

THE CULTURAL VIOLENCE ON WOMEN IN ASTIRIN MBALELA NOVEL BY SUPARTO BRATA AND THE ROAD OF LOST INNOCENCE NOVEL BY SOMALY MAM AND RUTH MARSHALL

Oleh:

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Abstrak

Kekerasan kultural terhadap perempuan disebabkan oleh beberapa aspek. Ideologi patriarki merupakan salah satu aspek penyebab tindak kekerasan. Novel Astirin Mbalela dan novel The Road of Lost Innocence merupakan dua novel beda negara yang memiliki kemiripan dalam bentuk kekerasan yang dialami perempuan. Konsep kekerasan kultural yang digunakan adalah konsep Galtung dan kajian sastra bandingan afinitas dari Hutomo sebagai kajian yang digunakan dalam penelitian. Penelitian ini berusaha mendeskripsikan kekerasan kultural yang diterima perempuan di lingkungan budaya patriarki. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dan ancaman kritik sastra feminis untuk memperoleh gambaran secara mendetail tentang kehidupan yang terjadi terhadap kaum perempuan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa bentuk kekerasan yang dialami oleh kedua tokoh perempuan dalam kedua novel sama, namun yang membedakan adalah motif tujuan kekerasan. Hal tersebut disebabkan oleh latar belakang budaya dari kedua novel tersebut berbeda. Selain itu, dampak yang ditimbulkan dari kasus kekerasan juga hampir sama yaitu kedua tokoh mengalami perubahan karakter menjadi sosok yang tega, pemarah, serta pendendam

Kata kunci: Kekerasan, kultural, perempuan, kritik sastra feminis, sastra bandingan

1. INTRODUCTION

Patriarchal culture is one form of culture that places women in positions that are not equal to men. Women are placed as parties who are discriminated against and are at a disadvantage. This is in accordance with the opinion of Herkisworo (2000: 76), which states that patriarchy is a structure that makes women crushed. Thus women in the system are very vulnerable to experience gender injustice.

Javanese and Cambodians people are adherents of a strong patriarchal culture. This can be seen through literary works produced by the two countries. Because most of a literary work reflects on social reality in society, (Wellek, 2001: 109). The novel Astirin Mbalela by Suparto Brata and the novel The Road of Lost Innocence by Somaly Mam and Ruth Marshall is one of the products of Javanese and English literary backgrounds with Cambodian backgrounds featuring female figures as victims of violence against patriarchal culture in their environment.

Women's violence caused by patriarchal culture is the main topic of feminism. They assume that patriarchal culture causes the position of women is not equal to men. Women are disadvantaged in various sectors, both domestic and public. This is in accordance with the opinion of Retnaningtyas (2018: 74), which states that patriarchy is defined as the domination of men in all socio-political aspects in society. In this case patriarchy not only describes as the dominance of fathers in a family, but the dominance of men in all

aspects of life. Women in this matter only act as executors of the existing power.

The cultural violence is one form of violence that can not be seen in plain sight but the impact can be felt for generations in society. That is because cultural violence originates from beliefs and attitudes that have been instilled for generations related to the need for violence and power in the community, (Eriyanti, 2017: 4). This violence can legitimize the existence of direct and structural forms of violence.

Based on the background of the study above, the purpose of this study is twofold. First, it describes the forms of cultural violence against women in both novels. Second, describe the impact of cultural violence on women in both novels. By doing this research, it is expected to be able to provide an overview of the forms of violence that women receive due to cultures in the two different countries. In addition, it can also provide information about the impact on women as victims of violence by local patriarchal culture.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Violence against women mostly occurs as a result of a lasting patriarchal culture in society. The domination of men as an effort to assert power in all aspects of life means that women do not have equal authority with men. Women in this case have a great opportunity to become objects of acts of violence by men. This is in line with Darni's opinion (2015: 2), which states that acts of

discrimination that place women in a subordinate position will provide the possibility of violence.

Violence is not only meant as an act of hurting other people directly and the perpetrators can be seen in plain view. But violence occurs when a person is unable to actualize himself properly. That is because the potential realization of a person controls himself rather than physical and mental realization, (Windhu, 1992: 64). So that in someone there is a barrier, it needs to be avoided so that violence does not occur. Violence can be classified into three types, namely direct, structural, and cultural violence (Galtung, 1990: 294).

