

Sabah feminist novelists: A view of one's own

ABSTRACT

This paper scrutinizes five award-winning novels by five Sabah female writers and the issues of sexual discrimination, lack of opportunities, patriarchal hegemony and the negative perceptions of the body that plague Sabah Malay women. A discursive analysis of these issues is anchored upon a gynocritic feminist approach first introduced by Elaine Showalter in her famous essay entitled "Toward a Feminist Poetics" (Newton, 1997). The purpose of this study is to uncover the concept of the feminine "self" in the Sabah context through a thirty-year interrogation represented by these five female authors' novels and narrative styles, which include an exploration of their themes, language styles and poetics through the five novels entitled *Malisiah* by Obasiah Hj Usman (1986), *Dari dalam Cermin* by Azmah Nordin (1992), *Gadis Adikara* by Ruhaini Matdarin (2007), *Pagi di Hujung Senja* by Kathirina Susanna Tati (2013) and *Helaian Linangkit* by Dayangku Mastura Pg. Ismail (2016).