



# Journal of International Women's Studies

[Home](#) | [About](#) | [FAQ](#) | [My Account](#)

[Home](#) > [Journals and Campus Publications](#) > [JIWS](#)

## About This Journal

*The Journal of International Women's Studies* is an on-line, open-access, peer reviewed feminist journal that provides a forum for scholars, activists, and students to explore the relationships among theories of gender and sexuality and various forms of organizing and critical practice. The journal seeks both multidisciplinary and cross-cultural perspectives, and invites submissions in the form of scholarly articles, essays, book reviews, and works of fiction. In addition, the *Journal* supports multi-media submissions through streaming audio capability, embedded video, and links to video sites to display short films and other visual materials. Through its diverse collection, the journal aims to create an opportunity for building bridges across the conventional divides of scholarship and activism; "western" and "third world" feminisms; professionals and students; men and women. Toward this end, the editors welcome your constructive and insightful comments in response to our publications.

The JIWS is currently indexed with the Library of Congress. The ISSN assignment for "Journal of International Women's Studies" is ISSN 1539-8706.

The Journal is indexed with the MLA International Bibliography, The International Bibliography of Social Sciences, EBSCO, Elsevier Bibliographic Databases, Ulrich's Periodicals, the Gale Group, the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), ProQuest Bibliographical References and at <http://webster.bridgew.edu>.

## Volume 19, Issue 2 (2018)

### Articles

-  [PDF](#) [Women in Turkey in the Context of Being Deprived of Capabilities and Feasibilities](#)  
*Senem Kurt Topuz and Hülya Erkanli*
-  [PDF](#) [Queer Motherhood: Challenging Heteronormative Rules beyond the Assimilationist/Radical Binary](#)  
*Luciana Moreira*
-  [PDF](#) [Women Confronting Death: War Widows' Experiences in the South Caucasus](#)  
*Nona Shahnazarian and Ulrike Ziemer*
-  [PDF](#) [Persistence and Resistance of Harmful Traditional Practices \(HTPs\) Perpetuated against Girls in Africa and Asia](#)  
*Jennifer Glover and Helen Liebling*
-  [PDF](#) [A Space of Their Own: Arab Women Artists in Israel: Identity of a 'Double-Minority'](#)  
*Shahar Marnin-Distelfeld*
-  [PDF](#) [Sexual Violence and the Limits of Laws' Powers to Alter Behaviour: The Case of South Africa](#)  
*Tameshnie Deane*
-  [PDF](#) [Study of Gender as Social Practice and Tokenism in an Indian IT Company](#)  
*Geetanjali Kaushik and Alison Pullen*

### JIWS Executive Staff

Executive Editors  
**Diana Fox, Bridgewater State University, MA, USA**  
**Cami Sanderson, Ferris State University, MI, USA**

Book Review Editors  
**Caroline Wanjiku Kihato, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa**  
**J. Michael Bodi, Bridgewater State University, MA, USA**

Copy Editor  
**Carley Taylor, Bridgewater State University, MA, USA**

-  [PDF](#) [Of Struggles, Truces and Persistence: Everyday Experiences of Women Engineers in Sri Lanka](#)  
*Deborah Menezes*
-  [PDF](#) [The Challenges of Women Leaders of Business Organizations in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in Balancing Work-Family Responsibilities](#)  
*Bruktawit Bahiru and Abeba Beyene Mengistu*
-  [PDF](#) [Women Nationalists in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Ghana and Zimbabwe: Case Studies of Charwe Nehanda Nyakasikana and Yaa Asantewaa](#)  
*Abdul Kuba*
-  [PDF](#) [Dimensions of Couples' Decision-Making at Home: The Ghanian Experience](#)  
*Ellen Mabel Osei-Tutu and Ernest Ampadu*
-  [PDF](#) [Marxist Feminism Meets Postcolonial Feminism in Organizational Theorizing: Issues, Implications and Responses](#)  
*Prajna Seneviratne*
-  [PDF](#) [Young Women's Civic Awareness and Public Engagement: A Challenge in a Bahraini Context](#)  
*Fatima H. Eid*
-  [PDF](#) [Lost in Translation: The Male Gaze and The \(In\)visible Bodies of Muslim Women - A Response Article](#)  
*Ewa Glapka*
-  [PDF](#) [Feminist Voice in the Works of Indonesian Early Woman Writers: Reading Novels and Short Stories by Suwarsih Djojopuspito](#)  
*Aquarini Priyatna*

