

# Male Domination of Women in the Novel Princess by Jean P Sasson: A Psychological Study

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**Abstract**— *The purpose of this study is to describe the dominance of male characters in a novel. The difference between men and women is essentially a biological characteristic (gender) which is sharpened through the process of socialization. In addition to the socialization process, there is also a social construction with the concept of gender. This is what determines the various practices of male domination unfairly over women. This study uses descriptive qualitative method. Qualitative descriptive is a research with a description through words or sentences to obtain a conclusion. Documentation study was conducted as a method of data collection. This research uses content analysis method, namely by giving meaning to the novel Princess by Jean P Sasson. This study concludes that a woman is indeed weak in terms of physical, power and so on. But that weakness can be a strength to fight against the power or domination of a man in acting and treating women excessively. Such an attitude is a manifestation of the desire to get what is called gender equality.*

**Keywords**— *Male domination, violence, psychology.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

In literary works there are psychological phenomena that are displayed by the author. The form of psychological phenomena is in the form of psychological elements expressed by the author to the characters who play a role in the story. The psychological element is raised based on conflicts between characters. Therefore, it is always assumed that the study of psychology always appears in literary works. This is in line with Endraswara's opinion (2003: 96) that literary psychology is a literary study that views it as a psychological activity.

The psychological element is reflected in the characters who play a role in the novel 'Princess' by Jean P. Sasson. This novel is a true story experienced by a female character in the Saudi Arabian royal family. It was told that the female figures in the kingdom were treated unfairly, inhumanely, had no right to make any decisions, and their freedoms were shackled. This is caused by the arrogance and arbitrariness of the male characters. The male character often treats the female character, namely his wife and daughters including Sultana, harshly. The suffering experienced by the female character lasted a long time, causing resistance that could not be avoided. This bad treatment had an impact on these women, namely they experience mental shock. For example, they performed unnatural actions such as wanting to take revenge against male characters.

This dispute or conflict is the focus of this research. The discussion is focused and limited to one problem, namely the treatment of male characters (Sultana's father) against female characters in the novel Princess by Jean P. Sasson. The novel is chosen because it raises the dominance of men over domestic

sexual activities, wife's social life decisions, and economic arrangements. Although only a fiction, this novel is able to reveal the reality of life in a household that is dominated by male power. This novel deserves a more in-depth study because there are many cases of domestic violence and the majority of the victims are women.

## II. THEORITICAL REVIEW

Pierre Bourdieu's theory of symbolic violence, as well as a series of underlying theories, views violence against women as systemic violence that has been rooted in and occurred through a long process. Pierre Bourdieu's theory maps out the roots of violence by first understanding the social position of women in society, and recognizing other types of violence that women themselves have consented to. The theory provides an explanation of the root causes of continued domestic violence, whether physical, psychological, sexual, or economic violence (Haryatmoko, 2003:6).

Therefore, it can be concluded that there are four meanings of violence against women as explained by Subhan (2001:78): 1) Violence against women is an act that violates, hinders, negates enjoyment, and neglects women's human rights on the basis of gender; 2) Violence against women is a social act, in which the perpetrators must be held accountable for their actions to the community; 3) Violence against women is any act that involves the recruitment or distribution of women and girls, domestically or abroad, or acts of abuse of authority, and fraud by coercion; and 4) Violence against women is behavior that arises due to the role of gender identity and the power they have.

Psychological impacts are generally assessed through mental or psychological processes and dynamics that underlie behavior (Irwanto, 2002). On the other hand, Mendatu (2007) states that there are several psychological effects that appear on women victims of violence, namely low self-esteem, depression, post-traumatic stress, suicide, alcohol and drug abuse, anxiety, shame and depression. The psychological impact according to Noorkasiani, Heryati & Ismail (2007:51), is in the form of a fall in self-esteem and self-concept.

According to Noorkasiani, Heryati & Ismail (2007:32) psychological symptoms that are often experienced by victims of violence are: a) fear when talking about violence. Fear arises because the victim already has a belief that it will put her in a worse situation; b) Feelings of helplessness. Victims attempt to control, avoid, or escape the situation. Feelings of helplessness arise when efforts are unsuccessful and nothing can be done to change the situation; c) Self-blame.

### III. RESEARCH METHODS

This study used descriptive qualitative method. Qualitative descriptive is a research with a description through words or sentences to obtain a conclusion (Siswantoro, 2005). The data source is the novel *Princess* by Jean P Sasson.

