

**PUBLIC DISAPPOINTMENT TO GILLIAN FLYNN'S
GONE GIRL NOVEL (2012): READER RESPONSE THEORY**



**Submitted as a Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement
for Getting Master's Degree of English Education Graduate School
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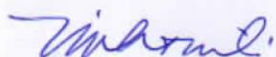
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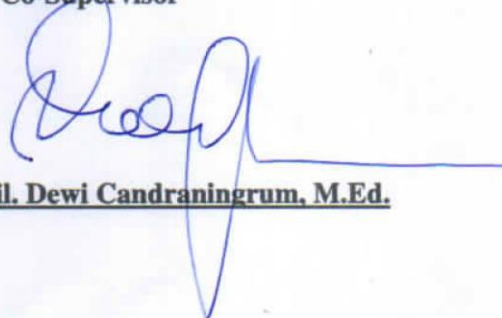
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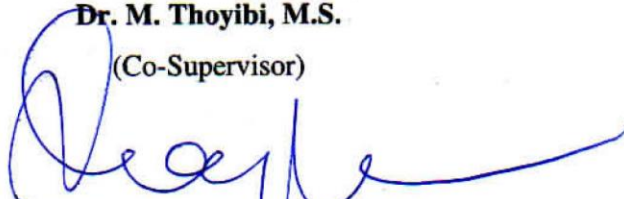
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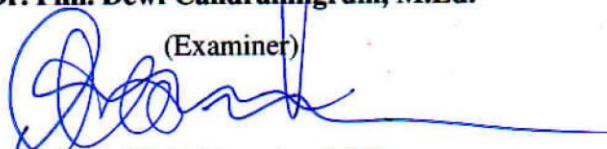
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I hereby stated wholeheartedly that the Publication Article entitled “**Public Disappointment to Gillian Flynn’s *Gone Girl* Novel (2012): Reader Response Theory**” is an original and authentic work written by myself and it has satisfied the rules and regulations of Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta with respect to plagiarism. Everything which is written in this thesis related to others works are written in manuscript and mentioned in the literary review and bibliography.

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PUBLIC DISAPPOINTMENT TO GILLIAN FLYNN'S *GONE GIRL* NOVEL (2012): READER RESPONSE THEORY

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui tanggapan pembaca terhadap novel *Gone Girl* (2012) karya Gillian Flynn, yang dianalisis dengan menggunakan teori *Reader Response* dari Richard Beach. Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk mengidentifikasi profil pembaca terhadap novel *Gone Girl*, untuk mengetahui aspek apa saja yang membuat pembaca kecewa, dan untuk menjelaskan mengapa pembaca mengekspresikan kekecewaan dalam respon mereka. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif. Data dari penelitian ini terdiri dari dua macam yaitu data primer dan data sekunder. Data primer berupa respon pembaca terhadap novel yang diperoleh dari situs *Goodreads*. Sedangkan data sekunder diperoleh dari sumber lainnya seperti buku-buku sastra, penelitian penelitian terdahulu, jurnal, artikel, internet, dan lain sebagainya. Teknik pengumpulan data dengan cara analisis dokumen. Hasil dari penelitian ini bahwa pembaca terbanyak berasal dari negara Amerika Serikat dengan perbandingan jenis kelamin wanita lebih dominan dibanding dengan laki laki. Rentang usia yang paling banyak memberikan respon yaitu antara 21 tahun sampai 30 tahun. Aspek yang membuat pembaca kecewa dengan novel ini terbagi menjadi delapan jenis, antara lain, cerita, karakter dan karakterisasi, alur, gaya penulisan, tema, scenario, latar belakang cerita, dan keseluruhan aspek. Dan terakhir yang membuat pembaca mengekspresikan kekecewaan karena semua aspek tersebut kurang dan berbeda dengan apa yang diharapkan pembaca.

