

## **THE REPRESENTATION OF MALAY WOMAN AS PORTRAYED IN H. SUHAIMI'S *CIK PUAN***

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### **ABSTRACT**

Malay society, a woman is placed to accept her weak or lower position than man's. In some works and media, this representation is commonly found. Anyway, there are also found some works in Malay society which dismantle that stable universal representation. Malay woman is represented as smart, brave and strong opinion. On the surface, these representations label Malay woman with positive stereotypes, but clearly this text represents Malay woman negatively; Malay woman is represented as rude, sly and ambitious woman. So, as a whole, Malay woman is represented negatively to describe that Malay woman who is in high position needs to be controlled because the woman in high position and the power tend to misuse the power and position.

**Keywords:** Representation<sup>1</sup>; Potrayed<sup>2</sup>; Cik Puan<sup>3</sup>; H. Suhaimi<sup>4</sup>

### **INTRODUCTION**

A woman has her role, duty, responsibilities and position in certain society and culture. Different society and culture put the woman is treated by her society. One of common treatments is by presenting or representing woman with certain image for certain aim. In most cases, the representation of a woman is done to socialize woman's position and her relation with man. In this case, there are found many woman representations which put woman lower than man in which woman is portrayed as more inferior than man. These representation create disadvantageous conditions for woman.

'these representations of woman are created and socialized through various media with various versions in order the society agrees and believes that the representations describe the truth about woman. In the same time,. They are used to convince woman to accept the created representations.

A representation creates meaning. It signifies something. For that reason, a representation has important and big role in creating meaning and certain signification. Similarly, a woman is represented with certain representation for certain purpose. In various representations of woman, most of them represent woman with less positive representations because the power in the man's hand. By so, less positive representations of woman put man in advantageous position. Woman's representations portray woman with certain labels and stereotype which put woman in weak position. .

In Malay society, there are found some representations in various media as efforts to make woman accept her role as a man's spouse, a Malay woman is conditioned to live up to that role. Thus, in Malay society, a woman is placed to accept her weak or lower position than man's. In some works and media, this representation is commonly found.

Anyway, there are also found some works in Malay society which dismantle that stable universal representation.

Related to the idea discussed above, this writing highlights the representation of Malay woman as reflected in a literary work entitled *Cik Puan* written by Suhaimi.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **A. Representation**

Talking about representation will lead to talk about two inseparable points: representative (the person, or the group who represents someone or something) and the represented (the person or group who is represented by other). The basic concept of representation urges that “representation may be defined mostly as a relation between two persons, the representative and the represented or constituent, with the representative holding the authority to perform various actions that incorporate the agreement of the represented.” (Gracia, p. 461). Thus, representative has the authority to present, depict or portray the represented from his/her own perception.

Furthermore, Stuart Hall defines representation as signifying meaning through language. He, then, urges that representation is “the production of meaning of concepts in our minds through language.” (Hall, 16-17)

In order the production of meaning in representation through language can work well, Hall offers three approaches: (1) Reflective approach which is also called mimetic approach which assumes that meaning is found in objects, humans, ideas or events in real world and language functions as reflection which reflects the real existed meaning. (2) Intentional approach stresses on the author or speaker who defines the meaning. (3) Constructionist approach believes that the social doers who use the system or concept and culture are the ones who construct the meaning. This approach presents complex relation among the objects, concept and language. Different from semiotic approach which defines representation by stressing on how words function as sign in a language, meanwhile in culture, meaning depends on wider elements in the whole discourses, through various variant of texts which place representation as source of “the production of social knowledge,” which relates with various social practices and questioning the power. Constructionist approach is parallel with the concept of representation urged by Foucault who argues that representation is “the production of knowledge through discourse.” In this case, Foucault defines discourse as “group of statements which provide a language for talking about – a way of representing the language about- a particular topic at a particular historical language.” Furthermore, Foucault stresses on the importance of discourse in signifying meaning in which nothing exists out of discourse, because nothing is meaningful out of discourse. . Foucault does not deny the existence of physical objects, anyway, those objects are meaningful in discourses. By so, representation is a process in which the cultural doer uses language to signify something. Objects, things, humans do not mean in themselves, the society in the culture which signify them.

Thus, constructionist’s statement supports Foucault’s idea which argues that representation is the signifying meaning by involving the relation of three elements; (1) objects, humans, events, experience, (2) concept in the mind and (3) sign, structured in language which communicate the concepts.

