

FEMINISM PERSPECTIVE IN A GOOD GIRL'S GUIDE TO MURDER BY HOLLY JACKSON

By

Angela Aprilyani Putri¹, Restu Arini²

^{1,2} Universitas Mercu Buana Yogyakarta

Email: ¹angelaaprilianip@gmail.com, ²arini@mercubuana-yogya.ac.id

Article History:

Received: 08-08-2024

Revised: 27-08-2024

Accepted: 11-09-2024

Keywords:

Liberal Feminism,

Radical Feminism,

Gender Equality

Abstract: *Feminism becomes a movement that emerged as a resistance to the dominant treatment that oppressed women due to a patriarchal culture in society and literary works. This study aims to find out the types of feminism portrayed by Pippa Fitz-Amobi in the novel A Good Girl's Guide to Murder by Holly Jackson. This study uses the theory of Rosemarie Tong, which categorizes feminism into different categories, including liberal and radical feminism. The research method used is a qualitative descriptive method in analyzing data. The data used in this study were obtained from relevant terms, conversations, and statements made by Pippa in the novel through her actions and dialogues. The result of this study reflects the aspects of liberal and radical feminism on Pippa. Liberal feminism highlights equality in education and liberty where Pippa's ambitions and desires are not hindered by patriarchy. For radical feminism, Pippa portrays radical libertarian and radical cultural feminisms.*

PENDAHULUAN

Feminism is a movement to eliminate the oppression of women rather than being anti-male, while a person who adheres to or practices feminism is referred to as a feminist (Hooks, 2000: viii). It is a women's movement to challenge dominant social structures, rejecting diminished aspects and rejecting social constructs like marriage and family, transform unfair institutions into ones that serve both men and women equally, and preventing women's exploitation (Desmawati, 2018). By acknowledging the feminist movement, women are expected to face the challenges that patriarchy continues to pose. The existence of oppression in various forms emphasizes the need for support and action. Addressing these issues through a feminist lens is crucial to achieving true equality and opening up opportunities for all members of society to achieve equality. Feminism has emerged as a major theoretical view in the study of gender and literature, focusing on topics consisting of as sexism, patriarchal power, and women's struggles for equality (Arizah, 2020). Throughout literary history, the representation of women in novels has been limited, misrepresented, or stuck in patriarchal tropes (Vyomakesisri, 2023). According to Rosmarie Tong in her book entitled Feminist Thought (2009), there are several types of feminism, which include: liberal feminism and radical feminism.

Society often encourages men priorities above women, implying that there are significant inequalities between men and women in terms of how they view themselves and

how society perceives them as persons of different sexes. Bell Hooks provides an analysis of patriarchy. She defines patriarchy as a system that teaches men to suppress their own emotions in order to dominate and control women. She makes a point of pointing out that patriarchy affects how men and women communicate, leading men to listen aggressively and reject empathy and vulnerability (Hooks, 2004, p. 66). Based on *suara.com*, an example of a recent case in Indonesia is Dini Sea Afanti (29) passed away at an apartment after reportedly being abused by her boyfriend. Cases of violence against women demonstrate how patriarchy continues to contribute to oppression, even to the level of harming a person. The issue of violence against women in intimate relationships is continually popular. From feminist perspective, domestic violence is primarily motivated by patriarchal beliefs in society, which promotes gender inequality (Azanella, 2020, cited in Hakim, 2023). In reaction to these issues, women developed the spirit of resistance movement against all forms of objectification of women known as feminism (Anwar, 2015:129, cited in Azzahra 2022).

This research can be beneficial for readers to have insight into the story of *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder* as a source of knowledge and to find out the forms of feminism that influence women which are also related and occur in real life such as discrimination, violence against women, and gender inequality. *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder* is a YA thriller novel written by Holly Jackson. She has sold millions of books in more than 40 languages, both in the United States and throughout the world. *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder* was a Sunday Times and New York Times #1 bestseller. Holly Jackson was born in 1992. She grew up in Buckinghamshire and began writing novels as a young girl, finishing her first novel at the age of fifteen. She holds a first-class degree and a master's degree in English from the University of Nottingham, where she studied literary linguistics and creative writing.

