

BREAKING DOWN THE CONCEPT OF FEMININE MYSTIQUE IN ESTI KINASIH'S CEWEK!!!

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ABSTRACT

Indonesian literature has various experiences of development based on the dynamics of literary thought in their work. One of the literary works that are currently developing is popular literature. The study of popular literature is an interesting study to do. Research on popular literary works is also rarely done by academics. The novel with the title CEWEK!!!, is one of the popular literary works that the researcher examines using Betty Friedan's mystical feminine theory approach. The study is based on the existence of construction that forces women to fulfill their femininity. Breaking of the mystic feminine construction is studied in more depth descriptively through the text sources contained in the novel. The results of the study show that there is an effort to break the mystical feminine construction that has developed in society through three female figures, Langen, Febi, and Fani. The female characters with their awareness have reconstructed the mystical feminine concept to show that women are also superior in society

Keywords: Popular Literature, mystic feminine, novels

ABSTRAK

Kesusastraan Indonesia mengalami berbagai bentuk perkembangan didasari arus dinamisasi pemikiran sastrawan dalam berkarya. Salah satu bentuk karya sastra yang saat ini berkembang adalah karya sastra populer. Kajian terhadap sastra populer menjadi sebuah kajian yang menarik untuk dilakukan. Penelitian terhadap karya sastra populer juga masih jarang dilakukan oleh akademisi. Novel Cewek!!! Merupakan salah satu karya sastra populer yang peneliti kaji menggunakan pendekatan teori feminine mistik Betti Friedan. Kajian didasarkan atas adanya konstruksi yang memaksa perempuan untuk memenuhi feminitasnya. Patahan akan bentuk konstruksi tersebut dikaji secara lebih mendalam secara deskriptif melalui sumber teks yang terdapat di dalam novel. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya patahan terhadap konstruksi feminine yang berkembang di

masyarakat melalui tiga tokoh perempuan Lagen, Febi, dan Fani. Tokoh perempuan dengan kesadaran mereka telah merekonstruksi konsep feminine mistik untuk menunjukkan bahwa perempuan juga merupakan superior di dalam masyarakat.

Kata kunci: Sastra populer, Feminine mistik, novel.

A. INTRODUCTION

Popular literature is a literary work that was popular in its time and attracted a lot of interest from its readers, especially readers among teenagers. Called popular literature because the book was compiled with popular or market tastes in mind. Meanwhile, elite literature, often referred to as serious literature, has been canonized and considered relatively important and stable.

There are several differences between the two, which does literary works classified as popular literature or elite literature. Judging from the content, popular literature raises stories about teenagers and the problems around them which are relatively light. The theme raised revolves around the romance of love, adventure, mystery, horror, fantasia, and religion, aiming to attract people to enjoy it. In contrast to elite literature, the problems taken are more serious and tend to be complicated. Reading our serious literature is like examining philosophically the essence of life. Even though the issues of humanity and life are the same, they are still interesting to talk about anytime and anywhere. It is one of the differences in the content of elite literature.

Popular literature focuses on the tastes of commercial readers. This literary category will not tell something serious, because it will reduce the number of fans. After all, popular literature is easier to read, digest, and enjoy. Popular literature provides immediate entertainment to its readers. The content is relatively light and can be understood in one reading.

There are various examples of popular literature in Indonesia. One of the teen lit genre novels that are included in the popular literature category, entitled *CEWEK!!!* by Esti Kinasih. The novel by Esti Kinasih tells the life of teenagers in general. The lives of teenagers who are still in senior high school and college. In this novel, Esti raises the lives of college students.

CEWEK!!! tells the story of the romance of 3 women with 3 men which is storied with adventure, problems, and self-evident to strengthen the identity of each character. Rei, Bima, and Rangga consider that climbing the mountain is an activity for men and when they go up the mountain, they always leave the women at home. A home is a safe place for women while they fulfill their hobbies and ambitions of conquering the mountains of Java. A place that they think is safe doesn't make Lagen, Fani, and Febi feel comfortable to sit quietly watching those

who are fulfilling their ambitions. These women also want to get involved, but not even once these men allow it until finally, these women characters have another way to prove themselves that women can also climb mountains and not just sit back and relax comfortably at home.

Esti Kinasih's novels are considered booming. *Fairish* is the first novel written in 2004 that was successful until it was made into a mini-series. *CEWEK!!!* is the second novel written in 2005. There are also novels *Dia Tanpa Aku* (2008) and *Jingga dan Senja* (2010).

