



WOMAN'S STRENGTH IN EKA KURNIAWAN'S NOVEL *BEAUTY IS A WOUND*

T. Raja Mulia, Pardi

Faculty of Literature, Universitas Islam Sumatera Utara, Medan

e-mail: raja99.r6@gmail.com

Abstract

The research aims to reveal the woman's strength in Eka Kurniawan's novel entitled *Beauty Is a Wound*. Strength is the emotional qualities necessary in dealing with situation or events that are distress or difficult. Strength is divided into two categories. They are strength to be tough and strength to solve the problem. The research design adopted in this study is descriptive qualitative, and the approach applied is adopting feminism one as this research describes the strength of the first female character by the name of Dewi Ayu. Dewi Ayu, as the protagonist, is reflected as a classy prostitute in Indonesia town of Halimunda. She is an Indonesian-Netherlands crossbreed. She is beautiful, cold, practical, logical, at the same time full of sympathy and she is also a good mother. She never tears herself. She has high adrenalin in her self. She never feels tired to do something. This story inspires all people to have more strength and tough to go on in life. Furthermore, the finding of this study shows that Dewi Ayu has strength to be tough and to solve her complicated problems.

Keywords: Woman's Strength, Strength to be Tough, Strength to solve the Problem, influence of strength.

I. Introduction

Beauty Is A Wound was written in 2002 by Eka Kurniawan. Eka Kurniawan was born in Tasikmalaya, Indonesia, in 1975, He graduated from Faculty of Philosophy, Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta. He writes novels, short stories, as well as non-fiction pieces. His novels translated into Japanese, Malay, French, Italian, Dutch, German, Korean, including *Man Tiger* (Verso Books, 2015) and *Beauty Is A Wound* (New Directions, 2015) in English.

There are many things needed to survive in life and one of them is strength. Hornby (2002) states strength is quality of being strong or the ability to resist strain. Human being must have it in life but of course it will not be the same from one to another. Strength is the emotional or mental qualities necessary in dealing with situations or events that are distress or difficult. The woman strength is not measured by the extend of her refusal to allow those hardship to dictate her and who she becomes. (http://www.goodread.com/c_joy_bell_c).

According to Mahatma Gandhi strength does not come from physical capacity, It comes from an indomitable (https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/mahatma_gandhi_122084) Similarity, Al-Bukhari stated the strong one is not the one who overcomes the people by his strength, but the strong one is the one who controls

himself while at the point of anger. Woman is someone who has softness and strength in her soul. They have feeling that makes anyone touched. In fact the woman can be stronger, moreover the woman can do everything. It demonstrates that woman's strength is the same as man. The other fact, many jobs can be done by man and by woman for example, lawyer, driver, police and so on (<https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/576884>).

The significance of this study is to give moral lesson to the readers and to be reference for other students when they are making a similar topic on their thesis. This study makes the writer or other people realize that a person must struggle for everything in his or her life, because a whole of human life is a effort and endeavor. Relatively, a person makes a struggle to get happiness and perfection of life.

II. Literature Review

2.1 Strength

Ronald Siegel states strength is built-in capacities for certain thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Everyone possesses all the character strengths associated with the six virtues of wisdom, courage, humanity, justice, temperance, and transcendence, to a greater and lesser extent. You can be particularly gifted in one area and weak in another, but if you are like most people, you are often somewhere in between.

Your particular pattern of strengths is part of what makes you unique. Because deploying a strength is usually the easiest as well as the most effective way to accomplish a goal, you can think of using your strengths as the smallest thing that you can do to make the biggest difference. We probably enjoy using our strengths and do it well naturally. When we play from our strengths, we are likely to feel more energetic and perform better than when you are trying to use a capacity that comes less naturally. For example, one person trying to influence a local school board to ban soft drink sales might have the strength to speak up forcefully and clearly at a general meeting (despite the almost-universal fear of public speaking). Likewise, when we set out to do something in alignment with the values you hold dear, we are likely to work harder and have more energy and persistence for the task at hand. Sometime, when we feel down and give up to solve our problem and then someone come and give us spirit, it is a strength and because we have more spirit it will give us strength to solve the problem. (<https://www.sharecare.com/health/personality>).

2.2 Woman's Strength

Eleanor Roosevelt states a woman like a tea bag. You cannot tell how strong tea is until you pour it in hot water. Tea cannot change became red if we pour cool water but if we pour hot water into the tea, it can be change. It means that the woman's strength can be seen from challenges of life. We know that life is challenge there are happiness, sadness, and sacrifice in life. All of them are part of life and ever happen in our life. Sometimes the people says that the problem is stepping stone to be a quality people and more mature. To face all kinds of problems in life, we need strength. With strength, we can resolve any problems that may be very difficult to overcome. Woman must have strength to survive in life. When we want something in life, we must do and accept a consequence to get that. The important thing that we must try, pray and optimist to get what we want.

