

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Following the research problem, I will use these theories to lead a better analysis and help limit the scope of the research problem. Theories that are applied to this research are the intrinsic approach and extrinsic approach. The intrinsic approaches include characterization through point of view, plot, and setting. The extrinsic approaches include the sociology of literature, feminism, and postfeminism theory.

2.1 Intrinsic Approach

The intrinsic approach or 'formalism' in literature focuses on analyzing and interpreting literary work primarily on its internal elements, such as the form of the text, language, symbols, and plot (Eaglestone, 2000). The intrinsic approach is concerned more with the internal elements as it helps understand all the necessary information and how it contributes to its meaning and impact on the story. Therefore, in order to analyze the novel *The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo*, I use the concepts of James H. Pickering and Jeffrey D. Hoepfer in their book titled *Concise Companion to Literature* (1981) and Albertine Minderop in her book titled *Metode Karakterisasi Telaah Fiksi* (2013) to carry out the intrinsic approach to examine the character through characterization, plot, and setting.

2.1.1 Characterization

Characterization in literature is a framework that examines how characters are represented in the story. It can be described and presented through the character's actions, dialogues, habits, and appearance to bring them to life and be believable. Pickering and Hoepfer (1981) state that characterization functions as the reason for a character to take specific action and allows readers to connect emotionally and invest in the story.

One of the ways to establish characterization is through point-of-view. According to Pickering and Hoepfer (1981: 44), point-of-view is a method of narration that determines the position of vision from which the story is told.

It is essentially a strategy and technique used by the author to express and convey ideas through the perspective of a character (Minderop, 2013: 88). Point of view shows the relationship between the narrator and the story, which not only helps in analyzing characterization but also any elements of literary studies. Cuddon (as cited in Minderop, 2013) states that point-of-view has different variations, but there are three primary variants: impersonal point of view, third and first-person point of view, and dramatic point of view.

2.1.1.1 First-Person Point of View

The first-person point of view is a narrative perspective in literature and storytelling where the narrator acts as the main character and tells the story from their perspective, using “I,” “me,” and “my.” The use of a first-person point of view might have some restrictions in telling the story. However, it retains the inside position of a character who addresses the reader directly (Pickering and Hoepfer, 1981: 50). This technique is typically more subjective because the main character uses the perspective of “I” where they tell everything about experiences, beliefs, and so on which allows the reader to immerse themselves within the center of the story. The reader can see and feel through the main character’s eyes and consciousness (Minderop, 2013: 107).

2.1.1.2 Dramatic Point of View

A dramatic point of view, also called objective, in a story is conveyed by the characters through dialogues and actions that reveal the characterization (Minderop, 2013: 117). The use of a dramatic point of view appeals to many authors because of the impersonal and objective way it presents experience and the vivid sense that it creates. This allows the reader to interpret the character’s feelings, intentions, and morals based on their words and actions.

2.1.2 Plot

Plot refers to the sequences of events that make up the story. According to Nurgiyantoro (2002: 113), plot implies how the author orders and arranges sequences of interrelated events connected by cause and effect and makes another event happen. Plot is often understood through five distinct stages: exposition, complication, crisis, falling action, and resolution (Pickering and Hoeper, 1981: 16).

2.1.2.1 Exposition

Exposition is the initial part where the author gives the necessary background information about the characters, sets, and scenes. For example, a historical novel needs to provide the reader with more background information than a novel with a contemporary setting. Exposition can also introduce the character to their conflicts or the potential for conflict (Pickering and Hoeper, 1981: 16).

2.1.2.2 Complication

Complication, also known as the rising action, is the part of the story where the balance is disrupted, and the characters are introduced to the underlying conflict that gradually develops and becomes more intense (Pickering and Hoeper, 1981: 17).

2.1.2.3 Crisis

The crisis also called the climax is the moment when the storyline reaches a point of intensity before a turning point that immediately precipitates its resolution (Pickering and Hoeper, 1981: 17).

2.1.2.4 Falling Action

In the falling action section, the character begins to understand how to resolve the situation, the tension of conflict decreases, and the

plot progresses toward the conclusion (Pickering and Hoeper, 1981: 17).

2.1.2.5 Resolution

The resolution or conclusion is the final section of the plot. It records the outcome of the conflict and establishes a new balance or equilibrium. (Pickering and Hoeper, 1981: 17).

2.1.3 Setting

According to Pickering and Hoeper (1981: 37), the term setting in literature means a physical location, such as the environment of the event, but also the climactic conditions and the historical period in which the story takes place. It is a background that provides information about the time, place, atmosphere, condition of the problem, and all the events the character faces. Setting can help readers visualize the action of the story, understand the character's credibility and image, and explore how the social context influences the narrative, characters, and themes.

2.1.3.1 Setting as Background of the Action

Setting in the form of costumes, manners, events, and institutions gives a sense of realism and insight into the broader context of the story (Pickering and Hoeper, 1981: 39). It also provides context and background to the characters' actions and choices.

