

Women's Awareness in Preserving Nature in Novel Entitled *Burung-burung Manyar* by Y.B Mangunwijaya (Ecofeminist Study)

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Abstract - This study was aimed to reveal women's awareness in preserving nature that is written in the novel entitled *Burung-burung Manyar* (*The Waver Birds*). In this study, the researcher applied qualitative descriptive method. The theory used to identify this work is ecofeminism, which assumes that there is a close relationship between women and natural preservation. The results of this study indicated that character of Atik played an important role in the preservation of nature, animals and plants. She had a high sensitivity and concerned for the survival of living things and the natural environment.

Keywords: women's awareness, preserving nature, novel

I. INTRODUCTION

Authors are member of society who have incisive ideas and thoughts. These ideas and thoughts are processed in a way that is then expressed in the form of literary works. One of the thoughts is matters related to the environment and natural sustainability.

As we know that environment is an important component in human life. Basically, whether the environment as a space for human movement is conducive or not would affect aspects of life, both physically and spiritually. The relationship between human beings and the environment is very closely related. It brings reciprocal consequences between the two continuously. Therefore, human beings should have deep awareness on it in order to create harmony with nature and the environment.

The description of the harmony of human relations with nature is an interesting topic for the authors. The authors represent the topic in literary works, one of which is Y.B. Mangunwijaya in his work entitled *Burung-burung Manyar*. The novel tells of the female character named Atik who had a high awareness for animals and the natural environment around her during her childhood before and after independent day of Indonesia.

There have been many studies on this novel. Many of the researches examine the novel from its sociological and psychological aspects. Yet, as for research from the feminist aspect, especially ecofeminist has not been done before, whereas it is also important to enrich the meaning explicated in this novel.

Ecofeminism is a new term rises from old ideas that grew out of various feminist movements, peace and ecology. These movements strive for environmental sustainability and oppose environmental destruction triggered by ecological disasters repeatedly (Shiva, 2005: 15). According to Shiva, when women take action against ecological destruction and or the threat of nuclear destruction, they realize that there is a relation between patriarchal violence against women, human beings and nature. By rejecting patriarchal power, this means that women care for the life of the next generation.

In line with Shiva's statement, Warren in Tong (1998: 360) said that the hierarchical, dualistic, and oppressive mode of patriarchal thinking has damaged women and nature. It was because women have been 'naturalized', women are portrayed through references to animals, while nature has been 'disseminated'.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Irsasri has studied the novel entitled *Burung-burung Manyar* regarding its sociological, historical, and educational value in it. Irsasri's study was aimed to describe (1) the aspect of sociology the author named Y.B. Mangunwijaya who colored the story behind the novel entitled *Burung-burung Manyar*, (2) the socio-cultural background of the novel entitled *Burung-burung Manyar*, (3) the Roman historical perspective of the novel entitled *Burung-burung Manyar* and (4) the educational value in the novel entitled *Burung-burung Manyar* by Y.B. Mangunwijaya.

This novel has also been studied by Kresnapayana with his research entitled "*Agresivitas Perwatakan Setadewa: Kajian Psikoanalisis Tokoh Utama Novel Burung-Burung Manyar*" (trans: Characters Aggression of Setadewa: Study of Psychoanalysis of the Main Character of Novel Entitled *Burung-burung Manyar*). He discussed about the intrinsic and extrinsic elements in the novel, the nationalism representation of character named Teto in the novel, and the values showed in the novel entitled *Burung-burung Manyar*.

III. RESEARCH METHODS

The researcher used qualitative descriptive method in her study by concerning on substance (nature) of the research. The problem of this research was the women's awareness in preserving nature. These problems would be described carefully and thoroughly. The data obtained from words, phrases, and sentences written in the novel entitled *Burung-burung Manyar*.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Environment is important aspect in human's life. Here lives various living things: humans, plants and animals. Animals have a significant role in the life cycle of living things. Animals are one of the biodiversity that must be preserved.

Awareness of that matter was planted in the soul of character named Atik. In her childhood, Atik had deep awareness for the environment and nature. At the age of ten she had shown her awareness for animals. She was very fond of animals, especially wild birds that were around her house and her relatives' houses. When she was on vacation at her Uncle Prince's house whose relative of her mother, she did not hesitate to ask sesame seeds for the baker at her relative's house to be given to wild birds flying around the neighborhood.

"Sedikit saja biji wijen enak itu." Gadis yang dikatakan noni Betawi tadi melihat ke kiri ke kanan dan menoleh, seolah takut diketahui berbuat sesuatu yang kurang layak...

