



THE DUALITY OF ROLES IN THE NOVEL WISANGGENI SANG BURONAN BY SENO GUMIRA AJI DARMA

Ummi Nurjamil Baiti Lapiana*, Wiekandini Dyah Pandanwangi, Sri Nani Hari Yanti

Department of Indonesian Language and Literature, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas Jenderal Soedirman, Purwokerto, Indonesia

*Email: ummi.nurjamil@unsoed.ac.id

Abstract. This research explores the identity conflict experienced by the character Wisanggeni in the novel *Wisanggeni: Sang Buronan* by Seno Gumira Ajidarma. Wisanggeni, as the main character, embodies a complex duality of roles. He is both a hero and a fugitive. This study employs a character analysis approach, focusing on Wisanggeni's inner struggle with his identity, revealing the roles' duality between protagonist and antagonist. The analysis shows that the identity conflict experienced by Wisanggeni reflects the moral and ethical dilemmas faced in the social and political context of Java. The duality of Wisanggeni, as a representation of the struggle between good and evil, underscores the intense quest for self-identity. This quest is particularly intense due to the societal pressures and expectations Wisanggeni must navigate. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of how Seno Gumira Ajidarma uses the character Wisanggeni to explore complex themes such as identity, morality, and power within the context of Indonesian culture.

Keywords: Wisanggeni, Seno Gumira Ajidarma, the duality of role, identity, character analysis

A. Introduction

A novel is a fictionalized story that describes the most important events in a person's life. Various events produce conflicts, which change a person's life. According to Nurgiyantoro (1), a novel as a work of fiction offers a world that contains an idealized model of life, an imaginative world built through various intrinsic elements, such as events, plot, characters, characterization, setting, and point of view. However, authors deliberately analogize what they write with the real world so that it seems like true and real things. A character is a person who describes events in a story so that the events can form a story (2).

The characters in the story have different roles. The role of characters in literary research is very important to create the story's dynamics and convey the author's message. Each character in the novel has a unique role, whether as a protagonist, antagonist, main character, or supporting character. All these roles contribute to the development of the plot and theme of the story. These characters serve as the main drivers to build the story and as a medium to convey concepts, principles, and social and psychological conflicts relevant to the literary work.

The roles of characters in novels are often not limited to simple characterizations. These characters can undergo major changes in their emotions, motivations, and attitudes throughout the story, which makes them more complex and alive. Each character does many things, such as interacting with each other, creating strong dynamics, and depicting internal conflicts, moral struggles, or even larger social issues. The main character is usually the center of conflict and



narrative development, while other characters enrich the story by providing different perspectives, giving readers a broader perspective.

One of the themes often discussed in literary works, including novels, is role duality. This theme emphasizes the situation where a character plays or is trapped in two conflicting roles, often leading to internal and external conflicts. This duality of roles builds character complexity and helps us understand identity, morality, and the life dilemmas humans face in specific social and cultural situations.

The duality of roles can appear in various forms in many works of fiction, especially novels. For example, a character can face different moral roles, such as being both a protector and a destroyer or acting as a hero but also being a person condemned by society. This phenomenon points to the fact that humans often have to adapt to situations where they have to perform multiple roles. Writers often use this role quality to show in-depth story dynamics and portray a character's mental worries.

Wisanggeni Sang Buronan by Seno Gumira Ajidarma is one such novel that is interesting to study, especially because of its characters and their duality of roles. In addition to lifting the classic puppet story, Seno offers a complex narrative with a modern touch in this work, where the main character is trapped in two contradictory roles that shape his personality. Wisanggeni, one of the Pandawa knights in the puppet show, is portrayed as a person who fights against injustice and becomes a fugitive, hunted by a power greater than him. This research will focus on the form of the duality of roles in the novel Wisanggeni Sang Buronan by Seno Gumira Aji Darma.

B. Methods

According to Sugiyono (3), research methods are scientific ways to get data with specific purposes and uses. In this study, the method used was descriptive qualitative. Qualitative research reveals certain social situations by correctly describing reality, formed by words based on relevant data collection and analysis techniques obtained from natural situations (4). The data collection technique in this research is a literature study with the main data source of the novel Wisanggeni Sang Buronan by Seno Gumira Aji Darma. After reading the entire novel, the researcher selected and classified the data needed. The data were then analyzed using a structural approach with character theory as the foundation.

