

Research Article

Morality and Religion Domination over the Women's Body in the Novel Azure by Rahayu Lestari (Michel Foucault's Critical Discourse Analysis)

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Abstract: So, morality, as a result of human rational efforts in determining something, should be in line with what is determined by religious normativity, so that morality will always be marked by human efforts to implement the prescribed religious shari'at. This study uses Michel Foucault's critical discourse analysis as well as his thinking about power. The results of the study found that, in the relationship between morality and religion in the Azure Novel by Rahayu Lestari, morality and religion as a social institution work together to achieve goodness. In the relationship between religion and the female body in Azure Novel by Rahayu Lestari, in this case, women are discriminated against for not doing anything in the name of religion. And if women are considered to have violated their social construction, it will be a disgrace.

Keywords: Morality, Women's Body, Critical Discourse Analysis.

Introduction

The term immoral appears when humans lack morals or inherent goodness values. Morals are absolute things that must be owned and attached to human beings. Morality, as a result of human rational efforts in determining something, should be in line with what is determined by religious normativity, so that morality will always be marked by human efforts in explaining the prescribed religious law. Lexically, morality can be understood as a level of rules that regulate the understanding of good or bad human actions, where humans can distinguish between good and bad things that can be done, and even prohibitions can make them happen.

Morals are closely related to the moral education given to teenagers, especially by their parents. The treatment given by parents to their children since childhood will have an impact on their moral development in adulthood (Adriansyah and Rahmi, 2012:2). This moral development will later shape the attitudes, traits, and even the character of the children in the future, so it is very important for teenagers who will become the next generation to be given moral education because this education will shape them to have a temperament that reflects the balance of knowledge and value experience, morals and religion. As social beings, teenagers are also required to obey those around them.

Women's bodies always enter the frenzy of discussion in all spheres. Therefore, there is no other discourse that has more power to compete with discourse except the discussion about women's bodies. Women's bodies, from time to time, always experience contestation by parties from outside themselves. There is a point that is targeted as well as being targeted by the struggle for discourse and women's bodies, namely and submission. In this case, the male side is the main accused of bias at the same time, the patriarch, who always felt he had the "privilege" to make judgments about women's bodies. Men feel as if they have the privilege to intervene by placing certain standards of

value on women's bodies. All of them work within a patriarchal framework that places women and their bodies in a subordinate position. The power dimension is used as a work machine to achieve goals (Tabrani *et al.*, 2019: 18).

In Nietzsche's view, one of the inspirations for Foucault in (Listiyono, 2006), he states that the body can not only be utilized and experienced in many ways, that its desires can be changed by cultural interpretations, and that every aspect of the body can be thoroughly modified by techniques. That is, a body that is malleable, subdued, and forget. This is also in line with what Foucault said, that the body will become a useful force if it is productive and in subjection. The body that exists is the property of every individual or private, not belonging to a group or the public, because the owner has the right to regulate and maintain the body, not someone else. However, this is not the case. The reality at this time is that there are many anxieties that occur about the power of the body. All human bodies, especially women, have been made objects. In other words, the body that is obeyed is a body that is subdued, controlled, restrained, and not given freedom or power over the body.

Women are positioned as something that harms men. Rape, an act of violence that is accepted by women, becomes the fault of women or victims, who, incidentally, are women. Discussing the body, according to Foucault (Vidiadari, 2017), is always linked to the production, transmission, reception, and legitimacy of knowledge on sexuality and sex. Women are engineered to fix their bodies to be perfect and make erotic some parts of their bodies, while men then see women as sex objects.

The critical discourse analysis used by Foucault is a theory as well as a method that looks at the relationship between power and all existing social relations. Foucault sees discourse analysis as an analysis of statements, which form discourse formations. The significance of this analysis is the view that discourse is constitutive as a contributor to the production, transformation, and reproduction of existing representations of power. In addition, Foucault also states that the social subject that produces the statement is not united with his statement where the subject is outside and discourse stands independently. The subject is only the source of the statement. It can be said that discourse is independent (Fairclough, 2006).

