

# Urban and Native Style Writings in Contemporary Women Writers in 2008 Short Stories (Gynocritic)

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## Abstract

*Vulgarity that emerged from 1999 has identified the characteristic of women literature and communes a contradictory fact. From this moment, women writers have defined a distinct characteristic in womanhood. Furthermore, this strong influential reality has introduced other new aspects, especially in contemporary writers. They have been absorbed strongly in the nature of womanhood and build their basis of creativity process on this matter. Development and enrichment has created these writers to become a rich source. One source such as contemporary short stories in the year of 2008 as the raw data, contain two specific styles of writings. Moreover, these writings can be categorized into urban and native style. Urban style, which was introduced by American immigrant, is a characteristic through chic-lit genre. In fact presently, it also involves Indonesian writers, and differentiates them from immigrant and urban writers. They reflect the city life, which describe a transition reality from traditional into modern life style. Meanwhile, native style is more or less the opposite of urban life. This style preserves the cultural aspect, which controversial creative process has convinced normative offensive and caused a downfall in women literature. Therefore, gynocritic has the opportunity to explore more in women writes and put a significant attitude toward scientific reality.*

**Keywords:** womanhood, writers, into urban and native style, gynocritic

## I. Introduction

The development of women writings according to Rabinowitz is as old as the Greek in Sappho's generation (1993: 128), which underlines facts in womanhood throughout the world and also opens a new perspective. It continues to progress to subtle domain and, even more, extreme obstacles are dealt in a patriarchy system. Afterward, creates masterpieces in women writers such as Jane Austen. According to Buikema, Jane was interpreted as a sinner because she was assumed against Christian values and lived in isolation (1999: 35) and, unintentionally, continues to influence other writers such as Virginia Woolf, Emily Bronte, etc. Recently, Toni Morrison introduces Gynocritic through the term 'silent voice', which evolved through women

contemporary writers and arouses critical thinking on loud expression, which puts a turning point in Indonesian women writers. Unconsciously, gynocritic, which is an unfamiliar term in Indonesian Literature, especially in women literature, is being evaluated by Indonesian society through the new genre Vulgarify.

Gynocritic as a new horizon in womanhood helps to understand and interpret on the same mindset. The characteristic of women writers, which explicitly expresses emotions and weakness, apparently is symbolized through Indonesian 'silent voice'. In Feminist criticism, it is stated that the characterization of woman writings tend to show quality of silent voice and detailed dialogues, which is described in a word 'spoken language'. The language itself does not symbolize the same mindset if it is in a different gender and, yet, still it is solitude of a marginal society. False interpretations are often absorbed by readers and continue to grow accordingly by dominant power. This voice is not loud enough to be heard outside womanhood. Nevertheless, their writings are various and controversial and evoke the patriarchal point of view. Moreover, this event has stimulated the veins of women writers and formed styles in their writings in a formed of Indonesian 'ghost'.

Indonesia has been highlighted since the president of USA was brought up in Jakarta. Luckily, it is an opportunity to re-conceptualize the term gynocritic in womanhood. A quite reason is selected because since 1999, women writers have been blooming and, eventually have also introduced newly genre and concepts. Again, this fact, which stigmatized the sinful interpretation of woman's action, has caused a great change in woman's perspective of life. More writers have given power to the existence of woman. A power that is reflected in the documented materials and source of hidden fresh ideas of womanhood is found by criticisms but not by 'gynocriticism'.

Social aspect in women contemporary works is considered an evolve movement. The length of development in the influential matter was an interpretation of a transition of the differentiation of Marxist and Foucault understanding of power. Moreover, power as a society's control has castrated many aspects of humanism in Marxist era but then Foucault regenerates the concept into an opponent definition from the previous expertise. A power that studies modernity and analyzed on modern form (<http://sociology.fas.nyu.edu>). Thus, a power that starts to touch womanhood identity

Power that is formed in dominance of a patriarchy system has recreated a similar power that has been captive in the deepest heart of womanhood. This power does not emerge only from radical feminism but also slavery and second world countries. Nevertheless, this power is regenerated on significant matters. Two opposite perspectives emerges a controversial reality, which is a risk of marginal society. This power roles through time and place, which Stevick concluded as a setting in a work of literature (1967:254) and becomes one of an important fact in a writer creativity process. Reinforcement, which is a new characterization in women works, can be evaluated by society and by rejuvenating the possibility of womanhood, they hand in hand uphold the identity that writers are reflecting.

