

## REPRESENTATION OF GENDER IDEOLOGY IN INDONESIA NOVELS: A STUDY OF THE REFORMATION ERA NOVEL

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### ABSTRACT

This research was based on a phenomenon that gender ideology practiced by a society might be reflected in the production of literary work. Thus, even though a novel is known as an imaginative work, its content and gender ideology could not be detached from social reality. The aims of this research were describing the role and gender identity, the types of gender ideology, and the gender relationship issues in the Indonesia novel written during reformation era. Gramsci's theory of hegemony and gender perspective helped to describe the problems presented in this article. The formal object of this research was elaborating gender ideology presented in four novels written by Indonesian authors during reformation era, namely *Saman* by Ayu Utami, *GeniJora* by Abidah El Khalieqy, *Nayla* by Djenar Maesa Ayu, and *Tanah Tabu* by Anindita S. Tayf. The research method implemented was library research. This research showed the variety of ideologies that occupy literature as the site of struggle among ideologies. The results of the research are the four novels represent the patriarchal ideology, familialism ideology, ibuism ideology, and general gender ideology. The four gender ideologies create domestication of the position and the role of women. The existence and the organization of the gender ideology are supported by masculine hegemony in Indonesian culture.

**Keywords:** gender, gender ideology, reformation era, hegemony

### INTRODUCTION

Literary work is a reflection or depiction of its era, which has its problem and various tendencies. Issues and trends may be reproduced in the form of literary work written during the era. This happens for the author who created the work of society of the era. They may observe and comprehend life and its problems from realities around them, which later influenced their works. It is not surprisingly if later, literary work from one particular period indicates certain trends according to the trend of the era.

This trend is also found in the novel written during the era of reformation. The revolution of technology, information, and globalization have begun to strengthen since the 1990s. The emergence to broader access to information has fueled the development of feminist thought in Indonesia. This thought becomes increasingly strong, radical, open and complex. Further, freedom of the press in the year the 2000s led to freedom of thought and expression. This freedom allows a tendency to freedom in writing fiction (novel). Namely, literary work has been dominated by issues such as body as sexuality including gender problems

and deconstruction on gender ideology practiced by society. As Blackburn (2004) stated that freed from the trammels of New Order ideology, the Ministry for Woman's role become more outspoken, critiquing government policies from the viewpoint of gender equality. Many women started to write this kind of work, and some male writers are also found writing the same theme.

Furthermore, Suryakusuma (2007) stated that since the Reformation era, the literary field is more developed compared to other fields, such as economics, politics, education, health, transportation and any other fields. The mushroomed of literature in the era of reformation can be said to be booming in many a wide range and genre such as local literature, Islamic literature, community literature, children literature, chick lit, teen lit, as well as cyber literature. However, this article will be limited to explore gender problems in the work of literature.

Concerning this study, four Indonesian novels written during reformation era serve as material objects. These novels are *Saman* by Ayu Utami, *Geni Jora* by Abidah El Khalieqy, *Nayla* by Djenar Maesa Ayu, and *Tanah Tabu* by Anindita S. Tayf. The four novels represent the dominant

gender ideology. Furthermore, the subjects to be discussed are (1) Roles and identity of gender, (2) Kinds of gender ideology, and (3) The relation of gender issue to the Reformation era in Indonesian novel using Gramsci Hegemony and gender analysis.

Greenstein as cited in Kroska (2001) and Yucel (2012) has defined gender ideologies as how a person identifies herself or himself concerning marital and family roles that are traditionally linked to gender. Udasmoro (2009) also mentioned that gender is a social relation between different sexes involving social, political, and cultural aspects. Some views see the determination of gender as a natural for women has reproduction organ such as the uterus, ovum, vagina, and breastfeeding. Women are also known to be blessed with gentle, natural traits such as beautiful, emotional, motherly. Meanwhile, men are considered to be manly and rational. It means that men may have those called female natural traits, and so do women. Therefore, gender is not a natural but rather roles practiced within a society in which women poses in feminine roles and men in masculine ones.

