

REVOLUTION AND NATIONALISM ISSUES IN THE INDONESIAN NOVELS IN THE 1950s

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Abstract

Indonesian Revolution and Nationalism in the 1950s were still become a hot topic and were widely discussed by the writers, considering that Indonesia as a new Republic had its own social and political problems by the way of a newly independent nation. This study reports on how the Revolution and Nationalism of Indonesia was represented in the literature works especially in of the novel published in the 1950s. Therefore, this study uses descriptive analytical methods which provide a systematic, actual, and accurate painting of the facts, properties, and relationships between the phenomena investigated (Nasir, 1988, p. 65). The technique of collecting data is based on literature studies, where data are chosen and selected according to research interests. In this research the focalization and narrative techniques are used to reveal the issue of revolution and nationalism in the novel. In addition, the novels of 1950's is the result of reciprocal influence between various social and structural factors. Thus the novel published in the 1950s can be treated as one of the "historical documents" that describes the socio-political phenomena in Indonesia during that time.

Keywords: Revolution, nationalism, Indonesian novels of 1950s, history, document.

1. Introduction

Revolution and nationalism were two prominent issues in the Indonesian novel in 1950's. In that period, Indonesia was still a newly nation and country that seeks to organize its national life. The independence achieved in 1945 was challenged by invaders who were not willing to admit Indonesian independence. For instance, the declaration of independence by Soekarno and Hatta received challenge with the first aggression in 1947 and the second aggression in 1948.

Sumardjo (1991, p. xii) mentioned that the theme of revolution in Indonesian literary works in the 1950s were the top works which described the war of Indonesian independence. Rosidi called this period as a transition period in the history of Indonesian

literature because the new economic and political impact also weakened the production of Indonesian literature, especially novels. The publishing number of novels in this period was not more than 50 novels. Sumardjo (1991, p. xviii) recorded only 34 good novels were published in the 1950s. Meanwhile, the latest data recorded by the Indonesian Literature History Research Team of Badan Bahasa was 47 novels. The limited number of publication novels in the 1950s was inseparable from the lack of socio-economic situation in that year. Filling out independence is not as easy as one thinks according to Rosidi (1969, p. 134). The economic and political crisis that occurred in the real world turned out to affect the world of literature as well. The crisis was seen in the reduction of novel publishing when compared to the Balai Pustaka period. Most of the novel only publish in the magazine and not publish as a book during that time. This publishing literary works phenomenon is called by Notosusanto (2000, p. 281) as a crisis event in Indonesian literature in his writing entitled "Situation 1954".

Beside novels, the other production of literary works in the 1950s were poetry, short stories, and dramas. These works were published in various media, like entertainment magazines and literary magazines such as *Kisah*, *Basis*, *Pancawarna*, *Mimbar Indonesia*, and in newspapers such as *Kompas*, *Suara Karya*, *Rakyat Merdeka*, and *Republika*. Overall, the published novels in the 1950s, as mentioned above, contained more frequent themes in politics, revolution and nationalism.

2. Literature Review

Some literatures related to the literary situation in 1950's also can be read in the writing of Sitor Situmorang entitled "External Influence on Indonesian Literature" and Pramoedy Ananta Toer's writing, "Lethargy, Weakness, Crisis, Impase" (Kratz, 2000). Literary essays described the literary situation in the 1950s are still scattered and have not been united in the anthology. There were even variations in opinion regarding the literary situation at that time. Some people said that there was indeed a literary crisis but there were also those who refused that the literary crisis did not occur.

On the other hand, various studies of nationalism have been frequently conducted, especially in the western world. Some publications on nationalism can be found in the following works: *Nation Before Nationalism* (Armstrong, 1982), *Nationalism and the State* (Breuilly, 1985), *Nation and Nationalism* (Gellners, 1983), *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe* (Hroch, 1985), *The Ethnic Origins of Nation* (Smith, 1986), *Nationalist Thought and The Colonial World* (Chatterjee, 1986), *Nation and Nationalism Since 1788* (Hobsbawm, 1990), and *Imagined Communities* (Anderson, 1991).