A Good Girl's Guide to Murder published in 2019 about Pippa Fitz-Amobi, a 17-year-old girl, who decides to investigate a closed murder case in Little Kilton. Everyone, except Pip, believes Sal murdered Andie Bell five years ago. Sal committed suicide while Andie was still missing. The most fascinating aspect of the case is that Andie's body was never found. As she begins investigating the case with Ravi, she will quickly discover that the individuals surrounding her have numerous secrets. However, there is someone out there who does not want her digging about, putting her life in danger. She builds up many enemies by accusing others around her of murder. She nearly dies, but she discovers the truth. Sal Singh didn't commit suicide. He was murdered by Mr. Ward, who believed he had killed Andie Bell. He needed someone to take the blame, and Sal was the right person. Andie suffered a concussion, and when pushed by her sister about selling drugs that led to her rape, Becca watches her choke and die. Becca, panicked, buries Andie in the septic tank of an abandoned farmhouse. The book concludes on a positive note, with Pip receiving recognition for her work and Sal's family learning the truth.

Some studies about feminism were conducted. The study conducted by Revita Chandra (2022), was to found out liberal feminism in the movie *Enola Holmes* by highlighting three points, which were equal freedom, equal education, and equal opportunity. The second study from Annisa Ainul Mardiyah (2022), found out the characteristics and values of liberal feminism in *Cinderella* movie; Amelia Putri Julianti (2023), identified liberal feminism in the character Anne Shirley in the novel *Anne of Green Gables*.

Liberal feminism is one idea about inequality between men and women. This theory

posits that women and men have equal potential. Liberal feminism emphasizes women's rights such as equal education and equal liberty (Tong, 2009). Mary Wollstonecraft in Tong (2009) stated that educated and independent women are more likely to be "observant daughters," "affectionate sisters," "faithful wives," and "reasonable mothers", which means women's role involves; fulfilling duties from parents with responsibility, building meaningful relationships with siblings, making good decisions for the welfare of her family and guiding them with wisdom (Tong, 2009:14).

According to Tong, liberals assert that the "right" has to take precedence above the "good", which means our system of individual rights is justified because it serves as a foundation for all of us to select our own interests. According to Harriet Taylor in Tong (2009), women should be partners with males further than reading books and using their right to vote (Tong, 2009:17). Tong defines liberal feminism as allowing women to pursue their own interests rather than doing actions that men can do. The emphasis of liberal feminism is on the freedom accessible to women which implies that women are free to express themselves through their choices and have the same level of freedom in society as men (Chandra, 2022). Liberal feminism opposes the existence of a system in which women are not allowed to lead because they are considered socially unworthy. Because of this assumption, women are not trusted or underestimated to lead (Rahayu. M, 2010).

Further Rosemarie Tong proposes, radical feminism was formed because of the patriarchal system that oppresses women. The patriarchal system disadvantages women because everything is dominated by male power. There are two categories of radical feminism: libertarian and cultural. In the words of radical libertarian feminism, the feminine character of women prevents women from getting rid of patriarchy. It encourages them to develop both feminine and masculine personalities. Kate Millett, a radical-libertarian feminist, states that the patriarchal system that emphasizes male control over women's sexual and reproductive lives and women's self-esteem is the main cause of women's oppression (Tong, 2009:49). Meanwhile, radical cultural feminism encourages women to be true women and feminine as opposed to attempting to behave like men (Okpala, 2022). Tong, in Abdullah (2022), claims that radical cultural feminists are opposed to traits associated with masculine, such as hierarchy, and support traits associated with feminine, including emotions. Authors D. H. Lawrence, Henry Miller, and Norman Mailer were cited by Millett as three of the most impassioned leaders of the patriarchy's 1930–1960 attack against feminist concepts. Tong asserted that because readers interpreted the accounts of relationships in which women are sexually abused and humiliated by men as models of ideal sexual behavior, women tended to view themselves as sexual failures who couldn't imitate the seductive actions of the characters in *Sexus* by Miller (Tong, 2009:53).

This study analyzes the kinds of feminism portrayed by the main character, Pippa Fitz-Amobi, in Holly Jackson's *Good Girl's Guide to Murder* novel. It emphasizes on discussing how Pippa Fitz-Amobi represents liberal and radical feminisms in the novel.