Mbok Ranu memberinya beberapa batangan bambu sekecil batang korek api selaku pengancing mangkuk daun. Dan takir itu diisilah oleh Mbok Naya barang seperempat biji wijen, yang seharusnya digunakan untuk melapis onde-onde ceplus yang mereka goreng. (BbM:17)

Trans: "Just a little of the delicious sesame seeds." The girl who was addressed as noni Betawi looked bewildered and turned around, as if she was afraid of being recognized to do something less feasible...

Mbok Ranu gave her some bamboo sticks as small as matchstick for fastening leaf bowl. And the takir—water container made of banana leaves, palm fonds, etc. was filled with a quarter of sesame seeds, which was supposed to be used for covering onde-onde ceplus which was fried by Mbok Naya. (BbM: 17)

According to the quotation above, it presented the little Atik tried to find food to be fed to the wild birds. Atik, who was still young, seduced the cooks to set aside a portion of sesame seeds in which would be used for covering *onde-onde*. She happily received the sesame seeds from the cooks and promised to give gifts in return for their kindness.

Dan tinggallah Larasati sendirian. Bukunya dirangkul di dada dan kedua lutut bersimpuh di tangga. Atik tak perlu lama menunggu. Sahabat-sahabatnya, burung-burung gereja, ketilang, pada datang, tetapi masih waspada menunggu dulu, bagaimana situasi keamanan. Sebab mereka biasanya dihalau oleh simbok-simbok bila kebetulan ada ini itu yang terserak bisa dimakan. (BbM: 25)

Lalu datanglah menyusul beberapa ekor manyar itu, itu burung-burung yang di mana-mana sibuk membangun sarang-sarang berseni elok. Mereka menyambar dari udara dan puk-puk-puk. Tertawalah lagi Atik. Lucu burung-burung itu. Maka segeralah burung-burung tingkat rakyat jelata, si gereja dan si emprit dan burung "anak kampung" ketilang, ikut pesta juga. Dan nah, tentu saja tak mau ketinggalan si gelatik cantik tetapi pencuri-pencuri padi yang nakal itu, dengan pipinya putih dan pecinya biru hitam. Persis seperti anak lelaki di dalam sekolah dan di mana-mana, nakal dan perusak segala. Begitu Atik menilai mereka...

Segeralah wijen-wijen berharga yang sebetulnya harus melapisi onde-onde ceplus dan dimakan para priayi tamu-tamu nanti petang, sudah habis. (BbM: 26)

Trans: And then Larasati left alone. Her book was embraced on her chest and both knees knelt on the stairs. Atik did not have to wait longer. Her friends, sparrows, nightingales, they were coming—but kept being alerted, waiting for the situation to be safe. Because they were usually driven away by maids when there happened to be something scattered which could be eaten. (BbM: 25)

Then came after, a number of these weaver birds, they were busy building beautiful nests everywhere. They snatched from the air and pecked. Atik laughed again. What funny birds! So, immediately the birds just like the rabbles, the sparrows, the 'country' nightingale joined the party too. And well, not to mention the beautiful wren yet the naughty rice thieves, with its white cheeks and blue black head. Just like boys in school and everywhere, naughty and destructive. That was what Atik thought of them...

Soon those precious sesame seeds—which actually had to cover the onde-onde ceplus and eaten by the priyayi guests later in the evening was gone. (BbM: 26)

Atik maintained the harmony with nature through her interactions with those birds. She did not only feed them foods, but also wait for the birds to eat their food until they were finished and made sure they were not driven out by her uncle's maids. Atik was excited to feed the birds and she laughed happily to see the fun moves of the birds that approached her. She was not at all disturbed by the hustle and bustle of the birds that she considered them as best friends. Sometimes, Atik also talked to them (gave advice) to the birds due to her awareness for them.

"Kau jangan nakal, ya, srigunting! Namamu sudah seindah itu: Sri. Dan ekormu aksi juga, mengapa tabiatmu begitu?"

Perhatian Atik ditarik ke sekian emprit, ketilang, gelatik, dan gereja yang sekarang sedang bingung mencari sisa makan yang ternyata sudah habis begitu cepat. (BbM: 28)

Trans: "Don't you be naughty, yeah, srigunting! Your name is as beautiful as that: Sri. And your tails can act too, why is your attitude like that?"

