

ADULTERY IN MOCHTAR LUBIS' NOVEL *SENJA DI JAKARTA*

Raja Fauziah, Efendi Barus, M. Ali Pawiro

Master's Program, Fakultas Sastra,
Universitas Islam Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia
Corresponding author: rajafauziah88@yahoo.com

Abstact

The research is concerned with types of adultery based on the plot giving pictures of immoral behavior of some of the major characters committing adultery. Some of them are married, and some are not. They are brave and not ashamed of doing this immoral deed because they are not close to the doctrine of their own religion that prohibits them doing this shameful behavior. They do not even seem to be afraid of doing something which is regarded as a very sinful deed. Adultery is a sexual relationship in which a man or women has with another partner rather than his/her own spouse. Adultery is seen as a great sin in the society. Adultery maliciously interferes with marriage relations, and sometimes opens the door to divorce. (Dillon, 2016). The research is conducted using descriptive qualitative method designed to obtain information which is concerned with the current status of phenomena that occur naturally. (Ary, 1972). The results show that there are three types of adultery committed by the major characters: Visual, Mental and Physical Adulteries.

Key words: adultery, visualization, mental, physics

Introduction

This study is concerned with adultery which is found in the novel *Senja di Jakarta* written by the Indonesian writer, Mochtar Lubis, and published in 1981. This novel describes immoral behavior of some of its main characters, that is, some of them commit adultery. Some of them are not married yet and some others are married. Even there is one of them who commits adultery with his step-mother and with his friend's wife. They are brave and not ashamed of doing this immoral deed because they are not close to the doctrine of their own religion that prohibits them doing this shameful behavior. They do not even seem to be afraid of doing something which is regarded as a very sinful deed.

Adultery has become a very prominent problem in today's society. It is spreading faster than many people could imagine and is almost uncontrollable. In this research some types of adultery are to be discussed and how those types are exposed in the daily life of the characters. Adultery is a sexual relationship in which a man or women has with another partner rather than his/her own spouse. Adultery is seen as a great sin in the

society. Adultery maliciously interferes with marriage relations, and sometimes opens the door to divorce. (Dillon, 2016)

A while back in history adultery as considered as serious as a "crime" as murder is considered today. Those people who are caught in extra-marital affairs are either shunned from their communities or are subjected to massive humiliation. These steps are taken to frighten those people who would be prone to committing acts of adultery. Adultery is something that "lower class" people would be involved in because it is such a dirty thing. We have gone from adultery being the worse thing a person could do to it now being something that is considered common amongst everyone. Why people commit adultery can sometimes still be a blunder. Some people think it is because the person is not receiving all his requirements at home, and others think it is a sick habit.

Adultery is defined as the act of sexual intercourse when it involves someone who is married and a person that they are not married to.

Those who commit adultery are called adulterers or adulteress (Sinclair et al, 1987: 20).

This immoral and shameful deed is commonly committed by the people who do not give their much care to the doctrine or teaching of their own religion. They do not care that they have done such an immoral deed to one of the members of another family, to a prostitute, to somebody's wife or husband, and even to a step mother and so on. They do not even care that there will be a torture later from the Almighty God in the life hereafter. In his life, they are not afraid of doing such a forbidden and sinful deed even though legally they can be blamed to have done a crime and later arrested. (Yao, 2009) The novel *Senja di Jakarta* was written when Mochtar Lubis was in a prison. It was first published in English in 1963. This novel tells about the crisis of life in Jakarta in 1950s: the dirty life of politics, the corruptors and manipulators who were extravagant, the profiteers who always looked for profit from every chance, the higher level of adultery or prostitution up to the lower level of prostitution, and the life of poor people which is full of suffering.

Literature Review

Adultery is extramarital sex that is considered objectionable on social, religious, moral, or legal grounds. Though what sexual activities constitute adultery varies, as well as the social, religious, and legal consequences, the concept exists in many cultures and is similar in Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. A single act of sexual intercourse is generally sufficient to constitute adultery, and a more long-term sexual relationship is sometimes referred to as an affair. (Whitman, 2014)

Kutty (2016), states that adultery in Islam is one of the most heinous and deadliest of sins. Its enormity can be gauged from the fact that it has often been conjoined in the Qur'an with the gravest of all sins: *shirk* or associating partners with Allah.