The limitations of the nationalism according to Anderson (1991, p. 5) were very concise and have three contradictory paradoxes, namely (1) the objective of modernity of nations to the historians eye vs. their subjective antiquity in the eyes of nationalist, (2) the formal universality of nationality as a cultural concept-in the modern world everyone can, should, will "have" a nationality, as he or she has gender. The irremediable particularity of concrete manifestations, such that by definition, Greek nationality is sui generis, and (3) the political power of nationalism vs. their philosophical poverty and even incoherence. Tom Nairn in Anderson (1991, p. 5) states that nationalism is the pathology of modern developmental history, as inescapable as neurosis in individuals, with much the same essential ambiguity attaching to it.

Bertrand (in Madinier, 2017, p. 115) states that Indonesian nationalism is not a single ideology. From the transition period in the 1910s, he encompassed a variety of ideas or political ideas - and often contradictory. So in the core of the movement including post-

oppression in 1926-1927, living together the figure of aristocratic nationalism "who intended to preserve or re-invent hierarchies, the old order, and figures of populist nationalism that embraced the protests of people and egalitarian utopias and some of it was really only a few are manifested by the Indonesian Nationalist Party formed by Sukarno.

3. Research Method

This study uses descriptive analytical methods. There are five novels that are studied and analyzed with the close reading technique. The data was obtained through literature review. The titles of the five novels are; *Telaqa Darah* by A. Damhuri (1956), *Djogya Diduduki* by Muhammad Dimiyati (1950), *Menunggu Beduk Berbunji* by Hamka (1950), *Keluarga Gerilya* by Pramoedya Ananta Toer (1952), and novel *Djalan Tak Ada Ujung* by Mochtar Lubis (1952). The five novels will be analyzed using structural and contextual analysis. Structural analysis is used to investigate who speaks and to whom (focalization) it speaks and contextual analysis is used to see the socio-political events that become the setting of this work.

When discussing this novel work in the 1950s, we will go into the realm of research on Indonesian literary history. In literary history research, a socio-cultural approach is used to underline the relationship between the formal system of literature and various other social systems, such as authors, readers, critics, and publishing (Damono, 2002, p. 2). Meanwhile, Luxemburg (1984, p. 203) states that, in the age of positivism, literary history has been written to link the development of literature with events in history, politics, and social, but mostly directs attention to the biographies of the authors and their works, both accompanied or not by evaluative comments from the author. However, with the development of the theory proposed by Jausz (in Teeuw, 2013, p. 239) there is also a growing notion that the identification of general history with literary history is very perilous and should not be applied without careful research (Teeuw, 2013, p. 239). The literary elements which also mentioned by Teeuw (2013, p. 240) are complex patterns of coefficient and divergence, not parallel lines that are different from elements in the field of culture that have their own development (Teeuw, 2013, p. 240). Therefore, it will be difficult to write a literary history based on the culture development or by tracing it in accordance with the development of culture.

The task of literary history researchers is to describe changes in aesthetic awareness to the extent that they are supra-personal, and to overcome individual personal judgment. This kind of research also needs to rearrange literary norms in historical development (Luxemburg, 1984: 210). According to Pratt in Teeuw (2013, p. 75) literary works are context-dependent speech events, speech events that depend on context: before we succeed in reading a literary work we must have been prepared mentally, we must know the context, through various social conventions.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Revolution Sacrificed the Nation's Children

Revolution sometimes sacrificed the nation's children. The description of this can be seen in The *Telaqa Darah's* novel by Damhuri (1956). This novel was first published in 1956 by U.P Printing, Tagore, Medan and reprinted by Eleonora Publisher Payakumbuh in 1964. The novel revolves around the fate of forced laborers of the Japanese era (Romusha). The Romusha system also gave birth to a new job called *wever*, a forced labor broker. The task of the *wever* is to persuade and if necessary to cheat; lure potential victims with the phony stories before being sent to forced labour. The main character in the novel, Martohardjo, works as

a *waver* who persuades and deceives his own people to be sent as Romusha for personal gain. One of the victims is Hadji Djafar. He was willing to be invited to Logas with the intention to spread religion. However, it turned out to be used as Romusha and finally killed by Martohardjo. The poor socio-economic life during the Japanese period forced Romusha, especially those from Java, to be brought to Lagos, Sumatra. The Romusha were taken on board the Asahi Maru.

