

## SEXISM AND FEMINISM IN TEXT ON STORY-BASED GAME “TEARS OF THEMIS”: FEMINIST STYLISTIC

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### ABSTRAK

Di dunia saat ini, bermain video game online sangat populer, terutama dengan Generasi Z. Feminisme adalah salah satu dari banyak topik yang termasuk dalam permainan online. Tears of Themis adalah salah satu contoh permainan yang menampilkan ide-ide feminis melalui representasi karakter, plot, mekanika permainan, dan interaksi sosial. Stilistik feminis menganalisis tulisan-tulisan di berbagai genre untuk mengungkapkan prasangka implisit dan representasi gender dalam bahasa. Hal ini memungkinkan untuk menganalisis karakter permainan dalam terang bahasa seksis yang ditampilkan. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk melihat cara karakter laki-laki secara teratur terlibat dalam perilaku seksis melalui pertemuan teks. Penulis menggunakan metode kualitatif, yang merupakan pendekatan yang digunakan. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa gaya feminis dapat digunakan untuk mengeksplorasi gagasan tentang masalah yang terkait dengan nilai-nilai gender dan kesetaraan di masyarakat bahkan di usia ini.

**Kata Kunci:** Tears Of Themis, Seksisme, Game Online.

### ABSTRACT

*In today's world, playing video games online is very popular, especially with Generation Z. Feminism is one of the many subjects that are included in online games. 'Tears of Themis' is one example of a game that shows feminist ideas through character portrayal, storyline, game mechanics, and social interactions. Feminist stylistics analyzes writings across a wide range of genres to uncover implicit prejudices and gendered representations in language. This makes it possible to analyze the game's characters in light of the sexist language that is being displayed. The purpose of this study is to look into the ways in which a male character regularly engages in sexist behavior through textual encounters. The writers employed qualitative method, which is the approach being used. The results showed that feminist stylistics can be used to explore the idea of a problem related to gender values and equality in society even in this age.*

**Keywords:** Tears Of Themis, Sexism, Online Games.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Online gaming is a prevailing trend in contemporary society, particularly among Generation Z. Accessed via the internet, online games facilitate both individual and group gameplay experiences. Additionally, they provide a communicative space accessible to players globally, contributing to the exponential growth in their popularity. According to Young (2020), online gaming denotes a network-connected form of play facilitated through the internet, wherein individuals interact to achieve objectives, fulfill missions, and attain high scores within a virtual environment (Drajat, 2017). Online games also encompass various themes, one of which is feminism. Such games present feminist values through character portrayal, plotline and narrative, game mechanics, and social interactions within the game.

Stylistics as one of the branches of linguistics can be interpreted simply as the study of how texts are styled in literary works, but not simply to describe its formal features for their own sake, but to show their functional importance in the interpretation of the text, or to highlight their literary effects in the linguistic arena (Katie, 1989). The main definitions of stylistics display researchers such as Crystal (2008:4) who see it as a "branch of linguistics which features situational distinctive uses (varieties) of language that are made by individuals and social groups in the use of their language". Thus, it can be concluded that stylistics focuses on the style of language use. The stylistic analysis also provides the reader with a scientific and objective commentary on the linguistic features of a literary as well as non-literary text based on concrete and quantifiable data processed in a systematic way.

## **METHODOLOGY**

In this study, the authors use qualitative methods. The author does a direct research by playing games that are the subject of reThe information was extracted straight from the game, and earlier studies were also carried out to provide a further examination of sexism and feminist style in general. Data collection is done by analyzing and recording some narratives or dialogues that show sexism in the story as well as feminist applications to the main female characters. Previous research was taken by the author through several official websites for national and international journals. After collecting data from both previous games and research, the authors analyzed the writing through previous data collected, namely the evidence of the narrative or dialogue in the game. The theory was only applied to one chapter of the plot because the game in question has a pretty long story. This allows the writer to conduct study and use well-suited theory when writing the article.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Tears of Themis is a game with an interactive story-based system developed by miHoYo and released globally by Cognosphere in July 2020. The main story in Tears of Themis is set in 2030, and takes place in a fictional town called Stellis. In the game, players will take on the role of a 24 year-old defense lawyer at Themis Legal Office with the code name "Rosa", and will protect her clients from cases that occur. Not only that, players will also look for answers to the mysteries behind cases that refer to the illegal distribution of a dangerous drug named NXX with the help of three suitors.

