

THE PHENOMENON OF AGGRESSION IN “KUPU-KUPU SERIBU PELURU” BY AGUS NOOR

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ABSTRACT. Aggression, whether indirect, relational, or social, directed toward oneself can be a grave danger, resulting in a drastic shift in their personality toward negative behaviors. In “Kupu-Kupu Seribu Peluru”, a short story in the book *Cerita buat Para Kekasih* by Agus Noor, we can see how the characters interact while affecting one another harmfully. This study explains how aggression changes a character’s personality to something they were not before, caused by other’s hostility toward them. This study aims to assess the phenomenon of aggression shown in the short story through literary analysis of the characterization and the narrative structure. It investigates how was the main character’s behavior before she received aggression and what happens after. The findings tell that by only accepting the aggression directed toward her without resistance, the main character alters into a disagreeable individual, just as she is accused of in the later part of the story.

Keywords: Aggression, Characterization, Hostility

FENOMENA AGRESI DALAM "KUPU-KUPU SERIBU PELURU" KARYA AGUS NOOR

ABSTRAK. Agresi, baik secara tidak langsung, relasional, maupun sosial, yang diarahkan pada diri sendiri dapat menjadi ancaman besar, dan mengakibatkan perubahan drastis sehingga menjadi berperilaku negatif. Dalam cerita pendek "Kupu-Kupu Seribu Peluru" dari buku *Cerita buat Para Kekasih* karya Agus Noor, kita bisa melihat interaksi antar karakter yang saling memengaruhi secara negatif. Penelitian ini memaparkan bagaimana agresi dapat mengubah kepribadian seorang karakter menjadi sesuatu yang tidak pernah mereka miliki sebelumnya, akibat permusuhan yang mereka terima dari orang lain. Selain itu, penelitian ini menyelidiki bagaimana perilaku karakter utama sebelum ia menerima agresi dan apa yang terjadi setelahnya. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa dengan pasif menerima agresi yang ditujukan padanya tanpa melakukan perlawanan, karakter utama bertransformasi menjadi pribadi yang tidak disukai, seperti yang dituduhkan kepadanya di bagian akhir cerita.

Kata-kata kunci: Agresi, Karakterisasi, Permusuhan

INTRODUCTION

The short story “Kupu-Kupu Seribu Peluru” was written by Agus Noor and included in the book *Ripin: Cerpén Pilihan Kompas 2005-2006*. This short story was later compiled in a short story collection book, *Cerita Buat Para Kekasih* by the same author, published in 2014. The short stories in the book revolve around social and political issues alongside the aspect of repetitious death. The social issue in the book reflects daily life occurrences such as conflict between two individuals or turmoil between regions. The plot told inside the story “Kupu-Kupu Seribu Peluru” is pictured to happen in a small port town as the background of its dweller's poverty. The realism is decorated more by describing places such as the town’s bay, alleyway, church, and old buildings and how characters interact with them. At the beginning of the story, the narrator describes the plot realistically, but progressively, it becomes more

illogical by the end of the story (Putri, 2016). This kind of writing creates a sense of wonder and mystery. The story is told in such a realistic way in terms of social, political, and cultural ways, yet in some parts of the short story; we can find many singularities, such as sorcery-like powers and miracles, which lean toward the aspect of fantasy. The fantasy part of the story also emphasizes what people believe are supernatural occurrences, as we see them in society these days, making the settings both familiar and mythical for the reader.

“Kupu-Kupu Seribu Peluru” is a short story with factual occurrence as its main idea, and it was constructed with a fantasy theme. During its publication, whether as a chosen short story in the newspaper *Harian Kompas*, compiled in both *Ripin: Cerpén Pilihan Kompas 2005-2006* and *Cerita Buat Para Kekasih*, this story has been looked into for research considering its plot, to mention a few of the

topic written regarding them, such as the construction of femininity (Atmanegara, 2016), and plot structure (Putri, 2016).