(http://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/44566.Eleanor_Roosevelt).

III. Research Method

Study design is a statement of general research approach or strategy that is adopted in one particular study or research (David, 2001). Therefore, the research design adopted in this study is descriptive qualitative because the process of the analysis and the finding are accomplished descriptively. Descriptive research is unique in the number of variables employed. Like other type of research, descriptive research can include multiple variables for analysis, yet unlike other methods, it requires only one variable (Borg & Gall, 1989). The method of the data analysis in this research uses descriptive qualitative method. There are a number of researchers who believe and support the fact that “qualitative descriptive” is a viable and acceptable label for a qualitative research design. In other words, there will be no calculative or statically work in this study. Qualitative research method is conducted by studying the organized material in order to discover inherent facts. The fact focused in this study is one of the social diseases; that is lie. Therefore, qualitative descriptive method was appropriately applied in this research as Setiawan, Barus, and Pawiro (2017) state that in social research, qualitative descriptive method is an appropriate method as it gives detailed points of some social event

IV. Discussion

4.1 Strength to be tough

People must be tough in life. If we have more tough, we more optimist faced the problem in life. In this novel, Dewi Ayu is a tough woman. It can be seen in the following quotation:

Now all of the lessons at school were filled with anxious stories about the war that was finally right in their own front yards. Dewi Ayu, who was impatient with the endless speeches, stood up and asked loudly: “Rather than sitting here talking, why don’t we learn how to shoot rifles and cannons?” (Eka Kurniawan, 2016: 45)

The data above explains something worry and anxiety that happens. This can be seen from “Now all of the lessons at school were filled with anxious stories about the war that was finally right in their own front yards. when peoples at her school are worried, only Dewi Ayu has the spirit to fight, and does not surrender to the war situation. This can be seen from “Rather than sitting here talking, why don’t we learn how to shoot rifles and cannons?”. The influence of strength to the protagonist’s life can make herself and others around him eager again to do something positive and not just sit and do nothing.

Another Dewi Ayu strength to be tough can be seen in the following quotation:

Everything was in chaos, and an East Indies defeat seemed guaranteed. After obtaining assurance as to when they could leave, the remaining members of the stammler family hastily started to pack, but were surprised by Dewi Ayu’s sudden pronouncement:” I’m not going. Whatever the case may be, a stammler must stay here,” she said stubbornly. “You know as well as I do who we must wair for.” (Eka Kurniawan, 2016: 50)

The data above explains something chaos that happens. This can be seen from “Everything was in chaos, and an East Indies defeat seemed guaranteed.” when all her family intend to flee to escape from the danger of the war situation only Dewi Ayu who dares to stay at home and does not choose to run away with his family. This can be seen

from "I'm not going. Whatever the case may be, a stammerer must stay here," she said stubbornly. "You know as well as I do who we must wait for." The influence of strength to the protagonist's life is her life survived, because the ship that his family used to go to Australia on a trip met with Japanese cruisers and his family's ship was successfully sunk without resistance by Japanese cruisers.

4.2 Strength to Solve Problems

Problem is a situation that is unsatisfactory and causes difficulties for people. As a human being in the world, we ever get problem such as family problem, financial problem, job problem and so on. We know that everyone in the world must be ever have problem. But we never know what problem will come, and how the way to solve it. We must be strong to solve the problem although the problem is very hard to solve. We must believe we can solve it with strength. In this novel, Dewi Ayu has strength to solve the problem. It can be seen in the following quotation:

Making a small campfire, she boiled all the leeches in the tin with some water from the river. Without adding any seasoning, she quickly brought them back to the hall. "Dinner is served," she said to a number of women and children who were living near her, her new neighbors. No one was interested in eating leeches, and one woman practically retched at the very thought of such a meal. "We're not eating the leeches, but cow's blood," Dewi Ayu explained. Then they tried it. It tasted bland, but sort of good. "We won't starve," said Dewi Ayu. "In addition to leeches, there are geckos, lizards, and mice", "okay" the women said hurriedly, "great thanks." (Eka Kurniawan, 2016: 65)

The data above explains a problem that there is no food in prison, but Dewi Ayu can solve the problem by finding and cooking leeches that have sucked the blood of cows. This can be seen from "Making a small campfire, she boiled all the leeches in the tin with some water from the river." So, that people are not disgusted she explained that what was eaten not leeches but cow blood. This can be seen from "We're not eating the leeches, but cow's blood." Also for really gets rid of people's anxiety, Dewi Ayu also said that besides leeches there are also other food sources. This can be seen from "In addition to leeches, there are geckos, lizards, and mice, "okay" the women said hurriedly, "great thanks". The influence of strength to the protagonist's life is she succeeded to avoid the threat of hunger that attacked her and others in prison that night, and many people felt helped by her and were very grateful for that.