Women writings have combined marginal community and ideas in their works. They have gone beyond society's expectation and resulted in a define identity. This identity has also a strong influence in other parts of the world. England has recorded ideas concerning women perspective as far as 14<sup>th</sup> century and, moreover, continues to spread out in USA in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This great influence has positioned women

writers in Indonesia in transition from traditional into a modern work presently and the picture of womanhood continues to grow.

In the 19 century, womanhood in USA has contributed a legal action through human rights and a false fact that was introduced by Sigmund Freud. The idea that Sigmund Freud in identifying womanhood is percept in dominance influence, which his concept of combining literature and psychology has resulted as a masterpiece named Oedipus complex. Unfortunately, his concept has an underestimating impression and feminists chose the term phallus rather than penis for their benefits. This friendly interpretation continues to develop womanhood afterward and unintentionally triggered writers in third world countries such as Indonesia.

## II. Indonesian Women Contemporary Writers

The development of woman writers in Indonesia is quite a startling boost for Indonesian literature. Previously, journalism was sorted thoroughly and information current was controlled by the government. After Soeharto's regime ended, the situation is indifferent. Journalists tend to show vulgarity in their news and tend to be a model for writers to express themselves. This style of writing has inspired woman contemporary writers and since 1999 until now their works are extensively strong.

In the year of 2008, there are 26 women writers that each produces more than 1 short story and experts are enabled only to analyze vulgarity which frankly saying is a common indication of transition in Indonesian society in the year 1999. Other aspects that are still in 'silent' are still handicapped and depended on the power that has been made by society's dominance. Moreover, these works should be evaluated not only for the sake of certain dominance but other powers such as womanhood through written form, which is part of the same history.

The phenomenon of women writers' in Indonesia is a discouraging reality. Before the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Oey-Gardiner explains that the documented material concerning their writing was done in the 1950s (1996: 24) and also ended in that period. Unfortunately, this ending influenced the atmosphere of the writers and rarely women writers are producing from 1950 through 1999. This period has hidden various expression of an unknown intention in womanhood and thoroughly demolished many valuable ideas.

Meanwhile, gynocritic is not a term in woman literature. The existence of their works is elaborated on the behalf of norms and culture, which is stigmatized through values. As a third world country and in a traditional phase, analysis and criticism on their works are indefinable. This reality ever existed in American literature through Toni Morrison's world of 'silent voice' or ghost. She concluded that as a second class society and womanhood has been capable to captive their ideas into a close community. Haunting and slithering through people's mind.

Indonesian women writers went through 3 phases or eras. These phases are not yet been touch by Indonesian laureate. They have existed and introduced women literature. These phases are classic, modern and contemporary works. Classic works are mostly symbolized in Kartini's *Habis Gelap Terbitlah Terang*. This shows social class conflicts, which is similar with Jane Austen and Emily Dickenson solitary. Second, modern works starts to expose urban life according to Teeuw Toety Heraty works, which describes fashion, social class, etc are examples of complexity in city life (1989:

130). In modern writings, their creative processes are in a rebellion atmosphere. Third, contemporary writings resulted in controversial action, which reflects transition between traditional and modern style of writings.

The development of woman literature from classic through contemporary indicates that classic and modern writings have been producing limited writings. Not only it is rare of works but also the struggle has been castrated. Moreover, womanhood, which is characterized in their oral form, is not documented in Indonesian literature. This fact burdens few of women writers that existed and automatically overviewed them.

Indifferent Ideas that are emerged from marginal society tend to be interpreted as contradictive reality. In 1999 Ayu Utami has introduced vulgar expressions in *Saman* and became the root of pre-regulation on porn action and pornography. It gets tenser when marginal societies are liberated after the transformation era. Utami's work has triggered many other woman writers and defines them through an open interpretation. Nevertheless, the change has challenged the dominance and the revolutionary action cause a great conflict in Indonesia.

