

# Society's View of Women in Drupadi's Novel by Seno Gumira Ajidarma

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## ABSTRACT

The novel entitled Drupadi, written by Seno Gumira Ajidarma, tells the story of a female character named Drupadi in the epic Mahabharata. Seno changed the nature of several characters in the Mahabharata based on the tragic fate of Drupadi. People in Drupadi's novel give various responses to the chance experienced by Drupadi. Through literary works, people's views of women are voiced. This study aims to describe the public's view of women associated with facts outside of literary texts. The method used in this study is a qualitative descriptive analysis method with a mimetic approach. The mimetic approach was chosen because it questions the relationship between literature and reality, and utilizes documents as social reality or facts. The results obtained in this study, namely (1) women who are considered perfect by society have physical beauty and a high degree, (2) women who have become the property of a person/group are free to be treated whatever, (3) great women always get place in people's hearts. Based on the analysis and discussion results, it can be concluded that society's view of women is described as a reflection of the times that are still entrenched in placing women's position in society. With this cultural reflection, it is hoped that the community will be wiser in placing women in life in society, such as giving proper rights, not discriminating against women from a physical point of view, and making the definition of beauty more complex which is not only seen from the physical form, but also spiritually and intellectually.

**Keywords:** *society's view, women, novel, mimetic approach.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The novel entitled Drupadi, written by Seno Gumira Ajidarma, tells the story of a female character named Drupadi in the epic Mahabharata. Drupadi as a beautiful princess married the five Pandavas. However, he got an embarrassing incident after the Pandavas made Drupadi a bet and lost gambling with the Kauravas. Drupadi received terrible treatment from the Kauravas in coercion, harsh treatment, and rape.

Seno Gumira Ajidarma, the author of the novel Drupadi, is an Indonesian writer and writer. Since childhood he was familiar with reading philosophy and wayang so that from these readings he was able to shape his character. The writing of the novel Drupadi is an interpretation of the character Drupadi in the epic Mahabharata. In interviews that have been conducted, Seno said that the book Drupadi is a critique of the ideology inherent in the Mahabharata story. Wrapping the criticism in a literary novel is a powerful message that people can learn in their lives. The purpose of literature lies in the experience itself—transforming the reader's personal and social

concepts—and in its use in social contexts [1]. Seno changed the nature of several characters in the Mahabharata based on the tragic fate of Drupadi. She wondered why after being humiliated, Drupadi became impure and with her courage she changed the story that Drupadi as a polyandry woman could defend her human rights and gain her chastity.

In Drupadi's novel, people give various responses to their fate. When he was not married, he was glorified by society. However, when she became the wife of the Pandavas who at that time lost the gamble, she had to be willing to be humiliated and treated harshly. In the end, society still places Drupadi in their hearts as a woman who is superior, both in mind and in appearance. The community accompanied Drupadi's departure with deep emotion.

This study aims to describe society's view of women using a sociological study of literature. Drupadi's novel was chosen because it portrays people's lives, especially their views on women. The use of the study of the sociology of literature is based on a solid relationship between the events presented in the text or literary work with social facts outside

the text. Sociology of literature sees a greater pluralization of perspectives, making scholarly understanding more nuanced in relation to reflection [2]. This is also corroborated by Swingewood's view on the study of the sociology of literature, including: as a reflection of the times, seen from the production process of authorship or writers, as well as relating to history or history [3]. These two theories are used as the basis for studying Drupadi's novel using the sociology of literature in relation to it as a reflection or reflection of society's view of women.

## 2. METHODS

This study uses a qualitative descriptive analysis method with a mimetic approach. Descriptive analysis method is a method that analyzes and describes data to provide an overview of the object under study. The mimetic approach was chosen because it questions the relationship between literature and reality. The survey used is a sociology of literature and is included in the study of the mimetic approach. Data collection is done by reading the novel intensively, carefully, and repeatedly to obtain the contents of the reading. The data collected are in the form of words and sentences that show narratives and behaviors that reflect society's view of women. Data collection is done by (1) identifying words or sentences, (2) coding the data, (3) grouping data according to focus/purpose, including similarities in themes and characters, as well as differences in characters and plots, (4) extracting data, (5) presents the data according to the objectives/findings, (6) discusses the findings, and (7) concludes the data. With these guidelines, the

