

ORIENTALISM AND RESISTANCE IN TJERITA NJI PAINA BY H.F.R. KOMMER

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ABSTRACT

Tjerita Nyi Paina is one of the works published before the Balai Pustaka era. This work is interesting to discuss using orientalism because it illustrates the colonial era so that the nuances of colonialism are still very much felt and illustrate the discourse of East produced by the West and how the authors as Chinese descendants who occupy the second class describe the discourse on East and West. After being analyzed, Tjerita Nji Paina portrays that the West is higher than the East much of the story of Nji Paina, although eventually the Toean Briot hegemony was broken down through Nji Paina's resistance. Nji Paina's actions that seemed unreasonable to the West were what the West feared, so they then formed a discourse about the East to create hegemony. In addition, domination also seems to occur because this short story is still set in the colonial period, although not too highlighted the tortures carried out by the colonialists. This may be due to the fact that those who wrote were Chinese and the Chinese community, when the racial segregation carried out by the colonizers; they occupied a higher position than the natives.

Keywords: *Tjerita Nji Paina, orientalism, resistance, hegemony*

INTRODUCTION

H. Kommer or whose full name is H.F.R. Kommer is a journalist and fiction writer. However, Woodrich (2014: 94-95) states that H.F.R. The community only has a few biographical records. The oldest novel written by Hommer is *Tjerita Rosinna*, published in Batavia, 1910. Kommer's work discussed in this article is *Tjerita Nji Paina*. This story is one of H. Kommer's works published in 1900 by the printing company A. Veit and Co., Batavia. The story was written forty-five years before Indonesia's independence so that the setting of the story was colonial times. Compared to other short stories collected by Pramoedya Ananta Toer in the book *Tempo Doeloe*, the short stories are among the fewest pages.

This short story is interesting to discuss because it not only illustrates how discourses about the East were produced by the West, but also illustrates how the authors as Chinese descendants who occupy the second class describe discourses about East and West. Therefore, the authors analyze this short story using

orientalism to show the Western view of the East in this short story made and show that there is always an attempt from the colonized to negotiate and resist the difficult choices that are often faced.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Edward Said is a literary critic and pioneer of post-colonial studies. Compared to Aime Cesaire and Frantz Fanon who had previously also conducted postcolonial studies, Said Orientalism's book was the first to criticize colonial ideologies discursively. In addition, Said's orientalism owes much to Michel Foucault's discursive theory and Antonio Gramsci's hegemony. In addition to the two, there are several others, but only Foucault, and Gramsci and Derrida's binary opposition will be used in how the texts deconstruct themselves by giving birth to oppositions, especially in relation to the West and East. The idea of the development of orientalism is raised in Said's statement (2010: 7) follows.

Ideas, culture and history cannot be truly understood or studied without studying the strengths, or more precisely, the configurations of power. Believing that "East" is a creation or in my term, "Eastern East" and beliefs that such things happen solely because of the demands of the imagination, is a dishonest attitude. The relation between the West and the East is a complex power, domination, and hegemony relation.

Roger Simon (1999: 19-20) states that hegemony is not related to domination. Power is obtained because of the agreement. This agreement is through political and ideological leadership because those who control and are controlled are organized by consensus. This was also confirmed by Patria and Andi Arief (2003: 115-116) who argued that hegemony was simply called a "leader" state.

Hegemony is related to how to obtain supremacy in a social class. Some supremacy use coercion or domination, but some use intellectual and moral leadership. This intellectual and moral leadership, which Gramsci calls hegemony.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Tjerita Nji Paina by H. Kommer tells the story of Nji Paina who had to be forced to marry a Dutchman named Toean Briot because his father, Niti lost some cash. Toean Briot then threatened to jail Niti for the mistake. Niti was actually

willing to replace the lost money, but Toean Briot wanted the money to be replaced by marrying him to Nji Paina who had become a widow.

Toean Briot is a Western representation. Referring to the racial segregation made by the Dutch in the colonial era, the Dutch occupy the highest social class, followed by the Foreign East (Arabic and Chinese), and finally the natives. While Niti and Nji Paina are Eastern representations.

