

Conflicts of Women's Role in Utilizing Conservation Values: Critical Examination of Environmental Perspective Works

U'um Qomariyah
Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia
uum@mail.unnes.ac.id

Abstract—The roots of crisis and environmental pollution as well as the degradation of culture are human positivistic empirical assumptions. Thus, a deconstruction of knowledge epistemological root and reconstructing it is needed. In this case, understanding the role of men and women within the context of literary works as representation of community's view. This study was aimed at describing and reconstructing three aspects: women role conflicts toward the utilization of conservational values, and women efforts to resolve women roles' conflicts that arise within the literary work with environmental perspective. This study employed descriptive qualitative method with ecofeminist approach, an approach related to environmental science, especially environmental conservation. Information were collected through interview, documentation, and library study with recording and taking notes. The literary work used in this study was the *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* novel by Ahmad Thohari. Based on the analysis, the conflicts routed from the double burden of the woman. There were three types of conflict found in this novel, namely 1) time-based conflict happened when woman's time devoted for conservation works reduced her time for other roles; 2) strain-based conflict, when the pressure from one role influences her other role; and 3) behavior-based conflict when there is a mismatch of expected behavioral pattern of two parties. Woman solved this conflict through self-motivation, time management, openness, and additional extrinsic motivation. These conflicts are relevant to women's efforts in environmental conservations.

Keywords: conflict, conservation values, literary work with environmental perspective.

I. INTRODUCTION

One of the issues that often discussed in public is environmental conservation needed to balance the natural exploitation and inappropriate policy in governing the environment, as well as the degradation of awareness on the socio-cultural structure. Due to the changes in the physical environment and pressure toward the social environment, there are shifting values, norms, and cultures within the society.

Within the implementation of sustainable environmental development, one of the instruments established for environmental protection and management is the UU (Undang Undang or Law,

throughout this paper, will be referred to as UU No. 32 of 2009 on Environmental Protection and Management. As a response to this, the Universitas Negeri Semarang (UNNES) declared itself as a Conservation University on the 12th of March 2010 by promoting eight values and three pillars of conservation.

A good instrument, either created by government or university, is a practical and applicable instrument. Concerning this, there are ideas that the root of the crisis and environmental destruction, as well as the degradation of culture, is the human empirical-positivistic assumptions. Therefore, there is a need to deconstruct the epistemological frameworks of this knowledge, then reconstructing it again. This is a counter-effort toward the positivistic view that can determine one's attitude and roles, either men or women toward conservation. In this case, the effort to understand men's and women's roles within the context of literary work is a representation of community's view.

A literary work can equally and harmoniously develop rationality, ethics, and aesthetics. This can be further studied within the framework of environmental and cultural orientation to further enrich values and norms, behavior, and community values in general. Nevertheless, within the perspective of conservation, it often shows a stereotype and hegemony that further legitimates the assumption that women play a larger role in environmental destruction and that men are considered to have a dominant role in environmental conservations.

The current issues in literary works are not only about women's involvement in creation, critics, and consumers of the works, but similarly important is the issue about how women are portrayed within a literary work (Andersen, 1988). Within the last decade, women issues have been taking center stage, especially by those who considered women are treated unfairly among the family and the community. The emergence of discussion on women is due to the reality that women's roles are often diminished in socio-economic, political, and even in conservational context (Shiva and Mies, 2005). This phenomenon have inspired many to conduct various

research on women and their roles within the community (Kayam, 1988; Ruthven, 1990). These studies included the exploration of impact, obstacles, and conflicts on women's roles within the conservational values.

Based on the analysis above, this article was obtained to describe and deconstruct the women's role conflict on the utilization of conservation values and the relevance of women's role conflict toward the utilization of conservation values. These problems are often clear within the literary works with an environmental perspective. It is expected that by shedding the light on women's roles conflict within the utilization of conservation values, women will have more knowledge on how to solve such kind of conflicts. In addition, this study is expected to lay down a foundation for further applied research on utilization of literary works as teaching materials with an environmental perspective.

