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Female Identity and Sexuality in Contemporary Indonesian Novels

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Female Identity and Sexuality Contemporary Indonesian Novels

by

Zita Rarastesa

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
with a concentration in Literature
Department of English
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ABSTRACT

This project focuses on female characters' identity and sexuality in four contemporary Indonesian novels, selected based on historical settings highly significant to the discussion. First, *The Girl from the Coast* (2002) by Pramoedya Ananta Toer takes place during Dutch colonialization, and the second, *The Dancer* (1982) by Ahmad Tohari, during the transition of power from President Soekarno to General Suharto, a period when the Indonesian Communist Party was still active. *Durga/Umayi* (2004) by Y. B. Mangunwijaya and *Saman, a Novel* (1998) by Ayu Utami both take place during the New Order era when Suharto was president of Indonesia.

The project's discussion focuses on how the four authors present their female characters and how they depict effects of Dutch colonialism, intensified feudalism, and repressive New Order politics on Indonesian women's oppression. In *The Girl from the Coast*, Toer interrogates feudalism within Indonesian society. He believes that Dutch colonialism served to cause feudalism within the colonized Indonesian population through discriminatory colonial practices meant to divide and exploit Indonesia. According to Toer, Dutch colonialists took advantage of a certain feudalism already characterizing Javanese traditions and social structure, in order to control the lower classes, thereby intensifying native-Indonesian feudalism and causing internal colonialism. In *The Dancer*, Ahmad Tohari depicts how the Indonesian tradition of ronggeng (a female figure who becomes a village's focus of sexuality and fertility) conquers and destroys a woman's freedom and hope for her life. Next, Soeharto's New Order politics damage her to the point of insanity. Forcibly extracted from the traditional role her village has assigned her, the

government imprisons her, mistaking her dance performance at a communist meeting for political affiliation with the Indonesian Communist Party. Having been more or less brainwashed by her village into assuming a traditional identity role that she did not want, being falsely imprisoned, and then released into a possibly free new life—with no direction or support—the ties binding her to human identity are completely severed, and she loses her sanity. In the third novel *Durga/Umayi*, Y.B. Mangunwijaya calls on traditional Indian epics to explore how Durga the Destroyer and Umayi the goddess are at work in Indonesia, as represented by a female character who repeatedly and purposefully changes her identity, at first to survive during the 1930s and later through prostitution, for the security of financial gain. She seems to know exactly what she wants and uses any means at hand to acquire it. In the novel's narrative strategy, she is both her divided self and the Indonesia plundered by Suharto, his family, and groups to whom he was indebted. Finally, Ayu Utami's *Saman* takes place entirely during the New Order Era, during which young, educated, middle-class Indonesian women go abroad to interact with people and social customs other than Indonesia's repressive ones.

Despite certain challenges inherent to leaving one's native land, Utami's female characters busily detach themselves from oppressive patriarchal Indonesian social norms and religious values. They have opportunities to choose the life they want to live. From the life of Toer's naïve and ignorant girl from the coast, who is never named and therefore has no personhood, to Utami's young educated women exploring sexuality and a free life outside Indonesia, there is progress, albeit often painful and punitive. Toer's girl and Tohari's dancer are both colonized and meet tragic endings. In contrast, Mangunwijaya's accommodating identity shifter and Utami's rather enlightened characters are able to improve their lives as Indonesian women because they have the individual power and authority to act on their dreams and desires.

Although their choices can be difficult, painful, and even sacrificial, they are able to choose—
unlike Toer's girl and Tohari's ronggeng.

INTRODUCTION

Statement of Purpose

Originally, I had hoped to research female identity and sexuality in contemporary Indonesian literature by women writers. However, my hopes for this research have been both postponed and transformed because I could find only two works by Indonesian women authors that have been translated into English! These are Djenar Maesa Ayu's compilation *They Say I'm a Monkey*, which is out of print and thus impractical, if not impossible, to research for a dissertation. The other choice is actually a pair of related novels by Ayu Utami, *Saman* and *Larung*. Of these two, only *Saman* has been translated into English.

As a consequence of searching for translated Indonesian novels by women writers, I began to see that valuable Indonesian literature has not received the attention it deserves from the greater reading community, translators, or scholars. This realization greatly broadened my long-term purpose as an academician: to initiate Indonesian literature as an integral part of global postcolonial literature and literature studies and to involve Indonesian literature in international, literary, and critical conversations among scholars. In fact, the difficulties of finding English translations has inspired me to consider translation projects; I also want to encourage others to translate as many Indonesian novels as possible in order to bring the richness of Indonesian literature to international readers, writers, and scholars.

In the meantime, however, I have a dissertation to write. For this purpose, finally, I decided to research Ayu Utami's *Saman*, although I would, of course, have preferred to include

the related novel *Larung*. In addition, I chose three novels by male writers, all of whom include feminist issues in their works, if not an explicitly feminist viewpoint in their philosophies. The latter three novels are Pramoedya Ananta Toer's *The Girl from the Coast*, the first of a trilogy and, unfortunately, the only novel of the three to survive destruction during the Soeharto era; Ahmad Tohari's intact one-volume trilogy *The Dancer*; and Y. B. Mangunwijaya's *Durga / Umayi*. My selection of these four novels is based not only on the similarity of issues among them, but also on inclusion of myths that play such a significant, meaningful role in the novels and make Indonesian literature so rich and multi-layered. Two of the novelists, Ayu Utami and Y.B. Mangunwijaya, are well known as writers whose feminist beliefs are depicted through their novels. On the other hand, Pramoedya Ananta Toer and Ahmad Tohari are not explicitly reputed to hold feminist viewpoints, but they do concentrate on female characters in novels that explore themes of human freedom. These four novelists' diverse concepts concerning feminism are nuanced and multi-layered, and thus it is very interesting to observe and investigate how the authors present the female characters and determine their fates.

As a matter of necessity for international readers to understand the novels, this research project also explains how these four texts reflect the beliefs and values of Indonesian societies and the struggles between Indonesian and Western values. Finally, the project mainly concentrates on the politics of identity related to issues of gender and class. Considering how much Indonesian literature has to offer, I hope that my research will enrich the diversity of postcolonial studies and contribute to the further development of Indonesian literary criticism.

The novels under discussion portray Indonesia as a country in which everything seems contingent. The author of *Saman*, Ayu Utami calls it all "negotiable"; in the four novels' plots, this translates into incidents that seem serendipitous, fatalistic, or more often, opportunistic.

The political and social situations are ever changing. Life seems to be decentered, as seen especially in Y.B. Mangunwijaya's *Durga / Umayi* where the writing style gives readers the feeling of being in the audience of a traditional shadow-puppet performance, listening to the puppeteer telling stories about the chaos of life in Indonesia. Consequently, the characters' identities, especially the main character's, seem myriad instead of unitary.

Additionally, if characters in these four postcolonial Indonesian novels are compared to those in, for instance, U.S. Native American or U.S. Latinex, we find a huge difference. In Native American and Latin American literature, the characters often love and long for their homelands, especially if they are far away, but in Ayu Utami's novel, for instance, no such feelings arise. Instead, when the characters are in New York, distanced geographically from Indonesia, their personalities can bloom and grow outside the restrictive soil of Indonesian norms. In this case, geographical distance also allows characters political, social, cultural, religious and sexual distance from Indonesian expectations for women. Rather than trying to recreate "a little Indonesia" in New York as have done immigrant groups from, say, Italy or China, these characters are happy to leave the confining Indonesian norms behind. Even so, one of the characters cannot escape feelings of guilt despite her relief at being able also to feel more complete as a human being.

As mentioned above, this research project analyzes issues of identity and sexuality, and of course, other related issues, especially the repressed Indonesian woman's voice. The issues of identity are sometimes complicated by the authors' use of female characters to represent the nation of Indonesia, so that they become more than human beings struggling as individuals. Of the four authors, only Ayu Utami writes character studies of individual women. In spite of that, the identity issues treated in each novel become conflated with political, religious, and

social conditions of the female characters who must struggle with patriarchal Indonesian culture and varying but continual political hegemony. Ayu Utami interprets her female characters through multicultural lens, but actually, polycultural might be a better term for describing the seemingly infinite variations in regions, cultures, mores, and languages of the Indonesian people. Ayu Utami's female characters usually have the finances and mobility to study abroad. Thus, they interact with societies of less strict social values and see the possibility of growing in different ways. On the other hand, Pradmoedya interprets his female characters in an earlier time period as victims entirely submissive to social class differences.

I will now briefly summarize each of the four novels. But first, I will explain some differences in naming customs. In Western scholarly work, the convention is to introduce authors, critics, and researchers with their given and surnames and then refer to them by their surnames. Because I hope to be read in Indonesia, I wish to preserve the Indonesian naming customs so deeply embedded in our culture that we take them for granted even in scholarly work. Thus, I will call Ayu Utami by her full name for two reasons: first, the name Ayu is extremely common in Indonesia; second, using her full name will prevent potential confusion with another famous female Indonesian author, Jenar Maesa Ayu. Pramoedya Ananta Toer is called Pramoedya because when we use the honorific "mister," we use the first instead of the last name. Pramoedya is thus a more familiar name to his readers than Toer. Y.B. Mangunwijaya, a Catholic priest, will be called by his last name because he is more popularly known as Father Mangun, not as Yusuf or Bilyarta (Y.B.). Ahmad Tohari is sometimes called by his last name but often by his full name. The people from the area where he was born call him Kang (brother) Tohari, and in this work, I refer to him as Tohari.

Summaries of the novels under discussion

1. The Girl from the Coast –Pramoedya Ananta Toer

Pramoedya Ananta Toer's *The Girl from the Coast* has a fairly simple plot. It tells about an attractive, unnamed fourteen-year-old girl who lived on the coast with her parents. Her father was a fisherman while her mother helped him manage the fish caught. They lived in very poor conditions. One day, a man from a royal family living in town sent a man to propose to the girl to become his temporary wife. The girl and her parents thought that the girl would live comfortably in the royal family's home without financial hardship as the Bendoro's wife. At the husband's home, the girl awkwardly adapted to the very strange way of life. She was unhappy because of the social gap and the strange way her husband treated her. At the house, she was taught to embrace a religion, Islam, with which she was unfamiliar. The husband taught her to pray properly according to the Islamic way. After her giving birth to a son, the husband sent her away from the house. The husband was getting ready to marry a woman who came from his same social class. For a period of time, the girl kept stalking her son from outside of the ex-husband's house. She once was courageous enough to get into the house and tried to see her son, but her ex-husband took him away from her. Realizing that she would never be able to see her son because her ex-husband was too socially and politically powerful, she went home to her parents' house on the coast. Not wanting to shame them, she said goodbye to her parents. It is not clear what happened to the girl after saying goodbye or where she went.

2. The Dancer – Ahmad Tohari

A village girl named Srintil was believed by the villagers to be the incarnation of the dancer spirit. Srintil did not realize it when she was a little girl until one day Rasus and her

other childhood friends paid attention to Srintil's behavior and how she could dance like a professional although she never had any lessons. They all lived in Dukuh Paruk, a poor village in Banyumas. In 1953 a man called Santayib, a bongkrek tempe maker in Dukuh Paruk, sold poisonous tempe by mistake. Consequently, many villagers died from eating it, including Surti who was the village ronggeng or mystic dancer. The other villagers so panicked that Santayib and his wife committed suicide by eating their own tempe. Their daughter, Srintil, was safe from the riot and she was taken under the care of her grandfather, Sakarya. Since Surti, the only ronggeng of the village, had died by poisonous tempe, there was no more music and dance in the village.

Ten years later, in 1963, Srintil and Rasmus, both parentless, became close friends. Rasmus kept his romantic feelings for Srintil quiet. After Surti died, the village suffered from starvation. Sakarya, Srintil's grandfather, believed that she could become the village ronggeng and save the village. One day he saw a sign, and then he asked Kartareja, the ronggeng spiritual man, to make Srintil a ronggeng. Srintil believed that she could atone for her parents' sins of making the poisonous tempe that killed so many villagers. Srintil then proved that she could become a ronggeng by dancing on the grave of Ki Secamenggala, the founder of Dukuh Paruk. Although Srintil could not convince Kartareja the first time, Rasmus, who was in love with Srintil, gave her something he found that belonged to Surti that was a ronggeng heirloom. After seeing the heirloom, Kartareja was convinced. Then Kartareja's wife prepared Srintil, put make up on her face, and dressed her to be a ronggeng. Meanwhile, Bakar, a member of the Indonesian Communist Party, came to the village to convince the villagers, who were mostly peasants, to join the Party to save the village from starvation and poverty because of greedy landlords.

As Srintil became more and more popular in the surrounding villages, Rasmus felt very uncomfortable since Srintil being a ronggeng would mean he could not have her for himself. Everytime after dancing, Srintil would have to sleep with many men because she became “publicproperty.” The last ritual to inaugurate her to become a ronggeng was a ceremony called “Bukak Klambu,” meaning “Opening the Mosquito Net.” In this ceremony, Srintil had to give her virginity to the wealthiest man in the village. Rasmus told Srintil that he was not happy for her decision to become a ronggeng. However, Srintil told him that she wanted to give her virginity to him, the man she loved. On the day of the ceremony, Srintil made love to Rasmus, but she did not tell her grandfather so her grandfather still thought that she was a virgin. Her grandfather was so greedy that he separately tricked two wealthy men to sleep with Srintil. After the Bukak Klambu ceremony, Srintil was considered the real ronggeng. Broken-hearted, Rasmus left the village to join the Indonesian Army and befriended Sergeant Binsar, who taught him how to read. Meanwhile, the villagers of Dukuh Paruk started to embrace communism although they did not understand politics at all since the Party promised them to set them free from poverty and starvation.

The ronggeng group became more and more popular as they performed in the events held by the Indonesian Communist Party. The dancing performance was used by the Communists to get attention. In 1965 there was a failed coup d’etat by the Communists in Jakarta followed by brutal army crackdown. Sergeant Binsar sent Rasmus back to Dukuh Paruk. Rasmus wanted to save Srintil, but he found the village empty and abandoned. He met the blind Sakum who told him to save Srintil. Rasmus went to the remote concentration camp where Srintil and the Dukuh Paruk villagers had been transferred on a train. Rasmus couldn’t free Srintil, however, and had to return to his army posting. After Srintil finally got out of jail, she became involved with a man

named Bajus, who was working on government development projects. She thought he would marry her, but when he tried to get her to have sex with his boss to curry favor, she suffered a nervous breakdown and became insane. Rasmus then returned and placed her in a mental hospital, vowing that he would marry her if he could.

3. Durga/Umayi – Y.B. Mangunwijaya

Durga /Umayi is a novel telling about a woman with the name Iin Sulinda, which later becomes longer as Iin Sulinda Pertiwi Nusamusbida Charlotte Eugenie de Progueleaux nee du Bois de la Montagne Angelin Ruth Portier Tukinah Senik. She was called Mrs. Nusamusbida, Iin, or Linda, or Tiwi, or Madame Nussy, Bik Ci or Aunty Wi depending on the situation and mood. She was the daughter of Legimah, who sold *gethuk cothot* (a traditional Javanese food made from cassava) near the Chinese Vihara (temple) at the corner of the square. She was blessed with beauty while her twin brother, Brojol, although he had a pointy nose like Iin's, had a face like *Petruk* (a comedic figure in Javanese puppetry) according to his wife.

Iin Sulinda's father was Obrus, an ex-KNIL (Royal Netherlands Army) soldier and Heiho (cooperating paramilitary) during Japanese occupation and also a guerrilla during the Indonesian revolt against the Dutch after World War Two. Iin grew up as a beautiful woman who got attention from the local young men. She considered herself a victim of men since when she was a child she could feel that she was treated differently from her twin brother. She had to sew her brother's torn trousers or shirts. Furthermore, she often became the target of her brother's anger by kicking her around. When she grew up, she became a laundry maid in powerful men's households, including President Soekarno.

Iin joined Gerwani, a women's organization associated with the Indonesian Communist Party. She fought with the NKR, nationalist anti-Dutch army, and to ease his suffering, she chopped off the head of a wounded Gurka soldier and put it on her commander's desk. After the incident Iin could not sleep and found an excuse to escape from the army. But then, she was busted by NICA (Netherlands Indies Civil Administration) dog troops, which were famous for their ferocity. Iin was accused of being a subversive terrorist and was tortured, electrocuted, stripped, and raped.

After that incident, she felt weak as a single woman who was no longer a virgin, so she became a call girl in Jakarta. People called her Madame Nussy. Owing partly to her linguistic ability, she was very successful, making a lot of money and getting involved in business deals. Her life became glamorous and she moved around from country to country. Worried that she might be recognized from her Gerwani days, she flew to Singapore on March 11, 1966, for plastic surgery. She then became Mrs. Angelin Ruth Portier, an international businesswoman doing development projects in connection with the Soeharto government. In terms of Hindu mythology, she was changing from Umayi to Durga.

When Iin remembered her twin brother, she went to Solo where Brojol lived, but to her surprise she could not find him. She then realized that Brojol's house was located on a big development project that she had signed and approved without checking the project site on the map. The project was considered her major achievement.

Finally meeting Brojol made Iin sad because her twin brother did not recognize her. She regretted having handled the project that made the whole village move to another area. As a result of her guilty feeling, she gave Brojol's wife's parents 17 million rupiah. She went back to Singapore so the doctor who performed the plastic surgery on her could change her face back

otthe way it was. She wanted to be back to Iin Linda Pertiwi. Coming home from Singapore, shewas arrested and interrogated by an intelligence agent who showed some pictures of her as a Gerwani leader. However, she was told she would be released if as Madame Nussy she would use her international connections to continue the development project. The novel ends with her debating who she will be.

4. Saman – Ayu Utami

This novel is the story of four women, Laila, Shakuntala, Cok, and Yasmin, who had been friends since they were in the elementary school. They all have the same obsession with men. Laila is an inexperienced woman who fell in love with Sihar, a married man, when they first met. This handsome and muscular man attracted Laila, who had previously been in love with a young Catholic priest, Wisanggeni. Laila got involved with Sihar's life when Sihar was looking for justice for his best friend who died of a wrong decision his boss made on an oil gir.

The second female character is Yasmin, who was a lawyer always willing to represent victims for no money at all. Yasmin was married. The third character, Cok, was considered easy to sleep with by many men. The fourth character, Shakuntala, lived in New York where she got a scholarship to study dance. All four were very generous women and they were compassionate toward people who needed their help.

Laila asked Yasmin and Wisanggeni to help Sihar find a solution for his case where his best friend died. Laila and Sihar were getting closer because they had been spending time together, so much that they thought of having an affair. Unfortunately, the affair failed because Sihar wanted to have sex and Laila was still a virgin and did not want to lose her virginity. Sihar did not want to "ruin" Laila's virginity.

Meanwhile, Wisanggeni, the Catholic priest, was getting involved in a problem in Prabumuih village. In the village Wisanggeni met Upi, who suffered from mental disorder and was trapped in a deep well. After saving the girl, Wisanggeni took her back to her home in the village. There Wisanggeni had to face the reality that Upi indeed suffered from mental disorder and the family kept her in a stall with chained legs. Upi's family was trying to justify why they treated Upi that way. The family told Wisanggeni that if Upi was let out to roam she could be dangerous for the villagers. It was her habit of masturbating in public. Wis wanted to help her niany way he could. He visited Upi every week to build a decent stall for her. Wisanggeni also helped the villagers to improve their economy. With money he got from his father and permission from the Head Priest, Wisanggeni built an electricity power source and planted rubber trees. However, the plan was not that smooth with the government deciding the plantation would be transferred to a private company to plant palm trees. Wisanggeni gathered the villagersto discuss the matter. Nobody agreed with the government decision. They insisted on keeping hetrubber trees. The government began to terrorize the villagers so much that they failed to hold hetland. Wisanggeni went to jail and was tortured. He blamed himself for not being able to help Upiwhen she died.

Laila planned to meet Sihar in New York, but Sihar stood her up. It made Shakuntala, Laila's best friend angry. Laila still defended and adored Sihar. Shakuntala could not understand Laila's attitude of being faithful to Sihar although she got hurt. In contrast, Shakuntala's attitude toward men was very different. Shakuntala could just leave the man if she was unhappy. She could easily get another man as a replacement.

Wisanggeni felt his faith was challenged when he got tortured so much that he begandoubtt the existence of God. One day he was released and asked his father to contact

Yasmin othelp him. Yasmin suggested that he go abroad. With Cok, Yasmin successfully helped Wisanggeni get out of Indonesia. In the middle of the process, Yasmin and Wisanggeni had an affair. Wisanggeni at last went to the United States and changed his name into Saman.

Methodology

As mentioned above, Indonesian literature is so rich with cultural plurality that these four (and most) Indonesian novels have content, tropes, and social milieux that beg for analysis. Therefore, I employ an interdisciplinary approach on the literary texts researched for the dissertation. Indeed, these four novels have contributed to shaping thought patterns in Indonesian society and, at the same time, reflect Indonesian society's beliefs and values within its multiple cultures. Although for the sake of clarity I will now separate out and list, and evenrank, various scholarly approaches, in truth they overlap to such a great degree that my analysis may be called intersectional.

Antonio Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony is appropriate for analysis in this project because he proposes that even a culturally diverse society can be dominated (ruled) by one socialclass. Such dominance is achieved by manipulating the society's culture (beliefs, explanations, perceptions, values, and mores) so that the worldview of the ruling class is imposed as the conventional, unquestioned societal norm. Consequently, every social class perceives that worldview as their own—as a universally valid ideology that justifies the social, political, and economic status quo as natural, inevitable, and beneficial for everyone—rather than as an artificial social construct that benefits only the ruling class (Lears 567).

In a project originally feminist in purpose, it may be surprising that I list feminist methodology second; however, these novels' powerful social mileux are so much in the

foreground in terms of plot, structure, and atmosphere that feminism cannot compete. Even so, the feminist approach aids interpretation of the novelists' varied ways of presenting female characters. Simone de Beauvoir's theory of *Self/Subject* and the *Other* certainly applies to the presentation of women in these novels. Furthermore, de Beauvoir's statements also apply: "One is not born but rather becomes a woman" and "Woman is determined not by her hormones or by mysterious instincts, but by the manner in which her body and her relation to the world are modified through the action of others than herself" supports my contention that in these novels, gender is a social construct rather than a biological reality. Elizabeth Martyn's book *The Women's Movement in Postcolonial Indonesia* can also be brought to bear since she discusses Third World feminism as parallel to and part of the anticolonial movement. Martyn cites Soekarno's (admittedly, partially sexist) statement, "You who have never known colonialism can never appreciate what it does to a man."

Third, the historical approach applies as a way of elucidating the Soekarno and Soeharto eras in Indonesia's turbulent development as a nation from just before the declaration of Indonesian Independence in 1945 to the overthrow of Soeharto in 1998—the historical period that plays a dominant role in these novels' plots and character development. Historical incidents have often determined and modified the roles of Indonesian women in society and the characteristics of gender relations between men and women. Since the novels' overall movements depend on certain political events in Indonesia, a historical approach is appropriate for interpreting the significance of certain incidents and reactions to them. In addition, the historical approach combines well with the feminist approach to elucidate the origin of feminist thought in Indonesia and Indonesian women's practice of their feminist values.

A sociological approach is also useful for understanding and interpreting the social oppression experienced not only by women, but also by the lower classes of Indonesian people. Social oppression includes cultural myths related to women, stereotypes of women, and the patriarchal attitude that regards women as less than fully human and relegates them to positions of inferiority. A sociological approach aids analysis of the effects of the feudalistic social system in Java and the social structure of Indonesia's society. No less important, this approach also aids analysis of how those in power use religion to control and manipulate the people. And last, since these four authors write from an overtly political stance, knowledge of Indonesian social values can explain how they strategize their positions in society.

Theories of cultural myth in products of popular culture must also be applied here, in order to elucidate how ancient myths and beliefs affect contemporary Indonesian society and literature. Each of these four novels is rich with cultural myths and symbols that add layers of meaning and complexity to incidents and character development. Furthermore, the myths in these novels very much influence the attitudes of Indonesian people toward their problems and conflicts and the approach they take to solving those problems or alleviating the conflicts.

Finally and perhaps obviously, these novels must also be interpreted according to postcolonial theories. The aftermath of colonialism permeates every aspect of these authors' conditions of production, literary execution, and reception of their works. The postcolonial perspective also involves postcolonial feminist theories about the relationship between colonialism and women's oppression, including colonialism's aftermath with its impact on women's lives. Postcolonial feminism, often referred to as Third World feminism, is a form of feminist philosophy that centers around the idea that racism, colonialism, and the long-lasting effects (economic, political, and cultural) of colonialism in the postcolonial setting, are

inextricably bound up with the unique gendered realities of non-white and non-Western women. One of the central ideas of postcolonial feminism is that a woman's identity is defined by gender, but also is inextricably bound to social class and ethnic identity. Homi Bhabha's theories of Hybridity, Multiculturalism, and The Third Space are also appropriate for discussion of the issues in these novels. Instead of seeing colonialism as something locked in the past, Bhabha shows how its histories and cultures constantly intrude on the present, demanding that we transform our understanding of cross-cultural relations. Overall, his work helped to transform the study of colonialism by applying post-structuralist methodologies to colonial texts (71-85).

