

## LIBERAL FEMINISM IDEOLOGY AS DESCRIBED IN MARTIN'S *THE SONG OF ICE AND FIRE : A GAME OF THRONES*

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### Abstract

Liberal Feminism Ideology is the idea of empowerment of women to get equal opportunity and extending their right by acknowledgment of society. In that sense, liberal feminism ideology helps women to remain about the sense of equality between men and women in many aspects. In accordance, the aim of the research is to describe the liberal feminism ideology through the character of *A Game of Thrones* Novel. The research shows that Daenerys, as one of the major characters in the novel, believes in freedom that can change the system that oppressed women, and she chooses to be the ruler of the Khalasar community which they never have women to be their ruler before. The findings include equal rights, equal liberty, sameness vs differences, and the suffrage.

**Key words:** Liberal Feminism Ideology, Freedom, Oppression

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### INTRODUCTION

In the patriarchal society, the female stereotypical role is to marry and have children. She has to put her family's welfare before her own by being loving, compassionate, caring, nurturing, and sympathetic and find time to be sexy and feel beautiful (Adam et al., 2020). Ideally, stereotypical gender roles are the way people act, what they do and say, to express being a girl or a boy, a woman or a man. These characteristics are shaped and continue to be adopted by our society. (Choi et al., 2015), (Wantoro et al., 2021).

We need to understand that this is the cost when we integrate ourselves with society by adopting stereotypical gender roles. These are the problems that the writer concerns and would be depicted in the *Game of Thrones* novel series *The Song of Ice and Fire*. It was first published in 1996, and it is the first book in the series *A Song of Ice and Fire*, which still has not been finished. Over the years, *A Game of Thrones* has won many awards. It became a bestseller, and was recently made into a ten-episode television series and is now already in its fifth season (Liu et al., 2020), (Fitri & Qodriani, 2016). It is a story about a political game, where the struggle for the Iron Throne is what motivates the characters. Everyone has their own political agenda, but only a few of these are successfully achieved (Gunawan D, 2020), (Suryono & Subriadi, 2016). The desire to increase one's power is reflected in the alliances between houses where women become important actors. It is by marriage one is capable to achieve a higher state of power, which becomes very apparent when studying the female characters especially the value of liberal feminism became the spirit of those characters to exercise freedom and power (Adam et al., 2020).

“Feminists believe that our culture is a patriarchal culture, that is, one organized in favor of the interests of men. Feminist literary critics try to explain how what they term engendered

power imbalances in a given culture are reflected, supported, or challenged by literary texts.” (Kuswoyo, 2014).

Guerin explains how patriarchal sphere becomes the main reason the imbalance between men and women power happen and strong reflection of feminism needs to be uphold in order to create balance in among people (Papuangan, 2018), (Febrian & Fadly, 2021b). To specifically match the context of patriarchal society, the strong women characters are also strongly presented in the novel. They are Cersei Lannister (Mittal & Patidar, 2019), Daenerys Targaryen, and Arya Stark. The characters take part in many important roles of the story and in this extent, the writer believes the characters describe the liberal feminism idea that will be discussed in this research. In this case, the literary text that will be analyzed is a novel about a reflection of women oppression that are challenged by a new vision of feminism as a result of dissatisfaction toward gender discrimination and gender role stereotype (Liu et al., 2020), (Muhammad Yuseano Kardiansyah, 2019), (Gulö, 2018). In supporting the research, the writer will highlight liberal feminism theoretical framework from a notable writer, John Stuart Mill

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Sociological Approach

Sociological approach used in the research aims to focus on social inequality based on societal perspective in general and especially women perspective (M Yuseano Kardiansyah & Salam, 2021). The discussion mainly breakdowns the idea of the roles, ethics, and culture of being virtue of women that living in the patriarchal system that inherently integrated within society. (Febrian & Fadly, 2021a) Analyzing the feminism comes with sociological approach, the writer contents sociology is the study of human social life, especially the origins, behavior, organization, institutions, culture and development of human in society. Considering the feminism is one of the progressive idea, it is important to bring the sociology to know more how feminism can develop as the progressive idea among society. (van Eijck, Michiel; Hsu, Pei-Ling; Roth, 2009) “Sociology learns about social life of the people such as society, culture, socialization, group, norm, and their ethnics and so on.” (Prasetyo & Suharyanto, 2019)

### Feminism Theory

Feminism is a form of revolutionary idea of women to fight against oppression in so many levels in society, such as class, strata, race, or even religion. These form of oppressions create standard that is reflected in society.

