top of the mountain safely even though she is alone, she can recognize and memorize rapidly wild plants such as meeting old friends.

“She could will herself to be invisible. Her family would give up hope and stop their search and here she'd be, safe and alone and free. She could make her clothes out of tablecloths, sleep on a pallet of straw, keep the windows open, leaving behind the overriding fear she carried so close to her bones” (Hoffman, 2011, p. 40)

Emily's freedom is taken away by her parents until she intends to disappear so that her family will not find her. Women can also get work outside the home and to get a good job requires knowledge. What Emily's family does to her makes her very hurt and unable to be herself. She will continue to be at home and be able to go out again freely. Emily has courage and a free mind but she has to obey her family to stay home. When she goes and walks through the forest she comes to an old house and stops to hide so that his family wil not find him. She meets Charles or Carlo, a blind man who loves to travel. Even though Carlo is blind, he can still travel while Emily has to obey her family to stay at home.

Emily and Carlo have a conversation and at that moment Emily knows that Carlo is going to South America, his hometown. It occurs that she wants Carlo to stay and be with her. Emily makes a way for Carlo to stay.

“Emily found herself thinking of a way to keep Charles from leaving. It was a wild, frantic thought. She had no right to it, yet there it was. She rose while it was dark and went outside to sit with the dog. After a while, she took a shovel from a shed, then made her way through the sleeping town” (Hoffman, 2011, p. 44)

Emily's idea is very smart. She has the idea to make a garden from the plants planted by Carlo and takes some clay plants in the forest. The way she picks and chooses plants shows that she is a smart person. She chooses plants that has a strong scent, spimen that makes them memorable by smell. Emily devises a pretty good strategy, she wants to make Carlo feel the beauty of the garden he has created even though he only feels it from the aroma. By having the knowledge and courage Emily should be able to have a job outside the home and go to school. Women can also expand their knowledge by interacting with other people they meet outside the home to gain new experiences.

Hannah's Choice

Rosemire Tong (2009, p. 20) states that in her book that Mill assumes women's choice of family over career is entirely voluntary and that such a choice involves women consenting to put their other interests in life on the back burner until their children are adults. Choosing is something that is important to Hannah. She chooses to stay in the village and takes care of the plants rather than having to go and leave the village. She feels the satisfaction she feels when she squats down tending the plants in the garden. When Hannah is at her house, her membrane has a closer relationship with her neighbors. Hannah is 35 years old and she chooses to live alone and is not married and all the women around her are married but many are left by their husbands to fight. Hannah has a difference in thinking with other women that Hannah thinks she doesn't want to get married.

“More than anything, she wanted a child. Find a husband, someone might have told her, get married, have a baby or two—all easily accomplished

even in a small town such as Blackwell. But Hannah was not interested in men. She never had been. She refused to speculate on what this might mean, or admit to the crushes she'd been aware of. She only knew that if she didn't wish to be someone's wife, she couldn't have what she yearned for most in this world" (Hoffman, 2011, p. 88)

Hannah's wish is to have a child but she doesn't want to marry a man because she doesn't feel interested in getting married. The patriarchal system provides an advantage for men. Many married women complain that most men keep doing what they want to do to make their wives find it difficult. When a woman is married she becomes the responsibility of the man or her husband. Hannah is used to living alone, so she does not feel like she is fit for marriage. Hannah does not want marriage to steal women's freedom.

Hannah sees around her that many women are married but abandoned by their husbands. Many women are alone at home and still support themselves. Hannah really likes her choice as an independent woman and not married. After her younger sister gets married, her husband goes to war and dies. Until finally Hannah takes care of her sister and does not marry anyone.

"The garden was old, and Kate's aunt, Hannah, grew tomatoes and red peppers and watermelon and radishes" (Hoffman, 2011, p. 101)

The little Kave who has just arrived with her mother from paris becomes a grown Kate of seventeen and Hannah remains devoted to tending her garden. Hannah doesn't regret her choice to be single. She knows what's good for her. Hannah feels like no one around her has a problem with her status. She feels fine. Liberal feminism demands women to be independent in their lives. Hannah can be said to be a feminist woman because she has control over herself; she is independent and does not depend on others. Hannah also wants equality between men and women so that they can create the right of women to choose what they believe is good for themselves.

Conclusion

From the analysis above, it seems that the four women have their own freedom; Hallie Brady with her wish of independence of looking for food to

protect the group from starvation though she does not get appreciation from the people she helps in return, Mary Starr with equal liberty she demands though she has to go out of her house, Emily with education she expects for women though she has to sacrifice herself by quitting school, and Hannah Partridge with her choice not to get married as being married is a trap not to be able to live freely. However, the theory used in this article does not mean that it does not have a weakness. The weakness the researcher finds is that when applying the theory, the researcher hesitates whether or not it is worth an application. To confirm the validity of the theory, the researcher hopes so much that there is another researcher/more researchers to do the same research with the same case in different literary works. Besides, other researchers are helpful to develop the application of the theory.

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