

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains the nature of the study: background of the research, reasons for choosing the topic, scopes of the study, research questions, aims of the research, research method, and clarification of terms.

### 1.1 Background

For centuries, the issue on women has invited tide of discussions in Indonesia. The discussions mostly talk about the inequality of role and position of women compared to men in Indonesian society. Dzuhayatin (year unknown) in her paper entitled *Islam, Patriarcy, and the State of Indonesia* states that women are commonly confined in private sphere and assigned to do domestic roles, raise children, and provide comfort for the husband at home. Men are primarily engaged in public sectors because they are responsible in making a living. This job division leads women to have a less chance compared to men in education, social, economic, and other fields. The less chance in education happens because there is an assumption that women will ultimately go to kitchen after they get married, no matter how high their education level is.

Thus, it can be said that being a good housewife is considered as the main role of women. Their main position likely makes them have a less chance in another field of life and put them as subordinates at once. According to Mansour (year unknown),

the subordination over women arises from the values of patriarchal society (male-dominated society) which put women as inferiors and second sexes to men. Besides, the misconception of religion's doctrine claim that women are Adam's rib also compounds the subordination over them.

Such conditions above are often met in Javanese society. Conventionally, Javanese women have main jobs, namely, primping, child bearing, and cooking, which are known as "3-M" (*Macak - Manak - Masak*) (Chaidir, 1999). Therefore, it has been considered as the nature of Javanese women to stay at home, care the household, give birth, raise the children, and please the husband.

The stereotype of women's roles, however, is actually a product of social constructs (Wilson, 1975 in Parwieningrum, 2001). The constructs are inherited from one generation to the next both culturally and religiously. These are not only issued orally in their daily life but also documented in literary works, such as, novels, poems, short stories, and films.

Among those literary works, novel is the most popular genre which "constitutes the reservoir of ordinary human experience" (Alwasilah, 2004: 33). It is believed that it can give an illustration and may reinforce the oppression of real-life women, since it is an imitation of real life, and it is vivid in portraying the real life (<http://www.glbtq.com>).

Based on Sardjono's study (1992) to nine novels written by Javanese authors, she points out that Javanese women are often portrayed as subordinates who should always please the husband. They should be submissive, loyal, obedient, patient, and

should always repress negative emotion as a sign of refinement. Sardjono (1992) also argues that Javanese women's characteristics are portrayed in those novels reflect the basic concept of Javanese culture on ideal characteristics of Javanese women.

Considering some cases mentioned above, the writer is invited to conduct a research on how Javanese women are portrayed in the novel of Pramoedyana Ananta Toer, *Bumi Manusia*. The investigation will focus on what characteristics of Javanese women portrayed in the novel. Besides, this study will find out whether the main woman character, Nyai Ontosoroh, has different characteristics from typical Javanese women portrayed in the novel and investigate the reasons why they are different.

## **1.2 Reasons for Choosing the Topic**

In the present study, Marxist feminism is adopted as the theory to reveal the characteristics of Javanese women in Pramoedyana Ananta Toer's *Bumi Manusia*. The reason for choosing this theory is that Marxist feminism is less to be used by researchers in analyzing the novel. Thus, the result of this study is expected to be able to provide recent information about women's characteristics in Pramoedyana Ananta Toer's *Bumi Manusia*.

The theory is considered to be relevant to the present study since it focuses on the idea of division of labor and class, which are existed in patriarchal Javanese society as discussed in the background of this study. Engels (1972, in Tong 1998)—who has valuable contribution to Marxist feminism—states that to be truly liberated

from men's oppression, women should be economically independent by working outside the household. Hence, Marxist feminists believe that the contribution in economic household may give women a better position in the family. Besides, women's job can influence women's way of thinking and develop women's characteristics.

### **1.3 Scopes of the Study**

In this research, the analysis will focus on characteristics of Javanese women portrayed in *Bumi Manusia*, a novel written by Pramoedya Ananta Toer.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

Since the investigation will mainly focus on the characteristics of Javanese women in Pramoedya Ananta Toer's *Bumi Manusia*, the following questions will be a guideline to conduct a research:

1. What characteristics of typical Javanese women are portrayed in the novel?
2. What characteristics of Nyai Ontosoroh as the main Javanese woman character are portrayed in the novel?
3. Are there any differences between Nyai Ontosoroh's and typical Javanese women's characteristics portrayed in the novel? If any, why?

## 1.5 Aims of the Study

Regarding to research questions above, the specific aims of the research are drawn in the following:

1. To identify the characteristics of typical Javanese women portrayed in the novel.
2. To identify Nyai Ontosoroh's characteristics as the main Javanese woman character portrayed in the novel.
3. To find out whether there are differences between Nyai Ontosoroh's and typical Javanese women's characteristics and to analyze why they are different.

## 1.6 Research Method

In the present study, the writer employs the qualitative descriptive method to achieve the aims of the research. This method is appropriate because it can describe existing phenomena related to women's characteristics evidenced in Pramoedya's *Bumi Manusia*. A social phenomenon, however, is much better to be presented in the form of narrative containing a thick description and involves interpretations of the whole data (Musthafa as cited in Alwasilah, 2003).

As the source of data is Pramoedya's *Bumi Manusia*, the writer uses textual analysis. The writer employs close reading strategies, in which the novel is read thoroughly and carefully to gain an in-depth understanding of the text. Afterwards, the novel is investigated by noting down relevant textual evidence to answer the

proposed research questions. Then, the data is analyzed and investigated by applying the relevant theories presented in chapter two.

### **1.7 Clarification of Terms**

**Marxist Feminism** is “a sub-type of feminist theory which focuses on the dismantling of capitalism as a way to liberate women.” Marxist feminists believe that capitalism is the root of women’s oppression (<http://en.wikipedia.org>).

**Patriarchy** (from Greek: *pater* means father and *arche* means rule) is a term used “to define the sociological condition where fathers have supreme authority within families.” (<http://en.wikipedia.org>)

### **1.8 Organization of the Paper**

The research will be presented into five chapters as a follow:

#### **Chapter I: Introduction**

This chapter comprises background of the study, reasons for choosing the topic, scope of the study, research questions, aims of the study, research method, and the organization of the paper.

#### **Chapter II: Theoretical Foundations**

This chapter presents theoretical foundations relating to the research analysis.

#### **Chapter III: Research Methodology**

This chapter comprises the methodology used to conduct the research.

#### **Chapter IV: Findings and Discussions**

This chapter deals with the result of the research which consists of findings (data presentation and the description of characters in the novel), and then followed by the discussions of the data.

#### **Chapter V: Conclusions and Suggestions**

This last chapter is about what the writer could conclude from the result of the research. The writer also put some suggestions for conducting a further research.