Western as the height of civilization

Timur, who is represented in this story by the Javanese, is depicted as having a marriage concept which for the modern worldview is like doing things that don't make sense because he married his daughters when he was a child. Not only that, the statement that Niti's daughters were married to working and rich people shows that the marriage was not based because they wanted marriage or because of love, but because the people who were going to marry them were people who could guarantee his life in the future. The following quote.

Niti Admodjo kadoe istri dibri oleh Toehan iang Mahakoeasa doea anak prampoean iang amat tjantik dan elok parasnja, tiada ada kadoenja di antero desa itoe. Maka menoeroet adat bangsa Djawa, kadoea anak ini koetika masih ketjil soedah dikasih nikah, satoe sama poetranja mantri oeloe-oeloe, dan iang lain sama poetranja saorang Djawa hartawan iang ada poenja banjak sawah dan hewan (Toer, 2003: 378).

Niti Admodjo's was given a beautiful present by God Almighty two very beautiful children in her village. In addition, according to Javanese culture, both of these children have been married, one of them was married to a mantri *oeloe-oeloe*, and another one was married to a wealthy Javanese who is possessed many ricefields and cattles.

The quote also illustrates the marriage of Niti's two daughters as well because they both have beautiful and beautiful looks. This also implies that for Easterners, physicality is also important in deciding marriage. This is as found in the Javanese cultural concept of marriage, namely seeds, seeds, and weights. Subandi (2008: 69) mentions seed literally means 'seed.' The meaning of seed is meant as a hereditary factor or in other words a person's biological value. Bebet is interpreted as a social position or economic condition, while weights are a person's moral nature.

In other words, the West, in this case represented by Toean Briot, illustrates that East, who is a Javanese, has a tradition of marrying off children as a child and with rich men. In fact, the concept of "getting married" that was meant by the Javanese when the children were still small was still in the stage of matchmaking, not really building a family. His marriage is usually done when the child is puberty and it could be that he is still the age of a middle or high school kid. In contrast to the West, which considers that after children of a certain age, they are considered adults and are free to make their own choices. The tradition of matchmaking since childhood for the West is irrational. However, for Easterners, this is a way other than to maintain a position in society; it is also considered a way to prevent their daughters from living unpleasant lives.

Racial Discrimination

Racial discrimination occurs in respect of the work of Easterners and Westerners. In *Nji Paina's* short story, Toean Briot's statement regarding Niti's salary illustrates that in the eyes of the West, there must be differences, and the difference is basic because Niti is Eastern and the following statement implies that her easternity makes it worthy of being paid a low salary, as the following quote.

Di mana pada zaman ini orang dengar iang satoe djoeroetoelis Djawa makan gaji begitoe besar. Doea poeloeh lima roepiah masih terlaloe banjak boeat satoe djoeroetoelis orang Djawa (Toer, 2003: 379).

At this time where we heard, a one Javanese clerk is earned a big salary. Twenty-five rupiahs is still too much for one Javanese clerk.

Based on the above quotation, Mr. Briot positions the West higher than the East, and considers the East inferior so that the work that Niti does does not deserve to be paid that much because he is Eastern. In addition, a quote about Western exploitation of the East because of its east is also found in the following quote.

Kamoedian toean administrateur berkata: "Briot, kamoe kasi tiap-tiap hari pada ini djoeroetoelis sedikit oeang, sebab kami maoe, ia saben hari moesti bajar ongkos-ongkos ketjil. Ia dapet terlaloe banjak gaji, djangan kamoe kasihanin padanja, tetapi kau moesti kasi pekerdjahan lebih banjak padanja, maski di waktoe malam sekalipoen (Toer, 2003: 380).

Later on, the boss said: Briot, give these small sums of money to the clerks, because they have to pay for small expenses. They got too much salary, do

not have a pity on them, you have to ask them to do extra works, even in the evening.