Kata Kunci: *Gone Girl* novel, Readers' Response

Abstract

This research aims to determine the readers' response to the *Gone Girl* novel (2012) by Gillian Flynn which is analyzed with Reader Response theory by Richard beach. This research was conducted to identify the readers' profile to *Gone Girl* novel, to describe the aspect of the reader's disappointment, and to explain why the readers' express disappointment in their response. This research used qualitative research methods. The data of this research consists of two kinds, namely primary data and secondary data. Primary data is the response from the reader to the novel obtained from the Goodreads website. While the secondary data obtained from other sources such as literary books, previous studies, journals, articles, internet, and others related to the study. The technique of collecting data using document analysis. The result of this research shows that the most readers is from United States (USA) with the comparison female readers is more dominant than male readers. And also range age of the readers is between 21 years old until 30 years old. The aspect that makes the readers feels disappointment are divided into eight, namely, story, character and characterization, plot, writing style, theme, scenario,

setting, and overall. And the last readers express disappointment because all the aspect less and also different with the reader's expectation.

Keywords: *Gone Girl* novel, Readers' Response

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the novels that gives an interesting story is *Gone Girl* novel. *Gone Girl* is a novel from Gillian Flynn. This novel was amazing. The reader shown this novel have complicated problem. The problem is about family problem, exactly a marriage. Besides of that, this novel is also built with two point of view. First is from Nick's point of view and second is from Amy's point of view. From these two points of view, it makes this novel widely used as a research. There are six group that take this novel as a research. The first group focused on the character of Amy. It was studied by Pertiwi, 2016; Hudzaifah, 2015; Abineno, 2015; Kontaine, 2016; Resti, 2016; Khoruddin, 2017; Sunjaya, 2017; Yusrina and Zulfaningrum, 2016; Manurung, 2017; Gustika, 2015; Kemala, 2014; Anugrah, 2017; Arwidita, 2017; and Rachmadany, 2016. The second group focused on the character of Nick. This research was conducted by Rusli, 2017. The third group consist of Fitriyana, 2018 and Sa'adah, 2017. They were focused on the both of main character. The fourth group focused on the conflict in the novel. This research was conducted by Aditya, 2016. The fifth group studied women representation. This research was conducted by Ridwan, 2016. And the last group focused on speech act. This research was conducted by Widyaningsih, 2016.

From all the previous research, they focused on the character, conflict of the novel, women representation, and speech act. The character is also divided again into three kinds, namely, Amy, Nick, and both of them. The researcher sees the gap between previous researches with current research. Reader is the main component in the literary work, but until now there are no research that discuss the readers' response. Departing from the readers' response, the researcher focused the readers' response in this novel. From the explanation above, current research is different with the previous research. The current research focused on the response of the reader after they read *Gone Girl* novel. And also, the use of theory is reader response theory. The previous research

has never conducted about reader response theory. To give novelty to the research on the novel *Gone Girl*, this study will analyze the response of the reader.

Reader response is one of the theories of literature which is focused on the reader experiences about literary work. The reader as the agent in the work and interpret meaning of the work. According to Rosenblatt in Becker (1999: 104) the writer does not have the power to interpret text meaning, all of the meaning is entirely given by the reader. From the definition, it can be asserted that text is a meaningless without the reader. Iser as cited in Backer (1999: 107) stated that reading is a dynamic process, because the reader creates a meaning as interaction with the text.

There are five perspectives on Beach's reader response. They are textual perspective that focused on the reader's knowledge to interpret meaning of literary work. The interpretation is primarily directed by the text or work. Experiential reader response is focused on the reader experience when they create meaning of literary work. Psychological reader response is related with the text to our lives. It speaks with personally and makes the reader to better understand about phenomenon in everyday life. Social reader response focuses on the influence of the social context of the reader. And the last, cultural reader response towards to reader's attitudes and value shape their response draw on a range of different disciplinary perspective: poststructuralist, feminist, anthropological, historical, and Marxist.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

The type of this research is qualitative research. There are two types of data sources which are needed to conduct this research namely; primary data sources and secondary data sources. The primary data source is from response of the reviewer that taken from Goodreads website. The secondary data obtained from other sources such as literary books, previous studies, journals, articles, internet, and others related to the study. The technique of data collection in this study is using library research. It was done by collecting and selecting both of primary and secondary data source which is compatible with the problem statement and objectives of the study. The technique used in

analyzing the data is qualitative analysis that consists of three phases namely data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions (Miles and Huberman, 1994: 11).

3. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Research Findings

The total reviewer is 124.675 from 2012 to 2018, but in this research the amount of data that can be provided only 300 reviewers because of problem in restrictions access in Goodreads. There are 15 issues that can be found by researcher, namely, accolade, censure, writing style, plot, character and characterization, theme, women's place, marriage, moral lesson, author, mass media, the movie adaptation, off stage, impact, and picture. From the 15 categories above, researchers focused on censure of the reader towards *Gone Girl* novel.