The Asahi Maru ship's hatchery is crowded with humans which would be more appropriately called half human. Most of his body is emaciated, distended stomach, eye socket is buried in, and skin is wrinkled without oil. That is the pattern of creatures that meet Asahi Maru (p.5).

The humanitarian crimes committed by the shortsighted figures such as Marto did not only send Hajj Djafars as Romusha. Instead, he was also able to kill, rob property, and take the daughter of Haji Djafar. However, his last intention to take the daughter of Haji Djafar was not accomplished because he finally suffered a mental disorder due to guilt by his own evil deeds. The Marto figure finally wandered as a lunatic in Sumatra. The death of Hadji Djafar and the madness experienced by Marto is a picture of the revolution which sometimes can sacrifice the own nation's children.

In the *Keluarga Gerilya's* novel by Pramoedya Ananta Toer (1950) the revolution ferocity does not only kill other people. Sometimes children themselves can kill their fathers as happened to Sa'aman, Canimin, and Kartiman. They were forced to kill Paijan, his father a KNIL Corporal. From the focalizations of Caimin, Kartiman, and Sa'man, they declared that the murder of Paijanis in the name of patriotism and political reasons. During the Japanese occupation, or during the period of "preparation age" or revolution, Paijan enrolled in the Koninklijk Nederlands Indische Leger (KNIL), the Dutch East Indies government army force. He wants his sons to do the same. However, his desire was contrary to the wishes of his sons who supported the Republic of Indonesia. Once when Paijan was drunk, his sons took and shot dead Paijan on the banks of the Ciliwung River.

His son, Sa'aman, said that he was forced to commit the murder because his father had different political beliefs from him and his younger siblings who fought for the revolution and independence of Indonesian nation. However, the revolution did not kill the conscience of the Sa'maan character. In the text, we can read that Sa'aman still keeps "the space" for conscience and confession for his actions after killed his father. He expressed regret in a letter voiced by the focalization technique by himself from the prison.

"And if I'm sorry," he said in writing the letter. Only one of my regrets I got in this world: killing my own parents - even though he had and had to kill me" (p. 249).

Hellwig (2003, p. 73) who also discussed the *Keluarga Gerilya* explained the complexity of the murder from a Freudian perspective. According to Paijan's son, they committed murder because of patriotism. The complication is that the traitor they killed was their own father. His father is the symbol of their own direct contact with the fatherland concepts and the symbol of their live roots. But there was also doubt about Paijan's truth as their biological father. Unconsciously, they did not owe paternal loyalty to Paijan. Helwig then concluded that the killer of Paijan could be interpreted as an Oedipus motif. Paijan is a barrier to the competition of boys to get the love of the mother.

4.2 The Idea of Nationalism in the Indonesian 1950's Novel

Naveau (2017, p. 408) mentions that Indonesian literary specialists generally agree to underline the national dimension of Indonesia starting from within the literature itself. Krazt (1991, p. 196) for example states that "Indonesian literature began together with Indonesian nationalism, Indonesia's literary idea was no older than the idea of Indonesian political unity". Jassin (1993b, p. 43) then added that the birth of Indonesian literature was inseparable from the nation's struggle. Meanwhile, the idea of nationalism as conveyed by the experts above was also represented in the Hamka novel entitled *Menunggu Bedug Berbunyi* (1950). In his novel Hamka tells the character of Mr. Sjarif by using focalization techniques, the character describes the nationalist spirit in him without having to frontally oppose the rulers who control his country one after another. "I am a Nationalist, I am a lover of the country.