Studies of aggression have focused for many years on physical aggression, and much of the emphasis has been on aggression in men and boys (Underwood, 2003a). Women who need to act indifferently because of how society sees them have no option to express their reactions by doing rather indirect or not so obvious for the eyes to see. Victims of indirect, relational, and social aggression are more depressed, anxious, and lonely and have more negative thoughts in a variety of categories, including physical appearance, romantic appeal, global self-worth, and close friendships (Craig, 1998). Nevertheless, indirectly, the aggression gives the victim a harmful experience, although it will not be seen as a bruise or scar, but instead affects their feelings and mentality.

In social psychology, aggression is generally defined as any behavior intended to harm another person who does not want to be harmed (Baron & Richardson, 1994). Aggression is an external behavior you can see, not an emotion that occurs inside a person nor a thought inside someone's brain (Bushman & Huesmann, 2010).

The terms indirect, relational, and social aggression are superficially similar, particularly concerning the manipulative acts they involve. Many of the same acts are found in all three categories, and they all show sex differences in the female direction, in contrast to direct forms of aggression (Archer, 2004). Therefore, it is particularly important to consider motives in defining these forms of aggression and separating them from more comprehensive concepts, such as gossip and social exclusion (Archer & Coyne, 2005).

This study, however, focuses on exploring the phenomenon of aggression depicted in the short story and studying how it affects the shift of the main character's personality throughout the plot. The short story's realistic plot describes how peer relationships happen and how aggression occurs between humans. The study justifies the effect of social aggression on one's change in personality and assesses the main character's behavior and self-esteem toward others' verbal rejection in indirect aggression.

METHOD

This study focuses on the phenomenon of aggression shown in Agus Noor's short story entitled "Kupu-Kupu Seribu Peluru." Specifically, the research explores how the main character acts toward social aggression and how her changing behavior is

caused by verbal rejection from others. The short story was chosen because, as with the rest of the same book *Cerita buat Para Kekasih*, the story has an interesting idea and is combined with a factual topic. The author reflects on real-life social perspectives from the literature perspective (Putri, 2016).

This research relies on textual data analyzed primarily on non-statistical methods, as it depends on interpreting and understanding the text rather than calculating numerical data. The study mainly focuses on literature analysis through characterization and narrative structures throughout the story. These two methods can show how social aggression directed toward the character shifts her personality caused by verbal harm and alienation.

The steps to do literary analysis included reading the short story thoroughly, analyzing how the characters interact, and identifying fundamental interactions. By characterization and narrative analysis, we consider the protagonist's behavior throughout the plot and how it develops related to the aggression, examine comparison and contrast in her personality, and identify the turning point where the character shifts her personality.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Aggression Effect on the Protagonist

The story starts when the main character is found in a horse stable beside a church. She was a baby, tiny, bare, and trembling. She looked like a fairy who liked to tease those whose eyes fell upon her. A night watch who found her was also trembling at the discovery. He then hit the drum he carried with him as an alarm and announced what he saw to all the villagers. The whole town was made awake and chose to find out what caused the commotion. When everything became calmer, the local priest took a step closer and carried the baby in his sling. He then was the one who took care of her and her growth.

Alongside her growing up, the town talks about her like she is a miracle sent to their town to make it livelier and more cheerful. They tell stories that they had seen signs far before her appearance that seemed to be a prophecy of her coming. People said that they had dreamed about their town getting blessed and such. They also say that the signs were also seen in their daily life: how the flowers were getting more and more beautiful, how illnesses they possessed were slowly but sure cured, and how a miracle happened during the birth of their cattle.

People are later conscious of their town, which was caused by the baby, who now has grown into a little girl under the care of the town priest.

They were weary of their town before the girl came, but now they realize it is small yet beautiful. Many tourists have acknowledged that the city is very beautiful, with its old town part well cared for. Still, the townspeople are just bored of repeatedly talking about the same thing about their town, discussing their town's matters that they know but do not know when.