According to Saptari and Holzner (1997), gender ideology influences women's behavior and social relations between men and women. Through certain mechanism, ideology can be the dominant force in the society. Suryakusuma (1991) states that gender ideology constructed by Indonesian, ideology defines men and women in narrow, limited, and stereotypical roles. Gender ideology governs women and men's identity, position, behavior. The form of this ideology can be dominant or appears in one place or the certain time (Saptari & Holzer, 1997). Compared to matriarchal ideology, patriarchal ideology is considered to be the most dominant in Asia (Bhasin as cited in Yulianeta, 2008). Meanwhile in British Capitalist society and Indonesia, *familialism* is very dominant. According to Abdullah (as cited in Yulianeta, 2008), this *familialism* ideology is widespread and pervasive to the public or social arena. Mies and Djayadiningrat (as cited in Suryakusuma, 1991) shows that during the New Order era, the ideology of *ibuism* was very dominant in Indonesia. *Ibuism* is an ideology that consists of a combination of bourgeois values and traditional noble value that allow whatever action taken by women for the sake of the family, community, class, firm, or state without asking or hoping any reward. Furthermore Suryakusuma (1991) claimed that gender ideology which was very dominant during the New Order is ideology *bapak-ibuism* posed a father as main sources of power and mother as the medium of power in society. Asian countries apply various forms of public ideology that emphasizes the value of female seclusion, exclusion of women from certain areas (exclusion), and emphasize women's femininity.

Related to gender ideology, literature plays important roles to the ideology. Literature as part of discursive practice within a society as conducted by mass media participating in setting up or changing ideology (Budianta, 1998; Wiyatmi, 2010; Manuaba, 2015). Women studies has proved that symbolic world including literature has become an established institution that forms, organize, and preserve dominant gender ideology (Saptari & Holzer, 1997; Marching, 2007; Pillai, 2011; Nair & Rosli, 2013; Antonio, 2015). Novels as part of arena and symbolic cultural organization proves having a major influence in forming, organizing, preserving and directing as well promoting gender ideology.

As a form of scientific activities, research work of literature requires a theoretical foundation. The selection of various theories used is directed by the problem to be answered by research and by the objectives to be achieved by this study (Chamamah-Soeratno, 2001). Theoretical basis used to address issues that have been raised is Gramsci's theory of hegemony and gender analysis. Gramsci's concept of hegemony is introduced into the British cultural studies in the early 1970s that contributed the new perspective on popular culture (including literature). The starting point of Gramsci's concept of hegemony is that a class and its members exercise power towards the classes below it by force and persuasion (Simon, 2001; Fontana, 2000). Hegemony is not a relationship of domination by using the power, but relations with the consensus using political leadership and ideology. So it can be said that hegemony is a consensus organization.

In his *Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci used a variety of terms that he said is equivalent to ideology, such as culture, philosophy, worldview or conception of the world. Similarly, there is the term intellectual and moral reformation when Gramsci talked about the transformation of consciousness as a prerequisite for improvements to socialism (Simon, 2004; Forgacs & Smith, 2012). Ideology is a material that is manifested in the rules and ways of life carried out by individuals collectively. Ideology always provides a variety of rules for human's practical action, which is conducted collectively. This, later, manifests in the social practices of the institutions and organizations where social practices take place.

Thus, Gramsci's concept of hegemony rests on its intellectual and moral leadership. Leadership means dominated classes voluntarily commit to being ruled or led by the dominant class. The agreement of dominated class occurs because the dominant class success in instilling the ideology. Ideological internalization is done by building a system and institutions, such as state, common sense, culture, organization, education, and others, which strengthens the hegemony. Besides that, the hegemony to the lower classes does not always run smoothly. Barriers and obstacles may occur, especially from classes who do not accept the hegemony. This disagreement can be undertaken by repressive action taken by state apparatus, such as the police. Domination and hegemony become important in Gramsci theory.

Then, gender analysis is an analysis that is considered to be new and has positive responses lately. This analysis has helped to sharpen the social analysis that already exist. Gender analysis is a critical analysis that sharpens the existing critical analysis (Fakih, 2008). The development of gender analysis (women studies and gender studies) is largely influenced by the evolvement of women's movement or feminism. Due to the diversity of the women's movement and feminism, the definition of gender analysis is also found numerous (Saptari & Holzner, 1997; Mosse, 2007; Fakih, 2008). However, in general, it can be said that women's studies or gender analysis try to lift the women in the better position. Here, gender studies is viewed as gender justice and gender equality (structurally and culturally). According to Saptari and Holzner (1997), there are two purposes of the women's study or gender analysis, namely (1) to gain an understanding of the mechanism of development of asymmetrical relations by gender, race, class in society, and its preservation. (2) to search strategy that may change the situation to a situation which embodies a more symmetrical relationship.

