



Women's Resistance to Religious Values in the Novel *Adam Hawa* by Muhidin M. Dahlan: Feminist Literary Criticism Review

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Abstract. The results of this study describe the problem of women's resistance to religious values as one of the social phenomena in the novel *Adam Hawa* by Muhidin M. Dahlan. The purpose of this study is to describe the forms and causes of resistance by women to religious values in the novel. This is expressed through the analysis of feminist literary criticism by using qualitative descriptive methods in both data analysis and interpretation. The results showed that women have resistance to their treatment on the grounds of religious values in open and closed forms both verbally through words and nonverbally through actions or behaviors. The results of this study also revealed that there is also a critical awareness of women that the injustice experienced through male domination, causing by mistakes in interpreting and applying religious values that are a reference in people's lives. Hence, the results of this study can be a lesson for the community and recommendations for policy makers to reinterpret and correct interpretation of the values that are a reference in community life in order to create peace and prosperity that is built through the relationship between men and women.

Keywords: Resistance · women · religious values · Adam Hawa's novel

1 Introduction

One of the interesting topics that became a topic of discussion in the Indonesian literary world in the 2000s, especially in the novel *genre*, was the life of women and the values that prevailed in their society. This problem is seen in Indonesian novels 'thickly' as an illustration of the reality of women's lives in an objective world. This is in line with Rahmawati's opinion (2009: 114) that the problem of women, especially in Indonesia, is a story that has no end in the Indonesian literary world because the oppression of women continues to occur, both by men and by women themselves.

One of the Indonesian novels that is full of the phenomenon in question is the novel *Adam Hawa* by Muhidin M. Dahlan which was first published in 2005. This novel packs a big topic that generally animates Indonesian novels that were born in the 2000s. *Adam Hawa's* novel is pictured as one of the controversial novels in the Indonesian literary reading society. A number of responses emerged from the public including Islamic mass

organizations because this novel was considered very radical. This novel tells the story of a man who has the status of a husband who does various bad things to his wife in the name of God and causes suffering to women. This phenomenon certainly invites the big question, how can God as the source of all truth and goodness be the reason for man to practice arbitrariness. Religion is the reason for patriarchal behavior and the instrument of power in this novel.

The patriarchal behavior in *Adam Hawa's* novel is especially evident in the relationship between husband and wife, in the relationship of sexuality. Maia, the female character in this novel was sexually assaulted by her husband, Adam. Maia was treated unfairly by her husband on the grounds that as a woman, Maia could have been treated by Adam as she wished because Maia only came from her ribs. The male character, Adam, in this novel act on behalf of God's representative on earth so that He considers his actions to always be correct. This is countered (resisted) by the figure of Maia. It is in this resistance that there is a critical awareness of women in the face of treatment towards them. Through the form of resistance of Maia figures, there is also a fallacy in placing religious values in the relationship between men and women.

Adam Hawa's novel describes the existence of certain parties in life who use religion for their own benefit. Religion is used as an instrument of power. This is what makes *Adam Hawa's* novel interesting to research with a feminist literary criticism approach. Through the analysis of feminist literary criticism, it can be revealed the ideas of resistance carried out by female figures and the reasons for these resistances and their relationship with religious values embraced by society in reality life which is the reason male characters commit arbitrariness.

The religious values referred to in this study are the religious values of Islam. In Islam, it is unequivocally explained that the relationship between a man and a woman (husband and wife) is a partnership relationship (Umar, 2010: 229–246). This description will reveal a mistake in interpreting religious values. For this reason, the results of this study outline two main problems, namely (1) the form of women's resistance to religious values in *Adam Hawa's* novel and (2) the causes of resistance carried out by female characters to religious values in *Adam Hawa's* novel. Both of these things will be expressed through the approach of feminist literary criticism so that the relationship between the female resistance emerging in *Adam Hawa's* novel and the reality of women's lives in society will also be revealed. In its disclosure, feminist literary criticism is juxtaposed with James C. Scott's theory of resistance.