required data can be identified, recorded, and coded through research instruments in the form of data cards and documents of analysis. The data card used contains data codes, aspects studied, data citations, data sources, and pages, along with facts outside of literary works. The data source for this research is a novel entitled Drupadi by Seno Gumira Ajidarma, published in 2017 (second printing) containing 133 pages and a journal. The two sources are mixed so as to produce a characteristic of this research in the form of combining literary texts and facts outside of literary texts. The researcher as the vital instrument acts directly in observing the narrative and behavior of the characters in the novel so that the public's view of women can be formulated. The data analysis technique was carried out in three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusions. Data reduction is a form of analysis that selects, classifies, and organizes data so that the conclusions drawn are accurate. Presentation of data, namely arranging data in such a way as to provide the possibility of drawing conclusions and taking action.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on data analysis conducted on the novel Drupadi by Seno Gumira Aji Darma, it was found that there are 3 views of society towards women, namely (1) women who are considered perfect by society have physical beauty and a high degree, (2) women who have become the property of a person/group free to be treated whatever, (3) a great woman always has a place in the hearts of society. The following is an indicator of society's view of women in Drupadi's novel in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Indicators of Aspects Assessed in Society's View of Women

No	Aspects Studied	Keywords
1.	Physical Beauty	eye, lip
2.	High Degree	vehicle, jewellery
3.	Arbitrary Treatment	coercion, rough treatment
4.	Great Woman	virtuous, adored, loved, remembered, prayed for

### 3.1 Women Who Are Considered Perfect By Society Have Physical Beauty And A High Degree

Table 2 shows the narration and behavior of the characters that belong to the aspect of physical beauty and a high degree. The characters identified are the main characters with responses from the companion characters, such as the people and knights. The view on the perfection of women is also obtained based on facts outside of literary texts in the form of assumptions about the shape and height of women's bodies as a standard of beauty and the view

of men who favor beautiful women over wise women.

Several studies have also carried out highlights of women's physical beauty. Laksmi Pamuntjak's novel Amba inserts a feminist ideology by contradicting the concept of beauty as an identity, finding the contradiction of beauty as a physical identity based on the view of patriarchal society and the idea of beauty which is built from the point of view of women [6]. The novel Cantik Itu Luka by Eka Kurniawan describes female characters whose physical beauty is a disaster for themselves and their bodies are used as objects to satisfy lust [7].

**Table 2.** Women Who are Considered Perfect by Society Have Physical Beauty and A High Degree

Number	Data, Data Code and Description	Beauty and High Degree	Facts Beyond Literary Texts
1.	Data	<i>Sudah tentu tandu tempat sang putri bersemayam adalah pusat dari segala keindahan.</i> Of course the palanquin in which the princess resides is the center of all beauty.	1. For South Korean women, compared to facial attractiveness (which can be improved by plastic surgery), tall and slim can be considered as more prestigious traits, implying genetic superiority or high socioeconomic status that allows a person to have a nutritionally balanced diet, engage in appropriate sports, and have sufficient free time [4]. 2. Most men view beauty as the primary source of social status for women in marriage marketing; and education as a secondary resource used in significant capital shortages [5].
	Data Code	Drupadi/ p 2/ 2/ data 1	
	Description	A princess who is paraded on a palanquin, a short distance means of transportation only used by the noble class	
2.	Data	<i>Matanya berkilat-kilat melebihi segenap kilatan perhiasan di sekujur tubuhnya, dan ketika ia tersenyum para ksatria seketika itu bagaikan langsung terjerat hatinya, membuat mereka untuk sesaat menjadi lemas tanpa daya-masih untung tiada yang lantas jatuh pingsan</i> Her eyes gleamed more than all the glitter of jewels around her body, and when she smiled the knights instantly seemed to be entangled in her heart, making them momentarily limp powerlessly - luckily no one fell unconscious.	1. For South Korean women, compared to facial attractiveness (which can be improved by plastic surgery), tall and slim can be considered as more prestigious traits, implying genetic superiority or high socioeconomic status that allows a person to have a nutritionally balanced diet, engage in appropriate sports, and have sufficient free time [4]. 2. Most men view beauty as the primary source of social status for women in marriage marketing; and education as a secondary resource used in significant capital shortages [5].
	Data Code	Drupadi/ p 6/ 1/ data 2	
	Description	The beauty of Drupadi's eyes and the smile on her lips was able to captivate the knights and the jewelery worn by Drupadi was only owned by the nobility.	

