



Women Celebrating the Body: Feminist Studies of Muhidin M. Dahlan's Novel *Tuhan Izinkan Aku Menjadi Pelacur*

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Abstract. The results of the discourse analysis of the novel find that the female character is in the subject position, Kiran as the female character is placed in a position that uses men as revenge for her disappointment towards God and rejects the concept of marriage. In the position of the object, Kiran is shown as a sexual object. In describing the anger of women, the author uses the first-person singular pronoun to describe the figure of a woman who celebrates her body in a domineering way. Based on the results of feminist discourse analysis of the novel, it can be concluded that Kiran represents feminism and masculinity in the theory of gender performativity and the theory of deconstruction. Kiran's character is both a resistance and a critique towards the law and social values that considers not to be in favour of women and also a critique of society's stigma related to gender-based actions.

Keywords: Feminist Discourse Analysis · celebrating the body · Gender Performativity · Deconstruction

1 Introduction

Literary works are composed with full appreciation and a little enthusiasm wrapped in deep creative thoughts about existence. Fictional works can be isolated into fiction and poetry. Nurgiyantoro in Rokhmansyah [1] pointed that the term fiction contains the meaning of anecdotal stories or stories that do not exist. The examples of fictional works include adventures, short stories, and books.

Novel, as a work of fiction, is widely appreciated by the general public. It is because individuals can find data about existence in a novel. Tarigan in Purba [2] states that novel derives from the Latin word, especially *noveltus* which derives from the word *novelis* which means 'new'. It should be new when compared to the type of writing.

According to Rokhmansyah [1] feminism is a theory about equal rights between men and women in all fields. Fakhri in Rokhmansyah [1] states that feminism departs from the assumption that women are basically oppressed and exploited. Feminism is a struggle

in order to transform a system that was previously unfair to a system that is fairer for both sexes.

Moeliono in Sughastuti & Suharto [3] reveals that in a lexical sense, feminism is a women's movement that demands full equality of rights between women and men. Moreover, Goefe in Sughastuti & Suharto [3] states that:

“Feminism is a theory about equality between men and women in the political, economic, and social fields or organized activities that fight for the rights and interests of women. In literature, feminism is related to the concept of feminist literary criticism, namely, literary studies that direct the focus of its analysis on women.”

Feminism seeks to explore the identity of women which has been covered by patriarchal hegemony [4]. Identity is needed as the basis for the movement to fight for the equal rights of all oppressed women. Feminist goal is to wrack the male domination by destroying cultural structures, all laws and regulations that place women as invisible and worthless victims.

In this study, the author chose one of the novels by Muhidin M. Dahlan entitled *Tuhan, Ijinkan Aku Menjadi Pelacur!: Memoar Luka Seorang Muslimah*. Muhidin M. Dahlan was born in Donggala, Central Sulawesi, started his work by writing a novel entitled *Mencari Cinta* which was first published in 2002. He has written many works. His fourth novel, *Tuhan, Ijinkan Aku Menjadi Pelacur!: Memoar Luka Seorang Muslimah*, is the only novel that reaps a lot of controversy in various circles, especially among religious leaders. The novel depicts the journey of Nidah Kirani, a former student activist of an Islamic movement organization. She is a Muslim woman who claims to have been let down by her God. Nidah Kirani represents the “women” in terms of feminism and masculinism to show the dimensions of resistance to patriarchy contained in this novel. In addition, although the main character shown is a woman, in certain parts she transforms into a masculine figure. In addition, to study through feminist discourse analysis, the author uses the study of feminism.

Several studies related to women and feminism have been carried out, but there is no writing regarding women celebrating the body in the novel *Tuhan Izinkan Aku Menjadi Pelacur*. First, research conducted by Fadhillah Amalia, a student of Fakultas Keguruan dan Pendidikan Universitas Islam Riau in 2013 with the title “Analysis of Feminism the *Gadis Pemberontak* by Nafisa Haji” [5]. The problem in this research is how aspects of feminism (behavior, attitude, character) contained in the novel *Gadis Pemberontak* by Nafisah Haji by using the theory of Sugihastuti and Suharto, B. Trisman, et al., and Djajanegara. The approach used in this study is a qualitative approach. The type of research used is library research. The method used is a descriptive analytical method. The data collection technique is hermeneutic. The results of the study include (1) the behavior of naughty female characters which can be seen from her courage to kiss foreign men, rebellion against drinking alcohol, marijuana, dating, sex and pregnancy outside of marriage.

Second, research conducted by Oktavianti Yuliandra, student of the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Islamic University of Riau in 2014 with the title “Feminism in the novel *Dari Tanah Haram Ke Ranah Minang* by Ummuki” [6]. The problems

in this study: 1. What is the position of women in the novel *Dari Tanah Haram Ke Ranah Minang* by Ummuki? 2. What are the forms of gender injustice of female characters in *Dari Tanah Haram Ke Ranah Minang* by Ummuki? The theory used in this research is from Sugihastuti, Soenarjati Djajanegara, Mansour Fakih. The data collection technique of this research used hermeneutic techniques, namely reading, note-taking, and summarizing techniques. The results conclude that in Ummuki's novel *Dari Tanah Haram Ke Ranah Minang* the position of women are set as mothers, children, domestic workers, and wives. Furthermore, there are forms of gender inequality in the form of gender and women's marginalization, gender and violence, gender and stereotypes, gender and workload. Things like this are found in the characters named Hanifa and Nur. The similarity in this study with the previous research is both are study about feminism. The difference in this research is the object of the research.