Another Dewi Ayu's strength to solve the problem can be seen in the following quotation:

Dewi Ayu would stake anything to fight the evil spirit before her. "I must stop you," she said then. "From what?" asked the evil spirit. "From destroying my family." (Eka Kurniawan, 2016: 450)

The data above explains something problem that evil spirit will destroy her family. This can be seen in "From what?" asked the evil spirit. "From destroying my family." But, Dewi Ayu can solve the problem by risking everything she had to stop the evil spirit from destroying her family. This can be seen from "Dewi Ayu would stake anything to fight the evil spirit before her. "I must stop you," she said then. The influence of strength

to the protagonist's life is Dewi Ayu succeeds to prevent the evil spirit from destroying her family. Family is everything to her and she will not let anyone destroy it.

After analyzing the topic, the writer finds that Dewi Ayu has strength to solve the problem and strength to be tough in life. although Dewi Ayu does not know what problems will come to her and how to solve them, she is never afraid for that and always tries to do her best to deal with them and struggle to solve them. Dewi Ayu wants her family to live happily even though herself is living a life that is very difficult for others to imagine. We can see that even though she works as a prostitute, she does not want her children to become prostitutes following in her footsteps, instead all his children are sent to school and each child he gives a house without exception. Dewi ayu is a mother who is willing to do anything to protect her child, even if it takes her life she has no regrets for that.

V. Conclusion

After analysing the strength in this research, the writer finds that Ayu Dewi is a classy prostitute who is famous at Halimunda, Indonesia. She suffers in her life not only mentally but also physically. However she has strength to be tough and to solve her problems. She does not feel hopeless to encounter her tough life, but she keeps on struggling for her happiness and her right as a woman. She is always optimist and hard working to get everything she wants. Although in her life she always encounters problems as well as constraints, she is very tough to pass through them.

References

- Borg, W. R. & Gall, M. D. (1989). *Educational Research: An Introduction*, Fiftyth Edition. New York : Longman.
- David J, et.al. (2001). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mix Methods Approaches*. New York: Sage Publication.
- Hornby, A.S. (2002). *Oxford advanced learners dictionary*. London: Oxford University press.
- Ihromi, Tapi Omas. (2000). *Penghapusan Diskriminasi Terhadap Wanita*. Bandung: Alumni.
- Kurniawan, Eka. (2016). *Beauty is A wound*. London: Pushkin Press.
- Rose, Gillian. (2003). *Feminism and Geography: The Limits of Geographical Knowledge*. Minnesota: University Press.
- Setiawan, Muarif, Barus, Efendi, and Pawiro, Mhd. Ali. (2017). Cause and effect of suffering in Sydney Sheldon's "If Tomorrow Comes". *Language Literacy: Journal of Linguistics, Literature, and Language Teaching*. Volume 1, Number 1, Desember 2017, Pages: 73–96 <https://doi.org/10.30743/ll.v1i1.247>
- Sipahutar, Cici Hafisah. (2018). *Feminism in Abidah El Khalieqy's Novel Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* in *The 1st Annual International Conference on Language and Literature, KnE Social Sciences*, pages 149–155.
- Suaidi, et.al. (2016). *Feminism Reflected in Pride and Prejudice Novel by Jane Austen* In *Jurnal Ilmiah Bahasa dan Sastra volume 3 nomor 1*, pages 85-99.
- _____. (2019). *C. JoyBell C. Quotes*. http://www.goodread.com/c_joy_bell_c. Retrieved on Thursday 12, September 2019.
- _____. (2019). *Mahatma Gandhi Quotes*. https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/mahatma_gandhi_122084. Retrieved on Thursday 12, September 2019.

- _____. (2019). *Sahih AL- Bukhari Quotes*. <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/576884>. Retrieved on Thursday 12, September 2019.
- _____. (2019). *Feminism*. <http://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminism>. Retrieved on Monday 23, September 2019.
- _____. (2019). *How Strength Defined Positive Psychology* . <https://www.sharecare.com/health/personality>. Retrieved on Wednesday 16, October 2019.
- _____. (2019). *Eleanor Roosevelt Quotes*. http://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/44566.Eleanor_Roosevelt Retrieved on Wednesday 16, October 2019.