Eventually, the existence in women writings not only introduces controversial matters but also transition in women contemporary writings. As mentioned above, Indonesia as a third world country is still accustomed with traditional way and, meanwhile, contemporary writings tend to explore beyond traditional reality. Gender realities are transparently expressed and are running uncontrollable in the creative process of women writers. The silent world is starting to produce 'silent voice' and womanhood is changing its course.

Contemporary writings have enabled readers, especially woman readers, to categorize them as urban and native style writings. Vulgarity that emerges from the Fragrance Literature has deconstructed other concepts and, eventually, Indonesian society, which is not build from immigrant fact, has its own strong identity. Two strong aspects that influence the writers are urban and native life style and, moreover, these two characteristics are facts that must be analyzed and criticized to explore more about marginal reality.

### **III. Urban Style Writing**

Urban style writings describe the complexity of city life, which was an attraction for antiquity writings from feminists. Urban life, which is constructed from different backgrounds and cultural elements, has caused a great attraction for society. Furthermore, it must be noticed that urban life in Indonesia is different with UK heterogeneity. UK's diversity is based on immigrants ([file:///C:/docdian/Internet/Thehistory of multicultural Britain.htm](file:///C:/docdian/Internet/Thehistory%20of%20multicultural%20Britain.htm)) and, on the contrary, people that enrich city life in Indonesia are not originated from immigrants, which exclusively struggle for identity. Indonesia urban life is based on *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*. People that moved to the city carry strong identity and originality. Moreover, they are exploring beyond the cultural values, which inclusively struggles to go beyond a certain identity.

The documented expressions are growing with reflective city life such as internet, sex affairs and emancipation. These aspects are mostly found in the creative process to rebel the previous concept. Women contemporary writers tend to show power that urge them to explore land that is beyond them, and, moreover, expel some writers

on indifference. One theory that can approach their ideas is binary opposition. This concept is introduced by Ferdinand Saussure and two facts on contrary matters, which Bertens has emphasized (2001:132). A great difference, which obviously describes the contradictory fact of womanhood, is defining the last characteristic of urban style writings.

Below are several contemporary writings that show contradictories in their plots. They occupy positive and negative expressions in their short stories to give a strong emphasized on womanhood and as a transition society, this reality is reasonable and acceptable. Novieta Tourisa, Lila Fitri Aly, Dian Savitri, Dinar Rahayu and Fransisca Dewi Ria Utari are names that uses urban style writings.

1.

	Positive	Negative
<sup>1</sup> Novieta Tourisia  <i>Agonia Senja</i>	Saya Pasrah ( <i>I am self determined</i> )	Saya menghilang ( <i>I disappeared</i> )
	Saya menari-nari gemulai ( <i>I dance gracefully</i> )	Saya kesurupan ( <i>I am possessed</i> )
	Ia akan dilahirkan kembali ( <i>I was rebirthed</i> )	Saya memang digantung koma ( <i>I am in a comma</i> )
	...hasrat ruh yang melawati batas ( <i>...a passionate spirit beyond boundary</i> )	Saya mati rasa ( <i>I am numb</i> )

2.

	Positive	Negative
<sup>2</sup> Lila Fitri Aly  <i>Sekuntum Rindu</i>	...dia begitu mencintai... ( <i>he is deeply in love</i> )	...hanya ketakutan. ( <i>...only frightful</i> )
	Anya mencari penghidupan baru ( <i>Anya is looking for a new life</i> )	Anya memendam rindu and kesepian ( <i>Anya is captived in longing and loneliness</i> )
	Anya menikah untuk sebuah perlindungan ( <i>Anya is married for self protection</i> )	...tanpa gelora cinta ( <i>...with no passion</i> )
	... ia bertekad untuk tegak ( <i>...she is convinced to be strong</i> )	...ia membiarkan Parto menikah kembali... ( <i>...she permitted Parto to be remarried...</i> )

3.

	Positive	Negative
<p><sup>3</sup>Dian Savitri</p> <p><b>Menanti Sekarini</b></p>	...diam-diam, aku bisa menikmatinya... ( <i>...in solitude, I am capable of enjoying it...</i> )	Dalam sepi aku berteriak pada... ( <i>In loneliness I yelled to...</i> )
	...aku dalam kegelisahan bila berusaha mencari arti... ( <i>... I am in a restless condition if finding a meaning...</i> )	Aku membenci bulan jalanan ( <i>I hate stray moon</i> )
	...melemparnya sejauh ku bisa... ( <i>...throwing it as far as I can...</i> )	...aku tertanam pada tempat tidur kami... ( <i>I am nailed to our bed...</i> )
	...aku akan jadi guru tari, kita akan baik kembali... ( <i>...I will be a dance teacher, we will be better as before</i> )	...aku meraung tanpa suara ( <i>I wailed without a sound</i> )

4.