Direct or personal violence is violence that has clear subjects and objects. Using the human body itself and cutting-edge objects to commit violence. It is carried out individually or in groups, and aims are related to physical (anatomical) or verbal (psychological). While structural violence is violence whose perpetrators are not visible, but are hidden in the structure of society. This violence is arranged based on the assumption of a general formula that is inequality, in this case related to the distribution of power, (Galtung, 1996: 74-75). This violence emphasizes the system that applies in social situations, such as structural violence committed by the government to its citizens which causes many of its citizens to suffer from hunger, death, etc.

Cultural violence is violence caused by cultural aspects as a means of validation. These cultural aspects include religion, ideology, language, art, formal and empirical science, (Galtung, 1990: 296). Cultural violence can make direct and structural violence visible. This violence is often not recognized by the public, because it has been believed to be an attitude passed down for generations related to the need for violence and power.

This study also uses a comparative literary science to determine the comparison of problems in two novels with different cultural backgrounds. This is because the science is a literary study outside the borders of a country as well as a study of the relationship between literature and the field of science as well as other beliefs (Remak in Damono, 2015: 2). Because comparing literature with literature, the comparative literary science in this study requires another theory, the Galtung theory of violence. This is consistent with Damono's opinion (2009: 1-2), which states that comparative literature is the only literary science that cannot produce its own theories.

In conducting of comparative literary research, Hutomo (1993: 11) divides three main elements that can be used as a foundation. These elements are: (1) affinity, (2) tradition, and (3) influence. This study uses an element of affinity foundation to uncover the problems in both novels. The element of affinity in this case has the intention that literary works can be compared if the two have

links between their intrinsic elements. In this case the two novels of different countries have a relationship in terms of themes. Both of these novels present cases of violence against women caused by cultural aspects in their environment. By using comparative literary studies and the Galtung theory of violence, this study will obtain similarities and differences in the shape and impact of violence experienced by women due to the confines of local patriarchal culture.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with the approach of feminist literary criticism. Analyzing data in this study by describing the facts contained in literary works. The data sources in this study are two different country novels, the novel Astirin Mbalela by Suparto Brata and the novel The Road of Lost Innocence by Somaly Mam and Ruth Marshall. Suparto Brata's Astirin Mbalela novel was published in Yogyakarta in 2007 by a narrative publisher with 207 pages, while The Road of Lost Innocence by Somaly Mam and Ruth Marshall was published in London in 2007 by Virago Press consisting of 14 chapters with 146 pages Data in this research are excerpts from novel texts about cultural violence experienced by women and the impacts that occur due to cultural violence on women in their daily lives.

This research uses library technique. The procedures for collecting data in this research are reading and knowing the existence of problems in literature, identifying problems, estimating tools used to solve problems, inventory and data processing, and conclusions. Analyzing data in this study uses descriptive analysis techniques. The data analysis stage in this research is organizing and preparing data for analysis, reading all data that has been determined in the novel, analyzing in detail with the coding process, applying the coding process to describe the same and different parts of the two existing novel objects, describing the focus of research which is restated in the form of narratives or qualitative reports, finally interpreting the data. Testing the validity of the data in this study using time triangulation techniques.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section will describe the form of cultural violence against women and the impact it has on the novels of Astirin Mbalela and the novel The of Lost Innocence. Cultural violence is perpetrated by men. This was done to express the aspects of masculinity that exist in him as well as a form of affirmation of power, (Rokhmansyah, 2018: 282). Affirmation of power in this case as a manifestation of the preservation of the pattern of power that has been passed down by its culture to treat women. By looking at the picture of violence against women in these novels, it is known that

various forms and impacts are caused by the cultural aspects that are at the root of violence.

1. The Cultural Violence against Women in the novel *Astirin Mbalela* by Suparto Brata and *The The Lost Innocence* by Somaly Mam and Ruth Marshall

The cultural aspect of patriarchal ideology is the cause of violence against women in both novels. Cultural violence in the two novels tends to be the same, but the motive for the purpose of violence is different. The forms of violence are arranged marriages and humiliation towards female reproduction.

a. *The Cultural Violence against Women in the novel Astirin Mbalela* by Suparto Brata

a) Arranged marriage of Astirin with his parents' choice men

The cultural violence in the form of arranged marriages in the novel *Astirin Mbalela* was experienced by Astirin figures. The figure when he was still in school would be matched with a man of his family's choice. That's because the Astirin family is still in the countryside and embraces patriarchal culture. This was also expressed by Kartodirjo (1993), who stated that most women were arranged for marriage when married. This practice still occurs in many rural areas and matched women have no right to refuse, (Darni, 2015: 2). The description of matchmaking practices is as follows.

