

Women Existency in The Drupadi Novel By Seno Gumira Ajidarma (An Existentialist Feminism Study Of Simone De Beaviour)

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Abstract:

Background: Based on a press release conducted by the National Commission on Violence Against Women (Komisi Nasional Anti Kekerasan terhadap Perempuan) on March 6, 2020, various spectrums and forms of violence against women have been recorded in the Komnas Perempuan Annual Notes 2020 with several findings including, 1) over a period of 12 years, violence against women increased by 792%; 2) there was Violence Against Girls that jumped by 2,341 cases or a 65% increase from the previous year; 3) complaints of cybercrime cases that jumped 300% with the most cases in the form of threats of spreading pornographic photos and videos; 4) sexual violence against women with disabilities increased by 47%. The expression of gender equality is often carried out through thoughts that are documented in a written work, one of which is in the form of literary works, namely novels. Based on this explanation, this research was conducted to describe the forms of oppression against women and women's resistance as a manifestation of their existence in the Drupadi novel by Seno Gumira Ajidarma from the perspective of Simone de Beaviour's existentialist feminism.

Materials and Methods: This study uses a qualitative approach with descriptive methods. The data source in this study is the Drupadi novel by Seno Gumira Ajidarma. Data collection in this study was carried out by using documentation techniques. The data in the form of quotations in the novel were then studied with the feminism-existentialist theory of Simone de Beaviour

Results: Forms of oppression against women are conditions experienced by female characters who are not respected and made second to men. After the research was carried out, there was data in the form of quotations regarding forms of oppression against women which were divided into two parts, namely, 1) oppression against women physically and 2) oppression against women non-physically.

Then women's resistance as a manifestation of their existence is the events experienced by female characters who relate to other people and their environment that show and strengthen their existence as a woman. After conducting the research, data was found in the form of quotations regarding forms of resistance as a form of women's existence which were divided into three parts, namely, 1) working, 2) becoming intellectual agents, 3) carrying out transformation in society.

Conclusion: Based on the research results of Feminism-Existentialist in Drupadi Novel by Seno Gumira Ajidarma, the researcher concludes; 1) In the Drupadi novel by Seno Gumira Ajidarma, data on forms of oppression against women are found, consisting of a) physical oppression of women; and b) non-physical oppression of women; 2) In the Drupadi novel by Seno Gumira Ajidarma, it is found data on the forms of resistance as a manifestation of the existence of women consisting of a) work; b) become an intellectual agent, and c) make a transformation in society.

Keywords: existentialist feminism, oppression, existence, women, Drupadi

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I. INTRODUCTION

Based on a press release conducted by the National Commission on Violence Against Women on March 6, 2020, various spectrums and forms of violence against women have been recorded in the Komnas Perempuan Annual Notes with several findings including, 1) over a period of 12 years, violence against women increased by 792%; 2) there was Violence Against Girls that jumped by 2,341 cases or a 65% increase from the previous year; 3) complaints of cybercrime cases that jumped 300% with the most cases in the form of threats of spreading pornographic photos and videos; 4) sexual violence against women with disabilities increased by 47%.

The facts as stated by the National Commission on Violence Against Women above are proof that the reality of violence against women still occurs. Almost always increasing every year. The description of the Komnas Perempuan Protection represents the condition of women and girls in Indonesia experiencing unsafe lives. Of course, these findings should receive serious attention from the government and the wider community. The government, through various public policies and constitutional regulations, has made various efforts to address the reality that has been described. Meanwhile, society responds to this reality with various movements for emancipation or gender equality through various methods, media, and various loci. These movements have been carried out with a very long historical story. In almost every region or country, there is this movement, including in Indonesia.

In Indonesia, the struggle to elevate the status of women has been carried out by many groups, including by women themselves. One of the most phenomenal figures is R.A. Kartini. The woman who was crowned a national hero wrote her thoughts on Indonesia's social conditions, especially regarding women's struggles in gaining freedom, autonomy, and legal equality through her letters. These letters were collected and translated by the Empat Bersaudara in 1922 to be presented in the book *Habis Gelap Terbitlah Terang; Boeah Pikiran* in Malay, published by Balai Pustaka.

Reality as described above is also often found in a work of art. One of them has been revealed in a journal in the form of "The Representation of Women Characters in The Movie *The Breadwinner*" written by Deta Maria Sri Darta and Diah Kristina in *IJHS (International Journal of Humanity Studies)* in 2018 which states that representation has been found. women in two opposing aspects, namely as objects of male domination and as subjects who could voice their thoughts and make decisions independently in a film entitled "The Breadwinner", along with a quote below.

