

Efforts of Lasi Character in Identity Control in Ahmad Tohari's *Bekisar Merah* Novel

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the efforts of the Lasi character in fighting for his identity, and why it was fought for. This research is a qualitative research that uses a sociological literature approach. The data source of this research is the text of the novel *Bekisar Maerah* by Ahmad Tohari, published by PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama, in Jakarta in 2013. The data in this study are fragments of the novel *Bekisar Merah* by Ahmad Tohari which allegedly contain identity. The research results are as follows; 1) the Lasi figure found in fighting for his identity, 2) found the identity that Lasi was fighting for, namely self-identity and social identity, 3) found three reasons why Lasi struggled for her identity. First, because of her dignity as a woman. Second, because Lasi upheld the teachings of her mother. Third, because of love and loyalty to her husband.

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INTRODUCTION

Research on female characters in the realm of literary works is always interesting. The attractiveness of women throughout the history of human civilization turned out to take place in any situation. The issue of women in fiction, such as novels, is no exception. Ahmad Tohari's works, especially early works, talk about women's issues. *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk*, *Belantik*, and *Bekisar Merah* is incomplete if it does not discuss the problem of fighting for women from various angles. This novel by Ahmad Tohari is different from other novels. The novel *Bekisar Merah* by Ahmad Tohari has its own peculiarities, because it depicts life in the village, and raises a Javanese female figure who is innocent, innocent, who always upholds the noble values of Javanese culture and provides role models, references in every problem faced by female figures in fighting for their identity as a woman from Karangsoga village. Ahmad Tohari managed to reveal all the stories in the novel *Bekisar Merah* with fluent, flowing language.

Previous research that discussed women's problems in the framework of fighting for their identity as humans. Identity in the industrial era 4.0 is a crucial and interesting issue to discuss and even research. Identity in a nation is a necessity that is always fought for in order to maintain not only a sense of togetherness but more than that, such as nationalism.

The novel *Bekisar Merah*, written by Ahmad Tohari, was published in the second edition in March 2013, published by PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama with a thickness of 360 pages. Chosen as a study in this research, because it is a reflection of what is in society. The emergence of a literary work can be inspired by a social reality that always has a deep meaning that Ahmad Tohari wanted to express.

Jabrohim emphasized the linkage of literature to society in his article entitled *Sociology of Literature: Some Introductory Concepts*, in his book of literary research methodology (2003). Literature is not just something that stands alone, but something that

is closely tied to the situation and environmental conditions in which the work was born. It is a necessity that all poets, writers or artists generally always live in a certain time and space. Certain space and time have a real form in a society or a social situation that coexist also contains various kinds of life problems. In society, many elements interact, associate with one another. (Jabrohim, 2003).

In line with Jabrohim, Faruk (2017) argues that literary works are cultural reflections because literary works are created by authors who are members of society. Literary works created by the author cannot be separated from the culture reflected in them because the author himself is a member of society who is bound by a certain social status and cultural environment. Literary work, in this case the novel is raised with a socio-cultural background which is expressed by the appearance of the characters through the social system, customs, arts and culture that is reflected in a literary work.

A literary work is an author's creative process towards the social life of the author. A literary work can be said to be good if the literary work can reflect the times and situations and conditions that prevail in society. Sumardjo and Saini K. M. (1991), said that good literary works also usually have eternal characteristics by containing essential truths that have always existed as long as humans have existed.

The research discussion focused on the Lasi character, namely the fictional character written by Ahmad Tohari in the novel *Bekisar Merah* (hereinafter abbreviated as BM) who fights for his identity, because he is immersed in a culture he does not understand. Therefore, this research is important to complement previous research. By understanding the struggle for the identity of the character Lasi, it is hoped that he will be able to reveal the author's view of the world of women around him.

The objectives to be achieved in this research are the first, to analyze the efforts of the Lasi character in fighting for self-identity, second, to analyze the Lasi character in fighting for social identity, the three reasons why it is fought for by the Lasi figure. The benefit of this

research is that theoretically, this research contributes to providing knowledge to readers to gain a comprehensive understanding of the female character Lasi in Ahmad Tohari's novel *Bekisar Merah*. Through this understanding, it is hoped that the author's world view of Javanese women is idealized by the author. Thus, the author's worldview and style may be used as a compilation of the history of modern Indonesian literature in the 80s. In practical terms, this research can be used as an academic reference in the field of case literature. Besides that, it can also be used as a source of inspiration for further research developments in different perspectives. In addition, the results of this study are expected to be a source of information for future literary researchers.