*“Feminist theory and its attention to diversity offer a sound framework for organizations working to change women’s inferior social position and the social, political, and economic discrimination that perpetuates it. Many of these organizations come together in networks under the umbrella of feminism, an inclusive worldwide movement to end sexism and sexist oppression by empowering women.” (Mill, 2008:14)*

Mill explains feminist theory is a framework to break down the discrimination in social, politic and economic (Suwarni & Handayani, 2021), (Nagel, 2014). The research as a scholarship field is nearly beyond a summary chapter like this because women speak with many voices like we recognize many of branch of feminism that support same empowerment but the way to achieve the goal is different.

## **Liberal Feminism**

The writer uses liberal feminist theory will support the analysis in explaining the liberal feminism. Liberal feminism, also called egalitarian or mainstream feminism is considered the most moderate branch. It is based on a proposition that all people are created equal, they should have same basis of equality and opportunity regardless of the gender.(Liu et al., 2020),(Sedyastuti et al., 2021) ,Because both genders benefit by the elimination of sexism, men are integrated into its ranks.

*Liberal feminism is based on Enlightenment beliefs of rationality, education, and the natural rights that extend to all men and women. Liberal feminists believe society does not have to be completely restructured to achieve empowerment for women and to incorporate women into meaningful and equitable roles.(Mill, 2008:40)*

liberal feminism is different from other branch of feminism. For example radical feminism gives the empowerment when women negate the biological rethoric such as patriarchal society uses certain facts about male and female biology (chromosomes, anatomy, hormones) as the basis for constructing a set of masculine and feminine gender identities and behaviors that serve to empower men and disempower women (Adiyanto & Febrianto, 2020).

## **Cultural Feminism**

There are some consideration why cultural feminism involves in this chapter. Some of people argue cultural feminism is different from liberal feminism(Gazali & Yusmaita, 2018),. But in some extant, they have similarities in supporting the women empowerment in terms of natural behaviors and and positive qualities.

*“Liberal feminists may also embrace “cultural feminism” with its focus on empowering women by emphasizing the positive qualities that are associated with women’s roles such as nurturing, caring, cooperation, and connectedness to others. The issue of how much women are alike and how much they are different is highlighted in this emphasis.”(Tong,2008:34)*

Although it does not constitute a separate branch of feminism per se, the debate around the “degree of gender difference or similarity” has allowed cultural feminism to become incorporated in all the feminist branches at some level (van Eijck, Michiel; Hsu, Pei-Ling; Roth, 2009),(Suwarni & Handayani, 2021). Liberal feminists, however, are more likely to subscribe to these principles than women in other branches. Tong emphasizes positive qualities women have are the standing power for women to show up to be the power player in their own way.

## **METHOD**

The instrument is the tool or the way that is used to obtain the data or information that is needed in a reseach. . The writer has been reading the novel *The Song of Ice and Fire : A Game of Thrones* carefully. Then he marks the characterization of main character to find out the evidence the liberal feminism value in the novel. That can be concluded that the writer is the instrument of research. Analysis unit of this research is the novel *A Game of Thrones* by George R. R. Martin, England, 1996. Published by Voyager.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Liberal Feminism

Terry Eagleton has stated ideologies have some-thing to do with systems of ideas, and especially with the social, political or religious ideas shared by a social group or movement. In addition to that Ideologies are often an unconscious practice in the case of individuals, and cultural, religious and social institutions, because these ideologies are the output of an unconscious tradition imposed by these institutions on their individuals.

