

## The Transformation of Women's Characters in the Novel of *Midah Si Manis Bergigi Emas* by Pramoedya Ananta Toer (Study of Feminism)

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### Abstract

The novel *Midah Si Manis Bergigi Emas* by Pramoedya Ananta Toer describes the story of a woman named *Midah Si Manis Bergigi Emas* who is so tough that she can survive and fight the vicious life that women face. Women's existence in this novel consists of women who work as singers, never give up, have a strong personality, independent, and can see the otherness as a child, mother, and singer's wife. Meanwhile, gender inequality comes in the form of sexual violence, physical violence, postal violence, marginalization in the form of layoffs, marginalization in the form of discrimination in the household, subordination in the household, negative stereotypes of women, and multiple workloads. Gender inequality is a type of discrimination between men and women. Gender inequality takes place when women are subjected to violence, are unable to make decisions, and so on.

### Keywords

gender existence; gender inequality; feminism; discrimination



### I. Introduction

In the shape of an image that is given on through writing, literary works are manifestations of the human individual in the form of their experiences, emotions, feelings, ideas, passions, and beliefs.

The manifestations of social phenomena in many facets of life that are seen in novels are a useful way of learning about people and the times in which they lived. According to Nurgiyantoro (2018), novels are literary works that take the form of prose. It further means that novels are basically literary works that form a fictional world based on the reality of life, which is a form of prose. Novels are the result of human creativity that describes or reflects the state of society and are created through transformation.

As long as men continue to consider women as powerless, women will never be in a position to wield authority, not even over themselves. The family is a basic family unit consisting of a husband, wife and children (Batubara, 2019). According to Ambarwati (2014), girls are treated differently by their mothers than boys in terms of the attention their mothers provide to them. Children are able to approach and kiss their moms while they are young, but when they are grownups, children are not the same as adults.

Further, according to the viewpoint of Fakhri (2012), it is assumed that it is natural for women to be in the kitchen, to clean the house, to make the bed, to take care of children, to cook, and to care to the sick.

This illustrates a female character by the name of *Midah* or henceforth *Midah Si Manis Bergigi Emas* who makes the decision to continue to exist in her life, to work as a *keroncong* singer, and have a strong personality, to be independent, and to reject her otherness. On the other hand, *Midah Si Manis Bergigi Emas* experiences gender inequality

in the form of violence, marginalization, subordination, stereotypes, and double the amount of work.

Besides that, feminism theory illustrates the social movements of women and men to strengthen their status and involvement in the struggle for justice. Moreover, Asih (2018) defines feminism as a system in which men always have power and women are regarded weak since they cannot lead or work outside the home.

Women's Inequality Theory is the theory that is concentrated on the notion of women, as it is based on Gender Analysis, which investigates women. Women are engaged with feminism, which is a societal construct rather than God's essence and creation (Rokhmansyah, 2016). However, they lose their uniqueness in the process.

Women's analysis, which is based on this notion of women, attempts to study various aspects of women's identities, such as women's profiles, women's roles in women's relationships, equality, inequality, and so on. According to the primary topic of this research, inequality against women is a form of social injustice that originates from disparities in discrimination that cause significant damage to the status of women in a variety of social responsibilities held by society. The significance of this inequality is that there are several intervention, such as: (1) violence), (2) marginalization, (3) subordination, (4) stereotypes, and (5) workload (Fakih, 2012)). Following is a summarized explanation of the five different types of inequality that are committed against women:

a. Gender Based Violence

The incidence of discrimination based on gender is significantly higher for women than it is for men.

b. Marginalization of Women

Women have an insufficient but important role to play in the working world. Where women are stereotyped as being emotional, sensitive, or otherwise lacking in strength, etc.

c. Placement of Women in Subordinated Positions

The field of subordination that is associated with decision making. In the meanwhile, men serve as leaders for women and women as reinforcement, and men have authority over women. Hence, it can be stated that women are always subordinate to men.

d. Gender Stereotypes

Gender, either female or male, which can lead to either a good or negative connotation depending on the circumstances. Consider the emotion of jealousy. Even so, there are also women who are rational, courageous, responsible, and possess leadership characteristics. On the other hand, there are also men who are hesitant, irrational, and irresponsible, which ensures that both women and men have equal opportunities.

e. Workload

What women do consists of looking for employment and trying to make a livelihood in addition to the activity that is performed in the house.

