

Marginalization of Woman in *Kremil* Novel by Suparto Brata

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Abstract—This study describes women’s marginalization in the *Kremil* novel by Suparto Brata through feminism theory. Focuses to discuss the forms of women’s marginalization, the causes of women’s marginalization, and the efforts to fight (eliminate and or minimize) women’s marginalization. The *Kremil* community is a marginalized group and a troubling prostitution area for Indonesian’s people, especially in Surabaya. The form of women’s marginalization that can be observed are control over productive power, sexuality, women’s motion, opinion right, ownership of assets or other economic resources, and disturbance in social condition. Marginalization of women character comes from three main factors: family, state, and economy. Efforts against marginalization aren’t carried out by all female characters. Resistance that leads to positive efforts is to improve life by trying to get out of prostitution, while destructive form to resist are reaching freedom, as freely as possible without heeding anything beyond her pleasure.

Keywords—*feminism, marginalization, and marginalization of woman*

I. INTRODUCTION

Literature represent life and the life mostly consisting of social reality [1]. Art (including literature) considered as reflection, imitation, or imagery of reality [2]. Therefore, in the literature can be observed various realities that also happen in real life. One of them is the marginalization of women. In society, women often defined by stereotypes that women are better to work at home, weak, not equal to men, and various views that disparage positions of women. Overall, women are still considered inferior, hence they have fewer possibilities in many things [3]. Those make women’s opportunities to develop themselves to be hampered. Many women end up having live by depending on their husbands or men in their lives. In some cases, women are having to do all that men want or desire of more powerful people. Feminism requires clear and fair legal regulations and ensures that no one is harmed in the competition of economic, social, and political fields in social life [4].

The practice of injustice like marginalization of women can be observed through the existence of unfair treatments and tend to force them to act not according to their wishes and desires. Basically, the marginalization of women is seen at set the woman’s position not in the main area, not only in the family (household), but also in the work, social life, and

the state. In the family, woman may have the discrimination over the rights of female family members [5]. Marginalization of women can be seen in the not powerful position of women, either individuals or in groups, in various areas, including the limitation of access to fulfillment of their needs. They don’t have full control over their lives, don’t have free access to public facilities, and have limited contributions in society [6].

Marginalization can be experienced and occurs in the context of any community with a different form. Can be experienced on a global scale or local groups. Individuals or marginalized people are often not considered to be part of society. They can be marginalized openly or covertly, are considered have negative character that less desirable or deviate from the norms, and displayed as undesirable, tend to be excluded from the wider community [6].

Every human has an essentially and its right in the fulfillment of the needs in learning, working, socializing, and give an opinion [8]. Bhasin mentions five fields in women’s lives that are generally controlled in the patriarchal system. They are the control over productive power or the labor of women, control of women’s reproduction, control in sexuality, control of women’s motion, control over ownership of assets or other economic resources [9].

Individual or groups that were originally not marginalized can experience marginalization in the future and, conversely, they can be separated from marginalization. This shows that marginalization can occur due to shifts related to social status. For example, because of actions that are considered inappropriate by the community [7]. Marginalization are seen at the level of vulnerability and resilience to conflict, including natural disasters, economic pressures, because of social protection and the law can’t protect women, also the ability (power) of others to negate the rights of women in society [8]

Marginalization is may occur for different reasons for each person. This may occur as a result of government policy, beliefs, interpretations of religion, faith traditions and habits (culture), and their education [10]. According to Shrirang, the main reason for marginalization is political, economic, religious or idealistic, ignorance and fear (to someone or something). Shrirang also explained that the marginalization determined by gender will always intersect and cross the identity and experiences of someone [6]. In some cases, they can be marginalized relatively or even fully marginalized [7].

Poverty and social dislocation may be the primary material for defining marginal people. However, it should also be seen how the existence of oppression and injustice experienced by women. With that, we will know the real of the marginalization of women, their causative factors, and by whom they are governed or marginalized [7]. That is, can't only be seen from poverty and dislocation, but more broadly seen from the experiences of oppression and injustice experienced, and the source of the cause must be investigated or where the marginalization began.

Marginalization, according to Buton and Kagan can be derived from three factors: family, state, and economic. These three sources or causes of marginalization can affect separately and at the same time can combine with each other. The three causative factors are specified in smaller dimensions causes. They are in gender, on race/ethnicity creed, disability, poverty, and knowledge [7]. Marginalized can lead to resilience and resistance to injustices experienced. The oppressed situation can trigger self-improvement efforts and efforts to change the situation. This can lead to positive or negative efforts that can be done individually or collectively [7]. The issue of women's marginalization is important, a harmonious life will not be created if marginalization still exist in a society. Marginalization of women as one of the humanity problems can be observed through literature, especially in the novel.

In this study, a novel by Suparto Brata will be used. In *Kremil* novel, the author reveals lives and problems of commercial sex workers (CSWs) that exist in *Kremil* Complex, at Surabaya.

The rest of this paper is organized as follow: Section II describes proposed research method. Section III presents the obtained results and following by discussion. Finally, Section IV concludes this work.