2.1.3.2 Setting as Antagonist

Setting can be a form of causality or antagonist in creating or intensifying the plot conflicts and determining the outcome of events for the characters (Pickering and Hoeper, 1981: 39). Setting acts as an antagonist when it opposes the protagonist's goal, complicates the plot, and contributes to the overall tension the character faces.

2.1.3.3 Setting as Means of Reinforcing Theme

Setting can be a means of reinforcing and clarifying the theme of a novel or short story. In this case, the setting helps explain the idea of an author's work, which is expected to be conveyed to the reader (Pickering and Hoeper, 1981: 42).

2.2 Extrinsic Approach

The extrinsic approach in literary analysis focuses on examining external factors outside the text. Eaglestone (2017) describes it as "looking through a window to another world." External elements such as the author's background, cultural and historical context, and gender issues, among others, can gain a deeper understanding of the meaning and interpretation of a literary work. Therefore, I will apply the approach of sociology of literature as well as Rosalind Gill's postfeminism theory to analyze the character.

2.2.1 Sociology of Literature

Sociology can be defined as the systematic study of social aspects of life, such as phenomena, structure, change, and the relationship of interactions of individuals to one another as a part of social beings (Smith, 1999). According to Damono (1979: 1), the sociology of literature is a branch that studies humans and their social implications through literary works. It focuses on the relation between a literary work and the social structure it created. For example, a literary work written in a certain period of time is directly connected with the norms, customs, and traditions, as well as the influence of social factors such as class, race, gender, and politics as the theme. Furthermore, Nurholis (2019) describes literary sociology as an approach that studies and understands literary works by considering the social aspects of the work and the real world to draw connections.

The sociology of literature consists of the nature and scope of sociology and its relationship with literature. This approach recognizes that applying sociological theories to analyze literary works would help

understand how literature intersects social processes in the real world. As Sidney Finkelstein states (cited in Meiliana, 2019), “To understand literature, we must know not only individual works but also the cultural life of which they are part because a literary work of any writer is conditioned and shaped by that culture of life.”

2.2.2 Feminism

According to Hooks (2000), feminism is about women gaining equal rights and a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression. The injustice of male-dominated societies and their hypocritical stance on freedom has led to the emergence of a women's liberation movement called feminism. It is essential to note that feminism is not about being anti-male but rather about ending patriarchy and addressing sexism as the root cause of the issue. It means that all forms of sexist thinking and actions, regardless of gender, must be addressed as part of the problem.

Feminism evolves through different waves that represent distinct periods of focus and activism. It is typically divided into three waves (Gardner, 2006). The first wave of feminism challenged the legal and social inequalities inspired by the abolition movement that emerged in the late 1850s, in which women focused on a single issue of women's suffrage or the right to vote. During this era, women received little to no formal education. Laws and social attitudes toward working women also prevent them from being independent and having control over their property and earnings.

The second wave of feminism covers the 1960s. The stress and frustration that women experience in domestic roles can be seen as the start of this era. It is why the second wave of feminism centers around liberation for women to find jobs in male-dominated occupations. The emergence of the second wave brings the need for feminist theories to link the movement's goals and agendas to women's real experiences (Gardner, 2006).

The third wave of feminism, "postfeminism," occurred around the 1990s and focused on individuality and diversity. The third wave

emphasizes that sexual oppression cannot be eliminated without addressing racial and economic pressure.

Lastly, there is also the fourth wave of feminism, which refers to the “Me-Too” movement that emerged in 2012 as a response to the growing concerns surrounding harassment on social media, violence targeted at women, and the flawed systems that enable such misconduct to persist. It seeks greater equality by focusing on the impact of gender norms and the marginalization of women in society.

Overall, feminism is a movement that advocates for social, cultural, political, and economic equality between genders, regardless of whether they are men or women. Its goals are to challenge the existing inequalities deeply rooted in society and to promote equal rights, access to opportunities, and the exclusion of restrictions on women’s choices and desires.

2.2.3 Postfeminism

Postfeminism is a belief that women can now freely choose their roles and identities without encountering gender-based barriers. Ann Brooks (1997) states that postfeminism has no unified definition because of the constant evolutionary movement of feminism. However, it can be understood as a theoretical framework that emerged in response to feminist movements around the late 1980s and early 1990s that focuses on women’s individuality, diversity, and the ability to decide their lives and bodies, as well as challenging modernist, patriarchal, and imperialist frameworks. Although some feminist critics use the term postfeminism to deem it as sexist or oppressive negatively, others discuss it as a new way that young women engage in feminist activism and theory. Furthermore, Gill (2007) argues that postfeminism can best be understood as a sensibility with several features comprising and constituting a postfeminist discourse. The three common notions that characterize the postfeminism sensibility are femininity as a bodily property, the sexualization of culture, and an emphasis on individualism, choice, and empowerment.