### **3.2 Women Who Have Belonging To Someone/Group Are Free To Be Treated By Anything**

Table 3 shows the behavior of the characters who are included in the aspect of arbitrary treatment or are free to be treated whatever. The figures who did this random act were the Kuravas, namely Duryudhana and Dursasana. Views about the treatment of women are also obtained based on facts outside of literary texts in the form of restrictions on women's freedom in accessing mental health outside the home and the bad treatment that women get in the migration process.

Both inside and outside literary works, society is reflected as a party that interferes arbitrarily with women's freedom. This can also be seen from two studies on the novel Kinanti and Tarian Bumi. The female characters in the novel Kinanti by Margareth Widhy Pratiwi experience psychological, physical, and sexual violence that occurs in domestic and public areas by both men and women [10]. There is a form of marginalization of women in the novel Tarian Bumi by Oka Rusmini that occurs in the workplace, household, community, and state because of the dominant role of customs and religious interpretation [11].

**Table 3.** Women Who Have Belonging To Someone/Group Are Free To Be Treated By Anything

No.	Data, Data Code and Description	Mistreatment of Women	Facts Beyond Literary Texts
1.	Data	<i>"E, Drupadi, e kamu sudah menjadi milik Kurawa, e kamu harus ikut menghadap, e nanti Kakak Duryudhana marah, e kamu harus ikut aku Drupadi!"</i> <i>"E, Drupadi, e you already belong to the Kuravas, e you have to come face to face, e later Brother Duryudhana is angry, e you have to come with me Drupadi!"</i>	1. Mental health access and gender inequality are inseparable in the context of North India, and women's mental health cannot be addressed without first addressing the underlying gender relations [8]. 2. Externalization of EU borders in Africa exacerbates violence perpetrated against women seeking mobility during the migration process, creating a
	Data Code	Drupadi/ p 58/ 3/ data 1	
	Description	Forcing Drupadi to confront the Kuravas.	
2.	Data	<i>Dengan kejam Dursasana menyeret Drupadi yang terjatuh pada rambutnya sepanjang jalan di</i>	

No.	Data, Data Code and Description	Mistreatment of Women	Facts Beyond Literary Texts
		<p><i>dalam taman yang membatasi gedung yang satu dengan gedung yang lain.</i>  Dursasana cruelly dragged Drupadi who had fallen on her hair all the way in the garden that separated one building from another.</p>	continuum of space in which black women must resist and succumb to gender, racial, and class power relations to cross securitized borders [9].
	Data Code	Drupadi/ p 59/ 3/ data 2	
	Description	Dursasana's harsh treatment of Drupadi's body.	
3.	Data	<p><i>Ia dilemparkan ke atas meja judi, dan Duryudhana di depan mata semua orang melepas pula kainnya, diikuti sorak sorai Kurawa.</i>  She was thrown onto the gambling table, and Duryudhana in front of everyone's eyes also took off her cloth, followed by the cheers of the Kuravas.</p>	
	Data Code	Drupadi/ p 61/ 3/ data 3	
	Description	The harsh treatment experienced by Drupadi whose body was thrown on the table and then the clothes she was wearing were forcibly removed.	

### **3.3 Great Women Always Have a Place in People's Hearts**

Table 3 shows the narrative and behavior of the characters that are included in the significant female aspect. The character of Drupadi is described as a great woman because she is virtuous and has a beautiful face. She has a place in the hearts of the people with the treatment of being adored, loved, remembered, and prayed for. The view of the majesty of women is also obtained based on facts outside of literary texts in the form of the choice of fashion and dress style of the first lady which affects the perception and attractiveness of women's society as well as the opportunity for women to get high positions in managing companies.