The enormity of this sin is no small measure due to its dire consequences affecting individuals, families, and societies. Among these are that it entails infidelity and erodes the trust and tranquility that are the foundations of a fulfilling family life; it dissipates

one's energies; it undermines peace at home; it corrodes the purity of one's soul and hence destroys one's faith; finally, it exposes the person to the wrath of Allah, thus resulting in eternal damnation. (Ahsan, 2011)

In Muslim countries that follow Sharia law for criminal justice, the punishment for adultery may be stoning. There are fifteen countries in which stoning is authorized as lawful punishment, though in recent times it has been legally carried out only in Iran and Somalia. Most countries that criminalize adultery are those where the dominant religion is Islam, and several Sub-Saharan African Christian-majority countries, but there are some notable exceptions to this rule, namely Philippines, Taiwan, and several U.S. states. In some jurisdictions, having sexual relations with the king's wife or the wife of his eldest son constitutes treason. By analogy, in cultures which value and normally practice exclusive interpersonal relationships, sexual relations with a person outside the relationship may also be described as infidelity or cheating, and is subject to sanction. (Dworkin, 1996: 100)

The term *adultery* refers to sexual acts between a married person and someone who is not that person's spouse. It may arise in criminal law or in family law. For instance, in the United Kingdom, adultery is not a criminal offense, but is a ground for divorce, with the legal definition of adultery being "physical contact with an alien and unlawful organ" (Dworkin, 1996: 62). Extramarital sexual acts not fitting this definition are not "adultery" though they may constitute "unreasonable behavior", also a ground of divorce.

Types of Adultery

White (2017: 1-8) states that adultery is one of the worst things that can happen to a marriage and violates everything you have built with your partner in such a painful way. Many of us who have been a victim to an adulterous affair did not see it coming. We were blindsided, and before we could even process what was happening were involved emotionally, physically or both with a person other than our spouse. Infidelity can feel like the worst thing that has ever happened in your marriage. The fatal blow to any marriage is an adulterous affair where one or both spouses think they finally found the person they were meant to be with. Once convinced that he or she was the wrong person that God put someone knew in his or her life, the idea of divorce can take root and destroy your marriage. Blinded by the deception of the affair, most people have no idea how they got there, and do not know how to get out. There is no doubt about it; adultery affects marriages in the worst way. While all of us are familiar with physical adultery, there are a number of other forms of adultery that are just as damaging. Here are three types of adultery that every man and woman needs to know.

1. Mental Adultery

There is no way we can talk about physical adultery without talking about mental adultery. It is one of the biggest problems destroying marriages today. Mental adultery is to look with an intentional and conscious desire to gratify lust; to picture situations in the mind; to think adultery in the mind with a person to the point that if the opportunity were presented you would commit the physical act. It isn't just something plaguing our relationships now.

2. Visual Adultery

Visual adultery is committing adultery with your eyes. It is often deceiving and easy for those doing it to not think seriously of because they're not committing a physical act. Many people think as long as they are not physically touching someone other than their spouse, they are not being unfaithful. But the more you commit visual adultery, the more likely you are to end up physical cheating on your partner. Lust can be categorized as looking at someone or someone's body because you think they look good or might look good. This is not to be confused with just noticing someone. You can notice a person's style, hair color or body build; however, lusting is different. This involves you intentionally directing your eyes towards someone because they look good or are sexually appealing to you.

3. Physical Adultery

Physical adultery is known as the type of adultery which is committed when one man or a woman has chosen to physically touch another person who is not their husband or wife in a sexual way. People are very familiar with this type of adultery compared to the other types of adultery done by the adulterers.

Research Method

This study uses a descriptive qualitative method, that is, a method which analyzes matters in the forms of words, phrases, or sentences. Ary (1972: 295) writes that descriptive qualitative is designed to obtain information which is concerned with the current status of phenomena that occur naturally. Research methodology is concerned with methods and steps of research operationally including: research approach (research design), presence of researcher, research location, source of data, data collection procedure, data analysis, verification of data validity, and phases of research. Mochtar Lubis' novel *Senja di Jakarta* is the main source of the data. All the information about adultery or immoral deed of the main characters which are found in the novel become the main source of data of this research. The data taken from some other books and websites are used to support the main data, and grouped as secondary data.