"It is found that in the movie the women are represented as two opposing aspects: women representation as an object of man domination, and women as the subject who is able to speak out her mind and to decide independently"

The researcher also suspects that there is a similar reality in one of Indonesia's literary works, namely the *Drupadi* novel written by Seno Gumira Ajidarma. The life journey narrated by Seno through female figures, especially *Drupadi*, represents a form of oppression to achieve a woman's existence. Therefore, researchers will conduct a more in-depth study of this matter. However, to be able to understand the message conveyed by the author properly, it is necessary to have a deeper study of the literary work. One approach that can be used to further examine women's issues in a literary work is the feminist approach.

Feminism itself is a struggle movement against all forms of objectification of women. Women and men are believed to also have differences in social awareness and social control (Anwar, 2010: 129). From the explanation regarding the feminist approach, it can be seen that this approach is suitable to be used in dissecting the *Drupadi* novel, which in several parts contains forms of objectification to women. The realities in the *Drupadi* novel by Seno Gumira Ajidarma represent many of the views on women which are told through events experienced by female characters, especially *Drupadi* figures. However, in conducting a more in-depth study, researchers need to choose one of the streams from the various schools in the feminist approach.

The researcher chose to use the flow of existentialist feminism from Simone de Beauvoir. This theory was chosen because it has a wider scope of view than other theories. Such as liberal feminism which is more androgynous because it only views the body as the cause of the inequality between the gender of men and women. Then in the flow of radical feminism, the thought only deals with issues of reproduction and sexuality. Then, Marxist feminism only discusses the issue of capitalism as a source of oppression against women. However, Simone de Beauvoir provides a broader explanation through existentialist ontologies of oppression against women. According to Simone's perspective, there is gender intersubjectivity in society. Women in their existence in this world only become 'the others' for men (Tong: 2004, 262). Men are free, self-determining beings to define the meaning of their existence. Women are other, objects that do not determine the meaning of their existence. If women want to be themselves, a subject, then women must transcend definitions, labels, and essences that limit their existence, including in terms of body, reproduction, sexuality, and their position in work as well as other things as conveyed by previous feminist theory. Apart from these theoretical considerations, the researcher also chooses this existentialist flow of feminism because many of the realities in the *Drupadi* novel by Seno Gumira Ajidarma are following the description of existentialist feminism in seeing women both from oppression perpetrated against women and forms of efforts to achieve their existence.

According to Simone de Beauvoir theory, the reason why women are oppressed is their existence that is not neglected and not an absolute subject like men. This process begins with biological facts such as reproductive roles, hormonal imbalances, weakness of female organs, and so on which are combined with patriarchal history until finally women are cornered to reproductive and domestic roles so that without realizing it, women have been led to the definition of unconscious beings. This is what makes the domination of women

throughout history. As stated by Yeni Artanti (2020), humans have the freedom to choose their way of life. Because by doing so, humans become responsible for their existence. Beauvoir also offers several strategies that can be launched by women when refusing to be others.

First, women can work. To become a woman who is empowered to actively demonstrate her presence in the public space is not easy. Especially when the matter of leadership is dominated by men (Sholihah, 2018). In Indonesia, women are more concerned with raising and caring for children and serving their husbands at home. This is what makes women do not have time for creativity like men (Marsipah, 2017). Even though Simone realizes that working in patriarchal capitalism is oppressive and exploitative, especially if the work requires women to do work in multiple shifts: one shift in an office or a factory, and another at home. But Simone insists that no matter how hard and tiring the work is, women still have the possibility that if they weren't done, they would lose them. Because according to Simone's theory, by working outside the home together with men, women can reclaim their transcendence concretely to assert their status as a subject, as someone who actively determines the direction of their destiny (Tong, 2004: 274).

Second, women can become intellectuals, members of groups that will build change for women. Intellectual activity is an activity when a person thinks, sees, and defines, and is not inactivity when someone becomes the object of thinking, observing, and defining. Simone encourages women to study writers such as Emily Bronte, Virginia Woolf, and Katherine Mansfield who value themselves seriously as writers by exploring issues of death, life, and suffering (Tong, 2004: 274).

Third, women can work to achieve the socialist transformation of society. Like Sartre, Simone has the same high hopes for an end to the subject-object conflict, the Self-Other among humans in general, between men and women in particular. Not only that, Sartre and Simone also think that one of the keys to liberation for women is economic strength. One point was emphasized in his discussion of independent women. Simone reminds women that the environment will limit their definition of themselves, that women's freedom will also be limited by the amount of money they have in the bank.