Even though it has a romantic theme like story-based games in general, Romance in this game is not really emphasized as the main theme. The detective adventure theme dominates the entire game, and the romance that occurs is only an insert that becomes a side-quest for the players. In this way, this game indirectly opens up more space for the ideas of independence and intelligence reflected by the main female character. Rosa, who worked hard to become a successful lawyer like her senior, Artem Wings, has opened up the idea of feminism in her game. If most story-based games focus on the romance between the main

female character and the male characters, This game focuses more on Rosa and the goals she wants to achieve with the mysteries she tries to solve. The presence of male characters is a form of support for the main female character, who is still developing herself throughout the story. However, several issues regarding gender inequality and sexism are also brought into the main story and become cases that must be solved by the players. The dialogues and narratives that occur in the game tell what problems occur in the story. Where these dialogues and narratives are the material for analysis and research into the reflection of sexism and feminism which will be discussed in this research.

### Result

After analyzing one of the story chapters from Tears of Themis, the dialogue texts and narratives that reflect sexism and feminism are summarized in the following table:

Table 1. Story-line

	Text
Narration	-
Dialogues	Rosa : “Marius's case wrapped up so smoothly only because of Dr. Richter's help..”  Rosa : “ <i>But I can't always rely on others. I need to learn things myself.</i> ”
Context of situation	In the previous case, Rosa was able to complete the investigation because of help from Vyn Richter. Since then, She has become determined to develop herself and learn about psychology so that she doesn't have to rely on and bother Vyn anymore.
Analysis	From the dialogue that occurs between Rosa and herself, it can be guessed that Rosa is an independent character. She felt bad if someone else had to take the trouble to solve her case. Therefore, she tried to study the field that Vyn mastered, psychology. From this it can be seen that the female main character has confidence that she can do this without the help of her male character one day.

Table 2. Story-line

	Text
Narration	The bell rings and Vyn gives a welcoming speech at the podium. A sizable amount of <i>cheers erupt from the female students.</i>
Dialogues	Rosa : “Dr. Richter's really popular here...”
Context of situation	Vyn is known as a charismatic lecturer among his students. When class started, the cheers from the students who admired him also started.
Analysis	The text seems to illustrate that women will react quickly to something they like, especially the opposite sex. It was as if a man caught their attention, they would immediately cheer up. However, Vyn, who plays the male character, seemed to think this was normal because he didn't give any reaction to the female students. And from the text that describes a charismatic man, many women would definitely like him.

Table 3. Story-line

	Text
Narration	Warm sunlight spills in from the windows, and you revel in its warmth. From your seat, you study the students who remained in the classroom. A young woman in a yellow dress catches your attention.

Dialogues	<p>Rosa : ‘There're a lot of cuts on the inside of her wrist. Did she inflict them on herself to relieve stress?’</p> <p>Rosa : ‘No, the cuts are aligned over her blood vessels... She wanted to kill herself!?’</p> <p>Rosa : ‘Her dress doesn't seem to fit very well, and the style is very old-fashioned.’</p> <p>Rosa : ‘There seem to be tears at the corners of her eyes. Did she cry before coming to class?’</p> <p>Rosa : ‘<u>Is she in some kind of trouble? Should I warn Dr. Richter that one of his students might be suicidal?</u>’</p>
Context of situation	Rosa accidentally saw a girl in a yellow dress. Seeing the girl's condition, Rosa couldn't help but observe further.
Analysis	From Rosa's observations as MC, she discovered that the girl might be under pressure from something that made her in that condition. Indirectly, this seems to indicate that women will become very weak under pressure and end up committing self-harm, even though this is also a very common experience by men. However, in the story in this chapter, women are the victims.