The Azure novel by Rahayu Lestari, in the Azure novel, tells the story of Tari's love for Bayu and brings him to the gates of the destruction of a very dark world. Taking off her hijab exposed God, promiscuity, damaged the good name of her family and even caused the death of her own father.

Method

This research on morality and the domination of religion over women's bodies uses Michel Foucault's critical discourse analysis method. The critical discourse analysis of Michel Foucault's perspective is not only interpretive but also explanative, namely finding an explanation of why an event occurred, not just explaining it descriptively but in depth to get a picture of cause and effect through a genealogical approach (Abadi, 2017). The genealogical approach in this case is as a scalpel to analyze the relationships and effects that arise from the relations of each discourse and aims to develop a deep understanding of a complex set of concepts that are closely intertwined with discursive structures and discursive relations.

Results and Discussions

Religion and Relationship

According to Frankena (Widiarti, 2003), the matter (scope) of morality is reasoning (consideration) based on rules, principles, and ideals that state actions as right, wrong, good, or bad, which has an influence on feelings, interests, idealization of others, or certain experiences, whether actually or hypothetically, or also having an influence on humanity. "Moral" always refers to the good or bad of humans as humans. So it's not only about good and bad in one aspect or certain sectors, for example as a cook, badminton player, or lecturer, but also good and bad as a human being.

In line with what Frankena stated above, the moral representation of the female character in Azure's novel is a figure who follows her ego too much in loving someone and has experienced a holy prison but not of her own volition. There is rebellion as well as delinquency. This can be seen in the following Azure novel excerpt:

“Selama kurun waktu kuliahku itu, aku memang berubah. Kutukar imanku dengan kenikmatan semu. Kubuang jilbab yang selama ini kupakai hanya untuk menajdi topeng kebusukanku. Akupun melupakan Tuhan. Karena Mas Bayu aku merasa bahwa keadilan dan Tuhan itu hanyalah omong kosong belaka. Toh, tanpa perlu meminta dan bersujud kepada-Nya, aku berhasil menjadi mahasiswa teladan, kesayangan semua dosen pengajar. (Rahayu, 2012: 193)”

In this quote, the female character behaves outside the eastern cultural norms. The moral principle, which is the reason for an action, is in accordance with the cognitive development theory adopted by viewing moral reasoning as a structure, not content (Widiarti, 2003). So, moral reasoning is not about what is good or bad, but how one arrives at a decision that something is good or bad. In the quote, it can be understood that the female character, who is experiencing the injustices of life, is highlighted more than the male character. The same thing happened to another Azure novel quote:

“Siapa sangka, aku yang dulu sempat mengenyam pendidikan pesantren, anak dari seorang ustadz yang taat beragama dan rajin beribadah, yang dimata keluarga dan tetangga selalu menjaga harga diri dan nama keluarga, yang terlihat normal dalam pandangan orang-orang di sekitarnya, bisa berubah menjadi jelmaan kaum terlaknat seperti pada zaman Nabi Luth. (Rahayu, 2012:192)”

“Tanpa sepengetahuan keluargaku, selama dua tahun ini, aku mulai bergabung dengan anggota belos, sebuah komunitas dimana wanita menyukai wanita adalah suatu hal yang wajar. Efek sakit hati yang diberikan Mas Bayu kepadaku memang membuatku menjadi ingin selalu maju. (Rahayu, 2012: 192)”

The female character in the quote explains that only female characters experience injustice in their lives while the male characters are not. From some of these quotes, it can be understood that female characters experience gender discrimination because only female characters are harmed and also experience psychological disorders.

