

## Women of Three Nations in Indonesian Resurrection: a Feminist Approach on "Jejak Langkah - Rumah Kaca"

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**ABSTRACT:** "Jejak Langkah - Rumah Kaca" is the final part in the tetralogy of Pulau Buru by Pramoedya Ananta Toer. The story is about the beginning of the nations unity movement in Indonesia. Started with human consciousness of Indonesia about equality of rights, it then build the power to compete, competing with the European community. It was the beginning of the 20th century that was called as the beginning of the rise of the Indonesian. This article discusses about three female characters in the story " Jejak Langkah - Rumah Kaca", namely Ang san Mei, Princes van Kasiruta, and Siti Soendari. They came from three different nations, namely Tionghoa, Ambon and Java. The characters are analyzed using Feminist theory. The result shows the appearance in power of behavior and thinking of the three female characters from different nationalities and religions to arouse nationalism in the society. The character of each different character confuses the Gubermen (Government of the Dutch East Indies).

**Keywords:** *Figures, Feminists, Nationalists*

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### INTRODUCTION

The origin of the concept of "nation" in Indonesia is an interesting event for the observers of the formation history of modern countries. Nationalism in Indonesia was built not only by men's power, but many female characters that had great strengths . Many historical theorician have written women's gait in the process of Indonesian unity. There are also many writers who tell about tough women in the early days of Indonesian nationalism. One of the historical novels that tells about women and its nationalism is the Tetralogy of Buru by Pramoedya Ananta Toer. Nationalism in Indonesia original, it does not plagiarize American and French historical models.

The tetralogy of Buru consists of Bumi Manusia, Anak Semua Bangsa, Jejak Langkah, and Rumah Kaca. The last two novels, i.e Jejak Langkah and Rumah Kaca are the material objects of this study. The two works of Toer tells the story of three female characters who have strong thoughts and attitudes of the struggle of Indonesian nationalism, they are Ang Mei, Princes van Kasiruta, and Siti Soendari.

Literary works are created by authors on the basis of social experience that took place in his life and his outlook and even his ideology. The precipitates of the philosophy of the past accepted by the author may by their critical attitude affect the literary work created by the author. Furthermore, the community accepted the work, initially as a necessity of art that finally could be a solution to a problem and then can form a new way of viewing the world that has been superficial and monotonous. The presence of literary works is not merely questioning the new worldview, but can also present new literary conventions even as a rejection of existing conventions. Jejak Langkah and Rumah Kaca can be placed as a work that can refer to the world view in society, both in its creation and its universal values that are still useful for today's society.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the women characters understood the concept that people who give something positive novelty for mankind will get a decent place. They criticize the attitude of the Dutch

East Indies government who was afraid to run out of places so that they are fighting over the earth and its contents.

## THEORY

The discussion was carried out by utilizing the theory of Liberal Feminism and Existentialist Feminism. Liberal feminism is a women's movement that demands equal rights before men, the movement is diplomatic. Existentialist feminism is a woman's appeal of her existence as a woman of different potential with men.

The view of feminism globally is divided into three major currents of thought, which are then classified into first, second, and third currents. However, according to Abrams and Harpham<sup>1</sup>, there are three main aspects that outline the way feminism, especially in the field of literature.

1. That civilization (especially Western civilization) is built on a patriarchal foundation (made by the father). This refers to a system controlled by men and makes women subordinate in the system, whether in family, religion, politics, economic, social, legal, or artistic.
2. That category of sex of a person "temporarily" is determined by anatomical concepts. In other words, a person can be regarded as a man or woman because of his physical characteristics. This then will then take a role in shaping whether a person will be "masculine" or "feminine". Only, this anatomical factor will not take a big role because it is actually a social construction factor that became the main actor in shaping a person's gender.
3. Furthermore, is that the great writings containing patriarchal ideology until now only written mainly by men and intended for men. Generally, dominating characters are also described as men who "manifest masculine traits, to experience masculine interests, within the scope of masculine action. Meanwhile, female characters tend to be considered marginal and subordinate.

In the book of *di Bawah Bendera Revolusi* (Under the Flag of Revolution), Sukarno<sup>2</sup> said that Nationalism is a sense of convert people of Indonesia who have only one group that is one nation. The sense of nationalism creates a sense of confidence, a sense that is indispensable in maintaining a sense of confidence in Indonesia's struggle.