2.2.3.1 Femininity as a Bodily Property

Media content across all genres and forms often frames femininity as the possession of a “sexy body” as women’s sole source of identity and scrutinizes it by assuming that it reflects their image and life (Gill, 2007: 149). For example, American cultural standards are often established in the media, such as magazines that offer pages of photographs of female celebrities’ bodies with scathing comments and excessive regulations that they put on their bodies. The fact that the female body is constantly under pressure to be molded into prescribed standards means there is a need to protect and claim women’s bodily integrity.

Postfeminism views femininity as a bodily property for empowering women to embrace and love their bodies, regardless of size, shape, or appearance. It understands femininity as a physical feature rather than social or structural. Moreover, femininity is an intrinsic right to have control and autonomy over one body, and how it inspires one to engage in efforts to bring broader social change (Turner & Maschi, 2014). Women can feel worthy of their bodies as a source of power to appear confident in public.

2.2.3.2 The Sexualization of Culture

Sexualization refers to the discourses about sex and sexuality and the increasingly erotic presentation of girls’ and women’s bodies in public spaces. Girls and women are demanded to be responsible for producing themselves as desirable, pleasing, and caring for men’s self-esteem while defending their sexual reputation (Gill, 2007: 150-151). For example, the media will aim at women and present them as complex, vulnerable human beings, yet only discuss their sexual fantasies or body parts or deem women unattractive due to their age or appearance.

Postfeminism puts women as the subjects who control their image rather than being the object of sexualization culture. It

emphasizes that women should be the ones in control instead of being objectified by sexualized culture. According to Hawkins (2011: 2), sexuality is prominent in women's empowerment. Women need control over their bodies to assert their rights, such as to empower, to protect from abuse, and to have a satisfying sex life. Sexualization in this sense is not seen as problematic because women are no longer depicted as sexual objects of the male gaze, but as active subjects who consciously choose to present themselves in a sexy way based on their own choice.

2.2.3.3 Individualism, Choice, and Empowerment

Postfeminism views the notion of “being oneself” and “pleasing oneself” as a personal choice that presents women as no longer constrained by any inequalities or power imbalances (Gill, 2007: 153). Grosz states (as cited in Turner & Maschi, 2014) that postfeminism is also based on the desire to change social structures so women will no longer be oppressed and further develop a sense of self-efficient, self-esteem, and confidence as a path of claiming power. Women can deliberately use their sexual power to their advantage and have the freedom to make choices about their lives without being constrained by traditional gender roles. It also suggests that women can be strong and independent while embracing these aspects of their identity.

2.3 Previous Related Studies

This research focuses on the sociology of literature through postfeminism theory in the novel *The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo*. Therefore, several previous related studies are stated to support this research and prove the existence of research that uses the same theory approach with different literature objects or vice versa.

The first research is titled “The Portrayal of Women Oppression in Reid’s *The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo*” by Alfina Putri Damayanti (2023). In this

research, the writer analyzed the portrayal of women's oppression depicted in the novel caused by gender inequality, including marginalization, exploitation, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence. It concludes the research that the main character, Evelyn Hugo, faces inequality and discrimination due to gender, racial background, and the dominant power held by men.

The second research by Fitria Ramadhana Rosmiati (2022), titled *Diskriminasi Gender sebagai Dampak Patriarkal Oppresi dalam Novel Seven Husbands of Evelyn oleh Taylor Jenkins*. The research presented a graphic chart that shows the forms of patriarchal oppression that can affect gender discrimination, such as patriarchy in male violence, patriarchy in sexual abuse, and patriarchy in cultural institutions.

The third research by Adawiyah Rabitatul (2021), titled “The Reflection of Feminism in Main Character on Crazy Rich Asian Movie Script by Peter Chiarelli & Adelle Lim.” The research includes the kinds of feminism and how it is reflected by the main character as attractive but also independent and intellectual in facing discrimination by other women.

The fourth research by Aisyah Bariyana and Ade Kusuma (2021), titled “Girl Crush dalam Budaya Pop Korea.” The research analyzes the representation of girl crush concepts with the existence of postfeminism ideology. It concludes the existence of postfeminism ideology throughout the music video of *Dalla Dalla* and *Wannabe* by Itzy.

There are some similarities between the concept and theory uses of feminism and gender inequality from the four related studies that have been briefly discussed above. The author of the first research uses the same literary work and a similar concept, namely gender inequality theory, by Irish Marion Young. The second research presents a percentage graph that shows the forms of patriarchal oppression that have an impact on gender discrimination. The third research shows the kinds of feminism and how the main character reflects it. The fourth research uses the postfeminism sensibility. The similarity between these three previous related studies is suited as a guide for the research that I conducted using the postfeminism sensibility by Rosalind Gill and *The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo* as the object.