

**WOMAN'S LIFE STRUGGLE IN SHAKESPEARE'S *AS YOU LIKE IT*:
A FEMINIST APPROACH**



RESEARCH PAPER

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Living in the world is full of problems. The problems in human life have many variations and they are caused by many things in life. There are some variations of problems, both are difficult or easy problem. Sometimes, the problems make them become down and hopeless, because the variations of problems are considered by them as something heavy to face. For some people, the problems are important for their experience. They have many experiences to know the cause and effect of their problems in life. People can learn about problems of life from experience, so they have ability to stand up and find the way to solve their problems.

The problems in life should be faced to solve. One of the ways to solve that problem must be followed by struggle. Struggle also must be done with strong desire, power and positive thought to get the best result in life. Struggle is one of a processes to get the victory . It is begun with difficulties, sickness and failure in life and then step by step, human being get the victory in life. Sometimes, struggles are exactly what human need in their life. If human being were to go through their life without any obstacles, they would be crippled. Human being would not be strong as what they could have been.

Basically, struggle to get better in life is done by both men and women. But in cultural construct, women and men are considered to have different gender, which men are more active, dominate, and rational, while women are passive, submissive and irrational. Different status and position between men and women are considered by some women as unfair for them. They fight against social construct which assumed that women are inferior and they try to show their own identities and roles in society which are considered to be equal with men. This struggle is usually related with feminism.

To understand further about the problem of feminism, it is better to understand the meaning of world feminism itself, Djajanegara (2000: 4) states that:

Inti tujuan feminism adalah untuk meningkatkan kedudukan dan derajat perempuan agar sama atau sejajar dengan kedudukan serta derajat laki-laki. Perjuangan serta usaha feminism untuk mencapai tujuan ini mencakup berbagai cara. Salah satu caranya adalah memperoleh hak dan peluang yang sama yang dimiliki laki-laki.

Feminism is emerged in the world as one of major issues in public life which is interesting to discuss until now. The main purpose of feminism is to improve the position and degree of the women to get equality as the men. The act and effort of feminism to reach this purpose consist of many ways, one of them by rights and opportunity which is equal as the men.

Women's struggle to get the equal right in all institutions spheres such as in family, workplace, and education are being talked in feminism. For example in family, a woman does not want to be considered as a wife who only cooks, take care of their children and sexual partner without taking any decision in her own house. While in work place, a woman wants to get the same opportunity like a man who can work in many profession. A woman also wants to get the same educational chance as a man get all them are usually being discussed in feminism and also being illustrated in literature. Literature, as work of art, gives us possibility and ease in comprehending other worlds, realities that happen in certain society and the value system which are adhered by that community. Literature also opens our minds and experiences and also invites us to come into the world. It seems that one who wants to understand the social conditions of certain community, should learn the literary works produced by the member of that community, because a literary work written in a certain period has direct relationship with the norms, customs, and social condition which prevail at the moments. It can also be said that one of the literary work is a model of social constructs to delete women's oppression and against patriarchy system in society supported by feminism.

The example of literary works that presents feminism and which illustrates the women's struggle to get equal rights as the men is *As You Like It* by Shakespeare. Where the major character, Rosalind struggles for her life to get happiness. She fights to against men dominations in their

life. With her patience and braveness, she tries to survive with difficult conditions. She fights against the social contract that women's role in inside of home, they do not get opportunity to go and play the same role with men. She tries to survive outside of home with her ability as a woman.

As You Like It is one of the play written by William Shakespeare, a greatest literature. It was first published in 4 August 1600. The play is set in a Duchy in France, but most of the sections take place in a location called the Forest of Arden, region of France. In England at least, *As You Like It* is only less of a favourite, and after a period of neglect, since 1740 has never been long off the stage. There are critical responses by George Bernard Shaw and Tolstoy. George Bernard Shaw has complained that *As You Like It* is lacking in the high artistry of which Shakespeare wrote the play as a mere crowd pleaser, and signaled his own middling opinion of the work calling it *As You Like It*, as if playwright did not agree. Tolstoy objected to the immorality of the characters, and Touchstone constant clowning. (<http://www.asyoulikeit.com>).

As You Like It is one of the comedy play. The entire story tells about struggle of life of major character, Rosalind. Her father Duke Senior sends to Forest of Arden by his younger brother, Duke Frederick. Duke Frederick wants to dominate The Duke Senior's company. Duke Senior has a daughter, her name is Rosalind, she lives in court with her cousins, Celia. Celia is a daughter of Duke Frederick. She loves and loyals to

Rosalind and she is also kind. One day in court there is a wrestling match between Frederick's wrestler and Orlando. In match, Orlando meets with Rosalind and then she falls in love with him in the first sight.

At Frederick dominions, Rosalind gets bad treatment from her uncle, Duke Frederick. He will banish Rosalind to get out of Court, but Rosalind escapes from the court with Celia and Touchstone to Forest of Arden to find her father, Duke Senior. The traveling to Forest of Arden is dangerous for Rosalind and Celia, so Rosalind disguises as a man and change her name as Ganymede, Celia is still a girl with dirty face and bad cloth and changes her name as Aliena. For safety in traveling to Forest of Arden, they are accompanied by Touchstone, he is clowning servant in palace. In Forest of Arden, Rosalind finds relations with Corin, Silvius, phebe and Audrey, they are poor shepherd. She also finds much poetry in every tree at the Forest of Arden from her love, Orlando. Orlando escapes from home to the Forest of Arden to avoid his eldest brother, Oliver. He gives bad treatment for Orlando, and plans to kill Orlando at midnight. At the Forest of Arden, Rosalind struggles for her life including the struggle for her father, Duke Senior and her love, Orlando. She survives from many difficulties in Forest of Arden, she becomes strong and brave woman. Finally her struggle is succesful, she gets equal opportunity, right, role and participation and she meets her father and Orlando. She gets married with Orlando and continue her life, she should sacrify what she has to get happiness.

