

## **SEKUHARA (Sexual Harassment) as a Representative of Gender Discrimination in *Out* Novel by Natsuo Kirino,**

Yunita El Risman,  
Universitas Hasanuddin,  
yunitael.risman@yahoo.co.id

### **Background of The Studies**

Natsuo Kirino is currently the best-selling author in Japan for the suspense novel. Natsuo Kirino is a writer who dares to make a new breakthrough in the realm of modern Japanese literature which has been dominated by male authors. The *Out* novel, published in 1997, made it a success. In addition, the novel led him to become the first Japanese writer to be nominated for the prestigious MWA Edgar Allan Poe Award as the best novel in the suspense category (2004).

In *Out*, Natsuo Kirino tells the life of four working class women with their respective burdens and having the same fate, namely no happiness and no freedom. They are Masako from her ostracized life, Yayoi from domestic violence, while Yoshie and Kuniko are out of financial trouble

Therefore, *Out* is considered interesting to be investigated because it shows the figure of a woman who fights against oppressive patriarchal culture. This work shows a claim against moral norms prevailing in society which is often used as a tool of male domination which is legalized by the patriarchal system to place women as objects of domination. The lawsuit is influenced by the women's transformation movement through the feminism movement which aims to break down the patriarchal ideology which is detrimental to many women.

### **Research Problem**

This study focuses on discussing the problem of sexual harassment (sekuhara) as a form of gender discrimination in the novel. This research question is outlined into two questions, namely

- 1) How is the practice of sekuhara depicted in *Out* novel by Natsuo Kirino?
- 2) What purpose or aspect do the women want to fight for as portrayed in Natsuo Kirino's *Out*?

### **Research Objectives**

This study aims to explain how is the practice of sekuhara depicted in *Out* and what purpose or aspect do the women want to fight for as portrayed in *Out*. In this case, the researcher attempt to reveal the practice of sekuhara and how the women selected as the resistance of women in an attempt to defend themselves.

### **Theoretical Approach**

As the work of women's writing, Natsuo Kirino writings express thoughts and feelings of women and contain a wide range of solutions offered by women to get out of the problems they experienced of gender inequality. Her writings were highly acclaimed. The plot is so interesting, very intelligent in describing the

character, and has a unique perspective on the portrayal of Japanese society.

This was as proposed in the perspective of a postmodern feminist that states that women's writing is a writing that is liberating for the women to express their writings experiences that allow to bring change for women to gain equal rights as men (Tong, 2010: 293 ). In other words, the various injustices that harm women's issues can be resolved by the women themselves by means of expressing their thoughts and feelings through writing.

In order to explain the problem on the basis of the theory used above refers to the concept of feminist Simone de Beauvoir because Natsuo Kirino regard to the work that is loaded with women's issues. In the novel *Out*, Natsuo Kirino apparent desire express feelings, thoughts, and problems of women in his time are still very relevant today. The thought of Simone de Beauvoir contained in the book *The Second Sex*. This book became an important milestone and the beginning of the outbreak of feminism as a discourse and as a movement.

### **Research Method**

The research method is a particular way which used in a study to solve the problem or answer the filing. Faruk (2012: 24-25) mentions there are two methods in the study, that is (1) data collection method, which means a set method or technique to get empirical facts related to the issue of research literature and (2) data analysis method, that is a set of ways or techniques to draw a relation between the data and other data which is based on a scientific knowledge. In this study, both methods are used to extract the practice of sekuhara depicted in *Out* and what purpose or aspect do the women want to fight for as portrayed in *Out*.

### **Analysis**

#### **#Subject and object relationships**

(馬鹿野郎(ばかやろう)！) 健司(けんじ)が怒鳴(いかりお)り、右手(みぎて)をさすりなが風呂場(ふろば)に入(はい)るのを横目(よこめ)で見(み)ながら、夫(おと)の右(みぎ)の拳固(げんこ)で殴(なぐ)られたと知(し)った。弥生(やよい)は痛(は)みに一(い)てしばらく横(よこ)たわっていた。(た)風呂場(ふろば)からは、烈(はげ)しい水(みず)の音(おと)がしてい(アウト: 53)

As a woman, this situation doesn't make women dialectical because it only fulfills the will of men. Women in patriarchal culture are considered as male servants at home, doing domestic works at home. Domestic works at home is an obligation for women in patriarchal culture, such as cooking, preparing food, cleaning the house, even the reproductive process. Men are considered kings who need to be worshipped and praised. Even when all of the works have been done, women still experience violence from male dissatisfaction.

Violence against women is any act that results in physical, sexual or psychological misery or suffering in women, including threats of certain acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in a private life environment.