As lamented at the beginning, few novels by Indonesian writers are translated into English. As a result, their readership is limited, and so is their evaluation by critics and scholars. Unfortunately, therefore, little criticism, either Indonesian or international, has been published on Indonesian literature in general. Of the four novels I have chosen to research, Pramoedya's is probably the most internationally read—because of his long political efforts, the banning of his works, and his imprisonments and house arrest in Indonesia. Additionally, his oeuvre is both wide and profound, having won many awards, and he was mentioned as a possible nominee for the Nobel Prize in Literature. His rebellion against oppressive regimes has become well known outside of Indonesia, and because of his long career and international reputation, the quality of his oeuvre, and the availability of his writings, more criticism has been published on his writings than on those of the other authors. Next in terms of published criticism comes Ayu Utami, who has gained popularity among literary critics because of the controversy over her characters' explicit sexuality. I find the situation especially interesting since in Indonesia, her works are not considered serious literature. This fact is proof of sexual discrimination in Indonesia, since when a female author writes openly about sex, she is accused of whoring herself and selling out

to the market. However, male authors can write openly about sex and still be considered serious authors. As for the remaining two works, a few essays treat Manguwiyaya's *Durga / Umayi*, but those treating Ahmad Tohari's *The Dancer* are very limited. Existing criticism will be discussed in the subsequent chapters of the dissertation.

Dissertation Structure

Following this Introduction, the dissertation is structured thematically into three chapters, followed by a summary Conclusion. Since politics are a significant part of the novels, Chapter I "Socio-historical Background and Politics in Indonesia" explains the background of the novels in order to familiarize readers with Indonesian history, society, and politics so that they can better understand the novels and the interpretations. Chapter II "Colonized Bodies of Women in Pramoedya Ananta Toer's *The Girl from the Coast* and Ahmad Tohari's *The Dancer*" investigates how the victimized female characters in both works function not only as territory that can be colonized, but also as a trope for Indonesia as a country and a nation. In addition, this chapter explores Indonesia's internal colonialization as a continuation of Dutch and Japanese occupation. Chapter III "Sexual Revolution in Y.B. Manguwiyaya's *Durga / Umayi* and Ayu Utami's *Saman*" explores how women may rebel against Indonesian social norms and claim their sexual rights, in other words, use their sexual rights to authenticate their identity. This chapter also attempts to explain the sexual repression enforced by the authorities, in this case, former Indonesian President Soeharto with his social program domesticizing women, that is, putting women back into the domestic sphere where their only role is that of wife-mother-homemaker. Chapter IV summarizes and concludes the analysis of the four novels discussed in Chapters I and III.

CHAPTER I

SOCIO-HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND POLITICS IN INDONESIA

Since politics play a significant role in the novels discussed in this dissertation, this chapter frames those novels' socio-historical background, in order to familiarize readers with the Indonesian history, society, and politics needed for understanding the discussion. Indonesia declared national independence from the Dutch on August 17, 1945, after three-and-a-half years of occupation by the Japanese during World War Two. The Dutch, who started colonizing Indonesia in the 17th century, tried to reassert control, but after protracted conflict finally acknowledged Indonesian Independence in 1949. Dutch colonization had actually strengthened Indonesian feudalistic culture, especially in Central Java, by prohibiting Indonesians without aristocratic blood from speaking Dutch. Consequently, Dutch schools were full of Indonesian aristocrats or priyayi. Although the feudalistic Javanese culture already promoted aristocratic superiority, the Dutch preference for befriending Indonesian aristocrats over "common" Indonesians strengthened the aristocrats' feelings of superiority. Following Independence, nationalist leader Soekarno (sole name) became President and tried to balance all the various factions in the country while emerging as an anti-colonialist champion on the world stage. On September 03 1965 the Indonesian Communist Party founded in 1924 attempted a coup, killing six senior generals. The army led by Major General Soeharto responded by arresting and killing at least half-a-million suspected communists. In 1967, Soeharto outmaneuvered and replaced

Soekarno as President, initiated the strict New Order, welcomed foreign capital for big development projects, appropriated land, and ruled until 1998 when government corruption and economic recession led to popular protests that resulted in democratic reform.

Gerwani (Gerakan Wanita Indonesia/Indonesian Women Movement) and The Women's Movement in Indonesia

Long before Indonesia's declaration of independence in 1945, many Indonesian women participated in the struggle to expel colonialists. During this period, the women's struggle was divided into three parts with women participating, first, on the front line with guns or whatever weapons they had at that time; second, in educating Indonesian people; and third, in politics and organizations. Since the Dutch first came to Indonesia in 1596, they had centuries to take crops and anything else to their benefit. They monopolized trade, robbed, and applied the policy of *tanam paksa* (forced cropping). Because of that, there were rebels everywhere in Indonesia, among them, women such as Cut Nyak Dien and Cut Nyak Meutia from Aceh, Raden Ayu Ageng Serang, Roro Gusik (the wife of Untung Suropati) from Java, and Christina Martha Tiahahu from Maluku (Moluccas).

While women's role in education came from the Dutch *politik etis* (ethical politics), that concept was applied as a reward to the Indonesian people for crops the Dutch took from them (or, in exchange for what the Dutch took from the Indonesian people). One form of ethical politics was the opportunity for *pribumi* (natives) to obtain education. After graduating from schools, they could work for the Dutch at public offices. These "civil servants" had awareness to spread education to other natives. Although very few women had the opportunity to obtain

higher education, they tried to share the knowledge they obtained from Dutch schools with other women from lower social classes. Some women fortunate enough to obtain higher education were R.A. Kartini from Central Java, Raden Dewi Sartika from West Java, Rohana Kudus from Minangkabau, Maria Walanda Maramis from North Sulawesi, Mrs. Ahmad Dahlan from Yogyakarta, and Mrs. Rasuna Said from West Sumatra.

During this period, R.A. Kartini played a significant role in educating Indonesian women, especially because of the patriarchal way of thinking that dominated Central Javanese society. The principle Central Javanese women had to follow was “*swarga nunut, neraka katut*,” meaning a woman follows her husband no matter what. In other words, unconditional obedience to their husbands determines women’s fate. Kartini broke through this idea by educating women so that they became independent and improved their quality of life. Her way of thinking was considered odd and strange to people around her, but in this way, she pioneered change in women’s lives, helping them become more independent and freer from patriarchal oppression. Education resulted in awareness among women that they had rights to join organizations to express their political ideas, to refuse polygamy, to decrease marriages of minors, and to attempt to deal with prostitution and human trafficking.

In 1912, the first voluntary women’s organization was established, Perwari (Persatuan Wanita Republik Indonesia, Association of Women of the Republic of Indonesia). This organization was concerned with education and social work, and, in order to reach isolated women, spread its activities into rural areas. Around 1920, national freedom was a common cause for several women’s political organizations.

After 1965, political changes naturally affected women’s organizations, as they did all social organizations (Suryakusuma 14). Information about the history of the women’s movement

called Gerwani was restricted in Indonesia during the Soeharto era (1965-1998). Only afterward could that history be revealed. In December 1998, after the fall of Soeharto, a national women's congress was held in Yogyakarta, where Gerwani's history was seriously discussed (Wieringa 2). The history of Gerwani, as given by the military to taint the PKI with insinuations of sexual perversion, had never previously been analyzed (Wieringa 3).

Thanks to library holdings on the movement's sources in the Netherlands and the United States, the history of Gerwani, the greatest women's organization in Indonesia, can be reconstructed. This organization was established as Gerwis (Gerakan Wanita Sedar or The Movement of Women Who Are Aware of Politics) in June 1950. Gerwis opposed feudalism and polygamy (Lestariningsih 38). When Gerwis became Gerwani in 1954, because the Communist Party supported their agenda, the organization's main purpose shifted from equality of women and men in marriage to equality of women and men in labor rights and responsibilities in the struggle for "full national independence" and socialism (Wieringa 140). Gerwani had three divisions: a political division focused on opposing reactionary activities; a feminist division fighting for the marriage law; and a division supporting farmers' demonstrations in villages. In *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, Saskia Wieringa explains:

Their militancy had to come to terms with the traditional women's kodrat, which, as the epigraph indicates, prescribes women's behavior as 'compliant', 'yielding' and 'submissive'. Gerwani did not accept this Sumbadra-like behavior and aspired to the militancy symbolized by the warrior princess Srikandi. (141)

Sumbadra and *Srikandi* are both characters in *wayang*, an Indonesian and especially Javanese dramatic representation of mythological events in a puppet shadow play or by human dancers. *Sumbadra* is the symbol of true womanhood—submissive—the kind of woman patriarchy

creates. In contrast, *Srikandi* does not fit the submissive image; instead, she is depicted as a masculine woman—a woman warrior. Related to *Sumbadra* and *Srikandi*'s images, the concept of *kodrat* is a patriarchal tool used to limit women's opportunities. *Kodrat* domesticizes women, keeping them away from the public sphere. However talented, intelligent, or successful a woman may be in her field, her *kodrat* is to bear children and care for them, her husband, and the household. *Kodrat* demands that women be superwomen if they want to participate in the public sphere since they are still expected to fulfill all the duties of a housewife. The housework and children are attached to the women, instead of the couple sharing responsibility for the household.

Initially, Gerwani, previously Gerwis, did not espouse the Communist Party's politics. However, a change in Gerwis's organizational body led to the Communist Party's domination. Gerwis members were from various political parties, including the Communist Party, and Gerwis allowed its members freedom to join any political party as long as it did not propose to dictate Gerwis's organizational purpose. Still, Gerwis was strongly opposed to imperialism and feudalism, including polygamy. In December 1951, the first Congress of Gerwis was held in Surabaya and produced the name change from Gerwis to Gerwani. The Communist Party insisted on changing the name because they had an agenda for taking the organization in the direction they wanted. In 1954, the second Congress was held with the theme of women and children's rights, independence as a country, and world peace. At this time, Gerwani demanded a version of peace that involved anti-imperialism, rejected the involvement of the United States and foreign capital in the economic sector, and also condemned nuclear weapons experiments.

Gerwani also discussed efforts to defeat the radical Islamic movement, which included Darul Islam (an anti-communist movement that, most of the time, terrorized villagers in West

Java) (Lestariningsih 43). Usually, women were interested in becoming members of Gerwani because it dealt with political and feminist issues. This is why Gerwani's reaction made other women's organizations furious when in 1954 Soekarno married Hartini as his second wife while he was still married to Fatmawati. The Gerwani representative stated that what Soekarno did in his private life did not concern Gerwani as an organization. For other women's organizations, this attitude was inconsistent. In its defense, Gerwani stated:

Merongrong Bung Karno tidak akan membantu berjuta-juta kaum wanita..., Gerakan wanita akan menjadi terpecah belah, yang tidak akan membantu kaum wanita, tetapi (akan membantu) kaum reaksioner, yang terus menerus menghalang-halangi terwujudnya undang-undang perkawinan yang akan melindungi kaum wanita. (qtd in Lestariningsih 48)

Condemning Soekarno will not help women.... The women's movement will be divided which will not help the women themselves, but will do the reactionary people a favor, that continuously fight against the marriage law that can protect the women. (qtd. in Lestariningsih 48)

The Gerwani representative also stated that the good relationship between the organization and Soekarno was much more important than Soekarno's polygamous marriage because through Soekarno, the organization of women felt they would be able to achieve their national goal. Soekarno's marriage with Hartini became the issue that divided Gerwani from other women's organizations, especially Perwari, which openly condemned Soekarno's polygamous marriage. For the first parliamentary general election on September 29, 1955, Gerwani saw an opportunity to obtain a seat in the parliament, and therefore, merged with the Communist Party to do so.

Subsequently, Soekarno decided to go back to basic law UUD 1945 through the July 5, 1959 decree. In his speech for the Independence Day celebration, Soekarno spoke against Western liberalism and individualism: These ideas had to be purged from Indonesian people's minds, and Soekarno changed Parliamentary Democracy into Guided Democracy.

On December 22, 1960, for the Mother's Day celebration, Soekarno declared that Indonesian women had to be leaders in Indonesian development. Furthermore, he said that the women's movement had to be purely revolutionary and that emancipation had to be related to the fight against imperialism.

Towards the end of the Soekarno era, Gerwani was accused of participation in the torture of six generals kidnapped and murdered in Lubang Buaya on September 30, 1965. According to John Roosa, "The army fabricated much of it while whipping up an anti-PKI [Indonesian Communist Party] campaign in the months after the movement, such as stories of PKI followers dancing naked while torturing and mutilating the generals" (6). A Gerwani member named Saskia said that Gerwani had not participated in any meeting concerning kidnapping and murdering the six generals. A member of the Communist Party had come to the Gerwani office asking for help in catering for a volunteer training held in Lubang Buaya (Lestariningsih 68). According to Soeharto's propaganda demonizing Gerwani, women from Gerwani sliced and cut the penises of the six generals before dumping their bodies into Lubang Buaya's well. In fact, Prof. Dr. Arif Budianto (Liem Joe Thay), one of the doctors who participated in the autopsies, attested that the condition of the bodies found in Lubang Buaya was not as described in mass media (qtd. in D & R Magazine).

Lestariningsih observes that propaganda concerning Gerwani's alleged involvement in the abduction and murder of the six generals is very much patriarchal in nature because

Soeharto wanted to demonize Gerwani as an aggressive women's organization closely related to Soekarno and the Communist Party (2011). Soeharto's propaganda about the generals' torture and castration deliberately included the phallus as a representation of masculinity to arouse people's anger, hatred, and desire for revenge. A contemporary newspaper article reads:

Seorang dokter wanita, S, yang jelas anggota Gerwani Komunis itu masih belum diamankan. Tapi ABRI kita yang selalu sia itu dengan tekun terus menerus mencari tempat persembunyiannya. Ia dokter orang-orang Gerwani yang dengan Gillette telah memotong kemaluan jendral-jendral kita yang gagah berani di Lubang Buaya itu. Seperti para pembaca tentu ingat, orang-orang Gerwani telah menari-nari dengan telanjang bulat seperti orang-orang primitive liar membunuh para pahlawan kita secara biadab. Sementara itu rumah dokter Gerwani ini dalam keadaan kosong. Alamatnya yaitu... (qtd. in Lestarini 74)

A female doctor, S, who is obviously a member of Communist Gerwani has not been captured, but the ABRI [Indonesian Army] keeps trying to find her. She is the Gerwani doctor who cut the penises of our courageous generals in Lubang Buaya with her Gillette. As you remember, the Gerwani women were dancing around the dying generals without their clothes on, like savages, murdering our heroes violently. Meanwhile, the house of this Gerwani doctor is empty. Here is the address. ... (qtd. In Lestariningsih 74)

Newspapers created an image of Gerwani directly opposite the normative image of Indonesian women—gentle, silent, submissive, polite, loving as a mother, and faithful as a wife. Soeharto confirmed that the Gerwani women's behavior went against women's kodrat. Furthermore, he

affirmed at that time that Indonesian women should be good mothers. After Soeharto provoked people to kill suspected members of the Communist Party, he also put members of Gerwani in prison, where they were tortured and raped. The Soeharto government treated the Gerwani women similarly to the way Japanese troops treated Indonesian women forced to become sex slaves during the Occupation. The Gerwani women were made victims of hatred and fury by Soeharto's propaganda.

In her article "Models and Maniacs: Articulating the Female in Indonesia," Sylvia Tiwon contrasts Kartini and Gerwani as models and maniacs where the models are the kind of women the New Order wished to create as the national identity of Indonesian women instead of the maniacs that are associated with aggressive women with political ambition:

Kartini/Gerwani: the model/ the maniacs. The model woman is the individual, her femaleness sequestered from other females by rank, by age, by social status. Her definition as Ibu controls her and fixes her within a hierarchical web of ties and responsibilities. The converse of this model is women in a crowd in which rankings fall away, as do age, family ties, and social status; their femaleness thus augmented, they become channels for power. In a very real sense, then, political behavior is equated with sexual behavior: the one is presented as good and nurturing; the other is presented as a powerful but destructive and thereby evil force. It is this suppressed background of the maniac force of femaleness that may help to explain the function of so many modern women's organizations in Indonesia with their insistence on rankings, the emphasis on Ibu as the only appropriate title for women. This channeling of women taps their energy and

turns them into “motors for development” without unleashing power of the female. (Sears 65)

In other words, women’s organizations in Indonesia are not expected to consist of women with political ambition. Women and their organizations are expected to be supporters of male supremacy in Indonesia. The role they play has to be only a supporting not a leading role.

Otherwise, they will be considered aggressive and inappropriate. The female voice is silent, and women act only as a sort of loudspeaker for their men. Thus, everything evolves around male interest.

The 1965 Coup and Transition to The New Order

Soekarno allied increasingly with China and the USSR in the 1960’s, loosening political relations with the United States. Soekarno believed in freedom—freedom from imperialism as represented by the United States. During Soekarno’s era, anything related to imperialism, including cultural products such as the Beatles, was banned and burned. Indeed, the members of an Indonesian band called Koes Plus were imprisoned simply because they were inspired by the Beatles in their songs and style.

The Soekarno government’s leaning toward Leftists was noticed internationally. And in fact, many Indonesians were funded to go to the USSR. As a result, the Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF), sponsored by the United States through a man named Ivan Kats, sought links with Indonesian artists and intellectuals. Kats actively supplied reading materials and pamphlets encouraging anti-communist ideas. According to David Hill, “Leftists in Jakarta long suspected that the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) was behind CCF, but such suspicions remained unconfirmed until some months after the violence of October 1965, with the public

unraveling of the connection of the USA in the late 1960s (“Knowing Indonesia from Afar: Indonesian Exiles and Australian Academics” 5).

In *Apakah Soekarno Terlibat Peristiwa G30S?* (Was Soekarno Involved in the September 30 Movement?), Kerstin Beise posits several theories, including the CIA’s involvement in the coup d’etat. The least involvement is the CIA’s assistance in destroying PKI afterward. This theory is supported by some authors, for instance, Kolko, 1988; Robinson, 2000; Scott, 1999; Siregar, 2000; Sophiaan, 1994; Sothwood/Flanagan, 1983; and Tim ISAI, 1995 (Beise 31). Indeed, Beise presents the rationale for the CIA’s involvement in this Indonesian coup d’etat during the Cold War, as the US government’s attempt to maintain the “free world’s superiority” over the “evil world.” The US government was concerned about the “domino theory” because of Indonesia’s strategic location and the communists’ influence over Soekarno posing a threat to the “free world,” including US capital. Therefore, Soekarno and PKI had to be overthrown (Beise 32).

This theory is difficult to prove since everything about the CIA or secret agents is classified. However, some documents such as telegrams, letters, interviews, and MOUs contain wording indicative of involvement: the overthrow of Chile’s “socialist” government was called “Jakarta is coming.” One CIA member, McGehee admits recommending that the CIA’s method used in Indonesia be used in other countries. More evidence is in (James D.) “Bell’s Proposal”: In January 1965, the US Ambassador to Malaysia (March, 1964–July, 1969) requested support in the form of weapons for the Indonesian army to use against any attempted coup d’etat, but the US Ambassador to Indonesia, Howard P. Jones (February, 1958–May, 1965), refused (Beise, 32). Jones thought the US Government could shift Soekarno’s neutral attitude toward the Communist Party to a resistant attitude by using the rumor that the Communist Party was

planning a coup d'état. Based on the telegram conversation between Jones and the US Department of State, it can be inferred that Jones proposed, considering Soekarno's declining health, that the US government offer him medical assistance if he would go to the United States, hoping thus to put Soekarno in a bargaining position. Despite Jones's optimistic attitude, the US Department of State refused his proposal since the US government was worried that their proposal for negotiation would be twisted by Soekarno to become a commitment to support him, whatever his attitude toward the rumor of a coup d'état by the Indonesian Communist Party. The US government could not take this risk, considering its strong stance against communism.

Furthermore, Beise presents the report that a researcher, Maxwell, had found in December 1964. This report mentions the testimony of a Dutch intelligence agent who mentioned that "Indonesia will be defeated by the West like a rotten apple" since there had been a premeditated coup d'état that would legitimize the destruction. Another witness, the American journalist Kathy Kadane, was informed that the US government had a blacklist of five thousand PKI members that had been delivered to the Indonesian Army. Beise adds that Indonesian Army soldiers had been trained and indoctrinated in the United States by its government (32–33).

According to Beise, in 1964, President of the United States L.B. Johnson stopped supporting the Indonesian economy in order to destabilize Indonesia's economic situation. This strategy was designed to instigate the Indonesian people to distrust and fight Soekarno. Because, in this situation, the US government's direct intervention would not have been wise, the CIA collaborated with the Indonesian Army as executor in provoking the Communist Party to undertake a coup d'état—preceeding the real coup d'état to be undertaken by Soeharto and his army. This engineered coup d'état by the Indonesian Communist Party would then give Soeharto and his army an excuse to exterminate the Indonesian Communist Party (Beise 33).

The US government wanted control over all aspects of both aid and trade with Indonesia, considering the following advantages: (1) preserve its foreign business investments in Indonesia, (2) continue strengthening anti-Communist elements within Indonesia as long as possible, (3) maintain for the time being US presence and foot-in-the-door influence, which exercises at least some restraint on the Indonesians and puts the US in a position to take advantage of any opportunities for steering their policies into more constructive channels, and (4) avoid the onus of triggering a break and putting the responsibility for any violent action directly on the Indonesians.

During the Indonesia-Malaysia confrontation, the US did not want to give too much support to Indonesia, for the likely consequence was that the United Kingdom and Malaysia would resent the US government for not supporting British Commonwealth forces against the Malayan National Liberation Army, a military force of the Malayan Communist Party.

At the same time, the US government did not wish to further arouse Soekarno's dislike of the US by not supporting him in the confrontation. Therefore, because the US government did not want to lose its investment in Indonesia and its good relationship with Soekarno, they only partially limited aid to Indonesia. Perhaps this was one reason Ambassador Jones refused Bell's proposal to give weaponry aid to Indonesians: It could be dangerous for the US position and reputation in the eyes of the UK and Malaysia. It was advisable for the US government not to cut off aid to Indonesia completely, since that action would not have changed Soekarno's behavior or attitude toward the confrontation. Furthermore, cutting off aid to Indonesia would likely trigger violent actions, possibly the burning of the US Embassy. At that time, Soekarno had no interest in hiding his attitude toward a confrontation, but made an open show of his behavior and attitude, so the US government had to be very careful dealing with him. Soekarno fully supported the guerillas

in Borneo, fighting against the UK, taking North Borneo to be part of Malaysia. The announcement of continuance of limited aid to Indonesia was intended to deceive Soekarno so that he would believe the US government supported his confrontation policy against Malaysia. But Ambassador Jones told Soekarno that the US Government would continue giving aid to Indonesia only if Soekarno changed his confrontational policy toward Malaysia.

The mastermind(s) of the 1965 coup d'état remains a mystery since mainstream history does not name names. Landmann, quoted in Beise's book, believes overlapping conflicts of interest might have led to coincidence—human weakness, improvisation—that set the coup d'état in motion. Moreover, as Landmann observes, history is not written by great figures, so who was (were) actually behind the coup is still debatable. Supporting Landmann's opinion, Anderson admits, "In fact, the sudden and erratic course of the coup would seem to argue against real organisation or thorough planning" (qtd. in Beise 34).

In *Apakah Soekarno Terlibat Peristiwa G30S?*, Kerstin Beise posits a further theory about who became involved in the 30th September movement. As mentioned, one is Soeharto's involvement to overthrow Soekarno. According to Beise, this theory is based on the consideration that Soeharto most benefitted from the 30th September movement. Without any significant resistance, Soeharto and his army easily defeated the communists, who were allegedly deeply committed to the coup d'état. Furthermore, since Soeharto was not on the list of generals kidnapped and killed in the movement, one can conclude that he had early knowledge of the coup and involvement in it. Furthermore, Beise believes that Soeharto's motives were to destroy PKI, to overthrow Soekarno, and to get rid of parties that supported Soekarno—all so that Soeharto himself could become president and national hero (28–29). Beise posits several opinions on Soekarno's involvement based on Soekarno's attitude in refusing to ban the

Communist Party, according to many, the agent of the coup. Soekarno, of course, believed that Soeharto instigated the coup by taking advantage of the Communist Party situation. Besides that, Soekarno confirmed that the murdered generals were neither mutilated nor tortured before being killed, based on a copy of the autopsy report that said their bodies were in normal condition (403).

The New Order era began with the *Surat Perintah 11 Maret* (11 March Letter of Command), written and signed by Soekarno when his health began to decline. Through this letter, Soekarno intended to transfer authority to Soeharto, his Lieutenant General, so that Soeharto could take necessary steps to save the country from the chaotic political situation arising from the September 30, 1965 incident. The letter gave Soeharto only temporary authority to act as President while Soekarno was unable to rule and the political situation remained unstable. However, Soeharto, who had already planned a takeover, did not return authority as the letter required. Instead, he became president and ruled Indonesia as dictator for 32 years.

In discussing the 11 March Letter of Command, we need to understand the conditions under which the letter was written. In fact, Soekarno did not write the letter voluntarily, based on his consciousness of his illness preventing him from discharging his responsibilities. Planning all along to grab Indonesian rule, Soeharto actually pressured Soekarno to write the letter. Without support and helpless, Soekarno wrote the letter, which does include conditions placed on Soeharto's authority. However, Soeharto led the Indonesian people to believe that Soekarno had given him absolute authority because Soekarno could no longer lead the country and because he had introduced communism, letting the Communist Party too greatly affect his view of how to manage the government. For the latter reason, the United States sent the Central Intelligence

Agency (CIA) to support Soeharto in relieving Soekarno of his authority. Defeating communism was an American ideal, and whoever got in the way was the enemy.

