



**Woman's Vengeance on Gender and Social Injustice:
A Post-Feminist Reading in Maman Suherman's *PeRempuan*
(*Perlawanan Perempuan dari Sudut Gender dan Sosial:
Kajian Feminis Pada Novel PeRempuan Karya Maman Suherman*)**

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ABSTRACT

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Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan perlawanan perempuan dari sudut pandang gender dan sosial pada novel PeRempuan karya Maman Suherman. Penelitian kualitatif ini berfokus pada teori post-feminisme milik Rosalind Gill and Christina Scharff. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa institusi dan nilai-nilai dalam masyarakat modern terlihat melemahkan dan kuno karena masih berlandaskan pada identitas gender perempuan; mengatur tingkah perempuan untuk dapat diterima dalam masyarakat. Balas dendam perempuan melalui pendidikan dan sikap tenang ini kemudian dimaknai sebagai sebuah respons, reaksi, dan perlawanan untuk memperoleh kesetaraan dalam kemanusiaan.

Keywords:

gender

novel

post-feminism

This study aims to describe women's resistance from a gender and social perspective in the novel *Women* by Maman Suherman. This qualitative research focuses on the post-feminism theory of Rosalind Gill and Christina Scharff. The results of the research show that institutions and values in modern society are seen as weak and old-fashioned because they are still based on women's gender identity; regulate the behavior of women to be accepted in society. Women's revenge through education and calm attitude is then interpreted as a response, reaction, and resistance to obtain equality in humanity.

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INTRODUCTION

The world we live in is haunted by social power. The sense of humanity develops in a bad direction due to superior power. The existence of the 'superior' in society controls others' life. They set rules, norms, dogmas, and doctrines that are a cuff for an individual's freedom. explained that people with superior intellect, insight, and uncommon strength of character, can transcend the laws and expectations that defined the ordinary populace Lyons (2021). As a result, it controls and decides the model of life that people should live in. The patriarchy, which has been considered superior in controlling society, has become the source of power and oppression and has set how normal life should be for a woman. This coercion of social desire and social structure has been implanted in a woman's mind. People are no longer conscious of the existence of social concepts and their destruction (Vukoičić, 2017). Hossain & Ali (2014) also explained that society and individuals are connected, in which an individual is surrounded and encompassed



by culture, as a societal force. We are accustomed to living by social norms, laws, and religious doctrines that have created a disciplined and well-behaved society. Rules and laws are drafted to direct people in a dignified way. This cultural tradition even needs to be respected by society.

Based on the issue of gender and social injustice above, this research attempts to discuss the main character's reaction, namely Melur, to gender and social injustice in modern life. The emphasis of the marginalized group found in the novel is a murdered prostitute, Re, who is the main character's mother. There is no justice for her because of a bad labeling identity from society. At first, living in a patriarchal world, women become objects to look at. In Indonesia, in this case, the patriarchal culture is one of the causes of violence. It frames gender inequality, unequal power, social values, entitlements, and roles (Herawati & Pinilih, 2020). Gender and social inequality for women are often exacerbated by the law and religious system. Cikalkinanty et al. (2022) stated that the existence of customary law and the misinterpretation of religious knowledge are justifications for patriarchal practices that make it take root in the lives of Indonesian people. There is also disregard for human dignity just because of their despicable social status. Violence, the dissolution of institutions, displacement, humanitarian crises, and other emergencies are only a few negative effects of fragility (OECD, 2016a, as cited in Lwamba et al., 2022). Thus, from this perspective, it can be seen that women's life are risky.

Even as victims, the prostitutes in the novel cannot get social justice. This condition is found in the novel in which Melur's mother needs to choose to be a prostitute since she is not in a good economic condition and she is underestimated by the law and society because of her job. Murder case for prostitutes is considered a punishment for them because they are considered a sinner in society so their case does not deserve to be investigated legally. Women often get accused or blamed and discrimination by society. This is similar to Lerner's argument (1980, as cited in Gabriela et al., 2018) about a view that the world is 'a just place'. Lerner interpreted the sentence "you get what you deserve" as a condition in which good things happen to good people, and bad things happen to bad people. Society considers the prostitute as the sinner so they deserve the bad thing.