Table 4. Story-line

	Text
Narration	Vyn gives you a pat on the shoulder as if comforting you.
Dialogues	<p>Vyn : “I asked Vera some questions. <u>She demonstrated an extreme distrust of the opposite sex.</u> Considering her mental state, it was best to let her leave and not provoke her any further.”</p> <p>Rosa : “...”</p> <p>Vyn : “Do not worry. <u>She is my student and my responsibility.</u>”</p>
Context of situation	Rosa and Vyn decided to check Vera's condition and what was causing her condition. As a result, they suspected that Vera might have experienced something bad.
Analysis	The victim was Vera, she was suspected of having extreme distrust towards the opposite sex. The dialogue text shows that women still receive violence from the opposite sex. As if to give an idea that men can be more dominant than women. And the final dialogue that Vyn delivered was the opposite of what a man did to Vera. The dominant akai that Vyn shows as a man is to protect, not to harm.

Table 5. Story-line

	Text
Narration	-
	<p>Rosa : “Dr. Richter, if she resists men in general, <u>wouldn't it be better for me to approach her?</u>”</p> <p>Vyn : “It would. Are you interested in taking on the case?”</p> <p>Rosa : “<u>You bet!</u>”</p>
Context of situation	Rosa happily offered herself to help resolve Vera's case of violence.
Analysis	Rosa shows high self-confidence. As a fellow woman, she offers assistance to help cases of violence experienced by other women, namely Vera. This shows that the game of who is more dominant will not apply if justice has been achieved. Shows that the female MC fights for justice for her friend and equalizes the punishment for the perpetrator.

Table 6. Story-line

	Text
Narration	(In between dialogues)
Dialogues	<p>Rosa : “Vera, can I help you clean up the wounds on your wrists?”</p> <p>Vera : “They're just scrapes. <u>I had a fight with my boyfriend.</u> Nothing to worry about.”</p> <p>(She stands up and walks away. You call her from behind, but she simply ignores you.)</p> <p>Rosa : “...No way those are just scrapes.”</p>
Context of situation	Vera refused Rosa's offer to help treat her hand as if she knew that Rosa just wanted to observe her more.
Analysis	This dialogue shows that Vera is still silent about the incident she experienced, whether because she is still under pressure from someone or something else. Vera thought that if she said that the wound was the result of a fight she had with her boyfriend, Rosa would immediately believe it. Showing that fighting with your partner to the point of causing injury is something you don't have to worry about , even though in reality any form of violence is a very bad thing that happens to both genders.

Table 7. Story-line

	Text
Narration	(In between dialogues)
Dialogues	Vyn: “Vera did say <u>she had a fight with her boyfriend when you asked about her wrist wounds ?</u> ”

	<p>Rosa : <u>“She said she had a fight with her boyfriend and asked us not to read too much into it.”</u></p> <p>(Vyn seems surprised for a second.)</p> <p>Vyn : <u>“This matter may not be that simple. I suspect that this boyfriend may be related to PUAS.”</u></p>
Context of situation	Rosa reported what she found after talking to Vera about her condition.
Analysis	Vyn suspects the involvement of PUA (Pick-up Artist), a condition that will be used by a man to achieve his goal of seduction and sexual success with a woman, in this case. From Vera's sentence explained by Rosa, it can be seen that the nature of women covers up a logical reason for romance. It feels uncomfortable, and women are considered to have thoughts based on the heart rather than logic.

Table 8. Story-line

	Text
Narration	He lifts up his arm to take a look at the watch.
Dialogues	<p>Vyn : <u>“It is late. Let me drive you back. I will contact you again if I find anything.”</u></p> <p>Rosa : <u>“Of course...”</u></p>
Context of situation	Vyn and Rosa finished their investigation into Vera's case that day.
Analysis	A common understanding, vyn dialogue text shows the role of men in protecting women. Shows the belief that it is still dangerous for women to come home late alone.