In her introduction to *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, Saskia Wieringa posits:

Suharto's New Order regime was built not only on the deaths of an estimated million innocent people who were massacred during the final months of 1965 and the early months of 1966, but also on the suppression of the power women had acquired during the preceding decades, a power which, as I shall go on to show, their adversaries interpreted through sexual metaphors linking women's political activity with sexual perversion and moral depravity. (1)

Further, Wieringa observes that Soeharto used to imagine, "the Indonesian New Order nationalism was built around a doctrine of 'national security' in which particular forms of hegemonic masculinity and femininity were constructed" (1). In *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, Wieringa describes another element of modern Indonesian history, the events of 1965–1966. She quotes John Legge: "Perhaps because it was Communists who were being killed, the conscience of the outside world seemed comparatively undisturbed by what must rank, in any assessment, as one of the bloodiest massacres in modern history" (3). Wieringa further explains,

There is little doubt as to the relief the USA must have felt when, in the midst of the Vietnam war, Sukarno, whom they considered an international troublemaker who had come dangerously close to delivering Indonesia into communist hands, was replaced by a right-wing general who put the country firmly onto a capitalist footing. As a renowned analyst of the Suharto Government, Vatikiotis, puts it, "Indonesia, the nightmare of US foreign policy

analysts in the 1960s suddenly became burning proof that not all regimes born out of a barrel of a gun are bad.”(3)

Javacentrism

Javacentrism, which posits the Javanese as a superior ethnic group, was not a new concept during the New Order era; it existed in Soekarno’s era as well. One likely reason for Javacentrism is that the central government is located on the island of Java. Therefore, most of those in the government are Javanese, and Java is more developed than other parts of Indonesia. Java is the center of Indonesia, and has more sophisticated education than other Indonesian regions.

In terms of elitism and prejudice, an obvious case of discrimination was against Chinese Indonesians, who were treated differently from other ethnic groups during both Soekarno’s and Soeharto’s era. Discriminatory treatments included, among others, greater difficulty in attending public schools and in working as public servants. The author Pramoedya Ananta Toer was imprisoned because he protested discrimination by Soekarno’s government toward the Chinese. In Soeharto’s era, in addition to the limited opportunities mentioned above, the Chinese were forced to take Indonesian names. This involved long court processes to obtain legal name changes. Although the Chinese, especially the rich, had greater business opportunities with Soeharto and his family, the discrimination continued. This is not surprising, however, since Soeharto and his family took advantage of his position for personal financial benefit. Chinese people also had limited opportunity to study in public Universities in Indonesia.

During his presidency, Soeharto implemented transmigration, a program to encourage Javanese farmers to relocate to other islands where much space for agriculture remained.

Transmigration aimed to decrease the population of Java and to create job opportunities for Javanese farmers. As a result, however, the Sumatrans and the Kalimantanans felt that the Javanese had occupied and stolen their lands.

Another custom Pramoedya Ananta Toer criticized was the practice of feudalism, in which Javanese people oppressed each other, feudalism being based on royal heritage and material wealth. Besides his ambitions for financial benefit, Soeharto was also ambitious to be considered part of the royal family. In fact, a title of royalty could be commercialized and bestowed on any of the wealthy who wanted a title. Soeharto's feelings of superiority led him to consider himself king, and those around him treated him accordingly. Most were people who wanted to take advantage of his position, but they were also scared to refuse his orders. In fact, everybody knew what Soeharto was capable of doing when it came to refusals. Since Soeharto left no room for freedom of speech and differing opinions, many "mysteries" happened during his era. In every election, every year, the same thing happened. Three major parties— Golkar (Soeharto), PPP (Islamic Party), and PDI (Democrat Party)—always had presidential candidates, but two would resign just as election day approached. Even before they voted, Indonesian people knew the winner. Really, at that time, there was no use voting. There was even the Golput (Golongan Putih/White Group), a group unwilling to vote because they questioned the elections' honesty. Those belonging to the Golput were very proud since choosing not to vote at that time was a way to demonstrate their political stand and attitude. This group was considered to be the opposition that refused political hypocrisy during the Soeharto era, unlike in the United States, where people are criticized for choosing not to vote. In Indonesia, staying away from the polls was considered silent resistance against the Soeharto Government.

Soeharto's attitude toward people or groups that voiced differences of opinion resulted in limited room for fanatic Moslem groups like the FPI (Front Pembela Islam/Defenders of Islam) to dictate the direction of government policy. That was fortunate because fanatic Moslems wanted to change Indonesia's secular nature to that of a nation based on Islamic law. If such groups had been allowed to participate in the government, it would have been a disaster. Since Indonesia's foundation is Pancasila (the Five Principles), which include the notions of belief in God, justice for all, and governmentally guaranteed protection of citizens who embrace a variety of religious beliefs, fanatic Moslem groups would have tried to dominate and oppress people who embraced other religions. This ability to suppress such groups illustrates Soeharto's political control; he ensured that the only political power in Indonesia belonged to him and his family.

From 1984 to 1986, Soeharto took an extreme step to eliminate the crime then raging. Many Indonesian citizens had died as a consequence of robbery in the streets. Soeharto formed special troops who hunted and fatally shot criminals, even those who had already been imprisoned. Prison guards would free imprisoned criminals, and then special troops would hunt them down and shoot them dead. Furthermore, to shock and deter other criminals, the troops placed the criminals' dead bodies in public places—outside schools, traditional markets, and so on—so that other criminals would know troops were hunting them. In addition, many criminals were hunted to their homes and taken elsewhere for execution. This proved a very effective way of eliminating crime, but many had mixed feelings about Soeharto's methods. On the one hand, crime decreased because criminals were scared of being hunted and shot to death, but on the other hand, Soeharto's methods were sadistic.

Gender Politics in Indonesia

Besides demonizing the women's organization Gerwani, Soeharto also created some women's auxiliary organizations for civil servants and government officials. One became *Dharma Wanita*, whose anthem (marching tune) proclaimed that a woman's role is to support her husband's career and to take care of their home life, including their children. Established formally on December 7, 1999, in a national meeting, *Dharma Wanita* members are mostly wives of civil servants. This organization's main purpose is to improve the quality of human resources and ultimately, the national welfare, through support for and by civil servants' family members. *Dharma Wanita*'s mission is to improve the education, economy, and social culture of its members. As a collectively supported organization, *Dharma Wanita* has responsibility for mentoring its members, strengthening union and togetherness, improving ability and knowledge, networking with related parties, and increasing social awareness. Besides all that, the organization is to mentor its members mentally and spiritually to have a good personality and believe in God. Members are wives and widows of all government personnel in Indonesia, specifically of government ministers, civil servants, of employees of government-owned institutions, Indonesian representatives abroad, village officers, and of those in the military and police force, and, finally, some members are retired female civil servants. The organization's marching tune is reproduced below.

Mars Dharma Wanita Persatuan (Marching tune of United Wives of Civil Servants),
written by N. Simanungkalit and Damayanti:

1. Dharma Wanita Persatuan
Bersatu-padu ikut berjuang
Wujudkan masyarakat adil dan makmur

Sentosa secara merata

(The United Wives of Civil Servants/are united to fight for the prosperity

/andwelfare of all Indonesian people.)

Refrain: Melaksanakan karya dengan mandiri

Membina istri pegawai negeri

Tingkatkanlah mutu pendidikan

dan ekonomi, sosial dan budaya

(To be independent and/to mentor the wives of Civil Servants/let's

improve our education, /economy, society, and culture.)

Tercapailah harapan kita

sejahteralah anggota dan keluarganya

(May our members and their families be prosperous.)

2. Ikut serta mempersembahkan

Dharma baktinya kepada bangsa

tingkatkan sumber daya insan

lindungi dan hormati hak azasinya

(We participate in serving our nation and developing the human resource as welas

protecting and respecting their human rights.)

Refrain: Melaksanakan karya dengan mandiri

Membina istri pegawai negeri

Tingkatkanlah mutu pendidikan

Dan ekonomi, sosial dan budaya

(To be independent and/to mentor the wives of Civil Servants/let's

improve our education/economy, society, and culture.)

Tercapailah harapan kita

sejahteralah anggota dan keluarganya

(May our members

and their families be prosperous)

Soeharto tried to limit women's lives to the domestic role that reflected the general image of Indonesian women, especially those married to civil servants. Ironically, women who were themselves civil servants and unmarried to civil servants had to join the organization as well. Both types of memberships in Dharma Wanita undermined women's individual potential. It seemed that women's existence depended simply on their relationships to their husbands or—as a second choice—to their jobs. At that time, Indonesian society was not constructed to acknowledge a woman's existence as an individual human being. In the Introduction of *Fantasizing the Feminine in Indonesia*, Laurie J. Sears mentions that “Suryakusuma describes Dharma Wanita, the organization of wives of civil servants, as a contradictory force in contemporary Indonesian society that pits women against one another” (35).

In her article “Gendered Anxieties: Islam, Women's Rights, and Moral Hierarchy in Java,” Clarissa Adamson observes that in Java not only the relationship between individuals is hierarchical but also the structure of the society shows hierarchical relationship. This hierarchical relationship is not only shown through culture but also in the Javanese language. The language used is based on this hierarchical relationship. The vocabularies used to speak to those who are hierarchically higher than the speaker are different from those used to speak to those who are hierarchically lower or the same level as the speaker (9). This becomes problematic “when arguments for gender relations are expressed through arguments for equality in the

context of economic and political change. This is particularly the case when the roles of gendered subjects are proscribed through a national ideology that permeates political, family, and social life as they are in Indonesia” (9). Furthermore, Adamson argues,

A gendered moral hierarchy in Java maintains women’s roles as key to the security of both family and nation. Security, in this sense, involves not only protection from individualist interests, but also assurance against threatening influences of social change brought on by an increasingly globalized economy. The compatibility of specific Islamic interpretations of gender roles and women’s rights with the principles of a gendered moral hierarchy that is mimetically extended from family to nation further complicates efforts to promote women’s rights in Java. (9)

Julia Suryakusuma in her book *State Ibuism: The Social Construction of Womanhood in the New Order* explains the origin of the ideology of ibuism. In the Indonesian language, the term ibu means “mother” or “Mrs.” Madelon Djajaningrat observes that “an ideology of ‘ibuism’ developed in the late 19th century and early 20th century that is a combination of Dutch petit-bourgeois values and traditional ‘priyayi’ values” (qtd. in Suryakusuma, 2). Basically, ibuism represents the national face of Indonesian women. It domesticizes them, limiting them to a position only in relation to their spouses, without whom they are considered unimportant:

Under ibuism women should serve their men, children, the family, the community and the state, and under housewifization, their labour should be provided willingly, at an inappropriately low cost (if any) but also free from any expectation of real prestige or power. While elite women have “power” over lower-class women, it is, as Djajadiningrat says, a derived power. They are used

only as a medium to channel state power, or the power of the paternal, authoritarian “bapak.” (Suryakusuma 9)

The New Order believed in family-centered power. It considers itself as a “family,” as seen in its propagation of *asas kekeluargaan* (the family principle), whereby members are expected to contribute to the welfare of the state-cum-family *tanpa pamrih* (without expecting anything in return). In line with the notion of the state as family, one might, in fact, also call the predominant gender ideology *bapak-ibuism* (Suryakusuma 10).

Suryakusuma explains that:

The term “*bapak-ibuism*” encompasses the entire society, with the *bapak* as the primary source of power, and the *ibu* as one of the media by which this power exercised. While both *ibuism* and *priyayization* provide the means to achieve “power,” it is pseudo-power that has been deprived of real autonomy, and therefore in essence signifies powerlessness. (10)

In Javanese terms, a wife is considered *kanca wingking*, which means “a companion that stays behind the man/the husband.” Obviously, the position demonstrates that a woman is not allowed to lead in the public sphere. She is allowed to stay behind her man only because he leads and performs in the public sphere. This particular “duty” is mentioned in the Five Principles of *Dharma Wanita*, that is, as a wife who stands behind her husband and as someone who takes care of the household.

With this concept in mind, Indonesia as a country becomes a family-centered nation. They believe in *azas kekeluargaan*, which means “family principle.” Suryakusuma describes the family structure that Soeharto applied to the structure of Indonesia as a country:

Paternalism infuses Indonesian social organization and relationships, with President Suharto as the ultimate bapak, or father figure. Civil servants refer to their male superiors as bapak. Strong paternalistic strains in Javanese political culture, marked by deference of power and authority, coincide with military norms of hierarchy and obedience to the command. (Sears 95)

While the Dharma Wanita organization was intended for wives of civil servants and government officials and female government officials from the sub-district level upward, the “PKK [Pembinaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga/The Empowerment of Family Welfare] was the sole vehicle appointed by the New Order government through which programs for women at the urban and rural village grassroots level can be channeled” (Suryakusuma 25). The PKK organization functioned as the mediator or bridge of power between the state and village women through various spheres of influence: social, cultural, ideological, political, and economic. The PKK Pembinaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga/The Empowerment of Family Welfare as a social development movement began with a Home Economics seminar in Bogor, West Java, in 1957, organized by the Education Section and Community Nutrition Institute of the Ministry of Health. As a follow-up, in 1961, the Ministry of Education developed ten PKK programs from “appropriate” educational topics compiled by an inter-department committee that included the Ministries of Culture and Education, Agriculture, Manpower, Religion, Internal Affairs, and a number of female figures (Suryakusuma 25–6). The ten programs are listed below:

1. Comprehension and practical application of the national ideology that is the five principles of Pancasila also known as P4 (Pedoman, Penghayatan, dan Pengamalan Pancasila).
2. Mutual self-help (gotong-royong)

3. Nutrition
4. Clothing
5. Housing and home economics
6. Education and skills
7. Primary health care
8. Promotion of cooperatives
9. Protection and conservation of the environment
10. Appropriate domestic planning (Suryakusuma, 36)

These ten PKK programs were pushed in 1967 because the Central Java Governor's wife Isriati Moenadi became concerned when she saw so many people suffering from malnutrition. On December 27, 1972, the Ministry of Domestic Affairs changed the name PKK from "Education of Family Welfare" to "Mentorship of Family Welfare" and decided to make December 27 "The United Movement of PKK" and celebrate it annually to recognize the organization. Based on the 2000 conference in Bandung, the name changed again, to "Empowerment of Family Welfare." During the New Order, government officials, including the President, often underlined the necessity of PKK for national development. On the occasion of the National Working Meeting of the P2W-KSS Peningkatan Peranan Wanita menuju Keluarga Sehat dan Sejahtera (the integrated guidance of the Empowerment of Women in managing the Family Health and Welfare), on March 2, 1981, President Soeharto said:

The government will support PKK, which we hope will be a spearhead for the development of society from below, "motored" by women. I ask that the various activities programmed at the national level be channeled through PKK. We can have many programs for women to enhance the role of women in development.

But it should not be forgotten that these programs are aimed at, and are to be implemented by women in the villages, whether in the urban or rural areas. If there are too many organizations, it is not in accordance with their simple desires and way of thinking and will only serve to confuse them. (qtd. in Suryakusuma 27)

Based on President Soeharto's speech, Suryakusuma observes that the New Order government thus justified their efforts to segregate women's programs away from mainstream development, to channel them through PKK, and to exclude any alternatives (27). Similar to the Dharma Wanita marching tune, the PKK marching tune also reflects how Indonesian women hold responsibility for the success of Indonesian families (the husbands, the children, and the whole household).

PKK Marching Tune

Marilah hai semua rakyat Indonesia

Membangun segra

Membangun keluarga yang sejahtera

Dengan PKK

(All Indonesian people/let's develop our country/improve our family's welfare/with PKK,)

Hayatilah dan amalkan Pancasila

Untuk Negara

Hidup gotong royong, makmur, pangan dan sandang

Rumah sehat sentosa

(Appreciate and apply Pancasila/on the way we live in our country/live to

helpothers, to be prosperous, and fulfilled/so that our home can be healthy,)

Laksana sadari dalam rumah tangga

Rapi dan indah

Didiklah putra berpribadi bangsa

Trampil dan sehat

(Realize that we are responsible for the tidiness and beauty of our household/teach

our children to grow up with good personality and nationality/skillful and

healthy,)

Kembangkan koperasi jagalah lingkungan

Dan sekitarnya

Aman dan bahagia keluarga berencana

Hidup Jaya PKK

(Improve our cooperative and/take care of our environment/so that our planned

family can be safe and happy. Long live PKK.)

In the domestic sphere, gender politics in marriage begin from the traditional Javanese wedding ritual. This is not only an old traditional Javanese ritual, but also a contemporary ritual because the ceremony and the philosophy are still believed to be the true value of a good marriage. In her book *Kajian Budaya Feminis: Tubuh, Sastra, dan Budaya Pop* (Feminist Cultural Studies: Body, Literature, and Pop Culture), Aquarini Priyatna Prabasmoro describes the ritual of a wedding ceremony:

... a bride with her heavy wedding costume, with konde (one of the hair accessories) stuck in her hair and a gold coated kembang goyang (another hair accessory), kneeling in front of a man who has just stepped on an egg. She then

washes his sticky foot with rose water. The groom, now with a clean and fragrant foot, touches the bride's shoulder and helps her stand. The guests, silent, amazed, and hypnotized by the romanticism of the wedding night, never notice any signs of the violence strongly imposed in each movement. (289)

Furthermore, Prabasmoro explains that, at least in Sundanese and Javanese marriages (with which she is most familiar), women are taught that the experience of sexuality belongs to men. When all efforts have been made to satisfy the husband, the wife receives protection and “affection” as a thank-you gesture, symbolized in the wedding ceremony by the groom touching the bride's shoulder and helping her stand (289). The traditional wedding ritual naturalizes women's sexual oppression, but is not recognized as such by Javanese common people, who are raised to see it as a Cinderella-like love story with a happy, romantic ending. In the ritual, the woman's role—simply to satisfy her husband and to regard fulfillment of his needs as the entire household's central purpose—is wrapped in a very nice package, as if it is the only important, significant purpose for which a woman were born.

Tiwon in her article “Models and Maniacs: Articulating the Female in Indonesia” says that how a woman is addressed after she becomes a wife and a mother confines the identity of the woman as a complete individual. She explains that even when the woman is still single, she is seen as simply a “potential wife,” nothing more (Sears 59). Based on Soeharto's biography, Tiwon posits the idea that the women organizations in Indonesia during the Soeharto era were established to guide Indonesian women to fulfill their task which is “to bring Indonesian women to their correct position and role, that is as the mother in a household [ibu rumah tangga] and simultaneously as a motor of development... We must not forget their essential nature [kodrat] as beings who must provide for the continuation of a life that is healthy, good and pleasurable”

(Sears, 59). A woman is not allowed to remain single and productive on her own. She has to be married someday, playing the role of a wife and a mother, which is known as kodrat.

In contrast with Soeharto's view on women, Soekarno had a more appreciative attitude towards women who are active in politics and women as leaders. Daniel S. Lev in his article "'On the Other Hand?'" says that in his book *Sarinah*, Soekarno wrote that women had an active role to play and a responsibility for change (Sears 197). Further Lev writes,

It was not an unusual line of thought among thinkers in that generation. No one should discount the hypocrisy and self-servingness of leaders, in Indonesia or anywhere else, but the educated elite of early independence was ideologically committed, if not to equality, then to some measure of equalization. The number of women active in politics of one kind or another following the revolution indicates the relative openness of the elite itself. In neither the parliamentary nor Guided Democracy (1959-65) periods was there a public effort to distinguish ideologically between men and women. (Sears 197)

Lev describes the condition of women in early independence as more involved in public spheres whether it was workplaces, armed forces, the police, public and private offices, in politics, business, or university degree programs at home and abroad.

The patterns of early independence were not toward more subordination of women but less, not more isolation but (without much clamor) more involvement. During the 1950's and 1960s, women went to school in increasing numbers, entered the professions, were politically active in and out of the party system—though they had to fight for influence—enlisted in the bureaucracy at all levels, established their own organizations, campaigned for change, and publicly took sides on major social and political issues. Moreover, women were not entirely

ignored by the government or treated unfavorably. The Mahkamah Agung [supreme court], for one example, began during the 1950s to establish the inheritance rights of widows and to extend Javanese bilateral rules of inheritance to other ethnic groups, including the patrilineal Batak. (Sears 195)

While Soeharto wanted to domesticate women or control and confine women to have limited roles only for the success of the men, Soekarno was more welcoming towards women to play various roles in public sphere. This is a very good acknowledgement for women not simply as potential wives but as potential individuals to develop the country. It is ironic that the appreciation for women's potential came from Soekarno, someone who had more than one wife, while the control over women's potential and power came from Soeharto, who only had one wife. Related to marital status, during the New Order era, Soeharto applied a regulation for civil servants called PP10 which forbade male civil servants to have more than one wife and female civil servants to be other than the only wife of their husbands. This regulation seemed to be a result of the anxiety of the first lady of Soeharto. She did not like to have her husband take more wives and she also felt the need to put it into a national regulation for all civil servants. The regulation protects women from polygamous marriage.

The PP 10 Regulation was originally written in 1974, revised in 1975 and then revised again in 1983. It was not only the expression of the first lady's concern towards women's position in marriage but also was triggered by the case of one of the members of Dharma Wanita who was the wife of Dewanto, a high-ranking official who took his children's babysitter as a second wife by religious marriage (in Islam it is called *nikah siri*, which is a marriage acknowledged by religious law but not state law). Dewanto's wife was the secretary to Mrs. Soedharmono, the wife of the Vice President. When Dewanto was promoted to become the

head of the presidential palace, Rahmini, the babysitter demanded a public acknowledgement as Dewanto's wife. Since he did not want to lose his new position and he did not want his secret marriage to be known publicly, he had Rahmini killed by henchmen from MKGR (Musyawarah Keluarga Gotong Royong, Family Mutual Help Association, associated with Golkar, Soeharto's Party) (Suryakusuma in Sears 103). Suryakusuma believes that "It is likely that the Dewanto incident climaxed the growing anxiety of Dharma Wanita members about their status as wives of government officials" (Sears 103). Soeharto felt that the government needed to reinforce this regulation since the members of Dharma Wanita often had to be away from home doing their duty for the society leaving the husbands and children, which is ironic considering the purpose of the organization was to serve and support their families at home.

CHAPTER II

COLONIZED BODIES OF WOMEN IN PRAMOEDYA ANANTA TOER'S *THE GIRL FROM THE COAST* AND AHMAD TOHARI'S *THE DANCER*

The first publication of Pramoedya's *The Girl from the Coast* was serialized in an Indonesian newspaper in 1962. At that time, Soekarno was still president, and Soeharto, a brigadier general, led the Mandala Command established by Soekarno to free Western (Netherlands) New Guinea from the Dutch. With the New York Agreement signed on August 15, 1962, at the United Nations, Western New Guinea was transferred to Indonesian rule. That happened one year before the Indonesian Parliament elected Soekarno "President for life." During Soekarno's presidency and after visiting China, Pramoedya voiced his concern about ethnic-Chinese Indonesians, who as a prosperous minority group also very often became the target of discrimination. In relation to this political situation, Pramoedya criticized the Javacentrism of Soekarno's government. Consequently, in 1960, Pramoedya was imprisoned by Soekarno, whom he admired. Once again, in 1965, Pramoedya was imprisoned because he was thought to be affiliated with the Communist Party. In 1969, he was even sent to Buru Island, a isolated prison island. Finally, the second publication of Pramoedya's *The Girl from the Coast*, this time as a single novel, took place in 1987. Soeharto, who took power in 1967, was very oppressive toward leftist literary works, and most of the literary works by those affiliated with

the Communist Party were destroyed. Fortunately, someone managed to save *The Girl from the Coast* even though the trilogy's other two novels were destroyed.

If Pramoedya Ananta Toer was considered communist, Ahmad Tohari is considered an Abangan Muslim. This means that he wants to preserve traditional Javanese beliefs and values and that he combines them with the teachings of the Qur'an. Many people criticize him for not being a true Muslim because his attitude and interpretation of Islam are both traditionalized as Javanese and Westernized. Born to a father who was a progressive intellectual, Tohari became a progressive religious intellectual. Tohari's first novel of his trilogy *The Dancer* was originally serialized in the Kompas daily newspaper in 1981. The second novel was published in 1985, and the third in 1986. The novels cover the period from 1946 to 1971—a critical political period after Indonesian Independence when the Communist Party still existed. Due to the 30 September 1965 Movement, the coup that resulted in the murder of six army generals and disposal of their bodies at Lubang Buaya, the trilogy's third novel *The Rainbow's Arc*, first published as a series in the Kompas daily newspaper, was rewritten under threat of being banned. Later, the complete trilogy was published, including the previously removed sections.

Pramoedya Ananta Toer and Ahmad Tohari are not reputed to hold explicitly feminist viewpoints, but they do concentrate on female characters in novels that explore themes of human freedom. These two novelists' diverse concepts concerning feminism are nuanced and multi-layered, and thus, observing and investigating how these authors present female characters and determine their fates is very interesting. Pramoedya, whose novel is set during the period of Dutch colonial rule and Javanese feudalism, interprets his female characters as victims entirely submissive to social class differences.