The application of gender equality is still ambiguous for women, especially in working place. Sweetman & Rowlands (2016) mentioned that the gender-based distribution of labor and duty in unstable situations frequently causes special issues for women, whose care obligations get heavier as fragility and insecurity rise and in the lack of resources, services, or justice. Women often encounter social and law injustice. Some are even afraid to report their case for some reasons, such as the embarrassment of receiving disgrace, to avoid negative views on society, no understanding of the law, as well as the lengthy trial process, misleading and exhausting (Arief, 2017). Moreover, whether someone is "good" or "bad" looking to others also seems to affect their socioeconomic prospects independent of many other factors, especially for physical attractiveness among adults in the labor market (Hamermesh, 2011; Hosoda, Stone-Romero, & Coats, 2003, as cited in Gordon, et al., 2013). Thus, to be accepted and appreciated by society, for example, a woman usually confronts two choices, whether she or he has to be economically successful



(born to be rich) or have a good look. For this reason, revenge appears as vengeance against social and law injustice.

Some researchers have also mentioned many reasons why people seek revenge. In common, the action of vengeance reveals two important points: the examination of gender and social injustice in modern life, and a feminist movement that is defined by Nienaber and Moraka (2016) as a challenge to the existing social system that oppresses and exploit woman and another marginalized group. Garland (2001, as cited in Rossner, 2017) mentioned that a criminal justice system that is dominated by professionalization and bureaucratization is less able to address the direct needs of victims, offenders, and communities. Haiven (2020) supported that vengeance is not only a passing sentiment but ‘wild justice’, a claim for unpayable debt. This paper notices the matter of injustice as a crucial aspect for people in taking revenge. Punishment is given to the minority, such as the innocent prostitute. The unsolved case of Melur’s mother’s death is a kind of unpayable debt from irresponsible justice. For the worse, they suffer punishment for a fictitious mistake. Their lower status and despicable job have triggered anger and hostility from society. As a result, their right to law justice is cut off by the hierarchy.

As an act of vengeance for social and gender injustice and to get her freedom as well, thus Melur’s action is explained as the Power of the self to make choices and act on them (Hirschmann, 2003, as cited in Elias, 2016). Here, women should act as a subject of change. A power feminism concept establishes ‘unapologetically sexual’, ‘free-thinking’, ‘pleasure-loving’, and ‘self-assertive’ (Genz & Brabon, 2009). It focuses on a woman’s self-freedom; her individuality. For some women, like Melur and her mother, their human right is neglected just because they lost social power. To resist this, a woman needs a reflexive project of the self (Genz & Brabon, 2009). Walter (1999, as cited in Genz & Brabon, 2009) explained that the new feminists are ‘combining traditionally feminine and traditionally masculine work and clothes and attitudes, where the woman can wear a minidress one day and jeans and boot the next. This statement shows the possibility of women exploring themselves.

In line with this possibility, thus this paper analyzes the novel using the post-feminism theory by Rosalind Gill and Christina Scharff. Gill & Scharff (2011) stated that post-feminist discourse focuses on women's achievements and encourages women's participation in personalized self-definition and privatized self-depiction projects. This theory appears as the new feminist movement that helps the development of woman’s self-determination, individualism, and femininity. Gill and Scharff further explained that the political movement is based on self-definition; on how the women define their personal relationship to feminism in ways that make sense to them as individuals. Post-feminism believes that norms of gender have created women to be old-fashioned constructions of the heteronormative system. The new-feminist movement should shift from ‘living for others’ to ‘living a life of one’s own (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2001, as cited in Gill and Scharff, 2011). Walter (1999, as cited in Genz & Brabon, 2009) also supported this statement, which explained new feminism as a concept that combines social and political ideology with personal freedom. Through a post-feminist lens, women are allowed to “attain equality without sacrificing all forms of pink-packaged femininity” (Genz, 2009, as cited in Morris, 2018). Rosenberg & Garofalo (1998,



as cited in Gill & Scharff, 2011) further mentioned that the new feminist movement aims to promote self-development and independence as the driving force behind the quest for politics of will, allowing women to better understand the focus on personal space; individual and emotional, than marches, legislation, and public policy. Thus, post-feminism appears as a political movement that promotes individual empowerment against social constraints that evoke injustice. This movement helps women consciously see themselves as subjects and have control over themselves. The idea of liberty and freedom means to improve the social and material condition of women and is mainly concerned with the rise of consciousness in which women should elevate their sense of self-esteem and change the way they see themselves (Fischer, 2012).