"Iki tepungna, Kang Buamin. Kancane Pakdhe nyambut gawe golek dagangan sepedhah montor. Ning Buamin iki luwih pinter lan akeh srawunge, wong sinambi bukak bengkel neng kulon pasar. Kene, kowe ya kudu melu nemoni, wong Buamin wis waleh nduwe karep ngepek golek bojo kowe. Kowe ora susah sungkan ora susah wegah, Rin. Beja, merga Buamin iki sanajan isih jaka wis duwe omah dhewe, duwe pametu cukup. Mula kene, saiki tepungna dhisik." (Brata, 2007:18).

The quote shows that Astirin was forced by her parents to want an arranged marriage with the man she had prepared. Her Pakdhe and Mbokdhe insisted that Astirin accept the proposal of the man. Thus, the burden of his life will be reduced. The practice of cultural violence in the form of arranged marriages does not seem to constitute violence. Even though it robs a girl's freedom and future. This is done because it has been done from generation to generation by the surrounding community. So that what he does is considered not a violence but a need for parental authority over his child. As a tribute to parents and culture, a child or younger person can only obey and accept decisions without rejection, as the quotation below.

Astirin mung dthingkluk wae. Jane, yen wong tuwa tuwas, mesthine tangkep kaya Astirin kuwi wis bisa digraita yen bocah wadone ora setuju. Pancen saiki jaman terus terang. Nanging yen posisine mepet kaya Astirin ngene iki, upama dheweke kandha blaka yen durung gelem kawin,

utawa luwih thoklehe emoh kawin oleh Buamin, apa Astirin ora diclathu bocah wadon murang tata? Apa Pakdhe Mar wani nampa sipat blak-blakan kaya mengkono kadidene pratandhane jaman maju? Apa Buamin ora ngrasa wirang lan peteng pikire? Ora!Ora! Astirin sing turunane wong Jawa, ngukuhi laku Jawa, ora bakal alaku wangkal lan thokleh mangsuli gaweserike atine liyan. Dadi, meneng lan ndhingkluk kuwi laku sing paling trep kanggone Astirin. (Brata, 2007:20)

The quotation above clearly shows that the Astirin character experienced mental anguish when he would be matched with Buamin. This can be seen from Astirin's bent body language that manifests one's disapproval of a decision. But that does not mean in the Astirin family that embraces Javanese culture. In Javanese culture the dominance of the decision is on the head of the family absolutely must be obeyed. The figure also realized that he was of Javanese descent who was known to be obedient and harmonious with others, so that if he behaved frankly it would violate existing cultural rules and hurt others.

b) A slighting view of female reproduction

In addition to arranged marriages, a slighting view of women's reproduction is one form of violence caused by culture. Women are considered as people who will surely get married and are in the domestic realm. Geertz (1985: 48) states that women are believed to have the freedom of movement in their households. So that women are harassed for free in terms of reproduction because later women also experience the same thing in the household. Thus it is considered normal by men, as the following quote.

Dhiik, Cah Ayu! Aja ngono, ta. Kowe ora sah nesu karo aku. Wis lumrah, wong lanang wadon ki yen kumpul saomah terus kaya ngono kuwi. Ora sah getun. Toh ora saiki, mbesuk kowe ya ngrasakake! (Brata, 2006:80).

The quote shows that women experience cultural violence against their reproductive organs. Women who are still young and do not deserve to be treated as a married couple, are forced to serve the passions of men who are not their husbands. Men think that later women will also experience the same thing when living in a household. It is clear that the woman suffered physical violence in the form of rape by men who were not her husband. Astirin was forced to do this by Johan Nur because it was considered normal in his environment. Though the act is very detrimental to women both physically, psychologically, and the future. But this was done because the behavior was considered as a necessity as men towards women.

b. *The Cultural Violence against Women in the Novel of The Lost Innocence* by Somaly Mam and Ruth Marshall

Besides occurring in Javanese novels, violence against women caused by culture also occurs in the novel *The Road of Lost Innocence* by

Somaly Mam and Ruth Marshall. The novel tells about violence against women caused by patriarchal ideology. The violence includes arranged marriages and low views on women's reproduction.