C. Results And Discussion

Wisanggeni is the son of Arjuna and Dewi Dresanala, born because Dresanala insisted on not aborting her pregnancy, as did the other seven angels who also had children from Arjuna. Even with the permission of the gods, Arjuna could marry the angels. Arjuna merited the gods for freeing the giant Niwatakacana from heaven. Because of his desire to pursue Dewi Supraba, the giant tore down Kahyangan.

After his birth, Wisanggeni caused chaos in Kahyangan because his grandfather, Betara Brama, wanted to kill him on the orders of Sang Hyang Giri Nata or Batara Guru. This was because his birth was considered a violation of natural law. Wisanggeni remained safe from disaster because he was an emanation of Sang Hyang Wenang.

In infancy, Batara Baruna, the God who rules the ocean, and Hyang Antaboga, the snake king at the bottom of the Earth, educated Wisanggeni with extraordinary abilities. Wisanggeni can fly like Gatutkaca in the puppet world, enter the Earth like Antareja, and live in the sea like Antasena.

Wisanggeni exited his mother's womb and searched for his father and mother, Arjuna and Dewi Dresanala. He is considered a demigod and breaks the laws of nature, so the gods want to kill him. Of course, the various challenges were overcome with ease. Being overwhelmed, the Gods asked Semar for help. Finally, Wisanggeni was expelled from the world of puppetry, thanks to Kresna's tactics.



1. Rebel vs. Hero

The description of research results should be clearly and precisely written. Results should be sufficiently explained and can be supported by tables, graphics, or figures. Discussion must be concise, and the results must be appropriately interpreted. It should explain the meaning and usefulness of the finding as an answer to the research problem.

Wisanggeni, who is made a fugitive and pursued wherever he goes, is described by Seno in the following quotations.

Ia masuk sambil membuka capingnya. Orang-orang tampak risi oleh pakaian dan bau badannya yang kurang sedap, namun para pelayan Wanita segera terpesona oleh ketampanan tersembunyi di balik brewoknya yang lebat. Ketika lelaki itu mengedarkan pandangannya, mereka tiba-tiba menunduk atau mengalihkan pandangan, hati mereka entah kenapa bagaikan bergetar memandang mata lelaki berpakaian pengemis itu. Namun di salah satu sudut terlihat sepasang mata yang tak kalah tajam memperhatikan segala gerak geriknya (Ajidarma:15).

The quotation shows that although Wisanggeni covered himself with his shabbiness and bushy beard, someone from God's messenger could still recognize him and spy on his activities. The same thing is illustrated in the following quotation.

Ketika lelaki itu beranjak pergi dengan bungkus makanan dan botol arak, orang yang menatapnya dengan tajam itu pun bangkit sambil meletakkan uang pembayaran di mejanya. Ia membuntuti si pakaian kumal dengan sembunyi-sembunyi (Ajidarma:15).

Wisanggeni was considered a rebel because of his unexpected birth. He was considered an illegitimate child who would cause trouble. Wisanggeni is always hunted because of his disturbing existence, as shown in the following quote.

“Siapakah orang tuamu?”

“Ayahku adalah Arjuna, ibuku bidadari dari kahyangan. Dewi Darsanala.”

Mendengar itu hanuman mendadak beringas, matanya merah, ia menyeringai dengan buas.

“Jangan bicara ngawur pengacau!” (Ajidarma:25)

The quote shows Arjuna's statement as Wisanggeni's father, who calls him a troublemaker. Besides the Gods who labeled him a rebel, his father now considers him a troublemaker.

“Oladalah bayi suci anak sang takdir,” ratap Batara Brahma dengan lirih, “lakon apakah yang ,menyertai hidupmu, cucuku, sampai kakekmu sendiri mendapat tugas untuk membunuhmu? Oladalah jagad raya alam semesta, adakah yang lebih suci dari seorang bayi yang baru saja lahir? Adakah yang lebih terkutuk dari seorang kakek yang membunuh cucunya sendiri? Oladalah jagad dewa batara, kebijaksanaan apakah ini, membunuh seorang bayi yang tidak dikehendaki?” (Ajidarma:51).

Wisanggeni always considered a rebel by the gods, is a hero to the universe. A hero who, with his existence, fights for justice and conveys that although his presence is not expected, he still has the right to live. He also has the right to know and meet his parents. He is a hero who fights for the meaning of self-identity.