METHOD

This research uses a descriptive analysis method with a qualitative approach. Creswell (2012) asserts that qualitative research may be used to investigate and comprehend significance of individuals or groups that are linked to societal issues that affect humans. This

study uses content analysis as an analysis technique and the collection of data is in the form of script or text. According to Krippendorff (2004), content analysis is a research technique for drawing identical and accurate findings from texts or other objects that are relevant in the context in which it is used. This research uses data obtained from relevant terms, conversations, and statements made by Pippa Fitz-Amobi in the novel through actions and dialog. Content analysis is a research technique for drawing identical and accurate findings from texts or other objects that are relevant in the context (Krippendorff 2004) and intentions contained in the message (Pramudyani & Arini, 2022).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results of the research on how liberal feminism and radical feminism are portrayed by Pippa Fitz-Amobi in *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder*. This chapter discusses feminism in Holly Jackson's novel. The data was derived from narrations and dialogues involving Pippa Fitz-Amobi in the novel. The data was analyzed using the ideas provided in the previous section.

Liberal Feminism

Pippa is working on a case study for her last project regarding the investigation into Andie's disappearance and the media's role in it. Liberal feminism is shown by Pippa Fitz-Amobi in the novel through dialogue and narrative. The following data reflects liberal feminism in the novel:

Equal Education

'So I'm doing my EPQ at

school and –'

'What's EPQ?'

'Extended Project Qualification. It's a project you work on independently, alongside A levels. (p. 13)

The first statement above depicts a conversation between Pippa and Ravi about a school assignment that Pippa is currently working on. Pip's ambition in education is evident in his courage to meet Ravi and bravely request an interview with him at the beginning of the investigation. Ravi is the younger brother of Sal, who was suspected of murdering his girlfriend Andie Bell. Pippa immediately begins discussing her school project and asks to interview Ravi regarding the murder case involving his brother, which is quite a sensitive matter for Ravi.

I should really be concentrating on my university applications; I have about a week to finish off my personal statement before the deadline for Cambridge. Just a small break right now from tooting my horn and shaking my tail feathers at admissions officers. (p. 155)

It can be seen from the second narrative that Pip is quite busy with her school project, but she still thinks about her college future. Pip plans to go to college which is a high level of education.

The next day, Pip was in the living room with Josh, teaching him how to play chess. They were finishing their first practice match and, despite her best efforts to let him win (p.250)

In the third narrative, Pip demonstrates an affectionate, caring and supportive role in the above narrative. Pip's role as a caring older sister is not the result of social pressure. As discussed in the theory in the previous section, women with access to education tend to be rational, have intelligent thoughts, and are independent. This has a good impact on the role of women in the family.

The ambitions related to school projects and ambition to continue to college level that lead to education are included in liberal feminism. Within the context of liberal feminism, this quote may be seen as a call to action for women and individuals in general to reach their potential and fulfill their ambitions. Feminism is in favor of gender equality and women's autonomy to pursue what they desire in a variety of spheres of life including education.

Equal Liberty

'Quick,' she said, beckoning him through the hallway and to the stairs (p. 58)

From the first conversation above, it is clear that Pip gives Ravi very stern instructions. This indicates that Pip acts as a leader over Ravi. Pip is obviously against patriarchy, in which males hold all the positions of authority.

'You know you use humour as a defence mechanism when you're rattled?' Pip smiled at him, letting him through the hedge gap ahead of her.

'Yeah, and you get bossy and posh.' (p.154)

In the second dialogue, Ravi jokes that Pip likes to boss around. This relates to earlier data in the form of a dialogue in which Pip commands Ravi. Pip's behavior proves that women can lead and have the freedom to lead well and assertively without fear of being humiliated.

'You are the worst person to vent to about life plans,' Cara snorted. 'I bet you already know what you want to be when you grow up.'

'Of course,' she said. 'I want to be Louis Theroux and Heather Brooke and Michelle Obama all rolled into one.' (p. 84)

The dialogue between Pip and Cara above shows Pip responding to a question from Cara regarding Pip's aspirations. Pip's desire is to become great people such as Louis Theroux and Heather Brooke and Michelle Obama. Pip conveys her dream without hesitation. This shows that Pip has freedom in determining her goals. This freedom is classified in the concept of equal liberty, which is about being free in determining what one desires.