This study is relevant to research conducted by Syukens (2011), which examines an article entitled *The Gotte Koya IDP Mystery: Tribal Identity and the IDP – Migrant Continuum in the Chhattisgarh – Andhra Pradesh Borderland (India)*. In this article, describe identities on the border between two states in central India, Chhattisgarh and Andhra Pradesh. Habbodin (2012), examines an article entitled *Strengthening Identity Politics in the Local Realm*. This research describes the politics of identity that occurred in Riau, Central Kalimantan, West Kalimantan and Irian Jaya. The focus of the study in this article shows the strength of the issues used by political actors when negotiating with other political entities. Moon (2013), examines an article entitled *Hybrid Heroes in Novel Dime West: Analysis of Women's Gender, Clothing, and Identity in the Deadwoock dick series*. The purpose of this study is to describe a narrative inquiry to explore attitudes, dress including cross-dressing and androgynous dresses used in the *Deadwood Dick* series, to construct meaning about gender and identity. Pranowo (2013), about an article entitled *Women's Identity in Patriarchal Culture: A Study of Existentialist Feminism Nawal El Sa'adawi in the Novel Perempuan Di Titik Nol*. The article in this study describes women in a patriarchal culture who have been treated unfairly. Fanani (2017), examines an

article entitled *Priyayi's Identity and Social Mobility in the Novel Para Priyayi by Umar Kayam*. Umar Kayam in *Para Priyayi* provides a clear picture of the life of a certain Javanese aristocrat called priyayi from the last period from the Colonial Era to Independence. Setyowati and Supriyanto, researched an article entitled *The Self-Actualization Process of the Main Character in the Padang Bulan Novel Dwilogi and Cinta Dalam Gelas*. An ordinary individual who struggles to make his dreams come true through hard struggle is presented. (2017), Fitriana (2017), examined an article entitled *Cultural Identity in Sekar Ayu Asmara's Fourth Twin Novel: Postmodernism Studies*. This article attempts to investigate cultural identity in Sekar Ayu Asmara's novel *Kembar Ke Empat* by revealing the characteristics of postmodernism. Fanani (2017) examines an article entitled *Priyayi's Identity and Social Mobility in the Novel Para Priyayi by Umar Kayam*. Novels with Javanese cultural settings are a phenomenon in Indonesian literary works. Umar Kayam in *Para Priyayi* provides a clear picture of the life of a certain Javanese aristocrat called priyayi from the last colonial period to the Era of Independence. Setiawan (2018) examined an article entitled *The Javanese Woman's View of Life in Ahmad Tohari's Novel Bekisar Merah*.

This study describes the view of life of Javanese women in the novel *Bekisar Merah* by Ahmad Tohari. Khristiyanti and Supriyanto (2018) which examines an article entitled *Nature Environment Representation in Raudal Tanjung Banua Poetries: Exocriticism Review*. Raudal Tanjung Banua poems contains many natural environmental problems. Widyastuti (2019), examines an article entitled *Discourse of Narrative Behavior and Inter-Ethnic Relations: Contestation of Ethnic Identities*. This study examines how attitudes, behavior, and identities can be analyzed through language or discourse. Nayak (2020), examines an article entitled *Colonial World of Postcolonial Historians: Reification, Theoreticism, and the Neoliberal Reinvention of Tribal Identity in India*. This article develops a critical analysis of the colonial world from postcolonial historians whose work

inadvertently contributed to the process of reconstructing the colonial construction of tribal identity in neoliberal India.

METHOD

This research uses a theoretical approach and a methodological approach. The theoretical approach in this research is the sociology of literature approach. This research is a qualitative research. The data source of this research is the text of the second printed novel *Bekisar Merah* by Ahmad Tohari in March 2013.

The data in this study are in the form of fragments of the novel *Bekisar Merah* by Ahmad Tohari which allegedly contain self-identity and social identity. Research data were obtained through heuristic reading techniques (Supriyanto, 2014). After the data was collected, they were classified based on the problems studied, namely (1) the researcher read the novel *Bekisar Merah* by Ahmad Tohari intensively, (2) looked for data in the form of words, sentences or paragraphs in the text of the novel *Bekisar Merah* by Ahmad Tohari. (3) analyzing data showing self-identity and social identity in the novel *Bekisar Merah* by Ahmad Tohari (4) writing data containing self-identity and social identity in the novel *Bekisar Merah* by Ahmad Tohari, (5) concluding the conclusions of the overall analysis that has been done. This is to answer all the formulations of the problem in this study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Efforts Of Lasi Character in Fighting for Identity

Lasi's efforts to fight for her identity are divided into two, namely self-identity using Erikson's theory and social identity using Tajfel's theory. This can be seen in the following analysis.

