

# VIOLENCE TOWARDS SAYURI IN ARTHUR GOLDEN'S MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA: A SOCIALIST FEMINISM APPROACH

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## ABSTRACT

Violence, an assault on a person's control over her/his body and life, can take many forms and has varying consequences depending on the type of assault, its context and interpretation, the chronicity of violence, and availability of support. Feminist theory is becoming the dominant model for explaining violence towards women. The problems of this study are; what kinds of violence that happened towards Sayuri and what the reasons of violence that happened towards Sayuri from Socialist Feminism point of view are. The aims of this study are; to find out the kinds of violence that happened towards Sayuri and to find out the reasons of violence that happened towards Sayuri from Socialist Feminism point of view. This study used qualitative descriptive method in analyzing the data. Qualitative descriptive studies is a comprehensive summarization, in everyday terms, of specific events experienced by individuals of groups of individuals. After analyzing the data it can be concluded that Sayuri experienced four kinds of violence; physical violence, psychological violence, sexual violence, and economic violence and the reasons of violence that happened towards Sayuri from Socialist Feminism point of view are because of the difference of social class and economic status.

**Keywords:** Sociolinguistics, Code Mixing, Types of Code Mixing, Alternation, Insertion, Congruent Lexicalization, The Reason of Using Code Mixing.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Violence against women has continued and throughout history unreported and unchallenged. Of all the violations of human rights, violence against women is the most common despite the violence against men. Women are commonly seen as an object or property rather than as a human being because some believed that women are born to only bear children and as an object to satisfy man, women also expected to be soft, obedient and loving at the same time.

Violence, an assault on a person's control over her/his body and life, can take many forms and has varying consequences depending on the type of assault, its context and interpretation, the chronicity of violence, and availability of support. (Susan & Janet, 2009).

Through this novel which told about a memoirs of a geisha itself, the writer chooses "Violence Towards Sayuri in Arthur Golden's *Memoirs of a Geisha: A Socialist Feminism Approach*" as her study because the writer wants to learn more about violence against women and to show to the reader the kinds of violence towards Sayuri and to find out the reasons of violence that happened to Sayuri from Socialist Feminism point of view.

### 1.2 Problems of the Study

- What kinds of violence that happened towards Sayuri?
- What are the reasons of violence that happened towards Sayuri from Socialist Feminism point of view?

### 1.3 Objectives of the Study

- To find out the kinds of violence that happened towards Sayuri.

b) To find out the reasons of violence that happened towards Sayuri from Socialist Feminism point of view.

#### **1.4 Scope of the Study**

This study is limited by finding out the kinds of violence that happened to the main character in the novel *Memoirs of a Geisha* by Arthur Golden and to find out the reasons of violence that happened towards Sayuri from Socialist Feminism point of view.

#### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

This study contributes about kinds of violence and Socialist Feminism point of view to find out the reasons of violence that happened towards the main character in *Memoirs of a Geisha*. The writer hopes that this study will be useful for people who are searching and learning about violence and Socialist Feminism theory. This study also provides knowledge and information about the writer's research topic.

#### **1.6 Previous Study**

##### **1.6.1 Mentari Andriani (2014)**

Mentari Andriani study entitled "Domestic Violence As Experienced by Katie in Nicholas Sparks *Safe Haven: A Feminism Study*". Mentari Andriani is from Faculty of Letters, Gunadarma University and she submitted her study in 2014. Mentari Andriani used Feminism Perspective for her research about domestic violence in the character of the novel she researched. The aims of her study are to describe what kinds of domestic violence that happened to Katie and to describe the reason of domestic violence that happened to Katie in Feminism Perspective. Katie got domestic violence, such as, physical violence, emotional violence and psychology violence. From the reasons of domestic violence that happened to Katie in Feminism Perspective can be associated with one of the Marxist theory of Feminism.