## II. Research Method

The approach used in this study entitled "The Transformation of Female Characters in the Novel *Midah Si Manis Bergigi Emas* by Pramoedya Ananta Toer" is a qualitative approach. A qualitative approach is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words about people and observable behavior (Moleong, 2021).

The data or information is gathered out in the ground. In literary works, it is defines as a description of social phenomena that occur in society and is re-appointed by the author into a new discourse in the form of literary works.

Sources of data in this study are data in the form of the novel *Midah Si Manis Bergigi Emas* published by Lentera Dipantara, on July 2003 which covers 134 pages and size of 13 x 20 cm. The primary data in this study are in the forms of words and actions, while the rest are additional data such as documentation and so on. Therefore, this study uses data in the form of words, quotes, sentences, dialogues and story units that show ideas about the issue of women who exist and get gender inequality in the novel *Midah Si Manis Bergigi Emas*.

Within the context of a study, the term "instrument" refers to the tools that researchers employ in order to gather or acquire research data. Due to the fact that the study involves the collection of data, the research itself serves as the instrument for the research.

The data collection procedure used in this study was in the form of observing existing novel texts. With the following techniques: A) Read the entire novel "*Midah Si Manis Bergigi Emas*" by Pramoedya Ananta Toer, B) Identify the part of the story of the novel "*Midah Si Manis Bergigi Emas*" by Pramoedya Ananta Toer, C) Include data collection on feminism and D) Interpreting data containing feminism and gender inequality.

The technique of analyzing qualitative descriptive data is because this research is in the form of verbal data, namely words, sentences, which are collected as data. The following are the steps that can be taken in presenting the results of data analysis using reduction, presenting data, and drawing conclusions.

Furthermore, in checking the validity of the data in this study is performed by (1). Accuracy of observations, carried out by observing diligently, in detail, and continuously according to the problems and data in the research conducted in the novel *Midah Si Manis Bergigi Emas* by Pramoedya Ananta Toer by examining female characters, (2). The adequacy of references made by researchers by reading and reviewing various libraries or journals that are relevant to the research to be carried out and also by studying the author's world view in the novel *Midah Si Manis Bergigi Emas* by Pramoedya Ananta Toer repeatedly in order to gain a deep understanding of the meaning, adequate and sufficient research in order to obtain valid data related to the existence and inequality of gender, (3). Checking research data in depth, carefully, accurately, right on target, and relevant to the needs of research results repeatedly with the aim of obtaining the correct data, (4). The correctness of the data can also be tested through discussions with supervisors or colleagues, this discussion is not only a correction to the correctness of the data which is the result of interpretation of the interpretation, (5) Finally, an analysis of checking or reference coverage is carried out, to find out the criteria that the research results are related to the novel. *Midah Si Manis Bergigi Emas* by Pramoedya Ananta Toer which is seen as a subjective reality from perspective.

The research stage is an important part in carrying out research in this research carried out as follows:

a. Preparation

At this stage the researchers were selecting titles, studying literature, selecting locations and designing research instruments that had been discussed with the supervisor.

b. Implementation

This stage is carried out by researchers, namely collecting data, managing data that has been collected in the form of observations and as readers of novels or short stories.

c. Solution

The activities carried out in this stage are preparing research reports, revising report preparation and reporting accountability.

### III. Results and Discussion

The results of the study aim to describe the findings of existential forms and gender inequality, which only focusing on the female character of the novel *Midah Si Manis Bergigi Emas* by Pramodya Ananta Toer. In this study, women existence consists of: (1), women work as *keroncong* singers, (2) Never gives up, (3) Strong personality, (4) Independent, (5) Rejects the otherness, while inequality consists of: (1), Sexual Violence, (2) Physical Violence, (3) Violence against Prostitution, (4) Marginalization in the form of Layoffs, (5) Household Discrimination, (6) Subordination in the world of Work, (7) Subordination in the Household, (8) Stereotypes, and (9) Multiple Workload.

#### 3.1 Women Existence in the Novel of *Midah Si Manis Bergigi Emas* by Pramodya Ananta Toer

##### a. Women can Work as *Keroncong* Singers

The first women existence illustrated by *Midah Si Manis Bergigi Emas* in the form of being able to work outside the home. She started working since she wanted to get away from her husband because he did not tell her that he already had a wife, so she decided to leave the house.

