

AGENCY IN THE NOVEL WANTING MOR (2009)

BY RUKHSANA KHAN

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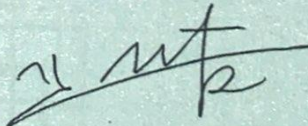


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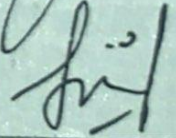
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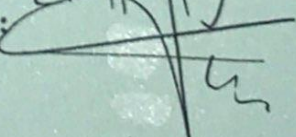
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ABSTRACT

Syahrin, Nada Alfi. (2023). Agency in the Novel *Wanting Mor* by Rukhsana Khan (2009). Thesis. Padang: English Language and Literature Department. Faculty of Languages and Arts. Universitas Negeri Padang

This research is an analysis of the novel *Wanting Mor* by Rukhsana Khan (2009). The research aims to analyze the agency shown by the main female character, Jameela, in the novel *Wanting Mor* by Rukhsana Khan (2009) as the representation of Afghan women in facing various oppressions in Afghanistan such as the patriarchal system, traditional social relation, foreign country intervention, and disability. The research data is based on agency theory by Catriona Mackenzie within feminist literary criticism. The form of this research is descriptive qualitative analysis. The data in this research was obtained from the novel *Wanting Mor* by Rukhsana Khan (2009). The results show that there are two factors lead to the emergence of Jameela's agency namely mental formation of agent and development of agent's capabilities. This research also shows that there are two manifestations of Jameela's agency namely decision-making and self-resilience.

Key words: Agency, Oppression, Afghanistan Women

ABSTRAK

Syahrin, Nada Alfi. (2023). Agensi dalam Novel *Wanting Mor* karya Rukhsana Khan (2009). Skripsi. Padang: Departemen Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris. Fakultas Bahasa dan Seni. Universitas Negeri Padang

Penelitian ini merupakan sebuah analisis terhadap novel *Wanting Mor* karya Rukhsana Khan (2009). Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis agensi yang ditunjukkan oleh tokoh utama perempuan, Jameela, dalam novel *Wanting Mor* karya Rukhsana Khan (2009) sebagai representasi perempuan Afghanistan dalam menghadapi berbagai penindasan di Afghanistan seperti sistem patriarki, hubungan sosial tradisional, intervensi negara asing, dan disabilitas. Data penelitian ini didasarkan pada teori agensi Catriona Mackenzie dalam teori Sastra feminis. Bentuk penelitian ini adalah analisis deskriptif kualitatif. Data dalam penelitian ini diperoleh dari novel *Wanting Mor* karya Rukhsana Khan (2009). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa terdapat dua faktor yang menyebabkan munculnya agensi pada Jameela yaitu pembentukan mental agen dan pengembangan kapabilitas agen. Penelitian ini juga menunjukkan bahwa terdapat dua manifestasi dari agensi Jameela yaitu pengambilan keputusan dan ketahanan diri.

Kata Kunci: *Agensi, Penindasan, Perempuan Afghanistan*

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

From ancient times to the present, the issue of gender equality is one of the social issues that are always fought for by people around the world. There is a stereotype about traditional gender roles where women have a weaker position and are always dependent on men considered incapable of doing things related to independence, power, and leadership. Thus, traditional gender roles have placed men at the top and women at the bottom of society

Historically, women's efforts to obtain education or engage in politics are modern women's endeavors to reduce gender discrimination. Women have fought for and won many rights, including the right to vote, equal pay, education, and participation in the workforce. Despite has reached many achievements, women in some parts of the world especially in countries that still adhere to patriarchal systems like Afghanistan, continue to face numerous challenges and obstacles in fulfilling their roles and agency.

According to Moghadam in Ghosh (2003:3), the problem of women's rights in Afghanistan is caused by various factors, namely the patriarchal system, traditional social relations, and foreign interference, which hinder social development in Afghanistan. In 1996, the Taliban who ruled Afghanistan established a very conservative and ruthless regime. In their government, they used the ideology of Deobandi which was conservative, and Pashtunwali which was local, so they often

applied rigid rules and used violence which had an impact on the limited rights of Afghan women during the regime of the Taliban (Sari, 2022:36). They destroyed universities, libraries and schools, restricted women from professional work, forced women to wear the burqa, prohibited them from visiting doctors, even prohibited them from accessing various entertainment (Ghosh, 2003:7).

All kinds of prohibitions are based on traditional social relations embedded in a society that believes that women should not be outside their family and community environment (Ghosh, 2003:10). The statement describes a cultural condition where any action that is considered to challenge or change the patriarchal order is considered something dangerous and a threat to the honor of the family and society. In this kind of culture, it is expected that women must submit to men so these cultural conditions encourage women to support and defend systems that oppress themselves. They are expected to abide by the norms set by the patriarchy and follow the roles assigned to them. After the fall of the Taliban Regime in 2001 and the entry of the US Invasion, women's rights in Afghanistan have progressed further. Women have been allowed to return to school, enter the workplace, and participate in civil society. Even though the US invasion succeeded in bringing down the Taliban regime, unfortunately, Afghan women are still not completely free from oppression (Cherly, 2022:46).