2 Method

The study of the novel *Tuhan, Ijinkan Aku Menjadi Pelacur!:Memoar Luka Seorang Muslimah* used a descriptive method. Travers in Umar [7] states that this strategy means describing the idea of something that is developing at the time, the examination is directed, and examines the causes of certain side effects. Gay in Umar [7] reveals that this technique means answering questions that are identified with the exploration cycle. This technique is used to analyse the description and investigate the types of words related to how much women's rights are in the novel.

3 Finding and Discussion

Based on the results of feminist discourse analysis of the novel *Tuhan, Ijinkan Aku Menjadi Pelacur!:Memoar Luka Seorang Muslimah*, there are several images of female characters celebrating their bodies, in this case, celebrating the freedom to rebel against the normative order that has imprisoned the character. This can be seen from the following quote.

Kulepaskan jilbabku, kuinjak dia yang sudah tengkurap. Aku tidak tahu entah dari mana datangnya keberanian dan pikiran nakal itu. Hanya satu pikiran yang ada dalam benakku: sangat mengasyikkan ini cowok buat pelampiasan ketimbang memikirkan Tuhan yang sudah mengecewakanmu dan membayangkan takut yang berlebihan akan dibunuh sekuriti Jemaah seperti dialami oleh temanteman kakakmu. Aku capek. Aku capek Tuhan dengan semua permainan yang Kau sutradarai ini! [8]

I took off my hijab, I stepped on his stomach. I don't know where that courage and mischievous thoughts came from. I only had one thought in my mind: it's very exciting for this guy to make an outlet instead of thinking about God who has failed me and imagining the excessive fear of being killed by the Jama'ah security as experienced by my brother's friends. I'm tired. I'm tired God with all these games You're directing! [8]

The text describes the figure of Kiran who wants a revolutionary change in practicing Islam. If it is related to the theory of gender performativity, Kiran's act of wanting to change is a breakthrough made by a woman. Through her assertiveness, the figure of Kiran emphasizes that being assertive and being a pioneer is not only possessed by male figures. Meanwhile, if it is related to the theory of deconstruction, the figure of Kiran in the feminism category tries to change the principle of the state owned by Indonesia which is based on nationalism towards Islamic principles. This is very contrary to the concept of statehood where Islamic principles are very unlikely to be fully implemented in the Indonesian state. Thus, Kiran's attitude in this text is described as having betrayed the sovereignty of the state and wants a change in the ideology of the state.

Dari situ janjiku dalam hati: akan kubongkar dan kululuhkan harga diri lelaki ini. Dia sudah terjun bebas dan setengah dari harga dirinya telah kukuak [8]

From there, I made a promise in my heart: I will dismantle this man's self-respect. He has fallen free and half of his pride has been revealed [8]

The text fragment that has been mentioned in the quote describes a determination that Kiran has to expose all the bad things and try to reduce the self-esteem possessed by every man through her body which is used as the object of the sexuality of men who approach her. In terms of gender performativity, Kiran's actions are a breakthrough made by a woman who opposes that what she has done is something that a woman can also do to bring down a man's self-esteem.

Dengan penguasaan itu, daya tawarku akan naik dan bertambah. Dengan kekuasaan, aku makin leluasa menundukkan para lelaki yang seenaknya memermainkan perempuan [8]

With that mastery, my bargaining power will rise and increase. With power, I am freer to subdue men who arbitrarily play with women [8]

In the quote above, it is illustrated that Nidah is very ambitious to be able to dominate men. In Nidah's eyes, men are creatures she hates the most. For her, men only want to play with feelings and hurt women. Nidah's expectation for the bargaining price illustrates her personality that wants to rule over men. Another proof that Nidah has the personality to rule is illustrated in the following quote.

Dan betul, dengan pengalamanku dengan segerombol lelaki lalu-lalu, aku terus menariknya dalam kuasaku. Dia pun sering mengirim SMS, sering menelponku. Puncaknya adalah ajakan untuk check in di losmen Kahyangan Parangtritis [8].

That's right! with my experiences with a bunch of guys, I keep pulling them in my power. He also often sends messages, and often calls me. The climax was an invitation to check in at the Kahyangan Parangtritis [8].

The quote above illustrates that Nidah has a lot of experience with men. She often changes partners and brings men into her power. This experience made it easier for Nidah to tempt her thesis supervisor to make it easier for her during guidance. The lecturer also finally fell under Nidah's power. Nidah's success in seducing her lecturer illustrates her personality who wants to rule over the lecturer.

4 Conclusion

Based on the results of the feminist analysis contained in *Tuhan, Ijinkan Aku Menjadi Pelacur!:Memoar Luka Seorang Muslimah*, it can be concluded that the overall thinking of the female character in the novel celebrates freedom through revolutionary action which is seen through the attitudes and behaviour of the characters who show women's rebellion against religion, socio-culture, and other normative things that imprison women. For female characters, recovering male self-esteem is a form of their self-existence. In addition, women need to have the power to increase their bargaining power in the patriarchal world.

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