Women who have a place in the hearts of society are generally seen from their attractiveness and nobility. This is in line with several studies that trace the existence of women in society. The novel Cinci Half the Heart by Netty Virgiantini explains the diversity of reality, including the presence of the I-you relationship, the existence of women, and the existence of freedom and responsibility regardless of the mindset that has been formed from the conditions of the surrounding environment [14]. In the novel Merantau ke Deli by Hamka, the figure of a Javanese woman can really be described according to the characteristics of Javanese women in general, including loving others, being skilled in work, and living a simple life [15]. Indonesian novels and the female characters in them have become an arena of establishment as well as cultural orientation [16].

**Table 4.** Great Women Always Have a Place in People's Hearts

Number	Data, Data Code and Description	Great Women Get a Place in People's Hearts	Facts Beyond Literary Texts
1.	Data	<p><i>Bukan hanya kecantikan wajahnya yang membuat Drupadi dipuja-puja dan dicintai, ia juga dikenal sebagai perempuan yang berbudi.</i>  It is not only the beauty of her face that makes Drupadi adored and loved, she is also known as a virtuous woman.</p>	1. Women are attracted by Michelle Obama's fashion choices and dressing styles that make her fit into women's daily lives and cause them to view her role as first lady in a positive light and often refer to her as down-to-earth because of her willingness to shop at retailers [12].
	Data Code	Drupadi/ p 122/ 4/ data 1	
	Description	Drupadi is a virtuous princess who is adored and loved by the community.	2. Taking into account the criteria of average profit, income and loss in the accounting period and credit rating, the more profitable companies are those that have one or more women in managerial positions [13].
2.	Data	<p><i>Maka ketika beratus-ratus ribu manusia mengiringi kepergian para Pandawa dan istrinya yang gemilang itu, tiada seorangpun ragu bahwa Drupadi akan mampu melaksanakan Yoga Pemusnahan – suatu cara untuk menyatukan jiwa dengan sumber kehidupan.</i>  So when hundreds of thousands of people accompanied the Pandavas and their glorious wives, no one doubted that Drupadi would be able to practice the Yoga of Annihilation – a way to unite the soul with the source of life.</p>	

Number	Data, Data Code and Description	Great Women Get a Place in People's Hearts	Facts Beyond Literary Texts
	Data Code	Drupadi/ p 123/ 4/ data 2	
	Description	Drupadi, who was considered a virtuous and beautiful woman, was escorted by hundreds of people to her final residence.	
3.	Data	<i>Orang-orang menatapnya di tepi jalan, merekam kenang-kenangan yang tidak ingin mereka lupakan.</i> People stare at her by the side of the road, recording memories they don't want to forget.	
	Data Code	Drupadi/ p 125/ 4/ data 3	
	Description	Drupadi is remembered by the people throughout her life.	
4.	Data	<i>Sampai di tepi Sungai Brahmaputra, orang-orang berhenti mengikuti Pandawa, hanya mengiringinya dengan doa-doa. Seperti masih terdengar dengung doa itu oleh Drupadi sekarang, ketika ia melangkahkan kakinya dengan anggun perlahan-lahan.</i> Arriving at the banks of the Brahmaputra River, the people stopped following the Pandavas, only accompanying them with prayers. Drupadi could still hear the hum of that prayer now, as she slowly stomped her feet gracefully.	
	Data Code	Drupadi/ hlm 126/ 3/ data 4	
	Description	Drupadi is prayed for by the people when accompanying her departure on his last day	

#### 4. CONSLUSION

Based on the results of the analysis and discussion, it can be concluded that society's view of women is described as a reflection of the times that are still entrenched in placing women's position in community. Organization still gives limited rights and decision-making to women, and offers different priorities from the view of women's ideals, especially from a physical perspective. Understanding of beauty is still attached to physical beauty so that those who lack this ideal can feel left out. With this cultural reflection, it is hoped that the community will be wiser in placing women in life in society, such as giving proper rights, not discriminating against women from a physical point of view, and making the definition of beauty more complex which is not only seen from the physical form, but also spiritual and intellectual.

The results of this study can be used as input by further researchers in highlighting the public's view of women from a broader perspective, such as the multirole of women in household and social life. In addition, this research can be used by readers as an illustration in interpreting the relationship between literary works and real life which contains a message that invites them to organize their lives for the better.

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