They find happiness in living once again. The town and its people grow alongside the main character. They find a reason to be happy with their town; they are described as paying more attention to details, which makes them even happier. They romanticize even the tiniest thing. This is believed to have happened because of the protagonist's presence.

People are more eager to attend the church. They like it when they can see her there, to see her singing during services. People also still discuss her signs of birth in the town. People still mention how miracles came one after another before her coming. People even remember her being found in a horse stable next to the church.

When she reached adolescence, the town was at its liveliest yet. You can hear laughter at every corner of the town, parties are held on every side of the road, and the night feels longer with the crowd, music, and singing. Unfortunately, in the middle of the night, there will be quarrels. Every youngster wants to dance with the most beautiful girl in town, and everyone thinks they are the most suitable for her. While the boys are at it, the girls, on the other hand, cry hysterically. The girls feel they are being neglected and hate the protagonist. This is where the act of aggression occurs. People start to slander her for things she has not even done before. People call her names when they find that she would take a stroll every night to the seaside, assuming only depraved individuals would do such a thing.

The girls are badmouthing her while paying close attention to their men, who now seem to like spending their time more on the seaside than at food stalls. Wives also kept their eyes on their husbands. The men who get this kind of treatment indeed were upset. When someone visits the town, they will most likely hear a lover's quarrel and swearing from every corner of the town.

Everyone starts to avoid her. Townspeople would try to distance themselves from her to the point that this alienation caused the church to be vacant of the congregation. The women are reluctant to come when the main character is there, and the men do not want to look like they come just to see the girl. The priest has given up trying to find the

wisest way out of this situation without hurting the girl's feelings.

When the priest prayed to God, he found the church's doors open. Someone enters while apologizing. He knows that voice; it is the protagonist. However, when he looks closely at her face, he can no longer find a pair of eyes that have stolen his attention since the first time he found the girl in the horse stable. She has gouged her eyes out and says that she was afraid to see more sins committed. Her eyeholes are bleeding, and during that moment, she declares that she will no longer live with him in the church and come back to where she belonged from the beginning, that is the horse stable.

The town is quivering in fear. When everybody knows what has happened to the girl, everybody is frightened. They no longer live in peace, and every day, they feel that they are terrorized. The area returns to be quiet, to the point they can hear the echo of prayer from the horse stable. Everything turns gloomy before they even realize it.

Until this point of the story, we can see some aggressions happening between the main character and her peers or the townspeople, and between the townspeople themselves, for example, are the men as shown when they are holding a quarrel to decide who was more suitable to dance alongside with the main character. In the past, aggression was seen as a male phenomenon (Buss, 1962). When aggression happens to boys and men, things tend to be more physical. However, when it comes to reactions to frustration or stress, the two sexes may not be fundamentally different after all—that both experience anger, but social pressures on girls to be feminine and ladylike cause them to deflect their anger and express it in indirect ways (Underwood, 2003a). Furthermore, we can also see how the women are also doing aggression, mainly directed toward the protagonist, and uniquely different from physical aggression done by the men; this more typical female aggression has been termed indirect (Björkqvist et al., 1992). Indirect aggression involves delivering harm circuitously through another person or object (e.g., spreading rumors about a person or destroying something that belongs to a person). Indirect aggression might be considered a cautious response because it allows the aggressor to avoid identification (Richardson & Green, 2003). They didn't do anything physically harmful but showed it by spreading rumors and alienation, excluding the protagonist, and putting distance between them and her. Unlike direct, indirect, relational, and social aggression, it is not so easily separated from the same