##### **1.6.2 Retno Savitri (2006)**

Retno Savitri study entitled "Subordinasi Perempuan Jepang dalam Dunia Publik di Era Pertumbuhan Ekonomi Tinggi Tahun 1960-1980-an: Di Analisis dengan Teori Feminis Sosialis-Iris Young". Retno Savitri is from Fakultas Ilmu Pengetahuan Budaya, University of Indonesia, she submitted her study in 2006. She used Socialist Feminism as her

theory for her research. This study refers to examine about subordination that happened to Japanese women in the growth of high economic era because of the social condition which occurred in that era. The purpose of her study from Socialist Feminism theory is to describe and analyze it through women as a subordinated object. Moreover, she used Socialist Feminism by Iris Young, used 'a work which differentiated by gender'. Socialist Feminism by Iris Young is about oppression of women from capitalist patriarchy which is gender biased. In her study, she also examine social status or a condition that made a subordination of Japanese women and also as a capitalist society and patriarchy point of view in that era.

#### **1.7 Position of the Study**

This study is similar to the previous study by Mentari Andriani, she used her research topic about domestic violence from Feminism perspective. The difference with this study is that this study is using violence as its topic and find out the kinds of violence that happened in the main character in *Memoirs of a Geisha*. This study also uses Socialist Feminism as its theory to find out the reasons of violence towards the main character in Arthur Golden's *Memoirs of a Geisha*, which is similar to the previous study by Retno Savitri, she used Socialist Feminism as the theory of her study.

This study provides only to find out the kinds of violence that happened towards Sayuri in Arthur Golden's *Memoirs of a Geisha* and to find out the reasons of violence towards Sayuri from Socialist Feminism point of view.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Literature and Feminism**

The first of the recent works on female stereotypes in literature cannot actually be classified as feminist criticism: Leslie Fiedler's *Love and Death in the American Novel*, rev. Ed. (New York: Stein and Day, 1966), employs a Jungian type of national character analysis that is scarcely compatible with feminism. Fiedler's own assumptions about female nature and his interpretation of the few works by women that he chooses to discuss call for a new feminist reading. Mary Ellmann's *Thinking about Women* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1968) moves

beyond Fiedler's two types, finding an intricate mythological pattern of stereotyping in the works of American writers. According to Ellmann, the attributes that literature commonly ascribes to women are formlessness, passivity, instability (hysteria), confinement (narrowness, practicality), piety, materiality, spirituality, irrationality, compliancy, and incorrigibility (the shrew, the witch). Feminist criticism can now go on to deal with the reasons behind this proliferation of female stereotypes and the lack of realistic women characters; to discuss the political uses of literary stereotypes; and to describe their effects on individual female consciousness. (Donovan, 1975:3)

## 2.2 Violence

Violence is probably the most obvious and visible form of oppression. Members of some groups live with the knowledge that they must fear random, unprovoked attacks on their persons or property. These attacks do not necessarily need a motive but are intended to damage, humiliate, or destroy the person. (Young, 2004) The literature on anthropology has often seen violence as a necessary and foundational precondition for the social bond, which takes us a long way from the ideas we have discussed thus far. From this point of view, violence is not referred to the subject, but to the functional requirements of the system, of the community it binds together, and of the collective life it makes possible. (Wievieorka, 2009: 159)

Violence is often an exceptional event, the crime is not repeated and the outbreak of nothing quickly dies down. In other cases, it has to thought of as a process that can last for a certain length of time, and that has its high points and its low points. Violence is itself a process of change, so much so that some of its manifestations have been described as a spiral or an infernal machine. (Wievieorka, 2009: 162)

## 2.3 Kinds of Violence

1. **Physical violence** is probably the most visible violence. It includes slaps, burns, kicks, bites, and any objects that may be used to do arm. In fact, the aggressor may prevent the woman to get medical help.

2. **Psychological violence** is the form of violence that is more insidious. In this case, women are directly affected in their dignity. It includes, blackmails, threats, false accusation, isolation from friend and family. All this is done in order to manipulate and control the victim.