2 Theoretical Foundations

2.1 Feminism

Feminism is a theory about the similarities between men and women in the political, economic, and social spheres (Motta, *et.al.*, 2011). Feminism is an organized movement that fights for women's rights and interests. In the feminist view, the subjectiveness of women is raised not because of 'natural' inferiority but rather because of inferiority according to a male-dominated culture in which they cannot shy away from living in it. Thus, reading a text in a feminist perspective means seeking to dismantle the patriarchal sex ideology in the text (Iannelo, 2010; Rutven, 1990).

The word patriarchy literally means paternal rule or 'patriarch'. Originally this word was used to describe a special type of family dominated by men. The large 'patriarch' family that includes women, men, children, slaves and housekeepers, are all under the rule of male domination. Nowadays it is more commonly used to refer to male dominance in power relations in which men dominate women, and to characterize a system in which women are positioned as subordinates in a number of ways (Asiyanbola, 2005).

Patriarchy refers to male domination in both the public and private spheres. Feminists mainly use the term patriarchy to describe the power relationship between men and women. So, patriarchy is more than just a term. Feminists use it like a concept, and like all other concepts, it is a way to help understand the reality of women (Sultana, 2011). The feminist school that highlights specifically how women are thrown away from the public sphere and the private world is liberal feminism.

Liberal feminism emphasizes the importance of individual freedom and voices equal rights between men and women. This feminism assumes that the subordination of women is rooted in laws and customs that prevent women from entering the public sphere. Liberal feminists oppose the opinion that women lack intellectuality and physical abilities due to their natural conditions and therefore are unable to perform roles in the public sphere. According to them, man is created equal, has equal rights, and must also have equal opportunities in advancing himself. Liberal feminists assert that it is the cultural values, regulations, laws, and customs of the country that are responsible for the oppression of women (Sultana and Nor, 2010; Madsen, 2000).

2.2 Feminist Literary Criticism

The use of feminist theory in the research of literary works is called feminist literary research. One form of feminist literary criticism that focuses on this issue is *Images of Women*. Through the *Images of Women* approach, critics determine how female characters are presented in literary texts. The main assumption that critics should make in this approach is an evaluation of the authenticity of female characters. The critic must look at whether the individual has a self-determined critical consciousness when confronted with a stereotypical identity defined by the masses (Duman, 2012; Donovan, 1990). This means that through the analysis of feminist literary criticism, women's positions and attitudes in dealing with various issues in their lives can be carefully decomposed and described. In addition, it will also outline logical and critical reasons for the attitudes and positions taken by women in their roles of facing and relating to men. This form of analysis is used in revealing the forms and causes of resistance carried out by women in the novel *Adam Hawa* by Muhidin M Dahlan based on the concept of liberal feminism.

2.3 James C. Scott's Theory of Resistance

Resistance comes from the English words *resist* and *ance*. This word refers to the positional meaning of the attitude or behavior of defending, trying to resist, resist (Syam and Aris, 2021). Resistance refers to a position taken in terms of being defensive, trying to resist, opposing or an opposition position. According to Susilastri (2020: 4) Resistance to something that is pressing in everyday life is normal. This is usually done by the

inferior party against the superior party or the subordinated party to the superordinate party. Resistance is meant not always in an open or vulgar form but also in a tacit form.

James C. Scott was a well-known figure with his theory of resistance. Scott reveals that resistance focuses on forms of resistance that actually exist and occur around everyday life, carried out by the weak who have no power and experience oppression. James C. Scott's theory is widely used in social research, especially through the expression and daily actions of society. The basis of Scott's thought in his theory can be outlined as follows. Scott (2002) distinguishes resistance into two forms, namely public or open resistance (*public transcript*) and hidden resistance (*hidden transcript*). The two categories by Scott are distinguished by the articulation of such resistance, forms, characteristics, and socio-cultural regions.

In explaining Scott's theory, Susilastri (2020: 4–5) elaborates that open resistance is resistance that presents communication between parties (superior and inferior), concrete or real, and observable. Open resistance is overt and instantly recognized by the superior or marginalized parties. Open attention is rational and aims to counter the acts of domination and oppression of the ruler and tend to have a social impact. Open resistance can be organized or systemized social protests, insurrections, demonstrations, or treason, but it can also be swearing, rudeness, direct facial expressions. Closed resistance tends to be individual because it is aimed at the benefit of the individual. This resistance is not systemized or organized so that it does not bring changes to superior or inferior relations. This form of resistance can be in the form of hidden words and attitudes, such as rumors and complaints or swearing that are *self-talk*.