Based on this background, the writer wants to analyze this novel by using the feminine mystique concept introduced by Betty Friedan. The writer wants to know the description of women's identity construction in the mystical concept of the feminine in the novel *CEWEK!!!* and how these female characters break that concept through their novels.

B. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Feminism is a women's movement that demands emancipation or equal rights and justice with men. Feminism also consists of several parts such as social, cultural, political movements, economics and others. There are 3 (three) waves of feminism movement according to history. In 1963 the book *The Feminine Mystique* was published by Betty Friedan, a sociologist and psychologist. This book was widely welcomed by the public who stimulated a second wave of feminism movement.

Through the book *The Feminine Mystique*, Betty Friedan shows some of the problems of unhappy women and Betty Friedan wants to know whether this unhappiness is actually related to the role of women as housewives. They are married, have husbands and children, live in luxurious homes, are financially well off, but it is not enough to make them happy as women.

"what's wrong with women today," a suburban psychiatrist said uneasily. "I only know something is wrong because most of my patients happen to be women. And their problem isn't sexual." (Friedan, Betty. *The Feminine Mystique*. 1963. New York. P.19).

Based on the problems that made these women feel unhappy, Betty made it a book *The Feminine Mystique*. The problem that occurs is actually about gender issues. The groping words I heard from other women, on quiet afternoons when children were at school or on quiet evenings when husbands worked late, I think I understood first as a woman long before I understood their larger social and psychological implications (Friedan, Betty. *The Feminine Mystique*. 1963. New York. P.20).

Feminine mystique defines women as people who are healthy, have a beautiful physique, have a white skin, and a good body shape. Women have the duty to take care of the household, take care of their husbands and children, and do not know anything about the outside world. Thus, women did not develop and had a low intellectual level at that time.

Friedan in Joanne Hallows, states that a society's construction of the roles, status and characteristics of masculine and feminine, leads to an understanding of who is a man and who is a woman (Hallows, Joana. *Feminism, Femininity and Popular Culture*. 2010. Yogya. P.19). Culture is one of the main factors in legalizing the construction of this understanding. The results of the construction show that men are superior and women are inferior.

The existing constructions have weakened the true meaning of women and led to extraordinary exploitation of women. Based on this construction, it ends up being a life handle that shackles and curbs human expression. In the end, men and women are driven by the construction of roles and assumptions about the nature of both. Rooted from that, there is an understanding that the nature of women is as "*kanca wingking*" who has to take care of children, cook, do household chores and will become taboo if men do the work.

This understanding leads to the exploitation of women, which is discussed in the book *The Feminine Mystique. Women also had minds. They also had the human need to grow. But the work that fed life and moved it forward was no longer done at home, and women were not trained to understand and work in the world.* (Friedan, Betty. *The Feminine Mystique*. 1963. New York: The Vail Ballou Press, Inc. P.74). Women are constrained by feminine traits that seem to have naturally merged and make themselves unable to be free to act like men. Women are always taught to cook, calm, speak slowly, weak which leads to inferiority.

Based on explanation above, the writer can describe the feminine mystique concept as scheme like this:

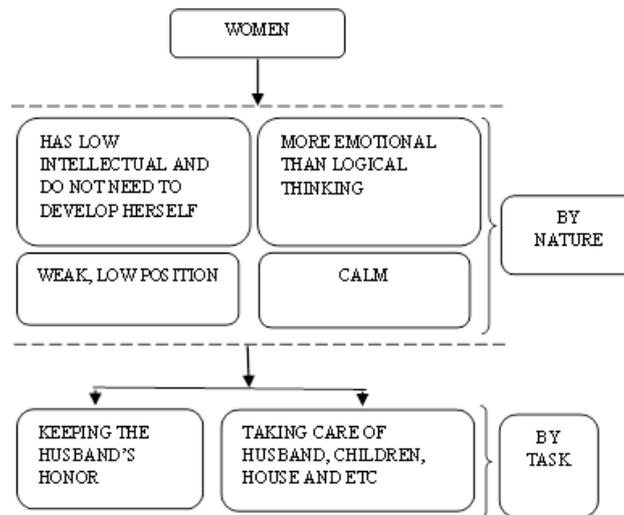


Figure1. Scheme of Feminine Mystique.

C. RESEARCH METHOD

This research is qualitative research using descriptive methods and objective approaches. The method used to analyze *CEWEK!!!* by Esti Kinasih was qualitative descriptive. Berg explained that qualitative research properly seeks answers to questions by examining various social settings and the individuals who inhabit these settings (Berg, 2001: 6).