	Positive	Negative
<p><sup>4</sup>Dinar Rahayu</p> <p><b>Impuls</b></p>	...ia akan bahagia ( <i>...she will be happy</i> )	...jendela yang terbuka itu adalah jurangmu ( <i>...an open window is your failure</i> )
	...berangkat ke surga ( <i>...departure to heaven</i> )	...kematian yang tersedia baginya... ( <i>...death is available for him...</i> )
	...ia tahu kenikmatan ( <i>...she is aware of passion</i> )	...hidup ini memang penuh penderitaan ( <i>...life is full of tragedy</i> )
	...ia lantas tersenyum ( <i>...she then smiled</i> )	...kelahiran tak pernah ada ( <i>...the birth, which never existed</i> )

5.

	Positive	Negative
<p><sup>4</sup>Fransisca Dewi Ria Utari</p> <p><b>Merah Pekat</b></p>	...mengucapkan kata pertama benteng (... <i>the first word was 'benteng'</i> )	Hanya satu benda yang kisahnya tak pernah diceritakannya ( <i>Only one object, which the story has not been told</i> )
	...rumah itu sudah ada di puncak bukit (... <i>the house is on top of a hill</i> )	...aku tak lagi dititipkan ibuku ke rumah kakek (... <i>I was not taken care again by my grandfather</i> )
	...rumah itu sebagai pelindung daerah itu. (... <i>the house as the fort of the region</i> )	...tak ada yang tahu kapan tepatnya rumah itu berdiri. (... <i>nobody knows when the house was build</i> )
	...aku bertemu Dante ( <i>I met Dante</i> )	...rumah itu menyimpan misteri (... <i>the house has a mysterious atmosphere</i> )

These writers are basically selected randomly. Novieta Tourisa, Lila Fitri Aly, Dian Savitri, Dinar Rahayu, dan Fransisca Dewi Ria Utari are names that through fiction world expresses vulgar thoughts, which has been the identity of urban life. Meanwhile, the similarities that occur in their works are mostly recognizable more than the writers themselves. Beside urban life, these writers use dictions and universality in elaborating their ideas showing power that initiates them to describes their emotion vulgarly.

Identity that is found in setting, dictions and universality symbols has been supported by other intrinsic elements such as character and plot. Dictions such as love (*cinta*), life (*kehidupan*), death (*kematian*), married (*menikah*), protection (*perlindungan*) and misery (*penderitaan*) are often repeated and reinforced by pronouns. These pronouns represent a character, which divided into round and flat characters and at the end the round character will receive the climax.

Plot in these urban writings also are build by these round characters, where the climaxes are clearly interpreted. Description of settings and characters in the plot are guiding the readers to understand the message. The turning point of these climaxes are profoundly describes on positive values to satisfies the standard point of view.

1. Ia akan dilahirkan kembali (*I was rebirthed*)
2. Anya menikah untuk sebuah perlindungan (*Anya is married for self protection*)
3. ...aku akan jadi guru tari, kita akan baik kembali... (...*I will be a dance teacher, we will be as before*)
4. ...berangkat ke surga (...*departure to heaven*)
5. ...rumah itu sebagai pelindung daerah itu. (...*the house as the fort of the region*)

#### IV. Native Style Writing

Native Style writings explore the nativity of the writers, which flows emotions and isolation. The solitude, which characterizes most contemporary writers, enables to generalize, compare to urban writings because of universality characteristics. Aesthetic aspect is purely recommended in evaluating these types of writings. Beside the wilderness of no form or pattern, still instinctively, the values that they are expressing are heavenly in enrichment of knowledge of womanhood and show consistency<sup>6</sup>. Their nativity and vulgarity are inspiring a strike to preserve a certain society value that according to them valuable and others visa versa. Therefore, emotions, skepticism and cultural values are important element in native style.