The West positioned itself higher than the East so coercive actions such as giving more work until night time illustrate that the salary is sufficient to pay for work time without rest. In fact, Niti's work history illustrates that she deserves that much salary because besides being neat, she saved many companies. The East represented by Niti also presented an Eastern view of the West, after being treated disrespectfully by Toean Briot. The statement is stated in the following quotation.

Niti lantas toeroet pada Toean Briot, iang berlaloeh kasar adatnja. Hatinja Niti tiada senang. Dari moelanja Toean Briot masoek kerdja, Niti ada bentji pada toean itoe iang amat koerang sopan, bitjaranja kasar dan roepanja tiada boleh diperdjaja, sehingga soeranja poela membikin boekan sadja keeping pegawai-pegawainja toeli, tetapi djoega bikin roesak hati orang (Toer, 2003: 380).

Niti then joined Mr Briot, a rude man. Niti's heart was not happy. From the start Mr. Briot came to work, Niti had a hate for that gentleman who was very impolite, spoke harshly and apparently could not be trusted, so his voice also made not only the ears of his employees deaf, but also made people's hearts broken.

For the West, speaking "straight to the point" has become a tradition, not so with the East, especially the Eastern figures represented are Javanese figures that are refined and put the principle of tranquility first. The things that are not liked as much as possible are not shown; if necessary, the delivery is also convoluted so that the listener is not offended. Such is the case with the assumption that someone can be trusted or not. For the East, a face can be a measure of someone's trust or betrayal from his face, while a rational West does not easily disconnect a trustee or betrayer from it because it is like showing the superficiality of logic. Not only is the opposition regarding the concept of marriage and wages, even Timur is considered low by having to respect Toean Briot by crouching in the following quote.

Maka lantas datenglah saorang Djawa, iang tiada moeda lagi dan iang berdjalan di dalem pekarangan fabriek, teroes djongkok dengan hormat di depan pintoe dan koetika diprentah masoek ia masoek dengan manggoet

serta bertindak iang amat pantesnja dan kain saroengnja iang dikandji ada berboenji-boenji. Kemudian ia menoenggoe titah toennja (Toer, 2003: 379)

Then came a Javanese man, who was no longer young and who walked in the factory yard, he continued to squat respectfully at the door and when he was ordered in he stepped in with a beard and acted very appropriately and the gloved cloth sounded. Then he waited for his master's orders.

Timur was described as "inferior" because he squatted respectfully at the front door to respect the West, which further confirmed that Mr Briot's position was higher than Niti's. In addition, Eastern clothes that used to wear sarong were also emphasized in Niti's description when meeting Mr. Briot, whereas for Easterners, Niti was someone who came from the upper middle class. This is indicated from the picture of economic life that is still good even though at that time it was a difficult time. Not only that, Eastern men's clothing is also represented by a starched and sounding sarong. This illustrates the traditional and not simple East because the West has long known pants. Western opposition to the East is also seen in the following quotation.

Kerna Nji Paina amat tjantiknja, koelitnja langsep dan ramboetnja patah majang, teroerei-oerei di tioep angin, maka Toe an Briot lantas djatoh birahi, dan tiada dapet menahan hatinja lagi, sahingga ia mengaloerkan soera seperti satoe babi roesa iang baroe mendapet makanan di oetan (Toer, 2003: 382).

Because Nji Paina was so beautiful, her skin was shiny and her hair was beautiful, scattered in the wind, Mr. Briot then fell love, and could not hold his heart anymore, so he made a sound like a pig deer who had just received food in the forest.

East for the West is exotic and interesting. For Toe an Briot, Timur represented by Nji Paina is something that gives birth to lust because its beauty is beyond description. Nevertheless, this is not the case for the East; the West is something that is threatening because it brings new things to them. Therefore, based on the data classification done in Nji Paina, there are several concepts of opposition between West and East that are represented in the story. This difference regarding the West, which is higher than the East, is the discourse that the West presents about the East. The East is just because the West thinks so. Because of those who have

knowledge, those who later produce discourse about it. What's more, the story of Nji Paina was still written in colonial times. The period when the Dutch were still colonizing and the Chinese received special treatment compared to the natives because they were generally traders.