II. PROPOSED METHOD

This research is a qualitative research with a critical discourse analysis approach. The data source is from *Kremil* novel by Brata in [13]. In the novel, words, sentences, or paragraphs which related to the marginalization of women as the focus of the problem will be selected, examined, and collected as data. After that, the data are grouped and analyzed to the form of woman's marginalization, the cause of women's marginalization, and efforts to resist women's marginalization.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Forms of Marginalization of Women

1. Control or Disruption to Productive Power

Based on *Kremil* novel, female characters who work as commercial sex workers (CSWs) in *Kremil* Complex was abide by and was controlled by the power of the pimps. They are obliged to give some of their revenue from selling their bodies to their landlords, according to the agreement that has been made. Control over the productive power of Sutini was carried out by the Nippon government. At first, she enrolled to become a nurse, but she sent to Sokaweg, her

goal was not achieved, and she was forced to serve Nippon's officers [11].

"Sutini has felt fooled. ... the trap set by the Nippon. ... In Surabaya Sutini wasn't taken to a hospital ..., but to a large house in the Sokaweg complex." (p. 407—409)

Suliyem was used and fooled by the broker, Bogang, who brought to Mrs. Tinny, one of the Pimps in *Kremil*. Her desire to seek freedom actually ends with her being plunged into prostitution [11].

"...Suliyem, she was brought here ... by Bogang. I pay Bogang."

2. Control over sexuality

In patriarchal culture, various measures are making to limit and control the expression of female sexuality outside marriage [9]. Jackson and Jones said that sexuality is something that most women have but is very often taken from them [10-12].

Tinny and Yuyun was fully held by others who have power over her body. Both are marginalized in coercion of sexual activities. The indigenous young women at the time, represented by Tinny (Sutini), were forced to serve the desires of Nippon's officers. The powerlessness to reject male domination of the colonizers makes them marginalized. As a result of the marginalization of their sexuality freedom, there is a sense of shame that always haunts their psychology because they feel to be a despicable, defective, and damaged woman.

"There Sutini's little virgin was forced to serve the desires of Nippon's officers... felt ashamed of falling into such a life." (p. 408—409)

Marginalization experienced by Yuyun (Maryuni) is the compulsion to sell herself, by initiative of her employer. To be able to live with her employer, Maryuni do whatever her boss wanted, including serving male customers.

"Opened the shop isn't enough income, then the maids are sacrificed to serve men. ... Maryuni sacrificed herself to be a shop assistant in everything. Willing to become a young prostitute." (p. 156—157)

Ningsih was obliged to limit her relationship with opposite sex, but her future husband, Sholeh, could hang out with many other women. When Sholeh married, he remained free to make relationship with Arni, one of the CSW in *Kremil*. So, it's as if men are free to do it, but it is strictly prohibited for women.

3. Control over Women's Motion

This is to control over women's freedom of movement and done to determine the women's behaviour, things women can do and shouldn't do, which are gender-specific [9]. Young Tinny and Yuyun lost their mobility rights when they became prisoners. Their mobility is taken away. Tinny was a prisoner and couldn't get out free from the lodge in Sokaweg. Yuyun became a prisoner, she couldn't go out and

return to her family, was suspected by the Dutch of being the spy of extremist indigenous. She was detained, interrogated, tortured, and imprisoned in Surabaya. Next, Marini, she was labelled as a Gerwani and suspected in conspired with BTI activists. Marini's status as a city prisoner makes her actions restricted and being monitored. She was prohibited from leaving Silir and was obliged to report to Koramil.

"I was arrested by the Koramil, my movements were limited ... I couldn't move from here. ... Every Friday for six hours must be at the Koramil." (p. 381)

Boyani character get prohibition in associating with her old boyfriend. Then, Ningsih was controlled to interact with opposite sex. Her face and appearance were also controlled by being prohibited from using face powder and lipstick and cutting and letting down her hair.

"I was confined, barred from associating with other men, not allowed to go to parties, watching was observed with male or female friends, ... I am spoiled by my mother, if possible, my face is closed, not to be found beautiful by another man..." (p. 485).

4. Control over Opinion Rights

Ningsih was prohibited from rejecting his parents' choice, was forbidden from talking about the ugliness of his future husband, and when she complains about it, her mom was shouted at and blamed her. Whatever she said would always be wrong. Boyani and Kartimah were also didn't have the right to speak. They couldn't to refuse marriages and reject the men who wanted to marry them.

"I told her I caught him with another girl ... my mother was even angry with me. I was yelled at, was spying bad on him... muddling family relationships..., but my family didn't believe." (p. 91–92)

5. Control over Ownership of Assets or Other Economic Resources

The property of Marini's parents was taken by her cousin.

"Sugeng had returned to Delopo. Takeover of your parents' land letter... the land and garden are controlled by Sugeng's father." (p. 400)

Mrs. Yuyun built a brothel business until became a successful pimp and her prostitutes were quite in demand, even important officials were being regular customers to one of her prostitutes. The brothel business went smoothly and became a major source of her family livelihood. However, behind her power, the land and the building, all of them, belonged to Markasan, his husband.