Meanwhile, *Midah Si Manis Bergigi Emas* can reclaim her transcendence. Therefore, *Midah Si Manis Bergigi Emas* will actively determine the direction of her fate.

*“Petir Cibatok menyabar tiang- Tiang besi ditengah bolong pikir-pikir babis dipikir-memang diri dimabuk kroncong. (hlm 32)”*

(The Cibatok lightning struck the iron pillars in the middle of the hole. I thought about it, and thinking that I was really drunk with *kroncong*. (p. 32))

In her performance, she experienced herself in front of the audience. She perceived her to be a *sripanggung*. In light of the fact, to pique the interest of the *keroncong* so they would join the *keroncong* group so they may sing as well as make a living.

##### b. Never Give Up

The second women existence illustrated by *Midah Si Manis Bergigi Emas* in the form of her personality that she never gives up in running her life to meet her daily needs with the child in her womb. Even if she does not get the living from her parents in running her life, it is included in the next quotation.

*“Sesuatu yang dulu yang indah tidak ia dapatkan lagi dari ibunya, maka dari itu mendapatkan kenikmatan di luar rumah. (hlm 16)”*

(Something that used to be beautiful and she no longer gets from her mother, therefore she gets pleasure outside the home. (p. 16))

##### c. Strong Personality

The next women existence illustrated by *Midah Si Manis Bergigi Emas* in the form of a person with a strong personality. In this context, she does not give up in running the problems that she faces repeatedly because she only thinks about her son's life with her. This can be seen by the following quote:

“Midah menirukan lagu keroncong agar dapat bergabung dengan pengamen keroncong, ia tidak pantang menyerah dan selalu mengikuti dian- diam gerombolan pengamen (hlm 18)”

(Midah imitates the keroncong song in order to join the keroncong buskers; she never gives up and follows the group of buskers in secret (p. 18))

#### **d. Independent**

The next women existence illustrated by *Midah Si Manis Bergigi Emas* in the form of nature of being independent and not relies on others. To do something to act freely, rightly, and beneficially, *Midah Si Manis Bergigi Emas* has taken responsibility for the decisions she has made. This can be seen by the following quote:

“Midah sudah memilih jalannya yang dianggapnya benar. Dan ia melihat kedepan jalan yang ia lalui. (hlm. 26)”

(Midah has chosen the path that she thinks is right. And she looked ahead of the road she was on. (p. 26))

By the illustration above, it can be seen that *Midah Si Manis Bergigi Emas* always raises the spirit that is in her and does not never give up to run her life independently.

#### **e. Refuses the Otherness**

The last women existence illustrated by *Midah Si Manis Bergigi Emas* in the form of woman that refuses otherness which can be seen in the following context:

##### **1. Woman Refuses Otherness as a Child**

The last women existence illustrated by *Midah Si Manis Bergigi Emas* in the form of woman that refuses otherness as a child. After the incident of Hadji Abdul slapped her son and her husband's treatment of *Midah Si Manis Bergigi Emas*, her father threatened *Midah Si Manis Bergigi Emas* if she didn't return to her husband's house, but *Midah Si Manis Bergigi Emas* rejected her father's words because Midah knew that her husband had many wives. This can be seen by the following quote:

“ancaman ayahnya tidaklah menimbulkan kegentaran dalam hatinya. Ia patah hati karena kepercayaannya pada kebaikan diremukkan oleh orang lain. (hlm 23)”

(her father's threats did not cause any fear in her heart. She was heartbroken that her belief in goodness had been crushed by others. (p. 23))

“Tapi itu tidak menarik perhatian Midah. Ia telah bisa hidup dalam kemewahan baik ditempatkan orangtuanya sendiri maupun di tempat suaminya, dan kini kekayaan dan kemewahan itu bukan barang yang menarik hatinya. (hlm. 24)”

(Nevertheless, that matter didn't catch Midah's attention. She had been able to live in luxury both in her own parents' place and in her husband's place, and now wealth and luxury were not things that attracted her. (p. 24))

By the illustration above, it can be seen that after *Midah Si Manis Bergigi Emas* left the house and decided to work, she didn't enjoy her luxuries anymore.