1) Self-Identity

Erikson (1989) explains that what is meant by self-identity is an identity that is related to the quality (existence) of the subject,

which means that the subject has a unique personal style. Therefore, self-identity means maintaining (a style) of one's own individuality. This can be illustrated in the following analysis.

The Lasi character has a distinctive personal style. Lasi is still a simple village girl, who is very innocent, whose thoughts, hearts and souls of the people of Karangsoaga are still attached to her. Even though she is in a big city and cultural isolation, Lasi has managed to fight for her dignity as a woman, and always upholds the teachings mother, and her appetite has not changed, because Lasi prefers to eat wong ndeso food, which is to eat with chili paste and salted fish. instead of eating takoyaki and so on. This can be illustrated in the following analysis.

“Darsa dapat melihat punggung istrinya yang terbuka. Juga tengkuknya. Ada daya tarik aneh pada kontras warna rambut yang pekat dengan kulit tengkuk Lasi yang putih, lebih putih dari tengkuk perempuan manapun yang dilihat oleh Darsa (BM : 9).”

“Penyadap itu tak habis merasa beruntung punya istri dengan kulit sangat putih dan memberi keindahan khas terutama pada bagian berbatasan dengan rambut seperti tengkuk pipi. Apalagi bila Lasi tertawa. Ada lekuk yang sangat bagus di pipi kirinya (BM : 9).”

“Darsa selalu berdebar bila menatap bola mata istrinya yang hitam pekat. Seperti kulitnya, mata Lasi juga khas berkelopak tebal, tanpa garis lipatan. Orang sekampung mengatakan mata Lasi Kaput, alisnya kuat dan agak naik pada ujungnya. Seperti Cina (BM :11).”

Lasi has a distinctive personal style. She has white skin, dark hair color, white nape, whiter than any girl's neck. There is also a very nice curve on her left cheek that brings Lasi's distinctive beauty. Therefore, self-identity means maintaining (a style) of one's own individuality.

“Lasi ingin menerangkan bahwa dirinya adalah wanita somahan yang punya harga diri dan tidak ingin merebut lekaki manapun. Dirinya sekedar menumpang truk untuk lari dan kebetulan pardi yang menjadi sopir (BM : 64).”

“Bu, saya tak terbiasa memakai baju seperti itu, saya biasa memakai kain kebaya. Tetapi dalam kamarnya yang sempit Lasi berdiri termangu. Baju baru yang hendak dipakainya masih terlipat ditangan (BM : 105).”

Tiba-tiba pintu terbuka. Bu Koneng masuk. Dan heran ketika mendapati Lasi berdiri beku dan belum berganti pakaian (BM : 106).”

It can be seen that in the big city of Jakarta, Lasi continues to fight for her identity, namely fighting for her dignity as a woman in the village of Karangsoga. It was evident that Lasi wanted to explain that she had self-respect, not wanting to snatch any man. And still comfortable wearing the kebaya cloth with the hair in a bun, when Lanting ordered her to change clothes, Lasi was still standing frozen and had not taken turns.

“Dari balik kain kebaya yang usang muncul tubuh Lasi yang membuatnya iri. Kemudaannya memancar. Sangat mengesankan. Kulitnya yang putih makin putih setelah punggung Lasi sejena terbuka. Rambutnya Lasi tergapap, tetapi menurut. Bu Koneng menggelengkan kepala kagum ketika melihat terlihat makin pekat karena tersaing oleh warna kulit yang begitu terang (BM :106).”

“Rasa-rasanya rok ini terlalu pendek, kata Lasi terbata dan salah tingkah. Ah... siapa bilang. Lagi pula betismu bagus tak perlu ditutup - tutupi. Bu Lanting tersenyum matanya menyapu sekujur tubuh Lasi. Sambil menyuruh Lasi duduk, Bu Lanting malah Bangkit. Kemudian meminta sisir kepada bu Koneng. Perempuan tambun itu kemudian berdiri dibelakang Lasi. Tangannya bergerak mengurai rambut Lasi yang tersanggul lalu menyisirnya pelan-pelan. Lasi kikuk tetapi senang karena merasa diakrabi demikian rupa, bahkan dimanjakan (BM : 106).”

Lasi received the clothes given by Mrs. Lanting, but Lasi felt stuttered and uncomfortable, when she was asked by Mrs. Lanting to wear these sexy clothes. Lasi is not used to wearing the clothes, because during her days in Karangsoga she wears a kebaya cloth.