Table 9. Story-line

	Text
Narration	(In between dialogues)
Dialogues	<p>Vyn : <u>“She is more observant than I imagined, and she is gifted with a clear mind.”</u></p> <p>(After returning home, Vyn speaks to himself in his room. The lit audio recorder screen shows that everything he said has been recorded.)</p> <p>Vyn : <u>“I am beginning to look forward to our meetings. However, I must remember that she was selected by Artem. Although the others are resistant, I believe that Neil Hume has betrayed us.”</u></p> <p>(He brews himself a cup of black tea, takes it to the couch, and takes a sip.)</p> <p>Vyn : <u>“Overprotection will only cause premature death to a fledgling. There is always a price to pay for flight. The set direction may not be</u></p>

	<u>for her. I believe hers will be a surprising journey for me.”</u>
Context of situation	Vyn recorded her diary alone and shared her views on Rosa.
Analysis	The sentences expressed by Vyn show that he believes he is still superior to Rosa. He seemed to expose himself as having a suspicious and unpredictable plan for Rosa to the readers or players. This dialogue still shows men's belief that they can do things better than women.

Table 10. Story-line

	Text
Narration	You look through the Wiki pages one by one and finally see something that might be the answer.
Dialogues	Rosa : “PUA... pickup artist?”  Rosa : “Pickup artists, self-identified as dating coaches... <u>a movement of men whose goal is seduction and sexual success with women.... So why did Vyn react in such a way?</u> ”
Context of situation	Rosa found out about PUA on her own.
Analysis	After learning what PUA meant, Rosa drew on her intuition to think about Vyn's reaction. Shows that Rosa has a way of thinking logically first and tries not to jump to conclusions.

Table 11. Story-line

	Text
Narration	-
Dialogues	Vyn : “I used the information you provided and conducted sandplay therapy with Vera. I have the results. She unconsciously chose objects with strong connotations of violence and aggression. Her aggressiveness is a self-defense mechanism. She is insecure and questions the value of her existence.  Rosa : “Questioning the value of her existence... Is that why she inflicted those wounds on herself?”  Vyn : “Yes. <u>I believe Vera suffered a traumatic experience caused by her boyfriend. She is unable to recover by herself.</u> ”
Context of situation	Rosa and Vyn met again to continue their investigation.
Analysis	Vyn discovered that Vera's injury did not come from her boyfriend, but from her own actions to relieve the pressure she was experiencing. Describing her situation as being at rock bottom, Vera couldn't even recover on her own.

Table 12. Story-line

	Text
Narration	-
Dialogues	<p>Vyn : <u>“From what I learned, PUAs are people who teach others how to get women? Initially, it was a motivational way to allow men a better chance of attracting women by presenting themselves better. However, it later degraded into something that only serves to fulfill a man's vanity and sexual conquest of women by any means possible.”</u></p> <p>Rosa : “...”</p> <p>Vyn : <u>“They are essentially the successful upper class that will often tell others they came from a disadvantaged origin. To attract innocent women, they present themselves as someone who was hurt but managed to climb their way up through life.”</u></p> <p>Rosa : <u>“But not all women are naive. How do people fall for such an obvious trap?”</u></p>
Context of situation	Vyn explains PUA to Rosa, and Rosa gives her opinion.
Analysis	From what Vyn has explained, it can be seen that the men in the context of this story have hidden desires and want to make them come true by targeting women as victims. Men are depicted as having evil intentions in this story, at least some of them. Then Rosa has the view that there are still women who are not naive when it comes to men but are still confused about someone falling into a trap like that.

Table 13. Story-line

	Text
Narration	-
Dialogues	<p>Vyn : <u>“Losing oneself and surrendering all self-control to a fabricated persona... This is not love. It's slavery. PUAs can be very destructive, turning women into nothing but slaves and objects of sexual attention. All in the name of love. Love brings light and hope into your life. Love lifts you up. True love can come at any time, even without you knowing.”</u></p>
Context of situation	Vyn shares his thoughts about relationships
Analysis	Here the character Vyn has a different view and character from the story's antagonists who have bad intentions towards women. Even here, he explains his perspective on the good relationships that should exist between men and women.