## METHODS

The research method implemented is library research. It based on concepts of ideology, gender and literature. This research shows the variety of ideologies that occupy literature as the site of struggle among ideologies. Therefore, the novel does not articulate single ideology but ideologies.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

*Saman*, a novel by Ayu Utami, represents gender roles of women accepted by Mak Argani and his mother, Wis. Traditional female gender roles are rejected by modern women such as Laila, Shakuntala, Yasmin, and Cok. Besides female gender role, *Saman* represents male gender role. The prominent male gender roles of men in the *Saman* are those who has already been existing culturally, namely their roles in the public arena. Male gender roles are accepted by Sudoyo (Wis's father), Mintoraharjo (Shakuntala's father), Wisanggeni (Wis/Saman), Sihar, Anson, and Nasri. Sudoyo is the head of the family as well as the head of the Bank in Perabumulih. Shakuntala's father is a head of the household as well as a lecturer. As the head of the household, they exercise their power traditionally. It seems that they enforce their ideology to their daughter.

Novel *GeniJora* by Abidah El Khalieqy represents contemporary female gender role despite having different backgrounds from the novel *Saman*. The setting of the novel is girl's boarding school where women are depicted to dedicate all their time to improve the ability in the public sector. For example the characters Jora, Masid, Mishwa, and Elya. This novel does not overlook traditional female gender roles to illustrate contemporary gender roles of women. Women who have traditional gender roles depicted as grandmother, mother of Jora, and Omi (mother) Ida. They spend the time to fulfill their roles in the domestic sphere, such as cooking, washing, and caring children.

*GeniJora* presents significant differences of traditional female gender role from the contemporary one. Female traditional gender role is portrayed to be very dependent on her husband as breadwinner. Therefore, they have no other choice and accept the decision of their husbands who want to conduct the polygamous marriage. Unlike the female characters represents having diverse gender roles, in these novels, all the figures represent men that have traditional gender roles. Male characters are illustrated to spend their time in the public sector, as breadwinners, and very active for self-actualization in the public domain.

In the novel *Nayla*, the women role presents in such a way to attract the attention of the reader regarding the construction of masculine reality that turns into feminine reality. Nayla, her mother, and Jul are dominant in constructing that reality. At home, Nayla does not perform cores related to the domestic sphere, so she is considered to be a contemporary woman. As a student, Nayla is always associated with school activities. As children of the higher class parent, Nayla has servants who provide the service in the domestic arena. Such description indicates that the economy affects the level of gender roles performed by a character.

Nayla, who has the contemporary gender roles, is considered to be a tool for the author to deconstruct women's gender roles. Nayla rises questioned regarding the existence of differential treatment toward women and men.

As describe in Nayla's dialogue, "I was wondering why this skills only that they provide to women" (Utami, 2005). In a patriarchal culture, women are constructed as an individual who is more inferior than men. Unlike the female characters, the male characters in this novel are portrayed to have the traditional gender role, namely working in the public sector.

*Tanah Tabu* is a novel that depicts the life in Papua. There is a tendency in this novel to illustrate the requirement of women to be a devoted wife, submissive, patient, quiet, forgiving and other attitudes that will grow as needed. The novel said that if a woman requires her husband's love, she must possess the requisites, such as women are required to bury their feelings. While, the male character is described as brave, who is never flinch in battle and hunting in the wild forest. Stereotypes above reveal that woman has no other choice except to accept what was given to her. The existence of these stereotypes leads women to fight against it. Women must fight for an equal position as that for men. One of the aspects that makes women equal to men is education. By having education, women may attain opportunity as men, and may achieve a better life.

*Saman* represents the patriarchal ideology, *familialism*, *Ibuism*, and general ideology. Patriarchal ideology is the ideology that emphasizes the power of fathers (men) who dominate, subordinate and discriminate women. In this case, women are placed as second class, inferior, subordinated, and marginalized. In a patriarchal society, patriarchal elements are used to rationalize subordination and discrimination against women, as shown in the myth legend of the fall.

Meanwhile, *familialism* or familial ideology is the ideology that constructs women's role at home as a housewife, a good wife, and a good mother. As a woman, Laila is trying to find a man who deserves to have a family and wants to make her parents happy because both are rewarding worship. Shakuntala who has been indifferent to marriage and hell, and considers marriage as hypocritical prostitution, also assumes that the family is a beautiful thing because it is rewarding and makes the parents happy.