Discussion

Visual Adultery

It is already told in the theory concerning adultery that visual adultery is committing adultery with a person's eyes. This type adultery is committed by one of the main characters of the novel who is called Saimun. He is an assistant to a garbage truck driver. He and his friend, Itam, work together to collect garbage and put them into the garbage truck. Then they get into the truck and come with it up to a garbage dump. They do this job every day from morning up to late in the afternoon.

One day, early in a drizzle morning, Saimun starts to work to collect garbage from the top of the garbage heap. From the top of the garbage heap, he pushes away wastebasket full of garbage by using his dirty bare foot and the basket rolls over and over and stop on the wall of a very small hut. Then a young woman from the hut comes out and looks very startled because of the impact of the basket full of garbage kicked by Saimun. He is very surprised when looking at the woman whose parts of her breasts

can be seen by him. This makes him passionate and wants to come closer to her but another thing suddenly happens and thus he cannot come closer to her. This event can be seen in the quotation below.

Saimun was surprised for a moment looking at and observing the woman intently. She laughed impolitely--without showing her anger or annoyance—because she had been accustomed to laughing in such a way—in his heart there was a passion or desire for a few seconds when looking at the breasts of the woman in the hut through the space of a torn and old shirt. He suddenly wanted to find the woman; however, he heard the sound of the horn of the garbage truck scream. (Lubis, 1970: 8)

In the above quotation, it can clearly be seen that early in the morning when Saimun is in the location of garbage exile, he does not purposely see a woman who is in her hut crying because he has just thrown away a basket full of garbage which hits her. However, when he looks at her directly she does not show her anger. Instead, she smiles at him. He looks at her again and again and he can see her breasts through the space of her old and torn shirt. This makes him seduced and wants to come closer to her, but he must cancel doing it because the driver of the garbage truck calls him by using the horn of the truck. This can be meant that Saimun has just committed an immoral deed which is called visual adultery.

Some hours after his first looking at the young woman at the location of garbage exile and after his hard works, Saimun remembers the woman again at the time he is about to unload the garbage from the garbage truck. Afterwards, he goes down towards the small hut where the woman he has already seen some hours ago. He gets surprised when he finds the woman is taking a bath in a pond whose water is very dirty without using her dress. Looking at her taking a bath without her dress makes her sexual desire arise. This can be seen through the following quotation:

Near to midday time, the truck went back to the garbage exile, and when dropping down the garbage, Saimun remembered the woman whom he saw in the morning, and then he stepped downwards to be closer to the hut. The woman was taking a bath in the water pond some meters from the hut, in the dirty stagnated water whose color was yellow, and his sexual desire aroused again because of seeing the woman was taking a bath stark naked in the shallow water pond. (Lubis, 1970: 12)

The above quotation describes the moment when Saimun does a visual adultery. The process of doing this type of adultery begins from the moment he starts to throw away the garbage from the truck. In such a moment he sees again the woman whom he has already seen in the same hut in the morning. This time he really looks at her without wearing her dress at all. She is naked and this makes him seduced. However, he must leave her because the horn of the truck calls him to go.

The visual adultery is also committed by another main character of the novel named Suyono. He does this when he is at home together with his step mother, Fatma. She is

the wife of his father, Raden Kaslan. Fatma is still young and her age is the same as his; besides, she is beautiful and makes him interested in her. While lying on the bed in his bedroom, he gazes at her who only wears a thin dress. This can be seen in the quotation below.

His step mother stood, opening the window curtain, and Suryono gazed at his step mother, Fatma, who was still young, as old as him, and she was still twenty nine years when his father married her and when he was still abroad one and a half year ago... And now, while lying on the bed to gaze his step mother, Suryono was imagining he was having a sexual relation between him and his step mother. (Lubis, 1970: 19)

In the above quotation, it can be seen that there is a visual adultery done by Suryono. He gazes into her face and the form of her body. He purposely does it because his step mother's face is pretty and the form of her body really seduces him. Furthermore, he sees that she lets him gaze her. She even likes to be treated in such a way.

