

## Harassment towards Women in the Novel '*Perempuan yang Menangis kepada Bulan Hitam*' by Dian Purnomo

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### Abstract

The novel "Perempuan yang Menangis kepada Bulan Hitam" addresses the theme of sexual harassment experienced by a female character named Magi in a village in Sumba, which is rooted in a tradition called "kawin tangkap" or "yappa mawine." The aim of this study is to identify the types of sexual harassment committed against the female character in the novel "Perempuan yang Menangis kepada Bulan Hitam" by Dian Purnomo. The approach used in this research is feminist literary criticism. Data collection in this study is carried out using heuristic techniques. The collected data is then analyzed using hermeneutic techniques. The data in this novel consists of words, phrases, and sentences that contain information related to the research problem, extracted from the novel under study. The results of the research show that the sexual harassment experienced by the female character in the novel occurs both before and after marrying the perpetrator. The types of sexual harassment faced by the female character include gender harassment, seduction behavior, sexual bribery, sexual coercion, and sexual imposition.

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## INTRODUCTION

Literary works are reflections of the realities that occur within their societies, so the conflicts in literary works are true or have once occurred in society. The novelist in literary works can depict the human life situation or reflection of society by imaginatively weaving language. This can be said to be commensurate with the role of literature, which functions as a reflection of life that is valuable to those who read it.

Literary works that contain women's stories are currently very popular. The problems faced by women are something that must be addressed in literature. The life of women in the literary world is usually depicted as characters who are often portrayed as less active or passive and weak. This underlies how men in literary works determine their attitudes toward women. This conflict can be linked to an idea known as feminist literature, a field that focuses its analysis on women. Feminist literature exists due to criticism of the injustices often experienced by women in society. Through their works, authors present social criticism by utilizing the imagination of the story. The purpose of creating feminist literature is to make society aware of the strong social conflicts that grow in society and to show a different perspective on how to resolve existing issues (Wafik & Solihati, 2022).

One of the issues that become the main conflict in a literary work discussing the story of female characters is sexual harassment. This is one of the most concerning issues for women in various aspects of their lives. Sexual harassment is a problem that attracts a lot of attention from both children and adults because victims often choose to remain silent for several reasons, even though it can have long-term impacts on them (Epi, Dongoran, & Mandala, 2021).

Murniati (1995) stated that sexual harassment behavior is a form of deviation in the relationship between women and men that can cause harm to one party due to harassment and insult to their dignity. Sexual harassment includes physical contact, comments or opinions, and glances that can cause inappropriate sexual arousal, one of which is requesting the practice of

something sexual in nature (in Sulistyorini, 2004).

Sexual harassment experienced by women is an imbalance of power relations commonly referred to as gender injustice between women and men that occurs in both domestic and public spheres. Indonesian society still strongly believes in patriarchal culture or customs, where there is a strengthening of men's status while women's status is weakened. Prejudice against women leads to the application of cultural practices that result in arbitrary actions aimed at domination (Setiawan & Farida, 2020).

This stigma causes women to often be seen as sexual objects. Most women have been in situations where they were harassed, and most women know others who have also experienced the same thing, namely sexual harassment. Eve Ensler stated (in Prabasmoro, 2006) that sexual harassment is categorized into three different forms: gender harassment, unwanted sexual attention, and sexual coercion. Gender harassment is discrimination aimed at hindering women from reaching positions of power in fields traditionally dominated by men (Low, Keikhosrokiani, & Pourya Asl, 2024).

Sexual harassment, both verbal and non-verbal, is increasingly occurring to women and children, with the perpetrators being men. This affects women's psychology, leading to feelings of trauma, fear, lack of confidence, and humiliation, making it difficult for harassed women to carry on with their lives (Elliza, 2022). The presence of women in literary works indeed brings its own appeal, as their presence in literature becomes a very strong magnet. Moreover, the female characters presented are the author's attempt to reflect women's issues in the guise of a story. Through literature, the author seeks to reveal the harassment experienced by women that has long been almost hidden. Murniati conveyed that sexual harassment is a deviation in the relationship between women and men that causes harm to a certain party due to the harassment experienced and because they have been demeaned (Murniati, 1995).