'No,' he said thoughtfully, fingers burrowing through his hair. 'If this is how we're going to clear Sal's name, I have to be there for that. That's worth the risk. It's too important. I still think this is reckless and I'm crapping myself, but -' he paused, flashing her a small smile - 'we're partners in crime after all. That means partners no matter what.' (p.160)

The dialogue above tells that Pip and Ravi will break into Bell's house to look for the burner phone (Andie's cellphone). Pip is not sure about inviting Ravi in because she thinks it

will be risky for Ravi considering that he has been stigmatized because of his brother's murder case. However, Ravi is more concerned with learning the truth about Andie and Sal's deaths rather than afraid of being arrested for breaking into someone's house. However, Ravi and Pip have turned into partners in crime. This is compatible with Taylor's liberal feminism view that women and men ought to be companions.

Radical Feminism

Radical feminism is shown by the main female character, Pip, in the novel through dialogue and narrative. The following data reflects radical feminism in the novel:

Radical Libertarian Feminism

Pip said, 'I'm sorry too. I didn't mean to step in and fight your battles for you. I just wanted to help, just wanted her to know that what she did wasn't OK. (p. 53)

The dialogue above shows Pip's treatment, who bravely argues in defense of Ravi. The reason Pip did this is not because Ravi is her friend, but purely because Pip stood up for what was right. Pip's courage in defending the man refers to masculine traits.

'I don't want you doing something that's actually dangerous. Sal wouldn't have wanted that either.'

'Oh, come on.' She shrugged him off. 'Nothing gets in between me and my homework, not even a little danger. And I'm just going to, very calmly, ask her a few questions.'

'Oh, it's a her?' Ravi said. 'OK then.'

Pip swung her rucksack to whack him on the arm.

'Don't think I didn't notice that,' she said. 'Women can be just as dangerous as men.' (p. 100)

Pip dismisses Ravi's concerns about her being involved in dangerous behavior. Her assertiveness and determination to proceed with her plan, despite the potential risks, aligns with traits that are considered masculine, such as courage, independence, and resistance to danger. Pip's statement *'women can be just as dangerous as men'* confronts the stereotype of powerless women by suggesting that women are equally capable of embodying traits related to strength and danger, which are often considered masculine.

Further, Pip's action of raising the middle finger is a gesture of defiance and aggression, traits that are often labeled as masculine. Pip's willingness to express herself in this bold way can be seen as a rejection of the expectations of the weak woman. Pip wound the invisible crank by her hand, jerkily raising her middle finger up at him. (p. 125)

It crossed her mind that maybe she had gone too far this time for a homework project. Maybe. But this wasn't just a project any more. This was for Sal, for Ravi. For the truth. She could do this for them. (p. 130)

Here, Pip reflects on the potential extremes of her actions, but eventually justifies her actions as necessary to achieve justice. Her commitment to uncovering the truth, despite the possible consequences, reflects traits such as determination, resilience and a sense of responsibility that are considered masculine.

I'm so sorry,' she said again. 'I was being stupid. I know you can't take the same risks I can. I'll go in alone. Maybe you can stay here, keep a lookout?' (p. 160)

In this narrative, Pip is aware of the risks involved but insists on taking them, showing that she is more willing to handle the danger than Ravi is. This reflects a sense of responsibility and self-sacrifice, which are often seen as masculine traits. By taking on this role, Pip positions herself as a protector, a role usually reserved for men.

'OK, OK,' Pip said. 'We've all overreacted a bit. Everything's fine; we just need to head back to the marquee. They've run off now, whoever it was, and there are six of us, OK? We're all fine.' She wiped the tears from Lauren's chin.

'I'm guessing no Ouija board then?' Ant said.

'Think we've had enough scares,' said Pip.