##### **2. Rejecting Otherness as a Mother**

The women existence illustrated by *Midah Si Manis Bergigi Emas* in the form of woman that refuses otherness as a mother to the members of the keroncong group who were all men. Even so, *Midah Si Manis Bergigi Emas*, refused to act against this decency. This can be seen by the following quote:

“Si manis pertamakali tidur bersama laki-laki yang bukan suaminya dan ia minta kekuatan pada ada yang ada di dalam perutnya. (hlm. 38)”

(*Si manis* (Midah) slept with a man who was not her husband for the first time and she asked for strength from what was in her womb. (p. 38))

### 3. Rejecting Otherness as a Wife

*Midah Si Manis Bergigi Emas* refused to her husband and also refused to spend the night with the men she followed, namely a group of men who were in the *keroncong* group. This can be seen by the following quote:

*“kapala rombongan melamar Midah tetapi si manis menolaknya dan membuat kepala rombongan benci. (hlm. 61-62)”*

(the head of the group proposes to Midah but she refuses it and makes the head of the group hate it. (p.61-62))

By the illustration above, it can be seen that *Midah Si Manis Bergigi Emas* experienced trauma due to marriage in her life, she no longer dared to have relationships with men.

### 4. Rejecting Otherness as a Singer

*Midah Si Manis Bergigi Emas* remembered the taxi driver who asked him to spend the night with him. This can be known by the following quote:

*“Midah menaiki kendaraan dan ditengah perjalanan supirnya mengajak ia bermalam (hlm.81)”*

(Midah got into a vehicle and in the middle of the trip the driver asked her to spend the night (p.81))

## 3.2 Gender Inequality in *Midah Si Manis Bergigi Emas* by Pramoedya Ananta Toer

The novel *Midah Si Manis Bergigi Emas* by Pramoedya Ananta Toer raises the theme of gender inequalities against female characters who get social construction which explained in current qualitative descriptive study. The analysis of this research is as follows.

### a. Sexual Violence

*Midah Si Manis Bergigi Emas* by Pramoedya Ananta Toer first sleeps with the *keroncong* group where all of the *keroncong* groups are adults and are not bound by religious regulations. The form of sexual violence can be seen by the following quote:

*“Why are you afraid of me, (the voice of the man beside her) The men disturb Midah.”*

*“Don't bother me (Midah Si Manis Bergigi Emas hardens the barrier). I'm pregnant. (p. 40)”*

Therefore, it is said to be sexual violence because it was the first time she slept with a man who was not her husband.

### b. Physical Violence

Physical violence that occurred when Midah played a *keroncong* song at her home. The form of physical violence can be seen by the following quote:

*“Her father declared the song haram-raman. The father came and slapped his girl until she fell. (p. 18) Even though, Midah Si Manis Bergigi Emas only heard Umi Kulsum's music at home.”*

### c. Postal Violence (Prostitution)

Another violence that Midah found when singing for her life and for her child. Only at that time she felt meritorious in singing. The form of postal violence can be seen by the following quote:

*“Midah dalam hidupnya kini bertemu dengan banyak laki-laki dan tawaran Villa terhadapnya. (hlm 131)”*

(Midah in her life is now meeting with many men and men that offer villa's for the night to her. (p. 131))

While singing around *Midah Si Manis Bergigi Emas*, she found many men around her so that she was refers to be a bad woman because she was pregnant without her husband and she was staying with a group of keroncong buskers even though she was a woman.

### d. Marginalization in the form of Termination of Employment (PHK)

Riah got laid off when she protected her employer's child who was slapped by her father. The marginalization of layoff can be seen by the following quote:

*“gak ada satupun yang brani menjawab perkataan bang aji (hlm 19)”*

(no one dared to answer the words of bang aji (page 19))

Bang Haji's anger could no longer be contained, everyone who worked in the kitchen was expelled that day, including Riah, because she protected her employer's children. Because it was thought that Bang Haji who taught Midah was his assistant when in fact Midah played the keroncong song, he had seen and followed buskers who had toured his village in Cibatok.

### e. Marginalization in the Household

Where Midah does not get full love for her parents. Furthermore, the birth of more children makes *Midah Si Manis Bergigi Emas* kicked from the house.