### Equal Right

Equal right is crucial for liberal feminism to be upheld. The first indication of women in exercising their right is to pursue the freedom of bodily autonomy. Bodily autonomy in the context of liberal feminism is right to manage the private sphere, having to be subject to choose what women want to do to their body such as having consensual sex and so on. This can be seen in the quotation below :

*Khal Drogo followed her out into the moonlight, the bells in his hair tinkling softly. A few yards from her tent was a bed of soft grass, and it was there that Dany drew him down. When he tried to turn her over, she put a hand on his chest. "No," she said. "This night I would look on your face." There is no privacy in the heart of the khalasar. Dany felt the eyes on her as she undressed him, heard the soft voices as she did the things that Daenerys had told her to do. It was nothing to her. Was she not khaleesi? His were the only eyes that mattered, and when she mounted him she saw something there that she had never seen before. She rode him as fiercely as ever she had ridden her silver, and when the moment of his pleasure came, Khal Drogo called out her name. (Martin: 1996: 236)*

Thing we should know first, people need to know the bar that liberal feminism agree or disagree within the concept of private sphere. liberal feminism maintains the tradition of liberalism, valuing personal privacy and autonomy in ways that appear, to some, to conflict with the goal of eradicating sexist norms. The quotation above mainly described about Daenerys Targaryen on how to perform the freedom to have bodily autonomy, What daenerys did is exercising the freedom of private sphere and choosing to be the subject rather than the object while she and Khal Drogo doing sexual activities. The key words is in the sentence "There is no privacy in the heart of the khalasar. Dany felt the eyes on her as she undressed him, heard the soft voices as she did the things"

### The Suffrage

The quotation explains about the sense of women need to response the social inequality and need to aware the fact that tradition or culture oppressed the other form of community. Liberal feminism allows women to socially aware the problem surrounds and manage to solve that. ". "I will not have her harmed," Dany said. "I claim her. Do as I command you, or Khal Drogo will know the reason why." These are the key word that explain Daenerys Targaryen did something that considered to be the best part of liberal feminism which againsts the oppressor and changes the social inequality that happen in front of her. The way she commands her squire to stop rape the girl that considered to be slave and object of

sexual harrasment and secure the plot by taking them to hers are also the effort of liberal feminism to change the social inequality and stand out to be the desicion maker. Further on, the sense of decision maker also appear in the quotation below :

*“My brother will never take back the Seven Kingdoms,” Dany said. She had known that for a long time, she realized. She had known it all her life. Only she had never let herself say the words, even in a whisper, but now she said them for Jorah Mormont and all the world to hear. (Martin:1996: 233)*

The quotation constitutes the act of Daenarys to speak up and think about the outcome if her brother manages to lead the army which impossible for him to win it simply because he has no capacity in it. Futher this is the first sense of how Daenarys gets the sense of decision maker.

### **Equal Liberty.**

Liberal feminism have to be bold in the extend of recognition to society, precisely to society that treat the women and oppress them by rethoric that they are weak and incaple to do anything. The first thing women need to do is speak up to represent her mind and idea. The quotation below provide the sense of women need to represent themselves by speaking up:

*“It pleases me to hold them safe,” Dany said, wondering if she had dared too much. “If your warriors would mount these women, let them take them gently and keep them for wives. Give them places in the khalasar and let them bear you sons.”Qotho was ever the cruelest of the bloodriders. It was he who laughed. “Does the horse breed with the sheep?”Something in his tone reminded her of Viserys. Dany turned on him angrily. “The dragon feeds on horse and sheep alike.”Khal Drogo smiled. “See how fierce she grows!” he said. (Martin:1996: 670)*

The data above manages to descibe Daenarys in giving the reasoning as to why she keeps the women slaves from any harm after the collonization. She argued with Qotho her husband’ Bloodriders which is the person that her husband has bound with. They both argue about why it is nessesary to keep them safe. In the culture of Dotraki of Khalaasar the one who can win and stand besides Khal would be the strongest one, everything detemines by the power.