In this study the writer reveals data in words, phrases, and sentences form in the novel of *CEWEK!!!* by Esti Kinasih. The problem was analyzed using feminine mystique. To analyze the data in order to achieve the research objectives, the writer uses several data analysis techniques. The data analysis technique used by the writer is (1) reading repeatedly carefully the research data in order to be able to see carefully the characters who describe the feminine mystique, (2) identifying the data according to the data number, (3) describing the data by interpreting the mystical feminine data (4) conclude the research results. This study aims to reveal the forms of breaking the mystical feminine concept that has been constructed unconsciously by the women character of the novel.

D. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The differences between men and women in the construction of people's thoughts are often related to the sex that each has. The roles of men and women are believed to be formed because of cultural concepts that are hereditary and driven by the construction of roles and assumptions about the nature of both.

This research is the same way as the results of research conducted by Nugroho (2019) published in the Indonesian Literature journal volume 8 (2) with the title "*Perlawanan Perempuan Terhadap Dominasi Patriarki dalam Novel Geni Jora Karya Abidah El Khalieqy Kajian Feminisme Psikoanalisis Karen Horney*". This research has similarities that aim to find a correlation between female characters in the novel and the resistance to patriarchal domination experienced by women. This research found that psychoanalytical women's resistance was divided into three forms of resistance. Namely, the movement toward other people, against other people, and away from others, and the impact of this resistance resulted in women experiencing various defence mechanisms such as displacement, sublimation, identification, repression, and projection.

This is also reflected in the novel that the writers studied. Through assumptions and descriptions of the characters in the novel, the writers try to show the construction of female identity to strengthen the masculine culture before the women characters finally break it.

1. Feminine Mystique Concept

The feminine mystique is a false assumption that requires women to play a role according to their femininity. According to the novel CEWEK!!! The depiction of the feminine mystical construction is reflected in the female characters who are forced to fulfill their femininity. This is found in the quote:

"Tapi kamu tau nggak, kenapa aku nggak pernah ngajak kamu? Karena gunung bukan tempat yang aman buat cewek. Banyak bahayanya. Binatang buas, misalnya."

"Kamu kok nggak kenapa-kenapa?"

"Aku cowok, La." (Kinasih, Esti. *CEWEK!!!*. 2004, P.17).

The writer underlines that the mountain is not a safe place for women. This statement is said by the male character in the novel, Rei. From the male point of view described by Rei's character, a mountain is a place for men, which means that it is identical to the vast nature that is still wild with steep roads and trails. An unspoiled place with the possibility of being chased by wild beasts is high. Based on that, the mountain is not a suitable and safe place for a woman.

As for mountaineering activities, where climbers usually carry quite heavy mountain backpacks through roads that continue to climb, trail, steep and full of cliffs. According to Rei, it is not the right place for activities for a woman. Because climbing requires strong physical and energy, these two things are men's power, strength, and energy. The greater strength, the men feel that this is not the

field for the women because the strength and energy that they possess would not be worth climbing.

Terus juga...,” sambung Febi. Kali ini nada suaranya sangat hati-hati. “Mereka itu kan udah semester enam, dua tahun lebih tua dari kita. Jadi elo seharusnya manggil Rei itu ‘Mas Rei’, La. Elo juga, Fan, jangan panggil ‘Bima’ gitu aja. ‘Mas Bima’, atau ‘Bang Bima’ kalo pake adat Betawi. Atau ‘Kak Bima’-lah, kalo elo malu panggil dia ‘Abang’.” “Kamu kok nggak kenapa-kenapa?” (Kinasih, Esti. CEWEK!!!. 2004, P.27).

'Mereka' In the quote above, 'Mereka' are the three dominant male characters in the novel, Rei, Rangga and Bima. Through this quote, the construction brought by the female character, Febi. Febi strengthens the concept of feminine mystique that has occurred before. Because as a woman, Febi applies and recognizes that men should be more respected, apart from the age gap between them, also because the construction of society in the form of respect for men uses the call "mas", "bang", "kak" and so on.

This is reinforced by the next statement: *Dan selamanya, suami adalah tuan.* The husband is the person who is responsible for the wife. He should take full responsibility for what the wife does, like a boss and his subordinates. Apart from being responsible, the husband will feel entitled to manage his wife in such a way as he wishes. Because the position of 'tuan' is given to men who have the title husband. This statement is expressed by Febi, the writer catches that one of the female characters here recognizes masculine culture and clarifies the construction of women as feminine mystique as constructed by men.

