

# SELF–ACTUALIZATION OF HUMAN’S NEEDS: THE PORTRAIT OF A WOMAN’S STRUGGLE AGAINST PATRIARCHY IN NH. DINI’S NOVEL *BANDUNGAN STREET*

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## ABSTRACT

Patriarchy places Mur, the main character in NH Dini’s novel entitled “Bandungan Street”, as the secondary citizen, since its orientation is men. This condition impedes her to reach Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. The apathy and sadness come since those needs cannot be met. It prompted her to be powerless. Then, she uses the ‘Will to Power’ proposed by Nietzsche as to control the undesired condition to empower herself. At last, she can achieve self-actualization, to be the best she can be, as the highest need’s rank. It proves that women can even be the better species if they are also given the same opportunity.

**Key words:** patriarchy, will to power, self-actualization.

## INTRODUCTION

Discussions on women are such interesting things to be done because one discussion always invites another new problem instead of real solution. The emergence of questions about women is not always followed by the satisfying answer for women as the object of discussions. On the other hand, questions keep coming up on the surface just like the rope that as if it tightly twists round on women’s existence nowadays.

As a matter of fact women have the similar dynamic attitudes like men, as to trigger them to be successful in public sphere. Nowadays women are at the top summit of education background, along with their profession career. These facts are the proof that basically women have the same abilities as men. Unfortunately many implied obstacles impede women to reach their dreams. The implied obstacles refer to the patriarchy society who differentiate women’s role. As the result, women become passive.

NH. Dini describes exactly the same situation in her literary works. Her main characters are

always independent and tough women in better or worse time. The ideal characters can easily be found in one of her works entitled “Bandungan Street.” The strength of this novel lies in the writer’s craft to connect the complex patriarchy system with the efforts of the main character to reach her self-actualization. The feminism aspects color the psychological framework within the novel as to reach human needs.

In line with that situation, series of questions emerge to the surface like why women can not all show their abilities in order to reach the ‘reward’ in their life as the member of society, to be the best they can ever be. All of those questions will be explained in detail in this paper especially related to a life phase, period of fall and rise. The first life phase of main character refers to the falling period, or the impacts of various repression against the victim, and the second is the rise period.

### **Patriarchy Repression against Human Needs**

Patriarchy is a system which socially, politically, and economically gives the priority to men (Djajanegara, 2000; 31). System here also refers to custom, tradition, law, and the broader scope namely culture that had been dominated by men as the creator (Darma, 2000). NH Dini concerns a lot with the patriarchy as it strongly colors her novel as if she wants to talk about the pathetic and also fun situation, on the other hand, for women. Social issues are reflected mostly in her novel "Bandungan Street". NH Dini's literary work wants to awake women with the real condition under the power of patriarchy. As a matter of fact, novel as one of literary works is the only media that writers and readers are connected to one another, and also it conveys certain 'message' or even ideology of writers since the way out of patriarchy is almost impossible to be spoken (Darma, 1999: 4).

Patriarchy puts women in the 'cage' since its priority is men. It creates the different role for both men and women, and it buries all women's abilities to grow up as human being (Noerhadi, 1989: 98-99). The differences in roles between men and women are not supposed to occur because of the different biological anatomy. As a matter of fact biological determinism does not differentiate attitudes, behaviors, and roles of men and women since they did exist a long time ago (Budianta, 2000).

The different roles leave no space for women to reach their actualization because their needs are impossible to be achieved. It certainly abandons the rights of women as human being. The core of human rights is the series of needs in order (Hall, 1983: 70). The series of needs may occur neglecting the numbers; it means that the second need does not always occur after the achievement of the first, and so on. People may have achieved their major needs only, not all, or

they may have incompletely achieved all needs (Goble, 1987: 82). According to Maslow, human needs can be classified into physic, love, reward, and self-actualization as the highest rank (Hall, 1983: 385). The next is the description about tension of the main character in each phase of human needs' rank.

