

Domestic Violence Against Women in *Isinga*: Roman Papua Novel by Dorothea Rosa Herliany

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed at finding out domestic violence against women in Indonesia, especially as reflected in the novel *Isinga* written by Dorothea Rosa Herliany. The violence as a form of discrimination against women due to the influence of patriarchal culture, norms and customs is still abundant. Women are required to be good wives who are able to serve their husbands, be obedient, maintain food availability, take care of their children, and so on. Men only have a role to provide homes and make offspring. In Papuan culture, men who succeed in having many children will be more respectable. However, this is bad for the women body and psychological states. The results showed that the character in the novel tried to contextualize existential feminism. Nevertheless, she eventually accepted patriarchal culture.

Keywords: *domestic violence, feminism eksistensial, patriarchy*

1. INTRODUCTION

The history of civilization like one in the Ancient Greece recorded how the world viewed women negatively. Women did not even have any rights and inheritance [1]. Women were considered only as an object of sexual satisfaction for men. During the Roman civilization, women were regarded as little or crazy children who could be traded or killed by their guardian. Meanwhile in Ancient China, it was even worse. Women had no value at all. Women could not have rights in various aspects of life. Her life rights were gone when her husband died. The woman would be burned alive [2]. Even in Arab Jahiliyah, women could be married in some random ways by men. In fact, having a wife was like getting a slave girl [3].

From time to time, some women do not get the right to show their existence as humans. This is not only triggered by history. The views of philosophers said that women are wombs which are just creatures designed by the word 'woman' who can be treated as desired also cause discrimination against women [1].

Discrimination against women caused by the influence of patriarchal culture, norms, customs, and religion [4] also has an impact on gender inequality. Women become victims of exploitation and violence in the domestic setting [5]. Domestic violence is commonly carried out by known close people (husband, father, wife, brothers) [6]. Culture-based violence in the household is also experienced by women in several countries such as Australia, Palestine, and Indonesia [4,7,8].

This had lasted for centuries until the 16th century feminist thought emerged and later was recognized as an intellectual movement in the 20th century, proved by the emancipation of women [9]. With the women's emancipation movement, the government made a policy to

protect women like the Regulation Article 5 No. 23 of 2004 which explains about the forms of violence that occur in the household can be in the form of physical violence, psychological violence, sexual violence, or neglect of the household.

However, domestic violence cases still exist. Patriarchal culture is growing. In Indonesia, revealing acts of domestic violence to the public is still considered taboo [5]. In the National Committee for Women (Komnas Perempuan's) annual records of facts and key points, 348,446 cases of female violence were reported and handled during 2017 [10]. Furthermore, in 2018, based on reports of violence in the private/ personal realm received by service providers, there was an increasing and quite large number of violence against girls, totaling 2,227 cases. While the number of violence against wives still ranks first at 5,167 cases. Then, in the private/personal sphere, the highest percentage was physical violence 41% (3,982 cases), followed by 31% sexual violence (2,979 cases), psychological violence 15% (1,404 cases), and economic violence 13% (1,244 cases).

Stuart Hall in the book of his entitled *Representation: Cultural Representation and signifying Practices* states, "Representation connects meaning and language to culture, representation is an essential part of the process by the which meaning is produced and Exchanged between members of culture [11]. Through representation, a meaning is produced and exchanged between members of the community. It can also be said that representation is a way to produce meaning. Representation is considered as an attempt to portray an object through the use of language symbols / symbols through the media [12].

As a matter of fact, various female writers also appeared to convey feminist thoughts as a form of rejection of the role of women built by culture. Feminism is a theory of equality between men and women in the political,

economic, and social fields, or an organized act that fights for women's rights and interests. In the sense of the word, the aim of feminism is to increase the position and level of women to be equal to men [4].

The rejection towards patriarchal culture by women through novels is a symbolic step to achieve gender equality. Many novels carry out gender equality to show rejection of gender injustice due to the dominance of patriarchal culture. Women are depicted as having a tendency towards domestic life because the image of mothers is closely related to domestic life in Indonesia [13].

1.1. Related Work

Furthermore, a number of writers these days have begun voicing women through literary works such as novels. Because in fact, some novels express conflicts in the fragments of life that cause changes in the life in the long term [14]. Similarly, other literary works that were created based on human and human problems, about life and the meaning of life [15]. In other words, literary works can be seen as a representation of real life.

1.2. Our Contribution

The purpose of this research is to describe the forms of domestic violence experienced by women and children, especially those caused by culture and social life reflected in the novel *Isinga: Roman Papua* by Dorothea Rosa Herliany. The research used existential feminism theory Simone de Beauvoir. This research is expected to be able to make an understanding of the forms, causes and consequences that occur from domestic violence. In addition, this research also aims to see the struggle of the female characters in the novel in the praxis of struggle in the domestic life. It is also expected that the awareness of men and women grow that the two can work together without marginalizing the role of women due to the role that has been shaped by patriarchal ideology .