Emotions are eventually the basic characteristic of women style of writings. The 'silent voice' that has been introduced previously had turned into a 'ghost' and is haunting native style writing, which resulted in mysteriousness. The sub ordinate community tends to show more negative values because it emerges values that are against moral values. These emotions, which symbolized in 'ghost', are described through dictions such as *understand*, *belongs*, *minds*, *a long time*, etc. These dictions give uncertainty and suppress emotion, which becomes mostly the characteristic of woman writings.

After emotions are recognized, it does not stop there but continues to describe events that give an open ending. All the climaxes are recognizable in these three short stories but the stress is more on denouements and strongly underlines the negative perspective on the matter. This type of plot gives an idea of skepticism, which deals with logical interpretation. Doubt and uncertainty continues to achieve their position and preserving a custom value is a difficult struggle. Therefore, skepticism plays an important role in contemporary writings.

On the last characteristic of native style and quite obvious is cultural values. The term itself is based on this aspect, which is native that refers to culture. The nativity is represented by three different cultures, which are Minangkabau, Bali and Mystique. Furthermore, these works are selected because they are considered as nominator for the 2009 short story competition in Indonesia. The description of the setting, especially time is performed in deep contemplation. A contemplation that describes customs that needs to be appreciated on a different perspective. An appreciation of reasonable attitude on preservation is seriously needed to be implied in Indonesian society, especially its own nativity.

In 2008, three names that represent this type of writings are Iyut Fitria, Ni Komang Ariani and Ambhita Dhyaningrum. These names are taken from the writer's aesthetic measurement. Below are depictions, which do not contain a fix formulation in choosing the depiction in the further analysis of native style.

1.

<sup>2</sup> Iyut Fitria  <b>Rumah Untuk Kemenakan</b>	Mamak berharap kamu tidak salah paham, Kalan. Tapi bagaimanapun kamu harus mengerti, sebab ini juga menyangkut adat kita. ( <i>Mamak wishes that you would not be misunderstood, Kalan. On the other hand, you must understand, because this is our custom</i> )
	Mamak memperbaiki sila. Mengeluarkan daun enau dari kantong baju, memasukkan tembakau ke dalamnya, lalu menggulungnya. ( <i>Mamak fixed his. Took out an 'enau' leaf from his pocket, put tembakau in it, and rolled it</i> )
	...rumah itu didirikan di atas tanah pusaka, tanah milik kaum kita. ( <i>...the house is build on heritage land, land that belongs to our clan</i> )
	...tidak biasa anak laki-laki di kampung kita ini menempati tanah kaumnya. ( <i>...it is unusual for a son in our community to settle in the same land</i> )
	Setiap laki-laki yang sudah punya istri akan pergi ke rumahnya yang baru atau tinggal di rumah istrinya. ( <i>Every man who has a wife will go to his new house or stay in his wife's house</i> )

The diction such as Mamak (*uncle*), *crossed legs* and *'enau' leaf* are key words in describing Minangkabau's custom. Mamak does not give opportunity for the other member of the family to defend themselves. Furthermore, his position sitting with crossed legs and smoking from an *'enau'* leaf is an affirmative action, which must be heard and obeyed. Emotions are built when Kalan is determined to be deported from his own land.

Moreover, the writer explains a matrilineal system in the society as seen in the last quotation. Even though, she considers this custom is difficult to be accepted but this a fact that she must acknowledge and to explain to other part of the society. She refers to injustice the fact of a son that does not have rights to settle in his own land, but on the other hand the existence of a sister is more important than a man. The indifferent has influenced a major perspective in a patriarchal system.

The second work is a culture that is popular through dictions such as *Karma*, *cock*, *'taji'* and *Galungan*. Hinduism, which impacted in most of traditional ceremonies in our daily activities, has educated traditional lives in Indonesia. One fact is a cock, which refers to gambling, is not only found in Bali but also in Java, has underlines the originality of this custom. Emotions start to move into skepticism when Galungan is starting to be forgotten.

2.