The Girl from the Coast is somewhat biographical, based on the life of Pramoedya's grandmother in the late 19th century. The novel does, however, move beyond the grandmother's biography. Pramoedya's broad theme elucidates relations between the lower and higher classes, more specifically conflicts that devolve upon characters because of hierarchical Javanese society's feudalistic values. Since nothing seems clear-cut in Indonesia, religion joins classism to oppress the lower classes. Religion contributes to the higher classes' hypocrisy because they use religious beliefs as strategies for their own agendas, especially against impoverished, ignorant villagers and young, lower-class women. Pramoedya paints the lower classes as poor and ill-mannered—compared to the highly stylized upper classes' ways of relating—but also as free-spirited and hard-working. As might be expected, their free spirits react profoundly when they interact with the upper classes that expect them to do whatever is ordered. To add another layer of significance, Pramoedya's higher Javanese classes, not the Dutch, impose the evils of colonialism on their own people.

Pramoedya's novel also raises the problem of biology as a woman's destiny, that is, sexual and reproductive issues. In *The Girl from the Coast*, the nameless protagonist marries, changing her identity from a village girl to a higher-class wife and eventually to the mother of a baby. From the outside, this situation looks advantageous; however, she is a temporary or "practice" wife who is treated as a sexual slave and baby-producer—without the right to claim her body and her baby as her own. The baby is regarded as a trophy awarded to a high-class man for taking advantage of a young, innocent village girl, essentially colonizing her body and her heart, and siring a baby upon her. In this way, the male conquers the woman's body, and the issue from what is essentially sexual slavery becomes a triumph, the patriarchy thus proving its masculinity.

In Pramoedya's novel, high-class people, or priyayi, function as an extension of Dutch and Japanese colonization in Indonesia by colonizing their own people, in this case, villagers who do not have access to decent education or the power to protect themselves from exploitation. Somewhat similarly to Mangunwijaya's *Durga / Umayi*, traditional Indonesian myths and puppetry carry a broad layer of cultural meaning: the high-class Bendoro pulls the strings, and the girl from the coast dances to his manipulation. The upper classes are puppeteers who determine the fates of lower-class people. Furthermore, Pramoedya, not considered an overtly feminist writer, uses the female as a trope for Indonesia—at least in the trilogy's first novel. Since the second and third novels were destroyed during the Soeharto era, we cannot know whether he rendered the same female character in the same way or how he developed female characters in the other novels.

Although Pramoedya is not considered a feminist writer as such, he writes about freedom, or the lack of it, and obviously advocates individual freedom, taking as his focus women who experience the double oppression of both class and gender in feudalistic Javanese society. Overall, Pramoedya is more interested in employing women characters to represent the collective voice of Indonesian people oppressed by the Javanese social system's feudalism than in developing them as individual characters; thus, the girl from the coast remains just that throughout the novel, a nameless puppet not only for the Bendoro (somewhat like a Western feudal lord), but also for Pramoedya. His concern is to clarify that colonization from within Indonesia is as cruel as that from without. Worse, the fact that hierarchical Javanese culture has roots supported and strengthened by the Dutch as a strategy to divide and conquer the Indonesian people invites even greater concern for the underprivileged and marginalized classes.

Similarly to Pramoedya's *The Girl from the Coast*, in Ahmad Tohari's *The Dancer*, the female protagonist is not only victimized herself, but also symbolizes Indonesia as a victimized political entity. Besides patriarchal oppression, *The Dancer* again elucidates social and political oppression. The mystic dance of the ronggeng is used by the PKI (the Indonesian Communist Party) to draw crowds to its rallies. In 1965 the army led by General Soeharto smashed the PKI and those associated with it, arresting and killing at least half-a-million. Soeharto went on to replace Indonesia's first President, Soekarno, two years later and instituted the strict New Order. The Indonesian Women's Movement, which had been connected with the PKI, became demonized by Soeharto's administration; he wanted the Indonesian people to support him in fighting communism, a political strategy sponsored by the United States government.

The main issue in *The Dancer* is the colonized bodies of women and women's madness resulting from unsuccessful negotiations for identity under patriarchal oppression. Somewhat similar to Pramoedya's *The Girl from the Coast* in which the protagonist decides to disappear because she is not allowed to care for her baby, the female character in Tohari's novel, Srinthil, goes mad because she cannot have the life she wants. Her life belongs not to her, but to the people around her because she is the mystic dancer, the ronggeng. Srinthil is chosen as ronggeng at the age of 11 because she loves dancing and sexuality emanates from her innocent young body—at least according to her grandfather and the dukun ronggeng, a village spiritual leader.

Having no choice in the matter, Srinthil is then trained as a dancer expected to invite male audience members, or clients, to dance in exchange for tip money given during or after the dance. The couple dances intimately, and the ronggeng may perform movements considered erotic by standards of modesty in Javanese court etiquette. In the past, the dance's erotic and

sexual nuances gave the ronggeng a shady reputation— prostitution disguised as the art of dance. Ronggeng developed more in areas of Central Java closer to East Java and West Java because East Javanese and West Javanese cultures are more open, less normative, and more overtly sexual than Solonese or Yogyakartaese culture. Traditional dances in Solo and Yogyakarta are very polite and formal and do not depart from normative sexual values.

In his trilogy, Ahmad Tohari raises issues through perspectives of uneducated, unsophisticated villagers instead of through the perspective of someone intelligent, educated, and worldly. Even so, as in *The Girl from the Coast*, the characters seem puppet-like, especially Srintil. Villagers also demonstrate naïveté in their beliefs and values because they depend too trustingly on spiritual figures such as the dukun ronggeng. In this case, having spiritual power means having the authority to control the villagers, who, since they are uneducated, are easy to pull in whatever direction the spiritual figure desires.

The fact that Srintil, a naïve little girl, was able to imitate a ronggeng dancer's style with considerable skill would not have come as a surprise to anyone from Paruk. In the hamlet, there was a powerful belief that a true ronggeng dancer was not the result of teaching. No matter how she was trained, a young woman could not become a ronggeng dancer without being possessed by the indang spirit. In the world of ronggeng, the indang was revered as a kind of supernatural godmother (Tohari 8).

According to Tineke Hellwig, author of *In the Shadow of Change: Images of Women in Indonesian Literature*, Pramoedya does not really condemn what the Dutch did in Indonesia. Instead, he was grateful for the excellent Dutch education he obtained during the period of Dutch colonization. Through a very young woman's victimization, *The Girl from the Coast* demonstrates Pramoedya's attitude toward the Javanese feudalistic system. Hellwig observes that

Pramoedya suggests it is not colonialism, but the feudalistic system of Javanese social values, which existed before the Dutch arrival, that visits suffering on poor people. Hellwig posits further that Pramoedya criticizes the Javanese feudalistic system because Soeharto spread and enforced this system throughout Indonesia. Pramoedya opposes the Javanese-oriented New Order because it gives too much power to Javanese priyayis (high-class people). The feudalistic style of Soeharto's Presidency further marginalized the poor in Indonesia, because the lower classes had to practice absolute obedience to the priyayis. Hellwig says,

Because of the feudal character and strict hierarchy of Javanese society, there is great distance between the common people (wong cilik) and the higher class (priyayi). In Javanese, the nuances of social distinction are expressed very precisely; class consciousness and the difference in status are deeply rooted in Javanese thinking and social relations. ... Even the (Indonesian) first person pronoun expresses a difference in rank; sahaya is polite and aku familiar. Gadis Pantai [Javanese for "the girl from the coast"] may use only sahaya when she speaks to her servant, but she uses aku when speaking to her husband about herself. (83)

Hellwig's explanation of the pronoun that Javanese people use according to their social rank is incorrect. The pronoun sahaya is used by the lower classes to speak of themselves to priyayis. In *The Girl from the Coast*, the female character uses sahaya to speak of herself to her husband. This pronoun is inferior compared to aku, which is used to speak of oneself to an equal or subordinate. In this novel, servants use sahaya when they speak to the protagonist because he is their master's wife, and the protagonist uses aku when she speaks to servants because she is of higher rank. The fact that the girl uses sahaya when she speaks to her husband

demonstrates her position is inferior to her husband's and that she became his wife merely because of his willingness to raise her rank in society. However, the increased social rank does not bring greater comfort; instead, it means the type of confinement that a high-class woman experiences.

Hellwig does correctly observe that for low-class parents to receive an offer of marriage from a priyayi is an honor because they can then expect a better life for their daughter (84). Hellwig also correctly notes that as soon as the female character becomes the priyayi's wife, her external appearance changes, becoming feminized. Although still in her early teens, she is expected to act like an adult.

A priyayi woman is silent. She does not speak, nor does she look. She exists merely to be seen. The way in which memories are related of earlier times—of freedomt Gadis Pantai had to do and say what she wanted—makes the reader empathize with her and understand that her current situation is in sharp contrast to what she was used to. Her loneliness and her understanding of the inequality she experiences are presented in the same manner. (85-86)

The protagonist's experience illustrates that women's identity is forced onto them by men. In other words, the woman's body is full of the imprinted ideas of what she should be, based on men's perspectives. Hellwig quotes one of the servants,

'In the city ... the world belongs to men and women are men's possessions,' that is, they have no rights. In the city, priyayi men have much more power over women than is the case with simple country people, whose relationships are much more egalitarian. The male character, the Bendoro, is a stereotypical priyayi and personifies priyayi ideology. (87)

In *The Dancer*, Ahmad Tohari portrays lower-class people as having the same characteristics as Pramoedya's priyayis. In Tohari's work, women's oppression does not come from different, higher social classes, but from the beliefs and values of their peers in the same social class. Tohari's novels ignore the fact that villagers are uneducated; instead, they are considered children of nature—the nature that oppresses women and biologically determines their fate from the day of their birth. Similar to Pramoedya's girl from the coast, Tohari's protagonist Srinthil is portrayed as the victim of the people who live around her. Because her grandfather perceives in her a supernatural gift for ronggeng, her path in life is determined. Hellwig describes the process:

This occurs when her grandfather and the dukun ronggeng ... perceive that she has been given the roh indang, supernatural talent or aura. Without consulting her, these two men determine the course of her life. Srinthil has no choice; whether she likes it or not, she has been chosen. She has been chosen by the spirit of the legendary ancestor who gave her this talent, so she must fulfill the function of ronggeng for her village. According to local popular belief a ronggeng gives life to the village. ...

She must go along with the village community's requirements, determined by mysticism and tradition, and thus she acquiesces without complaint to the will of the dukun ronggeng and his wife

... who make the rules. The price for her virginity is set at a golden ringgit. (149)

Being a ronggeng, Srinthil loses her rights over her body and her life. She has to submit to her grandfather's will since her parents have both died. Her grandfather receives financial benefit from her dancing because many men slip money to her in the same way people slip money to

astripper. Although what happened to the girl from the coast was similar to Srinthil's loss of a free life, the girl from the coast suffered two losses, bodily freedom and self-determination, through two kinds of life—life in the village and life in the Bendoro's city house, which are purposely contrasted by Pramoedya. In the village, the girl learned to respect men because of their struggle and their courage, in this case, as fishermen conquering the sea. She also lived with values of togetherness and sharing:

What the girl had once known in the village was that only the strong and powerfulsailors were thought to be worthy of honor and respect. They sailed the seas and caught hundreds, perhaps thousands, of fish in their nets. And the fisherman that was shown the most respect was the one who brought the biggest fish home. He was the hero, but he would not sell his prize catch. He would divide the meat among the neighbors, leaving the backbone for himself, which he would place above the doorway of his house. (Toer 79)

This is the kind of honor Hemingway illustrated in *The Old Man and the Sea*. In Indonesia, the fish's backbone symbolizes triumph over the sea—a powerful, masculine illustration of men's honor. Thus for Pramoedya's character, respecting a man like the Bendoro, who is physically weak and delicate, makes no sense: "As a child, the girl and her friends used to ostoop outside the doors of the fishermen's homes and stare at the long and broad backbones of fish hanging above them" (79). But with her husband, the girl wonders, "Why is everyone afraid of the Bendoro? Why couldn't she be given a clear answer? Or was it that she was unable to understand the answer that was given to her?" (81). One day, she asks the servant, who answers,

"As you can see in the shadow plays [wayang puppet plays], Young Mistress, on the battlefield, the giants are always defeated by the thin and delicate noblemen.

And ogres, too, for all their fire and sharpened teeth, are felled by nothing more than the touch of a noble warrior's hand. While the ogre is jumping up and down, turning cartwheels and bounding to and fro, the noble warrior acts calmly, hardly moving from his place." (Toer 81)

Here, the girl's resistance to the wayang concept of heroism and masculinity, as well as honor and respect, illustrates Pramoedya's attitude toward wayang. Although Pramoedya was born and raised in the Javanese culture closely related to wayang, which comes from the Indian Mahabharata, he refused to adopt wayang philosophy. In his article "Kenapa Pramoedya Menolak Wayang? (Why does Pramoedya Reject Wayang?)," Asep Sambodja reports that Pramoedya told Kees Snoek the following: Since he was 17 years old, he had refused wayang because he thought it was full of bullshit, considering the Javanese people were raised with the Mahabharata story and were inspired by it. The climax of Mahabharata is a massacre by relatives, so Pramoedya concluded that Javanese culture consisted of civil war, and, therefore, the Indonesian people were never able to win fights with foreigners. Furthermore, when Pramoedya was awarded the 1995 Ramon Magsaysay Award in Manila, he said he left the literature born of authority, in this case, Indonesian literature influenced by wayang philosophy, because he thought that the Indonesian people, especially the Javanese, could not learn how to fight for their freedom and defeat colonialists by following wayang. The civil war, influenced by wayang, confirmed the Dutch strategy of *divide et impera*, for the Dutch well knew that the Indonesian people consisted of many tribes, ethnic groups, languages, dialects, religions, and soon. The Dutch also knew that when the Indonesian people came together, they would not be easily defeated. Therefore, Pramoedya thought that a Javanese culture based on wayang was crippling the spirit of national unity.

Pramoedya's belief in unity can be seen clearly through the girl's worldview that everything comes from the sea. The sea gives life to her people, and they respect the sea for providing them food every day. Fishermen are real heroes: they go to sea every day, bringing home fish to eat, even though they sometimes die while doing so. The sea is life-giving, but dangerous. Pramoedya's strong reaction against wayang is illustrated by the village elder scolding a city man:

After he was back on his feet, the elder then said to the city man: "The problem with you, city man, the thing you're doing wrong, is that you're trying to trick us with those puppets of yours."

"I'm not trying to trick you!" the city man shouted.

"That's exactly what you're doing," the elder screamed back. "You're here to sell us fairy tales. You're here to deceive the village people with bits of buffalo hide that you've carved and colored. You'll tell them your puppets are powerful, without comparison. But that's crap! The only power here is the sea, not any of those shadow puppets." (82)

This dispute indicates that the Javanese people are purposefully deluded into believing that wayang possesses supernatural power and that, because wayang comes from the ancestors, must be preserved. Similarly, the conversation between the girl and the servant, who represents the Javanese wayang tradition, presents Pramoedya's view:

"They don't understand, Young Mistress: The characters in the shadow theater are our very own ancestors."

The girl disagreed: "Our ancestors are gone, Mbok. It's the sea that is still here."

“But, Young Mistress,” the servant argued, “if it weren’t for our ancestors, even we wouldn’t be here.” (82)

Pramoedya indicates that common people, in this case, Javanese common people, are influenced by what priyayi tell them to believe: wayang must be preserved out of respect for their ancestors, and wayang has power over common people, so they must follow this philosophy delivered through the Mahabharata story. As one illustrative result, the servant blindly has faith in wayang, which she does not really understand, but explains what she has been told. In the same way religion, in this case Islam, is considered the standard for human beings’ quality. Such a standard comes from the feudalistic society that utilizes religion to oppress its own people.

Deception plays a significant role in both these novels. In *The Dancer* Srinthil’s virginity is considered very valuable. Without consulting Srinthil, her grandfather offers her virginity to two rich village men. The grandfather also cheats these two by taking money for her virginity from both of them. The grandfather tricks one of the rich villagers by getting him drunk. In meantime, he takes the first man to deflower Srinthil. After the first man has finished, Srinthil’s grandfather sends the drunken man to Srinthil even though she is no longer a virgin. However, Srinthil does resist her grandfather’s oppression. Instead, she has subverted his will by freely giving her virginity to Rasus, the man she loves, before her grandfather sells her. This action demonstrates Srinthil’s rebellion toward the life determined for her. She finds a way to claim her body as her own, while acting submissive.

People in Dukuh Paruk live by their own norms and are separated from the criticalpolitical situation happening in their country. As Hellwig says,

When events occurring in and around 1965 are told by an external narrator, the focalization is so concentrated on the isolated and ignorant hamlet that the word

“Communist,” which is unknown there, is never used. Someone from outside the village talks about the “oppressed proletariat” and “imperialists, capitalists, and colonialists,” but in Dukuh Paruk these words are not understood. (147)

This ignorance leads to Srinthil’s unfortunate fate as ronggeng: since the Communist Party often pays her to perform, she becomes associated with Communism. When Soeharto imprisons everyone associated with the Communist Party in 1966, Srinthil and her group of musicians are imprisoned as well, and Dukuh Paruk is burned. After two years in prison, Srinthil is released, but by that time, she has lost her ronggeng aura. Hoping that a man called Bajus will help her and propose to her, she is shocked when she finds that Bajus is attempting, in exchange for a job, to sell her to his employer for an evening. Kept in Bajus’s room and without hope, Srinthil loses her sanity. It is Rasus, the man she loves, who rescues her from Bajus and places her in a mental hospital.

Both of these male writers depict confined and oppressed women whose sanity is stolen by patriarchal systems. Pramoedya and Tohari may not have experienced the oppression that women living in a patriarchal culture undergo, but they attempt to portray the impact on a woman’s psychological state when she lives in Indonesian and, especially, in Javanese patriarchal society. In Ahmad Tohari’s *The Dancer*, Srinthil adopts and internalizes her role as ronggeng. Then when she no longer has to perform the role because of the changing political situation, she loses her mind, demonstrating how Srinthil has not, and could not, internalize an identity separate from her role as ronggeng. Women do not have the opportunity to grow as individuals and decide how they want to perform in society. In Srinthil’s case, she was confined to the ronggeng role so early and for so long, when she is finally free to do anything she wants, she does not know what to do. That she wants to marry Bajus and become a housewife

demonstrates her longing for confinement in an approved role in which she can be comfortable. That she does not try to work to support herself, learning a new social role, also reveals a tendency toward agoraphobia. Staying inside a house and attaching herself to a man who will take care of her and tell her what to do seem easier than struggling in a new role. Sudden freedom terrifies Srinthil, who has been confined for so long that initiative and any vision of a freely determined life are in ruins.

Layers of colonialism in Tohari's and Pramoedya's novels are the legacy of the Dutch and Japanese that strengthen the feudalism that previously existed in Javanese society leading to the gap of the priyayi and the common people, the controlling New Order government and the local Javanese culture. Pramoedya's grandmother's life was ruined by the Japanese as described in the Prologue of his novel:

She also stored strange broken objects there, those she thought were beautiful. Her face shone as she gave them to me, or my brothers and sisters, whenever we came calling.

The Japanese conquered Indonesia. They took complete control. They destroyed her independence in the process. Her small, slender body suddenly became old. Her clothing became faded dirty. Her tiny hands and feet lost their strength.

Knowing I had decided to leave her to go to Jakarta, she came to me. I promised her: Grandma, as soon as I get a job, I'll send you a sarong.

I went to Jakarta. She went away too, forever. She was my grandmother, a genuine individual. I loved her. Admired her. Was proud of her. (Toer, Prologue)

The character in *The Girl from the Coast* is based on Pramoedya's grandmother's life story. He was the witness of how colonialism ruined women's lives in Indonesia. The Japanese

treated women as sex slaves. Women's bodies were worthless other than their function to satisfy Japanese sexual desire. During Japanese occupation in Indonesia, many Indonesian women were caught and put in a camp to fulfill Japanese sexual needs. Many Indonesian people consider that the three-and-a-half years of Japanese occupation in Indonesia was much worse than the three-and-a-half centuries of Dutch occupation since the Japanese were much more sadistic than the Dutch. Nevertheless, the Dutch sharpened the social gap between the priyayi and the common people in Javanese culture. During Dutch colonialization, only those from an aristocrat family were allowed to go to the Dutch schools. In Dutch schools, the Indonesian people were taught to speak Dutch. However, during Japanese occupation, everybody was treated the same way. Before conquering Indonesia, the Japanese called themselves "big brother" to convince the Indonesian people to trust them. After the Dutch left Indonesia, "big brother" became "emperor."

Colonization of women's bodies in Tohari's novel, through commodification of Srintil's body, again represents colonization's extension to Indonesian land, especially to the Japanese occupation that deeply scarred Indonesian women chosen as "comfort women." In "Listening to Voices: Testimonies of 'Comfort Women' of the Second World War," Maki Kimura writes,

The term "Comfort Women" itself is one of the most controversial of all arguments around "Comfort Women." Some ex-"Comfort Women" reject the title of "Comfort Women," claiming that "Comfort Women" implies that they provided sex voluntarily, although, they argue, this was not the case. These ex-"Comfort Women" and those who support them request the term "sexual slavery" to be used, in order to differentiate those "Comfort Women" who were forced into prostitution from voluntary military prostitutes. I cannot agree to make the distinction between those who were "forced" and "not forced" as this is the very

distinction that I would like to tackle. Therefore, I will continue to use this term “Comfort Women” but with quotation marks out of respect to these victims’ disagreement. (2)

Although Kimura refuses to differentiate between the “forced” and “not forced” aspect of the term “comfort women,” it has significance for Indonesian women who claimed they were forced to become sex slaves. In “Who Are the Ianfu (Comfort Women)?” Kirsten Orreill explains the term “comfort women” came from the Japanese Ianfu, meaning prostitutes who provided sexual services to Japanese soldiers during World War II:

The term itself is translated from the Japanese abbreviation Ianfu. ... As the Chinese characters ... [i : an] (comfort or solace) and ... [fu] (woman or wife) suggest, the women’s literal purpose was to offer solace and comfort to Japan’s Imperial Forces. However, the initiation of the Ianfu system was primarily a contiguous response to the Nanking massacre where it became evident to the Japanese authorities that future measures needed to be taken to minimise rapes local women by Japanese soldiers in war zones. Thus, in order to minimise these rapes, the Ianfu system was used to procure women for the sexual gratification of the Japanese soldiers. (129)

Based on this quotation, the comfort women’s purpose was to decrease the rape of local women by Japanese soldiers. However, this seemed unsuccessful because more and more women were forced to be “comfort women,” forced to be raped.

Although Pramoedya witnessed the Japanese occupation’s impact on his grandmother’s life, in *The Girl from the Coast*, he still criticizes Javanese feudalism as another form of colonization—that is, as the priyayi’s internal colonization of the common people. When the

Japanese were trying to persuade the Indonesian people to accept their help in scaring the Dutch away from Indonesia, they called themselves the Indonesians' "Big Brothers" to gain their trust. Similarly, priyayis fool the common people with their high values, including a more polite manner, knowledge of religion, wealth, and so on. As a result, many common people want to become part of the priyayi life by selling their daughters, trusting that their daughters will have a much better and more prestigious life than their parents. Indeed, Pramoedya attempts to demonstrate that the common people are colonized by this way of thinking—that they are lower than priyayis. They really believe that when their daughter is requested to be a priyayi's wife, they will feel honored rather than humiliated. The common people are very ignorant; they do not realize that giving their daughter in marriage to a priyayi will be only temporary. Their daughter will be only *garwa ampil* (Javanese term for "borrowed wife" or "practice wife"), that is, a temporary wife who will serve the priyayi sexually until he finds the right woman to marry—as a permanent wife—from his own rank or social class. Usually when this borrowed wife has children, the priyayi will keep them and take care of them, but send the mother away. These children are the symbol of his masculinity: he is able to father a child.

In Pramoedya's *The Girl from the Coast*, the first time the fourteen-year-old girl is informed that a priyayi has requested that she become his wife, the process unfolds as follows:

--there was a man who had taken note of her and informed his employer in the city of this village girl's beauty. One day, the man returned to the village and paid a visit to the home of the girl's parents. No more than a few days later, the girl learned she had to leave her hearth and home behind. She had to say good-bye to her country ways, to her hometown and its salt-sea smell. She had to put out of her

mind the nets she repaired each week, the tattered sail that hung in her mother's kitchen, and even the odors of the native home. (Toer 4)

After the marriage proposal from a priyayi, she realizes that she must leave everything behind and become a completely different person. The narration reveals her sense of the end of anything familiar. Indeed, she was taken to a world completely different, leaving everything and everyone behind. Her parents attempt to convince her that she will live like a queen in her husband's big house and wear beautiful and expensive clothes, so that she has to forget her poor village and neighbours living there:

She was taken to the city, where her body was wrapped in lengths of batik cloth and her torso cloaked in finely embroidered kebaya she had never before dreamed of owning. A gold necklace encircled her neck, its thin strand pulled downward toward the cleft of her small breasts by a golden, heart-shaped locket. (Toer 4)

Despite listening to what her parents tell her, she still does not understand why the man himself did not come to propose. She wonders if this is how it should be:

The day before, she had been married, in proxy manner, with a dagger representing her husband-to-be. At that moment, she had become aware that she was her father's daughter no longer, that she was not her mother's baby anymore. She was now the wife of a keris, a dagger standing in for a man she had never seen. (Toer 4)

The wedding ceremony without the groom present obviously reveals the priyayi's attitude toward lower class people. They are so low that they do not deserve his presence; it is too low for him to be present beside his bride on his wedding day. He had only to send a messenger

and a dagger as a symbol to replace his presence when the wedding ceremony occurred. This is an attitude of Javanese feudalistic people that Pramoedya despises. Priyayis believe that because of their social status, they have the right to humiliate and insult common people.