1.3. Paper Structure

This study used a qualitative descriptive method with an existentialist feminism approach . This research technique is content analysis. The data validation tests use data triangulation, theory, and methods. Data sources were primary data and secondary data. Primary data were excerpts from Dorothea Rosa Herliany's novel, *Isinga : Roman Papua* . Meanwhile, secondary data was quoted from books, journals, and the internet as a theoretical framework for conducting analyzes related to the concept of existential feminism Simone de Beauvoir.

2. BACKGROUND

Isinga novel : *Roman Papua* by DRH told about the figure of Irewa with socio-cultural conflict in her life as a woman

surrounded by customs. In Papua, women can reject men who propose them. However, it was not with Irewa who had to be willing to be a *yonime*, a peacemaker from the adat (the Hobone and Aitubu villages which were involved in a conflict) at the time. According to Papuan customary rules, being a peacemaker meant giving oneself to customary interests. However, obedience which was considered as the best way for a woman is actually fatal. Irewa, who at the time was Malom's wife, fell on the choice of surviving in abuse in the form of violence that or put up a fight.

Based on the 51 data on acts of violence in the novel *Isinga : Roman Papua* by DRH , it was found a few forms of violence in the form of physical, psychological, sexual intercourse, and family neglect, causes, and consequences of domestic violence experienced by the characters in the novel.

2.1. Physical Abuse

The first discussion is the physical violence that happened to the character Irewa . According to article 6 of Law No. 23 of 2004, physical violence is an act that results in pain, illness, or serious injury. The perpetrator (family member) persecutes the victim physically, which results in the victim experiencing bruises or physical injuries. Persecution of this motif can be directly seen so it can immediately be identified.

Based on the analysis and classification of data, physical violence can be seen from the following quotation.

Ia lalu memukuli badan istrinya. Ia mengira hal itu bisa menyebabkan istrinya hamil. Bahu, kepala, dan punggung istrinya ia pukul dengan kayu besar. Istrinya berteriak-teriak kesakitan. Tubuh istrinya berdarah dan jatuh ke tanah. Pada waktu lain, ia mengulang hal yang sama karena istrinya belum hamil juga [16].

He then hit his wife's body. He thought it could make his wife pregnant. He struck his wife's shoulders, head and back with large logs. His wife was screaming in pain. His wife's body bled and fell to the ground. At other times, he repeated the same thing because his wife was not yet pregnant [16].

Physical violence experienced by the female character (the wife) in the above snippet was in the form of beatings that occurred repeatedly so that they could be classified as severe physical violence. This happened due to the undeveloped knowledge about sex in Papua during that time.

Irewa tak bisa tidur merasakan ngilu, memar, dan sakit di seluruh tubuhnya. Sunyi. Lebam. Ia memikirkan banyak hal. Irewa merasa malam seperti tak selesai-selesai [16].

Irewa could not sleep feeling pain, bruised, and aching all over her body. Quiet. Bruised. She thought of many things. Irewa felt like the night would never end [16].

Acts of physical violence such as hitting and kicking women could also be found in the story. The character, Irewa often ached, bruised, and sick. These feelings were often experienced by Irewa. However, she was unable to

fight. It was caused by the customary rules which stated that women must always do good deeds. The patriarchal ideology in Papua made that happened [17].

2.2 *Psychic Violence*

Article 7 of Law No. 23 of 2004 stated that psychological violence is an act that results in fear, loss of self-confidence, loss of ability to act, feelings of helplessness and/or severe psychological suffering for a person. Psychological violence includes emotional torture, in the form of restraints carried out by the husband, leaving the wife to remarry without informing the wife, will indirectly result in emotional distress for the wife. Based on the data analysis and classification, psychological violence can be seen from the following quotation.

Hari ini Irewa ke ladang dan menggali....Irewa sudah tahu, nanti Malom pasti marah. Irewa pulang dengan hasil yang hanya sedikit. Ada keladi. Sedikit sekali. Hanya cukup untuk anaknya saja[16].

Today Irewa went to the field and dug up Irewa had already known, Malom would be angry later. Irewa returned home with only a few yields. There were taros. Very few. Only enough for her children[16].

Psychic violence made Irewa haunted by thoughts of her husband's anger. This caused the emergence of fear in every activity she did. Another result of the fear she experienced was the thought of committing suicide as a form of resistance. This was in line with Simone de Beauvoir's theory of existential feminism which has full power to ignore the order of values and social norms in order to break their own role. In this theory, suicide is a form of free choice as a human being. This could be seen in the following quotation.