3 Research Methods

This research on *Adam Hawa's* novel is a type of qualitative research that is descriptive. For this reason, researchers as the main instrument of research are directly involved by exerting all intellectual abilities, knowledge and skills possessed in the research process ranging from data collection, data classification, data analysis, and data interpretation based on the theoretical concepts and approaches used. The steps taken in the study were: (1) Reading Adam Hawa's novels repeatedly; (2) establish data related to the research problem; (3) classifying data based on the formulation of research problems; (4) analyze the data descriptively; (5) interpreting to find the ideas of resistance and connecting them with the concept of feminism; (6) linking these ideas to Islamic religious values and (7) formulating conclusions.

4 Results and Discussion

This study focuses on two things related to women's resistance in Muhidin M. Dahlan's novel *Adam Hawa* with a feminist literary point of view juxtaposed with James C. Scott's theory of resistance. First, a description of the form of resistance carried out by the female character in Adam Hawa's novel. Second, the cause of women resisting religious values in the novel *Adam Hawa* by Muhidin M. Dahlan. These two problems are expressed through the role of the main female character in the novel, Maia, in her relationship with the male character, Adam, as her husband.

4.1 Forms of Resistance

Adam Hawa's novel describes two forms of resistance as outlined in the previously discussed concept of James C. Scott's theory, namely open resistance and closed resistance. This resistance is carried out by the female character Maia in the face of various forms of injustice against her in relation to the male character, namely Adam. Maia is an inferior character in this novel. He confronts Adam as a superior figure by resisting Adam's treatment of him. This resistance was carried out by Maia to defend something she believed was true and to resist and oppose the persecution against her.

4.1.1 Open Resistance

Open resistance is a form of resistance that is carried out by presenting communication between the inferior party and the superior party. This resistance can be observed directly because it is carried out blatantly by the inferior party or the marginalized party in its efforts to defend, resist or oppose. In *Adam Hawa's* novel, this is described through the role of the character Maia.

Maia was Adam's wife. Maia is described as Adam's first female. She was called by her husband by the greeting 'Maia the woman', not by her name, namely Maia. Maia is subjected to abuse by Adam, especially in sexual intercourse. In this relationship, Adam treated his wife as he wished, causing Maia to feel distressed, tormented, and suffering. This is clearly seen in the novel.

After both of her knees were tired, Maia the woman asked Adam that she lie on Adam. But Adam refused while saying quickly that Maia the woman's desire was above him completely outside the rules (Dahlan, 2017: 41).

Men who should be on top. Destiny is decisive. Remind me of those words? A man is the heavens and he is the glorious son of God. Which carries the attributes of God. And you know, God was never brought (Dahlan, 2017: 44).

The two quotes above give meaning that in sex women are absolutely not given space to determine their comfort. Everything should take place according to the will of the male. Even so harshly stated Adam as a man and as a husband, he viewed his opinion as a truth from God that was never wrong. The above data also show that the male considers himself higher than the female, it is the male who is above and the female must be at the bottom. Men are the superior class and women are inferior classes. Females are inferior to males. Adam's behavior is resisted by Maia, the woman. Maia openly resists through words and a blatant rebellion against Adam's character.

I don't know. You attach too much importance to your own will. You want to fight me?

If this you say against, yes, I am against you, starting tonight (Dahlan, 2017: 48).

The living Adam had to be dealt with life. I have to fight him. I've been devastated.

Oh Adam, your haughtiness as a man (Dahlan, 2017: 79–80).

This conversation between Adam and Maia shows Maia's resistance directly through speech. Maia blatantly stated to Adam that she was against him, saying, "yes, I am against

you". Even Maia, the woman insists that the resistance must be done consciously and real. This is implied in the statement, "The living Adam must be faced with life. I have to fight him". Maia's attitude shows that she performs this resistance with full awareness.

The resistance exercised by Maia is not only through words or speech but also with behavior, even acts of rebellion. When Maia felt constrained and realized that she was being mistreated she fought hard.