2. Breaking down the concept of Feminine Mystique in Cewek!!!

In the previous sub-chapter, the writer describes the concept of feminine mystique through the text found in the novel. In this subchapter, the writer will break the concept through the text contained in the novel. This breakdown can be seen through the attitude of the female character and spoken by the female character. That is evidenced by the collapse of the stability of the superiors, men.

Table 1. Febi breaks the feminine mystique

	Feminine mystique	Breaking down
Febi	Calm and obey with her lover	Acting as he pleased, began to filter what he received. Start not being too obedient to your partner.

	Eat and drink politely and following the procedures. Don't burp loudly	Eat and drink carelessly and do not heed the procedures and burp loudly.
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From the table above, through the female character, Fani, the mystical feminine construction begins to be broken. The breakdown can be seen through the quote:

Rangga tidak tahu, sejak peristiwa itu, diam-diam Febi sudah tidak memakai ajaran surga nunut neraka katut (kesurga ikut, ke nereka pun ikut) lagi. Telinganya tidak lagi menampung semua omongan tanpa disaring. Dan cewek itu juga mulai ogah bercita-cita jadi kanca wingking (perempuan Cuma menjadi teman di belakang) kaum pria, seperti ajaran turun temurun. (Kinasih, Esti. CEWEK!!!. 2004, P.70).

In Javanese teachings, the term "*surga nunut neraka katut*" means that a wife must always obey her husband regardless of the circumstances. The position of a wife is always behind the man or husband, so, when the husband says 'don't' or 'no' to forbid something, then the wife must obey what the husband says, without debate and it is absolute. The wife seemed to have no choice and cannot speak about her troubles or desires. At this point, whatever the conditions, the wife will follow her husband either to heaven or even to hell, if following the directions of the head of his family.

The writer highlights the word '*cewek itu*' in the text, which refers to a female character, Febi, who supported and legalized the feminine mystique concept in the previous sub-chapter. From the same character, Febi broke the concept by not using Javanese teachings anymore. The reason why she broke this concept is because of a betrayal from her lover, Rangga. Febi can no longer be a housewoman who is obedient to Rangga. Activities outside from home which were originally only for the superiors represented by the figure, Rangga, while women are better at home and do not know anything about what men do, are no longer the reference for Febi's character. Thus, Febi emerged who broke the concept for the sake of justice and equality regarding the same activities outside the home.

Through the quote, *Selesai menenggak isi botol, Febi bersendawa keras-keras, Satu hal yang bisa dipastikan akan membuat kedua orangtuanya masuk ICU kalau mereka menyaksikan. Dan seperti centeng pasar yang sedang punya kuasa, satu kakinya lalu dia naikkan ke atas meja. Sepasang mata Rangga kontan terbelalak. (Kinasih, Esti. CEWEK!!!. 2004, P.123).*

The loud burping that the writer underlines is an activity that is not polite for women and is usually done by men. According to the Dictionary, Burping means noisily releasing air from the stomach through the mouth; as a sign of

fullness after eating. In the order of politeness, a woman who burps is very disrespectful and is considered embarrassing. What Febi did, burping and sitting like a market-centered model or thug, was inversely proportional to the feminine mystique concept that was discussed earlier. Febi, who initially had a calm and soft attitude and upheld the norm of decency, is in contrast to what she is doing now.

The same thing was done by another female character, Langen. Langen, in the quote, is drinking beer which does not describe the concept of feminine mystique. Beer is a strong drink that can signify strength and wildness. If a man drinks beer, it will be considered normal, but if a woman drinks it, various stereotypes will stick to her, like metropolitan, slang, and naughty women. In fact, according to the feminine mystique, women are not as free and not equal to men. Women are confined to the thoughts and concepts of women built by society. According to feminine mysticism, women do not develop themselves because women cannot hang out and drink beer.