Influenced by Foucault, the concept of representation is also expressed by Edward. W. Said in his book “*Órientalism: Western Conception of the Orient.*” In this book, Said argues how the West assumes that the East can not represent itself, so it’s the West’s

duty to represent the East. The representation done by the West places the East as *the other* as the West's effort to control the east and to make the East lives up to the western created representation. By placing the East as the other, to be controlled, the West strengthens its superiority as the controller and in the same time strengthens the East's inferior position. In his argument, Said states that, "European culture gained its strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self." (Said: 3)

In the same time, representation also creates image or stereotype attached to the represented as an effort to label. This labeling aims to weaken the *represented* and strengthen the representative. In his writing, Edward Said emphasizes that, "Orientalism can also express the strength of the West and the Orient's weakness – as seen by the West." (Said: 45). From what Said has urged, it is seen that the West creates the stereotypes of the east and it also creates its own stereotypes, "The Orient is irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike, "different," thus the European is rational, virtuous, mature, "normal." (Said: 40) This stereotypes creates the East's identity as the result of the West's manipulation.

By knowing how big the role of creating stereotypes, a representation can be used as a tool to discredit someone or a group. That's why representation is an important analysis because an image can be constructed and reconstructed through other representation.

### **B. Ideology**

When we discuss about representation, we can not avoid talking about ideology because a text which represents something may never without consequences (Storey: 5). It happens because "texts are said to take sides, consciously or unconsciously." That's why "all texts are ultimately political." So, it can be guaranteed that there is always an ideology which is hidden in a text because a text "a site on which ideological struggles are acted out." (Barry: 195)

There are some definitions of ideology mentioned by Storey. Firstly, ideology is defined as systematic ideas believed by a group of people for certain purpose. Secondly, ideology is masking, distortion, concealment in which this ideology creates false consciousness because this ideology hides the reality. As the result, the dominant groups do not see themselves as groups who dominate or oppress other and in the same time, the minority, subordinate groups do not realize to be dominated and oppressed because of those hidden reality. Thirdly, ideology is meant as ideological forms which shows how texts like (television, pop songs, novel, film, etc) present certain image in viewing the world. Fourthly, ideology is not meant as ideas, instead as everyday practice. (material practice). This definition stresses on everyday behaviors which can be caught through senses. This definition highlights certain habits and rituals which are powerful and binding society in social institution. Fifthly, the definition of ideology is presented by Roland Barthes which describes that ideology works in creating connotation. This connotation is creating secondary meaning through texts or practices produced by people. This connotation is what Barthes called "myth."

Through representation presented in a text, an ideology works unconsciously because ideology is hidden and integrated in a text so that it is not easy to identify. Ideology operates in disguised which is supported and agreed by the dominated ones and Antonio Gramsci calls this hegemony. This domination which works in disguised creates mask as false consciousness behind the representation which is presented in a text as the propaganda as media.

### C. Feminism

Feminism derives from Latin word *femina* which means “having quality of female”( Tuttle: 105 ) this term, is then, used for equal right movement to fight for women right. Feminism was inspired from the perception that there was something wrong in the way how the society treated women. That’s why feminism analyzes the reason and dimension which caused oppression towards women, in the same time to get freedom for women. For some feminists, freedom means “social equality with men.” (Tuttle: 105).

Feminists movement aims to increase women status parallel with men. One of the ways to be parallel is by freeing women from domestic bound. The earlier feminists faced many obstacles in because at that time, the society was tied with strong tradition and values which obligate women to keep purity, to be passive and submissive and happy to take care of the family.

Besides, feminist movement was continued in education, economy, politic which they finally succeeded in 1893.

The development was then signed by the appearance of some social and political organizations such as ASU ( Amalgated Shearers’ Union),which aimed to create harmonious relation between employers and employees , WCTU ( Women’s Christian Temperance Union) which fought the women exploitation. . WCTU, then, collaborated with *suffragists* which fought with women issues, legal assistance, access for employment and sexual problem.

Further development was seen when women had the right to ask for divorce, participated in war, involved in governmental institution and finally the existence of lesbian group which started to be popular in 1992.(Grimshaw: 151-279)

In 1970, an Australian feminist activist, , Germaine Greer published a book entitled *The Female Eunuch* which signed the beginning of second wave feminism .this book emphasized on sexuality and responsibility of every woman individually to refuse social condition constructed by men through patriarchal institution such as marriage, family. For more detail, this book suggested women to find their own sexuality so that they were able to refuse domination and oppression and to live with the way they chose.

