

## AN ANALYSIS OF LIBERTARIAN RADICAL FEMINISM ON RIE'S CHARACTER IN JOYCE LEBRA *THE SCENT OF SAKE* (2009)

Merry Rullyanti and Sinta Purnama Sari  
Dehasen University

### Abstract

*Literature has close relationship with human's life. It could not separate with society as the writer is member of society. It represents the life and life itself is social fact. Feminism theory has purpose to know the nature of inequality and focus on power, gender politics and sexuality. While generally feminist theory also concern to analyze women's right, interest and issues. The themes usually explored in feminism such as oppression, patriarchy, discrimination, etc. One of that is libertarian radical feminism that related to patriarchy is characterised by power and propose detrimental for men to exhibit only masculine traits and women to exhibit only feminine traits. The aimed of this study are to know Rie's life toward tradition with domination of man power and to find out libertarian radical feminism characteristics that possessed by Rie in the scent of sake novel. From the finding of the writer found about Rie's life as the main character in *The Scent of Sake* novel, she occurs many oppression from patriarchy which domination of men and women become passive just take care to her husband, house and children. She must receive her parents decision to marrying with man who didn't love her, she is sacrifice herself to get heir from that man consider to business family. Then she still survive with the act of her husband and the last she knows that her husband has been cheat to geishas and has babies whereas she can't has it too. Because of that, her libertarian radical feminism characteristics rise up. It also caused by her parents died and make her aware that she must take control in her family, she can't depend her life to her husband that waste much money to geisha. She changes become independent and androgynous women by her education. However, *Sake* business and the other business that her family become more successful in Rie's leadership. She really has soul of successor in *Sake* business.*

**Keywords :** *Libertarian radical feminism, The Scent of Sake novel.*

### Introduction

Literature has close relationship with human life. Literature could not separate with society as the writer is member of society. Literature represents the life and life itself is social fact. Thus, there is a close relationship among the writer, literature and her society. Her work may reflect the life of her surrounding and that may include the political situation and social condition.

There are three main branches of literature; they are prose divided into novel and short story, drama, and poetry. From those branches, literature can be investigated or understood by using literary criticism which explains what a work of literature means. It has important role for human life and the development of literature itself. It means that literary criticism is important in developing knowledge

and understanding the values outside literary itself such religion, philosophy, moral and so on. For example Feminism category represented social movements, so movement should be appeared some solution and social contact between women and other reality. Description social feminism respect of women should to discourse reproduction to build by social reality.

Feminism theory has purpose to know the nature of inequality and focus on power, gender politics and sexuality. While generally feminist theory also concern to analyze women's right, interest and issues. The themes usually explored in feminism such as oppression, patriarchy, discrimination, etc. One of that is libertarian radical feminism that related to patriarchy is characterised by power and propose detrimental for men to exhibit only masculine traits and women to exhibit only feminine traits.

Based on explanation above, libertarian radical feminism reflected in Japanese culture which very strong with customary rules. In *The Scent of Sake* novel that tells the situation in Japanese society especially in condition of Sake business like their tradition in politics, economy, custom, wedding, etc around society that produce Sake, traditional drink from Japan. Japanese people in 17<sup>th</sup> century really concern to their tradition and dominant with men power however Rie as the main character try to break the rule. That's the reason of writer investigates libertarian radical feminism in this study entitled *An Analysis of Libertarian Radical Feminism on Rie's Character in Joyce Lebra's The Scent of Sake (2009)*.

## **Conceptual Theory**

### **A. Literature**

Literature is human's way to express feeling, mind and emotion, though not all of human can express it trough writing. According to Terry (2006), Literature is simply another way we can experience the world around us though our imagination is a mood stated literature as born of telling story of arranging world in pleasing pattern of expressing words in some special aspects of human experience.

Where as all of works related to imagination of the capacity of invention. The primary aim of literature is to give pleasure and entertain those who attend to it. As Lerner (1952) said: "since the invention of language, men have taken pleasure in following and participating in the imaginary adventures and imaginary experiences of imaginary people."

### **B. Feminism**

Feminism is one of literary criticism theory related to feminine that develop in social. The doctrine advocating the social and political rights of women is equal to those possessed by men: a movement to aquiver such right; in a male, the presence of feminine characteristic. There are five kinds of feminism, such as : liberal feminism, marxist and socialist feminism, cultural feminism, eco-feminism and radical feminism.

One of the feminism thoughts is radical feminism. Radical feminism can be divided in two parts, those are : libertarian radical feminism and cultural radical feminism. But in this study the writer focus on libertarian radical feminism.

While Tong (2009) stated that there is certain relation between someone's sex and someone's gender. Gender was separated to sex. The gender order is imagined in agrarian society and women's role as wife and mother are guardian of cultural identity and stability in face of change. He made three main idea of libertarian radical feminism are :

- a) Role and responsibility of reproduction are often used to bound the women developing as a human
- b) Erasing the human discrimination based on sex/gender system by actualizing women to be brave became masculine and feminine.
- c) Believing in androgynous concept as ideal concept which human has to develop the combination of masculine and feminine characters.