Nationalism in some Asian countries evolved through reactions to popular national movements. Movements made consciously by the people to abolish the old political order were replaced by new ones<sup>3</sup>. The national personality according to Driyakarya<sup>4</sup> is the human personality as a citizen of a nation that will create national culture. Humans who have a national personality will do something to perfect the elements of the nation's personality shaping.

Society (human) is not limited, but covering all kinds of people, then nations and countries must implement that great society. From the nature of nationalism always toward internationalism. The ultimate goal is humanity that respects human rights and freedom<sup>5</sup>.

The condition of society movement (unity of Indonesia) became the background of the expression of the female characters above. They think and move about the awareness of indigenous people to unite, advance and understand about their human rights. Swingewood in Faruk<sup>6</sup> defines sociology as a scientific and objective study of man in society, the study of social institutions and processes. Public understanding of the

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<sup>1</sup> M.H Abrams., and Geoffrey G. Harpham, *Glossary of Literary Terms (Ninth Edition)*. Boston: Wardsworth Cengage Learning. 2005.

<sup>2</sup> Sukarno. *Dibawah Bendera Revolusi*. Jakarta: Panitia Penerbit Dibawah Bendera Revolusi. 1964. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Benedict Anderson. *Imagined Communities*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar. 2002. 131.

<sup>4</sup> Driyakarya. *Driyakarya tentang Negara dan bangsa*. Yogyakarta: Penerbitan Yayasan Kanisius. 1980. 16.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. 44.

<sup>6</sup> Faruk. *Pengantar Sosiologi Sastra dari Strukturalisme Genetik sampai Post- Modernisme (Edisi Revisi)*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar. 2011. 1.

importance of modern organization continues to grow, this is the discussion, i.e. how deep the awareness of Indies society (Native) in terms of forming organizations to achieve modern knowledge until finally Indonesian nationalism was formed.

## METHOD

The first step of the work step is by interpreting characterizations (female characters) on *Jejak Langkah* and *Rumah Kaca*. Next is the use of Liberal Feminist and Existentialist Feminism theory, which are applied to show the form of existence to the power of the female characters in social life in the world of text of *Jejak Langkah* and *Rumah Kaca*. About the cultural background symbols, each character is aided by several references to culture, which are linked to the concept of nationalist ideology.

## DISCUSSION and RESULT

### Ang San Mei

Minke (R.M. Tirta Adi Soerjo) knew Ang San Mei after he met Khoe Ah Su in Surabaya, when Minke was still attending HBS Surabaya. Khoe Ah Su was a young generation from China who were fighting for the nationalism of his people. He was a member of the White Lotus or in Madarin the name of his organization was called *Pai Lian Chiao*. Minke and Khoe Ah Su discussed a lot about the modern organization that would liberate the people of the East. At the beginning of 1903, Khoe Ah Su was killed, there were two speculations regarding why he was murdered, those those were that he was killed by a Chinese elderly who disagreed with modernity, and the second was that he was killed by the Europeans. Before he died, Khoe Ah Su gave a letter to Minke, he requested the letter was submitted to Ang San Mei, his lover.

Ang San Mei and Minke meeting took place in Kampung Betawi. Under the rule of the Dutch Government, ethnic Chinese must gather with their ethnic peers. Based on a mission to submit a letter from Khoe Ah Su's old friend, Minke found Ang San Mei living in a Chinese house. From the meeting there a sense of interest flourished in Minke towards Ang.

*"kenapa kamu memandangiku seperti itu?"*

*"Bukanlah kesalahanku" kataku.*

*"Akukah yang bersalah?"*

*"Iya. Kamu bersalah. Karena terlalu menarik."<sup>7</sup>*

("why do you look at me like that?" "It's not my fault," I said. "Am I guilty?" "Yes, you are guilty because you are too interesting.")

The interesting character possessed by the two figures above is about the consciousness of each individual who has the right: first to liberate his mind, the second is the right for indigenous citizens to be able to thrive through the movement of modern organizations. Feminists seek to develop a new paradigm of social criticism not based on the foundations of traditional philosophy<sup>8</sup>.