In general, basic research on women is oriented to describing or inventing symptoms or phenomena. Studies on women's issues and environments have been carried out by many. Kronlid (2003), in her article titled *Ecofeminism and Environmental Ethics. An Analysis of Ecofeminist Ethical Theory* focused on the natural view, social constructivism and nature, natural values, ethical contextualism, and ethical pluralism. Further, Alexander (2003) on *Resisting Imposed Metaphors of Value: Vandana Shiva's Role in Supporting Third World Agriculture* published in *Online Journal Metaphorik De*. He studied language used as a message carrier to influence the community to protect the environment. A similar study was also carried out by Chan et al., (2016), which discussed the importance of understanding the values of two ways relationships between human and nature that influences other policies on nature. Other relevant studies on women and the environment were also carried out by Sharnappa (2016) and Krishnasamy (2018). Sharnappa critically studied the ecofeminist approach reflected within the literary work of Indian author, Kamala Markandaya, in her novel *Nectar in a Sieve*. Whereas, Krishnasamy tried to discuss the environmental critics that arise as a separate discipline in the 21st century. He added that environmental critics, through analogy, have established a close correlation between literary works and the environment. These studies have contributed to the study on women, literary works, and the environment.

II. METHOD

This study employs theoretical and methodological approaches. Within the theoretical approach, this study uses the eco-literary approach, an approach related to the environment, in particular natural conservation or cultural conservation, in

correlation with the role and women's study within the literary text. Further, the methodological approach in this study uses a descriptive qualitative approach. The qualitative approach refers to the nature of this study on women's role reflected in literary work with an environmental perspective. In addition, this study also employs a critical analysis. This is to critically study the conflict within the literary work with an environmental perspective and analyzing the literary work within the perspective of eco-literary.

The material object in this study is the literary work with an environmental perspective, titled *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* by Ahmad Tohari. Whereas, the formal object of this study is the women's role conflict. The data in this study are classified into primary and secondary data. The primary data are verbal information and the attitude of the characters within the novel that are relevant to the study, whereas secondary data are collected from documents, photos, and other literary works that supplement the primary data.

Literature review, observation, and interview are employed to gather holistic and integrative information that is relevant to the focus of the study. The data are collected through recording and noting the information. Further, data are analyzed and interpreted using the descriptive qualitative approach. These analysis and interpretation are carried out in ways described by Miles and Huberman, that consisted of data collection, data reduction, and data display, and conclusion drawing and/or verification.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Imagination is a creative process employed by the author to combine social reality and fiction. Therefore, literary work is often considered as the portrayal of the social reality of the author (Wellek and Warren 1990: 109). In other words, a literary work is premeditated by the socio-cultural codes of its author (Chatman 1980: 26). Some of the social codes that often emerge within society are environmental problems and women's role.

Literary work is one of the social attributes that voiced up women's rights as well as environmental conservation. The existence of literary work as a medium of information as well as the reflection of women struggles within their culture and environment. Women have their own ways to show their social existence among the multicultural and multi-relational constructs of society. Within the interrelation between women and the environment, the source of women conflicts, in general, are due to the textual confusions that often reflect the reality.

The source of conflicts on women is usually double burden or women playing multiple roles. Conflict is actually part of the life process. It

also needs to be understood as an important part of life process, and the most important thing is not about the inexistence of conflict, rather whom women manage their roles to be able to resolve the conflicts and to prevent those conflicts from leading into other conflicts that may bring further disadvantage for women.

The focus of the study is the women's roles conflicts. The novel as the subject in this study, is centered on women's roles conflicts and their relation to the environment. This novel is titled *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* written by Ahmad Tohari. Interestingly, in studying the conflict of roles within this *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* novel, women's existence is involved in its reconstruction as part of a community, which at the same time its existence as the beholder of conservationist values are also discussed.

The *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* (RDP) is a trilogy novel of *Catatan Buat Emak* (1982), *Lintang Kemukus Dini Hari* (1985), and *Jentera Bianglala* (1986). RDP is a popular trilogy novel due to the stories that often focuses on ordinary people. The stories in this novel are centered on two main characters Srintil and Rasus. Both characters have different lives, Srintil became a dancer or *ronggeng*, whereas Rasus became an army officer. In life, nature and culture are on-going struggles for both characters, especially the woman character, Srintil. Below are three types of conflicts, women roles' conflicts in the utilization of conservation values presented within the *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* (RDP) novel.

Time Based Conflict

Conflicts on the utilization of conservation often happen when women have no alternatives. Conflicts can easily be triggered by changes in the role of family members, which demands others to adjust and adapt. Within this adjustment, women often face various types of conflicts. Women's roles conflict on the utilization of conservation values took place when the time needed by the women in order to be able to play their conservation roles reduced their time, which has been allocated for other roles. This is a time-based conflict.