One novel that tells the story of female harassment is *'Perempuan yang Menangis kepada*

*Bulan Hitam'* by Dian Purnomo. This novel broadly narrates the story of a character named Magi; a woman who becomes a victim of a tradition called '*kawin tangkap*' (*yappa mawine*) in Sumba. *Kawin tangkap* is a tradition from Sumba where a woman is kidnapped and then forced to marry her captor under culturally accepted reasons. This practice is carried out by the communities in Kodi and Wawewa, which are in the remote areas of Sumba. In the novel, Magi is kidnapped, harassed, and forced to marry an older man named Leba Ali. All this violence is considered legal as it is a longstanding tradition.

The depiction of women in literature is an author's effort to reflect the social issues present in society. Through reading literary works, the author hopes that readers will become critical in responding to the problems faced by women, which the author reveals through conflicts that are related to humanity. The conflicts of women in literature represent significant human issues concerning women's rights and status. '*Perempuan yang Menangis kepada Bulan Hitam*' is a novel that aims to raise readers' awareness of the forms of harassment faced by women in Sumba.

This novel vividly portrays the forms of harassment and various types of violence experienced by Magi and her struggle to fight against all forms of violence and injustice she encounters. She not only has to fight against the older man, Leba Ali, who kidnapped her and forcibly wants to marry her, but she also must contend with her parents, the entire village, and the cultural traditions that seek to strip her of her freedom as a woman. The customs, passed down from generation to generation, have become misaligned with their original purpose and are no longer appropriate for contemporary times. Countless women have fallen victim to this tradition, resulting not in happiness but in suffering due to sexual harassment and violence.

Leba Ali, the character responsible for all the violence experienced by Magi, deliberately uses the tradition of *kawin tangkap* or *yappa mawine* as an excuse to forcibly marry her. *Kawin tangkap* should not be performed haphazardly; it is a tradition intended to simplify customs to save costs and time. Typically, both families agree if

this method is to be used. However, Leba Ali exploits this tradition to make Magi his wife, as he has desired her since she was in elementary school. When Magi became an adult and graduated from college, Leba Ali executed his plan by kidnapping her. She was forcibly placed into a car, lifted, and laid on the floor of a pickup truck like an animal. During the journey, Magi endured harassment from the five young men who kidnapped her. This marked the beginning of all forms of violence and harassment against Magi. She did not remain silent; she fought back, even risking her own life by attempting suicide, although she ultimately failed. Eventually, she reported the kidnapping and harassment to the authorities, but Leba Ali, being a powerful figure with close ties to law enforcement, easily evaded all charges.

From the perspective of some members of the community, the *kawin tangkap* tradition of the Sumba tribe is a form of forced marriage that results in sexual violence, causing physical and mental harm to women (Lolo, I. U. 2020). Tribal elders assert that this tradition is a legitimate form of marriage that must be preserved within the community (Doko et al., 2021). The practice of *kawin tangkap* in Sumba, East Nusa Tenggara, continues to be experienced by women. Forced marriages in Sumba involve several forms of abuse, including physical violence such as kidnapping, coercion, beating, and confinement; sexual violence such as groping specific body parts, harassment, and rape; and psychological impacts, including feelings of trauma, oppression, humiliation, and loss of self-worth. Socially, if women manage to escape with legal assistance, they are often regarded by the community as outcasts, which results in further injustice and long-term trauma for the women of Sumba (Para, Hariadi, & Talakua, 2023).

This study will focus on the sexual harassment experienced by women in the novel '*Perempuan yang Menangis kepada Bulan Hitam*' by Dian Purnomo, where the novel depicts Sumba customs that significantly disadvantage women. Several previous studies have been used as a foundation for this latest research, including the study by Dwi Sulistyorini (2004) titled '*Pelecehan*