...Hatinya dikeras-keraskan agar ia sendiri yakin akan membuang diri ke dalam sungai. Irewa sudah mantap ketika ingat Malom pernah mengancam akan membunuhnya ketika mereka terlibat perkelahian. Irewa sudah melepaskan semua pakaiannya... [16].

... Her heart was hardened so that she herself would be sure to throw herself into the river. Irewa was firm when she remembered that Malom had threatened to kill her when they got into a fight. Irewa had removed all of her clothes ... [16].

But the remembrance of the role of a mother made her failed to realize her intention. As a result, inner conflicts were felt by Irewa character. Rejecting suicide choice meant indirectly accepting that she was drowned in the patriarchal system. Therefore, Irewa character must bear the consequences of her choice to stay alive as contained in the following quotation.

Irewa lalu ingat pada anak-anaknya. Ia sangat menyangi mereka. Ah, Irewa marah! Kini pada dirinya sendiri. Bagaimana mungkin ia tega meninggalkan anak-anaknya?! Tidak, kata Irewa. Ia menolak keinginan kuat untuk bunuh diri[16].

Irewa then remembered her children. She loved them very much. Ah, Irewa was angry! Now to herself. How could she have the heart to leave her children?! No, said Irewa. She resisted the urge to commit suicide [16].

2.3 *Sexual Violence*

Sexual violence in article 5 letter c includes (a) the force of sexual relations which was done to those who live in the household, (b) the force of sexual relations on one person within the range of their household with another person for a specific purpose.

The most common form of violence against women as intimate partner. This reduced women's agency which resulted in poor physical and mental health [18].

Based on data analysis and classification, the sexual violence could be seen in the following quotation.

....Betis Malom mengikat dua kaki Irewa. Irewa diam. Malom menciumi tubuh Irewa. Irewa menolak....Ia mendesak, menekan, dan mengimpit agar lawannya lemah dan tak mampu melawan keinginannya. Malom lebih dewasa usianya ketimbang Irewa. Badannya lebih kuat. Irewa seorang gadis. Masih muda. Otot tubuhnya tak sekuat Malom. Pergumulan dua manusia yang berbeda keinginan. Irewa menolak. Irewa menolak apa saja yang dilakukan Malom pada tubuhnya. Malom tertantang sebagai laki-laki dalam perkelahian yang harus jadi pemenang[16].

... Malom's calf tied Irewa's legs. Irewa was silent. Malom kissed Irewa's body. Irewa refused ... He demanded, pressed, and pushed so that his opponent was weak and unable to resist his wishes. Malom was older than Irewa. His body was stronger. Irewa was a girl. Young. Her body muscles were not as strong as Malom's. The sexual intercourse of two different human desires. Irewa refused. Irewa refused whatever Malom did to her body. Malom was challenged as a man in a fight that he must be a winner. [16]

According to existential feminism theory, being a woman in love is a useless form of women. That is what is avoided from feminist thinking. The contextualization of the struggle of existential feminism was exemplified by the behavior of Irewa who tried to fight back by rejecting whatever her husband did. However, because of considering her role of women which had been regulated by custom stated by Mama Kame to her, she let go and fulfilled her husband's wishes.

Irewa character continued to fulfill her husband Malom's wishes to have children, even though she had just finished given birth. In Papuan custom, having many sons will be more honorable and wealthier. So having a son was a demand as seen in the following quotation.

Hanya sepuluh hari setelah Irewa melahirkan, Malom sudah minta Irewa melayaninya bersetubuh. Malom bilang, ia ingin anak laki-laki. Anak laki-laki adalah tuntutan.... [16]

Only ten days after Irewa gave birth, Malom had asked Irewa to serve her with intercourse. Malom said, he wanted a boy. Boys are a demand [16].

Despite having many children and an unpleasant life, Irewa still captivated other men. Lepi loved Irewa so much even though he knew that he could never be her husband. In Papuan costum, a man who wants someone else's wife must pay with a lot of pigs. He did not have enough of that. The desire of men to dominate women was also realized by using mantras because they had not yet known religion there. Irewa returned to being a male victim .

...Irewa merasa enak bisa bicara dengan seseorang. Selanjutnya Lepi mengajak Irewa melakukan apa yang sudah lama ia inginkan. Bersetubuh. Lepi lalu langsung menyusuli permintaan itu dengan mengucapkan mantra-mantra seperti diajarkan dukun.... [16]

.... Irewa felt comfortable being able to talk to someone. Next Lepi invited Irewa to do what she had long wanted to do. Have sex. Lepi then immediately granted the request by sayings spells as taught by the shaman ... [16] The meetings became more frequent. One day Malom suspected Irewa's attitude and followed her. Malom found Irewa being forced to have sex because Lepi didn't use spells anymore. They were tortured by Malom. After that happened, Irewa could not refuse Malom's invitation to have sex even though it became easier to abuse her. This is seen in the following quotation.