After all, this article is aimed to discover an individual woman's empowerment in education and her tranquil attitude as a crucial part of a woman's action against patriarchy. Women's freedom in pursuing a career and having high education help them to train the development of HOT (High Order Thinking) for criticizing and finding a smart solution for a case. Realizing the enemy of her injustice is a man, thus embracing conservative belief supports the effort of resisting it. A woman has a right to their body. Woman's nature; beauty and feminine attitude, are something they may embrace for opposing injustice. So, applying post-feminism in this research underlines the unity of sexual empowerment and feminist emancipation in one.

METHOD

This research is a descriptive qualitative study to describe the phenomenon of women's vengeance against gender and social injustice in modern society. The object of research was a novel written in 2016 by Maman Suherman entitled *PeRempuan*. The writer chose this novel since the theme of woman's vengeance for social and law injustice is closely related to the issue of gender. The data for the research was collected in December 2021 dan analyzed from January to March 2022. The data collection method was textual or content analysis. This method is identified as a technique for investigating a group's or individual's experiences and perspectives (Paradis et al., 2016). Here, the writer used the novel *PeRempuan* as the primary data. Research articles and reference books were the supporting data to support the analysis.

The data were analyzed using qualitative data analysis. Bailey (2008, as cited in Harding & Whitehead, 2013) mentioned that the data needs interpretation and judgment. Thus, the writer read and interpreted data from related journals and books to analyze woman's vengeance. The writer used a feminist approach. It addresses critiques of women's lives in a social context (Kiguwa, 2019, Chapter 14). Data analysis is conducted in three steps. In the beginning, the writer analyzed the novel and found related problems concerning women's vengeance as a response to gender and social injustice in modern times. Secondly, the problem was interpreted, and the research question was arranged, that is how an individual woman takes vengeance as a response to gender and social injustice in modern society Finally, it directed the writer to identify the concepts used for analyzing the data, which were post-feminism.



In this case, power no longer serves its protective role but dominates others' life. The elites, represented by the law in the novel, take sides with the 'power'. They create their own 'circle' and neglect the 'outsider', the low social class woman.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

PeRempuan issues the woman's movement to resist gender and social injustice. Melur takes vengeance for her mother because there is no justice for her mother's death case. This article presents two main points to discuss related to the issue of injustice; questioning woman's rights in modern society and the post-feminism reading for gender and social injustice. The first point appears as the basic information on how women whose jobs are considered shameful do not deserve equal treatment in a legal process. The law favors those who have political and economic power. The second point appears as the resistance toward gender and social injustice; on how Melur as the individual subject no longer dependent on social constructions that restrict her rights as a human being.

Questioning woman's rights in modern society

In *PeRempuan*, the issue of social injustice is represented as the cause of Melur's vengeance. This violent conflict is triggered by the murder of Rere, Melur's mother, 20 years ago. Rere is a prostitute who works for Mami Lani. Mami Lani runs several 'black businesses. One of them is prostitution. Rere is trapped by Mami Lani who willingly accommodated her the first time she came to Jakarta. In the beginning, Mami Lani plays a part as a guardian angel for Rere. The woman gives free help and a place for Rere who has been pregnant. After six months, the woman turns into a devil who asks Rere to pay back the service. Thus this 'unexpected debt' turns into a bad destiny for Rere. She is forced to 'sell' her body, to become a lesbian prostitute to pay off the debt. This story reflects the major social problem in a big city. UNESCO (2002, as cited in Qayyum et al., 2013) mentioned that woman involves in the prostitution business voluntarily and involuntarily. Issues of poverty, illiteracy, and family breakdown are some causes of this voluntary action. Involuntarily, woman's reasons involved in the prostitution business are caused by forced rap, sexual assault, early marriages, trafficking, and being deceived by family, deceived by lovers (Qayyum et al., 2013). Those who have power and are smart like Mami Lani sometimes take advantage of this weak and bad-economical condition figure. These involuntary causes, as seen in Rere's case, turn someone's state into a miserable condition. A woman is left without a choice.