My roar "Merdeka" is sticky from my soul who wants to escape from colonialism. As you can see, in the Dutch era I was an employee. The Netherlands falls Japan coming, I will also be treated like a host who will move, pass his chicken to a neighbor. At first I felt that living as an employee was as high and noble as life. My son has three and all three have gone to school. Thursday's simple life and my food is enough from my salary. Sort the typhoon came twice. The occupation and suppression of Japan and the Cyclone Revolution. From the beginning of the revolution I began to see the catchword of independence, I began to see "Red and white" flag flying. Three flags have risen. "Three Colors", "Hinomaru", and "Sang Saka ". However, I am still an employee (p.10).

However, Mr. Sjarif's nationalist spirit was then questioned by his sons and neighbors when he again accepted the offer as a Dutch employee in the period of aggression. The need for stomach and ideological needs get a test for Mr. Sjarif. His choice of accepting the Dutch offer automatically made him as "The Other" in the eyes of his sons and the Republicans. His attitude was later criticized by his eldest son who judged his father as a person who was a weak person and could not bear to suffer. His idea is contrary to his son idea who is willing to live in the forest and on the mountain for the noble ideals for the independence and the nation glory (p.28).

The suffering people during the revolution did not only exist in Japan era, but it was also experienced after Japan left and was replaced by The first Dutch aggression as experienced by the Djogya people in the novel of *Djogya Diduduki* by Dimiyati (1950). The economic suffering caused by the Dutch aggression is reflected in the novel. Even the people like Witohardjo's family only can consume the banana stick for the meal, they did not leave Djogya as refugee. They stayed in Djogya and kept the spirit of nationalism imprinted in Witohardjono' heart as conveyed through the following focalization technic.

"We are not genuine Djogya people. If Sampeyan is embarrassed to cross here, it is better if we move to Semarang. "My wife said ... there is no one who will disturb you if you work on the Railway Service at Tawang or Jurnatan stations or in Poncol" (p.41).

Bitterness lived because the Dutch aggression almost made Witohardjono's beliefs change due to his wife's persuasion. His wife persuaded him to leave Jogya and cross to Semarang. However, Witohardjono was unwilling to follow his wife's invitation and stayed in Jogya as a symbol of the struggle for the republic. Witohardjono and his family's sacrifice during the Dutch aggression I were not just about experiencing the food shortages. He also

had to acquiesce his son's death on the battlefield and lose his daughter Fatimah due to coughing after difficult access to medicine.

“If Mount Merapi erupted at that time, if the atomic bomb exploded in Malioboro or if the Royal Army returned to the capital city by lowering its umbrella troops, the third republicanizing the republic, would not be surprised when I heard the nurse's words” (pp. 150-151).

However, bitterness during the Dutch aggression finally ended. The patriotic spirit in Witohardjono's soul sincerely accepted the suffering during the six months of Dutch occupation. This can be seen from the focalization which states that bitterness is the fruit of the struggle for national independence which has returned to its place of origin (p.158).

In the novel of *Djalan Tak Ujung* by Mochtar Lubis (1952), the effects of the revolution conflicts damaged not only in the physical characters but also undermined and destroyed the psychological characters as experienced by the main characters Hazil and Guru Isa. A tense battle situation causes humans to be involved in war either directly or indirectly to respond in various ways. Guru Isa unconsciously responded to the cruelty and pain of war in the form of anxiety and fear of carrying out sexual obligations as a husband. Many times he failed to make his wife happy in bed as stated by the following third person focalization technique.

“It has long been felt for him that his energy as a man has diminished. Like water in a tin that is drained - slowly runs out, until it's finally dry. And tomorrow night. Again he can't ... He has gone to the doctor. And doctors said that its impotence such as a kind of psychic impotence. Only the soul can treat it. Or something outside that can release the lack of soul pressure” (p. 30).