まさこ                      こた                      かる      ら      よ                      たいふう      とうらい      よかん                      ふあん  
雅子はそれに                      ; 答えずにカローラに寄りかかり、台風の到来を予感させる不安な



日々(ひび)。侘(わ)びしきや後(あと)ろめたさとは 無縁(むえん)の強(つよ)く正(ただ)しい日々(ひび)。(アウト:321)

As in the following quote described by Natsuo Kirino how women can accept objectification from men, not negatively but positively, i.e. as an attempt to improve (enrich) the limitations of their perspective. Natsuo Kirino wants to assert that women play a very dominant role in the family. Women are not just complementary, but also become the control of the wholeness of the household, especially in the family sphere. Natsuo Kirino also asserts here that the presence of women is no longer solely in the domestic arena only as a lasting support for men who always come to bring life and all possibilities from the outside world. Men are no longer the essential beings who are fully responsible as the breadwinners outside the house, but women can also play that role at once

#Freedom

(ばばア(あ)は黙(だま)ってろ!) のことだったので騒(さわ)ぎにはならなかったが、雅子(まさこ)の心(こころ)の奥底(おくそこ)で目(め)に見(み)えない深(ふか)い場(ば)がはっきりと刻(きざ)まれた。男(おとこ)であることがそんなに偉(えら)いことが。大学(だいがく)をでればそれでよいのか。自分(じぶん)の経験(けいけん)も向上心(こうじょうしん)も、この職場(しょくば)で持(もち)ことは許(ゆる)されないのか。これまでも考(かんが)えなかった訳(わけ)ではない。しかし、雅子(まさこ)は金融(きんゆう)の仕事(しごと)が好(す)きだったのだ。だが、これまでかもしれない、という絶望感(ぜつぼうかん)が生(しょう)まれた。(アウト: 172)

As mentioned in the quotation above, women are portrayed as being able to transcend the limits of their abilities, dare to argue, seek to demonstrate also their abilities, and challenge men that they are also capable of doing work that men can also do. Through this quote, Natsuo Kirino begins to describe that women are not weak figures, as it has been believed all this time that they cannot speak, cannot resist, and can only accept all the conditions given by men that make them absolute objects. Women can also present as subjects of desire.

(まだよ。まだ許(ゆる)さない)(な)弥生(やよい)はさらに絞(しぼり)けた。(に)このまま死(し)んでしまえばいい、(え)と思(おも)ったのは 正確(せいかく)な気持(きもち)ではなかった。(た)健司(けんじ)という男(おとこ)の顔(かお)を見(を)たくない、喋(しゃべ)るのを聞(き)きたくない、そんな一心(こころ)だった。(アウト:55)

Natsuo Kirino describes that in women have great power that women do not realize themselves. As human beings, women also have an awareness to change as a free gesture. When they have experienced long-standing pain, they can finally present themselves as an absolute subject figures. In the excerpt, Natsuo Kirino shows how a figure who has been considered only a mere object can also present as a subject, even beyond what was thought all this time. A quote showing a woman who dares to speak up all the feeling that weighs on her as a result of the violent actions committed by men.

それなら、これまでの自分(じぶん)はどうなるのだ。雅子(まさこ)は深爪(ふかづめ)に近いほど短(みじ)く切(き)られた自身の指(ゆび)の爪(つめ)を眺(なが)めた。弁当(べんとう)工場(こうじょう)の仕事(しごと)のために、二年間(にねんかん)一度(いちど)も長く伸(なが)ばしたこ

とはない。青<sup>あお</sup>白<sup>しろ</sup>い手<sup>て</sup>は、過<sup>か</sup>剰<sup>じょう</sup>な殺<sup>さつ</sup>菌<sup>きん</sup>消<sup>しょう</sup>毒<sup>どく</sup>のため<sup>に</sup>にす<sup>あ</sup>っか<sup>り</sup>荒<sup>あ</sup>れ<sup>て</sup>い<sup>る</sup>。信<sup>しん</sup>金<sup>きん</sup>で  
二<sup>に</sup>十<sup>じゅう</sup>年<sup>ねん</sup>間<sup>かん</sup>働<sup>はたら</sup>いてきたこと。子<sup>こ</sup>供<sup>ども</sup>を産<sup>う</sup>み、家<sup>か</sup>事<sup>じ</sup>をして、家<sup>か</sup>族<sup>ぞく</sup>と暮<sup>く</sup>らしてきたこと。あ<sup>あ</sup>の  
日<sup>ひ</sup>々<sup>び</sup>は何<sup>なに</sup>だ<sup>だ</sup>った<sup>の</sup>だ<sup>ら</sup>う<sup>か</sup>。休<sup>きゅう</sup>に染<sup>し</sup>み<sup>つ</sup>いた<sup>こ</sup>れ<sup>ら</sup>の<sup>こ</sup>ん<sup>せ</sup>き<sup>ま</sup>ぎ<sup>ま</sup>さ<sup>こ</sup>じ<sup>し</sup>ん  
に<sup>ほ</sup>か<sup>な</sup>ら<sup>な</sup>か<sup>っ</sup>た。佐<sup>さ</sup>竹<sup>たけ</sup>は虚<sup>ゆめ</sup>ろ<sup>い</sup>な<sup>ま</sup>さ<sup>こ</sup>げ<sup>ん</sup>じ<sup>つ</sup>す<sup>み</sup>す<sup>み</sup>な<sup>い</sup>  
き<sup>る</sup>。雅<sup>まさ</sup>子<sup>こ</sup>は、自<sup>じ</sup>分<sup>ぶん</sup>の<sup>ほ</sup>じ<sup>ゆう</sup>さ<sup>た</sup>け<sup>き</sup>き<sup>ゆう</sup>す<sup>こ</sup>ち<sup>が</sup>  
た<sup>き</sup>こ<sup>つ</sup>に<sup>き</sup>が<sup>つ</sup>付<sup>い</sup>た。(オウト: 447)