This research is included in descriptive qualitative. This is because qualitative research is a form of research that seeks to describe social phenomena encountered by researchers through a series of language and words. The data processing carried out in reviewing the *Princess* novel is to describe the words and language.

Thus the study of documentation was carried out as a technique in data collection. This study uses content analysis, namely by giving meaning to the novel *Princess* by Jean P Sasson. This is in accordance with the nature of content analysis, in which this study describes the content by paying attention to contextual meaning. From this meaning, it can be used as data validity, by utilizing source triangulation.

In accordance with qualitative research, the data collection technique in this study is documentation analysis. Documentation analysis was conducted to collect data sourced from archives and documents related to research. Documents as data sources are used to test, interpret, and predict.

This research was conducted with the following data collection steps. (1) Collecting data from the novel *Princess*. (2) Recording data related to gender dominance (3) Applying data in the form of quotations into paragraphs relating to the formulation of the problem.

### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There are two important results of this study, namely: (1) the treatment of male characters, and (2) the psychological impact of the treatment of male characters. The following is an explanation of each finding.

#### *A. The violence of the male character (Sultana's father) against the female characters*

The results of the identification found in the novel *Princess* include the treatment of injustice and violence, both physically and emotionally. The following is an explanation of each treatment experienced by the female characters.

##### *1. Injustice against women (Sultana)*

In a patriarchal society, it is as if women are not part of society so that their presence, experience, mind, body, and involvement are not recognized (Heroepoetri and Valentina, 2004: vi). Furthermore, in the name of objectivity and generalization, patriarchal society defines and regulates a life order that oppresses and excludes women. This kind of life results in gender inequality.

The form of injustice that Sultana's father applied to his daughter, Sultana, could cause social jealousy in Sultana. As a result of this treatment, Sultana thought that her existence and presence seemed unimportant.

(Data 1)

*Ketika Faruq berumur sepuluh tahun, ia mendapatkan jam Rolex emas pertamanya. Aku benar-benar menderita, karena aku saat meminta ke ayah sebuah gelang emas yang ada di*

*Souq (pasar), Ayah kasar menolak permintaanku dengan kasar (Sasson, 2007: 50).*

When Faruq was ten years old, he got his first gold Rolex watch. I really suffered, because when I asked my father for a gold bracelet that was in the Souq (market), Dad rudely refused my request (Sasson, 2007: 50).

In data (1), Sultana feels that in her family a son is the crown prince. All his requests were granted and all his mistakes were forgiven. As for girls, their presence is not expected. It describes a father who does not want a daughter to be present in the family environment so that she lives without obtaining full rights from the father. In this case, her father bought her brother, Faruq, an expensive watch, while her father did not want to buy Sultana a gold bracelet.

##### *2. Violence against women*

Violence is an attack or invasion (assault) against the physical and mental integrity of a person's psychology (Fakih, 2003:17). Violence experienced by everyone can come from various sources and one of them is the perception of gender. Irwanto (2002) defines violence as basically a concept whose meaning and content are highly dependent on society.

Violence against women often occurs because of male domination. Violence is used by men as a feeling of dissatisfaction, even just as a mere prestige that men have power over women. In addition, men also want to show that they have the power to lead women. The following is an exposure to two types of violence consisting of physical and emotional violence.

##### *a. Physical violence against a daughter (Sultana)*

The father's physical violence against Sultana was caused by violating religious laws, namely establishing the Lively Lips club. The purpose of establishing this club is to uphold women in order to be respected by men. So far, women have been treated with physical, sexual and emotional violence. In order to reduce this violence, Sultana and her two friends founded the Lively Lips club. However, the existence of the club was misused by her two friends, namely committing indecent acts against foreign men or those she did not know. As a result of that action, Sultana's friends received punishment from their respective fathers. Not long after, Sultana's father found out about the deed. It turns out that Sultana and his young wife named Randa also participate in the Lively Lips club. Even though she didn't do things like her two friends. With a hard heart and full power in making all decisions, her father was immediately angry.

Data (2)

*Aku bergerak maju dan mulai menyatakan tak tahu apa-apa, namun ayah berteriak dan mendorongku ke sofa (Sasson, 2007:136).*

I moved forward and started to say I didn't know anything, but my dad screamed and pushed me onto the couch (Sasson, 2007:136).

Data (2) describes the violence committed by Sultana's father to push his daughter to the sofa. The excessive act was done spontaneously, when he saw the error was in front of his eyes.