Similar to Tohari's Srintil, Pramoedya's girl from the coast is physically visible, but psychologically invisible. Srintil is visible as a *ronggeng* because she becomes the center of attention of the village men and the most desirable sexual object in the whole village. The girl from the coast is also visible physically since she is dressed as a high-class woman, but she is invisible psychologically since she cannot do what she wants. She is in the Bendoro's house as asexual servant who considers only her husband's needs, not her own. Her needs are not significant in the household. Everything has to be done the Bendoro's way. How the Bendoro treats the girl shows that she is nothing but a body to be used as he pleases, but when he does not need her, he wants her out of his sight.

A shiver ran down her spine when the Bendoro altered his position to sit facing her. When he unfolded the book rest and took from the Holy Book a small bamboo place marker, she felt that his eyes were sending her a command. In all her life, she had never felt such a chill. Earlier thoughts of his soft hands and their gentle caress vanished. (Toer 31)

When his sexual pleasure is over, he dismisses the girl with only a look because he wants to be alone reading the Qur'an. Despite this being the first such authoritative look the girl has ever received, she interprets it immediately and correctly: her position in the household is inferior. In addition, the Bendoro flicks a bamboo marker to dismiss the girl from the praying room. This is insulting because Javanese people send dogs or cats away with the same movement: "For the

second time, she saw him gesture with the bamboo pointer for her to leave” (Toer 32). The girl learns quickly, at least partly because she has earlier observed his behavior to his servant:

She continued to watch silently as he roused the maidservant with his foot, and then as the servant hastily rolled up her sleeping mat, with her pillow inside it, and crawled backward toward the door, where she rose in a stooped position and then disappeared through the doorway. (Toer 25)

This demonstrates the Bendoro’s position. He is the center of his universe, and everyone else exists only to serve his needs.

Pramoedya creates the Bendoro as a contradictory and thus scary character. At one time he is cold, distant, and authoritative, then at another, he is gentle, soft, and polite. This makes it difficult for the girl from the coast to predict what he is going to do next or what he wants next. The Bendoro also has a charismatic personality that seems to hypnotize the girl; she feels like a robot without a soul when he wants her to be with him:

“Come here, my bride,” the Bendoro said to her.

She recognized the tone of his voice—soft, gentle, and polite—and as if drawn to its source by an invisible cord, she rose slowly, lifelessly, and walked somnambulantly toward the door. The Bendoro stretched out his hand and took hers in his own. (Toer 33)

Next, Pramoedya’s attitude toward religion, especially toward Islam, can be seen through the Bendoro’s character, which represents the hypocrisy that uses religion to denigrate common people because they are not taught to pray the way Muslims should. This ignorance of the Islamic way of praying is considered representative of the common people’s lack of humanity. “Knowledge” of religion and the capability of reading Al Qur’an in the original Arabic becomes

high-class society's, or priyayis', form of "prestige." In this case, religion is used as a tool to colonize common people and women. Women, especially, receive more pressure because besides religion, Javanese tradition and feudalism oppress them.

On the coast, people live hard, but freely. They have no complicated rules of manner because they are busy surviving and taking care of their families. They concentrate on praising nature for their daily food. They are free and independent. The Bendoro's big house with many servants has an opposite kind of life. Although the girl becomes the Bendoro's bride, she is as helpless as the servants. She does have authority over the servants, but no authority over her own body.

Ironically, in her superior position, she needs the servants' guidance as to what to do in the household. The word "Bendoro" comes from "ndoro" which means "master." This term allows no room for criticism. Everything is "yes" to please the Bendoro. Everyone other than the Bendoro is a slave (including permanent wives). The Javanese feudalistic system and culture has the saying *sapa sira, sapa ing sun* (who you are, who I am), which differentiates the higher class, elites, and royals from the lower class, the proletariat, and common people. Therefore, in the feudalistic system there is no criticizing the boss culture by the staff. All that the people can do is just yes boss or *injih ndoro* from the lower class to the higher class (Muhibuddin 86). This oppressive culture of Javanese people was taken advantage of by the Dutch to divide the Indonesian people into categories: the higher class and lower class. The Dutch encouraged the priyayi to go and study in Dutch schools and work for the Dutch government to be civil servants. As a result, the priyayi become the slaves of the Dutch, while the common people become the slaves of the priyayi. Those priyayis willingly and happily become the slaves of the Dutch to be able to gain the respect as "priyayi" from the common people and to be able to get the

“consent” to oppress the lower class people as well as to climb the social ladder in the political and authoritative system in the government. This priyayi-centric culture is sadly considered to be the “high and long lasting” Javanese culture. In feudalistic culture, one’s dignity is not based on her/his professionalism, capability, and credibility, but on family tree and the bloodline instead. The colonialist sees Indonesian people as having a slave mentality. According to Sutan Syahrir, Indonesia has a colonized native mentality. However, this kind of mentality existed before the Dutch occupied Indonesia. That mentality was created by the feudalistic local culture (Muhibuddin, 89). The Dutch then used it as a tool to divide the native people and used the priyayi to enslave the common people for Dutch advantage. Since the priyayi went to Dutch schools and learned to speak Dutch as well as worked for the Dutch, they adopted the Dutch lifestyle that was considered exclusive and prestigious. Here in Pramoedya’s novel we can see it through the way the Bendoro ate breakfast with the girl from the coast:

A few minutes later they were back in the house and the two of them were seated at the dining table, an array of food before them: a sliced but still warm loaf of bread, newly delivered from the bakery; jars of marmalade; stoppered bottles of chocolate sprinkles and brown sugar crystals; a pitcher of freshly squeezed orange juice; a plate of shrimp crackers; and a tureen of cooked oatmeal. Steam rose from coffee in Japanese porcelain cups. The gloss of highly shined cutlery—spoons, knives, and forks, implements she hardly recognized—made the girl’s head spin. The glare of a silver fruit bowl assaulted her eyes. The girl’s mind reeled. She was hungry, but what were all these shining implements for? And why were there so many of them? (Toer 36)

The food the Bendoro ate for breakfast was European, for instance, bread, orange juice, marmalade jam, and so on. The typical Javanese breakfast is vegetable salad with peanut sauce and rice, accompanied by fried tempe and tofu, or fried rice, aromatic rice with chayote curry and shredded chicken that the girl was familiar with. Furthermore, she was used to eating simple food for poor people. Since rice was too expensive for the people in the village, the girl and her family ate corn as staple food more often than rice:

“What do you eat in the village?”

The girl couldn't answer. The language the Bendoro used was different, and not having been taught to speak the language that people in the city used, she was afraid to reply and thus refrained from speaking at all.

“Do you eat corn?”

“Yes, Master.”

“Do you have rice very often?” “No, Master.”

“Well, you can be thankful there's always rice to eat here. Praise Allah, God always provides.” (Toer 34)

The quotation demonstrates the Bendoro was trying to point out that the girl should be grateful that he married her because then she could eat rice three times a day unlike when she was in the village where she had to eat corn instead of rice. The European lifestyle of the Bendoro can also be seen from the cutlery he used, that is, spoon and fork as well as knife instead of using hands to eat like any other Javanese. This new and unfamiliar European lifestyle makes the girl confused and awkward at the dining table. The servant was trying to guide her to observe the Bendoro since it is her duty as a wife to serve her husband:

At the girl's side, her personal servant inquired, "What would you like to eat? Some porridge or bread? Or maybe you'd just like juice?"

Anything at all, the girl thought, as long as she could eat it without anyone watching. The servant spoke to her again: "Ask the Master what he wants and then serve it to him."

The girl glanced at the Bendoro, hoping that her eyes would speak for her, and then bowed her head again. When he then pointed at the bread, the girl rose and looked questioningly at the servant. (Toer 36)

The hierarchy is obvious that the servant is the lowest of the three at the dining table, and the girl is higher than the servant, but she is also the servant to the Bendoro who has the highest position. The new role makes the girl depressed since in the village no one treated her like she was a servant. Furthermore, no one makes her terrified like when she was with the Bendoro, her husband. The comfortable life she got, the beautiful and expensive clothes, jewelry, and the unfamiliar food, had its exchange value, her freedom. She was demanded to be completely submissive and silent. The language the Bendoro used when he was speaking to the girl is also a reminder that the girl was lower than he was and that she should be grateful and feel lucky that the Bendoro was willing to make her his wife. The Bendoro kept reminding the girl that she was now living a life that was higher, more glorious, and noble than the kind of life she had in the village. This attitude encourages the girl's awareness of the huge difference of social class she and the Bendoro had, which he already knew but made the girl feel uncomfortable by asking her to talk about her life in the village:

"You don't have to if you don't want to. I know about the villages on the coast, and they're all pretty much the same. About ten years ago, I visited your village.

It was dirty, the people were poor, and nobody prayed. A person of faith would never approve of such filth. People who live amid filth incur God's wrath. Wealth does not come easily to people like that; they are condemned to be poor."

"Yes, Master."

"Cleanliness is an important part of faith and is reflected in spiritual purity.

Do you understand what I'm telling you?"

"Yes, Master."

"Spiritual purity brings people closer to God." "Yes,

Master." (Toer 35)

Pramoedya's disgust with the hypocrisy of the priyayi when it comes to religion is clearly shown through the way he presented the Bendoro's character as someone who feels superior over common people just because he practiced Islam. The Bendoro is also presented as someone who behaves as if he was Mr. Clean and Mr. Good just because he practiced his religion. Although Pramoedya was Muslim and he believed that Islam could be the religion to unite all Indonesian people, his writings demonstrate that he was very disappointed with the Muslims in Indonesia who used Islam to oppress other Indonesian people in the name of the religion. Although the official history of Islam in Indonesia says it was Islam that brought Demak to its glory, Pramoedya saw this negatively as a bad victory since religion was only used as a mask for the hidden agenda to take over and colonize their own people through land expansion together with their allies especially Wali Sanga ("Wali" is from Arabic that means "trusted one" or "guardian" while "Sanga" is the Javanese for "nine" so "Wali Sanga" means the nine guardians or saints who spread Islam in Java). Pramoedya was extremely against praising any idol. He only believed in himself and that is what made him an individualist. He claimed that his ideology was

Pramis, that is the belief in Pram (Pramoedya). He admitted that every creative writer was almost always an individualist, an independent thinker, and it is difficult for them to adjust their way of thinking with other people. Furthermore, they follow their hearts and because of that usually people do not like them very much since the way they live is against the norm.

The alienated feeling that the girl experienced is not only shown through the kind of food she ate in the house and manner that she had to learn, but also through the fact that she almost could not recognize herself when she looked at herself in the mirror after her servant put some make up on her face:

“Look in the mirror,” the servant urged.

The girl stared at her reflection, then suddenly covered her face with her wothands.

“What is it?” her mother asked when she saw her daughter turn away.

The girl lifted her left hand to the mirror and screamed: “That’s not me! It’s the devil!” (Toer 42)

The concept of the devil here is the unknown which generates the fear inside the girl’s mind and gives her the urge to refuse and reject whatever it is that is in the mirror—a figure and a face look like her, but they are not her. It is natural that humans fear the unknown—something strange and unfamiliar to them because it feels threatening. Since it is unknown we cannot predict what will happen and what it will do to us. The new look of her is the evidence that Bendoro has made her the way the Bendoro wanted her to look. This is the embodiment of the control of the patriarch and the feudalist over the body of a woman.

Ahmad Tohari’s *The Dancer* demonstrates the colonization of not only the body but also the mind of women. As a result, Srinthil lost her ability to decide what is best for her life and

what to do with her freedom from being a ronggeng. Perhaps the word “lost” here is not appropriate considering she never had the ability. She was told that she got possessed with a ronggeng inang (ronggeng spirit) since she was very young, so she never knew any other way of life other than being a ronggeng, the one role she was told to play. The concept of ronggeng in this case is not simply a dancer, but a dancer with the mystical aura belonging to the community to serve the men sexually. Ronggeng becomes the symbol of desire, which ironically is the position every woman in Paruk village wants because when a woman becomes a ronggeng, she becomes the most popular and desirable in the community. She becomes the one every man wants. Any family will be proud when one of the members of the family becomes a ronggeng. Ronggeng is a valuable commodity for the family because she can support the family financially by being one. In other words, ronggeng is a sex slave who does not realize that she does not own her body. Instead of feeling humiliated, the ronggeng feels flattered by the prestige. This is the way patriarchy works. Srinthil, as early as possible, was told and brainwashed that being a ronggeng is what she wants her whole life without realizing that the men and the community use her as puppet to fulfill their need for an idol. In the novel, the villagers claimed that Srinthil was possessed by the ronggeng spirit when they saw her dancing. She was never trained or taught how to dance well, she just did it beautifully. From this event, the villagers concluded that she was possessed because they did not see any other way Srinthil could dance beautifully without any training. The people call it tradition that is constructed to make Srinthil feel that it is her responsibility to fulfill the role that she was told to play in her life. Srinthil was made to believe that being a ronggeng is what she lives for.

The concept of marriage for the villagers of Paruk village is not that sacred. Their attitude towards marriage is very casual. They consider it unimportant and insignificant. If they

want sex, they can just have sex without getting married. It feels natural for the people of Paruk village when Srinthil was still eleven years old and started to show that she would become a ronggeng when she grew up, she sang an erotic song without realizing that it was erotic:

Sitting on the ground with her legs tucked under and engrossed in her work, Srintil sang happily. The people of Paruk knew only two kinds of music: the classical kidung poetry that old people chanted, and the songs of ronggeng dancers that were popular among the children. Srintil, in her young girl's voice, was singing "Senggot," a favorite song of ronggeng dancers.

"Senggot" was an erotic song but Srintil, a girl of only eleven years, sang it heartily. It wasn't likely that she was able to fully fathom the meaning of the lyrics, but that didn't matter, and the people of Paruk wouldn't have been bothered about a young child singing such an indecent song. (Tohari 6)

When they were still children, Rasus rejected Srinthil's proposal to be married since he thought that Srinthil wanted to marry him just because she was afraid of growing old alone. However, that was not the reason Srinthil asked Rasus to marry her. She loved him dearly and had this idea of a happy life that is living together with someone she truly loved. Rasus misinterpreted Srinthil's marriage proposal.

Henry Spiller explains that a ronggeng satisfies a man's craving for an object of desire that is both mother and the other:

Ronggeng—professional female singer-dancers, whose duties are generally assumed to include sexual services as well—exhibit many of the characteristics of Lacan's other/mother. They are objects of desire through which a man's cravings might be satisfied, provided he can mobilize the power of the Other (in

the form of movement-regulating drumming) to get it. Like the mother figure in the Sangkuriang myth, ronggeng are perceived to be both divine (through their connection to the rice goddess) and profane (through their association with sexual behaviors that transgress conventional morality). (Spiller 82)

This desire is true for Rasmus since he lost his mother because of the tempe bongkrek incident. Tempe bongkrèk is a variety of tempeh from Central Java, notably Banyumas, that is prepared with coconut. This type of tempeh occasionally gets contaminated with the bacterium *Burkholderia gladioli*, and the unwanted organism produces toxins (bongkrek acid and toxoflavin) from the coconut, besides killing off the *Rhizopus* fungus due to the antibiotic activity of bongkrek acid. Rasmus' mother died of poisonous tempe bongkrek. Because of this loss, Rasmus expected Srinthil to fill the void in his heart. However, the suspicion of being simply an option in Srinthil's life offended his masculinity. The reason for his refusal of the marriage proposal may also be that Srinthil's body reminds him of something that has been conquered by many men. Considering Srinthil's past as a ronggeng, it is assumed that she had been with many men in her life. Rasmus' attitude refusing Srinthil is an act of othering; in this case, Rasmus puts himself in the position of an outsider. The "other" is himself feeling estranged among the people of Paruk since he feels differently from the other men in Paruk village, especially related to a woman who is a ronggeng dancer. He puts Srinthil inside the bubble of the tradition and culture of Paruk village. Rasmus' rejection of Srinthil at this point is yet another example of how patriarchal attitudes cause men to fail to understand the subjectivity of women.

CHAPTER III

SEXUAL REVOLUTION IN

Y.B. MANGUNWIJAYA'S *DURGA/UMAYI* AND AYU UTAMI'S *SAMAN*

This research project explains how the selected texts reflect the beliefs and values of Indonesian societies and the struggles between Indonesian and Western values as traditionally understood. The project mainly concentrates on identity politics related to issues of gender and class. Life seems to be decentered, especially in Y.B. Mangunwijaya's *Durga / Umayi* where the writing style gives readers the feeling of being in a traditional shadow-puppet audience, listening to the puppeteer tell stories about the chaos of life in Indonesia. Consequently, the characters' identity, especially the main character's, seems myriad instead of unitary. This research further analyzes issues of identity and sexuality, and of course, related issues, especially repressed Indonesian women's voices. Issues of identity are sometimes complicated by the authors' use of female characters to represent the nation of Indonesia, so that they become more than human beings struggling as individuals.

In contrast with Pramoedya's and Tohari's novels that portray their female characters as victims to make their points, Y.B. Mangunwijaya's *Durga / Umayi* has a very strong female protagonist who embodies various roles and adopts multiple identities. Reinscribing an old tale, Mangunwijaya introduces the types of women that readers can expect to find in the novel and establishes its structure based on a multicultural myth. The *Durga / Umayi* goddess symbolizes

the female who can be both bad and good, vaguely analogous to the Western virgin/whore dichotomy. Durga and Umayi are the same person representing different characteristics, Durga woman's evil side and Umayi her good side. Durga and Umayi are characters from Mahabharata, originally an Indian myth. The goddess Umayi is the wife of Lord Guru who becomes so inflamed with lust by her beauty that he wants to make love immediately—in a public place. Umayi refuses because she thinks sexual activity should appropriately take place nprivate. When Umayi refuses him, Lord Guru's spontaneous lust turns to anger, and he curses her to become the ugly creature Durga. The Durga / Umayi binary opposition is more complicated than it seems. In the Indian Mahabharata version, Durga's character as the destroyer is not an evil persona; destruction actually balances the world into harmony. Somewhat analogous to yin and yang, destruction and death must exist for creation and birth to exist. Therefore, in the Indian Mahabharata, Durga and Umayi are complementary. However, in the Javanese Mahabharata to which Mangunwijaya alludes, Durga as destroyer is evil, especially because she is associated with Soeharto's destructive New Order government.

Mangunwijaya's protagonist Durga cannot harmonize with Umayi. Instead, they both exist in a single woman imbued with contradiction and ambiguity, as shown by her many names that correspond to a series of social roles. Significantly, Mangunwijaya's protagonist wields her womanly powers skillfully and consciously to reach her goals. She does not submit to the social roles the patriarchy assigns women but plays other roles strategically to gain her ends. Mangunwijaya turns the Mahabharata on its head in that his Durga does not become ugly but the opposite. His Durga embodies the female protagonist in her actions on behalf of the destructive Soeharto government after changing her identity through cosmetic surgery. She is a physically very beautiful woman, but her evil acts belie her powerful beauty and actually

strengthen the Durga. In contrast, the protagonist's early appearance, just like that of her twin brother, represents her conscience and is associated with the caring and loving Umayi.

Over the course of the novel the protagonist takes on many names. She begins as Iin Sulinda Pertiwi, called Iin or Linda or Tiwi. As a prostitute in Jakarta and then international cagirl, she becomes Mrs. Nusamusbida or Madame Nussy. Later she morphs into international cagirl/businesswoman Charlotte Eugenie de Proguleaux nee du Bois de la Montagne and after plastic surgery becomes Angelin Ruth Portier. She is also sometimes called Tukinah Senik, BikCi or Aunty Wi depending on the situation.

Concerning the protagonist's negotiation of her identity, I will analyze an early scene highly loaded with magic realism. In this scene, the protagonist, named Iin Linda Tiwi at this point, is a laundrywoman in President Soekarno's home, from where he officially proclaimed Indonesia's independence in 1945. In the room where he announced the proclamation, the microphone approaches the protagonist and attempts to persuade, or perhaps to seduce, her outspoken mind. She becomes confused and is unprepared to do so because she believes she is nobody. Still, an Indonesian patriotic spirit burns in her heart, and she learns to speak in her own voice:

Indeed it came to pass, the event full of mystery, whose coming Iin Linda Tiwi sensed before it happened: in the moment of silent meditation, while all those present prayed fervently for those who had sacrificed their lives struggling for freedom, at just that meditative moment the microphone, the very Microphone of the Proclamation in the shape of an elegant, modern box, calmly and authoritatively turned about, then set out, went down the steps of the reception hall, and proceeded slowly in the direction of Tiwi who at that time was

standing along with some other household servants under a tree in the front yard, passed through the row of young fighters and the honored guests, then stood directly in front of Tiwi, the box smiled then whispered softly to her, a bit froggily: Speak, speak into me, dear Iin. This girl from Kedu, child of a KNIL corporal and a fried-cassava-snack seller, was startled. She did not know what to do or say. Don't be afraid whispered the Microphone gently, don't think that the only ones who have the right to speak into me are the big leaders of the nation or prominent intellectuals, speak! Okay but Tiwi's only a laundrywoman. That's just it, that's just it, my dearest Tiwi, speak. So Tiwi said a couple of words, now forgotten.

The Microphone of the Proclamation smiled once again: the moment of silence almost over, I have to go back now. At special moments I am going to visit you. That's all for now, Tiwi, FREEDOM! Thus the Heirloom Microphone walked back to the front of the reception hall, went up the steps, stood in its original place, faced the direction of the various proclaimers. (Mangunwijaya 56-57)

This scene exemplifies women's constant negotiation for position: women are supposed to remain in the background, supporting men at the microphone. However, the scene also suggests an Indonesian woman for whom a public voice is unnecessary. A political mastermind, she manipulates her man from the background. Here, Mangunwijaya on one level alludes to Soeharto's First Lady, who often controlled presidential policy, including the anti-polygamy law for public servants. At the same time during the New Order, Indonesian women's image was domesticated and associated strongly with housewifery and motherhood. Dharma Wanita, an

organization for the wives of male public servants, helped women support their husbands' careers by being good wives and mothers.

On another deeper level, this highly loaded magical realist scene implies not only silenced women's voices, but also those of farmers and poor people. Rebelling against the New Order political situation, Mangunwijaya, an architect and a Catholic priest, chose to live with hepoort on the bank of the Code River, to protest Soeharto's corrupt government. In 1992, Mangunwijaya won the Aga Khan Award for Architecture for designing and building poor people's houses in the same area along the Code River. Mangunwijaya's *Durga / Umayi*, first published in 1985, has never been banned, probably because of its swirling style and symbolic nature, even though inequities in Soeharto's government are its main issues. Soeharto's administration successfully built many things big and impressive, but ignored and victimized poor people. Thus, I conjecture that *Durga / Umayi* was not banned because of the difficulty in reading and understanding it. Possibly Soeharto's government censors could not find an excuse to ban it because they could not understand its complicated language, allusions, and symbolism. Mangunwijaya's repetitive, wordy narrative style differs substantially from Pramoedya's clear, straightforward style. The novel *Durga/Umayi* is written like a puppeteer's narration of a shadow puppet performance.

Y.B. Mangunwijaya's *Durga / Umayi* contains Hindu-Javanese mythical elements that help support its nonlinear plot. As mentioned, the mythic Javanese elements on which the novel is structured complicate the Hindu elements, mainly because of the negative Javanese attitude toward Durga, the destroyer. Iin, the protagonist, adopts various social roles and complicated personalities, representing, of course, creation and destruction, ambiguity and chaos. First, she

sifeminine, beautiful, and poised, but when she joins TKR, the anti-Dutch revolutionary army, and Gerwani, she becomes brutal.

Tiwi got all more upset when she asked herself whether a woman who has chopped off someone's head can still get married and have a wedding normally and happily, because isn't it the case that a woman's nature is not to kill but rather just the opposite to give life, to store living seed in her womb and to nurse the dear little life, to carry it about to rock it to sleep to kiss it and not to cut off its head, oh who can give her some indication as to whether she is still a girl or heaven forbid is barren having turned into Durga, wife to her own husband's seed who loves to kill people and cause them misfortune? (Mangunwijaya 76)

Interestingly, even though he opposes Soeharto's regime, Mangunwijaya uses Soeharto's demonized descriptions of Gerwani and the Communist Party as brutal and sadistic. His protagonist laments the possibility of a normal, happy life, thus revealing stereotypes' influences: women should be caring, domestic, gentle, nurturing, submissive, and supportive of their husbands' careers. Soeharto propagandized and essentialized women and their roles with the term "kodrat" or nature.

Mangunwijaya and Soeharto agree with the image of Gerwani and the Communist Party as brutalizing their women members and making them brutal. As a woman, Tiwi fulfills all these roles. Once a laundrywoman in Soekarno's household, she realized that she wanted her voice to be heard. She joined TKR and Gerwani to take part in the common people's struggle because she was one of them and their representative. Imprisoned, she was raped and then became a prostitute in Jakarta and then an international high-class call girl. But Tiwi is more than herself. Her name comes from Pertiwi—Ibu Pertiwi, meaning "homeland." Mangunwijaya uses

Tiwi as the symbol of a nation sold to a new form of colonialist. That is, the Indonesian people, their land, and their development are at the mercy of foreigners' strong economic power. They seem to gain economic independence through prostitution, just as Tiwi climbed the social ladder to a comfortable, even luxurious life. Ironically, Tiwi's sale of her body reveals that she had no authority over her embodied self; she others herself, but by doing so, she purchases independence. Again ironically, in Javanese philosophy, "kodrat" is closely related to fate determined by the puppeteer, who plays puppets as God plays human beings, who in Javanese belief, must surrender to their fate. The Javanese saying "sakdrema nglampahi" means they must live their lives as they are.