*“Bertambah banyak adik gadis dan laki-laki, Midah bertambah jauh pula ia tercerai berai dari kedua orang tuanya. (hlm 20)”*

(As the number of younger sisters and brothers increased, Midah also grew further apart from her parents. (p. 20))

*Midah Si Manis Bergigi Emas* doesn't get love anymore when she has many younger siblings, which is not as beautiful as before that she used to always loved by his mother and father. Currently, she is far from her parents since she gained unfavorable type of care.

### f. Subordination over Men

The gender inequality in the context of subordination over men is shown by the following quote:

Since, Nini wants to express her opinion but she can't, because women are always considered unable to lead.

*“Bangsat! Kau kira apa aku ini? Teriak wanita itu. Cuma satu orang perempuan yang boleh ikut rombongan. Tidak boleh lebih. Nini! Disini aku kepalanya. Bukan engkau!. (hlm 33)”*

(Bastard! What do you think I am? Shouted the woman. Only one woman can join the group. Should not be more. Nini! Here I am the head. Not you! (p. 33))

The head of the group did not give Nini a chance to speak. Nini could only listen to what the head of the group said. In fact, Nini has been following this group for a long time, but she can't give an opinion because she is jealous of Midah because she has taken her place.

### g. Subordination in the Household

His wife wanted to talk to her son about the problems his son was facing but Bang Haji didn't allow it and he told his girl to tell him everything that had happened.

*“istri ingin berbicara kepada anaknya tapi tidak diberikan oleh suaminya. (hlm. 118-119)”*

(The wife wants to talk to her child but her husband doesn't give her. (pp. 118-119))

As can be seen in the above expression where decisions are not given to women because men are always considered as leaders.

### h. Negative Stereotypes

Gender inequalities against Midah was showed by Nini's act. This can be seen by the following quote:

*“Dia ikut- ikut bergigi Emas! Teriak Nini dengan mengajarnya!” (hlm 64)*

(She went along with the Gold-toothed! Nini shouted by teaching her!” (p. 64))

“At one time, in order to encounter the power of Nini, she went to the doctor and had a gold tooth put in one of his canine teeth. Therefore, Nini's view regarding the gold tooth that Midah uses, *don't accuse if there is no evidence and don't shout at it.*”

### i. Workload

At first, there is no gender inequality in Midah family because she lives a well-off life, as is life with her husband. However, gender inequality began when Midah joined the *keroncong* group because every income after busking was used together. This can be seen by the following quote.

*“Min mengitung hasil ngamen, hasil dari ngamen itu untuk kehidupan bersama bukan untuk individu (hlm 30)”*

(Min estimates the rewards of singing, which are for living together rather than for individuals. (p. 30))

Nevertheless, this explanation was not experienced by Midah even when he joined the street musicians.

## IV. Conclusion

Based on the results of the study and discussion, it is concluded that the existence of the researcher presents a female character named *Midah Si Manis Bergigi Emas*, who comes from a wealthy family. However, after her younger brother was born, she did not get affection when she had a younger brother so that she lacked attention. In addition, when Midah reached adulthood, she was engaged to Haji Terbus that had several wives. Therefore, after Midah discovered that her husband had many wives, she decided to run away.

This novel depicts a woman who is very touching, a woman who is reflected as a *keroncong* singer that has a strong personality, independent, and rejects her otherness. This is what reflects women in carrying out their daily lives and can then be studied through feminism, while gender inequality in the novel *Midah Si Manis Bergigi Emas* by Pramoedy Ananta Toer happened to *Midah* received unpleasant treatment when she heard the *keroncong* song for the first time, she was slapped by her father due to listening to forbidden songs at home. Midah gets the third inequalities when she starts to join the group of *keroncong* singers and where the female characters here can't speak up their opinions because men are always seen as the leader.



Furthermore, the findings and conclusion of this study led to the suggestions that:

1. The results of this study may be used by Indonesian Language Teachers as a literary appreciation learning material,
2. Students can learn the positive values contained in the novel *Midah Si Manis Bergigi Emas* by Pramoedya Ananta Toer which can be imitated and practiced in everyday life, while the negative values found are quite learned from, and eliminated,
3. For further researchers, it can expand the problems studied regarding the existence and inequalities of gender by using other theories or approaches that have never been studied because there are still many other types of feminism, and
4. Readers of Midah novels in order to understand the existence and inequalities of gender and can take the positive value for everyday life.

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