actions carried out without the motive to harm another. Therefore, a person may gossip without intending to harm another but do so (Archer & Coyne, 2005). Girls hurt each other through damaging peer relationships, whereas boys use overt forms of physical and verbal aggression consistent with goals of instrumentality and dominance (Crick, 1995; Lagerspetz et al., 1988). Apart from bitching, girls often spread rumors; break confidences; and criticize others' clothing, appearance, or personality (Owens et al., 2000). Indirect aggression toward the protagonist by the women toward protagonist included how they called her names just because of the mere reason of her walking alongside the seaside at night, without actually knowing what she was doing during that specific time. What happened before the main character even realized it was how everybody was excluding her, both the men and women. Men because they did not want their perspective partner to get mad at them because of interacting with the protagonist, and women because they thought that the main character had ill intentions toward their romantic partner. Relational aggression is similar to indirect aggression, but focuses on "behaviors that harm others through damage to relationships or feelings of acceptance, friendship, or group inclusion." (Crick et al., 1999). Social aggression is very similar to both relational and indirect aggression, described as behavior that is "directed toward damaging another's self-esteem, social status, or both, and may take such direct forms as verbal rejection, negative facial expressions or body movements, or more indirect forms such as slanderous rumors or social exclusion" (Galen & Underwood, 1997). Social aggression is used less often but is regarded as encompassing the other two (Underwood, 2003b).

The initial effect of an aggressive attack such as exclusion is confusion (Owens et al., 2000). The protagonist needs to learn why every objection is being made to her. She did absolutely nothing wrong, and people were avoiding her. This confusion often leads to covering up as the girls try to deny what is happening to them. However, this cover-up eventually gives way to an admission of psychological pain, including hurt, fear, loss of self-esteem, anxiety, loss of self-confidence, and fear for future relationships (Owens et al., 2000). As the one being secluded, her life turned miserable. Her fear of future relationships pushed her to leave the church and return to the horse stable. She is even more scared since the absence of congregation in the church has resulted because people are reluctant to see her, and she realizes that she can never disappoint

the priest who has taken care of her since she was still a baby. In the fear of disappointing the priest, she sets her foot off the church she called as home since she was still a child.

The Protagonist's Personality Shift

Time passes, and the protagonist becomes homeless. She has no place to call home. People would find her walking around the city, dragging her gown on the ground. People try their best to avoid her. Shops and markets would close by the time she crosses them. The townspeople are more scared rather than pity because she shows them horror and not sadness. Everybody is also frightened by two holes where her pair of eyes were located. Another gossip shared between them: she can see everything invisible to human eyes and reveal secrets meant to be hidden from the other.

The girl would come to a party held by the town. They meant to reminisce about all the good things in the town and get rid of the gloomy aura that covered them. The protagonist then stands in the middle of the party and mutters what seems to be a curse. Surprisingly, what she said becomes reality at once, and everybody cannot be more confused and intimidated by what is happening. A similar accident occurs when she meets the town's mayor and makes him discharge a lot of snakes out of every hole in his body.

She accuses everybody in the town. She would point out that their secret doesn't matter who they are: men, women, teachers, soldiers, even the priest himself. She talks as if she is cursing. People once again try their best to avoid her. They believe that she has given her soul up to the devil in charge of her all-seeing vision. When she knocks on a house's door, it will never open. People are wishing for her death.

Being rejected in the town, she secludes herself on the seaside. She would walk alongside the beach and take snails off the ground before eating them straight from their shell. Those who saw her are disgusted, but not the prostitutes who occupy shacks next to the pier. They even copy her and show her respect because they think she has taught them how and what to eat. Those who live there, on some occasions, invite the protagonist to visit their residence. She becomes acquainted with sailors, procures, and port workers quickly. She implies that she has taken part in all the bad things that happened later in this part of town. They think of her to be their angel who would protect them.

The town becomes no better. The townspeople are regretting what happened to the

protagonist. Unfortunately, they are not in a state of grief because of it for so long, because later they talk about how they should have thrown her away from the town by the time they found her. People now speak about how they were lying when they dreamt of a miracle coming to the town, claiming false things about statements they muttered before. They later conclude that they need to get rid of the shackles on the seaside. They believe that the residents there were the cause of the town's misery. They even accuse the protagonist of leading the prostitute and everyone astray. She misleads them with her sayings that permit them to do all kinds of sin.

