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Radical Feminism Analysis in the Novel Orang-Orang Blanti by Wisran Hadi

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the representation of women in the novel Orang-Orang Blanti by Wisran Hadi using a radical feminist perspective. Radical feminism highlights how patriarchal structures systematically oppress women and demands fundamental changes in the social order. The method used is qualitative analysis with a descriptive approach. The results of the research Novel Orang-Orang Blanti depict women as victims of injustice in a patriarchal society, such as being restricted, having their voices silenced, and not being appreciated in history. However, female characters also show resistance and awareness to fight injustice. The radical feminist approach helps reveal that literature can be a mirror and critique of thinking about women.

Keywords: radical feminism, women's representation, patriarchy

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis representasi perempuan dalam novel Orang-Orang Blanti karya Wisran Hadi menggunakan perspektif feminisme radikal. Feminisme radikal menyoroti bagaimana struktur patriarki menindas perempuan secara sistemik dan menuntut perubahan mendasar dalam tatanan sosial. Metode yang digunakan adalah analisis kualitatif dengan pendekatan deskriptif. Hasil penelitian Novel Orang-Orang Blanti menggambarkan perempuan sebagai korban ketidakadilan dalam masyarakat patriarki, seperti dibatasi perannya, dibungkam suaranya, dan tidak dihargai dalam sejarah. Namun, tokoh perempuan juga menunjukkan perlawanan dan kesadaran untuk melawan ketidakadilan. Pendekatan feminisme radikal membantu mengungkap bahwa sastra bisa menjadi cermin dan kritik atas penindasan terhadap perempuan.

Kata kunci: feminism radikal, representasi perempuan, patriarki

Introduction

Literature as a cultural product represents the worldview of society, including in depicting the position of women. In many works, women are often placed in a subordinate position, reflecting and reinforcing patriarchal ideology. Therefore, it is important to examine the representation of women in literary texts, especially in the context of local cultures that are rich in traditional values. Feminism is a movement that fights for equal rights and justice between women and men (Rokhmansyah, 2014). This movement includes social, cultural, political, economic dimensions, as well as theoretical and moral foundations.

Feminists believe that the structure of society tends to benefit men, thus harming the position of women. Gender inequality experienced by women has led to the birth of the feminist movement, where women demand equal rights, status, and roles with men, both in the domestic and public spheres (Rohtama, et al, 2018). Feminism demands equality for women in various fields as an effort to fight for self-welfare, or as a reaction to oppression that hinders the progress and truth that women want to fight for (Astuti, et al, 2018). According to (Ritzer & Smart, 2014), feminists continue to support the modernist project as an effort to fight injustice against women through science for a better future.

The novel Orang-Orang Blanti by Wisran Hadi depicts the life of the Blanti community in Minangkabau. In this novel, female characters face social and cultural pressures that limit their roles and space for movement. However, some characters also show forms of resistance against male domination. This study aims to dissect how women are represented in the novel and how their resistance appears in the narrative discourse. The Minangkabau female characters in Wisran Hadi's novel are depicted as living in unhappiness and social conflict, especially related to inheritance and marginalization due to changes in values in the matrilineal kinship system. Literature not only reflects social reality, but also shapes the way its readers view various issues, including gender issues. In the context of a patriarchal society, literature often represents women in a subordinate position. Therefore, a feminist approach, especially radical feminism, is very relevant to studying literary texts that display the dynamics of gender relations. Radical feminism focuses on criticizing the patriarchal system as the root of women's oppression (Firestone, 1970; Millett, 1977).

Violence against female characters in the novel Orang-Orang Blanti is also found in other literary works according to previous research. Research (Bahardur, 2023), raises gender violence and women's resistance, and (Bahardur & Afrinda, 2024), the inner conflict of female characters using psychoanalysis. In contrast to these studies, this study uses a radical feminist approach to present women as victims and agents of complex change in the context of Minangkabau culture.

There are various classification systems and theories in feminism, one of which was developed by (Tong, 2010). She formulated various schools of feminist thought including liberal, radical, Marxist, socialist, psychoanalytic, gender, existentialist, postmodern, multicultural, global, and ecofeminism feminism. In this study, the topic discussed is the representation of women in the novel *Orang-Orang Blanti* by Wisran Hadi reviewed using radical feminist theory. The novel *Orang-Orang Blanti* by Wisran Hadi offers an interesting picture of the position of women in a traditional society that is still thick with patriarchal values. This study aims to analyze how the novel reflects the structure of patriarchal oppression and how women are depicted in dealing with these conditions, using a radical feminist framework.