Oppression can be even more severe for women with disabilities. There are differences in the way women with disabilities and non-disabilities experience bullying. According to Azhar et al., (2023:86), women with disabilities tend to face double stigma, namely stigmatization because of their gender and disability which creates greater barriers to access to health, education, employment, and public

facilities compared to those without disabilities. It can also increase the risk of bullying due to dependence on others and limitations in protecting themselves.

The novel *Wanting Mor* by Rukhsana Khan, which is set during the US invasion shows how Afghan women fight for their right to control and change their destiny through the female character, Jameela. Jameela is often considered different by the public because of her cleft lip. This stigma causes her to feel isolated and not accepted by her environment. Jameela's cleft lip makes her more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. Her father and stepmother treated Jameela as if she was a burden and forced her to do all the household chores. Jameela then ends up in an orphanage run by the same foreign soldiers who killed so many of her family members. At the orphanage, some of Jameela's friends also belittled Jameela because of her physical disability which made Jameela not only discriminated against but also depressed and lost self-confidence. She must struggle with her own image and struggle with the hardships of the outside world. Her condition affects the way she interacts with those around her and creates emotional challenges. Jameela's cleft lip has made the discrimination she experienced even worse.

As a woman who has a disability, Jameela oppression was exacerbated by the patriarchal system and intervention by foreign parties in her country, thus causing her to experience multiple oppressions. These oppressions limited her freedom as a woman. Her life gets worse when her mother (Mor) dies as a result of war and her drug-addicted father remarried a widow. She also faces various pressures from the people around her, especially her father to take on the traditional role that her environment has set as a woman. The patriarchal system has made her economically dependent on her father, limiting Jameela's choices and autonomy.

She could not go to school because her father did not prioritize her education, which hindered Jameela's ability to access education due to a lack of resources and support from her patriarchal family. Not only that, Jameela's condition which has a disability exacerbates the discrimination that Jameela receives. Her father abandoned Jameela in the Kabul market at the insistence of her stepmother because she was caught learning to read secretly also her stepmother thought that there was no point in having a daughter, especially Jameela because one day the daughter would be taken by her husband while her stepmother is not sure whether a man will propose to Jameela due to her physical disability.

Despite facing various kinds of oppression as a disabled woman, it turns out that Jameela has the agency to face discrimination and violence. In relation to feminism, the concept of agency is often associated with the idea of the power and ability of women both individually and in groups to act actively and make decisions in society (Sen in Samman & Santos, 2009:5-6). The agency is considered very important because it can help create a more gender-neutral environment where women have the same access to education, employment, health services, and other opportunities as men. The agency can manifest in many different forms, depending on the political, social, and cultural environments in which they operate because each society has a unique and diverse context in terms of social norms, political structures, and cultural values. Vizheh et al., (2023:13), in his research highlighted that women's agency is very dependent on how cultural beliefs and social norms influence its definition. A similar statement is also found in research conducted by Mason & Smith (2000:301), who compared agencies in various countries and found that the strength of the correlation between agency domains varied greatly.

In the novel *Wanting Mor*, Jameela is indicated to have agency that can help her face discrimination and violence in shaping her experiences and life journey. Overall, this novel shows that an Afghan woman who despite having a disability, proves that she has the agency to fight for her rights against gender discrimination and violence. Therefore, the researcher is interested in conducting research with the title "Agency in the Novel *Wanting Mor* by Rukhsana Khan (2009) using Catriona Mackenzie's Agency theory through feminist literary criticism to analyze how agency can appear in women and in what kind of manifestation this agency can appear.

1.2 Focus of the Problem

The focus of the problem in this study is the representation of women's agency amid gender inequality and difficult social conditions in Afghanistan through the main female character, Jameela, in the novel *Wanting Mor* (2009) by Rukhsana Khan. This study is adapted to the basic concept of feminism to show how women's agency empowers women to have control over their lives.

1.3 Research Questions

Based on the background and focus of the problem above, the researcher formulated the research problem as follows:

1. What factors lead to the emergence of Jameela's agency in the novel *Wanting Mor* (2009) by Rukhsana Khan?

2. How does Jameela manifest her agency in the novel *Wanting Mor* (2009) by Rukhsana Khan?

1.4 Purpose of the Research

Based on the research questions above the purpose of the research are:

1. To find out what factor that emergence of Jameela's agency in the novel *Wanting Mor* (2009) by Rukhsana Khan
2. To seek how Jameela manifests her agency in the novel *Wanting Mor* (2009) by Rukhsana Khan?