

ABSTRACT

Mendrofa, Melania Priska. 2017. **Resisting Social Construction of Womanhood: A Psychoanalytic Reading of Portia's Gender Construction in Elizabeth Bowen's *The Death of the Heart*.** Yogyakarta: The Graduate Program in English Language Studies, Sanata Dharma University.

This study aims to analyze Portia's resistance toward social construction of womanhood. To explain more about the social construction and the resistance, this study formulates two questions: (1) What is the influence(s) of Portia's self-identification with her mother and symbolic father toward her identity development?, and (2) How does sisterhood help Portia resist the social construction of womanhood? These two questions will reveal how the social construction of womanhood is formed and how sisterhood liberates Portia from the construction of identity.

This study answers the first question by using psychoanalytic theory to reveal the process of Portia's shift to the symbolic father. Portia's subjectivity is constructed by mother-daughter's unity that stimulates Portia's dependency on her mother's figure. Since she becomes a lacking subject of knowledge and experience toward social life, she is supposed to separate herself from maternal attachment and to shift her life to the symbolic father in order to be an autonomous figure. Meanwhile, during Portia's shift to the symbolic father, there is also restrained movement from the symbolic father to the development of her self-freedom. Symbolic father constructs feminine gender identity, forbids pleasure and maternal attachment. The prohibition finally affirms symbolic father as the lacking subject and stimulates Portia's return to maternal attachment.

To resist the social construction of womanhood, this study proposes the notion of psychoanalytic feminism which focuses on sisterhood that evokes inter-subjective dialogue between women. The notion of inter-subjective dialogue, sheer disruption, and critiques, will help the emergence of Portia's self-awareness toward her self-ability and deficiency. As a conclusion, this study highlights that gender is not biological but it is the result of social construction. Portia's identity as a 'woman' is determined by her possession of feminine gender attributes and gender performances.

Keywords: feminine identification, social construction of womanhood, resistance, sisterhood, inter-subjective dialogue

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Studi ini bertujuan untuk menganalisa perlawanan Portia terhadap konstruksi sosial. Untuk menganalisa konstruksi sosial dan perlawanannya, studi ini merumuskan dua pertanyaan: (1) Apa pengaruh identifikasi maternal dan *symbolic father* terhadap perkembangan diri Portia?, dan (2) Bagaimana *sisterhood* membantu Portia melawan konstruksi sosial?

Studi ini menjawab pertanyaan pertama dengan menggunakan teori psikoanalisis. Subjektivitas Portia dibentuk oleh kesatuan maternal dengan ibu yang mendorong ketergantungan terhadap sosok ibu. Karena kurangnya pengetahuan dan pengalaman tentang kehidupan sosial sebagai akibat dari keasatuan dan ketergantungan dengan sosok ibu, Portia harus berpindah ke relasi dengan *symbolic father* yang akan menjadikannya subjek yang bebas dari pemaksaan hasrat ibu. Namun, selama proses perpindahan ke *symbolic father*, ada pengekangan terhadap kebebasan diri. *Symbolic father* melarang *pleasure* dan kedekatan maternal yang sesungguhnya dibutuhkan Portia pada saat absennya figur seorang ibu. Hal ini lalu membuat *symbolic father* menjadi subjek yang tidak lengkap. Karena ketidak lengkapan identitas *symbolic father* dalam menyediakan *pleasure*, maka hal ini mendorong kembalinya Portia kepada keterikatan maternal.

Untuk menentang konstruksi sosial terhadap perempuan, studi ini mengajukan teori psikoanalitik feminisme yang berfokus pada *sisterhood* yang memunculkan dialog antar perempuan. Ide tentang dialog antar subjek, melalui celaan dan kritik, membantu munculnya kewaspadaan Portia terhadap kemampuan dan kelemahan dirinya sendiri. Sebagai kesimpulan, studi ini menggaris-bawahi bahwa gender tidak bersifat biologis tapi hasil dari konstruksi sosial. Identitas Portia sebagai seorang wanita ditentukan oleh kepemilikannya terhadap atribut dan penampilan feminine.

Keywords: identifikasi feminism, konstruksi sosial terhadap perempuan, perlawanan, *sisterhood*, dialog antar subjek