The movement of second wave feminism gave deep impact in the whole life. One of the impacts is the appearance of feminist literary criticism. This critic questions texts to revise. This critic aims to dig, analyze and appreciate works written by women writers in the past besides to evaluate and reevaluate works written by men from women perspective and in the same time to look for sexist texts.

Moreover, feminist movement triggers the appearance of a slogan “ personal is political” which views the dichotomy which separates public and domestic spheres as disadvantageous for women. By this dichotomy issues ( marriage/family) which are considered as private or personal and should be solved personal, is highlighted. Public sphere is identical with men with working world, politic, economy , while women are identical with domestic world are placed at home. By placing women in domestic world, women are not able to empower themselves and it may also lead to domestic violence. Here, it implies power relation known as sexual politic which shows n “power relation between sexes.” ( Tuttle: 296). This is stated by Kate Millet when she wrote *Sexual Politic* where she argues that “ when one group rules another, the relationship between the two is political.”( Tuttle: 196).

## METHOD

### A. Kind of Research

This writing describes woman representation reflected in a literary work entitled *Cik Puan*. Thus, this writing is a library research in which the data collected are taken from books, articles and other materials from library.

### B. Source of Data

The source of the data is the chosen literary work entitled *Puan* written by Haji Suhaimi. Thus, the focus of this writing is the representation of woman. So, the main data are those dealing with ideas which describe how woman is represented in that literary work.

### C. Data Analyzing Technique

This writing is a descriptive analysis which aims to describe the existed phenomena. That is the representation of Malay woman reflected in *Cik Puan*. Then, in concluding the result, the conclusion is drawn inductively in which the specific descriptions lead to general description about the representation of Malay woman.

## DISCUSSION

### A. Cik Puan

Cik Puan talks about a woman named Cik Puan who is the wife of the Sultan of Siak, who is brave and smart. As the wife of Sultan, she feels she has power to do what she wants. Her position as the wife of Sultan does not make her satisfied with the decision made by her husband. She feels her husband is too weak so she argues her husband and expresses her disagreement with his decision which she thinks is too considerate.

When the troop from Siak Kingdom was in battle facing the troop from Johor Kingdom. the troop from Siak lost in the battle. Cik Puan blamed the Sultan for his wrong decision which caused the defeat. She analyzed and found out that the Sultan gave time and opportunity to Johor troop to prepare the strength because the Sultan didn't want to attack the enemy when the enemy was weak. For the Sultan, attacking the not ready enemy was not commendable. The sultan explained that to Cik Puan when they were discussing about it.

Sultan : Ini kita lakukan karena kita tidak mau kejayaan kita dibantah seseorang, apalagi terhadap seorang nelayan yang mengaku panglima Apuk, panglima Sultan Johor yang perkasa. Kita harus menang dengan cara jantan agar musuh berlutut dan tidak dapat berkata apa-apa. Itulah sebabnya Apuk kanda susah kembali ke Johor menyusuan kekuatan kembali. Cuma nasib lagi sial, ketika itu kita kalah. ( Suhaimi: 125)

Cik Puan could not accept that decision as well as the lost. So she suggested Sultan to initiate the battle again, but the Sultan refused the idea.. Since her ideas was, Cik Puan decided to kick away the people who supported Sultan. She appointed Daeng Peringgi as her assistant to run her plan. Cik Puan ordered Daeng Peringgi to kill Laksamana because Laksamana always supported Sultan's decision. Daeng Peringgi agreed to do so. Cik Puan made Daeng Peringgi's kris powerful by spelling on it.

Cik Puan, then, went to see Laksamana ordered him to collect taxes. Cik Puan lied to him and told him that Sultan instructed it. Laksamana felt wonder because he knew that Sultan would never collect taxes from the people because Sultan didn't want to burden his people. With that consideration, Laksamana disobeyed, but Cik Puan convinced him that Sultan's order should be conducted. If Laksamana disobeyed he was

considered disobedient to the Sultan and would be punished. Laksamana was determined, he was ready when the Sultan's troop would attack him. Anyway, he was doubtful that the Sultan ordered that. So, Laksamana gathered his troop in Bukit Batu, ready to face the attack.

Suddenly Daeng Peringgi came to attack Laksamana. He was so eager to kill him. From what Daeng Peringgi was saying, Laksamana understood that Cik Puan was the evil mastermind. When Laksamana and Daeng Peringgi were attacking each other, suddenly, Mas Ayu, Laksamana's sister came in. Daeng Peringgi, who was crazy about her, stopped the fighting after succeeding hurting i Laksamana. Daeng Peringgi approached Mas Ayu and seduced her. When Daeng Peringgi was off guard, Mas Ayu stabbed him and made him injured. Being injured, he was still able to see Cik Puan and discussed their next plan.