*Seksual Terhadap Tokoh Perempuan Dalam Novel Perempuan di Titik Nol Karya Nawal El-Saadawi Dan The Colour Purple Karya Alice Walker*'. This study discusses the forms of sexual harassment present in Nawal El Saadawi's novel *'Perempuan di Titik Nol'* and Alice Walker's *'The Colour Purple'*, as well as the efforts of the female characters to obtain equal rights and liberate themselves from sexual harassment. Next is the research conducted by Ida Epi Hariati Dongoran and Robby Satria Mandala (2021). This research was conducted to understand the sexual harassment, causes, and effects on women in the novel *'Women Talking'* by Miriam Toews. The approach used in this research is the feminist approach with Rosemarie Tong's theory. The study focuses on unwanted sexual behavior, including demands for sex and verbal or physical behavior that refers to sex. Another relevant study on female harassment is by Muhammad Alkali, Rosli Talif, and Jariah Mohd Jan, titled *'Violence and Sexual Harassment in Nigerian Novels: The NegoFeminist Option'*. This research discusses violence and sexual harassment against women in a collection of Nigerian novels. The subsequent study is titled *'Sexual Harassment in Eka Kurniawan's Novel Lelaki Harimau'* by Muhammad Fatih Suhadi (2023). This study addresses the issue of sexual harassment committed by the main character in Eka Kurniawan's novel *'Lelaki Harimau'* through a literary psychology approach, as the behavior of the sexual harasser is related to personality structure (Suhadi, 2023).

The theory used is based on Fitzgerald and Shullman (1987), who categorized sexual harassment into different levels: gender harassment, seductive behavior, sexual bribery, sexual coercion, and sexual imposition. First, gender harassment involves actions that demean an individual based on their gender, also known as sexism. Next, seductive behavior, which is the second level, involves inappropriate sexual advances and requests without any threats. Third, sexual bribery entails soliciting sexual attention with promises of rewards such as gifts, promotions, or pay raises. Fourth, sexual coercion involves pressure to engage in sexual

activities through subtle or direct threats. Fifth, sexual imposition refers to aggressive or overt sexual assaults or forced actions (as cited in Sulistyorini, 2004).

## METHODOLOGY

This study employs a feminist literary criticism approach to examine the forms of violence and self-resistance of the female protagonist in the novel *"Perempuan yang Menangis kepada Bulan Hitam"* by Dian Purnomo. Feminist literary criticism elucidates the injustices experienced by women in literary works. Humm, as cited in Wiyatmi (2018), states that before the advent of feminist literary criticism, the history of literature was primarily written through male fiction. Consequently, feminist literary criticism reconstructs and rereads literary works with a focus on women, emphasizing the sociolinguistic nature of what women write, paying special attention to the words used in their writings (Wiyatmi, 2018).

The data comprises words, phrases, and sentences related to the research problem, extracted from the novel to serve as the research object. Additionally, the collected data pertains to forms of harassment against women in the novel *"Perempuan yang Menangis kepada Bulan Hitam"* by Dian Purnomo. The source of data for this research is the novel *"Perempuan yang Menangis kepada Bulan Hitam"* by Dian Purnomo. Data collection was conducted using the heuristic technique. Through heuristic reading, meaning is derived based on the conventional structure of the language, meaning that the language is analyzed according to its actual intended meaning (Riffaterre in Wellek & Warren, 1989). In this study, data collection using the heuristic reading technique involved reading the entire content of the novel *"Perempuan yang Menangis kepada Bulan Hitam"* by Dian Purnomo. The collected data was then analyzed using the hermeneutic technique.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Soponyono (2019) states that sexual harassment involves acts related to sexual

relations without consent, such as soliciting sex, as well as other verbal or physical actions aimed at engaging in sexual activity. The most concerning aspect of sexual harassment is that it commonly occurs in public places such as schools, markets, public transportation like trains and buses, offices, or private places like residential homes (as cited in Epi et al., 2021). Mary Boland, in her book titled "Sexual Harassment," defines sexual harassment by stating that "sexual behavior encompasses a range of actions from offensive words or minor gestures to forced sexual activity and even rape" (as cited in Mohamed & Mohamed, n.d.).

Schullman (1987) outlines the forms of sexual harassment, which include pressure, suggestions, sexually charged jokes, leering, winking, touching a woman's body, pinching, groping, suddenly kissing, and demanding sexual favors with threats of job loss (as cited in Sulistyorini, 2004). The novel *"Perempuan yang Menangis kepada Bulan Hitam"* by Dian Purnomo addresses the theme of sexual harassment, rooted in cultural traditions misused to force marriage upon the protagonist, resulting in harm to women. Based on the forms of sexual harassment described by Fitzgerald and Schullman, there are five levels of sexual harassment behavior.