Method

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a text analysis method. The main data source is the novel *Orang-Orang Blanti* by Wisran Hadi. The analysis focuses on the representation of female characters, especially Bu Yuyuk, using a radical feminist theoretical framework. Data were collected through critical reading techniques and analyzed by identifying dominant themes related to gender inequality and forms of resistance to patriarchy.

Result and Discussion

Analysis of Wisran Hadi's novel reveals that female characters are depicted as experiencing various forms of oppression, ranging from restrictions on their space for expression to social pressures that hinder their freedom. The following is a representation of patriarchy in Wisran Hadi's novel *Orang-orang Blanti*:

1. Objectification of Women in a Patriarchal System

Objectification of women in a patriarchal system means that women are often considered only as objects or decorations, not as human beings who have thoughts and feelings. Women are judged by their appearance or role to please others, especially men, not by themselves. As a result, women are not free to be themselves because they are continuously regulated and judged by the rules made by men. As depicted in the excerpt:

"Menurut Dawis, perempuan seperti itu diperlukan untuk kepentingan politik tapi bukan untuk kepentingan perempuan itu sendiri" (Hadi, 2008:20).

This quote illustrates how women are made objects by patriarchal power, not as autonomous subjects with their own will. Dawis's figure states that women are used for political interests, meaning that they are only considered important as long as they can benefit the power elite (men). Women's personal interests, aspirations, or welfare are not taken into account.

"Padahal selain perempuan itu, masih banyak perempuan lain di berbagai negeri yang benar-benar berjuang untuk bangsa dan pendidikan kaum perempuan. Sayangnya mereka tidak dicatat secara benar Mungkin karena dampak politisnya tidak menguntungkan-pihak yang berkuasa. Begitu kondisi yang pernah ada dalam dunia pengarang kaum perempuan di Blanti" (Hadi, 2008:20).

In the quote, women who really struggle are not recorded because their struggle is not politically beneficial. This means that the existence and struggle of women are measured not

from the substance of their struggle, but from the extent to which they can be used as tools or symbols for the interests of those in power. This reflects the process of objectification: women are not recognized as historical agents, but rather as figures who can be selected or removed from the narrative depending on their suitability to the dominant ideology.

2. Economic dependency as a tool of patriarchy

Economic dependency as a tool of patriarchy means that the system makes women dependent on men for finances so that they remain easy to control. Because they are not economically independent, women find it difficult to make their own decisions and are forced to follow the rules made by men. As illustrated in the quote:

"Payah kau, Yuk. Lebih baik cari uang yang banyak dari pada menulis tentang kehidupan orang-orang kecil. Apa kau masih seperti perempuan Blanti masa lalu? Menggantungkan hidup hanya kepada suami? Sekarang dunia sudah berubah Yuk." "Dari dulu aku tahu." "Suamimu seorang pelukis dan kenyataan sekarang lukisan tidak punya pasaran yang jelas" (Hadi, 2008:22).

This quote shows how the character Yuk is considered weak or "poor" because she chooses to write about the lives of the little people, rather than earning money. The person talking to her feels that earning money is more important than writing about things that are considered useless or unprofitable. Statements such as "Are you still like the Blanti women of the past?" also mocks Yuk, as if she is still dependent on her husband, even though times have changed. This shows that Yuk is judged based on her economic ability, not based on her good intentions or goals in writing.

In addition, it is also said that Yuk's husband is an unsold painter, which further strengthens the view that Yuk's family is considered to have no future because they do not follow modern living standards that pursue money. Overall, this quote illustrates the social pressure on women who choose a different path in life. They are considered failures or useless if they do not earn money or do not live like most people.

"Jika kalian berdua hanya mengandalkan biaya hidup dari hasil penjualan lukisan saja, hidupmu akan susah. Ingat Yuk. Sulit sekali seseorang dapat hidup dengan hasil seni" (Hadi, 2008:22).

This quote illustrates the concern or pressure on Yuk who chooses to live a simple life with her husband who works as a painter. This profession is considered unable to guarantee a decent life because the income is not fixed or economically promising. Therefore, Yuk is warned that their life will be difficult if they continue to depend on such work. This statement shows that the value or success of a person's life, especially women, is measured by their economic ability, not by their life choices or struggles. Yuk is considered to have made the wrong choice because she did not pursue money or financial stability, and this seems to be a mistake or weakness. Indirectly, this reflects how society (in a patriarchal system) pressures women to follow the standard of living determined by the economic system, and if they do not follow it, they are considered "unrealistic" or "on the wrong path".