Here is Ang San Mei's comment that inspired Minke

*"Sekitar enam tahun lagi kau akan menjadi dokter. Orang-orang setumpahdarahmu yang tidak sehat akan mengunjungimu. Mereka adalah orang-orang yang kurang mampu, tidak akan mampu mereka memberi uang padamu. Pasti kau tidak mengejar kekayaan, kan? Saat itulah engkau jadi bagian dari kemiskinan masyarakatmu, orang-orang pribumi. Kurasa tidak pantas jika menambahi beban hidupmu dan bangsamu. Selanjutnya akan semakin kau pahami bahwa sakitnya bangsamu bukan hanya sakit pada tubuhnya saja, tetapi pikiran dan jiwanya juga tertatih-tatih di belakang. Mereka membutuhkan pengetahuan atau ilmu untuk menjadi masyarakat yang maju. Tugasmulah mengobati fisik dan jiwa mereka, mereka harus bangkit.*

<sup>7</sup> Toer, Pramoedya Ananta. *Jejak Langkah*. Jakarta: Lentera Dipantara. 2007. 112.

<sup>8</sup> Madan Sarup, *Poststrukturalisme dan Posmodernisme*. Yogyakarta: Jalasutra. 2011. 241.

*Apakah yang dapat kuperbantukan? Ikatatan kita masa sekarang ini tiada lain adalah masa depan yang terang, menuju bangsa yang perkasa atas diri dan tanahnya sendiri”<sup>9</sup>*

("In about six years you'll be a doctor. People of your unhealthy blood oath will visit you. They are the less fortunate, they will not be able to give you money. Surely you're not pursuing wealth, are you? That's when you become part of the poverty of your society, the natives. I do not think it is appropriate to add to the burden of your life and your nation. The more you will understand that the pain of your nation is not only the pain of the body, but the mind and soul are also limping behind. They need knowledge to be a developed society. It is your duty to treat their physical and soul, they must rise up. What can I take? Our present bond is nothing but a bright future, to a mighty nation of its own and its own land ")

However, the shared concept that has been initiated by both of them can not be continued since Ang San Mei died of illness. The people of that time would probably argue that Ang Mei might have caused Minke's failure to become a doctor, since Minke was expelled from STOVIA school because before he graduated to become a doctor, he made a prescription for Ang San Mei who was seriously ill. The failure to become a doctor and being left behind by his lover made Minke rose to be a founder of a modern organization. The first organization to be pioneered was the Priyayi Syarikat, but the organization did not develop because the Javanese priyayi were still too close and afraid of the Gubermen (Dutch Government). Next, he established the rapidly growing Islamic Trade Company plus the widespread publication through the Medan Prijaji newspaper which had spread the thoughts of Minke (Tirto Adhi Soerjo) and the members of the Syarikat Dagang Islam.

### **Prinses van Kasiruta**

Princess Fatimah or Prinses van Kasiruta was one of the princess who was exiled to Java (Sukabumi) with his father Sultan Mohammad Sadik Sjah. They both heard that there was a native figure close to Governor Van Hust. They made an introduction with Minke so that they could get permission back to their home, Maluku island. Minke could not grant the request, but the unexpected event was the presence of love between Minke and Princes along with the admiration of Sultan Mohammad Sadik Sjah, so that Minke and Princess were eventually married.

Princess van Kasiruta was gentle and respectful in the presence of his father, but she became a free and open woman before modern thinkers. In access to power, especially within the gender perspective, various factors are considered. In understanding gender relations, class aspects, social position, hierarchy in people's lives also become a reference<sup>10</sup>.

Thin thinking developed rapidly he understood the condition of indigenous peoples, especially those living in Java. He was aware of the rising spirit of nationalism. "I must be part of the nationalism flowers". Through Medan Prijaji he developed the concept of thinking for women, he admired the thought of Jepara Girl (R.A. Kartini). Prinses believes that soon the natives will publish the enlightening sun of nationalism.

In connection with the success of the movement pioneered by her husband, Minke's third wife has the martial ability derived from the father. He is a capable shooting guns. The Robert Shurof gank which were ruled by Pangemanann was successfully paralyzed. Pangemanann was the man who then made the concept Minke exile. In the story of Princess and Minke, there was also a successor named Piah, a family assistant, who then continued the ideals of Minke by becoming members of the Sjarikat Daganing Islam, keeping the oath in his own heart that she will continue the fight of Minke, when the leader was exiled to Maluku. The strength of women is sublime, not just a complement to the needs of men<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> Toer, Pramoedya Ananta. *Jejak Langkah*. Jakarta: Lentera Dipantara. 2007. 117.