3. **Sexual violence** is the one nobody talks about, but which is often devastating. It includes all actions performed by resorting to force without the consent of the person. For example, there are may be unwanted touching, harassment, derogatory slurs, the infliction of pain and refusal to protect themselves against family transmitted disease.

4. **Economic violence** is the least known, but it must still be taken seriously. This form of violence can be defined by the total control of the finance of the family's aggressor. He monitors how women spend their money. He decides where money should be spent or saved. He forces her to give her earnings and may even stop her from working. All this leads the woman to be dependent on her spouses.

5. **Spiritual violence** is not negligible. The aggressor can prevent the woman to go to the church, he can denigrate religious beliefs or even require a religious practice other than his own.

([escalemadavic.com/typesofviolence.html](http://escalemadavic.com/typesofviolence.html))

## 2.4 Violence Against Women as a Feminism Study

Violence against women is particularly insidious crime against humanity. It is pervasive, appearing as frequently in the houses of the rich as in those of the poor. It knows neither racial nor ethnic limitations only cultural variations, such as female genital mutilation or dowry burnings. Furthermore, neither age nor physical attributes protect women from violations such as rape, battering, or prostitution. Some of the "classic" text on violence against women, written between 1971 and 1985, were among the first in North America to examine the issues of violence against women, and to do so from an avowedly "feminist" standpoint. A decade later we are well placed to consider how violence against women came to be conceptualized by

feminists such as Susan Brownmiller, Andrea Dworkin, Diana Russell, and Susan Griffin, and to understand how much of our thinking and our language was drawn from their work. (Frence et. al., 1998: 182)

## 2.5 Feminism

Oxford dictionary explains feminism as the belief and aim that women should have the same rights and opportunities as men. (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary)

## 2.6 Socialist Feminism

Socialist Feminism arose in the late 1960s and 1970s. It tries to combine insights from radical feminism and from Marxism. According to Marx, the most human activity is the activity of producing things to satisfy our needs. The social relationships within which people carry out this activity make up the 'economic structure' or 'economic base' of a society, from which other institutions—such as law and the state—arise. Throughout most history, these 'social relations of production' have been class relations in which some people control and exploit the productive activity of others. (Stone, 2007:13-14)

### 2.6.1 Socialist Feminism Approach

The write conclude that Socialist Feminism Approach is a method of dealing or to achieving women's equality and analyzed the connection between the oppression of women and other oppression in society that happened because of sex discrimination with their work to achieve justice for women.

### 2.6.2 Figure behind Socialist Feminism

#### IRIS MARION YOUNG (1949-2006)

Iris Marion Young is one of the leading feminist and political philosophers in this century. Iris Young's life work could perhaps be summarized by: an intense ethico-political commitment to praxis philosophy; and attentiveness to group differences; and a curiosity about the embodied experience. Her ground breaking recognition of the value of group difference has led to new ways of theorizing about justice. Young reminds us to be wary of idealizing community at the expense of ignoring oppressive circumstances of marginalized people. In her brilliant essay "The Five Faces of

Oppression." Young maps out an analysis of the function of oppression that is of great value to diversity teachers in the academe and "on the streets" alike. (solidarity-us.org/node/540)

## 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Research Design

The field of this research is qualitative research. The writer used "Qualitative Descriptive" research as the type of this research. The goal of qualitative descriptive studies is a comprehensive summarization, in everyday terms, of specific events experienced by individuals of groups of individuals. According to Sandelowski, qualitative descriptive research: should be seen as a categorical, as opposed to non-categorical, alternative for inquiry; is less interpretive than an 'interpretive descriptive' approach because it does not require the researcher to move as far from or into the data; and, does not require a conceptual or highly abstract rendering of the data, compare to other qualitative designs. ([http://www.tnc.or.th/files/2014/03/tnc\\_journal-7642/pacific\\_rim\\_vol\\_16\\_no\\_4\\_pdf\\_15802.pdf](http://www.tnc.or.th/files/2014/03/tnc_journal-7642/pacific_rim_vol_16_no_4_pdf_15802.pdf))

### 3.2 Source of Data

The writer took the data from Arthur Golden's *Memoirs of a Geisha* novel as the source of the data. *Memoirs of a Geisha* was published on 1997.