The female main character feels the pressure of the love need during her marriage with Widodo. The term 'pressure' here refers to the lack of to love and to be loved feeling. The feeling of love and care, in the third rank of the Maslow pyramid, does not come true. Maslow's love concept offers the 'healthy' and loving relationship between husband and wife, including the presence of trust (Goble, 1987: 75). "Widodo's utterances are mostly sharp, his tone are hurting and accusing..." (Dini, 1989: 84).

The neglect of love feeling invites the domestic disharmony (Goble, 1987: 75), and as the result is the intensive quarrel between the female main character and her husband. This relationship leads to the abandoning of 'group belonging' need. Mur feels exactly the same about her marriage life. "It is not about like or dislike. Do not fool me around. You are not the same person you used to be. I am tiresome to argue about our financial problem ..." (Dini, 1989: 92-93).

The loss feeling of caring from and to her husband causes Mur's madness and disappointment. Those negative feelings are the effects of her husband's action. Mur's reaction is in line with Goble's opinion that human cannot show loving attitude if he does not get attention and love (1987: 87). Mur could not love her husband, Widodo, because she did not get her husband's love. Mur's psychological disturbance indicated the obstacle for her need of love, and it caused her love to her husband fade away (Goble, 1987: 81). "Six years after the divorce is

not loneliness at all for me. I do not even think or even miss him. The truth is I do enjoy my time for my own” (Dini, 1989: 125).

Mur clearly does not need any reward or admittance attitude. According to Maslow the need of reward means being independent, free, and competent (Globe, 1987: 76). At this phase Mur endured the hardest pressure because of biological determinism which leads to the sexual working roles for both men and women. It means that the obligations of husband and wife are different. “...I still have to do all household works! That is wife’s responsibilities ...”(Dini, 1989: 93).

The different roles of husband and wife are only possible happening at the patriarchy system which allows wife to do domestic activities only and give power to men to control the public sphere (Djajanegara, 2000: 31). The activities of Mur, as the female main character, were also restricted by her husband, Widodo. At that time Mur wanted to be economically independent, at the same time her freedom and admittance needs met the dead lock because of her husband’s pressure on her domestic roles.”...If I teach again, there will never be any financial problems. What? Are you going back to work?” (Dini, 1989: 92).

The desire to show the competency was obviously pressed by men, which is represented by her husband, Widodo. The chain twisted on Mur’s life has the serious psychological impact. She became powerless, and lost her hopes and dreams (Goble, 1987: 76). The emergence of powerless feeling invites the condition to be as serious as the starving person (Hall, 1983: 385). Mur, as a matter of fact, endured the same situation. “...I did everything with the emptiness feeling inside of me .... Maybe I am also desperate. I do not expect another kind of life because I am not quite sure it exists” (Dini, 1989: 110).

The serious psychological disturbance grew even more severe in Mur’s life. Mur endured the serious psychological impacts until they disturb her catering business. Being powerless turned Mur into a gloomy woman. It indirectly worsened her financial life. “...pressure comes at the time the customers are gradually decreased. Meetings or workshops do not order snacks as many as before ...” (Dini, 1989: 101)

### **Self-Empowerment through Will to Power**

Nietzsche introduced the concept of will to power to any human life. Will to power is the drive belonging to every human that gives him the power to conquer the world (Stumpff, 1975: 375). The term ‘conquer the world’ refers to the strength of human desire that enable him to color the world. The power is so strong that human can rise from the falling period. In other words, finally human can survive and go on his life span because of the will to power proposed by Nietzsche.

Mur experienced her second life or rising period, after she fell into the hollow life because of her husband’s negative attitudes. Her husband disagreed with the desire of Mur to achieve her needs as a human being. Reaching the lowest point of human needs pyramid proposed by Maslow, Mur got the power to reach her self-actualization. “I really have to be able to let other people see the real me, I can surely stand on my own foot” (Dini, 1989: 166).