This belief discourages the Javanese from doing anything to change their fate and their "given" lives. In other words, they see themselves as authority-less puppets in the hands of fate and believe they deserve whatever life dishes out. This belief resembles karma: when in a previous life, we acted badly, in our present life, we deserve our misery and must suffer through atonement. Mangunwijaya wants to break through this "kodrat," so he creates the downtrodden protagonist as someone willing to change her fate, in this case, through her economic condition. She opportunistically uses any advantages that arise in order to attain the life she wants.

Pamela Allen in her book *Membaca, dan Membaca Lagi* observes that Iin's (Tiwi's) character symbolizes both not only the nation and the people but also the gap between them. Iin tries to forget her poverty-stricken but innocent past to attain power and wealth but in a corrupt way (Allen 108). Similarly, Iin and Brojol, Iin's twin brother, also represent the gap between the nation and the people: Brojol is happy to be an ordinary farmer with little money,

living in a small village. Conversely, Iin has such an insatiable desire for power and wealth that she exchanges her dignity and her body for them.

In fact, during her progression of attaining wealth, Iin does not realize that her international project results in the people's removal from her brother's village. Allen draws an analogy between the relationship of Iin and Brojol and, in Mahabharata, that of Sumantri and Sukrasana. Brojol, Iin's physically ugly brother, becomes the victim of Iin's effort to achieve her goal; similarly, Sumantri's twin brother Sukrasana becomes the victim of his brother's desire to reach his dream (Allen 117). Power-grabbing efforts that victimize innocent people illustrate Manguwijaya's concern about Soeharto's New Order plan for development that excludes poor people. In fact, his development plan usually further marginalized poor villagers and farmers, while the government built more factories and other projects.

Tiwi's progress through life symbolizes Indonesia's as a nation. Employed by the Soekarno's household as a laundrywoman, Tiwi has nothing; everything is taken from her—time, energy, her freedom to live independently. Too, the colonialists who occupied Indonesia took everything and treated Indonesians as slaves. Next, Tiwi became a prostitute paid by foreigners just as after independence Indonesia suffered another kind of colonialism—trapped in the economic web of capitalism because Soeharto invited foreign investors to build Indonesia, thus marginalizing common, low-class, poor people. Soeharto had major projects where Tiwi was involved.

Instead of solving problems or building utopia, Manguwijaya ends the novel ambiguously. Unanswered questions include: "Will compassion defeat greed?" "In which direction will Iin and Indonesia go?" "Will Iin find a way to unite the dualism that defines her?" Destructive Durga and compassionate Umayi are two-fold and inseparable like yin and yang and

other binary oppositions. Iin's ambiguity is also compared with Srikandi, another character in Mahabharata, neither male nor female—not androgynous, but completely gender-less. Despite that, Srikandi has both feminine and masculine characteristics that enable Srikandi, in any situation, to be brave, and tough, and compassionate.

Mangunwijaya terms his novel “anti-epic,” and he has a deeply ironic attitude toward the great national history of Indonesian independence. He positions his protagonist as a housemaid who mostly does laundry in Soekarno's household. Despite being close to national, historic events, she has no knowledge or understanding of the chaotic political situation. During this time, she knows only that after she washes the clothes, she cannot hang them in the yard as usual because of honorable guests' presence. Besides that, she has to keep the bathrooms very clean. Obviously, Mangunwijaya wants readers to perceive Indonesian history from the poor people's perspectives. In addition to Tiwi's household domestic position, Ward Keeler in his essay “The Postcolonial Dilemma” observes that the novel arises from a gender issue, referring to Iin's childhood memories of confinement to housework, while her twin brother, played freely in the yard. Furthermore, Keeler suggests that we cannot judge Iin and what she becomes because she grows up just surviving under people of power and authority. With her hard-won negotiation skills, she becomes a chameleon out of necessity (Keeler qtd. in Foulcher and Day 437).

Tiwi frees herself to do as she pleases with her life. But selling her body like a commodity is problematic. To a great extent, she loses freedom since she has to negotiate with the purchaser of her body. At the same time, she realizes her womanly sexual power can lead to financial advancement through her bargaining agency. She thinks only of money, never love. She sometimes feels dissonance and regret, but she always decides to follow the money even when

her twin becomes a victim of her project. A characteristic of colonial discourse, Katrin Bandel says in *Kajian Gender dalam Konteks Pascakolonial* (Gender Study in Postcolonial Context), is that anything related to white European or American foreigners is superior and to be imitated because they are superior to other human beings:

Salah satu ciri utama wacana colonial adalah keyakinan akan superioritas orang Eropa, atau superioritas ras kulit putih, atas manusia lain. Gagasan-gagasan mengenai superioritas ras, budaya dan pengetahuan Eropa membentuk sebuah wacana dimana kolonialisme tampak bukan sebagai kejahatan, tapi sebagai sebuah kewajaran atau bahkan kebaikan. Manusia non-Barat diyakini bersifat primitive, bodoh, irasional, dan serupa anak-anak, sehingga sudah sewajarnya mereka diperintah oleh orang Eropa. Oleh karena itu mereka sangat membutuhkan bimbingan orang Eropa, sebab mereka tidak akan mampu mengurus diri sendiri dan mengangkat derajat budayanya sendiri. (Bandel, *Kajian Gender dalam Konteks Pascakolonial* 5)

One characteristic of colonial discourse is the belief that European (Caucasian people) are superior, or that Caucasian people are superior to other human beings. Ideas on racial and cultural superiority as well as on European knowledge created a discourse in which colonialism seems to be not evil, but normal or even good. Non-Western human beings are believed primitive, dumb, irrational, and childlike; therefore, European people are able to occupy their lands. As a result, they seem to need European people's guidance badly, considering that they are

unable to take care of themselves and to elevate their own culture. (Bandel, *Kajian Gender dalam Konteks Pascakolonial 5*)

In his theory on hybridity, Homi Bhabha explains that thinking colonialism is a long ago series of events now completely over is wrong because its impact still shapes formerly colonized nations' characteristics (37). Tiwi here exemplifies this condition as she climbs the economic ladder from the common people to the elite international group—sold to international clients by making a commodity of her body. Because of her ability to speak a little foreign language and of having foreigners as her clients, she feels superior to other Indonesians.

Mangunwijaya uses a language and dialect from the Banyumas area to emphasize this attitude:

...but they say the magic specialists from Bagelen Magelang are more potent than Mataram magic specialists because it's the Dulangmas area (that means golden palm grease) that is, the Kedu-Magelang-Banyumas region which is rich in rice fields and tobacco that provides the food for the people of Mataram, whereas without the help of the commanders from Kedu not even Lord Senopati in his time could possibly have defeated the Kingdom of Demak, that of course is the version of the people of Kedu and Bagelen who always feel put down because the refined palace types think of them as crude rude dudes from down on the farm because they pronounce their words with a-a-a not o-o-o and use strange old-fashioned words when they mean to say I and you, and pronounce the ends words in funny ways rather than the straightforward way they should be pronounced, when as a matter of fact the language of Kedu Bagelen is actually much older much more antique and more venerable like a potent old heirloom than the snotty-nosed kid o-o-o style. ... (69)

How this narrative voice describes the Kedu Bagelen language demonstrates the Javacentrism first implanted in Soekarno's era, that is, considering the Central Javanese language the best, the most sophisticated compared to other Indonesian languages or dialects. The language is lost in translation because they are not old-fashioned words, but different pronunciations of the same words. In the Kedu Bagelen language, I is *inyong* and you is *rika*, and in fact, *inyong* and *rika* are still used today. The narrative voice also reveals feelings of superiority in that the way the Kedu Bagelen people pronounce certain words in a "funny" way, not the way they "should be" pronounced. In fact, the "standard pronunciation" of Javanese is the Solonese and Yogyakartaese pronunciation, thus encouraging those urban people's feelings of superiority. However, these attitudes and practices were conditioned by Javacentrism during Soekarno and Soeharto's era.

Still, even Javacentrists tend to position themselves lower than white Europeans and Americans. This is what Homi Bhabha describes as "slave mentality": colonialism's impact that causes Indonesians to want to be like Europeans and Americans both physically and mentally, lower themselves willingly. They consider physical features that look like Europeans or Americans superior as can be seen from this following scene:

His wife meanwhile only made him feel worse with all her ridicule: how come his sister was such a looker, stacked like a Euroasian, with well-proportioned hips, waist and those perfect breasts, all combined with that American face (everything fabulous is American) whereas her honored husband had Petruk's looks and a body shaped like the fried cassava snacks his dear departed mother used to sell as he squatted at the corner of the Chinese temple near the town square.

(Mangunwijaya 38-9)

In exploring another perspective, we find that Petruk, is one of the characters in traditional Javanese puppetry who does not exist in the original Indian version of the Mahabharata.

Hesonei of the Punakawan, four comedic figures common in the medium. His physical features are very ugly with a very long distinctive nose.

Punakawan comes from “puna” meaning understanding, comprehending, light, clear, careful, and resourceful about the significance behind natural events and human experiences, while “kawan” means guide or friend. Therefore, “punakawan” means friends who have the ability to analyze and process phenomena related to nature and human experiences (Kresna 28).

Punakawan symbolizes Javanese people’s humility since, in spite of their laughable physical features, they are actually reincarnations of gods. As a result, they function as political and spiritual advisors to the king. Brojol, whose physical features resemble Petruk, functions as Tiwi’s conscience, keeping Tiwi aware of her bad actions toward the common people, including Brojol. This seems to indicate that Brojol and Tiwi both had the wisdom of the gods, but Tiwi rejects hers for beauty and greed.

Tiwi’s decision to commodify her body to smooth her way to her desires affirms Bandel’s idea against Western feminist values in which women’s sexual revolution embodies their liberation, that is, a woman has to be sexually loose, according to the Indonesian standard, to be able to embrace “liberation.” Tiwi’s body symbolizes the land of Indonesia, not given freely or out of love, but priced as a bargaining position. In other words, Indonesian lands cannot be freely taken.

However, the money foreigners pay for Indonesian land and natural resources goes to a clique of individuals in the government, not to the people who actually live on the land. Soeharto’s rule encouraged massive appropriation of the land and its natural resources,

which were sold to foreigners with profits going to Soeharto, his family, and his clique's interests. They got wealthier, while the common people got poorer.

From one perspective, Tiwi's rise to power is a return to the power of women in ancient Java. In Titi Surti Nastiti's book, *Perempuan Jawa: Kedudukan dan Peranannya dalam Masyarakat Abad VIII-XV* (Javanese Women: Their Status and Role in the 8th--15th-century Society), Timbul Haryono claims that in Old Javanese society, women held a high position in Indonesia's culture:

Boechari dalam Diskusi Ilmiah Arkeologi I (1983) yang membahas mengenai local genius dalam pranata sosial di Indonesia pada "zaman klasik", secara singkat mengemukakan tingginya kedudukan perempuan di dalam masyarakat Jawa Kuna, kecuali hak waris dimana perempuan mendapat lebih sedikit dari laki-laki. Timbul Haryono sebagai penyanggah pertama tersebut pada dasarnya setuju bahwa tingginya kedudukan perempuan di dalam masyarakat Jawa Kuna merupakan kebudayaan asli Indonesia, dan ia pun memperkuat pendapat Boechori mengenai hak waris perempuan lebih sedikit dari laki-laki dengan mengambil contoh dari prasasti Bali. Sementara Hasan Djafar, sebagai penyanggah kedua menyebutkan bahwa adanya perempuan yang menjadi ratu bukan karena kedudukannya yang tinggi, karena dari sumber tertulis diketahui bahwa orang yang berhak menjadi raja adalah anak-anak raja dari permaisuri, baik anak laki-laki maupun perempuan. (Nastiti 19)

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Boechori in Archeology Scientific Discussion I (1983) who was discussing the local genius in social institutions said that Javanese women had a high social

status in Old Java (Classical Era) except in inheritance distribution that gave women less than the men. Timbul Haryono agrees that Javanese women's high social status during the Old Java era is Indonesia's original culture but confirms Boechori's theory that inheritance distribution to men was greater than that to women. Furthermore, he took an example from a Balinese inscription.

Meanwhile, Hasan Djafar, explains further that a woman became queen not because she had high social status, but, from the written source, only King's children born to his Official Wife (First Lady/ Empress/Queen), and whether they were male or female did not matter. (Nastiti 19).

Therefore, the assumption that Indonesian women's liberation came only from the West is partially mistaken because Java had a tradition of women's high social position during the 8th–15th centuries. However, in some respects, the society practiced legalized gender inequality, as follows: polygamy, prostitution, and sexual harassment were legalized by the authority as well as the adopted Indian custom that when a husband died the wife had to commit suicide.

Furthermore, in religious institutions women could not hold the highest religious position:

Seperti telah dikemukakan, ketidaksetaraan tidak selalu berarti bahwa kedudukan dan peranan perempuan lebih rendah daripada laki-laki. Dalam masyarakat Jawa Kuna tampak adanya kedudukan perempuan yang lebih tinggi dari laki-laki, terutama di bidang politik. Adapun kedudukan dan peranan perempuan lebih rendah dari laki-laki terdapat di bidang social terutama menyangkut poligami, pelacuran, dan pelecehan seksual yang disahkan oleh penguasa, serta adanya kebiasaan yang sebenarnya diadopsi dari kebudayaan India, yaitu bahwa seorang isteri harus ikut mati apabila suaminya meninggal lebih dulu. Di bidang hukum

berkenaan dengan tukon dan paradara, dan di bidang agama, perempuan tidak dapat memegang jabatan tertinggi dalam bidang keagamaan. (Nastiti 347).

As mentioned previously, gender inequality does not always mean women's roles and positions are always lower than men's. In Old Javanese society, there were women's positions higher than men's, especially in politics, but in social life, women's positions and roles were lower, due to legal sexual harassment, such as polygamy, and prostitution, and sexual harassment that was legalized by the authority, as well as the adopted Indian tradition in which a widow had to commit suicide when the husband died. Furthermore, in the law, especially the one related to tukon and paradara and religion, women could not hold the highest position. (Nastiti 347)

Tukon is money that a groom presents to a bride's parents, symbolizing his gratitude to take the bride as his wife. But actually, the word tukon derives from the word *tuku* meaning "to buy," and in essence, the groom seems to buy the bride from her parents. In the Indonesian language, the same payment is called "uang susu," meaning money to pay for the breast milk the mother provided the bride as an infant. Symbolically, responsibility for the bride is thus shifted from her parents to her husband. This patriarchal tradition treats the bride like "some thing" given or sold to the groom.

Supporting Haryono's claims about Javanese women's status, Christina S. Handayani and Atdhian Novianto explain,

Namun demikian, peran para wanita ini nyaris tidak pernah tersentuh oleh konstruksi ilmiah yang diimpor dari Barat yang digunakan untuk memotret politik

Asia. Peran wanita Asia jarang muncul di dalam tulisan-tulisan yang dibuat oleh para peneliti Barat (laki-laki). Persoalan dalam menginterpretasikan proses politik di Asia Tenggara bukan sekadar hasil dari warisan dominasi laki-laki yang lama, melainkan juga oleh hegemoni pemikiran Barat. Akibatnya sampai sejauh ini belum ada teori atau pemikiran politik yang dapat mendekati realitas wanita di kawasan ini. Tradisi berpikir ilmuwan politik di kawasan Asia, termasuk Indonesia, sangat dipengaruhi bahkan didominasi oleh cara berpikir Barat yang tidak memanipulasi wanita, tetapi juga tidak memasukkannya. Ada kecenderungan kemudian bahwa konstruksi berpikir tersebut tidak relevan jika diterapkan di Asia termasuk Indonesia. Akibatnya sampai sejauh ini belum ada teori atau pemikiran politik yang dapat mendekati realitas wanita di kawasan ini. (Handayani & Novianto 5)

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Nevertheless, women's role was hardly influenced by Western scientific construction that portrayed Asian politics. Indeed, Asian women's role hardly existed in the minds of Western male researchers. A problem arises in interpreting Southeast Asia's political process, which is not only a legacy of patriarchal domination but also of the hegemonic Western way of thinking. The tradition of Asian political scientists' thought including Indonesia is very much influenced, even dominated, by the Western way of thinking that does not manipulate women, but does not involve them either. This kind of way of thinking tends to irrelevance for application in Asia, including Indonesia. As a consequence, no

theory or political thought can so far approach women's reality in this area.
(Handayani & Novianto 5)

According to Denys Lombard, Indonesian women play important distinctive roles and hold higher status when compared with those in other Asian countries (Lombard qtd. in Handayani & Novianto 5):

Sementara di Indonesia, menurut Denys Lombard, para ibu jelas memegang peranan penting yang sangat menonjol. Bahkan kedudukannya jauh lebih tinggi daripada wanita pada masyarakat Asia lainnya. Kekuasaan mereka, sekalipun di belakang layar, tetap ampuh dan bersumber pokok pada kelompok perkumpulan mereka. Rogers menambahkan bahwa dalam kultur Jawa dominasi laki-laki pada akhirnya hanya berhenti pada ideology. Ketika dihadapkan dengan kenyataan maka dominasi laki-laki ini menjadi mitos. Sebaliknya, dominasi wanita adalah dominasi nyata dan praktis yang lebih memperlihatkan kuasa yang hidup.
(Handayani & Novianto 5-6).

Meanwhile, in Indonesia, according to Denys Lombard, women obviously played significant roles. Even their general position was much higher than that of women in other Asian societies. Their authority, although behind the curtain, was still great and came mainly from their gathering group. Rogers added that in Javanese culture, in the end, men's domination became simply an ideology. When confronted with the reality, we see that it was simply a myth. On the contrary, women's domination was real and practical, demonstrating real genuine authority.
(Handayani & Novianto 5-6)

In *Kuasa Wanita Jawa*, Handayani and Novianto counter the Javanese women's image as submissive, oppressed, and politically powerless. Indeed, women's domestic sphere provides a space to exercise their power and expand it into the public sphere. Soeharto's first lady, Tien Soeharto, exemplifies this expansion of domestic power. Women dominate by managing family finances, while men are only breadwinners. Therefore, Western feminism's imposition of bifurcated domestic and public spheres is not apt, in particular for Javanese women.

However, because the Dutch who occupied Indonesia were interested in depicting Indonesian women as only puppets or pretty dolls who smiled and then made themselves invisible, Javanese women's power has not been broadly known. Themes popular among Dutch authors, influenced by orientalism, were fantasies about Eastern countries:

Satu tema yang sangat digemari penulis colonial Belanda seperti kolega pengarang Eropa yang terpengaruh orientalism (Said 1978:188-90) –adalah khayalan mereka tentang dunia Timur sebagai surge hiburan sensual, kesuburan dan gairah seks yang tak pernah pudar (Hesselink 1987:205-24). Salah satu tema kunci (leitmotif) roman Couperus *De Stille Kracht* adalah bagaimana pengaruh kekuatan dunia malam – ketidakberdayaan dan nafsu seks— mampu menaklukkan akhlak luhur orang Eropa yang berkarakter tinggi (Breekman 2004:66-70). Sosok nyai (gundik, isteri kontrak) dan ronggeng—gadis penari desa/pelacur—sering tampil dalam roman dan pementasan drama pengarang colonial Belanda (Groneman 1883:14-16; Boeka 1901:121-2, 176-8; 1904:126; Melati van Java 1901:127; Ruzius 1905: II:14-16, 18-19).

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One theme that influenced European and Dutch authors was orientalism (see Said, 1978:188-90), that is,

– fantasies of the Eastern world as a sensual entertaining heaven, filled with everlasting sexual desire and fertility (Hesselink 1987:205- 24). One of the key themes (leitmotif) of Couperus's *De Stille Kracht* is how night life—helplessness and sexual desire —can destroy Europeans' sophisticated character (Breekman 2004:66-70). The Nyai character (mistress, contract wife) and ronggeng – (village female dancer/prostitute)— often exist in Dutch authors' stories and plays (Groneman 1883:14-16; Boeka 1901:121-2, 176-8; 1904:126; Melati van Java 1901:127; Ruzius 1905: II:14-16, 18-19).

Javanese women's power is obviously something that Dutch people denied because, besides the classic description of Indonesians as “the most gentle people in the world” (de Javanen als het zachste volk ter aard), –famous for their gentleness and submissiveness (Carey and Houben, 1), they imposed male chauvinism on Indonesian culture. For example, Herman Willem Daendels (1762–1818), 36th Governor General of the Dutch East Indies from 1808 to 1811, wrote on the Yogya Resident, “Women have no place in honorable public status, and related only in private matters” (Carey and Houben xii).

In *Durga / Umayi*, Tiwi seems to take advantage of the sensual Eastern woman image, fulfilling Western men's fantasies in return for wealth. On the other hand, Brojol, functioning as Tiwi's conscience, lives an honest life even though it does not provide him comfort; this is also a characteristic of Punakawan. Interestingly, although Tiwi seems willing to do whatever she must, without regret, to get what she wants, she does not actually determine her own fate. Instead, like a puppet onstage, Tiwi goes where the puppeteer, or fate, determines. She represents the evil

Durga character, but she is too apologetic to be called evil herself. After cosmetic surgery, she becomes confused, having assumed so many roles that she has lost her identity. She does not occupy even Homi Bhabha's third space; she is not even the hybrid woman flowing from one culture to another. Rather, she feels uncomfortable and lost all the time:

Ah the mysteries of virtue! The mysteries of evil! If Goddess Durga and Lady Umayi were one and the same, was I in fated to live a life full of doubles full of dilemmas full of conflicts full of contradictions without a break for the rest of her life, and why and what for and to what end? Hadn't there been a breakthrough, hadn't there resounded a Proclamation of Independence freedom redemption rescue from some quarter or other? To do away with this distressing dualism?

In Sulinda

Pertiwi Nusamusbida Charlotte Eugenie de Progueleaux nee du Bois de Montagnel Angelin Ruth Portier Tukinah Senik pondered as she prayed prayers that were crumbly crispy crumpled hurried hastied hindered, crying and crying crazed confused chaotic; while before her lay open shut open shut open the Bible the Koran the Bhagawad Gita and the like, she pondered thinking considering confusedly conflictedly brainstorming and planning what would be best, pondering possibilities further how best to approach this matter full of Durga Umayi dilemmas and contradictions. ... (Mangunwijaya 168)

The novel ends with the protagonist trying but unable to resolve her identity.

President Soeharto's New Order effort to domesticate women is what Ayu Utami writes against in *Saman*. By escaping confinement to explore their sexuality, though not in the same prostituting way as *Durga/Umayi's* Tiwi, Ayu Utami's female characters liberate themselves

from the image—beauty, modesty, silence—and roles—wives and mothers—that Indonesian society assigns to women. And since women are not supposed to speak publicly, and certainly not about sex, this novel has become very controversial in Indonesia. Ayu Utami is condemned for “whoring” herself publicly by portraying women from female perspectives as sexual creatures. In sum, Ayu Utami’s attitude toward sex is considered too Westernized for Indonesian women.

In the previous discussion of Pramoedya’s novel and Ahmad Tohari’s trilogy, female characters are helpless. They submit to the patriarchy--without even authority over their own bodies. In Tohari’s *The Dancer*, Srinthil devises a strategy for giving her virginity to a man she chooses. Apart from that, however, she remains a submissive and obedient granddaughter to her grandfather, who plots to sell her virginity to two rich men in the village. In contrast, Tiwi seems a powerful woman, but in fact, she is helplessly trapped in a chaotic situation where she does whatever she has to do to survive and become wealthy. In Utami’s *Saman*, female characters attempt to find independence, but struggle for freedom from the norms and values through which they were raised.

Not only is Ayu Utami against the domestication of women, but also against the rest of President Soeharto’s political agenda. Thus, her themes are at least dual in *Saman*, and interestingly, the main character is male—Saman, a Catholic priest—and the female characters, although well-rounded and dynamic, have supporting roles. Ayu Utami’s reasons for creating a male protagonist are unclear. Is she trapped in the traditional myth of women’s silence in public? Does a male voice dominate the novel because she knows that the reading audience in Indonesia will more easily accept the male as a source of authenticity and authority? Some critics argue that Ayu Utami attempts to be feminist, but all the while she still craves the phallus.

Despite what critics say about the reason for Ayu Utami's choice of a male narrator, she has arranged the novel in such a way that its socio-political issues are seen not through the eyes of uneducated, poor Sumatran villagers whose viewpoint would necessarily be very limited, but through the eyes of Saman, an educated man, a Catholic priest who becomes an activist defending marginalized people on the plantations. In the case of her political agenda, Ayu Utami needs an authoritative, acceptable mainstream character who undergoes fundamental, life-changing incidents in order to give force to the dramatization of unfairness in Indonesian society.