Isn't that what you want Adam?

Never mind. I no longer want to be a woman behind the sun. Live alone your way Adam. And make love to the female. Only women are willing to treat them as you please (Dahlan, 2017: 48).

But Adam didn't let Maia, the Woman just leave. Adam swiftly caught her arm. Maia the woman struggled. But Adam's muscles gripped it very firmly. He slams Maia the Woman and forces her to return to the rock. Maia the woman struggled and shook off with all her might Adam's grip. Adam's grip came off. Maia the woman tried to scatter, but one of the bases of her legs was caught before reaching the triangular door. Maia slumped. Adam too. Both of them fell down. But Maia hadn't run out of steam and kept raging and kicking. And one of his hard kicks hit Adam in the cheek. Adam was scuttled and his cheeks were bleeding from Maia's sharp wood which was as sharp as a boulder after being split (Dahlan, 2017: 49).

These two data imply several meanings. First, Maia, the woman fought back seriously with the threat of separation by saying, "live alone your way Adam". This means, according to Maia Adam's way of life is Adam's own and Maia will not follow him. Even Maia's character thinks there is no connection between Adam's way of life and his way of life. Maia even likened Adam's way of life to the animal's way of life. The statement of Maia, the woman in this novel shows that the treatment of this man is really humanely unacceptable. Second, there was physical resistance from Maia, the woman, to Adam, her husband. This is a symbolization of such serious resistance by women in an effort to defend their opinions and decisions.

The relationship between Adam and Maia as husband and wife in *AdamHawa's* novel is a relationship between men and women within the confines of a very 'thick' patriarchal culture. The male character with his power and power considers himself a representative of God. His words and behavior should always be considered true, men are the source of truth. To cement that power, Adam's character takes refuge behind god's name. He made God a tool to perpetuate power. This also confirms the involvement of religious values to maintain and strengthen its position as superior. Ironically, the character of Maia, the woman fought back (discussed further in the next sub-discussion).

Based on the study of feminist literary criticism, the female character, namely Maia in *AdamHawa's* novel, is a woman who fights for her freedom. A woman who wants to enjoy her life through her own choice. A woman who in her life is determined by herself, not by others, not by men, and not by a husband. Maia is not a traditional woman who is submissive and obedient to whatever a man decides. She is a woman who lives her life by her own choice and is able to resist and even rebel against the will contrary to her opinion. She even did it openly, without hesitation and using all her abilities.

4.1.2 Closed Resistance

The resistance exercised by the character Maia in *Adam Hawa's* novel is not only openly but also behind closed doors. His resistance to Adam's character is not only in Adam's presence but also behind him. Unbeknownst to Adam, Maia tried to erase all the memories of her being with Adam in her.

"That night, with tears covered in resentment he walked towards the north. She never regretted meeting a man named Adam. Then in a waterhole he stopped and picked up a few pieces of leaves and devoured them just like that. Not long after he vomited profusely because of the bitterness of the leaves. It wasn't that he accidentally touched the leaves, he just desired that the nights of his copulation with Adam not leave a single drop of genital water in his arms. He hoped that by vomiting his stomach could be cleared of the pleasures that Adam glorified (Dahlan, 2017: 78–79).

Maia's attitude was a form of resistance she made to Adam's presence in her life. He didn't want any possibility of Adam's presence in him. This is a form of resistance carried out by the inferior party to the superior party without the presence of the superior party. Next, Maia continues her resistance to Adam by drawing up a revenge plan. This revenge was planned by Maia when she was already living together with Idris, her second husband without Idris' knowledge.

"I must have a strong hand once to avenge this me. Therefore, I must have a son. Ijjil, so I will give it a name. Maia the woman snorted to say that. The look in his eyes was sharp. There was a fire running around the pliable eyelids. The moon that is still half devoured by the dark shows Maia's grudge. "That's why I have to get another man who can give me a man's seed." (Dahlan, 2017:79).

Maia, the female character in *Adam Hawa's* novel, feels so miserable and depressed that in her is embedded so much desire for revenge. He planned his revenge through the birth of his son named Ijjil. However, in this novel, it is further told that Maia's son is not a boy but a woman whom she gives her own name marfu'ah. She herself gave her son a name, without the intervention of her husband. Maia thought for a while, then continued: I'll give you a name before Idris comes. I am the one who gave birth to her with great difficulty, then I am the one who has the right to give you a name." (Dahlan, 2017: 88).