Table 14. Story-line

	Text
Narration	(In the end of dialogues)



Dialogues	<p>Rosa : “What if we can expose a PUA's true colors to their victim? At the very least, we can prevent things from getting worse.”</p> <p>Vyn : “A PUA usually has more than one target. They are always on the hunt for vulnerable women who either lack experience or who suffered from previous relationships.”</p> <p>Rosa : “<u>Which means... I can let myself be the bait?</u>”</p> <p>Vyn : “<u>We do not know how skilled Vera's boyfriend is. You would be in too much danger.</u>”</p> <p>(Now you feel embarrassed for even saying it since you just fell for Vyn's PUA demonstration.)</p>
Context of situation	Vyn demonstrated the PUA action to Rosa without her realizing it beforehand. Previously, Rosa was very sure that not all women would fall for the tricks of PUA perpetrators.
Analysis	Even though Rosa was very confident that there were women who would not fall for PUA, in fact she herself fell for Vyn's demonstration. This part of the text seems to show that it is a woman's instinct to quickly feel pity and pity someone's condition.

Table 15. Story-line

	Text
Narration	-
Dialogues	<p>Vyn : “<u>I don't understand why you're angry. It's just a cake. What's so special about it? Let's just go. Stop being so childish.</u>”</p> <p>Rosa : “<u>Childish!? This is our anniversary! You just don't love me anymore, do you!?</u>”</p> <p>Vyn : “<u>I told you I don't care for things like this from the start.</u>”</p>
Context of situation	Rosa and Vyn pretended to be fighting to attract the perpetrator's attention.
Analysis	Even though the context is only pretend, from the text of the dialogue can see the difference between a man's perspective, which seems logical, and a woman's perspective, which contains feelings.

Table 16. Story-line

	Text
Narration	(In between dialogue text)
Dialogues	<p>Rosa : “You spent a lot of money on him, didn't you?”</p> <p>Vera : “<u>L.. Yes. He needed more money to open the shop, so I went around and got him the money.</u>”</p> <p>(Vera then breaks out in tears hysterically right in front of you.)</p>

	Vera : “ <u>...I-I gave him everything! Now I owe people a lot of money! Together for three months... and all he's given me is a skirt!</u> ”
Context of situation	Vera finally wanted to tell what happened to her.
Analysis	Veda's nature can be seen that she is the type of woman who can easily melt at other people's stories. And when he was disappointed, he only dared to keep it all to himself.

Table 17. Story-line

	Text
Narration	(In the end of dialogue text)
Dialogues	<p>Stephon : “Of course. Someone like you should be treated like the queen you are.”</p> <p>(His cheesy lines and his over-the-top performance make your skin crawl.)</p> <p>Rosa : ‘<u>Seriously? This is too much... I have to suffer through this to help Vera and other victims... I can do this!</u>’</p> <p>Stephon : “Why are you sighing?”</p> <p>Rosa : “Oh, I failed miserably in my previous relationships, so being praised like this makes me a bit sentimental...”</p>
Context of situation	Rosa goes undercover to catch the perpetrator.
Analysis	Rosa here dares to use herself as bait to catch the perpetrator mentioned by Vera. Shows that Rosa is not afraid of the strange male figure who is with her for the sake of standing up.

Table 18. Story-line

	Text
Narration	(In between dialogue text)
Dialogues	<p>Stephon : “No problem. Did you put on some new makeup? You look a bit different.”</p> <p>(As soon as you sit down, he goes off again.)</p> <p>Rosa : “Different? How?”</p> <p>Stephen : “Your eye makeup seems a bit off... Hmmm, you could use some more practice.”</p> <p>Rosa : “H-Hey! That's not something you should say.”</p> <p>Stephon : <u>“Ha, what I meant to say is that I think you don't need all that makeup. You're beautiful without it.”</u></p>

	(Then he reaches a hand towards you. You can only try to avoid his disgusting touch by acting as if you're shy.)  Rosa : 'I really can't wrap my head around why Vera fell for a guy like this...'
Context of situation	Stephon tries to flirt with Rosa.
Analysis	Stephon, who is the antagonist in this chapter, starts his action by flirting with Rosa, touching her hand and continuing to flirt. Rosa on the other hand wondered why Vera or maybe a woman could fall for a man like this. Shows that Rosa has her own standards when it comes to men.