Meanwhile through the focalization technique Hazil explained that the struggle for independence did not provide space for chaotic and doubtful thoughts. Independence is interpreted as male virility that should not be doubted.

“I already knew --- since the beginning --- that the path we are taking is no end. He will not be inexhaustible. Starting from here, then, all the time, there is no end. This struggle, even though we are already free, has not yet reached its end” (p.46).

The culmination of the psychological problems experienced by the Guru Isa took place after he and Hazil suffered and tortured by the Japanese soldiers in the prison cell. It turned out that fear was not only experienced by the figure of Guru Isa. Hazil who originally presented himself as a brave man finally destroyed like a sissy on the Japanese hands. He who had originally disagreed with his father in the struggle of his nation which was not unable to resist the roar of torture carried out by Japanese soldiers in the cell. The torture from the Japanese army finally made him speak and show his comrades in combat, including the Guru Isa.

“Changing Guru Isa and Hazil were beaten and kicked. And Guru Isa saw that gradually Hazil achieved his human and male disintegration. His fear of torture and pain added to him until he was finally crushed by his fear. Hazil told everything. A temptation in his head was enough to tell him to speak up!” (pp. 137-138).

The feeling of sorry led Hazil to rise his hatred of the dark forces that could destroy a human being and arouse a sense of self-worth. The fear that mounts in the Guru Isa slowly but surely starts to disappear. The courage that has been lost has emerged after experiencing physical torture in Japanese prison cells.

"It was as if the collapse of manhood Hazil expanded his own manhood. And suddenly Guru Isa knew that Hazil would die. And the feeling of grief is getting bigger. But at the same time, he knew that the road just begin. All of Hazil's words first, which he remembered in the room cells was for him. He has mastered himself" (p. 139).

After being tortured by Japanese soldiers in detention cells, Guru Isa increasingly had patriotic and nationalist to his nation and country. The tortured from the Japanese army did not immediately discourage him from betraying or naming his comrades as Hazil did to him. It was precisely the physical pressure when he received during torture by the Japanese army to re-establish self-confidence as a man or make him reborn as a new man. This novel illustrates how the image of a hero is not always identical with the figure of a strong posture, full of manhood, and braveness. But sometimes the hero is described as someone who is fragile, has a self-confidence disorder as a man, and reborn as a hero precisely after experiencing bitterness, torture, and suffering

5. Conclusions

Revolution and nationalism in Indonesian novels of the 1950s is an important issue considering the period of publication of this work is relatively still very close to the Indonesian independence declaration in 1945. The five novels that were selected in this study show how the issue of revolution and nationalism is a central theme in novel story. However, revolutionary actions and actions are not always portrayed in a form of dramatic and bombastic actions. Sometimes such dramatic acts do apply in novels such as in the Guerrilla Family like when the three brothers who fought in the Republican side were forced to kill their father who fought in the Dutch (KNIL) invaders side.

A description of the revolution was not always fanfare in the midst of war. The pain which caused and experienced by the people can take many forms, ranging from the stories of people who were forced to eat banana humps because of lack of the food such as in the *Djogya Diduduki*, parents who lost their children or vice versa in the *Telaga Darah*, to the torment of *pribumi* (the Indonesian) who was considered as nationalist in the novel *Djalan Tak Ada Ujung*. Lajoubert (in Madiner, 2017, p. 462) mentions that the 1950s also initiated a most turbulent literary period, marked by the opposition of two different directions, namely universal humanism and socialist realism. In addition, novels always have an important role when compared to other literary genres in modern Indonesia, except in times of upheaval. Since the beginning, Indonesian novels have always presented themselves as defenders of an issue. We can witness for example, novels that contain the tragic fate of the Nyai, the issue of forced marriage, early marriage, and the issue of the struggle for independence and freedom of women. Indonesian novels that in general have social, historical, political, or philosophical characteristics always imply a precarious problem. The nuance is also rarely very humorous.

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