This description suggests that there is freedom of action that Maia had when living with her husband, Idris. That freedom he even gained in many ways, such as the text in the following data:

"That freedom also applies in the daily lives of Maia and Idris. If Adam had held her in a stone house so that he did not see the sun as long as he was in contact with Adam, then with Idris, Maia was free to go anywhere. In fact, he went with Idris to take their cattle to the grasses away from home. Even here, when the sheep are engrossed in devouring grass or mating, Maia and Idris don't waste the opportunity to make love under a tree. This is how they feel love that becomes, like a human

being who has long harbored longing and wandering. The two made love without revealing their origins.” (Dahlan, 2017: 83).

An analysis of Adam Hawa’s novel also shows that the freedom Maia gained in her life with Idris not only resulted in happiness in the love between them but also an opportunity for Maia to secretly plan her revenge on the man who had brought severe suffering to her life. Even this grudge is the main reason Maia raised her child to be a strong child. He planted the seeds of his grudge against Adam in his daughter, Marfuah. Maia teaches her child to be a girl who is not young to be tempted by men. Even Maia taught her son to be able to make men submit to him.

This critical analysis of *Adam Hawa’s* novel in a feminist point of view gives an understanding that a woman’s freedom can lead her to the achievement of happiness in her life. The analysis also suggests that women have the potential to be given the same space as men. This can be seen in Marfu’ah’s role as *an agent* to realize his revenge on Adam. On the other hand, this analysis also shows that resistance exercised by women without control, and in a closed way can lead to bad behavior and negatively affect human life, both for men and for women.

4.2 Causes of Resistance

The resistance exercised by the female character in Adam Hawa’s novel is not coincidence. The events experienced by the female character in relation to the man depicted in this novel in the husband-wife relationship are based on logical reasons. Maia’s character performs resistance not as an attempt at domination against Adam. Nor is it an attempt to master the character of Adam but rather as an attempt to gain his rights and freedoms to determine what is good and not good for him.

“You owe me a favor. You were created from my ribs. Then you must obey all my commands”.

“I’m not sure.”

“You have to be sure.”

“But our ribs are the same Adam. It’s the same number.”

“God has determined it.”

“Then I must leave you with your God.”...

“You still owe me a favor. It’s not good for you, O Maia the woman just fought back. You’re my servant in this house” (Dahlan, 2017:47).

The conversation between Adam’s character and Maia’s character in the data above shows that Maia did not believe and could not accept Adam’s treatment of him on the grounds that it was God who wanted him. Maia also doesn’t believe that because women come from men’s ribs, men can treat women as they please. Maia strongly opposed it until she said that if it was God’s will, then she would leave Adam with her God. This is certainly a sign that in fact Maia did not intend to forsake God, but was a protest against the existence of a party (male) in the name of God to commit abuse.

"I didn't find the slightest difference in our ribs, both left and right. I'm sorry Adam, if it is true that your God himself said that I was created from your ribs, your God must have lied big."

"God never lies, He is honest, He is honest."

"Then you're the Lie".

"I'm the son of God. What God says, that's what I said."

"Including the one that determines that I must be at the bottom and you must be at the top? Is it also God who said that?" (Dahlan, 2017: 46–47).

The conversation between Maia, the woman and Adam in the text above shows clearly how much Maia did not believe Adam's words. To see further the meaning implied in the text based on the feminist concept, it must be attributed to its sociological factors. This is because feminist theory is part of the theory of sociology, as well as the application of feminist theory in literary studies is part of the application of the theory of literary sociology. For this reason, the relationship between the ideas contained in literary works and social life in the world of reality is an absolute thing based on the feminist literary criticism approach.