Referring to Frankena, morality always refers to the good and bad of humans as humans. In the Azure novel, the female character experiences a lack of knowledge about morals and ethics, violating the prevailing religious norms. In line with what was confirmed by Bertens (1993), morality is considered close to the word ethics because the etymology between the words ethics and morals is the same, which means custom. Only ethics comes from the Greek singular form *ethos* and the plural form *ta etha*. Meanwhile, moral comes from the Latin singular form *mos*, and the plural form *mores*. Furthermore, ethics, according to the KBBI, is defined as 1) the science of what is good and what is bad and about moral rights and obligations; 2) a collection of principles or values relating to morals; and 3) values regarding right and wrong held by a group or society. Furthermore, Bertens asserted that morals are the values and norms that become the guide for a person or a group in regulating their behavior. The similarities between ethics and morals are that both are values and norms that serve as a guide for an individual or a group in regulating their behavior. Discussions about morals and ethics can be shown to female characters who are willing to take off their headscarves because of their hurt to male characters and the inclusion of female figures in the lesbian community, which is strictly prohibited by religion.

Hijab means glory for a Muslim woman, because it will distinguish her from women who are not good. A person who is neatly and politely dressed will more easily avoid being disturbed by ignorant

people, and a woman who opens her genitals in public is easily judged as a woman who is not good (Noer *et al.*, 2016). By wearing a headscarf more or less, it can affect a woman's soul so that it can form a noble character. Hijab is also expected to reflect good behavior towards others and individuals with noble character.

Furthermore, the discussion about deviant behavior (lesbians) is a form of resistance to the character that Allah has created. Deviant behavior is an indication of very severe damage. There are elements of abomination and the sin of adultery. Even worse and more vile than adultery, Allah SWT. said:

Meaning: "Dan (kami juga telah mengutus) Luth, ketika dia berkata kepada kaumnya. Mengapa kalian mengerjakan perbuatan keji, yang belum pernah dilakukan oleh seorang pun sebelum kamu (di dunia ini), Sungguh kamu telah melampiasikan syahwatmu kepada sesama lelaki bukan kepada perempuan. Kamu benar-benar kaum yang melampui batas." (Q.S Al-A'raf 80-81)"

Morality relates to how humans achieve a good life. A good life can be achieved after humans carry out all God's commands. God's commandments can be known in the context of religion. So it is clear that morality presupposes religion. If life wants to get luck and goodness, then follow God's commands without violating them at all. Religion is the most ancient social institution that regulates how to achieve good. The existence of religion even precedes the moral and legal principles of a society. Moreover, morality in a traditional society is closely related to religious norms. There is an absolute reality that rewards those who act morally. Then religion becomes a strong guarantor for moral life (Cantika, 2020).

The Relation of Religious Power to the Female Body

Power, according to Foucault, is not owned but practiced in a scope where there are many positions that are strategically related to one another. For Foucault, power is always accumulated through knowledge, and knowledge always has the effect of power. The organizers of power, according to Foucault, always produce knowledge as the basis of their power. Knowledge is not a vague expression of power relations, but knowledge is within the power relations themselves. There is no knowledge without power, and conversely, there is no power without knowledge (Eriyanto, 2005). In Power, Foucault describes knowledge as a confluence of power relations and the search for information, which he calls "power/knowledge. He stated that in an essay entitled "Prison Talk," that 'it is impossible for power to be exercised without knowledge, it is impossible for knowledge not to produce power' (Mills, 2003).

Religion, in addition to being a mediator between humans and God, provides clear boundaries in interpreting the body and how the body is treated. Religion explicitly designates an action by using the body as a moral or immoral act. Berger (1991) and Suraji (2012) suggest that in discourse about the body, various religious concepts, values, and norms can be a "blueprint" that has a function as a standard for how the body should be treated and how people behave with their bodies. Because the basis of reference for values is transcendent or cosmic, the values established by religion have the most widespread and effective legitimacy and are almost indisputable.

Then, Shihab (2006) in Suraji (2012) suggests that the main moral sources in Islam are the Qur'an and Hadith. From these two sources, various kinds of fiqh about women emerged. Of course, how the Qur'an, Hadith, and Fiqh regarding the female body are interpreted is very dependent on women in their association with men by covering the aurat. Broadly speaking, in the context of discussing women's genitalia, Muslim interpretations of the Qur'an and Hadith can be grouped into three different views, namely: first, the view which states that all without exception is genitalia; second, the view which states that the whole body is aurat with the exception of the face and palms; and third, the view which states that the issue of aurat and hijab is a cultural issue.