Data (3)

Sebagai hukuman, semua mainanku diberikan kepada Faruq. Untuk mengajarkan kepadaku bahwa laki-laki adalah majikan, ayah meminta Faruq mengisi piringku pada saat makan. Faruq pun memberiku porsi yang sangat sedikit dan potongan daging yang paling jelek. Setiap malam aku tidur dalam keadaan lapar, karena Faruq menugaskan penjaga di depan pintuku untuk melarangku menerima makanan dari ibu atau saudari-saudaraku. Abangku itu masuk ke kamarku dengan mengejekku di tengah malam sambil membawa piring yang berisi ayam dan nasi panas dengan bau yang sangat enak (Sasson, 2007:31).

As punishment, all my toys were given to Faruq. To teach me that men are masters, my father asked Faruq to fill my plate at mealtime. Faruq also gave me a very small portion and the ugliest cut of meat. Every night I went to bed hungry, because Faruq assigned a guard at my door to forbid me to accept food from my mother or sisters. My brother came into my room mocking me in the middle of the night carrying a plate of hot chicken and rice with a very good smell (Sasson, 2007:31).

Data (3) shows the second physical punishment, namely, the act of mental abuse experienced by Sultana. The abuse stems from differences in the way they are treated, and Sultana's father thinks that a woman needs to be given a severe punishment. Because it is the men who give and create the punishments, so all decisions are entirely in the hands of men. Therefore, women are powerless to fight it. This helplessness becomes the target of physical violence for men.

#### b. Psychological Violence Against Young Wives (Randa)

Psychological violence can arise suddenly or unintentionally so that all speech is not controlled or cannot contain emotions. This was experienced by Randa when she took part in establishing a club consisting of women, even though she was not directly involved. Seeing this, her husband's anger was unavoidable until he said "divorce his wife," as shown in data (4) below.

Data (4)

Ia melihat dengan tajam ke mata Randa dan berkata: 'hari ini kau kuceraikan (Sasson, 2007:137).

He looked sharply into Randa's eyes and said: 'Today I divorced you (Sasson, 2007:137).

Data (4) is the arbitrary action of a husband against his wife. He should have assessed his wife's involvement in the Lively Lips club first. Such an attitude makes women unable to fight injustice and violence that makes them oppressed for their rights. It is as if a man easily decides to divorce his wife without thinking carefully.

#### c. Psychological violence against daughters (Sara and Sultana)

In this novel, the form of psychological violence in treating daughters stems from the problem of matchmaking. It can be seen in data (5) below.

Data (5)

Sialnya, airmata Sara hanya memperkeras hati ayah. Aku mendengar Sara benar-benar memohon kepada Ayah. Ia semakin tenggelam dalam kesedihan sehingga ia menuduh ayah pembenci perempuan: Ia mengucapkan kata-kata Budha:

'kemenangan melahirkan kebencian, karena yang kalah merasa tidak bahagia.' Ayah yang punggungnya kaku karena marah, berbalik dan pergi, Sara meratap di belakangnya, menyatakan luka hati yang begitu berat (Sasson, 2007:58).

Unfortunately, Sara's tears only hardened my father's heart. I heard Sara was really pleading with Dad. She sinks so deep into grief that she accuses the woman-hating father: She utters the Buddha's words: 'victory breeds hatred, for the loser is unhappy.' The father, whose back was stiff with anger, turned and walked away, Sara wailing behind him, declaring the wound such a heavy heart (Sasson, 2007:58).

Data (5) discusses the issue of forced matchmaking by Sultana's father against Sara with a rich old man, making Sara feel tortured. But Sultana's father ignored what Sara complained about and the marriage continued. In the marriage there is a business relationship between Sara's future husband and Sultana's father. Actually, Sara wanted to refuse, but her father persisted.

The picture of psychological violence shows arrogance and a dysfunctional conscience. Actions outside the boundaries that show the power of a father over daughters. The father's emotional act was because he wanted to obtain abundant wealth and sacrificed his own daughter.

Sultana's father's attitude shows the principle that daughters must obey men, and do not have the right to choose their own life partner. This causes Sara to be forced to live her life with a sore heart. The sultana's father thought that matchmaking was something he usually did.

Lying can lead to emotional abuse, but it can also be used to counter emotional abuse. This can be seen in data (6) below.