Furthermore, the discourses produced at that time also gave rise to the perception that Nji or Nyai had negative connotations at that time. As Sutedja (2008: 278) states that in the nineteenth century, living with a Njai was a habit that was acceptable to the Indies community. However, a Njai's image is generally negative. This is because in the beginning, Nyai lived together with a man without being officially married, even after having children.

Domination and Hegemony

The story of Nji Paina not only produced a discourse which then represented the West about the East which further emphasized the position of the West which placed itself higher than the East, but the story also displayed Western domination and hegemony over the East. The characteristic of domination is the existence of coercive or coercive action, whereas hegemony has no compelling element, but there is agreement to do it. In other words, hegemony makes someone do something voluntarily.

The dominance arose when Mr. Administrator forced Niti to work harder than usual with the salary still the same and would be threatened to be fired if she did not follow the order. The following quote.

Kamoedian toean administrateur berkata: "Briot, kamoe kasi tiap-tiap hari pada ini djoeroetoelis sedikit oeang, sebab kami maoe, ia saben hari moesti bajar ongkos-ongkos ketjil. Ia dapet terlaloe banjak gajih, djangan kamoe kasihanin padanja, tetapi kau moesti kasi pekerdjahan lebih banjak padanja, maski di waktoe malam sekalipoen. Kalaoe ia bantahan, nanti kami oesir padanja. Sekarang djoga kau moesti serahkan kas ketjil padanja," dan sambil menoenjoek pada Niti, toean administrateur prentah aken toeroet toean Briot (Toer, 2003: 380).

Then the administrator said: "Briot, you have a little cash every day, because we want it, every day we have to pay small fees. He gets too much salary, don't you pity him, but you have to give him more work, even at night. If he disputes, we will expel him later. Right now, you must leave the petty cash

to him, "and while pointing at Niti, the command administrator will join Mr. Briot.

The statement that he was given more work and worked even into the night was a repressive action by the administrator because Niti had no choice. The choice is only to work and follow the wishes of the administrator if he does not want to lose his job. This dominance shows that the West places itself higher than the East and has undeniable power. Even the rights to his body can be regulated by the administrator as a colonizer. Another act of repression carried out by Toean Briot was when Niti lost her cash. He forced Niti to pay the loss through the marriage of Nji Paina and *Toean* Briot, as the following quote.

*"Niti! Dengar, tjoemah ada satoe daja, iang boleh loepoetkan kau dan...
"Hamba kandjeng toean, tjeritakanlah daja itoe." Menjaoet Niti dengan amat heran mendengar perkataan lemas itoe dari moeloetnja Toean Briot, iang belon pernah bitjara begitu manis.*

Berkata Toean Briot: "Di mana Nji Paina? Kaloe kae soeka Nji Paina djadi njaikoe, nistjaja tiada nanti terdjadi satoe apa atas dirimoe dan semoea oewang itoe kau tiada oesah bajar koembali" (Toer, 2003: 388).

"Niti! Listen, there is only one power, which can escape you and ...

"Servant Sir *Kanjeng*, tell me the power." Replied Niti very surprised to hear these weak words from the mouth of Mr. Briot, who had never spoken so sweetly.

Said Mr. Briot: "Where is Nyi Paina? If you like Nji Paina to be my soul, surely nothing will happen to you and you don't have to return all the money"

The main problem with *Toean* Briot and Niti is the loss of Niti's cash. Niti is willing to compensate, but *Toean* Briot continues to insist on putting Niti in jail. Niti had no effort to refuse an offer to go to jail in exchange for marrying her child to *Toean* Briot because of the dominance of *Toean* Briot. In fact, Niti was still able to return her lost cash when compared to having to be bartered by marrying off her child.

In addition to dominance, hegemony is also highlighted in this story. *Toean* Briot often calls and asks many questions to Niti. However, the question has nothing to do with Niti's work, so Niti was upset; even the money began to disappear when called *Toean* Briot. The loss of Niti's cash which then made her agree to the wishes

of *Toean Briot* so that Niti came to her house to take responsibility for the cash she had lost.