Finally, to transcend their boundaries, women can refuse to internalize their otherness by identifying themselves through the views of the dominant group in society. Accepting the role of 'the others' according to Simone's theory is accepting the status of an object which means "rejecting the creative self-subject, and having autonomy towards themselves" and taking the risk of experiencing madness which is the result of being involved in continuing to lie (Tong, 2004: 276).

From some of the things described above, we can conclude that women can fight against the oppression that has happened to them, namely through work; become an intellectual agent; and carry out the socialist transformation of society.

II. MATERIAL AND METHODS

This study used the descriptive qualitative method. Ratna (2013: 46-47) states that the qualitative method is the same as the hermeneutic method. This means that both the hermeneutic, qualitative and content analysis methods as a whole take advantage of the methods of interpretation by presenting them in the form of descriptions.

To avoid misinterpretation in this study, it is necessary to put forward the definition of terms. The definition of the terms referred to in this study is described as follows.

- 1) Forms of oppression against women are texts contained in novels that describe the subordinated condition of women. Women are made as objects or creatures second to men and are seen as not absolute. This situation is illustrated by men's actions towards women such as seeing women as objects, oppressing women in a marriage bond, and sexually harassing women.
- 2) Forms of women's resistance as a form of existence are texts contained in the novel that describe women's actions to achieve their existence and not only become objects for men such as work, become intellectuals, and can be transformers in society.

III. RESULT

Forms of oppression against women are conditions experienced by female characters who are not respected and made second to men. After the research was carried out, there was data in the form of quotations regarding forms of oppression against women which were divided into two parts, namely, 1) oppression against women physically and 2) oppression against women non-physically.

Then women's resistance as a manifestation of their existence is the events experienced by female characters who relate to other people and their environment that show and strengthen their existence as a woman. After conducting the research, data was found in the form of quotations regarding forms of resistance as a form of women's existence which were divided into three parts, namely, 1) working, 2) becoming intellectual agents, 3) carrying out transformation in society.

IV. DISCUSSION

A. Oppression Against Women

Oppression against women is a condition experienced by female characters who are not respected and made second to men. After the research was carried out, there was data in the form of quotations regarding forms of oppression against women which were divided into two parts, namely, 1) oppression against women physically and 2) oppression against women non-physically.

1) Physical Oppression of Women

Physical oppression is violence that can be seen, felt by the body. Physical violence takes the form of loss of normal health or abilities to the loss of a person's life. This reality is also found in several parts of the Drupadi novel by Seno Gumira Ajidarma. Here are some examples of quotations.

Durasana ruthlessly dragged Drupadi who had fallen on her hair along the path in the garden that bordered one building from another. Durasana drags Drupadi through a shortcut, without going through the path in the garden, but from the Pandawa inn building, downstairs, across dirt yards, grassy gardens, gravel paths, through bushes, crashing into plants, sometimes the roots of large trees, and finally go up the stairs of the building where the gambling is held. (Ajidarma, 2017: 59)

The quote above tells of Drupadi being dragged by Durasana from her inn building to the building where the gambling game was held. The Durasana forces Drupadi to follow it. However, Drupadi rebelled and refused, forcing Durasana to drag her by pulling her hair. Drupadi has dragged down stairs, across dirt yards, grass gardens, gravel roads, through bushes, crashing into trees, and up stairs again.

Based on the quotation and explanation above, it can be seen clearly that there is physical violence. Drupadi who is dragged by Durasana by pulling her hair can certainly injure Drupadi's body. Plus, the dragging wasn't just a flat place. But in a steep place, it even passes through a gravel road so you have to hit the trees. Such reality is, of course, physical violence perpetrated against women. This event represents as if women are creatures that are underestimated so that women are considered worthy of being done like that when they do not want to follow the will of men.

"This woman does not want to worship me," said Duryudhana. "Durasana my brother, naked her!". At once, peel off the Drupadi cloth. She was thrown onto the gambling table, and before everyone's eyes Duryudhana took off her cloth too, to the cheers of Kurawa. "Drupadi is ours!". The first Duryudhana, the Durasana, the Kauravas then fought over it.... (Ajidarma, 2017: 61)

The quote above describes Drupadi being raped by the Kauravas. Drupadi, who had been bet on the gambling table by her husband, Yudhistira, who lost, was then forced to obey Duryudhana's orders. However, Drupadi rebelled and refused. In her refusal, she was forcibly stripped naked by the Durasana. Then there was the rape committed by 99 Kurawa men. The five husbands, who felt that they had lost the game of dice, could do nothing but see for themselves how the Kauravas committed the rape.