### 3.3 Data Collection Procedure

- Reading Arthur Golden's *Memoirs of a Geisha* novel.
- Finding statements and examples about violence towards Sayuri in Arthur Golden's *Memoirs of a Geisha* novel.
- Marking the statements and examples about kinds of violence towards Sayuri in Arthur Golden's *Memoirs of a Geisha* novel.
- Making a table to classify the statements and example about violence towards Sayuri in Arthur Golden's *Memoirs of a Geisha*.

### 3.4 Data Analysis Procedure

- The writer classified the kinds of violence that happenend toward Sayuri.
- The writer analyzed the statement and examples about violence thst hspended

towards Sayuri from Socialist Feminism point of view.

- c) The writer gave explanation about violence that happened towards Sayuri in Arthur Golden's *Memoirs of a Geisha* novel.
- d) The writer gave a conclusion about the study of Violence towards Sayuri in Arthur Golden's *Memoirs of a Geisha*.

#### 4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

##### 4.1 Kinds of Violence that Happened Towards Sayuri

###### 4.1.1 Physical Violence

she tried to spread my knees apart, she had to slap me on the leg. . .She put a finger between my legs and gave what felt to me like a pinch, in such a way that I cried out.

she looked around to be sure no one was watching and then hit us the tops of our heads. (Memoirs of a Geisha, 1999:33)

And then just as I'd feared, she reached out and began pinching me so hard on the side of my neck that I couldn't even tell which part of me hurt. (Memoirs of a Geisha, 1999:33)

Sayuri got hit, slapped, and pinched by Mrs. Fidget who is not even her family or the person that known Sayuri personally, she is a fortune teller but she treated Sayuri like that even when they first met. Sayuri also got pinched again when Sayuri tried to ask where she was going to the person next to her, but Mrs. Fidget pinched her to make Sayuri shut up. Sayuri did not make any mistake but she got pinched and slapped, it is because she was a poor kid from a really poor family and she was being sold by her father to be a geisha, so she got these bad treatments from the people who have more power than her.

###### 4.1.2 Psychological Violence

He had taken me from my mother and father, sold me into slavery, sold my sister into something even worse. I had taken him for a kind man. I had thought he was so refined, so worldly. What a stupid child I had been! I would never go back to Yoroido, I decided. Or if I did go back, it would only be to tell Mr. Tanaka how much I hated him.(Memoirs of a Geisha:82)

Sayuri has sent to Gion to be a geisha by Mr. Tanaka, it can be said that Mr. Tanaka was the cause of Sayuri was being sold to be a geisha. Mr. Tanaka has controlled Sayuri's life by selling her to be a geisha without her permission and has forced her to leave her family, Sayuri said if she would go back to Yoroido and meet Mr. Tanaka she wanted to tell how much she hated him, it can be showed that Sayuri held her angry towards Mr. Tanaka which can be mean that she holds her angry, upset, and even hateful feeling towards Mr. Tanaka and it conclude that she got a psychological violence.

###### 4.1.3 Sexual Violence

soon began to unwind the broad obi, wrapping and unwrapping his arms around my waist. . . . In a moment the Baron let the obi fall in a pile of the floor, and then unfastened the datejime-the waistband underneath. I felt the sickening sensation of my kimono releasing itself from around my waist. I clutched it shut with my arms, but the Baron pulled them apart. (Memoirs of a Geisha, 1999:261)

From the statement above, it is proved that Sayuri got unwanted touching and force to undress herself because it can be said that Baron wanted to rape her. Sayuri did not want to have a sexual interaction with Baron but Baron wanted to have it with Sayuri, he tried to undress her. Sayuri as a woman can do nothing when a man approach her with an intention to rape her.