As a consequence of the prostitution business, woman overcomes some problems, psychologically and physically. Flower (1998, as cited in Kajanová, 2017) indicated some psychological problems, such as feeling worthless and helpless, low self-confidence, and especially depression. By having no choice in her life, Rere suffers a lot, both mentally and physically. It is narrated in the story that she often gets sex abuse from customers. She has even to stop breastfeeding her daughter because the breast is bitten by the customer and bleeding. She could not bear the condition that she has to give the bloody milk to her baby daughter. She feels guilty and helpless for her baby (p. 41). To save the child, Rere has to send her to someone else to be taken care of. Sutadi and Marlina, a childless couple, take care of Melur, Rere's daughter very well. As a mother, Rere has low self-



confidence to admit herself as Melur's mother. She allows herself to be called Melur's aunt. Therefore, she never stops to give everything to little Melur; a tuition fee, clothes, shorts, and all accessories. She gives it through the help of a close friend, Herman.

Regardless of Rere's psychological state, a prostitute also never gets away from physical abuse problems. The issue of sex abuse is found in this novel, and there is no protective law for this case. One day, Rere's body was found dead crucified on an electric pole in Blora street. This murder case was written in a newspaper headline, underlining the word 'prostitution' instead of 'woman': "*Seorang Pelacur Tewas Tersalib di Tiang Listrik Jalan Blora. Tubuhnya Penuh Sayatan!*" ("A prostitute has crucified in an electric pole at the Blora Street. Her body was full of cuts.") (p. 45). Herman, Rere's close friend, voices his view about the law injustice in the case, as is written below:

"Mengapa pula harus ada kata pelacur di sana? Tidak cukup lakukah koran itu kalau sekedar menyebut 'Perempuan', bukan 'Pelacur'? Darah dan nyawa pelacur, bagi banyak warga terhormat kota besar, barangkali ibarat sampah yang memang harus dienyahkan dan dilupakan. Harus cepat-cepat disingkirkan daripada menebarkan bau anyir dan najis yang mengganggu kenyamanan hidup." (Suherman, 2016, hal. 45).

Herman's opinion reflects the social crisis when the media only focuses on the word of the dishonorable profession. However, the negative statement about the 'disgusting' profession has triggered common public perception about the prostitute. The popular emotion of disgust negates the humanity and equality of people before the law based on a lack of respect, and it is believed that it harms those who live outside the normative boundaries set by a society that is complicit in their exploitation (Riswanda, et al., 2017). It sets off the delinquency of human rights.

The violent conflict confronted by Melur's mother indicates the deterioration of human rights. The gap exists in society; between the strong and the weak, the rich and the poor, and man and the woman, and so on. As a result, the physical and social gap still affects the application of laws for a human being. The list of norms even arises because of the increasing functional differentiation of modern society (Hanna, 2015). The truth that prostitution is still illegal in Indonesia increases the government's excuse for denying woman's rights. People involved in prostitution, particularly those who survive through the industry are regarded as outside the boundaries of decent society (Riswanda, et al., 2017). It can be seen from Herman's narration when he witnesses the horrible life of the prostitutes. Most of his informants died tragically; some were crushed by cars until their heads were broken, some were hanging in their rooms, some had their stomachs stabbed with rusty knives and the fractures had been left in their stomachs (p. 23-24). This tragic condition has become a common thing that is often encountered in the world of prostitution. Women often get sexual and verbal abuse as a consequence or risk of their underground profession. Herman himself even lose his sense of the case of murder in the world of prostitution, as narrated below:

"Jadi, ketika ada kabar seorang PSK dibunuh oleh pelanggannya hanya karena menghina pelanggannya itu bau badan, reaksi biasa



saja. Bergidik tidak, bersikap nyiyir juga tidak, apalagi mau mengadili.” (Suherman, 2016, hal. 24)

The narration above strongly reflects the social stigma of a prostitute. Their underground status puts them in a condition where their rights begin to be denied.