Based on the quotation and explanation above, it can be seen clearly that there is physical violence in the form of sexual harassment committed against women. Drupadi, who is a wife who is obedient to her husband, is used as a bet at the gambling table. As a result of her husband's defeat, she was raped by 99 men. Reality like that shows clearly the existence of physical violence in the form of sexual harassment against women. Sexual harassment by men against women is oppression and humiliation of the status of women.

2) Oppression Towards Women in a Non-Physical Way

Non-physical oppression is violence perpetrated invisibly. This violence is aimed at the spiritual or the soul so that it can reduce or even eliminate the normal abilities of the soul and of course make a person worse off. This reality is also found in several parts of the Drupadi novel by Seno Gumira Ajidarma. Here are some examples of quotations.

If only they were lovable knights, if only! They were called knights but they were also assassins who didn't seem to know how to talk to women. (Ajidarma, 2017: 11)

The above quote tells Drupadi who is grumbling at the fact that after the contest, she must accept the winner as a husband under any circumstances. She also said that the male knights didn't even know how to talk to girls. He seemed to want to illustrate that men were freer in speaking words when speaking to women even though the man was a knight.

The explanation above is a form of non-physical oppression against women. Men are considered to have the freedom to say anything to a woman. On the contrary, it seems that women are limited by the rules for speaking to men. Reality like this shows the existence of non-physical oppression against women. It seems as if women are free to accept various expressions uttered by men, even though it can hurt them.

From inside the princess building, Drupadi heard the cheers of the Kauravas. She cried in the arms of Dewi Kunti. she had heard how the five Pandavas no longer owned themselves, but even without that possession Yudhistira still risked Drupadi against the other four Drupadi husbands. (Ajidarma, 2017: 57)

The above quote tells about Drupadi's sadness and suffering because she heard the news that Yudhistira, one of her husbands, bet Drupadi in a game of dice gambling with the Kurawa and Sengkuni. This is a very inappropriate thing for a husband to do. This incident illustrates that a wife is just like an inanimate object worthy of being used as a bet at the gambling table. This is in stark contrast to the fact that Drupadi is a wife who is highly demanded to serve her husbands fairly. Meanwhile, she had to be treated inappropriately to the point that he became a bet on the gambling table.

Based on the quotations and explanations above, it can be seen that there is non-physical oppression of women. Drupadi is a wife who has complied with the demands she carries to serve her five husbands fairly is treated the opposite. It is considered only as an object as if only an inanimate object can be used as a bet in a dice game. This reality represents how women experience oppression in a non-physical way by their husbands. It is as if Drupadi is considered to be non-human or only in the form of items suitable for betting. Of course, this hurt Drupadi as a woman.

B. Forms of Women's Resistance as a Form of Their Existence

Forms of women's resistance as a form of their existence are events experienced by female figures who are in contact with other people and their environment that show and strengthen their existence as a woman. After conducting the research, data was found in the form of quotations regarding forms of resistance as a form of women's existence which were divided into three parts, namely, 1) working, 2) becoming intellectual agents, 3) carrying out transformation in society.

1) Work

Working is one of the things that supports women to be said to be existence because by working women can prove themselves that they are capable of being independent, by not expecting help from others and indirectly they will be able to determine their way of life. The reality that women can live independently is found in several parts of the Drupadi novel by Seno Gumira Ajidarma. The following describes the data and discussion regarding this matter.

Arjuna threw away all weapons, destroyed all powers, climbed as ordinary humans.

"Are you okay, Drupadi?"

"Don't worry, Arjuna, we are picking up destiny now." (Ajidarma, 2017: 127)

They walked back and stepped into the darkness of the night. Drupadi felt that she was stepping down a long black hallway because the fog was all over the place, giving her no sight. So she felt for the stone walls and slowly moved forward. The sound of the wind whistling, the cold is not abysmal. Drupadi was still going on and on through the night. Sometimes she saw Sadewa crawling in front, but Nakula and so on were nowhere to be seen. Yudhishtira and his dog were far above and ahead. (Ajidarma, 2017: 129)

The two quotes above describe Drupadi's journey with her five husbands to the top of Mahameru. During this journey, Drupadi traveled and climbed without bothering her five husbands. Even when Arjuna asked about her physical condition, Drupadi warned Arjuna not to worry about her condition. As if affirming that he was able and could do it herself. Even though the fog interfered with her vision, she kept walking and trying on her own by feeling the stone walls and advancing slowly. In the very cold of the snow, Drupadi continued and walked through the night. She could try and walk on her own without bothering her five husbands.

Based on the quotes and explanations above, it can be seen that the Drupadi character is a tough woman. As long as she can and is able, then she doesn't want to bother her five husbands in facing difficulties.

Reality like that is a form of existence for a woman. This is evidenced by the toughness of Drupadi who does not depend on other people. She can live life and solve her problems independently.