Mental Adultery

In the theory of adultery, this type of adultery is described as to look with an intentional and conscious desire to gratify lust, to picture situation in the mind, to think adultery in the mind with a person to the point that if the opportunity were presented you would commit the physical act.

In the novel it is found that Saimun buys a single cigarette and sits down on a road side while smoking cigarette after he gets his monthly salary. At this moment, he feels very rich and comfortable, and his thought often comes to the woman who has seduced him. His thought stirs his desire. This mental adultery can be proved through the quotation below.

In his pants pocket, there was money amounting to twenty nine rupiahs. He thought he was very rich. His mind, however, often returned to the young woman in the hut near to the garbage exile.....Now his thought was full of the young woman's shadow. This thought, however, did not disturb the tranquility of his heart. Besides, the thought was accompanied by pleasing shadows, hot and stirring his heart. (Lubis, 1970: 16-17)

In the above quotation, it can be seen that Saimun commits a mental adultery. Through this quotation, it is described that he always thinks about the young woman that he has ever seen before. He imagines that he would have a pleasing moment with her. The woman, in his mind, has really stirred his sexual desire.

In one occasion, Suryono meets his friend, Ies, a woman who works with him at the same office. At this moment, they are sitting in a near distance. Suryono looks at her who is sitting near to him. He looks at her face which looks smooth and the form of her breasts which are full. In such a moment, he imagines her without wearing a dress and lies besides him on a bed. He even compares her with Fatma that he has already knows

anything about her parts of her body. The forms of this mental adultery can be proved through the quotation below.

He looked at Ies who was sitting beside him, her smooth face, her full breasts, and his mind ... he imagined Ies without a dress, and lying beside him on a bed, and he then compared her with Fatma. The young woman felt that she was gazed, and she then looked at Suryono. What she had seen in the eyes of Suryono made her face red. And she soon avoiding seeing him. (Lubis 1970: 53)

The above quotation describes that Suryono has done a mental adultery. He does this towards his friend, Ies, the young woman working together with him at the same office. It has been found that he is really seduced by the pretty face and the good body form of her. Soon he imagines that he would be lucky if he could sleep together with her after sexual intercourse.

Physical Adultery

The relationship between Suryono and his step mother is very close. They always stay at home together and sometimes they go out dancing together. In such a condition Fatma, his step mother asks him to call her by her name, not to call her as a mother. Suryono smiles at himself because this happens for the first time between he and his step mother, and it is in his father's room. At that moment, they have just gone home from the ballroom. There is no one at home when they come in. From his step mother's room, he can hear that she is calling him. Then, he comes to her room and finds her changing his dress. Though at first he is reluctant to come into her room, he is finally brave enough to come closer to her because he sees that she has already opened her dress and she only wears her night gown. Then, he and she commit a sexual intercourse. Their deed to commit a physical adultery can be seen in the quotation below.

"Come in," he heard Fatma's voice. He opened the door, he saw Fatma changing her clothes behind the curtain near to the cupboard. "I want to look for my father's album, Fat," said he. "Do you know where?" "Here," said Fatma, "Take it here." For a moment, he was reluctant to come, but later he went to the back side of the curtain, and he looked at Fatma only wearing her night gown which was very thin. Suryono did not remember for sure how to do it, he only remembered that later he stood from the bed of his father. Fatma slept on the bed and they finally did that ... (Lubis, 1970: 20-21)

In the above quotation, it can clearly be seen that Suryono and his step mother have committed a type of adultery which is known as a physical adultery. It is found that Suryono commits the adultery with his father's wife in the room of his father. This is his first time to do it to somebody that is actually forbidden. It is something shameful. He, however, does not care about what he has just done with his father's wife. He is even proud to have done it because in his opinion he is able to satisfy her.

After the first happening, the second one happens very easily, and even the third. A week after the first night, every night he sleeps together with Fatma in his father

bedroom. Both of them look like drunken persons. Later after he gets the news from his father, Raden Kaslan, that he wants to go home and asks for them to fetch him in the airport, they then stop their forbidden activities. However, before the fetch Mr Raden Kaslan, Fatma asks Suryono whether he will be angry with them or not if he knows later that they have already done the physical adultery which, of course, must not be done by them.