Furthermore in *Saman*, *Ibuism* ideology is represented through New Order attitudes toward women in the military organizational structure. It is clear that the role of women is to be companion to their husband, and then as the mother, the later acting in the public space with additional role as breadwinner. *GeniJora* also represents *familialism* and patriarchal gender ideology. Patriarchal gender ideology is found through the behavior and the mindset of Jora's grandmother and family. Meanwhile, Nayla unveils patriarchal ideology, which is later challenged and deconstructed. The deconstruction of the patriarchal ideology is found through the narration of Nayla's mind. For example, when Nayla is in the nightclubs and places of rehabilitation, while she is in a disco, a lot of men want to get her body because they think Nayla is a virgin. From this condition, Nayla considers that men who just desire female virginity are stupid men. The reason is that the issue of virginity is no more than a myth created by men.

Type of the dominant gender ideology contained in the *Tanah Tabu* is general and patriarchal ideology. Patriarchal ideology represented in this novel is a form of preferential treatment of men than women. The boy is described to be more desirable than girls. This is illustrated from Leksi's father who just admits Lukas, and so does Yosi's parents who just wish for a boy, not a girl.

Reformation is one effort to update the system, actors, ideologies, structures, and mechanisms of political power

(Jurdi, 2008). The reformation era has some products such as social, political, cultural, and economic product. Products in the field of social reformation has resulted more open access in term of international relations. This has allowed an interaction of local values and external values that has influences the community perspective. These changes are assumed to have influenced the viewpoint regarding the interaction of women. With the influx of foreign influence, Indonesian society addresses some questions regarding values they have been living and holding. In the literature this can be seen from the work of Ayu Utami, *Saman*. In this work, Ayu Utami can freely express things that are considered taboo to discuss. It is also closely related to the lifting of press license to mass media and the dissolution of the Ministry of Information (including body sensor in it).

A novel with the background of New Order government repression shows how the authority maintained the power by ruling repressively. *Saman* is described as a priest who is touched to help people who are oppressed by the state through its military apparatus. *Saman* finally disrobed his ministry and became a fugitive activist. In the context of this novel, *Saman* is described as organic intellectuals. According to Gramsci, the politically conscious intellectual has views toward the dominant hegemony. *Saman* poses AyuUtami as an organic intellectual. As Indonesian people who have the awareness of the existence of a dominant hegemony, Ayu Utami narrates the injustice to women through the depiction of the character of Shakuntala, Laila, Cok, and Yasmin. Through these characters, Ayu Utami addresses what is called taboo regarding female sexuality.

Through the character of Shakuntala, Ayu Utami expresses the injustice suffered by women, especially on the discourse of virginity that according to Javanese culture, women should dedicate her virginity to her husband. Shakuntala believes that marriage is worship that will bring reward, but she states that marriage is hypocritical prostitution. Then, AyuUtami illustrates Shakuntala to free herself from man and take control of her body by dedicating her virginity to herself.

In addition, Ayu Utami also shows that injustice is also caused by the misinterpretation of the holy book. In the Bible, women are portrayed as the cause of the fall of man to the earth. This can be found from the dialogue between *Saman* and Yasmin. Through the dialogues, Ayu Utami launched a discourse about ideology. Thus, this novel can be said to shed light and bring into public discussion on the topic of gender ideology.

In the Reformation era, the rights to express aspirations become wider and greater. Ayu Utami is referred as the author who created the literary canon (*Saman*) for she offers a new color to Indonesian literature. She encourages to reveal things considered taboo. This novel is the best seller in its time and has encouraged other writers to write about the themes of sexuality. The theme of sexuality in the novel *Saman* can also be seen as a discourse of liberation. Liberation here means liberation from taboos and censorship. According to Foucault (2000), sexuality is socially constructed and very closely related to power. It is a historical product of a system of surveillance, control which construct social atmosphere. All elements of repression, namely the prohibition, rejection, censorship, and denial, can be seen as asocial construction machinery, including the construction of sexuality.

According to Foucault (2000), there are some characteristics of how power constructs sexuality as mentioned; (1) The existence of a negative relationship

in the form of exclusion, neglect, rejection, inhibition and disguises. (2) The existence of the rule of law governing sex, for example, the law, and so on. (3) Cycle prohibition that aims at that sexuality denies itself. (4) Logic sensors, this prohibition has three forms, namely, that it should not be, it cannot be talked, and denial that it exists. (5) Unity device means power over applied at all levels.

Characterization of the sexuality construction in the novel can be seen through the character of Shakuntala as follows:

*“My name is Shakuntala. Dad and my sister called me a bitch. For I have slept with a few men and some women. Although not attract a fee.”* (Utami, 2002).