In the women's, men looking for "The figure of the Other" as a life partner. Men through his ambivalent feeling makes women as a source of inspiration in which the men were able to conquer at will. Men dreamed of her in serenity and adequacy among all the hustle and bustle of all these difficulties and become a part of her mind. This dream incarnate in the person of the expectations of women as mediators between something that is foreign to the male, and a friend who is identical with him. Women against men with unique abilities, women are also conscious beings can physically although it seems dominated by men. (Beauvoir: 2003: 214).

Women's liberation efforts will be meaningless if it is done by positioning himself as a subject. If women are oppressed then she will try to find a way out so that he could continue to appear as the subject in relation to men. Effort out of the objectification of women and appears as a subject in a way that kinship foster togetherness women.

In addition to group unity and revival, liberation effort shackles of patriarchy also pursued through economic independence of women leaders in Out. Economic independence will be effective when it has the support of social, political, and cultural. Economic independence is a key prerequisite for achieving the freedom of movement of women to patriarchy. As long as women have not been able to meet the needs of his own life, then women will depend on other people. Human needs, for example, eating, board, and clothing.

## Conclusion

1. In *Out* novel, female characters are presented by Natsuo Kirino as a platform to convey the life experiences of women who experience being decomposed as objects in manifestations of gender injustice.
2. The awareness of women finally manifested in the form of collective resistance. Forms of resistance not only in the forms of ideas, but it is done in the form of a controversial action. Such actions include explicitly stated that he did not want to be treated arbitrarily so that working with fellow women in the same boat. Women realized that they had higher levels of reasoning, moral, and emotional equal to men, so women are not just a tool or instrument for happiness or perfection of man. Women are agents of reasoning whose self-esteem is in its ability to determine their own destiny.
3. The analysis shows that sekuhara experienced by female in *Out* novel occurs

- because of the patriarchal ideology in Japanese society which has been rooted for centuries in all aspects of life, including in the family and work environment. The female characters which presented by Natsuo Kirino in *Out* novel represent women who are shackled but with an awareness of shared solidarity against and undermining patriarchal dominance .
4. Economic independence of women has been obtained in the novel *Out* was entirely freed from the shackles of patriarchy.

### **Bibliography**

- Beauvoir, Simone De dkk. 2000. *Hidup Matinya Sang Pengarang*. Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia.
- Beauvoir, Simone De. 2003. *Second Sex (Fakta dan Mitos diterjemahkan oleh Tony B. Febriantono) Jilid I*. Surabaya: Pustaka Prometheus.
- Beauvoir, Simone De. 2003. *Second Sex (Kehidupan Perempuan diterjemahkan oleh Tony B. Febriantono) Jilid II*. Surabaya: Pustaka Prometheus.
- Beauvoir, Simone De. 1976. *The Ethics of Ambiguity*. New York: Citadel Press.
- Hollows, Joanne. 2010. *Feminisme, Feminitas, dan Budaya Populer*. Yogyakarta: Jalasutra
- Humm, Maggie. 2002 *Ensiklopedia Feminisme*. Yogyakarta: Fajar Pustaka Utama.
- Kirino, Natsuo. 2007. *Bebas*. Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama.
- Kirino, Natsuo. 2007. *アウト(OUT)*. Japan.
- Prabasmoro, Aquarini Priyatna. 2007. *Kajian Budaya Feminis*. Yogyakarta: Jalasutra.
- Zoer'aini Djamal Irwan. 2005. *Tantangan Lingkungan dan Lansekap Hutan Kota*. Jakarta: PT Bumi Aksara.
- Sholwater, Elaine. 1985. *The New Feminist Criticism: Essay on Women, Literature, and Theori*. London: Virago Press.
- Shiva, Vandana dan Mies, Maria (Terjemahan Kelik Ismunanto dan Lilik). 2005. *Ecofeminism : Perspektif Gerakan Perempuan dan Lingkungan*. Yogyakarta : IRE Press.
- Tong, Rosemarie Putnam. 2004. *Feminist Thought*. Yogyakarta: Jalasutra.
- Tong, Rosemarie Putnam (ed. Terj) Aquarini Priyatna Prabasmoro (2004). *Feminist Thought: Pengantar Paling Komprehensif kepada Aliran Utama Pemikiran Feminist (Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction, Second Edition* (Westview Press: Colorado, 2004) Jalasutra: Yogyakarta.
- Wolf, Naomi. 1997. *Gegar Gender: Kekuasaan Perempuan Menjelang Abad 21 (terj. Omi Intan Naomi)*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Semesta Press.