“Nah benar. Kamu memang cantik. Kamu akan dibilang orang mirip Haruko. Kata bu Lanting sambil menoleh kepada si kacamata. Haruko Wanibuchi jawab si kacamata. Ya betul Haruko Wanibuchi. Hanya sayang gigimu tak gingsul. Nah kalau sudah cantik demikian, kamu masih mau tinggal di warung ini atau mau ikut aku ? (BM : 108).”

“masih sulit percaya bahwa perempuan cantik dengan kimono merah itu adalah Lasi (BM :125).”

“Dalam rias dan busana seperti itu Lasi bahkan membuat jantung Kanjat bekisar-kisar. Lekuk pipi Lasi yang sejak dulu sangat manis dimata Kanjat terkesan bertambah indah. Lasi seperti kayu dipoles pernis, masih tampak pola garis seratnya, tetapi terlihat jauh lebih terawat dan indah. Kanjat menelan ludah (BM : 125). “

Lasi was polished like a Japanese movie star, Haruko Wanibuchi, and was dressed in a red kimono. Kanjat was amazed to see Lasi's changes since Lasi lived and lived in the big city of Jakarta. Lasi's beauty is very distinctive, and Lasi looks much more groomed and beautiful.

“Pak ...eh mas saya ingin makan nasi dengan sambal terasi dan lalapan.... (BM : 158).”

“Di sebuah rumah makan khas Sunda, Lasi menemukan hidangan yang sudah sekian lama amat dirindukannya. Seluruh sistem pencernaannya yang sudah terbiasa dengan makanan sederhana menjadikan Lasi begitu menikmati makan malamnya. Pedasnya sambal terasi dan kuatnya rangsangan garam ikan asin membangkitkan selera aslinya sehingga Lasi menghabiskan sepiring nasi penuh. Malah kalau bukan malu kepada Handharbeni, Lasi ingin minta tambah....(BM : 158).”

Living in the big city of Jakarta for almost two years, Lasi's appetite for food and favorite foods has never changed. Lasi prefers to eat with chili paste and salted fish, which greatly affects Lasi's appetite. Lasi really enjoyed the food. If you eat anything other than wong ndeso food, Lasi's tongue doesn't seem to accept the food.

2) Social Identity

Tajfel (Haslam, 2001) defines the notion of social identity as part of an individual's knowledge of his membership in a group or social group accompanied by the importance of values and emotions as group members. This can be illustrated in the following analysis.

The Lasi figure feels that he is still part of the Karangsoaga community. Lasi seems to have responsibilities in her homeland. The Lasi character has a very high sense of empathy, and this Lasi can feel, do something, and understand what the sap tappers in the village of Karangsoaga feel. The suffering of the sap tappers, who could no longer tap sap, because all their coconut trees were torn down due to the electricity that will enter their village. To reduce the suffering of the sap tappers, Lasi is willing to provide financial assistance to Kanjat for his research which aims to ease the burden on the sap tappers in his homeland, Karangsoaga village, including building Suro Eyang Mus, and also providing financial assistance to his ex-husband Darsa for the purpose of renting coconut trees. This can be illustrated in the following analysis.

"Aku bisa mengira-ngira, Mukri memintamu membiayamu pramugaran surau kita itu. Iya kan ? ya jawab Lasi. Kamu mau ? ya, mau. kamu ada cukup uang? Cukup, yang.. (BM : 199)"

"Kalau begitu bila saya membeli pengeras suara untuk surau kita, Eyang Mus dimana - mana orang memasang pengeras suara untuk masjid dan surau mereka (BM : 200)."

"Eyang Mus bilang kamu punya rencana yang perlu biaya. Jat aku mungkin bisa membantumu (BM : 206)"

"Berikan uang ini kepada Kang Darsa. Uang itu cukup makan kalian selama setahun bila kalian gunakan untuk menyewa pohon kelapa (BM : 219).

"Maka Karangsoaga pun akan menerima pengaduan dan keluhan Lasi, serta menyembuhkan kegelisahan yang dibawanya dari Jakarta. Di tanah ini Lasi berharap akan terhibur oleh usapan halus tangan mbok Wiyarji, emaknya. Atau eyang Mus, yang sekedar sapaannya pun cukup melegakan jiwa (BM : 290)."

As a living creature that cannot live alone, and because Lasi thinks that Lasi is still part of the Karangsoaga people. The social responsibility embedded in Lasi made Lasi moved to help build Eyang Mus' mosque, and help finance Kanjat for his research for the welfare of the sap tappers in Karangsoaga Lasi. All of this was done by Lasi without expecting anything in return, and Lasi only carried out her responsibilities as part of the Karangsoaga community.