Data (6)

Kemudian pada malam harinya, ayah dengan sangat marah datang ke rumah membawa dua orang bibi Karim. Aku dipaksa berdiri tegak sementara mereka meneliti seluruh tubuhku, mencari tanda-tanda bekas luka di wajah atau anggota badan yang bentuknya tidak serasi (Sasson, 2007:173).

Later that evening, my father, very angry, came to the house with two of Karim's aunts. I was forced to stand up straight while they scanned my entire body, looking for signs of facial scars or mismatched limbs (Sasson, 2007:173).

Data (6) describes Sultana lying to her father when she wanted to meet Karim as a potential husband. Sultana's lie made her father angry. Why did Sultana do that? All of this is caused by the lack of mutual love, so Sultana's behavior shows an attitude of disobedience to what has been enforced within the royal family. Therefore, the form of Sultana's resistance is an attitude of pretending to vilify herself. This pretense appears directly because it is caused by a man who will dominate him. This was done to ward off the notion that women were weak and willing to be regulated.

#### B. Psychological Impact of Sultana's Father's Treatment

From the data analysis, it was found that there was a psychological impact due to the treatment of the male character (Sultana's father). It was done to Sultana's mother and daughter.

##### 1. Psychological Impact on Mother Sultana



Someone who is frustrated will react unconsciously. This is done to reduce mental pressure that can cause pain or stress. This reaction is called a defense mechanism. With a reaction, they try to defend their self-esteem from the reality they face. Mechanistic reactions can be divided into three main forms of behavior: (a) aggressive reactions, (b) avoidance or withdrawal reactions, (c) compromising or compromising reactions.

The wife's patience and obedience to a decision and policy is not so long adhered to. One day she will dare to oppose her husband's decisions, as shown in data (7)

Data (7)

*Ibu berdiri melindungi anaknya seperti gunung dan, untuk kali pertama dalam hidupnya, ia menentang suaminya. Ia berkata pada suaminya bahwa Sara tak akan pernah kembali ke rumah seorang monster (Sasson, 2007:76).*

Mother stands protecting her child like a mountain and, for the first time in her life, she opposes her husband. She told her husband that Sara would never return to the house of a monster (Sasson, 2007:76).

Data (7) shows a wife's resistance to her husband's decision that was made suddenly and without taking into account the consequences. This was done because she wanted to protect his daughter from the danger she received. Psychologically, this action arises because she wants to fight the violence that results from forced marriage. In Sara's marriage, Sara's husband often abused her. As a result of this treatment, a mother acted harshly and fought Sultana's father so as not to side with her daughter-in-law.

## 2. Psychological Impact on Daughter

The treatment of Sultana's father was unfair and shackled the rights of daughters in the royal family, both in terms of material, affection, and all decisions. This treatment can lead to deep hatred and have an impact on the daughter, namely, committing acts that are beyond normal limits. An example of that action, as presented in data (8) below.

Data (8)

*Selama dua minggu faruq memamerkan jam Rolex- nya, aku melihat ia meletakkan jam itu di atas meja dekat kolam renang. Karena cemburu, aku mengambilnya batu dan menghancurkan jam itu (Sasson, 2007:50).*

During the two weeks that Faruq had been showing off his Rolex, I watched him place it on the table by the pool. Out of jealousy, I took the stone and destroyed the clock (Sasson, 2007:50).

Data (8) shows that the aggressive actions taken by Sultana are negative attitudes that arise from themselves. The action starts from social jealousy or jealousy and revenge is the only way that must be done by the individual as a form of disappointment towards her father who has prioritized sons over daughters. The disappointment continues with hatred. To vent her anger, Sultana often performs various ways and deviant behavior and actions. These behaviors and actions show an aggressive reaction carried out by a woman. This is because Sultana's psyche is under constant pressure so that the reaction of wanting to fight emerges quickly, when Sultana sees the object (male) that she hates appears in front of her. As happened

to Sultana. Furthermore, the psychological impact is seen in the data (9), (10), (11), and (12) as shown below.

Data (9)

*Dengan sengaja dan nekat, aku menciptakan malapetaka di rumah kami. Akulah yang memasukkan pasir ke dalam Mercedes baru Faruq: aku mencuri uang di dompet ayahku: mengubur koleksi koin emas Faruq di halaman belakang: melepaskan ular hijau dan kadal dari kandangnya ke kolam keluarga ketika Faruq berbaring tidur di atas pelampungnya (Sasson, 2007:60).*

Deliberately and recklessly, I created havoc in our house. I was the one who put the sand in Faruq's new Mercedes: I stole money in my father's wallet: buried Faruq's collection of gold coins in the backyard: released green snakes and lizards from their cages into the family pool as Faruq lay sleeping on his life jacket (Sasson, 2007:60) .