Atik's attention was drawn to the sparrows, nightingales, and wrens that was now confused to look for the leftovers which turned out to have run out so quickly. (BbM: 28)

Atik's awareness for animals and nature made Atik angry at Teto when she knew Teto would hurt the birds who were playing. Atik accidentally caught Teto who was behind the wall ready to aim his sling at the birds. Atik asked Teto not to aim at them. She did not have the heart to see innocent birds being subjected to Teto's fad. Atik's anger was expressed by cursing Teto and calling him 'mean kid'.

"Hei! Hei!" teriak Atik. "Kasihannya! Jangan dipelanting! Teto! Teto! Jangan!"

Teto memalingkan kepala ke segala arah sampai pandangannya bertemu dengan Atik yang marah berkacak pinggang. Ia tak menjawab apa-apa. Hanya lidahnya yang keluar dari mulutnya dibuat mirip kera. Jelek sekali.

"Kasihannya mereka! Kau anak bengis..." Atik marah, masuk beranda dan di kamar tidak dapat berbuat lain kecuali mencoba membuka buku hadiahnya. Tetapi kamar dalam istana pangeran selalu gelap. (BbM: 35-36)

Trans: "Hei! Hei!" Atik yelled at Teto. "Poor them! Don't shoot them! Teto! Teto! Don't do that!"

Teto turned his head everywhere until finally his eyes met Atik who was angry with his hips. He did not answer anything. Only his tongue that came out of his mouth was made like an ape. Ugly as hell.

"Poor them! You're a mean kid. "... Atik got angry, entering the veranda then the room. But she could do nothing but try to open her gift book. But the room in the prince's palace was always dark. (BbM: 35-36)

What Atik did in this story was in line with the thoughts of feminist figures who believe that human beings must maintain harmony with nature. As expressed by Tong (1998: 403) that human beings are interconnected with one another and relate also to the non-human world: animals, plants, and other silent objects. Although Atik was just growing up, she already had the awareness to create harmony with nature so that the nature would not be damaged quickly and the birds would not become extinct because they were used as hunting objects by irresponsible parties.

Atik's love for nature resembled her father who worked in the Forestry Service. Since childhood, she had often been invited by her father to explore the nature along the forests, mountains, and natural tourist attractions. Once a week Atik's father, Mr. Antana, invited his children to visit these places.

Mr. Antana was an employee of the Bogor Botanical Gardens and the nature preserve Ujung Kulon. Mr. Antana was well aware that ecosystems must be well maintained to remain sustainable. That principle planted to Atik and it was very pervasive in his daughter. Atik, her only child preferred to travel nature rather than travel to crowded places.

Although she was the only child and was spoiled by his parents, Atik was not spoiled, she even grew up to be a diligent, intelligent, and socially caring child, and had a deep curiosity. She liked to read books and asked many things she did not know yet. She was not satisfied just to get an explanation from her mother about rhinos that were said to resemble buffalo. She wanted to see the animals directly. Her curiosity was almost fulfilled when her father invited her to travel to Ujung Kulon.

Berkali-kali, bahkan dapat dikatakan sekali seminggu paling sedikit, Atik diajak ayahnya menyusuri sawah ladang dan masuk ke semak-semak hutan gunung. Bahkan ia pernah diajak masuk Ujung Kulon. Kata ayah mau mencari kolam tempat badak-badak suka merendam diri. Atik belum pernah melihat badak dan ingin sekali melihatnya, walaupun ibunya sudah berkata seperti kerbau biasa. Hanya tanduknya di hidung. Ah *mosok*. Tetapi sayang mereka tidak berhasil melihat badak. (BbM: 31)

Trans: Time and time again, it could even be said that at least a week, Atik was invited by his father to explore the rice paddies and into the bushes of the mountain forest. Even she was invited to come to Ujung Kulon. Father said that he wanted to find a pond where

rhinos like to soak themselves. Atik had never seen a rhinos and was eager to see it, even though her mother had said that rhinos just like common buffalo. Only the horn on the nose. Ah really? But unfortunately they were not lucky in seeing rhinos. (BbM: 31)

Her affection to animals and the environment was captured through camera. Together with her father, Atik would explore in capturing various animals she found in the fields or in teak forests. She could not wait for tomorrow to arrive, exploring the fields and the forest to find her “preys”.