### **Methodology**

In this study, the writer used qualitative descriptive method analysis which is to analyze and to identify libertarian radical feminism in Joyce Lebra *The Scent of Sake* novel. Then the writer also find out more about how is Rie's life toward the libertarian radical feminism and what the libertarian radical feminism characteristics is possessed by Rie in *The Scent of Sake* novel.

In this study the writer uses feminism theory in data analysis to identify how is life of Rie toward the libertarian radical feminism and what libertarian radical feminism characteristics is possessed by Rie in *The Scent of Sake* novel. Whereas, there are some steps of writer do to collect the data, such as :

- a. Read *The Scent of Sake* Novel by Joyce Lebra
- b. Find out about the libertarian radical feminism theory
- c. Identify how is Rie life by using the libertarian radical feminism theory that are in that novel
- d. Find the characteristic of libertarian radical feminism is possessed by Rie in the novel.
- e. Collect the data and analyze it
- f. Make a conclusion.

### **Finding and Analysis**

In this paper, the writer used the theory of libertarian radical feminist that focus on Rie as the main character on *The Scent of Sake* novel. According to Gayle Robin in Tong (2009), libertarian radical feminist said sex/ gender system is set of organization that used by society to transform biological sexuality into the humanity product. While Tong Millet (2009) stated that there is certain relation between someone's sex and someone's gender. Gender was separated to sex. The gender order is imagined in agrarian society and women's role as wife and mother are guardian of cultural identity and stability in face of change. Therefore, patriarchal society uses certain fact about men and women psychology as basic to build identity and behavior of masculine and feminine with purposed to empowering men and weakling women. In this part, the writer described two answer of statement problems are (1) how is Rie's life toward tradition with domination of men power and (2) what

are libertarian radical feminism characteristics possessed by Rie in *The Scent of Sake* novel.

#### **A. Finding**

##### **1. Rie's Patriarchy Family**

Patriarchy ideology were taught from family, besides educational and religious institution. So, the writer saw libertarian radical feminism seed in Rie because she is refuse to be girl in the box. According to Rosemarie (2010, p. 73) family is basic institution in shaping the patriarchy culture. While the patriarchy ideology kept well in traditional and modern society. As smallest part of patriarchy, family has big contribution of it. every member in family has role and act as social rule which submitted patriarchy.

Rie is the only child in Omura's family after her little brother died in some accident and because of that Rie guess that she must more responsibility and take more control to her family especially in Sake's business.

As she did so, she glanced through the misty screen of her breath at the door of the brewery and inhaled the pungent, mildewy smell of yeast, the smell that permeated every corner of the drafty old wooden house and brewery buildings. Women were never to enter the forbidden door that gaped darkly before her. As little girl, she had waited, terrified, for the news that Sake had soured. It never had. Now, that she was grown, she had her own secret opinion of what women could accomplish, she made it he duty to wash the barrels, a task she took on when she knew her father was not looking. As atonement. (p. 1)

Rie had interested to all about Sake business even when she was young, but she got limitation at that moment. The girl can get into wooden house because it can made their Sake soured. When she grew up, she made her important task and duty for her to join and showed her cares to Sake business. Eventhough she still got angry by her father.

O-natsu bowed and left the room, glancing at Rie as she left. With a sharp intake of breath, Rie looked down at her clenched fists and avoided her mother's gaze for several minutes. Shame burned her cheeks as she thought of her husband with the geisha and child together, so soon after her own miscarriage! anger quickly suffesed shame. (p. 44)

There's not any word can say from Rie's mouth after heard that Jihei had baby with geisha. She feels shame, angry and feel debased dignity because she as children as noble families had been lose from Geisha. She feel betrayed and had Jihei. From that news Rie had to fight again to seduce

man disgusting it to get the child, if not baby of that geisha will be the heir of this family.

## 2. Libertarian Radical Feminism Characteristics of Rie in *The Scent of Sake* Novel

After reading the novel and found about Rie's life toward tradition with the domination of men, the writer connected it to three ideas of Tong Millet (2009) then rise up the characteristic of Rie related to libertarian radical feminism concept, such as :

### a. Educated Women

In Japan society women's role didn't hope around them. Tradition only focuses on domination of men. Patriarchy feels really strong in this novel especially in Sake business. Man as head of family is also head of Sake business. He has important role in family. However, women just allow take care home, child and her husband. They don't have responsible to another aspect like in economy, politic and education.

“Good evening, Kin-san.” Rie bowed as she entered the room. “Ah, O-Josama.” Kin beamed. “The increase in our shipping to Edo has succeed.” (p. 27)

That's different to Rie's life, even she is women her parents allow her to study *sempoa* and she clever in that. In addition she is also smart and has good sensitivity as her father in Sake business, in fact he didn't get permit in that case. It can be seen from she's hobby to wash barrel of Sake with big size when she was child until she became woman. She can't control Sake by herself to enter in house of Sake save because women will change the taste to be sour. That's why she always wash barrel of Sake as important task and her duty to still play role in family business.