#### 4.1.4 Economic Violence

*"I came to tell you that this time next month you'll have a danna." "Mameha thinks I should establish my reputation first, just for a few years." "Mameha! What does she know about business? The next time I want to know when to giggle at a party, I'll go and ask her." "Leave the business decisions to me," Mother went on. (Memoirs of a Geisha, 1999: 291-292)*

Mother told Sayuri that Nobu wanted to be her *danna* (a wealthy man who wants to accommodate a geisha's life by stick with him), but Sayuri refused by saying that she said she was only eighteen but Mother said "leave the business decisions to me", she said about a *danna* as a business while actually it was about Sayuri's future and life, because a *danna* will be like a husband to a geisha. It means that Mother still the one who controlled Sayuri's life and her financial.

#### 4.1.5 Spiritual Violence

Spiritual violence is not negligible. The aggressor can prevent the woman to go to the church, he can denigrate religious beliefs or even require a religious practice other than his own. (escalemadavic.com-typesofviolence.htm)

In this research the writer did not find any spiritual violence in Arthur Golden's *Memoirs of a Geisha* novel, Arthur Golden did not tell or write about a religious side of Sayuri.

### 4.2 Reasons of Violence that Happened Towards Sayuri from Socialist Feminism Point of View

#### 4.2.1 Social Class

Socialist Feminism explains that class society and capitalism caused women's oppression such as violence against women.

*I wasn't born and raised to be a Kyoto geisha. I wasn't even born in Kyoto. I'm a fisherman's daughter from a little town called Yoroido on the Sea of Japan. (Memoirs of a Geisha, 1999:7)*

It means that Sayuri was not born in a middle-class or a wealthy family

because her father was a fisherman and she lived in a little town.

#### 4.2.2 Economic Status

Socialist Feminism has seen economic class can be the reason of women's oppression such as violence. In Sayuri's case, Sayuri was became a geisha because she lived in a poor family and she got the violation when she lived in geisha's district in Gion. This is the statement that Sayuri has lower economic status:

*"The time has come to say something to you, Sakamoto-san." Dr. Miura began. You need to have a talk with one of the women in the village. Mrs. Sugi, perhaps. Ask her to make a nice new robe for your wife."*

*"I haven't the money, Doctor." My father said.*

*"We've all grown poorer lately. I understand what you're saying. But you owe it to your wife. She shouldn't die in that tattered robe she's wearing." (Memoirs of a Geisha, 1999:12)*

From this statement it can be said that Sayuri's family is poor. Sayuri's father said that he has no money to buy a new robe to his sick wife. This proved that Sayuri raised in a poor family and has lower economic status.

## 5. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

### 5.1 Conclusion

Sayuri got a lot of kinds of violence, from the five kinds of violence, Sayuri got four kinds of violence that she experienced; there are physical violence, psychological violence, sexual violence, and economic violence. But Sayuri did not experience spiritual violence because the author of the novel, Arthur Golden, did not tell or write about religious aspect about Sayuri or Sayuri's religion and so other characters' religions. From the four kinds of violence that Sayuri has experienced, the most violation that happened towards Sayuri is physical violence. Sayuri got physical violence such as beating, hitting, slapping, pinching, and other physical violence. The reason of violence that happened towards Sayuri from Socialist Feminism

point of view are mainly because of the difference of social class and economic status of Sayuri, it made her experienced the violence. Socialist Feminism explains that class and capitalism caused women's oppression, such as violence against women.

## 5.2 Future Research

Memoirs of a Geisha is a very interesting and fascinating novel, it is a historical novel that flows with romantic story of Sayuri's love life. There are a lot of aspects that some researchers can be analyzing through this novel. The writer suggests to other researchers who want to analyze this novel to make sure the aspects that the researchers want to analyze have not been taken by other researchers because this novel is an old novel and historical novel, it makes this novel more known and interested by so many people to analyze. The writer hopes that this study can be inspiring and useful for the reader and people who are writing or making a research.

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