*“Here, in this town, at the night he tied me to the bed and gave me my first two lessons about love. He said: First, only men should approach women. Women who chase men must be bitches. Second, women will dedicate their body to proper men, and they are going to live with him and make living for her. It is called marriage.”*(Utami, 2002).

Based on those quotations, Shakuntala is required to separate her sexual desires from traditional Javanese rule, which states that only men should approach women. The quote shows that regulation of the sex is generally applied. Her sister and father who consider Shakuntala as a bitch are an evidence that sex regulation is generally applied to all level of society. Moreover, the previous quotations also unveil that the existence of laws governing sexuality on how sexuality should not be and so on.

*“Perhaps I am tired with all that hinders our relationship with Indonesia. I am tired with the values that sometimes terrorize me. I want to get away from it and make everything we want to happen. I want to break all obstacle that blocks my relationship with Sihar. Perhaps.”*(Utami, 2002)

In this quotation, Ayu Utami illustrates that the character of Laila feels tired of Indonesian law that she considers blocking her relationship with Sihar. The text states that there is a law that regulates sex in Indonesia.

Product of reformation era in politics is licensing of foreign people to invest in the education sector. As a result, education becomes more expensive. This policy influences poor people in that they would prefer to give education to their sons than to their daughters. The patriarchal ideology motivates this condition. This can be seen through the novel, *Tanah Tabu* that demonstrates the importance of education, as follows:.

*“Yosi also is okay even though she did not go to school because her parents could not afford to buy the uniforms. I know she is lying! There are a few of my friends who do not wear uniform, but they are still allowed going to school. All I know is Yosi is not allowed to attend the school because she was a girl, she has to take care of her three young sisters and help her mother who is pregnant, work at home and in the garden.”* (Thayf, 2009).

The economy condition of Leksi’s family influences to give priority to men for accessing education rather than women. In the quotation above, it can be seen another aspect that is used as a reason why Dani tribedo not give

priority for women to access education. Anindita S. Tayf explicitly explains that education can make people know the things that are important to know, so that other people cannot deceive us. According to a new hegemony by Gramsci (as cited in Simon, 2001), we must create new hegemony opposite to the capitalism, if such condition accumulates. The creation of the hegemony must be built based on alteration of consciousness, thinking patterns, and apprehension to conception of the world, as well as their moral norms of behavior. This can be done with education.

The authors, Ayu Utami, Abidah El Khalieqy, Djenar Maesa Ayu, and Anindita S. Tayf acknowledge the existence of gender ideology prevailing in the society that causes inequality and gender injustice. They stated that through neutral description, claims, and parody in the novels. They show some gender bias from their community. The authors admit that one of the roots of gender inequality and injustice occurs because the weakness of women in bargaining to the men. Women empowerment is the best solution to eradicate exploitation, discrimination, and the marginalization in the future. It means that internal power and independence of women must be empowered.

The authors agree that existence of women protests the prevailing gender ideology in society. All of them appreciate women who are independent and smart. They like women who are stable when reviled by the patriarchal society as they struggle to fulfill their needs. All of them support feminist struggle so that they are no longer inferior. Feminist struggle with the issue of gender equality or equal in all aspect seems to be difficult to reach. Patriarchal values remain solid that have already been established for so long, and most of the men still inherit the patriarchal ideology from their family. Some women fall into enjoying position offered by the patriarchal system. Ironically, they were feminists who actively challenged patriarchal systems in the past.

All authors approve the feminist struggle done slowly and tenderly. They are aware of the existence of women inequality in a patriarchal system. Therefore, they support the feminist movement challenging inequality in a patriarchal system. They demand changes, stability, and independence in the patriarchal system in society. They admit the strength and power of the patriarchal system.

## CONCLUSIONS

Indonesian novels published during reformation era represent roles and traditional gender roles, egalitarian contemporary, multiple roles and traditional male and female identities. The types of patriarchal gender ideology presented in the novels are familialism ideology, ibuism ideology, and general ideology. Then, gender ideology creates domestication of the position and role of women. The existence and organization of gender ideology are caused by the hegemony of masculinity in Indonesian culture.

Therefore, according to Gramsci (as cited in Simon, 2001), hegemony must create new hegemony to oppose the capitalists. The creation of the hegemony must be built by alteration of consciousness, thinking patterns, and understanding on the conception of the world as well as their moral norms of behavior. This can be done by education. Regarding gender issues, the authors from the Reformation era can be termed as an organic intellectual who offers a new ideology to destroy the old ideological hegemony.

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