### b. surviving women

I know, Rie murmured softly, yet feeling a tightness in her chest as she thought of what it was coasting her. Sleep well, dear,” her mother said, bowing slightly as she left. So long as her parents understood, Rie would continue, would endure, until she became pregnant. She prayed it would happen soon, that she would be relieved of the unpleasant but pressing duty. In the meantime, she would continue to think of Saburo. (p. 28)

She called as surviving women because she can survive from complicated problems that she got as children in Sake's family. She got oppression from her husband especially in sex, she feels like sacrifice

things that her parents from their plan to her future that just consider to Sake business. Moreover, she can't choose man that will be her husband, man that will life beside her, man who her love.

c. An androgynous woman

Learn not get trapped anymore in patriarchal prison, Rie grow up to become an independent women, an androgyny. She refused to depend on men. Even she married.

Rie looked around at her assembled family and bowed, trying her best to conceal her tears. All the family was present, though Kin, Kinnosuke, and Buntaro were also part of what she had worked all her life to achieve. White Tiger was now the largest sake empire in all the land. (p. 363)

As an androgyny, which combined the feminine and masculine character at the same time, Rie live in Japan economically and got high social status. An independence of men was the key from feminist mindset, especially libertarian radical feminism. By destroying the man domination among women, it meant that women were not meant be passive, such as men were not meant be active. The solution if women do not want to depend on man by developing combination of the best feminine and masculine character until reflected the unique from each women. That idea was what Millet called as androgyny.

So, based on the libertarian radical feminism that the writer used, the character of Rie assumed that the Sake business was patriarchal and being a mother and marriage institution were forms of oppression from patriarchal society system. Those things all women needed if they wanted to release themselves from the trap of men domination. Therefore women had to release themselves from depending on men.

## B. Analysis

Based on findings, Rie is victims of tradition with the domination of men. Women have passive role and men as an active one. Women just follow the patriarchy rules that are in society with men take control in all important aspect like economy and politic. Rie didn't get permission to take responsibility in her business family, even she must hide in her father's office to listen what topic they discussed related to Sake business. She also hide to clean big barrel, place to made Sake although her father didn't want her did it.

Meanwhile, she married to stranger man which chosen by her family that consider to experience of that man and also his family status. She felt so sad because of that, she must spend her life with man who she didn't love. The arrogant and bored man, but she still accepted that because she felt she is the only children in her family and must follow it to family business name.



Rie hopes with her sacrifice herself she can help her family business and make her father proud of her. But she totally wrong, her parents had chosen stupid husband to her that can't work or thinking. Jihei just a man with old fashioned and thinking. He just can give pain to Rie even he cheat to geisha and make many babies. That's the big oppression of Rie feels in her life, she can't divorce to her husband because tradition. On the other side, she cannot received babies from geisha, she felt like trash because can't give pure heir to her family.

From big pressure is made of her husband, her movement of feminism rose up. Rie becomes different women that cannot receive that value in tradition again. She tried to take control in Sake business, she didn't want to be passive again. She knows that Jihei can't be a successor to her family business. The awareness woke Rie up and thought about her destiny. She knows she can't hope to her husband that waste of money to meet geisha and her parents has been gone, so she decided to take family business under her control.

Rie is educated woman, because at that time not all of Japan women allow to study *sempoa* included her, but she got that skill by watch her father and Kin used that in office. She also has big sensitivity in Sake business. She always get brilliant idea in Sake business and made White Tiger becomes more popular than in her father era.

On the other hand, Rie also androgynious woman, she can destroy patriarchy prison and become independent moment which combined feminine and masculine character at the same time. Although she live in old tradition but she has open mindset as women and didn't want to depend on men. She didn't depend on her husband to take responsibility as head of family, she can handle it well. She took care of her step children, and also become successor in Sake business. Moreover, she success to develop family business become no 1 in Japan with her ideas. They has company of boat, Kura business, Seller miracle water and also made her family brand of Sake *White Tiger* become the most popular drink.

## Conclusion

From the findings, the writer found about Rie's life as the main character in *The Scent of Sake* novel, she occurred many oppressions from patriarchy which domination of men and women become passive just took care to her husband, house and children. She must received her parents decision to married with man who didn't love her, she was sacrifice herself to got heir from that man considered to business family.

Then she still survived with the act of her husband and the last she knew that her husband has cheated to geishas and has babies whereas she cannot have it too. Because of that, her libertarian radical feminism characteristics rose up. It also caused by her parents died and make she awared that she must take control in her family, she can't depend her life to her husband that waste much money to geisha. She changed become independent and androgynious women by her education. However, *Sake* business and the other business that her family become more successful in Rie's leadership. She really has soul of successor in *Sake* business.

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