Data (10)

*Aku mengendap-endap masuk ke kamarnya dan mengumpulkan timbunan 'harta karun' rahasianya yang dilarang oleh agama dan negara. 'Harta karun' ini adalah playboy, penthouse, slide film porno (Sasson, 2007: 84—85).*

I sneaked into his room and collected his hoard of secret 'treasures' that were forbidden by religion and the state. These 'treasures' are playboys, penthouses, pornographic slides (Sasson, 2007: 84-85).

Data (11)

*Aku meletakkan tas berisi barang terlarang Faruq di ruang tangga menuju balkon yang berisi pengeras suara tempat mengumandangkan hadist-hadist Nabi ke seluruh kota, lima kali sehari*

I put the bag containing Faruq's forbidden item in the stairwell to the balcony where there was a loudspeaker where the Prophet's hadiths were echoed throughout the city, five times a day (Sasson, 2007:85).

Data (12)

*Permainan itu terjadi ketika aku meminta salah satu teman perempuanku untuk menelfon Faruq dengan berpura-pura menyukainya (Sasson, 2007:171).*

The game happened when I asked one of my female friends to call Faruq pretending to like him (Sasson, 2007:171).

Four data (9), (10), (11), and (12) are in the form of actions and behaviors that show Sultana's power to respond with unexpected actions as girls normally behave. Such behavior is the result of the treatment of men who oppress him. As a result, they experience frustration when their desires are blocked and not realized. This condition had a psychological impact on Sultana. As a result, Sultana dared to do more than expected. For example, committing acts of violation without any fear. The aggressive impulses that exist in Sultana in acting have gone beyond the boundaries of social norms. For example, the actions taken by Sultana were decided consciously. That is, what Sultana did was obtained satisfaction and inner pleasure that has been released. Sara also experienced the same treatment. Sara's grief was caused by a forced marriage. This

incident traumatized Sara. The condition is as presented in the data (13)

Data (13)

*Sara menangis dan mulai mencoba meninggalkan tempat tidur sambil berkata ia tak ingin hidup. Ia mengancam akan merobek pergelangan tangannya jika dipaksa kembali ke suaminya (Sasson, 2007:76).*

Sara cries and starts trying to get out of bed saying she doesn't want to live. She threatened to tear her wrists if forced to return to her husband (Sasson, 2007:76).

The data description (13) shows the traumatic events experienced by Sara in her life. The incident she experienced made an imprint on the structure of her personality. Such events may last for an instant or may last for a longer period of time. Therefore she lives in a family that is too oppressive. The impact of this incident caused Sara to be anxious, insecure, and mentally depressed. This condition causes Sara to change her behavior. For example, Sara is trying to hurt him herself.

#### V. DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the study, two things were found which include: 1) the psychological impact as a result of Sultana's father's treatment to both her mother and herself; and 2) injustice against women leaders which includes injustice against women, emotional violence against young wives, and emotional violence against girls.

Based on the findings, the psychological impact that appears in this novel is in line with the results of Hayatiningtyas' research (2011: 125) which shows the psychological effects of violence, namely helplessness, sadness, guilt, shame, anxiety, responsibility, enthusiasm for learning and perseverance. Each subject experiences a different psychological impact and a different intensity. The same psychological impact was found in Claudia's research (2014: 109—110) including remembering events consciously or unconsciously, avoiding everything related to violence, shouting, distrusting others, being inappropriate with men, judging negative attitude towards men, harboring and confining all problems within himself, blaming himself, and staying away from other people.

In addition, the bad treatment of male characters towards women resulted in changes in women's behavior. This is in line with the results of Wahid's research (2020:7-8) regarding behavioral changes in the Dhirga character. Changes occur due to stimulus stimuli that affect the response of Dhirga's

character. This response is a reaction to the influence of environmental stimuli. The response then becomes the basis for behavioral changes that ultimately have an impact on oneself and others.

#### VI. CONCLUSION

In this novel it can be concluded that men dominate in making all decisions. The treatment of Sultana's father had an impact on his daughters and wives in the royal family. They often get emotional violence, physical violence, and unfair treatment.

A woman is weak in terms of physical and power. However, this weakness can be strength to fight against the power or domination of a man in acting and treating women excessively. Such an attitude is a manifestation of the desire to achieve gender equality.

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