Sejak peristiwa hari itu, Irewa sama sekali tak bisa menolak ajakan bersetubuh dari Malom. Sejak itu pula, Malom juga jadi lebih mudah memukul Irewa. Salah sedikit saja, Irewa ditampar atau dipukul. Irewa sering mengingat kata-kata Mama Kame agar ia menjadi istri yang baik. Irewa merasa, sungguh tak mudah menjadi istri yang baik. [16]

Since the event of that day, Irewa had been unable to refuse the invitation to have sex from Malom. Since then, Malom had also become easier to hit Irewa. Just a little wrong, Irewa was slapped or beaten. Irewa often remembered Mama Kame's words so that she could become a good wife. Irewa felt that it was really not easy to be a good wife [16].

Disloyalty could be a cause of someone committing an act of violence. That is what happened to Irewa. The life of Irewa character had been created by socio-culture which required her to be a good wife. The role of women had been built on the basis of a patriarchal point of view [19]. As a result, women accepted their existence or what was called 'we are there for others' as a tragic act inherited from generation to generation in patriarchal culture.

But at another time, Irewa began to open her voice after learning about the danger of free sex done by her husband which resulted in her being affected by syphilis. By talking about her experiences, it meant that they have expressed their aspirations and socialized to other women. Women can express the impact of sexual violence explicitly in public [20].

2.4 Abandonment of the Household

Abandonment of the household is an act of abandoning people or family members within the family. In Law No. 23 of 2004 article 9 has stated that an agreement or testament is that he is obliged to give life, care, or guard to that person. This type of household abandonment, for example, dishonesty of a husband over his income, does not provide for his wife, and exploitation to make his wife work harder. That was what happened to the character Irewa. Based on data analysis and classification, family abandonment could be seen in the following quotation.

....Malom tidak merasa harus bertanggung jawab untuk segala urusan itu. Itu sudah jadi kewajiban semua perempuan di bawah pegunungan Megafu. Malom tak mengerti Irewa merasa berat dengan semua itu. Pekerjaan

perempuan sudah harus demikian adanya. Anak dan makanan. Maka tak akan bisa dilihat oleh orang luar Papua ada laki-laki di wilayah itu menjinjing anak dalam noken. Kalau ada anak dalam noken, itu pasti ada di noken perempuan. [16]

...Selain itu, ia juga tahu tentang rumah makan yang di belakangnya ada para pelacur itu. Semua laki-laki Distrik Yar dan sekitarnya tahu. Ada perempuan bisa diajak tidur di sana. Malom memang tak kerja. Tapi ia punya uang dari hasil menjual tanah [16].

.... Malom did not feel obligated to be responsible for all of these matters. It had become the duty of all women under the mountains of Megafu. Malom did not understand that Irewa felt heavy about all that. Women's work must be like that. Children and food. Then no outsider could see that there are men in the area carrying children in noken. If there are children in Noken, it must be in women's Noken. [16]

... Besides, he also knew about the restaurant which there were prostitutes behind it. All the men in the Yar District and surrounding knew about it. There were women who could be invited to sleep there. Malom didn't work. But he had money from selling lands [16].

Women assumed that loyalty is important in their lives despite the presence of other women in the middle of their household [21]. The women in the story of this novel did not dare to take steps to ask for divorce as a form of struggle for existential feminism in general.

Irewa tahu Malom menjual tanah. Itu sebetulnya mengecewakan hatinya. Tapi apa yang bisa dilakukan Irewa? Bukan haknya untuk melarang. Irewa kecewa karena Malom tidak mematuhi aturan adat. [16]

Irewa knew that Malom was selling land. That actually disappointed her heart. But what could Irewa do? It was not her right to ban it. Irewa was disappointed because Malom did not obey the customary rules [16].

Household abandonment done by Malom toward Irewa caused disappointment. Malom sold land arbitrarily without obeying customary rules. In her heart it was unfair because she withstood because she obeyed the rules created by the custom. She could not do anything, including stated out her opinions. Women who expressed opinions and fight for freedom to make choices were still considered taboo [22].

3. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the discussion of data analysis, it could be concluded that all forms of violence contained in Article 5 of Law No. 23 of 2004 experienced by female character in the novel *Isinga: Roman Papua*. Forms of violence include physical, psychological, sexual abuse, and abandonment of the household. The cause of the violence occurred dominantly because of patriarchal culture and ideology which then had an impact on gender inequality. In addition, violence also occurred due to lack of knowledge about sexual health and also adultery. As the result of such violence comes in the form of struggle from the character who had existential feminist thinking to become an intellectual. Women refused to be discriminated by working to meet the daily needs of their families as the character did. At the end of the story, the

character managed to be the subject of women's inspiration and played a role in socializing the dangers of free sex in the household. This novel successfully showed the contextualization of the struggle for extension feminism, although indirectly, it still preserved patriarchal power.

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