## Essays

---

 PDF [Maroon Indigenous Women Circle, Jamaica: Historical Recurrences from Indigenous Women's Perspectives](#)  
*Gaama Gloria "MaMa G" Simms*

 PDF [Ezidi Women's Forced Migration to Germany](#)  
*SeyedehBehnaz Hosseini*

## Book Reviews

---

 PDF [Book Review: Haters: Harassment, Abuse and Violence Online](#)  
*Shelagh Smith*

 PDF [Book Review: Women and the Informal Economy in Urban Africa: From the Margins to the Centre](#)  
*Lomarsh Roopnarine*

 PDF [Book Review: Gender and Conflict: Embodiments, Discourses and Symbolic Practices](#)  
*H. Nanjala Nyabola*

## Poetry

---

 PDF [Famished: On finishing Hunger by Roxane Gay](#)  
*Amber Moore*



Jan-2018

# Feminist Voice in the Works of Indonesian Early Woman Writers: Reading Novels and Short Stories by Suwarsih Djojopuspito

Aquarini Priyatna

Follow this and additional works at: <http://vc.bridgew.edu/jiws>



Part of the [Women's Studies Commons](#)

## Recommended Citation

Priyatna, Aquarini (2018). Feminist Voice in the Works of Indonesian Early Woman Writers: Reading Novels and Short Stories by Suwarsih Djojopuspito. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 19(2), 230-243.  
Available at: <http://vc.bridgew.edu/jiws/vol19/iss2/15>

## **Feminist Voice in the Works of Indonesian Early Woman Writers: Reading Novels and Short Stories by Suwarsih Djojopuspito<sup>1</sup>**

By Aquarini Priyatna<sup>2</sup>

### **Abstract**

Suwarsih Djojopuspito is among the most important early Indonesian women/feminist writers. This research intends to emphasize her rightful position among the first Indonesian feminist writers. Focusing on her very important novel *Manusia Bebas* (published originally in Dutch as *Buiten het Gareel* in 1940)<sup>3</sup>, one collection of short stories, *Empat Serangkai* (1954), and a novel written in Sundanese, *Marjanah* (1959), I argue that feminist spirits and ideas actually have existed and been elaborated in works by women writers in the era prior to the Indonesian New Order (1966-1998) as exemplified by Suwarsih's works. What is important in these works is that despite the unjust gender and sexual construction, the women protagonists and characters are shown to find their agency through their awareness of their particular situation. Suwarsih<sup>4</sup> reestablishes the construction of femininity and attributes it not to total submission and acceptance to males and the patriarchal culture but to female agency, subjectivity, and intelligence.

*Keywords:* Suwarsih Djojopuspito, Indonesian women writers, feminist voice, sexuality, gender, local culture

### **Introduction**

*Autobiography makes trouble: it is difficult to define as a distinct genre, and the borderline between fact and fiction, the personal and the social, the popular and the academic, the everyday and the literary.* (Cosslett, Lury, & Summerfield, 2000: 1)

---

<sup>1</sup> A much simpler paper on this topic was presented for the discussions at the Komunitas Salihara Jakarta under the title of Suwarsih Djojopuspito: *Menciptakan Subjek Feminis Nasionalis melalui Narasi Autobiografis*/Suwarsih Djojopuspito: Establishing Nationalist Feminist Subject through Autobiographical Narrative, Jakarta, 9 April 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Aquarini Priyatna is currently teaching in the Department of Literature and Cultural Studies, University of Padjadjaran. She holds a Master's Degree from the Institute for Women's Studies Lancaster University, UK (2002) and another Master's Degree from the Women's Studies Post-Graduate Program, Universities Indonesia (2003). She completed her PhD, which looked at celebrity auto/biographies, at the Center for Women's Studies and Gender Research, Monash University, Australia. She has published two books on Feminist Cultural Studies. Her latest book publication is on novels by Nh. Dini, a prominent Indonesian feminist writer.

<sup>3</sup> I am referring to *Manusia Bebas* in my reading of the novel. Although some discussion regarding the *Buiten het Gareel* where relevant ideas are included.

<sup>4</sup> I refer to Suwarsih Djojopuspito as "Suwarsih" as Indonesians are recognized by their first name rather than their family names. In fact, some Indonesians do not even have a family name, like the former President Soekarno and Soeharto.