In the question made by Fatma, there is no symptom of her restlessness or fear. The question only sounds as a joke, as if he was quite sure that she can cheat her husband. She then laughs and bites Suryono's cheek. Though Suryono first thinks that it is not good for them to say something about the weakness of his father, he finally can accept it in his mind.

They never discuss whether they love each other or not. They do not care about love. What they really want to get is only the intimate relationship between them. After Raden Kaslan goes to leave them again, they do not feel any form of a tension anymore. Even his father asks Suryono to accompany his step mother to watch movie together, to come to feast places and so on. Suryono and Fatma think that they are free to do a physical adultery wherever and whenever they want to. This form of adultery that they do it again can be seen in the quotation below.

Afterwards he kissed Fatma's nape on the bed that morning. The drizzle still fall outside, and he felt that the breasts of Fatma became tight and tense under his hands, and the woman hugged him hard and kissed his mouth and then she suddenly grabbed himself and ran to the door. "Ouch, you are very naughty," said he opened the door and came out. (Lubis, 1970: 23)

From the above quotation it can be seen that Suryono and his step mother, Fatma, becomes braver and feels comfortable to continue their forbidden deed. They feel what they have done will not be known by Mr Raden Kaslan. They also think that he may already have known what they have done but he just let them do it. Afterwards, they even go into the bathroom to take a bath together.

Suryono also does a physical adultery with his friend's wife called Dahlia. He is not afraid of doing the adultery even though Dahlia is his friend's wife. He asks her to go to a certain place where he and she can do what they want. Dahlia, suggests to go to her aunt's house. Then, they do a sexual intercourse. This can be found in the following quotation:

Dahlia pulled his hand and brought him to come in. Dahlia locked the room door. The bedroom was very good. The bed sheet was white clean and was newly changed. The dressing table was found in the corner. Dahlia closed the window and soon undressed herself. (Lubis, 1970: 52)

Through the above quotation it can be seen that Suryono does a physical adultery to his friend's wife, Dahlia. They do it in the house of Dahlia's aunt. Both of them, do it as if they were husband and wife. They are not afraid that what they are doing is a

forbidden deed. Suryono really does not respect his friend whose wife is made by him as a whore.

Conclusions

Adultery is a bad deed which is not good to be done by anyone at any place and at any time. Those who are known to have done such a forbidden deed tend to be hated by most people. They can even be abused with vulgar words by many people, especially by the wounded spouses. Most of the people who are brave enough to commit adultery are those who are not close to the doctrines of their religions so that they do not care about the possible effects of their deed. There must be various consequences or effects of committing adultery. The consequences or effects of committing such a deed can be in the forms of feeling guilty and shame, loss of trust and intimacy, divorce, loneliness, and illness. There must be some other effects that will possibly happen to those who are quite brave to commit adultery. Regarding this, the research results show that there are three types of adultery found in the novel: Visual Adultery, that is through eye-sight to form some erotic images; Mental Adultery, through formation of certain erotic images in imagination and Physical Adultery, that is through physical contact, all of which have been committed by the major characters of the novel.

References

- Ahsan, Rahim. (2011). *Islamic Syaria*. Boston: Blanc. Inc.
- Ary, Donald. (1972). *Introduction to Research in Education*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc.
- Dillon, John. (2016). *The Heirs of Religion*. Oxford: Oxford Press.
- Dworkin, Roger B. (1998). *Limits: The Role of the Law in Bioethical Decision Making*. Indiana: Indiana University Press.
- Kutty, Sheikh Ahmad. (2016). *How Islam Views Adultery*. Toronto: Fatwa Bank.
- Lubis, Mochtar. (1970). *Senja di Jakarta*. Jakarta: Pustaka Jaya.
- Sinclair, John. et al. (1987). *Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary*. London: William Collins Sons & Co Ltd.
- White, Lesli. (2017). *Types of Adultery You Probably Didn't Know About*. Retrieved from www.beliefnet.com>affairs-and-divorce on 12 February 2018
- Whitman, Donald. (2014). *Marital Affairs*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan
- Yao, Phillip. (2009). *Essence of Religion*. Cambridge: University Press.