Meanwhile, Laksamana was assisted by the Sultan who came with the troop to Bukit Batu. The assistance from Siak made Cik Puan and Daeng Peringgi in difficult situation. . Laksamana came followed by the Sultan. Just after he was able to overcome Daeng Peringgi, Sultan ordered to arrest Cik Puan when Daeng Peringgi was dying because of his severe injury.

#### B. The Representation of Woman in *Cik Puan*

Cik Puan was eager to attack Johon to avenge the defeat of Siak in the battle. Her desire made her argue the Sultan. She tried to convince the Sultan to agree with her idea to attack Johor. With convincing argument, diplomatically, she expressed strong argument why they had to attack Johor.

Cik Puan : Dialah punca semuanya ini. Sebulan kita telah kembali dari Johor. Tapi semuanya tidak dapat dilupakan. Kita kembali dengan nama yang cemar. Sebagai ayam sabung yang kalah di tengah gelanggang.

Sultan : Kenapa itu yang menjadi fikiran?

Cik Puan : Bagaimana tidak menjadi fikiran. Bukankah kekalahan itu salah kita sediri?

Sultan : Kalah menang itu biasa,

Cik Puan : Tapi bukan untuk kita

Sultan : Mengapa begitu ?

Cik Puan : Karena kita telah memberi waktu kepada musuh, memberi waktu kepada musuh sama dengan memberi pedang untuk memenggal leher kita.

Sultan : Ini kita lakukan karena kita tidak mau kejayaan kita dibantah seseorang, apalagi terhadap seorang nelayan yang mengaku panglima Apuk, panglima Sultan Johor yang perkasa. Kita harus menang dengan cara jantan agar musuh berlutut dan tidak dapat berkata apa-apa. Itulah sebabnya Apuk kanda susah kembali ke Johor menyusuan kekuatan kembali. Cuma nasib lagi sial, ketika itu kita kalah.

Cik Puan : Kekalahan itu sangat memalukan. Kita kalah melawan sisa-sisa laskar yang telah kita tawan. Ayam kalah negeri tergadai.

Sultan : lalu apa yang mesti kita buat?

Cik Puan : Inilah yang dinda runsingkan. Dinda yang berambut panjang ini sangat aib menerima kekalahan itu, apalagi kanda seorang Sultan. Punya daerah sejauh mata memandang. Punya laksamana hndal terbilang. Tentu saja peristiwa itu sangat memalukan kanda.

Sultan : Maksud dinda kita berperang lagi, menumpahkan darah ke bumi lagi? Menambah lagi bilangan janda? Memperbanyak lagi yatim piatu? ( Suhaimi, tt: 124-125)

From what he said, Sultan refused Cik Puan's idea to fight again. But this didn't make n Cik Puan give up, she kept arguing with more and more convincing argument to make Sultan agree with her idea.

Cik Puan : Jika kanda tak serta, biarlah dinda seorang saja. Mungkin Yang Maha Kuasa memberikan perasaan malu itu hanya pada dinda. Aib itu telah begitu merasuk jiwa dinda, kadang kala ia mengaca dari muka, mengejek dari belakang, telah begitu mebakar letup-letup hati ini. kemanakah perginya marwah kanda sebagai raja perkasa? Dinda tak sanggup melihat semua ini. dinda akan memakai celana dan memotong rambut. ( Suhaimi, tt: 126)

Convincingly, Cik Puan explained in detail the reason why they had to attack Johor. By using pride and dignity as the motives of the attack, she argued that Siak Kingdon should uphold their self esteem in order Siak Sri Indrapura would be respected and appreciated by other kingdom.

From the way how she explained her idea, cik Puan is represented as diplomatic and argumentative woman. Diplomatically, she exolained why Siak should attack Johor and argumentatively she convinces the motive behind the attack.

When she realized her idea was not accepted by Sultan, Cik Puan didn't stop. She was a woman with strong establishment, so, Sultan's refusal didn't stop her. If Sultan didn't want to fight, she would fight. She expressed that assertively to Sultan. The Sultan knew she was hardheaded, so he could not do anything to make her forget about the battle. Sultan knew nothing would stop her steps. This scene shows the image of n Cik Puan as a brave woman with her strong opinion.