### **Sameness Versus Difference**

Sense of boldness means women need to take a stance once they find obstacle, problem, and others thing. The importance of this sense is in the particular situation that women precieve to experience, such as discrimination of gender. Therefore, it is very important to have a positive quality to be bold in taking stance to show the power. This is one of the ways liberal feminism empower women to begin with.

This quotation shows the liberal feminism in regards to boldness :

*The sound Viserys Targaryen made when that hideous iron helmet covered his face was like nothing human. His feet hammered a frantic beat against the dirt floor, slowed, stopped. Thick globs of molten gold dripped down onto his chest, setting the scarlet silk to smoldering . . . yet no drop of*

*blood was spilled. He was no dragon, Dany thought, curiously calm. Fire cannot kill a dragon. (Martin:1996:500)*

The quotation above reveals Daenerys' rational calculus in regards to her brother. She agrees to prosecute her brother to a custody to Khalasar simply because he does not fit with law in that community and Daenerys can not help him because he was too cruel to be with Khalasar.

### **Cultural Feminism**

Women need to learn and adopt the culture of society, in some respect liberal feminism women can do that with the aim of acceptance and gain the information about the culture that they want to fit in or change if there is something need to change. But, in that respect women needs to remember about society welfare, such as comfortability, cost and benefit, and the outcome while they acting to against the oppression. The thing that highlighted in liberal feminism is the positives qualities that women receive, they are sense of connectedness, compassion, nurture, and boldness in taking stance.

Liberal feminism concept in the point of cultural feminism needs to contextualize the goal of women. The goal is to being noticed by society with the basis of accomplishment, nobility, and the positive qualities that liberal feminism manages to highlight in its ideology along with positive quality they have, such as caring, nurturing, connectedness and compassion. The quotation below is describing the way liberals gets the full acceptance along with the positive quality they maintain and resulted to good outcome:

*"You will be my khalasar," she told them. "I see the faces of slaves. I free you. Take off your collars. Go if you wish, no one shall harm you. If you stay, it will be as brothers and sisters, husbands and wives." The black eyes watched her, wary, expressionless. "I see the children, women, the wrinkled faces of the aged. I was a child yesterday. Today I am a woman. Tomorrow I will be old. To each of you I say, give me your hands and your hearts, and there will always be a place for you." She turned to the three young warriors of her khalasar. "Jhogo, to you I give the silver-handled whip that was my bride gift, and name you ko, and ask your oath, that you will live and die as blood of my blood, riding at my side to keep me safe from harm." (Martin:1996: 800)*

This part is the deliberation time of Daenerys to say to her people whether they want to be her side or not and offer choice if they choose to be one and not to be. Daenerys realizes the sense of liberation is important to be applied in her way to rule Khalasar. So, she made a deliberation time.

### **CONCLUSION**

Based on the analysis, liberal feminism ideology is proven described in the novel. First is equal liberty in freedom to have private sphere, it specifically explains about right to choose and liberate the private sphere and bodily autonomy that women autonomously receive in the first place (Tuhuteru & Iriani, 2018), (Permatasari & Anggarini, 2020). No matter how suffer women is they need to deliberate the free choices to manage their body, whether it is about consensual sex. Second would be the equal right, this means women need to against system that unbenefiting women in maximizing their capacity, as Daenerys dimension from very timid and incapable to do anything, she realizes it is important to

change the system and fully liberated from any form of oppression without jeopardizing social welfare. The suffrage that leads to empowerment of women to exercise the freedom and acknowledge by the accomplishment. This things scrutinizing the form of goal that women in liberal feminism wanted to happen (Papuangan, 2018). The way women accomplish maximum effort and gain much benefit from the ideology that they believe precisely liberal feminism. But the last is cultural feminism in the portrayal of unique empowerment in women' positive quality that character has, the process of liberal feminism attached to her and how she manages to exercise the empowerment and getting acceptance the positive quality which caring, connectedness, compassion and boldness are completely accomplished to prove in the analysis.

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