The idea of women comes from the ribs of men voiced by the character Adam as the reason for treating women as his will, actually related to the process of creating man (woman) as understood by Muslims. In the teachings of the Islamic religion it is explained that the Prophet Saw. Bersabda "a woman is created from a crooked rib if you try to straighten it she will break. But if you let it go then you will enjoy it by staying crooked. (HR. Bukhori). In interpreting this postulate, a number of classical and contemporary mufassir share the common understanding that women were created from the ribs of men, namely Adam. But not a few have different understandings, such as Muhammad Quraish Shihab and Nasaruddin Umar. Umar, who corroborated Shihab's opinion, said;

"The twisted ribs must be understood in a figurative sense (majazi) in the sense that the hadith warns men to confront women wisely because there are traits, characters, and tendencies of those who are not the same as men. If it is not realized, it will be able to lead men to behave unnaturally. They will not be able to change the character and innate traits of women. Even if they try, the consequences will be fatal, as will it be fatal to straighten crooked ribs" (Umar, 2010: 220).

This shows that in Islam there is a value that refers to the origin of the creation of women, namely from the ribs of men although among the mufassir have a different understanding. However, in various explanations of the meaning of the postulate, there is not a single interpretation that leads to the meaning that since women come from the ribs of men are the source of truth of women's lives, that only what is said by men is true because men are God's representatives on earth as Adam said to Maia the woman, wife of Adam in the novel *Adam Hawa* by Muhidin M. Dahlan.

Adam's treatment of women based on the value he referred to, which is said to be derived from God, also contradicts a number of verses in the holy book of the Qur'an, such as Qs. Al-Nisa': 1, Qs. Al-Nisa: 21, Qs. Al-nisa': 19, and Qs. At-Taubah: 71. This

can be seen for example in the relationship between man and woman (husband and wife) as a relationship of mutual perfection that cannot be fulfilled except on the basis of partnership, not a relationship between superior and inferior, nor is a man higher in position than a woman but a relationship based on mutual needs, “people of faith, male and female, some of them (are) helpers for another. They told (to do) the ma’ruf, prevent from the munkar.” (Qs. At-Taubah: 71). According to Umar (2010: xxix) every human being, male and female should be able to carry out this commandment of the Lord, to disobey it is to ignore our instructions.

Based on this description, it appears that the character Maia in Adam Hawa’s novel fundamentally resisted Adam’s behavior with her various arguments because critically, this woman understood that there was a misinterpretation of this value that Adam made for his personal interests, both in matters of sexuality and in other relationships. This gives the meaning that the character Maia in *Adam Hawa’s* novel is a character who carries feminist ideas. Maia is a woman who in her life does not only depend on the will of her husband. Maia is a woman who fights for her rights and freedoms, a woman who bravely resists if treated unfairly in her life. Maia is a representative of women in reality life who are treated unfairly on the grounds of religious values. With his potential, he dared to fight even in a rude way because he believed that there was a mistake in interpreting religious values for the benefit of certain parties.

5 Conclusions and Suggestions

This study revealed that women’s resistance to religious values in Adam Hawa’s novel was carried out because of the injustice experienced by women by making religion an excuse. The male power described in the novel is constructed and reinforced by the reason that men have power as a superior class over women as an inferior class because of God-derived values. This assumption is fiercely resisted by women in various ways. Resistance is carried out because of women’s critical awareness that religion is a source of truth and goodness so it is illogical for religion to be used as an excuse to commit injustice.

After juxtaposing with values derived from the teachings of the Islamic religion, it is revealed that the power built by men in Adam Hawa’s novel is contrary to the values of the Islamic religion. Islam teaches the relationship between a man and a woman (husband and wife) as a relationship of mutual need, a relationship of partnership. In this case, it is seen that the character Adam in the novel is a representative of men who use religion as a shield to build power and power as seen as a phenomenon in the life of reality.

Furthermore, the results of the analysis show that the women in the novel are women who want freedom, women who want to enjoy their lives in their own way, not by the decisions of others. The resistance that is carried out leads women to a life based on love and mutual understanding. However, the suffering caused by the injustice he had experienced had a devastating impact on his life. Resistance that is carried out indefinitely also shows the bad behavior of women. For this reason, it is important to conduct more serious research on this work to reveal the positive and negative impacts of resistance carried out by women and their relation to the reality of women’s lives in the world of

reality. In addition, in order for this work to carry out its useful function as a teaching of life in a better direction.

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