Ayu Utami's *Saman* was published just a few weeks before Soeharto was overthrown in 1998. In 1994, when Soeharto banned magazines like *Tempo* because of content critical of the government, Ayu Utami joined the Alliance of Independent Journalists to demand freedom of speech. *Saman* is the embodiment of Ayu Utami's belief in freedom of speech. Similar to Mangunwijaya, Ayu Utami has concerns not only about the marginalization and victimization of poor people and villagers by Soeharto's country development plan, but also about the silencing of women's voices and the domestication of women. In the novel, the government of Indonesia, as a palm oil producer, expropriates the land and villages of poor rubber farmers in South Sumatra. *Saman* illustrates Ayu Utami's argument that the Dutch colonial exploitation of Indonesia continued to happen under the Soeharto presidency. As someone who admires Pramoedya, Ayu Utami shares the concern that Indonesians are still colonized by their own people.

Somewhat similarly to Mangunwijaya, Ayu Utami writes *Saman* in a lyrical, nonchronological style. Mangunwijaya tells a story about a high-class prostitute, but Ayu Utami treats the sexual revolution, especially sexual experience as perceived by female characters.

SoTjen Marching observes that many Indonesian critics who condemn the so-called vulgar sexual scenes in contemporary Indonesian novels by female authors actually overlook these works' treatment of a significant postcolonial issue (Marching 133). Marching argues that the novels' overt female sexuality challenges the conventional, normative image of woman as good wife and mother—submissive to males and appearing to be asexual. Condemnatory critics seem not to realize that this “vulgar” depiction of female sexuality is the author's reclamation of female bodies that, during Dutch colonization and the Soeharto era, were oppressed and silenced. Indeed, during Dutch colonization, depicting female sexuality was taboo and considered pornographic; therefore, any author acknowledging the reality of female sexuality was in need of censorship. The colonizers successfully implanted their values for “a good woman,” so that the colonized Indonesians did not realize that they were brainwashed to approve values not originally their own. The accusations about the Westernization of women characters' sexual attitudes, according to Marching, is in fact wrong, considering that the repressed sexuality of women results from enforcement of Dutch values. Furthermore, during the New Order period, Soeharto enforced censorship on literature considered pornographic, and so, during that era, literature faced dilemmas between free individual expression and criticism of the government. Despite all the critical and social pressure, Ayu Utami's *Saman* treats themes of women as sexual agents and of political problems during the Soeharto era.

Ayu Utami employs Westernized open rebellion against the norm and values with which her female characters were raised. To obtain freedom and security, they must remove themselves from their home country. For an Indonesian audience, Utami's theme of open rebellion is vulgar, and especially vulgar are Utami's sexual descriptions, and even worse is to describe female sexuality, considered too indecent to express publicly, while expressing male sexuality is more

acceptable. The “good woman” is silent, but especially about her sexuality. A woman should not be seen as “willing and available” sexually. In *Kajian Gender dalam Konteks Pascakolonial* (Gender Studies in a Postcolonial Context), Katrin Bandel criticizes Ayu Utami’s depictions of female sexual activity and how it feels to experience that sexual activity. In contrast, Indonesian readers accept male authors’ vivid descriptions of male sexual activity: this is “normal” because males are allowed to express sexual desire openly, but critics categorize this female authors’ expression of sexual activity as “Sastra Wangi” or “Fragrant Literature.”

Katrin Bandel argues that Ayu Utami’s feminist attitude shows that she is still trapped in a patriarchal way of thinking because she depicts female characters longing for the phallus (*Sastra, Perempuan, Seks* 110). Bandel also criticizes Ayu Utami’s use of metaphor—a flower for a woman and bee for a man—as stereotypical because a flower is fixed and passive while a bee is active, and a bee naturally goes from one flower to another. This depiction, according to Bandel, strengthens the stereotype of women as sexually passive and men as naturally polygamous. Bandel argues that Ayu Utami’s female characters are not strong enough in countering phallocentrism; instead, they are phallogentric because, according to her, they cannot attain sexual satisfaction without the phallus. Bandel supports her argument by quoting the very brief, unclear lesbian sexual encounter between two female characters, Shakuntala and Laila, in opposition to the detailed descriptions of sexual encounters between the female and male characters. However, in my viewpoint, Bandel’s argument is limited because she does not consider the possibility of woman-as-subject, instead of woman-as-object, in sexual relationships; Bandel seems to think that as long as a woman longs for a phallus, she is not liberated from the patriarchy. In other words, according to Bandel, a woman cannot be feminist as well as active heterosexually.

Aquarini Priyatna Prabasmoro presents a more balanced perspective on sexual description in contemporary Indonesian novels by female authors. She considers the sexual revolution expressed in literature as a way to speak out through women's bodies. She also uses Luce Irigaray's theory of *l'écriture féminine* to support her argument about women's language. In a patriarchal world, women's bodies are sites on which to write; thus, women are defined by others, remaining without the power to write as agents defining themselves. Prabasmoro observes that Ayu Utami empowers women's bodies to speak women's language and to answer those assuming the right to define women. Ayu Utami uses geographic discourse to remove women's bodies physically from the place they are sexually oppressed. She depicts New York as a place where the character Laila feels freed from the sexual norm that has prevented her from having intercourse with the man she loves. In New York, Laila feels that she can do whatever she wants and listen to what her body wants without worrying about preserving her virginity as she did in Indonesia (Prabasmoro xiii).

Countering Bandel's argument about passive females and active males, Prabasmoro quotes Saman and Yasmin's conversation: "Saman, you remember that night, that very night, when all I wanted was to caress your body and watch your face as you ejaculated? I want to come to you. I'll teach you. I'll rape you." Saman replies: "Yasmin, Teach me. Rape me." Prabasmoro suggests that Saman's will to be object and Yasmin's will to be subject, or agent, of sexual activity reverses, quite realistically, the conventional roles in patriarchal sexual relationships (Prabasmoro 192).

Ayu Utami's *Saman* also makes use of several Javanese spiritual beliefs. In his book *The Religion of Java*, Clifford Geertz describes a category of spirits in Javanese belief, called

gendruwos, characterized by Geertz as naughty and fun, spirits without evil intention (Geertz, 18-19). Gendruwos, the commonest type of memedi, are generally:

more playful than harmful and enjoy playing practical jokes on people, such as prodding women in the buttocks (especially when they are praying), removing a person's clothes from the house and throwing them into the river, tossing rocks onto the roof all through the night, jumping out big and black from behind a tree near the cemetery, and so forth. (Geertz 18-19)

However, Geertz also explains that gendruwos are not always fun and harmless. Furthermore, Geertz explains that the gendruwo sometimes appears resembling someone we know. In most of the cases the gendruwo resembles the husband of a woman and then has sex with the woman who does not realize that it is not her husband she is having sex with. So, when the woman gets pregnant, it is not a human baby, but the gendruwo's, which Geertz calls a "monster":

Sometimes the gendruwos will take even more serious liberties. They will adopt the form of a woman's husband and sleep with her, she being none the wiser. Then there will be children of these unions who will be monsters. There was one in Modjokuto—a large, black, and curiously misshapen child who lived to be sixteen and then died. All in all, gendruwos, despite their generally pleasant dispositions, are not to be trifled with, and one should not even talk about them—although everyone does—for they may overhear and become annoyed. No one, child or adult, in the household with which my wife and I lived would dare go to the toilet alone after sundown for fear of gendruwos. ... (Geertz 18)

Geertz also states that the Gendruwo is sometimes destructive:

But gendruwos, fun-loving as they may be, are not always harmless. Often they will appear in the form of a parent, grandfather, child, or sibling and say, “Hey, come along with me.” If one obeys, he will then become invisible. Then the real relatives, missing the victim and suspecting what has happened, will go about beating on hoes, sickles, pots, and so forth, making as much noise as they can. The gendruwo, upset by all this racket, will then offer the victim some food. If he eats it, he will remain invisible; if he refuses it, he will become visible again and his relatives will be able to find him. One day, in the neighborhood across the street from my house, a boy was missing and it was thought he had been snatched by a gendruwo, and so the people went around making a terrible racket. It turned out finally, however, that he had hitched a ride into a nearby town and had not been spiritually kidnapped at all. (Geertz 18)

In this vein, Utami depicts Saman’s mother as having unborn babies disappear mysteriously from her womb. Worse, his mother did not understand what had happened. When pregnant, Indonesian women are commonly believed to be spiritually fragile and prone to pregnancy thefts by spirits. Although older people had warned her not to go deeply into the forest, Saman’s pregnant mother walked alone, further and further into the forest. She returned with a flat abdomen and flat facial expression, eyes empty and vacant, unable to explain what had happened. Even in childhood, Saman then perceived his mother was soulless and empty.

After a doctor convinces Saman’s father that his wife is no longer pregnant, he lets go of the incident, but hopes that someday his wife will become pregnant again. When she does, he wants to send her to stay with her parents who would protect her from another such incident.

However, the wife's mother comes to stay with them, but this time, the baby, a girl, went missing after being born. This incident traumatizes Saman who witnessed a big, dark figure taking his sister from his mother. Again his mother seems lost, as if she were unconscious. Finally, Saman's father leaves his wife and son.

The belief in spirits helps Javanese people escape anything they cannot explain logically. Unexplainable incidents become deeds of the spirits, which seem more acceptable than trying to get answers that make sense. This demonstrates Javanese characteristic, *nrima*, which means easily accepting anything that is usually unacceptable. Thus, Javanese people become tough in dealing with hardship. They also believe in "surrender," defined in Javanese belief, not as giving up *per se*, but accepting an unfortunate event sincerely.

The novel's title character is Saman, who was originally called Wisanggeni. The name Wisanggeni, which Saman dropped after leaving prison, comes from a character in the Javanese version of Mahabharata, "wisa" meaning "poison" and "geni" meaning "fire" or "fire poison" as a whole. In this tale, sexuality and pregnancy are central themes. Durga's daughter, Dewasrani, jealous of Arjuna's wife Dresanala, persuades Durga to separate the couple through various machinations. It happens even though some characters realize that separating them while Arjuna's wife Dresanala is pregnant is not right. With Arjuna gone, Brama beats Dresanala, to remove the fetus by force. Consequently, Dresanala gives birth prematurely, and Brama throws the baby into Candradimuka, a crater on Jamurdipa mountain. Batara Narada, secretly watching, helps the baby escape the crater, and, magically, the baby grows into a young man, whom Batara Narada names "Wisanggeni." Instead of killing the baby, the fire in the crater enlivens and empowers him. Wisanggeni then goes to paradise and makes trouble. Since he is so

powerful, no one can defeat him. After several complications, Wisanggeni looks for Arjuna, his father, but Arjuna does not believe Wisanggeni is his son until Wisanggeni defeats him in a fight.

Wisanggeni has the characteristics of truthfulness and honesty, but not flexibility. To him, the truth is whatever the situation actually is. This also characterizes Saman (Wisanggeni), who became a Catholic priest because he had a very strong sense of right and wrong. The loss of Saman's siblings alludes to Wisanggeni in the Javanese version of Mahabharata. Arjuna had several wives other than Dresanala who were also pregnant, but Arjuna's other wives obeyed Batara Guru's order to abort Wisanggeni's half-siblings.

Those around Saman consider his inflexible attitude towards the truth about his mother and the search for his father marks of insanity. Thus, the "crazy girl" Upi reflects Saman's mental condition, and he seems able to understand and communicate with her. Her family has locked her in a room with her legs chained--not because they do not love her, but to protect her from angry villagers who are disturbed by her presence and her abnormal behavior. Very upset at her treatment, Saman sees her as a fellow human being not deserving of what amounts to punishment for mental illness. Too, Saman is told that her behavior becomes crazier and more uncontrollable before her menstrual periods.

Utami based Upi's creation on her personal experience in elementary school, where she encountered a boy with Down's syndrome. Fourteen but with the mind of a six-year-old boy, he was sexually aggressive and unable to deal with sexual desire. In Utami's novel, Upi has no voice and no one to understand her desires or to speak for her. Still, Upi feels natural sexual desire, especially before her menstrual periods, but is incapable of giving sexual consent. On one hand, she has rights over her body, but she seems unaware of potential harm from sexual predators.

Wis [Saman] looked at the girl [Upi] uneasily. Rogam continued his story. Nobody knew her name. People called her whatever they liked: Eti, Ance, Yanti, Meri, Susi, anything. Like a dog in need of affection, she would respond to any name ending in “I”: Pleki, Boni, Dogi. She had achieved notoriety in this town for one thing. She was in the habit of wandering around the streets and rubbing her genitals against any suitable object –a post, a fence, the corner of a wall–like an animal in heat. Of course a number of the local boys had taken advantage of this particular habit of hers. Everyone said she enjoyed it too. That’s why she keeps coming back to town, they said, in search of an electricity pole or a man. And she would always be certain to find both: a passive pole and an aggressive man. “But everyone says she’s mad,” Wis whispered in bewilderment. Rogam chortled. He said: even a hole in the wall can give you pleasure, if it’s made of flesh it’s even better. Wis said nothing. He had never had sex. Rogam wasn’t aware of that. (Utami 68)

Bandel theorizes that in *Saman*, Upi’s character represents sexuality. Because of her disability, Upi embodies unrepressed sexuality, that is, “natural” sexuality understood mainly as a biological issue. Her mental growth had been retarded despite her physical maturation (Utami76). Furthermore, Bandel explains that Upi’s sexuality resembles that of the novel’s characters Cok and Shakuntala who also actively seek sexual satisfaction. However, as Bandel notes, Upi is the only female character depicted masturbating:

Namun ada hal yang khas pada representasi seksualitas Upi: gadis itulah satu-satunya perempuan yang diceritakan beronani. Masturbasi dilakukannya dengan

cara menggosokkan selangkangannya pada pohon, tiang listrik, pagar atau sudut tembok. (*Sastra, Perempuan, Seks* 113)

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Nevertheless, the typical representation of Upi's sexuality is masturbation, and she is the only female character who does so-- by rubbing her crotch against trees, electricity poles, a fence, or the edge of a wall. (*Sastra, Perempuan, Seks* 113)

Bandel characterizes Upi's role as the only female who practices masturbation as weird, especially considering that Utami fights for sexual freedom in the form of a sexual revolution women's. In patriarchal culture, of course, female masturbation is taboo, while male masturbation is considered common and "normal." Bandel might be interpreted as finding Utami unfair to women because she depicts the only female character who masturbates as mentally disabled. Thus, the presence of Upi's masturbation and its absence in other female characters' sexual lives, which Utami depicts in much detail, is disturbing.

Saman develops compassion for Upi as if she were his lost sister, perhaps because he has in common with her the inability to communicate with others; Upi's is caused by her disability, and Saman's by his longing for his father and the trauma of his mother's inexplicably terminated pregnancies. They are both lonely, isolated people. In his compassion Saman then creates for Upi a statue of a man with his penis erect. She can then satisfy herself sexually in private, not disturb the villagers by masturbating publicly, and not be raped by the village men. Saman does not fit the stereotype of a man as sexually aggressive. In fact, he acts passively in his affair with the married Yasmin. Instead, Yasmin showed more aggressive behavior.

In Indonesian culture in general and in Javanese culture specifically, women's sexual desire has been repressed. But, obviously, Utami tells readers that a woman can freely talk

about her sexual desires and fantasies because she has the right to do so. Even so critics have rejected Utami's perspective. One of the fiercest critics of the sexuality in Utami's novels is Katrin Bandel who says that the Indonesian feminist struggle follows the Western feminists who believe the patriarchy has repressed women's sexual desire. Bandel, however, bases her argument on Foucault's theory that repressed sexual desire in women does not exist, but is a socially constructed concept. Patriarchy is socially constructed, and so is "repressed sexual desire." According to Bandel, we should stop believing in a "natural (sexual) desire" that feminism can free and, instead, think about an individual as an empty vessel with personal perception, emotion, and behavior influenced by dominant social discourse (*Kajian Gender dalam Konteks Pascakolonial* 62).

Still based on Foucault, Bandel suspects that in the "sexual revolution," instead of freeing women's sexual desire, Western feminism confines women with Western feminism's "constructed freedom through sexual revolution." For Bandel, this is called (neo) colonialism:

Dalam konteks itu, hipotesa represi memperoleh corak khasnya sendiri. Kekuatan yang dianggap merepresi seksualitas manusia Indonesia adalah adat, tradisi, dan agamanya sendiri, sedangkan pembebasan dicari dengan memandang ke Barat. Dengan demikian, wacana tersebut mereproduksi imaji buruk dan gelap mengenai kekolotan dan tertutupan budaya setempat (atau "budaya Timur" pada umumnya), yang dikontraskan dengan cahaya terang kemerdekaan (ala) manusia Barat. Apabila kita mengikuti argumentasi Foucault seputar sifat kekuasaan, tampak bahwa alih-alih membebaskan manusia, hipotesa represi malah mengatur dan mengungkung manusia, dengan cara mengkonstruksi subjektivitas mereka

sesuai dengan hierarki (neo) colonial. (*Kajian Gender dalam Konteks Pascakolonial* 63)

In that case, the hypothesis of repression gains its own characteristics. The power considered sexually repressive exists in custom, tradition, and religion; meanwhile, freedom from all those things has been sought by looking to the West. Therefore, the discourse reproduces a bad and dark image of the backwardness and closedness of local culture (or “Eastern culture” generally), which is then contrasted with the independent light of Western people. If we follow Foucault’s argumentation on characteristics of power and authority, we see that instead of setting people free, the repression hypothesis confines and controls people, by constructing their subjectivity based on (neo) colonial hierarchy.

(*Kajian Gender dalam Konteks Pascakolonial* 63)

For non-Western feminists in non-Western countries, Bandel compares Western feminism’s sexual revolution with patriarchy because both are socially constructed. Bandel finds sexual freedom an illusion because the non-Western feminists want to counter patriarchy so much that they remain unaware of the new (Western feminist) perspective colonizing their perspective instead. Furthermore, Bandel accuses Utami of being confined by the Eurocentric perspective that everything Western is “forward” while everything Eastern is “backward.” Bandel theorizes that Utami attempted to escape one colonialization (Eastern patriarchal values) but landed in another (Western feminism) (*Kajian Gender dalam Konteks Pascakolonial* 62-63).

However, I believe that Bandel does not differentiate between Western concepts of power and authority and those of the Javanese. In the Western concept of power and authority, an

individual openly wields power over others. The Javanese believe that a powerful individual can control the self and have power over others: only then can a person have power over other people. The same is true of the Javanese feminist attitude; considered non-feminist in the West, Javanese feminism includes conquering oneself before conquering other people. This seems strange to Western feminists, and Javanese feminism's absence of public acknowledgment of women's ideas seems a failure, especially in countering patriarchy. What really happens is that Javanese women "take advantage" of the patriarchy instead of defeating it. As discussed earlier, feminists act to implement women's ideas and agenda, probably without public recognition. Western feminists need public acknowledgement, that is, defeat patriarchy openly and visibly. In contrast, living in harmony is very important to Javanese people, and although Javanese women seem to submit to patriarchy, they very often control it to their advantage. Rather than attack patriarchy frontally and live in conflict, they would rather negotiate with it and live in harmony.

Dissimilar to Western feminists, Indonesian wives discover that they can voluntarily allow men to lead, both domestically and publicly, but that they can control them silently, without the men realizing it. Indonesian wives do not demand public acknowledgment of their leadership; just success in achieving their goals is their triumph. In a patriarchal society where women's voices are problematic, husbands become puppets or a medium through which women work out their agendas. In Javanese culture, the women still seem silent and invisible, and yet they find ways around such confinement to attain their goals. Paradoxically, they silently borrow men's voices.

Javanese women's belief emerges from a philosophy demonstrated by the Javanese alphabet. When a letter becomes a consonant, it is considered voiceless (or "dead.") Javanese

women work analogously with their men, driving them in the desired direction by feeding their egos. The women work in silence, unacknowledged, having mastered the art of subtle persuasion. Not overtly frontal, the power struggle is slow and soft, and successful.

To return to the issue of sexual depiction in fiction, critics like Bandel burden female authors like Utami who use sex as a tool to break through the wall between male and female authors. Male authors have long described sexual scenes before authors like Utami started to challenge the norm that women authors are inappropriate when they write openly about sex and sexual activity. Although labeled a feminist critic, Bandel seems unconsciously to act patriarchally by being disgusted by pages of sexual description in Ayu Utami and Djena Mahesa Ayu's fiction. Bandel believes that thick sexual scenes have no point at all. However, she misses a significant point by not observing how differently male and female authors describe sexual scenes. Male authors tend to use very physical images, while female authors describe how the sexuality feels. In *Saman*, sex is more complicated for women because of conflict between what they "should" and "should not" do... between what they should and should not feel. One example is Utami's scene with Sihar, who is married, and his girlfriend, Laila, who is still a virgin. Laila is somewhat naïve in that she experiences conflicted feelings, ...torn between wanting to make love with Sihar and remaining a virgin until she marries, as she is "supposed to." Sihar told her that he was married and someone who was married needed sex. He had to have sex. Sihar tells Laila that someone who is married cannot do without sex. Being with Laila and not making love with her because she is a virgin frustrates for him:

On the way home he said it would be best if we didn't see each other again. (I wasn't expecting this.) "I'm married."

I replied that I didn't have a boyfriend, but I did have parents. "You're not alone. I'm a sinner too."

He said that was not the point. "Once you're married it's hard to forego sex."

I understood. Even though I was still a virgin. (Utami 14)

Because of her conflicted feelings, Laila negotiates with Sihar, asking about a way to make love without ruining her virginity:

Then we lay on the bed, without taking off the bedspread; after all we weren't there for an afternoon nap. He told me I had big breasts. I said nothing. He asked me if I was ready. I said, "Please don't. I'm a virgin. Could we do it another way?" He said I had beautiful lips. "Kiss me, kiss me here," I responded to him, but there was no need for words. But I had sinned. Even though I was still a virgin. (Utami 13)

Laila's guilt demonstrates that she is still trapped in the norm with which she was raised and in religious dogma, so that although she found a way to make love with Sihar, she still knew she had sinned. This attitude represents many Indonesian women who are aware of their sexual desire, but hold back or experience guilt because they were told not to have such desires. Furthermore, when women are raised with strict religious values and confining social norms, even when they have removed themselves from that culture, they still have the dogma and norms ... judging them. The pressure is psychological. Laila has not yet been able to free herself; she lets religious values and norms control her behavior.

In contrast, Yasmin, who is married but in love with Saman, has a different attitude. She shows no remorse for still desiring Saman and talking (dirty) about their sexuality with him, even though she has a husband. Although raised with the same religious values and social norms

and religious values as Laila, Yasmin refuses their confinement. She is aware that she has complete authority over her desires and her body. Actually, all four women rebel sexually—Yasmin, Laila finally, Shakuntala, and Cok. These women are friends, and they support one another. Shakuntala is bisexual, while Cok decided to lose her virginity when she was in high school.

Utami hopes the Indonesian women writers do not make sexual novels as the goal of their feminist idea. Instead, they should write those sexual novels as a stepping-stone to the real goal that is the courage of Indonesian women to speak their opinions, their thoughts. Utami explains that her purpose in writing sexual novels (*Saman* and *Larung*) is to portray the sexual problems Indonesian women have that they do not talk about openly. Sex in *Saman* and *Larung* is not an incident but it is a discussion. Utami also explains that the sex in her novels is to counter society's attitude that a woman is defined by her virginity. Virginity shows what a woman's worth. The same thing is not demanded from a man. Therefore, Utami wrote the sexual novels to depict women's problems that are considered taboo in public. Novels are one way to give voice to women to talk about their problems including (especially) sex.

Once again, Katrin Bandel questions Utami's feminist attitude in a scene where Laila had sex with Shakuntala and criticizes that Utami seems to be strangely very "decent and polite" in depicting lesbian sex. It is ironic for Bandel considering her criticism of the very open depiction of sex scenes with heterosexual couples. She wonders why Ayu Utami is not really interested depicting lesbian sex in this novel in detail. Is it because she is herself heterosexual? Or is it because of lack of research on how lesbians have sex? Bandel in *Sastra, Perempuan, Seks* (Literature, Women, Sex) considers Utami inconsistent and affirming the stereotype of

homosexuality spread in Indonesia among religious people that it is a disease that can be transmitted to other people just by hanging out with homosexuals (94):

Setelah Shakuntala memutuskan bahwa Laila perlu diberi “pelajaran seks” sebelum menemui Sihar lagi, dia melanjutkan: “Setelah itu kamu [i.e. Laila] boleh pergi: sebab vagina adalah sejenis bunga karnivora...” Artinya, lewat hubungan seks antar perempuan Shakuntala bermaksud mengajari Laila hakikat hubungan seks “secara umum”, dan yang dimaksudkan dengan seks “secara umum” itu adalah hubungan heteroseksual. Heteronormatifitas yang tampak sangat jelas dalam adegan ini diperkuat oleh kenyataan bahwa Laila tertarik pada sisi maskulin dalam diri Shakuntala, dan pada saat hubungan seks dimulai, Laila “tak tahu lagi siapa dia. Apakah Tala apakah Saman apakah Sihar” (Larung, hlm. 132). Hubungan homoseksual di sini sekedar semacam variasi dari heterosexual matrix. (Sastra, *Perempuan, Seks* 94)

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After Shakuntala decided that Laila needed “sex education” before seeing Sihar again, she continued: “”After that you [i.e. Laila] may go: because the vagina is a carnivore flower...” which means, through sexual intercourse between women, Shakuntala intended to teach Laila the meaning of “common sex,” and by “common sex” she meant heterosexual sex. Heteronormativity, obvious in this scene, is supported by the fact that Laila was attracted to the masculine side of Shakuntala, and when sex with her began, Laila “did not know who she was anymore. Was it Tala or Saman or Sihar?” (Larung, 132). The homosexual

relationship here is simply an intermezzo from the heterosexual matrix. (*Sastra, Perempuan, Seks* 94)

Shakuntala lures Laila into sexual activity based on the excuse that she needs to teach her virgin Laila about sex. Laila is so naïve that even when she eventually has sexual intercourse with Sihar, she does not know whether she has an orgasm:

I immediately called Yasmin and Cok. And we were all nervous, not about what would have to buy the knobby condoms of course, but worried that something might happen to Laila. What that something might be I didn't really know. I sat by the phone for the next two hours.

