

# Comparing Gender Relations in *Pada Sebuah Kapal* by Nh. Dini with Ayu Utami's *Larung*

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the comparison of gender relations in the novel *Pada Sebuah Kapal* by Nh. Dini with the novel *Larung* by Ayu Utami in terms of the author's period. The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative, the data sources in this study are divided into two, namely primary sources and secondary sources. The results of this study show that there are similarities between the two novels, which can be seen from how the author tries to describe female characters who experience changes in attitudes, traits, and thoughts. Another similarity can be seen from the desire of female characters in both novels to equalize with men. Furthermore, the two novels also have similarities in depicting the gender gap experienced by female characters. The two novels also show differences in the factors causing the gender gap. In addition, the differences can also be seen from the way the author expresses and describes the story in the novel.

**Keywords:** *gender relation comparison, pada sebuah kapal, larung*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Literary works are created from imagination which is a personal expression of the author, which can be in the form of ideas, ideas, thoughts, beliefs, personal experiences or other people described or described in written form. Literary works can also be in the form of expressing habits in religiosity, customs in certain ethnicities, and patterns of habitual behavior that express diversity [1]. In addition, literary works also play a role in developing human values, enriching experiences through the life backgrounds of characters in stories with various cultures, religions, races, and social statuses.

One of the literary works that is widely known in the form of long prose consisting of a series of stories of someone's life is the novel. In line with the opinion of Taufik & Mukarramah which states that there are many forms of literature that are generally known, the forms of these works include poetry, essays, short stories and novels. Among these literary works, the novel is the most popular literary work because it is more complete than other literary works [2]. This shows that literary works in the form of novels are better known because they have more complex and more detailed stories.

Novel as a form of literary work shows real life scenes depicted in a plot or a situation with various themes that are in accordance with the times. In line with the opinion of Wellek & Austin "Novel is a picture of real life and behavior from the era when the novel was written. Novels are realistic, novels develop from non-fiction narrative forms; letters, journals, biographies, chronicles or history" [3, p. 260]. In addition, in a novel the author also often relates to gender which is described by the problems that arise in the storyline in the relationship between male and female characters.

Gender is a social construction and consists of a set of behaviors and expectations. Gender used to be associated with biological sex, but is now considered a different concept. The history of gender differences between men and women has gone through a very long process. Therefore, the formation of gender differences is caused by many things. For example, because the social construction of men's gender must be strong and aggressive, men are then trained and socialized and motivated to become or go to the gender characteristics determined by a society. On the other hand, women must be gentle, so from infancy the socialization process not only affects the emotional development and vision and ideology of women, but also affects the physical

and biological development of women's ideology [4, p. 9-10] [5].

Gender in the novel can be defined as roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that are inherent in men and women and are socially and culturally constructed. Gender is an issue that exists in society, while literary works are one of the social tools that can be used to reflect on gender issues. A literary work in the form of a novel entitled *Pada Sebuah Kapal* by Nh. Dini and Ayu Utami's novel *Larung* are novels related to the issue of women's gender, only the two authors have different ages or periods.

Several previous studies on gender in the novel *Pada Sebuah Kapal* by Nh. Dini and Ayu Utami's novel *Larung* were conducted by Simega who examined gender ideology in the novel *Pada Sebuah Kapal* by Nh. Dini. The results of his research show that mixed marriages between eastern women and western men show gaps that result in no peace or happiness for either party. There is a gap between Eastern culture and Western culture in the form of ways of thinking that are expressed through language and choices of behavior that have become habits [6]. Furthermore, research conducted by Geleuk & Anindya examined the construction of gender in Ayu Utami's novel *Larung*. The results showed that there was a change in the identity of women, namely Yasmin, Cok, and Shakuntala. In addition, there are differences in the identities shown by the three female figures. The findings prove that there has been a shift in the post-New Order era regarding women's identity. Women began to critically question their position in society. Women also began to have an awareness to be brave and free in determining their lives, both in education, work, and household [7].

Based on some of the explanations above, it can be seen that the focus of previous research was limited to analyzing and describing gender in one novel, so that researchers are interested in comparing gender relations in the novel entitled *Pada Sebuah Kapal* by Nh. Dini with Ayu Utami's novel *Larung* remembers that the two authors are both from Indonesia but have different eras or periods. This comparison is not to judge which novel is better, but to see the gender differences and similarities in the two novels. The purpose of this study is to describe the comparison of gender relations in the novel *Pada Sebuah Kapal* by Nh. Dini with the novel *Larung* by Ayu Utami in terms of the author's period.