3.1.1. Reviewer's Profile

In this part the researcher wants to show profile of the reviewers. It divided into three parts, namely; reviewers by country, reviewers by gender, and the last reviewers by age. The amount of reviewers' opinion based on country as follow:

No	Country	Total Reviewers	%
1	USA	160	53,33
2	UK	23	7,67
3	Canada	18	6,00
4	India	10	3,33
5	Australia	10	3,33
6	Greece	6	2,00
7	Germany	5	1,67
8	Mexico	5	1,67
9	Columbia	4	1,33
10	Africa	3	1,00

From the analysis, we can see mostly reviewers come from the United States (USA). The number of reviewers is 160 reviewers or in percentage are 53,33%. In the second place which gives the response came from the UK (United Kingdom). The number of reviewers is 23 reviewers or in percentage are 7,67%. The next place comes from Canada. The number of reviewers is 18 reviewers or in percentage are 6,00%. India and Australia have same number of reviewers. The number of reviewers is 10 reviewers or in percentage are 3,33%. And then Greece is 6 reviewers or in percentage are 2,00%. Germany and Mexico also have same number of reviewers. The number of reviewers is 5 reviewers or in percentage are 1,67%. The next place is only different with 1 reviewer, namely, Columbia and Africa. The number of reviewers from Columbia is 4 reviewers or in percentage are 1,33%. Meanwhile Africa is 3 reviewers or in percentage are 1,00%.

There are countries that only have 2 reviewers, namely, Jordan, Arab, Malaysia, Argentina, Spain, Venezuela, Philippines, New Zealand, Pakistan, Belgium, China, Iran, and Rumania. There are also countries that only have 1 reviewer, namely, Indonesia, Hawaii, Morocco, Poland, Costa Rica, Palestine, Iraq, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Ukraine, Norway, Italy, Chile, Liechtenstein, Denmark, Brazil, France, Lithuania, Portugal, and Vietnam. And the last one is unidentified people. There are 10 reviewers. These people do not mention specific of age, country, and gender. They only give their response to this novel.

The next is the amount of reviewers' opinion based on gender, as follow:

No	Gender	Total	%
1	Female	217	72,3%

2	Male	73	24,3%
3	Unidentified	10	3,3%
TOTAL		300	100

Based on gender, female reviewer is more dominant than male reviewer. The number of females reviewers are 217 reviewers or in percentage are 72.3%. And then male reviewers are 73 reviewers or in percentage are 24.3% and by 3.3% excluding unidentified reviewer.

The last is the amount of reviewers' opinion based on age, as follow:

No	Age	Total	%
1	11 – 20	7	2,3%
2	21 – 30	191	63,6%
3	31 – 40	54	18%
4	41 – 50	16	5,3%
5	51 – 60	14	4,6%
6	61 – 70	6	2%
7	71 – 80	2	0,6%
8	Unidentified	10	3,3%
TOTAL		300	100

From the table, the most percentage age spanned between 21 years to 30 years are 63.6% with the total 191 reviewers. It followed age between 31 years to 40 years are 18%. While the fewest percentage age between 71 years to 80 years are 0,6%.

3.1.2. The aspects that makes the readers' disappointment

There are eight aspect that makes the reader disappointed about this novel, namely,

No	Kinds	Gender		Amount
		Female	Male	
1	Story	31	10	41

2	Character and Characterization	22	8	30
3	Plot	9	2	11
4	Writing Style	4	2	6
5	Theme	4	1	5
6	Scenario	1	0	1
7	Setting	0	1	1
8	Overall	2	1	3
	TOTAL	73	25	98

From the table, we see the aspect what makes the readers' disappointment to this novel. In the story is divided again into three parts; first half, second half, and ending. First half means the readers give criticism about the story from first time read this novel. And second half means the readers gives criticism after reading half a page. Meanwhile ending means reader give criticism about the end of the story in novel. In the character and characterization is also divided into 7, namely, Nick, Amy, Margo, Amy's parents, Nick's parents, Police / FBI, and Andie. In theme is divided again into 6, namely, marriage, social class, dishonest, economic, sociopath, and misery porn.