6. Disturbance or Control of Social Conditions

The people in the *Kremil* Complex, who are prostitutes and perpetrators of night life activities, are the people whose disturber in the lives which uphold the manners. In *Kremil*, people often use pseudonyms and hide their real identities. It's to keep save their good names outside of *Kremil* community. Interaction with *Kremil* women is something that

doesn't need to be known by other people because it can bring damage to customer's self-image.

"When was my name replaced by Burhan?"

"Don't mention real names here." (p. 40)

"... Don't open secrets... Here everything is fake!" (p. 87)

Women in *Kremil* get real pressure from the wider community. They are considered damaged and damaging society customs. *Kremil* women are labeled as having undesirable traits so that most people will tend to limit their interactions with them, avoid them, or not acknowledging their existence, and even try to get rid of their existence. The illegal settlements status of *Kremil* make it very vulnerable to eviction and enforcement. The *Kremil* residents constantly feel anxious that the government will close their income source. Women in *Kremil* are also very susceptible to fraud and violence, thus murder became very familiar in prostitution environment.

"Kremil has given lot of development or bonus to the village head or subdistrict head. But never recognized... If there is crime and moral damage, Kremil, that's the source." (p. 147)

Mrs. Tinny, Mrs. Yuyun, Suyati (Marini) previously had a good and normal life. Tinny was tricked and imprisoned by the Nippon invaders, while Mrs. Yuyun was detained by the Dutch government. Both experienced social disturbances due to their status as indigenous people who were oppressed by colonial powers. The invaders carried out disturbances against the natives for the benefit of their people. The Marini family was killed by Sugeng and his group, they property was taken over by Sugeng and his family, then Marini was brought, educated become Gerwani. The life and freedom of Marini's family was eliminated.

B. Causes of Marginalization of Women

In general, women who live in *Kremil*, have experienced marginalization from the social life of the community. They are marginalized because they carry out activities that are resented by most people, through selling themselves to make money, having parties with alcohol, and legalizing sexual relations that are illegal and unethical in Indonesia society.

Tumini was marginalized because take a part of PKI which was banned by the governmental. She was forced to get away, went into seclusion, and cover her tracks. She must leave her children and hide in *Kremil* by changing her name to Tumiyah, seen in the following text [11]:

"The children's father disappeared when the PKI commotion. ..." (p. 19)

"My family, my relatives, my comrades, many were killed. I was released ... escaping alone here." (p. 544)

Mrs. Tinny was marginalized because of her body as woman and because of the instability of the country at that time. She had to be separated from her son because Leo

Pastora's family didn't want to acknowledge her as the mother of Leo's child. Mrs. Yuyun was marginalized due to unstable political and state conditions.

The marginalization factors come from families can be observed from Ningsih and Boyani. Ningsih rebelled and fled to *Kremil* because want her freedom that was taken away by her mother. As for Boyani, she experienced injustice after married. She became the source of feud between the family of her ex-boyfriend and her husband's family. Freed herself from family and eliminate from her relatives. Next is Kartimah, who left her family because she was forced to marry someone she didn't like. The marginalization caused by economic factors was experienced by Yu Ni. Yu Ni was rejected at Tinny's store because she was considered couldn't give economic benefits. She also had seriously ill, was abandoned by her customer, and almost died because of syphilis.

Unlike the others, Marini was marginalized because of her family's relationship with Sugeng's family. Sugeng killed all of Marini's family so he could control all her possessions. Marini was also marginalized because the country suspected her of being Gerwani. Marginalization that occurs in Marini comes from family, economic, and state factor.

C. Resistance efforts against the marginalization of women

Positive resistance efforts were carried out by Marini. She managed to catch Sugeng who had destroyed her family. She wasn't trapped in prostitution even though lived in Silir and *Kremil*. Efforts to resist destructive marginalization carried out by Ningsih, Kartimah, and Boyani, and were demonstrated through their freedom in sexuality, which was previously prohibited for them. Even so, there are also figures who continue to accept their marginalized position. Yu Ni, Tumiayah, and Mrs. Yuyun didn't fight the marginalization in their life. Mrs. Yuyun returned to Leo Pastora's family even though her status as the mother of Leo's child was never recognized.

IV. CONCLUSION

All female character in the *Kremil* novel have experience of marginalization, even with different forms and causes. There are six forms of marginalization that can be observed in *Kremil* novels: 1) Control over productive power, 2) control over sexuality, 3) control over women's motion, 4) control over opinion right, 5) control over ownership of assets or other economic resources, 6) disturbance in social conditions. The marginalization caused by a variety of reasons whose main source from the family, the state, and the economy. Problems in the family and unstable political or government are the dominant factors. Efforts to change the situation or fight against marginalization aren't carried out by all female characters in the novel. Resistance that leads to positive efforts is carried out to improve life by trying to get out of the trap of prostitution, while efforts to resist in destructive are shown by achieving free self-freedom, without heeding anything beyond her pleasure.

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