2) Become an Intellectual Agent

Intellectual is awareness which involves thinking and understanding. Intellectuality can not only be measured by formal values but can be measured through everyday life both in career and in problem-solving. According to Beaviour, women who become intellectualists can show their existence through thinking, seeing, and defining. Women who have intelligence and the ability to express opinions are women who could determine the direction of their future well and of course will be appreciated by others. It can also be evidence that it is not only men who can stand in front of an opinion, but also women. The reality of women is described in several parts of the Drupadi novel by Seno Gumira Ajidarma. The following describes the data and discussion regarding this matter.

Oh, I'm sorry, because, I didn't mean to insult you, but I can't possibly marry you. It's not fair to you, but I'll make up for my sins later. Shouldn't I decide my destiny? (Ajidarma, 2017: 16)

Drupadi felt her chest ache because she hated herself for being forced to utter such words, but she was saving her life, because in her guess maybe if Karna won, Karna would only present herself to Duryudhana! (Ajidarma, 2017: 17)

The two quotes above tell Drupadi who had forbidden Karna not to participate in competitions because Karna was not a knight who had a royal throne. Drupadi had to say that reason because she thought that Karna was only being used by Duryudhana. Because Karna has a very powerful archery ability like Arjuna and he has a very big possibility of winning the competition. Despite feeling uneasy, Drupadi bravely expressed her opinion to defend her right to self-determination and avoid Duryudhana. Everyone around the arena seemed to agree with what Drupadi had said, including her father. So that Karna canceled the competition.

Based on the quotations and explanations above, it can be seen that Drupadi has the intellectual capacity to read the situation. She could intelligently suspect that Karna was only being used by Duryudhana. Then with her courage, Drupadi also conveyed her opinion to all the people who were present at the arena, including her father so that Karna was not allowed to participate in the competition. Reality like that is a form of existence of a woman. This can be seen from how Drupadi as a woman dares to express her opinion and has the intellect in reading the situation.

3) Transforming Society

Transformers in society are very synonymous with men, whose figures are often considered appropriate and worthy to stand in the front. Whereas the transformation process itself does not always have to be carried out by leaders or people who stand in front of it, but it is related to how someone can have knowledge and ideas that are in harmony and can be confirmed by the community. The process of transforming knowledge and ideas into society is not easy to do. It needs certain abilities, especially language skills in processing the transformation of knowledge and ideas. The ideas held by the transformer must not conflict with the ideas held by the masses to succeed in influencing and moving them. If this is the case, the masses will be easily controlled because they are already on the boundaries of the same idea and motion. Therefore, transformation in society can not only be carried out by men but can be done by anyone who has the ideas and skills in processing this transformation, including by a woman. The reality that women can transform in society is also found in several parts of the Drupadi novel by Seno Gumira Ajidarma. The following describes the data and discussion regarding this matter.

"My main husband, Yudhistira, only felt that his chess game was interrupted when I complained to the king. I know you will defend me, but Batara Surya, whom I cast the spell on, protected me. I know Kanka said, 'Go back to your place, butcher,' and you obeyed him. This is your chance, kill Kichaka for me. I have suffered for and because of you, do not add to my suffering by failure. Do not." (Ajidarma, 2017: 84)

The quote above is a dialogue that Drupadi spoke to Yudhistira. In the dialogue, Drupadi asked Yudhistira to kill Kichaka, a Mahapatih Wirata who wanted to marry her. Kichaka was overpowering his will even threateningly against Drupadi. Drupadi, who was in disguise with her five husbands, was worried about Kichaka's wishes. So Drupadi also asked Yudhistira to kill the mahapatih Wirata. With sentences in the name of sacrifice and suffering, Drupadi succeeded in influencing Yudhistira and her five husbands. Until in the end, the Mahapatih Wirata was killed by Bima.

Based on the quotes and explanations above, it can be seen that a woman can also transform many people. This is illustrated by the Drupadi character who succeeded in influencing her five husbands to take any action, namely to kill Kichaka. The actions taken by Drupadi were a form of the existence of a woman who can transform many people through her ideas and thoughts.

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the research results of Feminism-Existentialist in the Drupadi Novel by Seno Gumira Ajidarma, the researcher concluded; 1) In the Drupadi novel by Seno Gumira Ajidarma, data on forms of oppression against women are found, consisting of a) physical oppression of women; and b) non-physical oppression of women; 2) In the Drupadi novel by Seno Gumira Ajidarma, it is found data on the forms of resistance as a manifestation of the existence of women consisting of a) work; b) become an intellectual agent, and c) make a transformation in society.

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