The theory used in this study includes theories about novels and gender. The word novel comes from the

Latin word *novellus* which is formed from the word *novus* which means new or new in English. It is said to be new because the novel form is a form of literary work that came later from other forms of work, namely poetry and drama [8, p. 124]. Novels can be interpreted as stories that describe part of the lives of the characters, especially the parts of life that change their fate [9, p. 18]. Apart from being a depiction of the author expressed through writing, the novel also plays a role in forming the character for the reader. This is in line with Yenhariza opinion that novel is a tool to educate to understand and understand various life problems experienced by humans. By reading novels, readers will know which good behavior to imitate and which behavior to abandon [10, p. 168].

Talking about novels, it cannot be separated from the term gender which is indicated by the author in the novel. Gender in all aspects of human life creates differences between women and men, including the social creation of women's lower position than men. For example, the woman is known to be gentle, beautiful, emotional, or motherly. While men are considered strong, rational, manly, mighty. The characteristics of the properties themselves are interchangeable properties. This means that there are men who are emotional, gentle, motherly, while there are also women who are strong, rational and mighty [11, p. 15]. Gender can also be interpreted as an inherent trait of men and women who are socially and culturally constructed. Changes in characteristics and traits that occur from time to time and from place to place are called the concept of gender [12, p. 71].

## 2. METHOD

The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative. In this study, the researcher only describes or describes the comparison of gender relations in the novel *Pada Sebuah Kapal* by Nh. Dini with the novel *Larung* by Ayu Utami. In other words, this research is a research that performs analytical procedures by not using statistical analysis procedures in the form of numbers or other summations [13, p. 6].

Sources of data in this study are divided into two, namely primary sources and secondary sources. The primary data source is a novel entitled *Pada Sebuah Kapal* by Nh. Dini (1985) was published by PT Gramedia, 351 pages thick and the fifth edition of *Larung* novel by Ayu Utami (2017) was published by KPG (Library Popular Gramedia), 295 pages thick. The

secondary data sources in this study came from several books and articles related to gender relations.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1 *Gender Relations in Novels Pada Sebuah Kapal by Nh. Dini (1985)*

Nh. Dini describes women through the character Sri who as a child was shy, didn't talk much, was closed, felt inferior and lacked self-confidence. Sri does not speak much but she is a woman who is able to observe closely the events around her, so Sri is also described by Nh. Dini as a woman who is meticulous and has a subtle feeling. This can be seen from several expressions contained in the novel, namely as follows.

Dini describes Sri as a woman who doesn't talk much "Sri is still the same as before. Not much to say. Usually only talk to the cat, to the chicken or to the plants in the front garden" [14, p. 18]. Dini also has an expression that reiterates that Sri does not talk much "From the very beginning, my brothers and sisters always made a sound in the family circle" [14, p. 260]. Furthermore, Dini shows why Sri has a quiet nature "I also accept my quiet nature as an inheritance from my father" [14, p. 266].

Dini describes the character Sri who is closed "It is not my habit to describe things about myself to others" [14, p. 27]. Dini describes the character of Sri who has low self-esteem "Suddenly I feel that I am shrinking, I do not deserve to be in the midst of a life where he is also present. That day I learned another torturous inferiority complex. I was born with shame and folds to myself" [14, p. 44]. Dini describes Sri who lacks self-confidence as well as a conscientious woman. "Since I was little I felt that I could not speak. I'm very shy. I speak only to answer questions that deserve to be answered. I observe the busyness of the people around me with the rigor I am aware of" [14, p. 14].

Sri's family environment also recognizes strict upbringing but cannot be separated from gentleness. Sri was educated hard with love to have subtlety, both speech and attitude. Subtlety is also interpreted as the obligation of a woman to obey the will of the man who becomes her husband, as Sri stated in the following novel. Dini expressed Sri regarding upbringing in his family "I grew up in a family that was quite harsh in upbringing, but which was filled with love and affection which was expressed with an attitude of tenderness" [14, p. 130]. Dini points out that Sri's desire to be a

perfect wife by having gentleness towards her husband "For twenty-four years I was filled with the thought that a wife is the shadow of her husband. That the paradise of a wife lies at the soles of her husband's feet. That the husband is the queen and representative of God who must be followed and followed by all his orders. I was expecting to be a wife like that" [14, p. 130].

In addition, in the novel *Pada Sebuah Kapal* by Nh. Dini also shows that women have an ethical mindset in implementing education. In other words, this novel describes how a woman educates in her own way. It can be seen from the expression in the novel, Dini "We live in the village, but my mother doesn't want her children to be influenced by the attitudes and teachings of ordinary people. For him a daughter is a representative of refinement, purity and beauty" [14, p. 14].