The basic point of will to power is the tremendous inner strength (Stumpff, 1975: 375). It means that each human has the real strength that can help him rise from the fall life-period. Unfortunately only some people realize it, to be themselves in order to energize them to reach their actualization. The turning point separates the first and second life period namely the fall and the rise period. Just like Mur who

experienced the fall period and started the second life or rise period. By the time Mur reached the turning point in her life, at the same time she completed her needs as a human being. Mur got all the needs like public attention, the reward to her profession as a teacher, and her dedication to her family as well. Mur continuously sharpened her ability as a teacher, and it automatically affected her increasing salary.

According to Maslow, the fourth need is two types namely self-esteem and public rewards (Goble, 1987: 76). The first type or self-esteem includes competency, independence, and mastery. The second type of fourth need or public rewards is public acknowledgement, being popular, and rewards. Mur had the widely-opened chance to maximize her competency or abilities. She was able to achieve her dream as a tough personality and take every possibility in life. All of which occurred at the time she left the patriarchy 'world'. "I have more friends from that organization... I work at a laboratory school and teach English to teens....I do have the chance to practice my English there" (Dini, 1989: 120-121)

Nietzsche proposes that the inner strength of human is the real reflection of the desire to rise (Stumpf, 1975: 377). The same strength belongs to Mur that helped her out of the hollow side of her life. Her strong willingness or will to power drove her strength to keep on trying and rising from her fall period. Gradually Mur was able to fulfill her needs up to the highest rank, self-actualization, because of her abilities and the supportive family. Self-actualization is described as the ability to use and to maximize talent, capacity, and the like in order to do the best (Goble, 1985: 48). "Pursuing higher degree overseas...means to raise my salary...I have graduated (Dini, 1989: 125, 129).

At the same time Mur achieved the needs of self-esteem, she also had the chance to fulfill

others. Like her need of love and care that was reflected at her second marriage life. In other words she had the feeling to love and to be loved. "I miss and love him every time I am away...We will never be apart" (Dini, 1989: 305-306).

The fulfillment of the highest rank or self-actualization equals with the complete human realization. Human can be categorized to be perfect when the basic of human destiny is fulfilled, without any sexual working differences. Mur achieves all needs, even though they are not in an orderly fulfillment. At the time Mur reached her self-actualization, her psychological maturity colored her life choices including her decision to end her second marriage. She did it without any negative feelings or any psychological or physical disturbances. "We are saying good bye like best friend. I let him go without sadness nor relieved feeling" (Dini, 1989: 377).

Mur decided not to step into the room of patriarchy again in the end of the story. She did it with avoiding the women exploitation inside the house, so women did not have to take any responsibilities of domestic works alone (Fakih, 1996: 41). Being independent is the softest and smoothest way of patriarchy injustice at house (Fakih, 1996: 48). Mur had the strong and mature personality because of the fulfillment of human needs. It is in line with the theory proposed by Hall (1983: 82) that the strong character belongs to the person who had achieved all his needs.

## CONCLUSION

Patriarchy differentiates the role of men and women; as a result, it buries all Mur's needs. Her needs of love and respect are impeded because of the perspective of biological determinism. Husband's oppression towards wife invites the feeling of desperation and emptiness. Reaching the lowest rank of human needs pyramid

proposed by Maslow, Mur empowered herself with the will to power proposed by Nietzsche. Her strong willingness to rise energized her as to enable her to keep on trying with maximizing all of her abilities as a woman. Gradually Mur achieved the needs of reward and self-esteem because she always sharpened her teaching abilities which increased her skill. All of which lead to the increasing amount of salary. By the time she achieved the need of self-esteem, she also experienced the loving need at her second marriage. The fulfillment of all needs makes her tough and independent. The achievement of self-actualization reflects the real human being. It is obvious that Mur became psychologically mature in determining any attitudes at the time she reached self-actualization.

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