3.1.3. The reason reader express disappointment in the novel

The reason of the readers giving such response to the certain issue, since they read this novel, compare one novel to another or have the experience with such issue. This table shows reason of the reader express disappointment, especially in the censure of story.

No	Censure of Story	Gender	
		F	M
1	First Half	- Boring - Slow moving plot	- Boring - Hanging - Misogyny

		- Too many discription - Too many twist - Confuse - Misogyny - Too complicated	
2	Second Half	- Inconsistent - Not connected - Boring	
3	Ending	- Hanging and not interested - Flat	- Open ending - No climax - Too many twists - Uneven

The female reader disagrees about the story because boring, slow moving, unclear, too many twists, and complicated. Meanwhile male reader feels boring, hanging, and misogyny, too many twists and uneven. Character and characterization also make the reader feels disappointment. Nick shown as liar, selfish, insecure, fake, irresponsible and etc. and Amy shown as psychopath, sociopath, narcissistic, monster, etc. Besides of two main character, another character is also bad, bored and awful. It can be seen in this table:

No	Character and Characterization	Reason
1	Nick	liar, selfish, insecure, fake, irresponsible
2	Amy	psychopath, sociopath, narcissistic, monster,

3	Margo Parents Nick's Parents Police / FBI Andie	bad, bored and awful
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Plot of this novel was also criticized by the reader. According to them the plot in the novel is not consistent. Between the first and second parts are not connected. The first part which contains the story of the past is by using the diary and the second part contains a story now. By using the plot, it makes novel like a mess and the reader confused about the story in the novel. The twist worsened with many stories. The second part the author still gives a twist in the story, so it makes it more difficult to understand. Plot speed is also very slow. Readers served many descriptions that are not important. Male reviewers emphasize the plot of the novel is not clear. They commented that the plot is far-fetched.

Writing style is the next aspect which is criticized by the readers. According to them, the author's writing style is vulgar. The author uses too much word "fucking" and "bitch" in his novel. That is not only vulgar but also uses a bad phrase. This makes novel not worth to read. This novel also uses difficult vocab. Thus, requiring the reader carry a dictionary in order to understand its meaning. Placement is also lacking proper punctuation. And the last is the lack of meaning, humor, and poetry. In the novel, there should be some humor. This is very important because it makes the reader interested or comfortable in reading. But in fact, Gone Girl novel lack of everything. The reader feels confused and hated.

Next is theme. The readers' criticism is divided into six part, namely, marriage, social class, dishonest, economic, sociopath, and misery porn. According to readers, the author

raised bad theme for her novel. It makes this novel into dark book and not appropriate to read minors people. Setting and scenario are not different with previous aspect. Those two aspects have bad depiction. Scenario in this novel is lack of detailed, bad dialog, and not interesting, and then setting in this novel is also not appropriate. And last is overall. People feel all the aspect in this novel broken and this book is not worth to read.

3.2. Discussion

This part is the discussion of the data and the main issues analyzed in the previous chapter. It shows that reader response applied by the readers to *Gone Girl* novel is a textual reader response. It can be seen from the reviewers who give comment related to the text or content of the novel. Textual reader response holds the reader's knowledge to interpret the meaning. The readers read *Gone Girl* novel and then they interpret the meaning based on their knowledge. If the reader's knowledge is fat, they will be more critical in responding to the novel. It will be different if the reader is lack of knowledge.

Besides the reader's knowledge, the others aspects that give influence to the readers are country, gender, and age. From the analysis before shows that based on the country, United States (USA) is the highest reader among others. In the second place is UK, followed by Canada, India. The comparison between reviewer in USA and other countries is striking. This is common thing because the novel itself comes from the USA. The variation of people live causes much variety and number reviewer criticism of the novel. Background of the author also determines the popularity of the novel. As we know, Gillian Flynn as the author of *Gone Girl* novel also came from the USA.

The reviewers of this novel are separated into three kinds, namely female, male, and the unidentified based on their gender. The number of female reviewers is 217 people, whereas a male with 73 people, and

followed by unidentified with 10 people. From the amount of the people, it can be seen that female reviewer more dominant towards the censure from the novel. Women give his criticism of all aspects contained in the novel items, namely; story, character and characterization, plot, writing style, theme, scenario, setting, and overalls. Different from the male reviewer, they just criticize on scenario. The age of the reviewers is also influencing when they give an opinion about the novel. The researcher found that the reviewer at age 21-30 reviewer as the highest among the others, it happens because the people enter new life at the age. They seek their identity in this life. That is not different with this novel. This novel tells the dissolution of a marriage built on love. The novel tells beautiful day will be broken if there was a slight problem not resolved.