Their rage is more unstoppable when they find out that she is pregnant. She claims that it is her son with an angel. Everybody around her considers her as Santa whose womb shines bright light. People decide to arrest her and throw her into prison. They leave her there without even thinking of feeding her. Strangely enough, it does not stop the baby inside her belly to grow. As it reaches her eighth month of pregnancy, the townspeople decide to execute her. They cannot let such a baby be born into this world. They believe that it would give them even more calamity.

The day of punishment has come. Those who have rifles and guns saved in their house are bringing them to the field where the execution takes place. However, when they try to shoot her altogether, the bullets that are going toward her transform into butterflies before lifting her high and disappearing as if the sky swallowed her. The whole townspeople are left in awe. In the last paragraph of the short story, it is written that they felt at the loss of her going. They did not get what to think of her until the very last part of the story.

Throughout adulthood, the individual goes through essential changes in goals, resources, and coping styles, and both affect and are affected by a changing environment (Helson et al., 2002). One construct is the timing of social events (Stewart & Healy, 1989). What happened to the protagonist in "Kupu-Kupu Seribu Peluru" was a change of personality caused by social events around her, specifically aggression. Ultimately, what people did to her was social aggression, which not only hurt her self-esteem, social status, or both but also affected those around her, including the priest as her caretaker. Puberty is one of the central dramas of the human life course and results in very rapid somatic growth, brain development, sexual maturation, and attainment of reproductive capacity (Viner et al., 2015). These include the initiation of many important health-related behaviors, such as smoking, alcohol

and drug use, physical activity, and sexual behaviors, and patterns initiated in adolescence track strongly into adult life (Viner et al., 2015). She was in her adolescence when aggression had happened to her. She was in her most important years of growing up to be an adult, yet she was confused because of how people treated her. She behaved most likely according to what the priest had taught her throughout her life, yet people seemed displeased by that. Therefore, during the story's turning point, she changed drastically from what she was before, as described as cheerful, easy-going, and friendly towards others, to be rather hostile and impulsive, which, unsurprisingly, made her even more rejected than ever by the townspeople. Delinquency is also an externalizing problem behavior, defined as the behavior by one individual that violates the formal norms and even makes the person subject to the court (Shaw & Gross, 2008). This personality shift by the main character can be seen as her coping style. The coping style is a cognitive or behavioral strategy individuals adopt when facing stressful situations (Sun et al., 2019a). However, because of all the accusations and harm she got during her period of adolescence, she leaned toward negative coping styles such as behavior disorder, self-accusation, rejection, and substance abuse (Sun et al., 2019b). A negative coping style, including avoidance and emotion-focused coping, has been identified as being related to higher levels of dysfunctional problems (Tao et al., 2000). It might be the plot that made it like it is, but it seemed logical for her to befriend all the prostitutes, procures, and everyone at the seaside who had a bad reputation in the eyes of the townspeople. She was seeking people who welcomed her the way she was. Between the confusion of what to do for people to accept her in their life, she found it along the seaside. She suffered from loneliness, and as a stressful event and an adverse emotional reaction, experiencing loneliness can activate in individuals a coping mechanism that is focused on adverse effects (Krause-Parello, 2008). Besides that, loneliness could result in negative self-knowledge and self-evaluation, lower self-esteem, reduced coping self-efficacy, and a raised sense of incompetence (Bolger & Amarel, 2007). Everything adds up to make her lose her judgment of right and wrong. Every good thing she did since she was young proved to be hated by others, and so she gave up on the bad influence.

CONCLUSION

The phenomenon of aggression, as displayed in "Kupu-Kupu Seribu Peluru" by Agus Noor,

showed us just how malevolent aggression can be. It also tells us that everybody can be its victim. It does not care whether it is someone agreeable or disagreeable. The protagonist is described as easygoing at the story's beginning, yet people still hate her for one reason or another. Furthermore, the protagonist receives such behavior from her surroundings, which makes it a social aggression. It carries more pressure on her shoulder to behave the way people want her to while negatively impacting her surroundings, such as the church. This leads her to shift her personality to be someone she was not before and become an individual, just like the names people used to slander her.

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