She sat next to Cara for a while, forcing water down her friend's throat while she distracted her by talking idly about the fall of Rome. Lauren was already asleep, Zach too on the other side of the marquee. (p. 80)

This dialog describes Pip and friends going through a scary situation. Pip takes on a caring and protective role, calming her friends, wiping away tears, and caring for them by providing water and comfort. Rather than being seen as weak, her empathic behavior is portrayed as strong and essential to the emotional health of the group. Pip's ability to lead and also care for her friends is considered both a masculine (strong) and feminine (emotional) trait. In radical feminism, masculine traits are often associated with power, dominance and qualities associated with men in a patriarchal society. Those are the traits developed by Pip as a form of resistance to male dominance. Radical feminism looks at the context of the action and emphasizes Pip's traits such as courage, loyalty, and a sense of justice.

'Pippa!' Victor's jokey-but-serious voice sailed up the stairs. 'No boys in bedrooms.' Pip felt her cheeks flood with heat. She turned so Ravi couldn't see and yelled back, 'We're working on my EPQ! My door is open.' (p. 59)

The dialogue shows that Victor, Pip's father, shouts at her and warning her not to bring a boy into the room without checking directly. Victor dislikes the idea of guys and girls sharing a space, particularly a bedroom. This demonstrates Victor's lack of trust in his own daughter. It reflects Victor's patriarchal control over his daughter's autonomy. The patriarchal belief that a girl's sexuality needs to be monitored and controlled, especially when around boys. The open door symbolizes her attempt to gain her father's trust while still maintaining her autonomy.

'Little Pipsy going to a house party.'

'I know,' Pip's mum said, her smile wide and glistening. 'With alcohol and boys.' (p. 127)

This situation highlights how patriarchy seeks to control women's behavior. The mother's statement reinforces the idea that girls' activities should be closely monitored, especially when they involve the presence of men, thus strengthening the notion that women are vulnerable and need protection from male behavior.

And then Stephen put his hand on the back of her head, grabbed her forward and lunged for her face. Pip twisted out of the way and shoved him

back. She pushed so hard that he was defeated and fell three feet from the garden wall, sprawled on the wet grass.

'You stupid slut,' he said. (p. 132)

The behavior of Stephen towards Pip demonstrates patriarchal violence. The physical aggression followed by the verbal insult "stupid slut" reveals how patriarchal attitudes confirm male violence against women, especially when women resist or reject male advances.

'No, no, I don't think so.' In two giant leaps Howie darted over to the door, blocking their way out.

'Excuse me, Howard,' Pip said, her nervousness cooling into fear. (p. 153)

Pip's reaction, which goes from nervous to fearful, highlights that women often feel trapped or powerless of male aggression. Pip's response, although polite ("Excuse me, Howard"), reflects a moment of fight, despite the fear. This polite response is a conditioned response in a patriarchal that teaches women to minimize conflict, even when their safety is threatened.

'I'm sorry,' she said quietly.

'No, I'm sorry,' he said, his voice breaking. He ran his sleeve over his face to catch the angry tears and reached for the door. 'I'm sorry for thinking you were someone you're clearly not. You are just a kid. A cruel one, like Andie Bell. (p. 249)

The dialogue above reveals the moment where Ravi expresses his disappointment after realizing that Pip does not meet his expectations. Labeling Pip as "just a child" and "cruel" implies that he is putting pressure on Pip as a patriarchal act. Radical feminists contend that patriarchy, which takes many forms, including familial relations, is the primary source of women's oppression.

Radical Cultural Feminism

'I won't go to the police,' she said.

Max heaved a sigh and Pip eyed him, disgusted, as he tried to hide a faint smile crossing his mouth.

'Not for you, Max,' she said. 'For Naomi. And everything your mistakes have done to her. I doubt the guilt has played much on your mind, but I hope you pay in some way.'

'They're my mistakes too,' Naomi said quietly. 'I did this too.'

Cara walked over to Pip and hugged her from the side, tears soaking into her jumper. (p. 211)

Pip prioritizes female solidarity over protecting or forgiving male transgressions. Cara's supportive attitude by hugging Pip illustrates the feminist principle of women supporting each other. Her comforting actions through touch show emotional connection between them.

'I was just looking through old pictures of Barney. And I found the video from that Christmas two years ago, when Barney went round the table giving everyone a shoe. I can't stop watching it.'