<sup>10</sup> Wening. Udasmoro, *Pengantar Gender*. Yogyakarta: Unit Penerbitan FIB UGM. 2009. 63.

<sup>11</sup> J. Susilo, "Wanita-Wanita Perkasa Pencipta Dunia dalam Teks Serat Mursada". *Jurnal Parafrese*. 15 (2). 2015. 1-8.

### Siti Soendari

After Minke had disappeared from Java, there had born a child of the fruit of his thoughts about the national organization, that was Siti Soendari. She was educated woman, graduated from HBS Semarang, and a daughter of an official in Pemasang. Siti Soendari's behavior matched the characteristics stated by Driyakarya<sup>12</sup> about the human personality as a citizen of a nation that will create national culture. Human who have a national personality will do something to accomplish the elements of the nation's personality shaping. This is also in accordance with the principle of liberal feminism. As an independent woman, she traveled around Java to raise awareness of the younger generation.

Siti Soendari was a tenacious woman who always wrote articles about nationalist calls on newspapers and magazines in the Dutch Indies. In addition, she traveled around Central and East Java to call for freedom of thought for students at the People's School as well as non-formal schools. Soendari's activity was then considered disturbing by the Dutch East Indies government.

As was done to the Jepara Girls first, the government persuaded his father to have Sundari married, but it failed. There are two factors that thwarted the Dutch plan: first because Siti Soendari was aware of her position as a woman, and had read the previous woman's event of Jepara Girl (R.A. Kartini), and the second is that Soendari's father were more fond of her daughter's thoughts and soul than her position. The following dialogue quote about the determination of Siti Soendari's heart facing the seduction of women messengers of the Dutch government

*"Ampunilah sahaya Ibu, 10 tahun sahaya sekolah dan 2 tahun selanjutnya beraktivitas bukanlah untuk menunggu datangny suami"*<sup>13</sup>

("Forgive me Mam, 10 years I went to school and my 2 years next move is not done to wait for the husband)

*"Mulai anak-anak sahaya ditimang oleh ayahanda agar kelak menjadi perempuan merdeka. Ayah sahaya selalu mengizinkan aktivitas saya selama tidak merugikan diri dan nama keluarga. Cinta kasih ayahanda menjadi penyinar bagi sahaya dan keluarga sahaya"*<sup>14</sup>

(Starting from when I was a child, I was lulled by my daddy in order to become an independent woman. My father always allowed my activities as long as it does not to harm myself and my surname. The love of my father became a glowing witness for my family and my sister ")

The full compassionate of the family gives the independence to its members, including those who are female. Such independence has the potential to become the seed of nationalism for its people. Driyakarya<sup>15</sup> described the beginning was the concept of humanity resulting from the presence of democratic principles that will lead to elements of nationality in living together. The togetherness is a national togetherness. Sukarno<sup>16</sup> said that democracy will build the life of the national unity of Indonesia is a genuine democracy characterized and born in Indonesia. The salvation (welfare) sought is the salvation of all human beings.

### CONCLUSION

The three female characters in *Jejak Langkah* and *Rumah Kaca* have a foresight about the perfection of national understanding in Indonesia even for the international community. Ang San Mey is from China, she supported all movements that promote freedom and equality of rights for all mankind. Princess van Kasiruta from Maluku proves that indigenous women (Indonesian) have a great spirit and power in realizing

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<sup>12</sup> Driyakarya. *Driyakarya tentang Negara dan bangsa*. Yogyakarta: Penerbitan Yayasan Kanisius. 1980. 16.

<sup>13</sup> Toer, Pramoedya Ananta. *Jejak Langkah*. Jakarta: Lentera Dipantara. 2007. 435.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. 436.

<sup>15</sup> Driyakarya. *Driyakarya tentang Negara dan bangsa*. Yogyakarta: Penerbitan Yayasan Kanisius. 1980. 45.

<sup>16</sup> Sukarno. *Dibawah Bendera Revolusi*. Jakarta: Panitia Penerbit Dibawah Bendera Revolusi. 1964. 173.

Indonesian nationalism and unity. The great Siti Soendari, who were born in the middle of the strict feudalism in Javanese environment proves that family affection does not paralyze the progress of development, it is able to plant the seeds of nationalism for the people of Indonesia. The wholeness of nationalism does not look at ethnic nor origin. Successful nationalism aims at internationalism. The climax is a humanity that upholds human rights, and perfect freedom for all mankind.

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