#### **First Level of Harassment Behavior (Gender Harassment)**

The first form of sexual harassment is categorized as Level 1 Sexual Harassment (gender harassment), which involves demeaning someone based on their gender or being sexist (Sulistyorini, 2004). The female character in the novel *"Perempuan yang Menangis kepada Bulan Hitam"* experiences Level 1 sexual harassment, where Magi is seen as an object devoid of rights to her own life simply because she is perceived as weak and powerless due to her gender. The struggle for gender equality in society becomes a primary goal, as many literary works often depict women as weak and helpless figures (Saeed & Qadar, 2024). This is evident in the novel on pages 88 and 111.

*"Budaya mengambil perempuan secara paksa seolah-olah mereka adalah barang yang bisa dibawa ke*

*sana kemari tanpa ditanyakan keinginannya. Tidak banyak yang berubah di kampungnya dan Magi merasa berlari sendiri."*(Purnomo, 2020)

*"Magi benar-benar gusar tetapi suaranya tidak berarti di rumahnya sendiri. Sama seperti suara-suara perempuan lain di balik rumah-rumah besar mereka".* (Purnomo, 2020)

The above sentences demonstrate how women are viewed merely as objects; when Magi is abducted, raped, and coerced into marrying her rapist, it clearly shows that women are not valued as human beings with freedom over their lives. Higher levels of sexual harassment are expected to occur frequently in cultures that promote the objectification of women, thus portraying them as inferior to men (Kalra & Bhugra, 2013). Female characters in literature are often portrayed as objects of fascination simply because women are seen as interesting subjects to discuss. Women have two sides; on one hand, they are objects of desire whose allure drives men crazy, while on the other hand, women are considered weak, which becomes a justification for men to exploit their beauty. Despite being beautiful, women are considered second-class humans and are seen as inherently different from men. Aristotle suggests that women exist due to certain deficiencies, while Aquinas states that women are an imperfect form of man (Yusuf & Susilo, 2020).

The misuse of traditions that inherently disadvantage women is experienced by many women in Sumba, not just the protagonist Magi who undergoes the practice of kawin tangkap. Several other women also face similar experiences. It is not enough that Magi is raped and abducted; more disturbingly, she is forced to marry her rapist simply because she is no longer a virgin and is deemed a disgrace to her family. She is not seen as a victim needing rescue but rather as nothing more than a family disgrace. This is found on pages 102 and 174.

*"Ama Nano sependapat dengan kebanyakan lelaki di kampung itu; seharusnya Magi segera dinikahkan dengan penculiknya, karena perempuan itu sudah dianggap tidak perawan lagi".* (Purnomo, 2020)

*"Ko sudah bikin aib untuk keluarga. Mau ko tambah lagi? Ko tahu pamali menolak lamaran yang*

*su dibahas di tikar adat. dan ko tahu, selain Leba Ali, su tidak ada laki-laki lain yang mau den ko”* (Purnomo, 2020)

Level 1 harassment was perpetrated by nearly all the villagers in her community. She is no longer valued as a woman because she is no longer a virgin. From her father to her mother and even the villagers, everyone tells her that she will never be able to marry or be desired by any man again because she is not a virgin. This clearly shows that women in the novel are judged solely based on their virginity.

### Second Level of Harassment Behavior

Seduction behavior, which can also be referred to as Level 2 sexual harassment, involves acts of seduction and sexual requests without any threat. Magi experiences Level 2 harassment when she is kidnapped and confined in Leba Ali's room. As Magi resists and fights back, Leba Ali attempts to seduce her by saying that his actions are only because he wants to make her his wife. This is depicted on page 53.

*“Sa mau ko jadi saya punya istri. Tidak ada niat buruk lain. Jadi diam dan jadi istri yang baik buat sa.”* (Purnomo, 2020)

Leba Ali tries to manipulate Magi by saying he has no ill intentions and only wants to marry her. Clearly, Leba Ali's words are aimed at seducing Magi into compliance and stopping her resistance. Initially, Leba Ali threatens and abuses Magi, but he changes his approach by trying to seduce and deceive her with persuasive words to get what he wants. In this section, Leba Ali attempts to manipulate Magi with words and phrases he believes can seduce her into yielding to his desires.