Table 19. Story-line

	Text
Narration	-
Dialogues	Rosa : <u>"Dr. Richter, this isn't over yet. I want to investigate the PUA team behind this. Would you be willing to help? The thought of leaving other women at their mercy is unbearable to me..."</u>  Vyn : "Of course. However, we will have to come up with a concrete plan."
Context of situation	Rosa wants to tell Vyn that she wants to continue her investigation into the PUA case further.
Analysis	Rosa has the desire and motivation to help more women who are victims of this PUA syndicate. Showing that he is not afraid of what he will face. A depiction of a brave and clever female character.

## Discussion

From what has been referenced in the introduction section, and seeing how a result can be obtained through a theory, it can be said that in literature elements and roles between genders cannot be separated. In relation to language, the areas of gender, equality and justice are never separated. A literary work has the author's point of view, culture, and even the thoughts of the characters involved. Differences between viewpoints or language patterns between male and female authors are not a problem. In fact, that is what can enrich the discussion in the work. However, it is the gap between rights and the role of gender played in the work that is often questioned.

Routledge ( 2014 ), Mills (1995) defines feminist stylistics as a different 'style of analysis,' mentioning that the terms 'feminist' and 'stylistics' have varied meanings for readers. The term represents her main focus on explicitly feminist analysis that employs linguistic analysis to investigate texts. This method goes beyond simply recognizing sexism in texts; it investigates how components such as point of view, agency, metaphor, or transitivity are inseparably connected to gender concerns, as well as whether women's writing practices may be classified (Mills 1995, p.1). Furthermore, Mills (2006, p. 221) claims that feminist stylistics is concerned with unraveling the complex messages inferred from texts and analyzing how readers interpret or resist these messages, rather than assuming that gender concepts revolve solely around discriminatory messages about sex differences. From this explanation, feminist stylistics aims to analyze how text producers use linguistic features that

portray male or female values, as well as how readers (including advertising, cinema, and radio audiences) identify gendered meanings in texts, either intentionally or unintentionally.

In the story plot that we took from the game *Tears of Themis*, it proves that feminist values move freely through the main character and the role he plays, considering that the main character is not depicted as a weak woman and does not act quickly. However, the difference between how other female characters are portrayed and how male characters are portrayed still reflects sexism in the story. Even from this chapter alone, it can be seen that more female characters are used as victims of men's bad actions. Even though in other story chapters that are not discussed in this research, there are several men who are victims, but the dominance of men as more powerful figures still exists. And the views that players or readers of the story will get will also be interpreted in different ways. In comparison with research that has been conducted previously on sexism, feminist views, and feminist stylistics, It can be said that a literary work can be a medium that conveys such concerns about gender. Even though this literary story is presented in a game that actually has a feminist nuance.

## CONCLUSION

From the results that the researchers found in this study, it can be concluded that Feminist stylistics is a way to explore a person's understanding and point of view from the writing style and language patterns presented in the work. Feminist stylistics as a theory has been able to reveal a complex message to be conveyed through the gaps experienced by the story characters involved and differences in thoughts. A male character could be described as a coward, could be a strong person, could be a bad person, and the same goes for female characters. However, this label, although it will differ depending on the view of the viewer of his work, cannot be something that is truly attached to a particular gender. Women will not always be weak and become victims of men. And men are not always depicted as remaining in power and not running away if they encounter an evil witch. The gender equality that one want to achieve is a value that one want to emphasize. And feminist stylistics is one method that can explore all of that in literary works.

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