Pip walked over and hugged her from behind. 'I'm sorry you're sad,' she whispered into her mum's hair. (p. 280)

The dialogue above shows Leanne reflecting on a nostalgic memory of Barney, and Pip responds by offering comfort through a hug and a whispered apology. This interaction highlights the caring behavior of Pip as a way to maintain emotional comfort. From the perspective of radical cultural feminism, these narratives demonstrate the power of feminine traits such as empathy and caring. In patriarchal concepts, these traits are seen as signs of weakness, but radical cultural feminism seeks to elevate them as signs of strength.

CONCLUSION

Women have suffered at the hands of males from the beginning of human society and literary works. This is shown by the patriarchal society, which poses a significant difficulty for women. This study evaluated Holly Jackson's novel *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder* from the viewpoint of liberal feminism and radical feminism, drawing on Rosmarie Tong's theory and it study shows how Rosmarie Tong's theory is relevant to the story that portrays liberal feminism and radical feminism through the character of Pippa Fitz-Amobi.

Pippa demonstrates aspects of liberal feminism in the terms of having equal education and equal liberty, as she pursues her education, asserts her leadership, and expresses her freedom to make choices. On the other hand, Pippa also exhibits traits of radical feminism, particularly radical libertarian feminism, as she displays courage, independence, and resistance to male dominance. She challenges patriarchal norms and stereotypes by defending herself and others, taking risks, and rejecting traditional gender roles.

The novel explores the challenges faced by women in a patriarchal society and emphasizes the importance of feminism in achieving equality and justice. By studying feminism perspective, readers are expected to obtain a deeper understanding of the feminism portrayed in Pip's character in the novel. By encouraging women to stand up for their rights and interests, feminism can help improve how women are treated in their daily lives, especially when dealing with a patriarchal culture. In addition, this research also hopes that it can be useful for future researchers who are interested in studying feminism.

REFERENCES

- [1] Almaarroof, Ansam. (2022). Multicultural Education J.B. Priestley's Time and the Conways: a Feminist Reading. 10.5281/zenodo.6519266.
- [2] Anwar, Ahyar. (2015). Teori Sosial Sastra. Yogyakarta: Penerbit Ombak.
- [3] Arizah, Mila. (2020). FEMINISM: EQUALITY GENDER IN LITERATURE.
- [4] Chandra, Revita (2022) THE ANALYSIS OF LIBERAL FEMINISM IN THE NOVEL "ENOLA HOLMES – THE MISSING MARQUESS" WRITTEN BY NANCY SPRINGER. Skripsi thesis, Universitas Buddhi Dharma.
- [5] Creswell, J. W. (2009). Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches/John W. Creswell. United States of America: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- [6] Desmawati, E. (2018). Analysis Of Feminism in The Novel of Little Women by Louisa May Alcott. Journal Of Language and Literature, 6(2), 91–96.
- [7] Hooks, Bell. Feminism Is for Everybody: Passionate Politics. Pluto Press, 2000.
- [8] Hutasuhut, A. H., & Rangkuti, R. (2022). A Feminist Stylistic Analysis in Jessica Knoll's Novel. LingPoet: Journal of Linguistics and Literary.
- [9] Julianti, Amelia Putri (2023) Liberal feminism represented in the main character of

- Montgomery's Anne of Green Gables. Undergraduate thesis, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim.
- [10] Krippendorff, K. (2004). Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology (2 ed.). Sage Publications, Inc.
- [11] M. Reza Sulaiman, D. A. (2023, Oktober). Perempuan Tewas Diduga oleh Anak Anggota DPR, Mantan Komisioner Komnas Perempuan Sebut Kasus Femisida. Retrieved from suara.com.
- [12] Mardiyah, A. A. (2022). THE PORTRAYED OF LIBERAL FEMINISM IN THE MAIN CHARACTER IN CINDERELLA (2021) FILM. Skripsi thesis, Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah.
- [13] Pramudyani, A., & Arini, R. (2022). Holistic Education in Greta Gerwig's "Little Women". Teaching & Learning English In Multi Cultural Contexts.
- [14] Rahayu, Mundi. "Women in Achebe's Novel "Things Fall Apart"." Register Journal of Language Teaching IAIN Salatiga, vol. 3, no. 1, 2010.
- [15] Tong, Rosemarie. (2009). Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction. Colorado: Westview Press.