From the story, there are two reasons that make the writer interested in analyzing the play by using feminist approach. The first reason, this play is interesting. It is interesting because of the idea of Shakespeare as the author who wrote the greatest monologue which begins:

“ all the world’s a stage
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exist and their entrances,
And one men in his time plays many parts,
His acts being seven stages.....”
(infant, school-boy, lover, soldier, justice, pentagoon, and second childhood,” sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything”).(AYLI in Shakespeare ACT II SCENE VII, 1948, 124).

The second reason is the play illustrates the women’s struggle in the past time at about sixteenth century especially in Elizabethan age. Which is in this century women are stated as really imperfect men. But, in the play, the woman character, Rosalind is able to defend or solve her problems with her struggle as a woman. Although in the Elizabethan age women’s positions are considered as inferior.

As the explanation above, the writer is interested to analyze the woman’s life struggle in the play using feminist approach. Therefore, the writer encourages herself to give her research paper a title:

**WOMAN’S LIFE STRUGGLE IN SHAKESPEARE’S AS
YOU LIKE IT: A FEMINIST APPROACH.**

B. Literature Review

Based on the researcher's observation, there are some research papers which were already analyzed by using feminist approach. The first previous study is conducted by Kartini (UMS, 2007) entitled *A STRUGGLE FOR HARMONIOUS FAMILY LIFE OF FAYE PRICE THAYER IN DANIELLE STEEL'S FAMILY ALBUM: FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE*. She finds two results namely, (1) the author criticizes the social condition of women in twentieth century, and (2) The novel reflects the author's attitude towards woman's struggle for harmonious family life.

The second research is conducted by Hanik (UMS, 2007) entitled *WOMEN'S POSITION IN HENRY JAMES' THE PORTRAIT OF LADY: A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE*. The finding of this research are (1) *The Portrait of a lady* reflects the social reality of American society in the late of nineteenth century, and (2) Henry James is the opponent of liberal feminism for her creations of a heroin in his novel the *The Portrait of Lady* who finally loses her freedom to be accepted by the society where she lives.

The third research is conducted by Wartanti (UMS, 2004) entitled *WOMEN'S INDEPENDENT IN MARY HIGGINS CLARK'S A CRY IN THE NIGHT: A FEMINIST APPROACH*. The finding of this research are (1) the author criticizes the social condition in 1980s in which women were being subordinated by men, and (2) there is a close relationship between the literary work and social reality.

Based on the literature review above that they are use feminism in analyzing a novel. As far as the reseacher tries to conduct the research paper from the Shakespeare's play using feminist approach because the reseacher finds that no one has conducted research on this play using feminist approach.

C. Problem Statement

The main problem of the study is: "How is a woman struggle for her social equality as a man reflected in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*?"

D. Limitation of the Study

To get easier for the writer to focus on her discussion, she gives limitation of the research on the theory of feminism, based on feminist perspective and the writer focuses in analyzing the main character in this play.

E. Objective of the Study

The objective of the study as follows:

1. To analyze the play based on its structural elements.
2. To analyze the play based on feminist perspective.

F. Benefit of the Study

The benefits expected from the syudy are as follows:

1. Practical Benefit

To develop the body of knowledge, particularly the literary studies on Shakespeare's *As You Like It*.

2. Theoretical Benefit

To enrich the literary study, particularly among the students UMS.

G. Research Method

1. Object of the Study

The research object in this study is Shakespeare's *As You Like It*.

2. Type of the Study

Based on the problem statement and the discussion, this study can be classified as descriptive qualitative research. It is suitable with Surakhmad's opinion about descriptive method. He states that one characteristic of descriptive method is that the data are collected, described, and then analyzed (1985: 146). This research is also a qualitative research since this research is a research that presents the descriptive data, in form of words and oral or written of the characters and their attitudes (Moeloeng, 2007: 4).

3. Type of the Data and the Data Source

u. Primary Data Source

The primary data sources are the data taken from the text *As You Like It*. they cover such things as words, phrases, sentence and dialogue in the play.

v. Secondary Data Source

The secondary data sources are the data taken from some materials selected in the relation with the problem exposed such as biography of William Shakespeare.

4. Technique of the Data Collection

The method used for collecting data is library research by collecting and selecting both primary data and secondary data.

5. Technique of the Data Analysis

The technique of analyzing data is descriptive. It means that the researcher interprets the text and content to get the needed data. This data then, are used to analyze the character of Rosalind using feminist approach.

H. Research Paper Organization

The research paper consists of six chapters. Chapter one is the Introduction that consists of Background of the study, literature review, problem statement, limitation of the study, objectives of the study, benefit of the study, research method, and paper organization. Chapter two is underlying theory. The third chapter deals with the social background of England in Elizabethan age. The four is structural analysis. The fifth chapter presents the feminist analysis and chapter six is conclusion and suggestion.