Gone girl novel has 124.675 reviewers, since it was published in 2012 until 2018. With a large number of reviewers made this novel into bestseller in 2012. Although Gone Girl is bestseller novels, there are some readers still give criticism or disappointment through this novel. They give criticism to 8 aspects of the novels, namely story, character and characterization, plot, writing style, theme, scenario, setting, and overall. Most reviewers are talking about character and characterization. They disagree that the characters and characterization in the novel too featuring many vices. As we know, Nick is someone who is a liar. He is not only a liar but also selfish, narcissists, fake and so forth. In addition, Nick is also misogyny. The reader believes that this novel has close relationship with the hatred of women. Nick depiction in this novel that reflects him misogyny. He hated Amy, though she was her own. When meet with Amy's parents he is still indifferent.

And the next is Amy. The readers do not like the portrayal of Amy in the novel. Amy is a psychopath or sociopath. She became psychopath or sociopath driven a sense of revenge against Nick. Before she becomes psychopath or sociopath, she loves Nick

wholeheartedly. She looks different when she moved away from New York City to the village of Missouri. In addition to the reasons, Nick also use the money buying the bar, buying luxury goods and having fun at another bar. He used the money without Amy, whereas the money is very important because they had lost a job. Nick was also having an affair with Andie. This is what caused Amy changed into a sociopath or psychopath.

Beach (1993: 8) mentioned that the reader gives a response about the text is based on five categories, namely; textual, experimental, psychological, social, and cultural reader response. After analyzing the data shows that the reader response in the novel *Gone Girl* is a textual reader response. It can be seen from the reviewers are who give the opinion about the intrinsic element in the novel. They give critics intrinsic element in the novel because it failed to give what they expect it. Intrinsic element is criticized by reader among other items, namely; story, character and characterization, plot, writing style, theme, scenario, setting, and overalls.

4. CONCLUSION

I would like to make a conclusion of what has been analyzed in the previous chapter; first, the profile of the reviewers is divided into three categories, namely; reviewers by country, reviewers by gender, and reviewers by age. Based on the analysis, the most reviewers are from United States (USA). The numbers of reviewers are 160 reviewers or in percentage is 53%. It shown that novel give influence to the reviewers based on the country. Based on the reviewers by gender, female reviewers are dominating in giving a response of censure to the *Gone Girl* novel. The number of female reviewers is 217 reviewers or in percentage is 72,3%, these number defeated male reviewers which only 73 reviewers or in percentage is 24,3%. The reason why a lot of number of females is tell novel about woman's sociopath/psychopath. And last is based on reviewers by age. The researcher found mostly reviewers in the age 21 years until 30 years. This is usually happened because in that year people start thinking about identity, so it pushes them to read book or novel as much

as they can. The number of reviewers in age 21 years until 30 years are 191 reviewers or in percentage is 63,6%.

Second, there are eight aspect that makes the reader disappointed about this novel, namely; story, character and characterization, plot, writing style, theme, scenario, setting, and overall. In the story is divided again into three parts; first half, second half, and ending. In the character and characterization is also divided into 7, namely, Nick, Amy, Margo, Amy's parents, Nick's parents, Police / FBI, and Andie. In theme is divided again into 6, namely, marriage, social class, dishonest, economic, sociopath, and misery porn.

Third, the reason why readers express disappointment in their response because they get nothing about this novel. There are many kinds what make the readers feels disappointment. The female reader disagrees about the story because boring, slow moving, unclear, too many twists, and complicated. Meanwhile male reader feels boring, hanging, and misogyny. Mostly character and characterization in this novel is liar. That is not only liar but also selfish, psychopath, and superficial. Plot in this novel is slow moving, inconsistent, and unclear. The author's writing style is vulgar, difficult vocab, bad utterance, and lack of meaning, humor and poetry. The entire theme in this novel is bad theme, for example; bad marriage, social class, liar, economic, sociopath, and sex. Scenario in this novel is lack of detailed, bad dialog, and not interesting. The use of setting in this novel is also not appropriate. And the last is overall. Some people feel not understand and dislike about genre of the novel.

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