Dengan mata melirik seraja moeka bengis ia mengawasi pada Niti iang lagi goemetaran sekoedjoer badannja kamoedian ia berkata dengan soewara perlahan, soepaja djangan dapet didengar orang laen iang ada di samping kantoer: "Niti, bawa semoea oewang itoe karoemahmoe, dan malem kau moesti datang di roemahkoe dan kami ingin dapet taoe apa sebabnja ada kakoerangan oewang di dalem kas iang kau pegang." Dengan amat sedih Niti berdjalan poelang, dan ia taoe betoel, kaloe kahendaknja Toean Briot tiada ditoeroet nistjaja tjilakalah dirinja (Toer, 2003: 385—386).

Niti who was dominated by *Toean Briot* finally persuaded Nji Paina to want to marry *Toean Briot* through the rhymes he told. The characters were named after *Toean Briot* and Nji Paina. The poem of the story then really managed to arouse Paina's heart, so he voluntarily agreed to marry *Toean Briot*.

In colonial times, oppression did occur in layers. When invaders oppress native men, then native men will oppress the weak, usually women and children. Such was the case with Nji Paina. His father was oppressed by *Toean Briot*; his father oppressed Nji Paina through marriage to *Toean Briot*, a man who was even teased by wild children in his village. For Niti as a father, her marriage and freedom are more important than the happiness of Nji Paina, her child.

Resistance

Nji Paina's marriage to her previous husband did not matter to her because she was a native. Therefore, Nji Paina did not refuse. However, when his father wanted to marry him to *Toean Briot*, Nji Paina refused.

"Apa djadi njainja tjeleng itoe?" Tiada sekali-kali. Beberapa orang melamar padakoe, tetapi koe soedah tampik dan sekarang koe hendak didjadikan boedaknja si tjeleng alas itoe? (Toer, 2003: 389).

"What's the problem with that boar?" Never occasionally. Some people proposed to me, but I have already rejected it and now you want to be made into a slave to that boisterous boar?

The use of the word boar or pig shows how *Toean Briot* for Nji Paina is just like an animal. Therefore, he put up resistance by rejecting his father's desire to marry *Toean Briot*, whom she had hated since the beginning of the meeting.

However, his father's rhetoric could not be denied, as previously stated. Nji Paina finally accepted the marriage of *Toean Briot*. The marriage is a form of negotiation Nji Paina. A patriarchal culture would place Nji Paina as a child who does not serve his parents if he refuses marriage and leaves his father in prison. However, Nji Paina did not just accept, after her marriage, when she headed to the *Toean Briot*'s house, she resisted by allowing the deadly smallpox to infect herself. She deliberately made contact with several people who had the disease, so that *Toean Briot* also contracted and died.

Hata maka sepoeloeh hari kamoedian, Toean Briot kena penjakit tjarjar amat sangetnja. Bagimana djoega diobatin, Toean Briot tiada djadi semboeh, maka ampat hari kamoedian, orang dapetin Toean Briot mati terletak di atas oebin di depan roemahnja dan roepanja seperti ia soedah menangoeng sangsara besar selama sakinja itoe. Nji Paina djoega dilanggar ini penjakit tetapi tiada sebrapa kerasnja dan sigrah ia semboeh kombali, tjoemah tinggal bopeng antero moekanja, sahingga ilanglah elok dan tjantiknja (Toer, 2003: 391).

CONCLUSION

Nji Paina's story is one example of Western representations of the East. Discourse about the West is higher than the East much of the story of Nji Paina, although eventually the *Toean Briot* hegemony was successfully undermined through Nji Paina's resistance. That was done by leaving a trace on Nji Paina's face. Nji Paina's actions that seemed unreasonable to the West were what the West feared, so they then formed a discourse about the East to create hegemony. With hegemony, Timur will feel that this is how they should be because the West seems more rational. In addition, domination also seems to occur because this short story is still set in the colonial period, although not too highlighted the tortures carried out by the colonialists. This may be due to the fact that those who wrote were Chinese and the Chinese community, when the racial segregation carried out by the colonizers; they occupied a higher position than the natives.

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