Besok pagi sesudah istirahat dari pesta kelahiran puteri Pangeran, ia dan ayahnya akan berburu di ladang-ladang, dan kalau bisa ke hutan-hutan jati gunung kapur di Baturetna. Bukan berburu dengan bedil, tetapi dengan alat kamera, Atik benci pada senapan. (BbM: 32)

Trans: On the following morning after the break from the Prince's daughter's birthday party, she and her father would hunt in the fields, and if possible they would go to the limestone mountain teak forests in Baturetna. It was not hunting with rifles, but with a camera device, Atik hated guns. (BbM: 32)

When walking through the paddies and fields, Atik was very impressed with the beauty of nature and was amazed to hear the sounds of oriole birds which are very melodious and have beautiful physical form. Her admiration was an example of harmony between human and nature. It was in line with Tjahyono's statement in Endraswara (2016: 128) that the harmony between human and nature would create a calm and pleasant atmosphere.

Heh? Bukankah itu nyanyian kepodang? Orang-orang Sunda menamakannya bincarung, burung perada kencana yang berpelesir hitam molek dari paruh melalui mata dan terus ke belakang seperti ikat kepala petani Kedu. (BbM: 32)

Trans: Hey? Wasn't that oriole's birdsong? Sundanese called it bincarung, the golden turtle bird, which slips black from the beak through the eyes and keeps going back like a bunch of Kedu peasant heads. (BbM: 32)

The harmony between human beings and nature grew blossomly. Atik grew into a smart person but she was not arrogant and could read situations carefully. When she passed the high school examination, she did not want to throw a party that drew attention of many people. Because the situation and circumstances at that time did not suitable for holding a party. However, she still eager to have a party in her own way, which was to infiltrate the forest or mountain peak with her father. She really enjoyed the tour activities because she had not joined that for a long time. That was happened since Japan arrived and it was martial law situation so it was not possible to carry out any ecotourism activities.

Tadi selama makan petang, Atik sendirilah yang mengusulkan agar jangan diadakan pesta. Dengan serius dan begitu meyakinkan sehingga kedua orang tuanya hanya tercengang. Tetapi Atik tetap memohon acara pengganti. Sekali lagi, Atik ingin berpesta, tetapi dengan cara menyusup ke dalam alam hutan atau puncak gunung bersama ayahnya. Sudah sejak Atik bersekolah di SMP, ya sejak Jepang datang *wanawisata* yang dulu sering dialami di SD tidak pernah lagi dilakukan. Karena situasi darurat perang tentu saja. (BbM:66)

Earlier during the evening meal, Atik herself proposed not to throw a party. She was serious and so convincingly that both of his parents were just astonished. But Atik still begged for a substitute activity. Once again, Atik wanted to throw a party, but by infiltrating into the forest or mountain peak with her father. It happened since Atik attended junior high school it meant when Japan came, the tours which they used to have in elementary school were never done again. Because of martial law situation of course. (BbM: 66)

Atik's affection for nature continued to grow and blossom, even though her father who bequeathed this character had fallen on the battlefield during the revolution. Mr. Antana and Atik, during their childhood, were true nature lovers, so her awareness and care for nature were ingrained like her father.

After the independence period and her father passed away, Atik chose to work as an employee in the Forestry service. She did not want to continue working in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs even though the opportunity to develop her career there was very wide open. As secretary of Prime Minister Syahrir during the struggle, working in that institution was certainly a very promising and coveted thing for many people. However, Atik was not a materialistic person for just pursuing a career in work. She worked based on hobbies, choice of conscience, and love for the fields that she liked. Atik felt her soul was more fitted to work in the Forestry service because her instincts as nature lovers called her to decide the choice. Atik's decision was fully supported by her mother so that she became more determined by her choice.

“Ibu, barangkali Atik tidak akan terus bekerja di Kementerian Luar Negeri.”... (BbM:217)

“Aku ingin meneruskan pekerjaan Ayah. Di dalam dinas kehutanan, Bu.”

Dalam gelap tidak tampak, tetapi seperti kawah Merapi itulah air mata panas dari kedua wanita itu meleleh. Ya, begitulah. Sudah seharusnya begitulah. (BbM:218)

“Mom, I probably will not continue to work in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.” ...
(BbM: 217)
“I want to continue Father’s work. In the Forestry service, Mom.”
In the dark it was not visible, but just like Merapi’s crater the sores tears of the two
women melted. Yes, that was. That was how it should be. (BbM: 218)

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion above, it could be concluded that from a human being’s awareness for nature would create a harmony of life among human beings, plants and animals. This effort to preserve harmony with nature is a choice. In this novel the researcher found some examples of Atik’s awareness for nature and animals, including: (1) her loving towards animals, especially birds; (2) her travelling passion to natural attractions; and (3) her decision to work in the Forestry service.

VI. REFERENCES

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