Cik Puan asked Daeng Peringgito work with her to make her plan work well. She asked him to assist her to realize her plan. The first step they did was to kill Laksamana because Laksamana was the one who always supported Sultan's decision. Cik Puan ordered Daeng Peringgi to kill Laksamana. At first, Daeng Peringgi felt worried because if he did that it would mean that he was against the Sultan. His worry made Cik Puan angry. Rudely, she scolded him

Cik Puan : (marah! Daeng Peringgi didepaknya, lalu jatuh) Bodoh, selama ini apa yang kau dapat. Hanya kasihan beta. Suatu pekerjaan memang minta rintangan. Tapi jika ini berhasil Daeng kujadikan Laksemana.( Suhaimi, tt: 127).

To reach her goal, Cik Puan made use of the name of Sultan to press Laksemana. Convincingly, she told Laksamana that Sultan ordered to collect taxes. This deed represents Cik Puan as sly person who made use of Sultan to get what she wanted.

Cik Puan : ( memandang ke kanan dan ke kiri ) Pertama, Laksemana harus Member upeti. Kedua, besok pagi Kota berjalan agar diantarkan ke Siak Sri Indrapura.

Datuk Laksemana: ( Heran) Upeti ? kenapa beta mesti mengantar upet  
Memberi upeti berarti menambah beban rakyat. Kehidupan rakyat sangat sengsara. Dagangan dengan Melaka telah terputus. Melaka dalam kepungan Portugis. Rakyat tak berani membawa perniagaan ke sana. Cukai Pancung alas yang beta kumpulkan, tiga suku hamba pergunakan untuk pembangunan. Dari mana hamba mesti memberi upeti. Peri Menghantar kota berjalan sedang hamba fikirkan.

Cik Puan : Apa.....? Laksemana menolak titah? Dimanakah taat setia Datuk Kepada Sultan. Bukankah datuk sewaktu dilantik menjadi Laksemana mengucapkan ikrar setia? Apakah laksemana ragu kepada beta? ( Suhaimit: 129-130)

Her slyness is also seen when she made use of t Daeng Peringgi. She didn't she didn't foul her own hands, instead she made use of daeng Peringgi as the scapegoat when the plan failed. That was what happened, it turned out that Sultan found Daeng Peringgi guilty. Before he was punished, he died because of the injury. When Cik Puan found out that her plan failed, she ordered Daeng peringgito leave. Before he left, he was blocked by the troop from Siak which came to Bukit Batu with Sultan. When he was arrested, Daeng Peringgi revealed Cik Puan's slyness and told that Cik Puan was the evil mastermind.

From her deed, Cik Puan is also represented as a smart woman. Her smartness is seen from the way she set the strategy to run her idea. Firstly, she used Sultan to create negative image of Laksemana. In the same time, she ordred Daeng Peringgi to kill Laksemana. This strategy was well thought. If Daeng Peringgi succeeded killing Laksemana, Laksemana's negative image would create negative perception. Thus, Sultan and the people would view him as disobedient to his Sultan. So, hhis death would be considered as the consequence of his misdeed. Eventhough Cik Puan failed to run her plan, but from the way she arranges the strategy, it shows that she is a smart woman.

So, Cik Puan is represented both positively and negatively. Positive representation is seen from the way the text presents her as bravem smart, argumentative and strong opinion woman.anyway, in the same time, the text also portrays her as rude and sly woman.Interestingly though, her positive representations do not put her as good woman because the positive qualities she has are used for negative intention and bad goal. So, Cik Puan is labeled with negative label because the positive qualities do not give benefit both to herself and to others.

The representation of Malay woman represented from this text can be signified an effort to make the people who this representation is adressed to agree with the representation created.

Cik Puan is a woman in high position. In her position as Sultan's wife, she misused her power and position to get her ambition.In one side, Cik Puan is represented as brave, assertive and strong opinion woman.These representations can be signified positively and also negatively. Her bravery, aseertiveness, strong opinion are used for bad goal.



Moreover, in the same time, negative labels are also attached such as rude, sly, and ambitious. So, the signification from the representation creates negative perception to Malay woman.

## **CONCLUSION**

From the discussion it can be concluded that Malay woman is represented as smart, brave and strong opinion. On the surface, these representations label Malay woman with positive stereotypes, but clearly this text represents Malay woman negatively; Malay woman is represented as rude, sly and ambitious woman. So ,as a whole, Malay woman is represented negatively to describe that Malay woman who is in high position needs to be controlled because the woman in high position and the power tend to misuse the power and position.

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