Nh. Dini also shows that the changes that occurred in Sri when she grew up. "I started to be able to talk. I started to be able to express my opinion in front of a group of my friends. And even a year later I dared to accept the responsibility of a dance teacher, who sometimes didn't show up, to teach the class below me. This is a novelty for me. I began to see another life of precision" [14, p. 17].

Lack of opportunities for women to work because of a sense of distrust of a woman's abilities and capacities. It can be seen from the expression in the novel, "He will only think: women cannot work without petty quarrels that unlucky fate" [14, p. 49]. Furthermore, "In this country people will not appreciate it," he said slowly. I am offended" [14, p. 50].

Novel *Pada Sebuah Kapal* by Nh. Dini also describes Sri as an Eastern woman who faces a gender gap in her marriage. Seen from the statement in the novel "I prefer a husband who is not good with other people, but who is gentle and affectionate to me" [14, p. 125]. Furthermore, "I only need love and tenderness" [14, p. 131]. Sri tries to show her husband's attitude which is rude, harsh, hot-blooded, angry, likes to yell, slam. Seen in the following quote, when there is something in the house that he does not approve of, his anger overflows violently "He shouted and slammed his feet on the floor" [14, p. 120]. "His hot blood is not at all restrained" [14, p. 124]. This gap is interpreted as a gap between attitudes or behavior of Eastern culture and Western culture, especially communication between husband and wife in mixed marriages.

Nh. Dini shows that an Eastern woman is a loyal type but that doesn't mean that she can just accept the

treatment of a Western man. Rude and arrogant treatment and disrespect for women are things that are very disliked by Eastern women. It can be seen from the following quote, "I don't like the way he talks. If he really wants to help, I want him to come close to me and just take the iron hammer from my hand and do the job I'm doing without saying a word" [14, p. 135]. "But I still don't agree with his attitude which always allows me to do things that are not really my job, lifting heavy things, lifting back high and rough drying ropes" [14, p. 138].

### **3.2 Gender Relations in Ayu Utami's *Larung* (2017)**

Ayu utami depicts women through the characters Yasmin, Cok, and Shakuntala. These three characters experience a change in attitude in Larung's novel, Yasmin, for example, who is initially described as a shy woman and sees herself as an object. However, as an adult Yasmin chose to refuse to follow the values regarding women in society that women were always depicted as submissive, patient and weak, including in sex relations which were considered male-dominated. Because for him it is the same as hurting himself. It can be seen from the quote in the following novel, "...where women are sexual objects? I lost subjection to myself and placed myself as an object..." [15, p. 179]. Furthermore, "What is the difference between idealism towards wife sacrifice, polygamy, and masochism? Everything is an internalization of injustice" [15, p. 180].

Ayu Utami through the character Yasmin shows that women have the same desires as men. Yasmin is described as an independent, intellectual, and not easily deceived woman. It can be seen from the expression in the novel Larung, "Look at my friend Yasmin Moningka. The perfect woman is beautiful, intelligent, rich, religious, educated, loyal to her husband. At least that's what he admits about himself" [15, p. 88].

Yasmin's character tries to show that women are free to identify themselves through their point of view. Not only that, he also teaches himself and invites all women to fight for their identity. The trick is to reject the custom in society that women are weak and unable to make decisions for their lives. "But actually I am not so contradictory. My subconscious is just clever. Although intelligence often does not reconcile, but separates. What distinguishes me from women who establish patriarchy is that I localize it to sexual fantasies. I accepted it and had sexuality with it. They accept it as a moral value, I as an aesthetic value" [15, p. 181].

Cok is described as a woman who follows the norms in society. One of them is a woman must maintain her chastity until marriage. But a change of mind occurred to him, Cok decided to break the existing norms, because he thought there was no need to follow what was in society. This can be seen from the quote in the novel, "Then I thought, why do I have to suffer to keep my hymen while my boyfriend gets pleasure? Good on him not good on me. In the end, I thought it was really stupid, ah, it's done" [15, p. 93]

Shakuntala proves that identity is not stable, every woman does not always have a feminine side and also men do not always have a masculine side. The novel Larung also depicts parents who always think there is a difference between women and men, as seen from the expression of Utami "My parents believe that men tend to be rational and women are emotional. Therefore men will lead and women take care. So you taught my brother to use reason to control the world, as well as the body. I never forced him to do the same thing, because he believed in the fact that I couldn't do it" [15, p. 154].