The second breaking of the feminine mystique concept is on the character Fani. Fani is a close friend of Langen. Fani is dating Bima, a friend of Rei and Rangga. Through Fani's character, the breaking down of the concept can be seen in the following table:

Table 2. Fani breaks the feminine mystique

	Feminine Mystique	Breaking down
Fani	Do not dare to take a decision	Dare to take decision
	Always obey to her lover	Dare to refuse and disobey her lover

At first, Fani felt intimidated by Bima's character, who was described as a big man with big muscles and a ruthless face. Bima's character is very dominant towards Fani, Fani needs to muster up the courage to ask for a breakup in a relationship. Women who dare to make decisions and dares to take risks are inversely proportional to the feminine mystique. Meanwhile, according to the feminine mystique concept, women are weak, helpless, do not dare to take risks and always obey what men say. However, Fani was able to break it. Fani dared to decide to break up with Bima, her lover who was too dominant over her and Fani dared to choose to take risks

The third breaking down of the feminine mystique concept was carried out by the three female characters, Langen, Febi, and Fani. They decide to challenge their lover in a mountain race. In the minds of the male characters, these three female characters cannot do it.

Table 3. Langen, Febi and Fani breaks the feminine mystique

	Feminine Mystique	Breaking down
Langen Febi Fani	Staying at home and not knowing about the outside world	Climbing the mountain and join mountain racing.

In the previous sub-chapter, there was an explanation about Rei who thought the mountain was not a suitable place for a woman. Langen, Fani and Febi also break Rei's statement by going up the mountain together. Even though these three female characters are not members of Maranon, a UKM Pecinta Alam on campus., they still want to climb the mountain. In the end, they managed to conquer the mountain with a clever strategy.

“Jadi begini...,” katanya sambil membentangkan peta itu di meja di depan Langen cs. “Lo bertiga bener-bener mesti nyiapin fisik. Sabtu besok kita datengin mereka, dan kita tantang... kebut gunung!”. (Kinasih, Esti. *CEWEK!!!*. 2004, P.73).

Climbing the mountain is not an easy thing. Even the climb in this novel is not an ordinary climb, but a mountain with a speedway. In this climb, you have to be physically prepared. Women in the feminine mystique concept are women who do not know the outside world and do not develop. However, these three female characters break this concept by doing outdoor activities, preparing a strong physique, and even climbing mountains which, according to male superiors, are not a field for a woman.

Mountain racing is not an ordinary climbing activity, if only with the energy, strength, and physical capital of the three female characters who have never set foot on a mountain, it is very impossible to come out as a winner. However, they have smart brains with the right tactics and strategies, they can defeat Rei, Bima, and Rangga who are very familiar with mountains. Brains who are smart to determine tactics and strategies are evidence of a broken feminine mystique concept where women have low intelligence or tend not to be smart enough than men. These concept breakdowns are further strengthened by the collapse of the male character Rei's stability. This is shown in the quote: *Bima menatapnya lurus. Karena belum tahu apa yang sebenarnya terjadi, dia jadi terkejut melihat keadaan Rei sampai seperti itu. Seakut apa sih, akibat ditinggal cewek? Biar pun katanya cinta sejati, toh mereka masih punya banyak pilihan lain....*(171).

As a result of being broken-hearted by a girl, Rei looks messy in Bima's eyes. Just because his girlfriend, Langen, leaves him, Rei's stability comes

crashing down. This further reinforces the men are not always strong, superior, and dominant. In this incident, Rei was at the zero point, where Rei was really weak like a woman, helpless and the strong predicate that had always been attached to the men was lost

E. CONCLUSION

This research reveals, in the novel, the three female characters have broken the concept that has been embedded for generations about women. Febi's character has broken the stereotype that women are gentle and full of manners, Fani as a woman, has shown the courage to make decisions and not bend her knees under men. In contrast, Langen has demonstrated that she has ignored the boundaries of women and all their taboos. The three female characters have also succeeded in breaking down the egos of their lovers by showing that they can beat the three men in a mountain race.

Women are now taking action and reconstructing the feminine mystique concept. Women begin to realize that they have been confined and imbued with an understanding of tasks almost in harmony with women's nature. The nature of a woman is pregnancy, childbirth, and breastfeeding. Other than those three things are not included in nature. Women must be able to separate what is natural and what is included in the task. In a sense, the duties of a woman can also be done by men. Such as cooking, taking care of children, washing clothes, shopping, etc. However, it needs awareness from women themselves to break the concept of women that has been created in society. Because with that awareness, feminine mystique will be revealed and destroyed by itself.

Societies that tend to be patriarchal will increasingly create and develop feminine mystical concepts that increasingly shackle women. However, many women have become a part of and even confirmed the concept without realizing it, as did Fani's character. She was indoctrinated that women are like that by educating her parents and family about the right woman—such as calmly, *kanca wingking*, obedient, etc.

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