1) Arranged Marriage

Arranged marriages are a form of cultural violence contained in the novel *The Road of Lost Innocence*. The practice of matchmaking was experienced by Somaly's figures by his adopted grandfather. Somaly was set up with a man chosen by his grandfather and had to be willing to accept it, his quote as below.

About a month after we returned from that trip to Kampong Cham, Grandfather caught hold of my arm one morning when I was dropping off his money. He said, "Prepare your things and come to the house tonight." I did what he said- it never occurred to me to disobey him. That evening, when I went back to his house, there was a man there, and Grandfather told me, "This is your husband." (Mam and Marshall, 2005:27).

The quote clearly shows that Somaly's character was forcibly arranged by his foster grandfather to a chosen man he had prepared. Grandfather did this to get money not to unite two people as husband and wife. Somaly figures as if the goods are sold to other men but under the guise of being married. This practice was unavoidable by Somaly, because he felt he was part of the life of someone else (his grandfather). In Cambodian culture, girls are obliged to respect their elders. Thus Somaly must accept the need for violence which has entrenched hereditary in its environment. Though it really makes someone's need for freedom disturbed.

2) A slightly view of female reproduction

A slightly views of female reproduction are also a form of cultural violence in the novel *The Road of Lost Innocence*. That view is in the form of treatment that Somaly received when she worked at a clinic. Although married and not white, but he remains a target of the men at work. He was sexually assaulted by men in that place. The description of this matter is as quoted below.

There was no respite from men, even at the clinic. The doctors there preyed on us, especially the pretty white-skinned ones and the orphans, those who had nobody to protect them. There was nothing we could do but submit. At first I was spared, because I was ugly, and married. But it didn't last forever, (Somaly and Ruth Marshall, 2005:32).

The quote shows that the women in the novel are not free from the target of men. The men sexually assaulted women, one of them at work. While the women according to the culture that exists must be obedient to men. This shows that there is violence caused by local culture, where there is domination of men over women. Then many women experience suffering. The act was not

realized as being classified as a cultural violence, but was not realized because it was considered as a need for violence and power.

2. The Impact of Cultural Violence on Women in the novel *Astirin Mbalela* by Suparto Brata and The novel *The Lost Innocence* by Somaly Mam and Ruth Marshall

After experiencing a number of acts of violence by patriarchal culture in their environment, the female characters in the novel *Astirin Mbalela* and the novel *The Road of Lost Innocence* experienced a change in character. The change was caused by the behavior he had received previously from the men who committed violence against him.

a. The Impact of Cultural Violence on Women in the novel *Astirin Mbalela* by Suparto Brata and The novel *The Lost Innocence* by Somaly Mam and Ruth Marshall

As a result of cultural violence experienced by a female character in her life, Astirin has experienced several character changes. Changes in the character of the character in the novel *Astirin Mbalela*, among others, become a flirty woman who offered to satisfy the lust of men who have contributed to his life and there is an intense desire to take revenge on those who have hurt him.

Being a Prostitute Woman

Astirin used to be an innocent, kind, obedient, and obedient girl to the rules of Javanese culture. But because one day he got violent acts from a man named Yohan Nur, so he kept the anger and rebelled into a brave person to one of them by offering himself to the men who have contributed to his life. One of the quotations is as below.

Ing hotel, ing peturon, Astirin tetep seneng atine. Ora wedi kaya nalika ing kamar sewane Yohan Nur. Ora sengit karo wong lanang ing cedhake. Kosokbaline, Astirin kaya andreg anggone kepengin ngruket wong lanang kuwi, (Brata, 2007:156).

The quote shows that violence has an impact on changes in a person's character. Astirin is no longer as personal as before, but has a different character like a brave and even wanted to get the love of a man. This was done by Astirin, because he did not want to be in a dark condition as a useless human being. While struggling for happiness, he offered himself as a woman who satisfied men or as a guest entertainer in a cafe. This was done because he had also been a victim of male sexual violence. This is in accordance with the opinion of Wismayanti in Darni (2005: 37), which states that young girls who were originally prostituted, then through the process of habituation will prostitute themselves. From this opinion, it can be concluded that people who have been victims of sexual violence may be able to offer themselves as well.