3) The reason why this was fought for by Lasi.

Lasi's character in the novel entitled *Bekisar Merah* by Ahmad Tohari fights for: (1) her dignity as a woman, (2) upholding the teachings of her mother, (3) love and loyalty to her husband. The following will describe some of the reasons these things were fought.

Her dignity as a woman

"Mas Pardi, "kata Lasi tiba - tiba." Bumi langit jadi saksi bahwa aku pergi atas kemauanku sendiri. Ayolah. Atau apabila kalian keberatan aku akan turun, dan duduk di depan roda. Bagaimana ? (BM : 61)."

"Lasi memang menangis. Kini ia mulai sadar akan apa yang sedang dilakukannya, lari meninggalkan Karangsoaga, bumi yang melahirkan dan ditinggalinya selama dua puluh empat tahun usianya Lari dari rumah, rumah lahir, rumah batin tempat dirinya hadir, punya peran, dan punya makna. Lari meninggalkan tungku dan kawah pengolah nira dan wangi - wangi tengguli mendidih. Dan semuanya berarti lari dalam ketidakpastian , menuju dunia baru yang harus diraba - raba, dunia yang belum dikenal atau mengenalnya (BM : 61)."

"Lasi kadang merasa ragu dan takut. Namun rasa sakit karena perbuatan Darsa dan lebih sakit karena merasa dirinya tidak lagi berharga untuk seorang suami, membuat tekadnya lebih pekat. Lari dan mbalelo adalah salah satu cara untuk melampiaskan perlawanan sekaligus membela keberadaannya. (BM 62)."

"Darsa ingin memahami apa yang benar - benar telah dilakukannya dan menyebabkan Lasi minggat dan seisi kampung gejer. (BM : 77)."

His mother's teachings

"Lasi ragu karena mendadak teringat emak pernah mengatakan, tak ada pemberian yang tak menuntut imbalan. Ya. Lasi masih ingat betul emaknya beberapa kali menekankan, tak ada pemberian yang tak menuntut imbalan. Bahkan emak waktu itu bilang, dia sendiri merasa berhak menuntut imbalan kepatuhan Lasi karena dia telah melahirkan dan menyusui (BM :105)."

"Lasi bertambah ragu. Dia percaya apa yang emak bilang. Tetapi di tangannya kini ada baju pemberian bu Lanting yang baru dikenalnya. Untuk kebaikan bu Koneng yang telah memberinya tempat berteduh Lasi sudah memberikan tenaga sebagai imbalan (BM : 106)."

"terasa ada kepuasan karena dendam yang terbayar. Namun seiring itu pula Lasi teringat kata - kata yang pernah diucapkan emaknya. Aja dumeh, jangan suka merasa diri berlebih (BM : 196)."

"Ah... pasti tidak. Orang harus bekerja, itulah piwulang emaknya, mbok Wiyarji, yang telah mewarnai keutuhan dirinya. Atau bukan hanya piwulang, karena bekerja sudah menjadi kebutuhan sekaligus bagian hidupnya sejak anak - anak (BM : 243)."

"Lasi ragu karena mendadak teringat emak pernah mengatakan, tak ada pemberian yang tak menuntut imbalan. Ya. Lasi masih ingat betul emaknya beberapa kali menekankan, tak ada pemberian yang tak menuntut imbalan. Bahkan emak waktu itu bilang, dia sendiri merasa berhak menuntut imbalan kepatuhan Lasi karena dia telah melahirkan dan menyusui (BM :105).

Love

"Lalu pada pertemuan keesokan harinya, Lasi mula-mula tak mudah omong. Mula-mula Lasi lebih sering menatap Kanjat dengan perasaan tak menentu. Ada harap, ada segan, dan malu. Ketenangan yang diperlihatkan Kanjat malah membuat Lasi merasa kecil. Anehnya, dada Lasi selalu berdebar bila mata Kanjat menyambutnya. Telapak tangannya berkeringat (BM : 205)."

Loyalty to Husband

"Tetapi, Bu, saya kan tidak bisa. Saya tidak bisa. Saya masih istri pak Handharbeni. Jadi mana bisa... (BM: 275).

CONCLUSION

The Lasi character in the novel *Bekisar Merah* by Ahmad Tohari fights for self-identity and social identity. The reasons for the Lasi character to fight for her identity, include dignity as a woman, uphold the teachings of her mother, love and loyalty to her husband. All of this was done so that Lasi could live happily with her partner, make her role as a wife clear, and live comfortably.

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