"Tala?" Her voice was still subdued. "Laila!

Hi...did you do it?"

"Do what?"

"It."

"No. Not properly."

"But you came?" "He did."

"What about you?"

"I don't know... tell the others I'm okay." Click. (Utami 122-123)

What Bandel finds problematic here is the way Ayu Utami depicts the vagina as a flower that craves sperm, while according to Bandel, the sperm actually does nothing for a woman's sexual satisfaction. In other words, for the vagina to have sperm inside is insignificant. The orgasm itself involves the touch of the penis, not the sperm. So, Utami depicting satisfactory sexual intercourse as the vagina satiating its craving for sperm seems weird. From Bandel's perspective, Utami's depiction of sexual activity does not make sense. However, I believe that

Utami depicts woman as a sexual agent, not the passive sexual object she has long been depicted as. To reverse the woman's role, Utami creates the metaphor of a flower hungry for sperm.

In *Saman*, the four female characters reflect how modern Indonesian women live. They have opportunities to release themselves from confining Indonesian norms and culture like Cok who had sexual intercourse with various high school boyfriends and Yasmin who lived with her boyfriend before they married. Some begin freeing themselves early. Shakuntala is a lesbian, and Laila was the only sexually inexperienced virgin. Yasmin also had an affair with Saman when Waseh still a priest, but now they have email sex instead of physical sex. Utami employs sex as a liberating act because women are oppressed sexually, not allowed to express their sexual desires freely. Their bodies do not seem to belong to them, but to the society that decides for them what to do with it—whether to remain a virgin, to marry, to have a baby, and so on. Utami portrays sexual revolution, that is, women's entire bodily rebellion.

Bandel also misses the fact that it does not matter what Foucault says about socially constructed repressed female sexual desire because in reality, Javanese women were supposed to be composed at all times but especially in their sexual expression. This "rule" has been so long applied that Javanese women were finding their way around it to run their agendas. Westerners named the concept "feminism," and it demands total equality. But feminism draws Javanese men's fierce objection since it "ruins" harmonious Indonesian society. Javanese husbands believe that feminism causes their wives to disobey them and to become courageous in objecting to everything they are not willing to do. Quiet feminism has become Javanese women's weapon for breaking taboos and helping them achieve their agendas. Western and Indonesian feminisms have similar principles but manifest differently. Western feminism is too vulgar for Javanese

men because in Javanese philosophy, humiliating someone, but especially men, in public is not “allowed.” The Javanese philosophical phrase “Ngalahke tanpa ngasorake” means “defeating without humiliating.” To Westerners, this seems a strange idea, especially in feminism. Although Javanese women sought “a way around,” Western feminism still made them realize that some things must come to light. Furthermore, they realized that they had rights, that is, ... human rights to feel and act as men do. Ayu Utami claims that in a patriarchal society like Indonesia, sexual themes are not taboo as long as they do not favor women’s interests, that is, not very visibly focused on women. She asserts, “So far, people exploit sex, but by objectifying women. What I write is no cruder than those pictures or rape stories that they write. But I want to make women the subjects. That’s considered taboo.”

Saman was published in 1990s, so its setting is the New Order era and that very significantly affects the novel’s narrative background. In the chapter on historical background I explained how the New Order domesticized women by creating organizations for civil servants’ wives to control women’s roles as homemakers and supporters of their husbands’ careers in the government. The organization’s anthem clearly states that women are responsible for their husbands’ career success, the “happy” family, and their environment. Therefore, Utami’s use of sexuality as a symbol of freedom seems natural; sexual consent is within women’s purview. Although they need other women’s support, women ultimately decide what to do with their lives. In *Saman*, Utami demonstrates strong sisterhood among the four female characters and that support goes so far as Shakuntala teaching the virgin, Laila, how to know her sexuality. It seems important for Laila to feel comfortable having sexual relations for the first time. Confined by a mainstream norm, Laila is so afraid of losing her virginity before her wedding day that she avoids a full sexual relationship with Sihar. As is obvious, no one seems concerned about a

groom's virginity, reinscribing the male-female double standard. Men may commonly be "bad," indulging their sexual urges, while women are supposed to play the "good" role in the patriarchy at all times, so there is no tolerance for women who are not virgin anymore on their wedding day. That is the role that a woman should play in the patriarchal society.

In *Saman*, religion is not discussed in an open way so it is not clear whether the four female characters are Catholic or Muslim. However, both religions impose confining norms on women and on Saman (providing some indication of the Catholic view of sexuality). During his time, the Soeharto regime was so repressive, including in land management policy, that the villagers could not plant certain trees on their own land. Saman was motivating the villagers to object and to plant rubber trees. As unjust as that was, Saman could do nothing but go to prison as a rebellious activist. Soeharto let nothing counter to his New Order to develop, including radical Islam. The moment any resistance arose, he destroyed it. He had killed those having the courage to express their disagreement, to criticize him, to express dislike of Soeharto personally or his government.

In *Saman*, Ayu Utami portrays intertwining political, gender, and sexual repression. Women were to remain invisible, in the private realm, managing the household, raising the children, supporting her husband's career, and maintaining the "harmonious" community. Gender roles were strictly defined so that the harmonious family would create harmonious community leading to a harmonious nation. This "harmony," under which citizens were suppressed, poverty-stricken, imprisoned, and murdered, was pressed especially onto women, but also onto the Indonesian people in general. Ayu Utami went against the New Order, rebelling through her open depictions of female sexuality in her novel.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

Pramoedya Ananta Toer, Ahmad Tohari, YB. Mangunwijaya, and Ayu Utami portray Indonesian women from colonial days to the era of independence as both victims and agents of change in an Indonesian culture that strictly represses women. *The Girl from the Coast* illustrates Pramoedya's belief that colonialism doubled in Indonesia. Dutch colonizers enabled Indonesians to colonize their own people. The strategy to set Indonesians at odds with each other smoothed the Dutch plundering of the country. Allowing priyayi, or the royal family, to attend Dutch schools of higher education stratified the Indonesian culture in feudalism, to Pramoedya, was an effective tool for Indonesians to colonize their own people. But Pramoedya wanted to educate Indonesians about such self-colonization and self-oppression. Unfortunately in this situation, an indigenous philosophy of life predisposes the Javanese to accept oppression, that is, their saying "saktrema nglampahi" means people must live life as it comes, so willing acceptance of fate is seen as a virtue. Thus Indonesians as a whole, but especially the Javanese, accepted hetpriyayi's condescending treatment of those without royal blood. Pramoedya thus sees the Javanese as having an inherent slave or colonized mentality.

Pramoedya's *The Girl from the Coast* portrays the impact of external and internal colonialism on the Indonesian people. His "girl from the coast" has no name; she is insignificant but, in the novel, representative of the masses. Although she begins life freely with hard-working

parents in a fishing village, her reputed beauty makes her vulnerable to a priyayi man. The beauty that is a blessing becomes a curse. Naively, the poor fisherman and his wife see the priyayi's proposal as good fortune. But as the girl's "married" life shows, Javanese loyalty to priyayis, those who must be served, traps people into a life of servitude and a closed-minded way of thinking. Thus, the no-name protagonist loses her secure early identity. She is treated like a puppet (wayang) who cannot control her fate or her body, which is conquered like Indonesia. She is not a person but a territory.

Another element of Indonesian culture to which Pramoedya objects is religion, a tool used to colonize and hegemonize, especially the Javanese people. In fact, Pramoedya did not admit to being Moslem even though his identity card categorized him so. He declared instead that he had his own belief, "Pramoedyalism." He especially disliked Islam because the Dutch used it to make priyayis colonize the Indonesian lower classes. In the novel, the girl and her family do not recognize Islam and its religious rituals, but they believe in the sea and the fish that provide their daily living. Uneducated, lower-class Indonesians generally did not know religion, especially imported religion. They were usually animist or pantheist, and they did not call what they worship "God." However, they were and are mindful, believing in a higher being(s) that has (have) greater power than humans. The first reign established in Indonesia was the Kutai Kingdom based on Hinduism, so that Indonesians were introduced to Hindu gods and goddesses long before Christianity and Islam arrived. Despite this, Pramoedya still does not like wayang from the Indian Mahabharata because wayang characters, used in Indonesian shadow-puppet plays, fight continually. Pramoedya also criticized wayang as a philosophy many Javanese people follow because it closely involves civil war. As Pramoedya explained, no great nation can base its existence on a philosophy loaded with civil war.

Instead, Pramoedya tended to believe in the nature that gives us food to survive and in her ancestors' spirits and legacy. In *The Girl from the Coast*, the girl converses with her maid about believing in her ancestors, but they have died and gone. The only thing left is the sea, giving fish for survival. The maid is puzzled because she has learned from the Bendoro, the priyayi man and the girl's husband, that Allah exists, and she sees Bendoro pray five times a day. The maid also talks about wayang and Pramoedya's objection to wayang is reflected through the girl's opinion about it.

After the girl becomes the Bendoro's temporary wife, he introduces her to the spiritual life of Islam as a way of being more sophisticated. Many of their conversations are one-sided; the Bendoro talks condescendingly, and the girl listens uncomfortably. She feels uneasy around her husband, and his religion and its rituals seem very strange, even unintelligible. She is also uncomfortable with her husband's superior attitude. She misses her family, but she cannot see them or do as she pleases since she is the wife of a high-class man. Pramoedya thus illustrates the irony of class and religion—the higher the class and the more religious, the less freedom, especially for women.

Because of her family's ignorance and naivete, although girl now belongs to the royal family, she is only a "temporary" or "practice" wife for the Bendoro until he takes a woman from his own class or from a royal family for his "real" wife. Of course, the Bendoro treats the girl badly and casts her off when he is finished with her. Pramoedya portrays this Javanese woman as completely voiceless and colonized. Her body functions only as fertile territory for producing a son, who is considered treasure to a Javanese family. A woman who cannot bear a son is useless and worthless. In this novel, however, even having given birth to a son, the girl is

still worthless because of her status as a temporary wife. In feudalism, poor people are dispensable, especially women like the girl from the coast.

Thus does Pramoedya depict how brutally feudalistic society treats poor people and women. Since the novel is based on Pramoedya's grandmother's life story, he obviously had a personal grudge toward priyayis and their religion, proclaiming his personal faith as "Pramoedyaism." Because Soeharto had spread propaganda about Communists not believing in God, Pramoedya became rather arbitrarily associated with the Communist Party even though his real concern was justice for the poor. In Indonesia, still, this propaganda about the Indonesian Communist Party has successfully led to many Indonesians conflating communists with atheists.

Similarly to *The Girl from the Coast*, in *The Dancer* Ahmad Tohari portrays a Javanese woman's helplessness. While Pramoedya portrays how bad a feudalistic society and religion are for the poor and women, Tohari creates Srinthil, from whose poverty-stricken and uneducated perspective readers view Indonesia. Again, Indonesian culture itself oppresses the female character, but Srinthil, unlike the willing and obedient girl from the coast, has an internal voice although any external voice is silenced by her family and society. Through subterfuge, she finds the power to claim her body and her virginity for herself and Rasus, the man she loves. Traditional belief dominates villagers' lives so that they believe that Srinthil, with her glowing beauty and magical aura, is an incarnation of the dancer spirit, or ronggeng. As her village's dancer, Srinthil is a dancer-prostitute meant to be the focus every male villager's sexual interest, that is, for all of them to fall in love with her.

Yet another aspect of the ronggeng is economic. That is, when Srinthil's grandfather, her caretaker since her parents died, thinks she is mature enough to have sexual intercourse, he offers her virginity, which defines her worth, to two of the richest villagers. After she has sexual

relations with the first rich man, her wily grandfather tricks the second man into believing that Srinthil is still virgin and charges him twice as much for being with Srinthil. However, before sleeping with the first rich man, Srinthil has claimed her body, covertly and purposely bestowing her virginity on Rasus. While Srinthil is ultimately used, this scene significantly demonstrates Srinthil's conscious undermining of her family and society's demands.

Somewhat similarly to *Durga / Umayi*, Ahmad Tohari intertwines Srinthil's life with Indonesia's political condition. Soeharto's government banned and swept away members of the Communist Party. Although Srinthil is not a member, the Communist Party often invites her to dance for them, and thus she is jailed. This sort of excuse for random arrest was common during the Soeharto era, and the slightest association with the Indonesian Communist Party becomes a terrifying reason for imprisonment. In fact, civil servant recruiters screened civil servant candidates for association with the Indonesian Communist Party. Any suspected candidate—with just some communistic idea—was struck off the list and investigated by the police. Even naming former President Soekarno as a favorite historical figure disqualified a candidate. Furthermore, Tohari's portrayal of poor people in relation to Communism and the Indonesian government illustrates how sensitive the issue was at that time. People could simply report a neighbor as a Communist, and the government would immediately arrest the neighbor—no questions asked.

Tohari's *The Dancer* exemplifies Pramoedya's belief that Indonesians colonized their own people. Not only priyayis but also poor villagers force Srinthil to become what they want—a dancer-prostitute to serve the village. The ronggeng manifests society's view of women as confined to a certain life role. Again wayang comes to mind.

Both Srinthil and the girl from hecoastt are puppets who, ostensibly, have no desires for their lives. But, in fact, the parents of the girl from the coast had no power to object to the Bendoro either. And, knowing only village life, the girl had no ability, even covertly, to negotiate her position. She was simply shut out of the Bendoro and her baby's lives, the latter even crueler since motherhood often bestows deepest meaning to a woman's life. Perhaps because Srinthil's enforced life comes from a culture with which she is familiar, she covertly negotiates between her desires and those of her family and society. Srinthil is somewhat better empowered than Pramoedya's innocent, silent, and completely helpless girl.

The feudalistic social system in Javanese culture creates a society parallel to the high and low societies of Gramsci's cultural hegemony. The early Indonesian royal family created a royal-centric culture in which nonroyals and the poor served them and provided whatever they needed or wanted. Gramsci notes how the hegemonized group consents to allow the hegemonizing party to run their agenda. In *The Girl from the Coast* and *The Dancer*, the hegemonized party includes the (coastal) villagers, poor citizens, all of the Bendoro's servants, and, of course, the girl. In *The Girl from the Coast*, the hegemonizing priyayi especially demonstrates his power and contempt for the poor by being disrespectfully absent on his wedding day, substituting a keris dagger for himself. Based on Javanese tradition, the groom must be present on the wedding day when, the bride's father, not a priest, conducts the marriage ritual by shaking the groom's hand and having him repeat the marriage vow. Sadly, the girl's parents accepted the Bendoro-groom's disrespectful treatment of the bride.

On the other hand, the bride does not have to be present at the marriage ceremony at all, being just a thing passively transferred from the father to the groom. The ritual excludes the bride's voice and even her presence. After the ritual, the bride's family provides a wedding

reception, but because Pramoedya's girl comes from a poor family, everything is arranged by the groom but without any wedding reception. So the girl's parents consent to the priyayi because they cannot fulfill their obligation of the wedding reception. Too, they assume that their daughter will happily climb the social ladder by becoming the Bendoro's wife. They are too ignorant to be suspicious or to know what questions they might ask to ensure their daughter's welfare. They cannot do other than what the priyayi demands, and they have no idea their daughter is to be a practice wife for use as a breeder until the Bendoro chooses a real wife from his social class. The girl is then overwhelmed and surprisingly depressed by her extremely confined lifestyle with the Bendoro, but when she communicates her feelings to her mother, the mother does not want to listen, assuming that the girl is just having temporary difficulty adjusting to the sophisticated, royal way of life. Too, she might have suspected all was not well and had some feelings of guilt.

In contrast, Srinthil makes hardly any attempt to communicate her uneasiness, assuming that everyone in her village thinks and expects the same thing—that she would be ronggeng. However, she does conduct silent resistance before ostensibly accepting her new role. Srinthil practices the Javanese women's strategy of accomplishing an agenda without sacrificing social harmony; that is, silent, calm, and invisible resistance seems the most effective strategy. As is common for Indonesian women, she does not make public her unwillingness to be ronggeng or her love for Rasmus, and, in the patriarchy's interest, goes along with her grandfather's plan for her life. Although Srinthil "cheats" his plan, she also preserves his public dignity.

There is the tiniest progress from Pramoedya's girl—too submissive, without courage or guile to rebel and claim her body and her baby—to Srinthil's proactive fulfillment of her love or Rasmus. That is progress in that Srinthil, conscious of her grandfather's injustice as it was being

planned, considered carefully, and acted as she thought best. Her action must thus be contrasted with the passivity of the girl from the coast, who seems utterly helpless and too long persists in trying to convince herself of her good fortune. Although Pramoedya was neither considered a feminist author nor particularly focused on gender issues per se, this fictional portrayal of his grandmother's treatment and feudalistic society depend greatly on the gendered cultural traditions of Indonesia.

Mangunwijaya in *Durga/Umayi* develops a very complex character in Tiwi, who, with the split of Durga Umayi, develops a great deal more subjectivity than Pramoedya's girl and Tohari's Srinthil, due more than partly to the modern era. The story of Pramoedya's girl takes place during Dutch colonialization, and that of Tohari's Srinthil takes place mainly during the 1960s when the Indonesian Communist Party was active and after 1965, during the Soeharto era when it was prohibited. Mangunwijaya's Tiwi actually uses Soeharto's typical personal and political strategy, that is, using any means necessary, including financial power. To that strategy, Tiwi surgically and painfully adds womanly power, that is, a beautiful face and figure to achieve her desires.

Mangunwijaya's *Durga / Umayi* vividly depicts the chaotic Soeharto era, during which no order was strictly applied. The chaos offered wildly opportunistic situations, and in the novel, Tiwi takes advantage of them. A young, naïve laundry maid in President Soekarno's household, she undergoes a magical transformation that sends her on a search for identity and for a cause to make her feel really useful. Continually searching for her life's purpose, she becomes an activist, a member of Gerwani associated with the Indonesian Communist Party, and, then eventually, using whatever can make her life comfortable, an international prostitute. As both a

character and a symbol of Indonesia, Mangunwijaya's Tiwi is superficial, moving opportunistically with the prevailing winds.

However, does Tiwi show progress compared to Pramoedya's girl and Tohari's Srinthil? Srinthil claims her body and loves Rasmus. Although her enforced role and its eventual political ramifications result in insanity, at one point she has enough courage to claim what is hers and does what her heart tells her to do. However, she acts to maintain social harmony, even with her society, her grandfather included, that sees her as a financial resource.

Mangunwijaya's Tiwi, also representative of Indonesia, commodifies herself to gain financial stability. Indonesian conditions during Mangunwijaya's production of *Durga / Umayi* were a sort of monetary heaven for opportunists. Following Soeharto's lead, but staying well out of his way, opportunists found nefarious ways to achieve their agendas. Actually, Soeharto taught his family and those close to him how to obtain power and money—by any means necessary. At a somewhat lower echelon, those in the know used the same means.

As a narrative strategy, Mangunwijaya alludes to wayang to define his characters' personalities. In contrast, Pramoedya disliked wayang characters because they colonized each other, fought civil wars, and generally set a bad example for living. However, Mangunwijaya alluded to wayang characters because he considered them effective, universally known and recognized by Indonesians. Considering the complexity of *Durga / Umayi*, his readers are likely grateful because the novel includes almost every aspect of Indonesian people's lives: the diversity of Indonesian ethnicities, languages (although in the English version, this complex aspect is lost in translation), their opportunistic way of thinking, their paradoxical acceptance of fate, conflicting feelings and logic, and so on.

Durga/Umayi tends to parallel the madonna–whore binary opposition or yin-yang balance. The one cannot exist without the other. Creation cannot exist without destruction. The Durga in Tiwi’s character appears after recovering from her rape by the Dutch dog soldiers when she becomes physically beautiful, that is, outwardly she becomes the physically beautiful Umayi. The Durga in Tiwi’s character is psychological because she will do anything for her own benefit, whether it destroys others’ lives or not, including that of her brother Brojol. Tiwi becomes the Durga, without compassion, a commodified and destructive product.

But Manguwijaya’s portrayal of commodification is actually characteristic of Soeharto’s government, which commodified everything that could financially benefit Soeharto’s cronies and his family. *Durga/Umayi* perfectly depicts the condition of Indonesia, which was sold piece by piece to whoever had the economic ability to buy. The Indonesian people’s needs were outside any consideration. As the saying goes in English, “the rich got richer and the poor got poorer.” Under conditions of greed and lack of order, as in *Durga/Umayi*, opportunists were living comfortably, oppressing the lower classes.

With his ugly, even scary physical appearance, Brojol seems to resemble Durga, but he has a compassionate heart. Tiwi also had a compassionate heart before entering the vortex of hetoportunistic elite classes. Tiwi might reflect Umayi in her beautiful physical appearance, but the Durga exists in Tiwi’s shift to an opportunistic, social-climbing prostitute. Even so, Tiwi’s prostitution provides her with what she wants, a comfortable life with a lot of money and a broad business network. On her own authority, Tiwi sells her “assets” to become a successful businesswoman—a path often taken by men who have been bandits, drug dealers, and so on. Thus does Tiwi emulate, manipulate, and participate in the patriarchy, leaving Manguwijaya’s readers to adjudicate, perhaps confusedly, her actions.

Yet another element of *Durga/Umayi* is the Javacentrism that emerged in Central Java and the Javanese obsession with blue, or royal, blood. This obsession, developing especially during the Dutch colonial era, helped create Javanese feelings of superiority. Even Soeharto considered himself and his family to belong to the royal family. Still, Indonesians from different areas, especially those areas with languages other than Javanese, or even languages that share most of their vocabulary with Javanese but include other vocabulary as well and have a different accent, are considered inferior. The Javanese mock and insult speakers with different accents and languages. Unfortunately for this study, the English translated version does not include these subtleties of language that are so revealing in the original.

During the oppressive Soeharto era, while Tiwi's actions symbolize the rape of Indonesia, they also exemplify a sexual revolution in that Tiwi has the courage to claim her body as valuable, as belonging to her, and uses it in exchange for money. Tiwi does not set out to become a prostitute, that is, it is not a forced action but an offer and a negotiation. Since Tiwi has "currency" to invest, she takes the opportunity to do so.

The bodies of both Pramoedya's girl and Tohari's Srinthil are colonized, and inhabitants are helpless to stop that colonization. Although Srinthil successfully claims authority over her body and freedom, that authority is brief and secret. She is effectively silenced. She negotiates within the patriarchal culture and maintains the community's harmony as a socially approved, traditional dancer-prostitute, or *ronggeng*, serving her village's men. Furthermore, Srinthil believes she has no choice, that being a *ronggeng* is her womanly role and fate. However, politics and imprisonment override her ability of "sukdrema nglampahi" (living life as it is, or taking life as it comes), driving her to the insanity that proves her a victim of ideology; she believes that her assigned role is as a *ronggeng*, and it is the only role she knows how to play.

When that role becomes impossible after her release from prison, she becomes frustrated and ultimately disoriented. She is no longer accepted in her assigned role, and thus her identity disappears, leaving her an unwanted outsider.

Last, Ayu Utami's *Saman* puts forward contemporary women not directly under the pressure of traditional values. The four protagonists have escaped Indonesia's repressive patriarchal society by travelling abroad. They are a range of contemporary women who attain higher education and work or study internationally so that they interact with cultures and ways of thinking other than Indonesian or, specifically, Javanese. True, Ayu Utami's female characters are westernized in that they reject their country's tradition and religious values, believing they no longer live with them. They claim authority over their bodies and do not allow colonization. Instead, they experiment, mostly according to their individual wants and needs. Although *Saman* has been criticized for its explicit sexual scenes and female characters considered not "good girls" in cultural and religious senses, the novel depicts more realistically (than the other novels) Indonesian women's contemporary experience. Much more than in *The Girl from the Coast*, *The Dancer*, and even *Durga/Umayi*, female characters' sexual lives have inherent force, and the women celebrate their sexuality. No longer controlled by tradition, culture, and religion, these women manifest a revolution through their sexual subjectivity.

Again, the Soeharto era made Java Indonesia's center, giving rise to Javacentrism so that most government staff members were Javanese, and even the national costume was a kebaya and long cloth functioning as a skirt. But Soeharto's control extended much further into Indonesian lives. His norms kept people frightened and women at home, ostensibly involved only in domestic matters. Women's identities were subordinated to their husbands' identities and, to a lesser degree, to their children's. Women were serviceable to their families and their

communities, invisible, and subjugated even in their sexuality. Although the character of Wisanggeni–Saman comes from a Javanese wayang character, puppetry is not really as central to *Saman* as in the other novels. Escaping their puppet-like fates to extremely different degrees, Ayu Utami's four female characters share international exposure and thus can express themselves more freely than Pramoedya's girl and Tohari's Srinthil, who are both severely confined, socially and geographically, to a kind of puppet-hood. In the final analysis, Ayu Utami's female characters have shed Indonesian women's traditional submissiveness and assumed proactive lives—without strings attached.

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