2. Antagonist vs. Protagonist

Wisanggeni, shown as a fugitive, becomes an antagonist character who is considered evil and not in line with the reader's expectations. However, he is just a child who wants his existence recognized. He is a child who wants to know and meet his parents. With his ability



and magic in fighting the rulers, Wisanggeni is like an antagonist who goes against his predestined nature. He goes to the west as instructed by Hanuman.

However, unwanted things happened. After meeting his father, Wisanggeni was not even recognized. As shown in the following quote, Arjuna doubted Wisanggeni's words that he was the son of Arjuna and Dewi Darsanala.

“Biarlah aku yang menghadapi mereka, arjuna, ayahku”

“Apa? Aku ayahmu?” Arjuna tersentak kebingungan (Ajidarma:33).

“Ibumu Dewi Darsanala? Janganlah kau membual kesatria digjaya”

“Aku berkata yang sesungguhnya ayahku.”

“Jangan sebut aku ayahmu.” Arjuna membentak. “Jangan main-main, kamu pengacau, hadapilah Arjuna secara kesatria.”

“Aku tak mengerti maksudmu, ayahku.”

“Diam,” dan di tangan Arjuna telah terenggam panah sakti Pasopati. Tapi Wisanggeni tidak bergerak sama sekali.

“Bunuhlah aku, kalua itu memang kehendakmu ayahku, aku tak akan melawan.” (Ajidarma:34-35)

Wisanggeni's happy look at who could finally find his father, Arjuna, disappeared instantly—hearing Arjuna yelling at him and even parading pasopati arrows into his body. He was hurt, disappointed, and angry at what happened to him.

As an antagonist who always fights the Gods, Wisanggeni has his own story. He is a child who is sought for safety and loved by his mother, Dewi Darsanala. With a body covered in blood and even fainting, Dewi Darsanala struggles to give birth to Wisanggeni.

Besides his mother, Wisanggeni is guarded by Sri Krishna and Hanuman, who love him. This can be seen in the following quote.

“Beliau memandangu dengan tajam sehingga aku merasa malu, setua ini aku masih belum mampu mengendalikan hawa nafsu amarah meskipun telah bersemedi setiap hari. Aku akhirnya menghentikan pencarianmu Wisanggeni. Bukan karena aku tidak bertanggung jawab, tapi karena Sri Kresna sendirilah yang memberikan jaminan padauk bahwa bayi itu selamat. Pada mulanya aku masih bingung, bagaimana mengatakan hal ini pada Dewi Darsanala. Namun syukurlah, Sang Dewi Pun mampu menerimanya dengan penuh pengertian. Ia tetap tinggal dengan damai di Kendalisada, sampai Ketika kemarin Batara Narada menjemputnya pulang ke Suralaya, Sang Dewi sempat berpesan untuk mencari keterangan tentang hilangnya kamu.” (Ajidarma: 46).

3. Criticism of Power

This novel is an epic narrative and a critique of power and social structure. The novel is set in Indonesia, a political and social environment rife with shifting power and injustice. In this story, the gods, especially Batara Guru, are portrayed as cruel and scheming rulers. This indicates the repressive system of power in the real world, where rulers often oppress their people to maintain their power. As a character who defies submission to the gods, Wisanggeni shows the resistance of the common people against unjust authority. He represents people who dare to defy tyranny in dangerous situations. Art uses the character of Wisanggeni to convey a moral message about the importance of courage and integrity in the face of oppressive power.

“Cucuku, malang benar nasibku!” ratapnya tanpa sadar bahwa ada orang lain mendengar, “Kalau saja para dewa menyadari, alangkah kelirunya Keputusan mereka. Seberapa hinakah



Bidadari dikawini manusia. Siapakah yang mengangkat diri mereka menjadi dewa? Aku tak mengerti, menahan waktu, betapa muskil. Mengingat lahirnya bayi ini, betapa tak bisa dimengerti.” (Ajidarma: 54).

The quote shows a social critique of power that arbitrarily makes decisions about leaders who do not want to listen to their people's cries and continue to hunt for the existence and authority of their power. Babies who are born pure become the target of the rulers' frustration because of their dignity and high self-esteem.

D. Conclusion

This Seno Gumira Ajidarma's novel *Wisanggeni Sang Buronan* presents a complex and ambiguous story. *Wisanggeni* not only functions as a hero or rebel but also as a symbol of resistance to injustice. Through the duality of roles, Seno illustrates how this character is caught up in moral and social dilemmas that reflect real-world situations, especially in the Indonesian social and political context. Thus, this novel is not just an epic story but a profound social critique of identity and power.

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