The unsolved case of her mother’s death leads Melur to question the role of law. Rere did not get legal protection because of her status. Therefore, Herman mentioned that the state takes over the rights of its victims of crime to commit some form of revenge (p. 73). It is to control the citizens for not being a vigilante. The state sided with high-social status people, as described by Melur:

“... Beda perlakuannya kalau yang menjadi korban itu pejabat atau keluarganya, pengusaha besar atau figur publik. Meski kejadiannya jauh dari tatapan mata mereka, tapi aparat berebut memperlihatkan kepeduliannya di layar kaca, dan karenanya kasusnya begitu mudah dikuak. Pelakunya begitu mudah dijebloskan ke dalam penjara.” (Suherman, 2016, hal. 72)

The narration above shows the privilege of the upper-class in-law's justice. Blader and Chen (2012, as cited in Wingen et al., 2020) stated that status can lead to increased justice towards others, whereas power reduced justice towards others. The current criminal justice system seeks to punish prostitutes more than it seeks to punish the johns who hire prostitutes (Mclachlan, 2021). It reflects how the government uses its power to save the status of public figures and themselves in society. Both are powerful and dominant. As the consequence, the life of prostitutes is worthless to them. They get nothing when handling and saving the life of prostitutes. They will be appreciated if they can eradicate the world of prostitution. There is no longer an equal right for them in getting justice. Equality of power is thus a condition for the emergence of the whole sphere of justice (Elgat, 2017). This argument indicates a special interest from the hierarchy to protect and take sides with superpower people. In line with it, it is also mentioned by Elgat (2017) from his interpretation of Nietzsche’s opinion about the equality of power that justice can be achieved only when both sides are under equal compulsion. If one is stronger than the other, the weak must accept the consequence. This view leads to the argument of unbalanced justice. Furthermore, Elgat (2017) wrote that law comes after justice. This statement strengthens a polemic of the inequality law for a certain group of people. It is to confirm that our society has returned to ancient time culture where the ‘strong person will win the game. Thus, this condition determines vengeance of Melur to seek justice for her mother.

A post-feminist reading on woman’s vengeance on social and law injustice

In time, a woman has tried to integrate her freedom and sexuality. It is not only to get freedom in a social context but also for their personal. At the beginning of the novel, Melur is a representative of a feminist character who is still trapped in gender and social dogma. It is to say that women never come as an individual subjects. Her identity is determined by society, that she should be a woman with pride and obey rules and norms, as argued by Spence and Helmreich (1978, as cited in Jugović & Ančić, 2014) that gender roles are shared societal expectations about the appropriate behaviors regarding gender. In a conversation with Melur, for



example, Herman always closes his sentence with religious dogma, as it is presented below.

“Temanku yang mempelajari perbandingan agama-agama di dunia, Candra Namanya, pernah bilang, amar ma’ruf tidak boleh dilakukan dengan cara munkar.”
Aku sengaja menutup uraianku yang panjang-lebar dengan mengutip ajaran agama. (Suherman, 2016, hal. 82)

The conversation above shows how Herman tries to convince Melur not to take vengeance. As we know that religious dogma sometimes does not fit reality. It seems like to tell people to be patient and just let the karma works. Not only the religious dogma but also the country law that has constructed social trust. Herman believes that the country has put effort to provide justice for its citizen:

“Intinya,” suaraku memecah keheningan, “Schafer berpandangan, hak korban untuk balas dendam telah diambil alih oleh negara, maka seharusnya negara memegang teguh amanat itu. Amanat masyarakat korban telah diatur secara rinci dalam kitab hukum, dan pelaku kejahatan harus dijatuhi pidana setimpal dengan kesalahannya. Dengan demikian masyarakat korban merasakan kepuasan karena pelaku kejahatan telah dihukum.” (Suherman, 2016, p. 73)

Therefore, in fact, the condition does not exist at all. Laws failed to protect the woman. It chooses the subject who will give advantage to them; those who contribute positive vibes to the country. It is to say that patriarchy still overshadows a woman’s path. Women try to escape from their inferior status using their power, but ‘their hand is cuffed’ by many dogmas and rules. Women have no place to escape and show their power. Our society is still attached to social norms and culture. In Melur’s case, even though she is depicted as an educated woman who finishes her doctoral degree in Japan (p. 34), her gendered status as a ‘woman’ never let her be a free subject. As it is explained before that her actions must be attached to certain social norms, religion, and laws. There is a gap or problem here. Engaging in violent acts is sinful for Melur, but not for the society that punishes the prostitute immorally.