2) Revenge

When Astirin has managed to struggle to become a free and independent woman, she remembers some of the people who have been present in her life, either those who hurt or who have contributed. After paying some debts in the form of repayment of services or material to people who have done good to him, the figure also conducted several searches for people who have committed violence against him, one of the figures is Yohan Nur. Yohan Nur is a very cruel figure to him, because he has committed sexual, physical violence, and sold it to the human trafficking bureau. Thus Astirin searches for these figures with the aim of taking revenge, as quoted below.

“O, wis tangi, Mas, sampeyan? Nuwun sewu, sampeyan kejiret tampar kaya ngono! Hi hi hik! Aku sing njiret. Kelingan, Mas, biyen aku ya kokdhadhung kaya mengkono ing cagak kuwi, ya nganggo tampar iki. Ah, sayang yen sampeyan ora kelingan. Yihuuuuu! Aku ora seneng lagu ndhangdhutan e Mas, senenganku lagu ngono! Saiki aku nyaur utang, Mas. Kowe genten dakjiret, dakkon ngrasakake sepiro larane atiku, larane awakku nalika samana, (Brata, 2007:189).

The quote shows Astirin's revenge to Yohan Nur as the perpetrator of the violence. The figure is a man who used to commit violence directly to Astirin. With a series of violence inflicted upon him, Astirin harbored great anger. This was revealed when she became a successful woman by doing the same treatment as perpetrators of violence against her.

b. The Impact of Cultural Violence on Women in the Novel Astirin Mbalela by Suparto Brata and the Novel The Lost Innocence by Somaly Mam and Ruth Marshall

The impact of violence in the form of character changes was also carried out by the female character Somaly in the novel *The Road of Lost Innocence*. The change in character includes a passionate desire to seek revenge and hate marriage.

1) Revenge

Because he often accepted the violence carried out by his grandfather, he caused a great anger in Somaly. This is illustrated in the following quote.

I dreamed of killing Grandfather, but it never occurred to me to slip away and try to make my way back home to the forest. That part of my life was gone forever-somehow it didn't seem possible for me to make my way back. I had discovered his true nature and I hated him, (Mam and Marshall, 2005:29).

The quote shows that Somaly wanted to repay his grandfather's treatment all this time. The violence committed by his grandfather so far has been miserable for him. This makes a character initiative to vent his anger. But this desire is only a desire in the character, did not dare to be done

directly because he was a person who was riding in his adopted grandfather's in law house.

2) Hate Marriage

Cultural violence in the form of arranged marriages has a significant impact on Somaly. Living in a matchmaking household made Somaly suffer physically and psychologically. He seemed to be a domestic slave carried out by her husband. This caused anger that never ended ended hating the bond of marriage. The description of the quotation is as below.

“I hate marriage. It puts women in prison. On her wedding day the girls obeys her parents, and when the ceremony is over she is raped. What does a young girls in Cambodia know about sex? Nothing, (Mam and Marshall, 2005:28).

The quote shows that the action taken by Somaly was an impact of the existence of violence in the household. Starting from an arranged marriage by his grandfather, he had to live as a married couple with a man he did not know. During the married life Somaly figures seemed to live in prison. She seemed to be her husband's domestic slave. Every day working in the domestic sphere, not allowed to socialize with the public, and always obey each of her husband's orders. Not infrequently these figures get direct violence that hurt him. As a result of getting insistent violence that makes the character in the resistance in the form of feelings of hate marriage.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis conducted on the novel *Astirin Mbalela* and *The Road of Lost Innocence*, it can be concluded that the cultural violence in the novels of different countries is caused by aspects of patriarchal ideology. The ideology places men to dominate women in social life. This causes women to experience various forms of cultural violence.

Cultural violence against women in both novels tends to be the same, namely matchmaking and a low view of women's reproduction. Although the same, but because of different cultural backgrounds, the motives for the purpose of the violence committed are different. In the novel *Astirin Mbalela* with a Javanese cultural background, arranged marriages for women aim to form a happy family, while arranged marriages in the novel *The Road of Lost Innocence* with Cambodian cultural backgrounds aim to gain economic benefits for their parents.

The violent violence has a significant impact on the female leaders who are victims. In general, these actions made the female character angry and tried to respond. But the form of the impact contained in the two novels is different. In the *Astirin Mbalela* novel the act of violence changes the character of the victim into a woman who likes to entertain men and becomes a woman who dares to take revenge. Whereas in the novel *The Road of*

Lost Innocence, violence makes female characters hate marriage and revenge.

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