### **3.3 Comparison of Gender Relations in Novels *Pada Sebuah Kapal* by Nh. Dini (1985) with *the Novel Larung* by Ayu Utami (2017)**

There are gender similarities and differences expressed by Nh. Dini through her novel entitled *Pada Sebuah Kapal* (1985) with Ayu Utami through a novel entitled *Larung* (2017). The two authors of the novel are from Indonesia but have different periods or eras. The similarities between the two novels can be seen from how the author tries to describe a female character who experiences changes in attitudes, traits, and thoughts. In the novel *Pada Sebuah Kapal* by Nh. Dini shows that the female character named Sri was shy, didn't talk much, was introverted, felt inferior and lacked self-confidence. However, when Sri grew up, Nh. Dini shows that Sri has changed, such as Sri's courage in expressing her opinion, even Sri has the courage to accept the responsibility as a dance teacher. Nh. Dini also describes Sri's courage to oppose the custom in her family which demands that women must submit to men, but Sri bravely resists and opposes her husband's treatment.

The same thing is also seen in the novel *Larung* by Ayu Utami through the characters Yasmin, Cok, and Shakuntala. Yasmin, for example, was initially described as a shy woman and thought of herself as an object. However, as an adult Yasmin chose to refuse to follow the values regarding women in society that women were always depicted as submissive, patient and

weak, including in sex relations which were considered male-dominated. Furthermore, the character Cok is described as a woman who follows the norms in society. One of them is a woman must maintain her chastity until marriage. But a change of mind occurred to him, Cok decided to break the existing norms, because he thought there was no need to follow what was in society. Ayu Utami through the character of Shakuntala shows that there is a change in thinking that initially women are always considered feminine, but in fact they can also have the same masculine side as men. Through the character Shakuntala Ayu Utami proves that identity is unstable.

Another similarity can be seen from the desire of female characters in both novels to equalize with men. In the novel *Pada Sebuah Kapal* by Nh. Dini is illustrated by the character Sri who breaks the notion of a lack of opportunity for women to work because of a sense of distrust of a woman's abilities and capacities. Ayu Utami through the character Yasmin shows that women have the same desires as men. Yasmin is described as an independent, intellectual, and not easily deceived woman. Yasmin's character tries to show that women are free to identify themselves through their point of view. Not only that, he also teaches himself and invites all women to fight for their identity.

The two novels also have similarities in depicting the gender gap experienced by female characters. Novel *Pada Sebuah Kapal* by Nh. Dini also describes Sri as an Eastern woman who faces a gender gap in her marriage. This gap is interpreted as a gap between attitudes or behavior of Eastern culture and Western culture, especially communication between husband and wife in mixed marriages. In the novel *Larung* by Ayu Utami, it also depicts the gender gap that parents always assume there is a difference between women and men. Through the two novels, it can be seen that the gender gap is manifested in several forms, namely, marginalization, subordination, stereotypes, violence, and workload [16]. For centuries women in Indonesia have faced various forms of discrimination that occur due to the strong influence of patriarchal culture, norms, customs, and even religion. This view then causes men and women to have different roles, both biologically and socially [17] [18][19].

Differences can also be seen from the factors causing the gender gap. In the novel *By Nh. Dini* early gender gaps are caused by differences in attitudes and behavior of Eastern and Western cultures, while in Ayu Utami's novel *Larung* the gender gap is not due to

cultural differences but rather to the thoughts and assumptions of parents. As it is known that in Indonesia the gender gap can be seen from the family environment, population, education, economy, work, and in government. The difference in roles between men and women is also strongly influenced by the culture and culture of Indonesian society which consists of many ethnicities and tribes [20]. Not only that, even gender inequality has become a persistent feature of all modern societies. Although work-related gender discrimination in various forms is legally prohibited, prejudice and violence against women have not been eradicated. In fact, gendered social expectations can limit the career choices of men and women [5]. In addition, the differences can also be seen from the way the author expresses and describes the story in the novel. Novels written by Nh. Dini is open about issues related to sex. However, the expression in the novel is not too vulgar when compared to the novel written by Ayu Utami which openly and vulgarly tells sex from a woman's point of view.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

There are gender similarities and differences expressed by Nh. Dini through her novel entitled *Pada Sebuah Kapal* (1985) with Ayu Utami through a novel entitled *Larung* (2017). The two authors of the novel are from Indonesia but have different periods or eras. The similarities between the two novels can be seen from how the author tries to describe a female character who experiences changes in attitudes, traits, and thoughts. Another similarity can be seen from the desire of female characters in both novels to equalize with men. Furthermore, the two novels also have similarities in depicting the gender gap experienced by female characters. The two novels also show differences in the factors causing the gender gap. In addition, the differences can also be seen from the way the author expresses and describes the story in the novel.

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