In this case, revenge appears as the response to the right of injustice. It is portrayed by Suherman that the gender and social injustice to a prostitute provoke the issue of gender-based violence law. The unsolved case of Rere’s murder shows the failure of modern society to apply the concept of gender equality. Women still have low access in certain aspects, mostly in-laws. Modern society echoes the feminist movement. Therefore, some women still encounter inequality. Rere herself questioned the function of feminism. In her opinion, the fate of women is still more vulnerable than even rotten trees. Rere also mentioned that what a woman needs is an equal right, not a special right (p.38). Regardless of their status as sex workers, they are human beings and citizens who are entitled to legal protection.

In response to the issue, this novel presents the true action of being a new feminist. It reflects the turning point of a woman’s condition. The first thing to notice is that Melur has escaped from social and gender inequality by having a good education. Quoting Heywood and Drake in 2004, Gill and Scharff (2011) wrote that new levels of gender equality in academic achievement and career success mean



women are just as, if not more likely to identify with their gender. This is one kind of post-feminist movement that echoes women's achievements and women's participation in personalized self-definition. Education clearly empowers those who have access to it, as an educated person is more likely to be able to actualize a higher level of well-being. A person who has less education has a lower command in other areas of his or her life such as employment, salary, and bargaining position in decision-making, both in the public domain and at the household level (Surbakti & Devasahayam, 2015). This article notices how education affects someone's perspective of life. By mentioning Melur's high education, Suherman triggers the importance of education to create critical thinking for people. As mentioned by Shubina & Kulakli (2019) that critical thinking may be developed while solving tasks or problems within a specific domain when students need to apply analytic, selective, evaluative, and rule-based abilities. Melur must develop such ability during her doctoral study which require a lot of reading activity and analysis of problem and data. This educational experience helps her to analyze the situation and condition. She bravely questions and argues the religious dogma, and social and law injustice. Along with her argument, she mentioned several books, authors, and real cases which will help her to set and maintain her opinion. This proves her effort to escape from being a subaltern and silenced woman. Thus, Melur's action models the innovation of the individual feminist movement. She shows how women no longer attach to one concept but can deal with their beauty and intelligence as well.

Becoming an intellectual woman helps Melur to identify a problem and find the solution. She knows the political issue, criminal issues, detective action, and even automotive. The way she talks and argues with Herman indicates her good intellectual abilities. Instead of being too emotional and giving up on her sadness, Melur shows her strength. The crucial point in this strength is not about the physical one but as an intelligent woman. In this novel, Suherman elicits the development of the feminist movement in society. He eliminates the status of an inferior woman through Melur's brilliant character. In some aspects, a woman can develop themselves and become equal to men.

Another crucial point to notice in Melur's vengeance is her tranquil attitude in overcoming a problem. She might disagree with anything Herman said, but she responds calmly:

“Ada buku yang isinya ditulis dengan menggunakan tinta darah, dan tidak bisa dihapus dengan penghapus pensil,” pelan dan tenang Melur mengucapkannya. Ia kemudian meminum teh yang baru saja dimintanya.

...

Aku makin terdiam mendengarnya. Melur terlalu pandai bagiku, yang otaknya sudah makin menumpul termakan usia. Ia cerdas menyerang lawan bicaranya dengan merebut senjata lawannya secara halus, lalu membalikkan arah senjata itu kearah tuannya sendiri. Menempelkan moncong senjata itu tepat di jidat tuannya. (Suherman, 2016, hal. 115-116)



This woman vigilante seems to show people the other sides of a woman's character. Instead of showing the ideal woman imagery constructed by society, like being spoiled and mushy, Melur courageously takes action against injustice. Therefore, it is noticed that vengeance commonly equals male action. As Benshoff and Griffin (2009, as cited in Wiggins, 2018) noted that Hollywood films women only become equal by being just as violent and brutal as men, which is not something to champion. It is such a patriarchal perspective that will not allow a woman to have their action through their self-power. It conveys the idea that women will be equal to men when they do violent and brutal actions. Therefore, Melur's action smashes such a view because she does not perform a physical action.