3. Ideological repression of women's voices

Ideological repression of women's voices is a subtle but powerful way that patriarchal systems silence women's voices and experiences through social rules or values. As a result, women are often deemed unworthy of a voice, and their voices are rarely heard or considered important. As in the quote below:

“Tentang gerakan ini Bu Yuk pernah menulisnya berupa esei dalam majalah mahasiswa. Bercerita tentang tragedi yang dialami sebuah kaum. Penghulunya dijemput orang-orang tak dikenal dan sejak itu tidak pernah pulang lagi. Kaum itu terpaksa menggadaikan sawah ladang karena mereka harus membayar uang tebusan. Walaupun uang tebusan sudah diserahkan, namun penghulu mereka tidak pernah dikembalikan. Dikabarkan penghulu telah meninggal karena penyakit jantung. Yang dipertanyakan Bu Yuk dalam esei itu adalah teror dan ancaman yang menakutkan masyarakat, ketidakpastian hukum dan pelecehan hak-hak asasi. Siapa yang menjadi dalang dari semua itu? Siapa yang harus bertanggung jawab? Seminggu setelah majalah itu beredar, Bu Yuk dipanggil Dekan dan diancam akan dikeluarkan dari fakultas kalau masih menulis tentang hak-hak asasi dan anti Pembangunan” (Hadi, 2008:46).

The quote about Mrs. Yuk who wrote an essay about kidnapping cases and human rights violations can be read from a radical feminist perspective. In her writing, Mrs. Yuk questions who is responsible for the injustice and terror that occurs in society. However, after her writing was published, she was summoned by the dean and threatened with expulsion from campus if she continued to write things that were considered “anti-development.” This shows that the voices of women who dare to criticize those in power are often considered disturbing and must be stopped. In the view of radical feminism, women like Mrs. Yuk are considered to be fighting the patriarchal system because they dare to voice major problems that are usually kept quiet. This system not only limits women's roles at home, but also silences them in public spaces, including in the world of education. So, Mrs. Yuk's experience shows that the patriarchal system still works through official institutions to limit women who are critical and dare to speak out.

4. Awareness of History as a Tool of Patriarchy

Awareness of history as a tool of patriarchy is the understanding that history that has been written and inherited is more biased towards men and power, rather than reflecting women's experiences. In a patriarchal system, history is often used to erase, ignore, or belittle the role of women, so that women are not seen as important in major events or societal developments. As illustrated in the quote below:

“Bu Yuk jadi gelisah. Bagaimana nanti dia dapat membedakan antara masa lalu yang mungkin akan disadur untuk latar belakang penulisannya tentang Empon dengan sejarah orang-orang Blanti yang tidak mungkin dapat diubah-ubah. Karena masa lalu keluarga Empon dan masa lalu kaum Bu Yuk adalah bagian yang tak terpisahkan dari sejarah Blanti” (Hadi, 2008:75).

"Sejarah bukan sesuatu yang sakral," jawabnya sendiri menenangkan diri dari kegelisahannya. Tapi benarkah Bu Yuk dapat membendung kegelisahan saat memutus Empon dari masa lalu?" (Hadi, 2008:75).

The quote about Bu Yuk's anxiety shows how a woman tries to write the story of another woman's past (Empon), but is trapped between official history and personal experience. In the view of radical feminism, history is often written from a male perspective, so that women's experiences are rarely considered important. Bu Yuk is aware that Empon's story is part of history that has never been recorded fairly. When she says "history is not something sacred," it means she wants to say that history can be questioned and rewritten, especially from the perspective of women. Bu Yuk's efforts can be seen as a form of resistance against a system

that has long silenced women's voices. She wants women to also have the right to tell their stories and be recognized in history.

Conclusion

The novel *Orang-Orang Blanti* shows that women live under the pressure of a culture dominated by men. They are often viewed as objects, economically dependent, their voices are silenced, and they are rarely recognized in history. The character Bu Yuk is an example of a woman who is aware of this injustice and tries to fight through her writing and thoughts. By using the theory of radical feminism, we can see that the problems faced by women in this novel come from a system that is unfair to women. Through literature, women's voices and struggles can be displayed and fought for.

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