From the analysis conducted, it is found that the relationship of religious power regarding women's bodies is weak. This is indicated by the existence of religious power that runs when the body is analyzed and integrated, which is finally placed in functional communication with the social body.

“Kupejamkan mata saat Mas Bayu memeluk dan lembut bibirnya menyentuh bibirku. Untuk sesaat, akupun melupakan ajaran agama yang jelas mengharamkan perbuatan kami tadi karena bisa mendekati zina. Aku menangis. (Rahayu, 2012: 150)

Melihat tawa lepasnya dan perhatian yang ia curahkan padaku sudah membuatku semakin jatuh pada pesonanya. Hingga tangan Mas Bayu bergeriliya ditubuhku, aku hanya bisa diam dan memasrahkan diriku. Bahkan saat Mas Bayu menepikan mobil untuk melakukan ‘itu’, aku hanya mampu mengiyakan. Pasrah pada keadaanku yang benar-benar tengah dilanda mabuk asmara. (Rahayu, 2012: 161)”

Anything that is not done according to religious norms will only be considered a sin. If a man and a woman who are not related to each other in a marital relationship have intercourse that is not husband and wife, it will be punished as adultery. Surah Al-Isra'verse 32:

Meaning: “Dan janganlah kamu mendekati zina itu adalah sesuatu perbuatan yang keji. Dan suatu jalan yang buruk.”

From verse 32 of Al-Isra, it is explained that we are forbidden to commit adultery. Just approaching is not allowed. In this case, women are discriminated against for doing nothing in the name of religion. And if women are considered to have violated their social construction, it will be a disgrace. Fundamental problems in relationships occur because the relationship between men and women is not balanced. Gender relations as a social construction in society are seen as natural. That is, if the right to every reproduction is the right of everyone to make reproduction decisions free of discrimination, coercion, and violence, then activities related to the reproductive process, specifically sexual relations, must also be free of coercion, violence, and discrimination.

Women's bodies are highlighted and regulated in the most essential sphere of human behavior (religion), through controlling behavior, clothing, and other aspects of life. Women's bodies are controlled to undergo submission and obedience to the patriarchal frame, cut firmly by a sexuality regime (Tabrani *et al.*, 2019). In the end, in the scourge of modernity that capitalism constantly sways, women's bodies begin to lose their autonomy.

Power has defined the body as something that should naturally be clean or dirty, holy or not. Power also determines that the body must be controlled in such a way. The power over the operating body is good for the community itself. Moreover, when power moves in the name of a religious value, power acquires a very strong legitimacy (Berger, 1991) in Suraji, 2012). Religious values that are rooted in divine truths that are inviolable will remain in the air if these values do not come into contact with the daily experiences of religious people.

Furthermore, Foucault (2002) in Fismatika (2019) explains that the mechanism of power tends to think about the capillary form of its existence, namely the subject matter where power reaches the deepest parts of individuals, touches their bodies, penetrates into their actions, behavior, and discourses in everyday life. Therefore, it can be interpreted that there is power over knowledge and knowledge over power.

Gordon (1980) explains that impractical forms of power are not as necessary as had been thought and that industrial societies could satisfy themselves with much looser forms of power over bodies because power would be a fragile thing if its only function was to suppress. In today's society, prohibitions arise not from taboos or rituals.

Conclusion

A moral is an important guide or guide for teenagers to find their own way towards a mature personality and avoid all the conflicts that occur during adolescence. Morality relates to how humans achieve a good life. A good life can be achieved after humans carry out all God's commands. God's commandments can be known in the context of religion.

The relation of religious power over women's bodies. In this case, women are considered to have violated their social construction and become a disgrace. This is indicated by the existence of religious power that runs when the body is analyzed and integrated, which is finally placed in functional communication with the social body. Women's bodies are controlled to undergo submission and obedience to the patriarchal frame, cut firmly by a regime of sexuality.

Conflicts of interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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