Melur starts to stay close to Surya Buana, Mami Lani's son and takes revenge. Mami Lani, who had run a black business for many years, built her empire and possessed an endless treasure, had a rich and brilliant career son in legislative. Her son, Surya Buana Putra, shows the privilege of being a wealthy person. This is not fair since rules and laws seem to close their eyes to Mami Lani's mistake. They trade antiques, importer of liquor, brokers on evicted land, and run the prostitution business. Mami Lani was also honorably buried. She holds a privilege since she can give 'something' to the institution to legalize her black business. Here, equality for women seems to be out of track. Surya Buana finally dies in a car explosion. Suherman begins to suspect Melur because she asks him things about automotive. So, it is undeniable that Melur's action has brought her the freedom to get rights and oppose gender and social injustice. This vengeance shows that Melur does not really perform as 'a high-powered woman' who blatantly threatens others but strategically balances the power with her gender. According to Gill and Scharff (2011), this act can reveal some of the larger contours of the new femininity, a mode that can combine various social demands and envision the femininity of the new millennium. Feminism has become popular, cool, carry out new visibility, and has new luminosity in popular culture (Gill, 2017; Gill & Orgad, 2017). Melur knows that she cannot wait for justice to come since there are many proofs of laws that have not been working properly. With her tranquillity, she successfully infiltrated the enemy line. Her intelligence helps her to adapt herself to the situation. Jung (1946, as cited in Garuba, 2020) described a person attitude who never be introverted or extroverted only. There is always a relation to adaptation. From this point of view, it is seen that Melur begins to come out of her comfort zone to resist the injustice.

Melur, herself, consciously knows the unacceptable act of the vigilante. Therefore, on one side, she also argues the positive side of being a vigilante which will 'awaken' the sleeping government. Herman cannot provide a clear answer about the injustice. He disagrees with the 'eye for eye' act. For him, injustice does not have to be paid with injustice either. This statement is against Melur's perspective, and she finally comes to justify the vigilante. Melur knows that she cannot wish for a miracle to come. No one will help her to solve her mother's case, or at worst no one willingly wants to help her because of her mother's status. The police and the law are against her, and she needs to fight back. The crucial point about revenge is Melur's transformative movement as a woman. As a writer, Suherman ejects the mistreatment of a woman of tremendous feeling and intelligence. Ucan (2017) mentioned that the concept of post feminism combines



self-determination, individuality, and feminism that help a woman to break free from their position as a victim and find power in their femininity. That is by refusing the label of being a victim, Melur liberates her right to pursue her desires.

After all, Melur's vengeance reflects a new feminist movement. Her action resists the concept of a weak woman. She bravely embraces her sexuality as a woman not as an object for society, but as an agent of change. There are so many stories of a heroine in literature, but the female vigilante is the most interesting one to discuss. This paper finds how individual empowerment allows women to resist oppression (Mulyaningsih, 2015). As it is mentioned by (Setyaningrum, 2020) in her discussion about woman's freedom that there may be other ideas beyond the standardized norms. The idea of self-liberation raised in the novel is through education which can help a woman in having critical thinking; knowing and realizing their right as a human being and citizen, and behaving with a tranquil attitude. Nietzsche (1908/1979, as cited in Stolz, 2017) described that a person needs to learn a new thing to be the person he or she wants to be, not being fooled by the illusion of what she or he might become. He added that a person wants to be who he or she is; a new, unique, incomparable person, and one who can create a law for themselves (n.d., as cited in Knoll, 2019). This natural desire may also be affected by her surrounding in which she wants to be a person who can protect herself from oppression. People must resist the common value judgment because it will create inequality.

CONCLUSION

From the explanation above, this article comes to fulfilment that a feminist movement in Melur's vengeance represents woman's independence in getting social and gender equality. Melur represents women as no longer a subaltern. Education shows its real power in helping the emergence of woman's status. At the end of the story, Melur gets what she wants; an act of revenge for social injustice. Many cases of denied human beings due to their low status in society. For the worse, they are forced to be in that position. They have no other options. The law and government are supposed to construct a well-being society, for instance by providing shelter or training for jobless and street people. They should not get rid of the lower class. Melur's action helps the growth of societies' awareness of the existence of social and law inequality. We should realize that the law and religious dogma should be understood wisely and should not be applied for one interest only. Melur finally recognizes her talent, intellect, and contribution to humankind. Women must fight to get their human rights back. Last but not least, this outstanding sentence from McCullough needs to be echoed throughout the world: To make the world a more forgiving, less vengeful place, don't try to change human nature: change the world!

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