<p>§Ni Komang Ariani</p> <p><i>Senja di Pelupuk Mata</i></p>	Aku menyelami Meme dan Bapa... ( <i>I dive into Meme and Bapa minds</i> )
	Karma terjadi begitu cepat. ( <i>Karma appears so fast</i> )
	Ayam jago yang pernah menjadi teman yang begitu akrab ( <i>A cock that has been a friend for a long time</i> )
	Sudah lama ayam itu tak mencium bau taji dan darah lawan yang anyir. ( <i>It has been a long time since the cock smelled the enemies and blood</i> )
	Galungan yang enam bulan sekali, dan sekarang ia hanya datang setahun sekali (' <i>Galungan</i> ' which is usually celebrated every six month, now it is only done once a year)

3.

<p>²Ambhita Dhyaningrum</p> <p><i>Anak yang menyelamatkanku</i></p>	Sepasang matanya yang bening mencerminkan kesucian dirinya. ( <i>A pair of crystal clear eyes are reflecting his purity</i> )
	Anak itu bagaikan magnet buatku. ( <i>That child is as a magnet for me</i> )
	Aku memutuskan untuk menolak angkot dan menemani anak pengemis itu. ( <i>I decided to reject the 'angkot' and accompanied the beggar's child</i> )
	Sebuah pohon besar di dekat halte tumbang dan melesakkan sebagian atap halte. ( <i>A huge tree near the halter tumbled and thrust the roof of the halter</i> )
	Anak kecil tanpa dosa yang pergi tadi memberi sebungkus biskuit yang meredakan rasa laparnya. ( <i>The innocent child who just went away gave me his bag of biscuit</i> )

Indonesia as a second world country has exotic elements, especially in art. Most of the idea refers to the heterogeneity of Indonesian culture and one famous aspect is mystique. The concept of mystique as Utomo would say that is a combination from Hinduism and Moslem (1997:34) with the same intention that is safety. The interpretation that is resulted in their works is in unification. A unification that is documented in a book named *Primbon*. This perspective is not based on a certain cultural background in applying a literary work but, moreover, this aspect is an 'identity' of Indonesian literature.

Furthermore, purity, which is natural feelings that are build through substantial life matters can be expressed through Abrams concept of supernaturalism "...he at least proposes as resurrection from the "sleep/Of death" and the way to the instauration of an

earthly paradise—transferred, however, from a supernatural to a natural frame of reference, for their paradise will be “A simple produce of the common day,” and is described by words “which speak of nothing more than what we are.” (1971: 23). This definition is represented in “A pair of crystal clear eyes are reflecting his purity”, which at the end gave the main character an enlighten purpose.

Negative impression through emotion, skepticism and cultural values is elaborated through two representations of local culture and a national understanding. Moreover, preservation and mystique or in other word, supernatural aspect has emphasized the quality of a work and also understanding the marginal community.

## V. Conclusion

Unconsciously, woman contemporary writings have been producing and enriching Indonesian literature. This fact is proven from their short stories in 2008. These writers do not only exposed vulgar expression but also introduced various styles of writings such as urban and native style. From *Wanita* (1967) through *Saman* (1999), these characteristics are identified but, unfortunately as Heraty would underlined that womanhood does not strongly support their existence.

Gynocritic as a tool to explore more on urban and native style writings analyzed woman contemporary writings based on woman’s idealism. On the other hand, apparently, writers have contributed enough works to be analyzed by criticism but women are starting to be in a sleeping beauty condition. This condition is contradictory with the reality that many actions have been done to emerge the quality of womanhood such as the denial of RUU pornography and porn action, *Perempuan Berkalung Surban* and *Manohara* tragedy. These actions are more for cultural movement. On the other hand, documented materials are still kept in the storage room. Therefore, womanhood identification stays temporarily

Urban style writing is evidence about the controversial reaction that is related to the previous attitude in womanhood. Three characteristics of urban style, which are cultural values, diction and universality, relate to the condition of modern life in Indonesia. The transition from traditional into modern life has flicked values that have been rooted through cultural and customs foundation. Problems that are depicted in women works are basically similar. Therefore, style reflects contemporary women writers in general.

Native style writing is a bit different because this style shows emotion, skepticism and cultural values. Two from three characteristics exposed woman quality as a marginal society. From this fact, their writings are opposite from urban style because only negative perception is mostly found in this style. Therefore, even though, native style does not exist in Indonesian woman literature but this identity is stronger than urban style.

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