As a *ronggeng/ dancer*, Srintil should participate in several activities to be called a true dancer/*ronggeng tulen*. First, she was isolated by Ki Kertareja, a *ronggeng* master. This seclusion has caused Srintil, a teenage girl, no longer able to enjoy and interact with nature. This change has made Rasus complained. Rasus is a dear friend of Srintil, as well as her loved one. Rasus' point of view is taken in RDP trilogy: *Catatan Buat Emak*.

Yang merisaukanku adalah ulah suami-istri Sakarya. Mereka melarang Srintil keluar bermain-main di tepi kampung atau di bawah

pohon nangka. Bila ingin melihatnya aku harus mendatangi rumah Sakarya. Atau mengintip Srintil selagi ia mandi di pancuran. Aku mengerti maksud Sakarya memingit cucunya. The Sakaryas has made me worried. They forbid Srintil to play near the boundary of the village or even play under the jackfruit tree. If I want to meet her, I have to go to the Sakaryas. Or peek when Srintil when she is taking a bath in the outside bathing place. I understand why the Sakarya has sheltered their granddaughter (RDP, 2016:36)

Srintil is a nature-lover. The clear description of the village background and its virgin nature is clearly depicted by Ahmad Tohari in his RDP novel. Even though this description is clearly reflected the culture of the Dukuh Paruk people, they are still depicted as uneducated people. The beautiful description showed by Srintil clarified that Srintil is a character that is able to adapt to nature. It is seen in the following excerpt:

.... Dibawah pohon nangka itu mereka melihat Srintil sedang asyik bermain eorang diri. Perawan kecil itu sedang merangkai daun nangka dengan sebatang lidi untuk dijadikan sebuah mahkota/Under the jackfruit tree, they see Srintil is happily playing by herself. The little virgin is stringing the jackfruit leaves into a coconut leave's stick to make a leaves' crown (RDP, 2003: 11)

However, Srintil's earthly role, as well as the balancer of nature, becomes different when she has to accept her role as a *ronggeng*. In the end, her time is largely spent on preparation of how to become a true *ronggeng*. This has given rise to time-based conflict when her time for conservation efforts reduce her time to do other roles.

Women play a critical role in determining the success of a development process. This is due to women as the first educator within the family, which is the smallest unit of a community. Similarly, this is also experienced by Srintil, which is considered to have brought the essence of life for Dukuh Paruk. Its people considered that their Dukuh would be more lively if they have a *ronggeng* there. The selection of *ronggeng* is not due to training but rather chosen by the spirit of *indang* that possesses the body of the woman. *Indang* is a kind of revelation in the world of *ronggeng*. In the end, becoming a *ronggeng* is called as something extraordinary; thus, Srintil is "urged" by her grandfather to willingly accept all the process of becoming a true *ronggeng*. This urge is

more on the material rewards that will be received by a *ronggeng*.

Traditionally, the breadwinner is tasked to husband (man) as the leader within the family. However, later, many women have to work for other reasons. In Srintil's case, as an orphan, her grandfather should have worked in her stead. However, as her grandfather is old, Srintil has to take the role as the breadwinner for her family. Such a role of Srintil led to many conflicts with her other roles as nature balancer and nature conservationist. Srintil has roles in the protector of conservation values, which reflected in the utilization, protection, and conservation of nature through the utilization of natural resources, preserving the local food by preserving their natural ingredients.

Strain Based Conflict

The second conflict faced by women happens when the pressure from one role influences her other role. This conflict is called a strain-based conflict. If there are roles that demand times at the same time and demand similar attention, then one of the roles will influence others.

Termangu-mangu di atas lincak, Srintil merasakan kesejukan air sedang mendinginkan badannya yang semula panas oleh terik matahari dan panas oleh galau pikirannya. Sementara itu di dalam hatinya sedang berlangsung penataan kembali keseimbangan antara emosi dan rasa. Proses penguasaan diri yang berlangsung dalam diam itu ternyata menghabiskan banyak tenaga, terbukti dari terbitnya titik-titik keringat di seluruh permukaan kulit ronggeng Dukuh Paruk itu.../Srintil is daydreaming on the bamboo chair, she felt the freshness of the water that is cooling her previously sun-heated body and the heat from her thought. Meanwhile, in her heart, she tries to balance her feeling and emotion. This process of silence self-mastery is draining her energy, it is proven by the sweats on the body of this Dukuh Paruk ronggeng,...(RDP, 2003: 126).

Conservation or the protective behaviors, utilization, and conservation of nature, within the RDP novel is demonstrated by Srintil character. Srintil conserves and protects nature by utilizing natural resources properly. This is a form of harmonization with nature, enjoying nature without destroying and disturbing nature. In addition, Srintil, a *ronggeng*, is able to understand the signs of nature (dancing to the sound of the wind and the sound of

the leaves), which demonstrates her conservationist nature.