### Third Level of Harassment Behavior

Third level of sexual harassment, also known as sexual bribery, is the act of inviting someone to do something related to sexual attention along with a promise of a reward (for example, a gift, salary increase or position). Third degree sexual harassment was experienced by a female character named Anjelin who was still a 10th grade high school student. The harassment was carried out by her own teacher who

succeeded in persuading and seducing Anjelin until she was repeatedly raped until the girl became pregnant.

*“Namanya Anjelin, kelas 10 SMA. Magi segera terbayang Manu. Mungkin usia Anjelin dan Manu hanya terpaut beberapa bulan saja, tapi garis hidup membuat Anjelin harus berada di rumah aman ini, jauh dari keluarga dan terpaksa berhenti sekolah. Dia bukan hanya dibujuk rayu oleh gurunya hingga mengalami pemerkosaan berulang, Anjelin juga diusir orangtua dan keluarganya sendiri karena dianggap perempuan penggoda”.* (Purnomo, 2020)

Anjelin, who was pregnant, was ultimately expelled by her own family because she was considered a disgrace and worse, she, who was supposed to be a victim, was considered a seductress, while the man who raped her did not receive adequate recompense for his actions.

### Fourth Level of Harassment Behavior

Fourth level sexual harassment or Sexual coercion is pressure to do sexual things with subtle and direct threats. Magi experienced fourth level abuse. Magi experienced fourth level harassment when the woman was kidnapped by a group of men ordered by Leba Ali, and the girl was forcibly put into a pickup car. In the car he experienced fourth-level sexual harassment. The men who kidnapped her abused her by touching Magi's body with threats. This happens on page 41.

*Setelah remasan di dada, laki-laki lain memegang pahanya dengan cara menjijikan. Magi menendang, tetapi tangan orang itu justru naik kearah pangkal paha Magi.*

*“Diam, atau sa lanjutkan sa pung tangan?”* (Purnomo, 2020)

The quote above shows what Magi experienced when she was kidnapped. She was harassed and when she resisted, the men threatened to continue the harassment they had inflicted on Magi. The next level of fourth level harassment that Magi experienced was when she was at Leba Ali's house after being kidnapped. Magi was harassed by Leba Ali in the man's room, Leba Ali tried to rape Magi who at that time was trying to fight Leba Ali.

*“Kalau ko masih terus melawan seperti ini sa akan gunakan cara lain.” bersamaan dengan itu Leba Ali mengencangkan cengkramannya di leher Magi, menindinya semakin dan mendesak pinggulnya dengan kasar ke arah Magi sampai ia merasakan sesuatu yang keras di antara kedua pahanya. (hlm 53) (Purnomo, 2020)*

The quote above shows Leba Ali threatening Magi. The man said that if Magi still resisted then he would use other methods, namely violence. The man was not afraid to hurt Magi to satisfy his own desire to make Magi his wife. Leba Ali raped and threatened the woman to force marriage on Magi. Forced marriage is largely a form of power and control used against women and girls. Like spousal abuse, rape, and other forms of sexual violence, it is used to control women, their sexuality, and often, their offspring (Kahfiatika & Manugeran, 2020). In this case, Magi was under Leba Ali's control using threats and violence, Magi's resistance was meaningless.

#### **Fifth Level of Harassment Behavior**

Sexual imposition is a form of assault that involves forced, harsh, and overtly sexual actions against the victim. Rape is one of the most extreme forms of sexual violence perpetrated against women. It is an act of physical violence and assault expressed through sexual means (Kapoor & Dhingra, 2013). Level five harassment occurs in Leba Ali's room when the two are married. Magi, in her final attempt to escape forced marriage, suffers from Leba Ali's heinous actions. He beats and rapes her until she is nearly unconscious. This incident is detailed on page 292.

*Dia merasakan setiap detiknya, dengan begitu jelas, saat kemaluan Leba Ali memaksa masuk ke dalam dirinya dan menciptakan rasa sakit tak terperi. Jiwa Magi telah dibakar habis. Dia mengutuki diri sendiri dan nasibnya. Dia mengutuki keberanian dan dendamnya yang harus dia bayar mahal. Ia merasakan setiap hentakan yang dilakukan Leba Ali sembari menampari wajah dan menggigit payudaranya. Dengan penuh kesombongan laki-laki itu berbisik, “Sadar ko, perempuan iblis!” lalu dia menggigit pundak Magi, “Bangun!” Leba Ali*

*menggigit setiap bagian tubuh Magi yang bisa digigitnya, berusaha keras membuat Magi sadar. Suara dan gerakannya semakin bernapsu, membuat kemarahan Magi kian bergejolak tanpa bisa melakukan apa pun. (Purnomo, 2020)*

Magi was beaten until her body and face were bruised and battered; as if that wasn't enough, she was raped until her body weakened and she nearly fainted. The most concerning aspect of rape is sexual assault with elements of coercion. Rape is an assault directed at a person's sexual organs, such as the vagina, anus, or mouth, or the use of other body parts and objects. The assault involves violence through threats and coercion, resulting in fear of violence and other consequences (Anggriani & Siregar, 2021).

The excerpt above illustrates level five sexual harassment where Magi experiences assault, beating, and rape. The incident begins with Magi deliberately provoking Leba Ali's anger. She had postponed their first night together, lying about menstruating and asking Leba Ali to wait seven days before they could be intimate. On the seventh day, Magi requested Leba Ali to have everyone in his house leave so they could be alone, wanting her plan to proceed without any interruptions.

The woman boldly decided to sacrifice herself to obtain evidence of rape and domestic violence to imprison Leba Ali. Magi provoked Leba Ali's anger by lying that she had slept with other men during her escape to Kupang and Soe. She also lied, saying that Leba Ali was insignificant compared to the men she had been with. This enraged Leba Ali, leading him to rape and beat Magi.

*Semalam dia tidur sangat nyenyak setelah melampiaskan amarah dan nafsunya, perempuan yang sejak SD sudah diincarnya. Dia tidak peduli lagi jika apa yang dikatakan Magi benar, bahwa dia sudah tidur dengan banyak laki-laki lain, karena baginya wanita itu sudah menjadi miliknya pelacur kecilnya akan menjadi pelacur pribadinya. Dan dengan itu dia bebas memperlakukannya sesuka hati. Bahkan semalam, sesaat sebelum terlelap, Leba Ali sudah berencana untuk kembali memperkosa Magi di pagi hari. Setiap hari kenikmatan itulah yang akan menunggunya di rumah. (Purnomo, 2020)*

The excerpt above shows that Leba Ali felt no remorse for what he had done to Magi. He even planned to continue treating Magi like his personal prostitute. He regarded Magi as nothing more than a personal possession to be enjoyed whenever he desired.

## CONCLUSION

The novel *Perempuan yang Menangis kepada Bulan Hitam* by Dian Purnomo tells the story of sexual harassment from a character named Magi who lives and lives in a village that upholds customs, which in the end one of the traditions of that culture becomes a boomerang that attacks her and destroys her life. The women in this work not only experience sexual harassment but also experience violence. Magi experienced harassment even when she was little, Leba Ali would deliberately touch Magi, who at that time was still an elementary school student, this proves that Leba Ali had been targeting Magi even since she was little.

After Magi grew up, Leba Ali made her his wife by kidnapping her. He utilized the tradition of bride kidnapping, also known as "*yappa mawine*," where a man kidnaps a prospective spouse to marry her. Not stopping there, Magi was also forced to marry her assailant under the coercion of her own family. Her father did not care that Magi was a victim; the family only cared about their honor. Magi, who had been raped, was considered a disgrace, and if not married off soon, she would never marry because they believed that a woman who is no longer a virgin holds no value, and no man would want her as a wife.

All the efforts Magi made to free herself from Leba Ali, including attempting suicide by biting her own wrist, ultimately failed, and she was still forced to marry Leba Ali. In the end, all her struggles to escape from him were futile; she sacrificed herself to marry him and used her body as evidence of rape and violence. She endured being raped and assaulted by Leba Ali, which later became evidence to incarcerate him. This novel shows that only women themselves can help themselves against all forms of sexual

harassment and violence. Magi's struggle to free herself from her abuser received no help from those she called family. Her family never saw her as a victim who needed saving; instead, Magi was viewed as a disgrace and was ultimately forced into marriage with her assailant.

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