However, this role as the conservationist is challenged by her other role as a *ronggeng*. This clash of roles causes conflict in the role of woman as a nature conservationist. Her role as a *ronggeng* demands Srintil to think more about this role. This has caused Srintil to experience emotional pressure as she could not enjoy nature, and she felt under someone else's pressure.

Behavior Based Conflict

The third conflict is a behavior-based conflict that happens when there is a mismatch of expected behavioral patterns between two parties or more (job or social environment of the family). This conflict happens due to the behavior that is considered inappropriate with the expected behavior of specific jobs and specific social environment.

This happens with the female character in this novel of *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk*. She is trained to be a *ronggeng*. A *ronggeng* is believed to be the character of Dukuh Paruk. Hence, it is clear that woman is the Tradition Preserver of her community. Women inferiority within the male superiority view results in the traditional rules to diminish women's civilization as social beings. As a woman, Srintil experiences two contradictory things. On one side, she is exalted and being catered to her needs. On the other hand, Srintil has to agree to all the demands of the *Dukun ronggeng/ronggeng* master to serve his rich guests and carry out all *ronggeng* rituals.

Within these roles, Srintil experience indecision. This indecisiveness has made Srintil to secluded herself and tries to find the tranquility within nature. Due to this behavior, the *ronggeng* master felt unsatisfied and unhappy because Srintil has neglected her role as a *ronggeng*, and she is no longer willing to do her role. This has caused the behavior-based conflict to arise. Srintil's union with nature is depicted in the following excerpt:

Kelengangan pekuburan Dukuh Paruk menjadi ibu bagi seorang anak yang ingin memahami apa yang sedang melintas dalam hidupnya. Srintil mengadukan kebuntuan rasanya kepada berjenis-jenis anggrek liar yang menempel pada tubuh batang beringin besar, kepada relung relung pakis yang berjumbai-jumbai di lereng curam, atau kepada terotok kayu mati yang dipatuk burung pelatuk. Santunan mereka yang demikian ramah membuat Srintil merasa betah tinggal di tempat yang tersembunyi itu hingga matahari terbenam nanti atau bisa lebih lama lagi. Dalam kelengangan di pekuburan itu alam mengajaknya bicara banyak-banyak melalui bau

tanah dan wanginya bunga kamboja. Melalui dending agas yang mengitari kepalanya atau melalui kelembutan lumut yang menutupi batu-batu lembab/the tranquility within the graveyard complex in Dukuh paruk has become a nurturing mother for one who wants to understand things that happen in her life. Srintil pour her weariness into various types of wild orchids that nestled on the large banyan tree, she complains to the ferns that attached themselves in the brink of the canyon, or to the dead tree that the woodpeckers are pecking on its trunk. Their warm acceptance has made Srintil felt content to stay there for a long time. Within the quietness of the graveyard complex, the nature has talk to her through the smell of the earth and the fragrant scent of the frangipani flowers. They talk to her through the ringing of the sandflies that surround her head or through the softness of the molds that cover the wet stones (RDP, 2003: 119)

Emotions vent up through retorts, talkback, and the willingness to be on her own are the reflection of conflicts showed by Srintil as she felt mistreated by her role as a *ronggeng* and by people that are close to her. This is evident in the following excerpt.

“Pulang, Srin. Kau ditunggu,” ulang Nyai Kartareja dengan suara tanpa tekanan memerintah. “Kau harus tahu siapa tamumu kali ini: Pak Marsusi, kepala perkebunan karet itu.”/“Go home Srin, they are waiting,” Nyai Kartareja repeated with non-commanding voice. “You have to know who your guest this time: Mr. Marsusi, the head of the rubber plantation.”
Srintil mengerdip tanda mengerti./Srintil blinks to notify that she understands
“Nah, ayo pulang.”/“Come on, let’s go home.”
“Aku belum mau pulang,” jawab Srintil tanpa emosi./“I don’t want to go home yet,” Srintil said without emotion
“eh, jangan begitu, wong ayu,” kata Nyai Kartareja sambil mengatur dirinya duduk disamping Srintil. “Kamu tak boleh menyepelekan tamu. Apalagi tamu kali ini bukan sembarang orang.”/“Don’t be like that pretty girl,” Nyai Kartareja said

while seating herself beside Srintil. “You cannot neglect your guest. Even more, the guest this time is not a commoner.”
“ya, tetapi aku tidka ingin pulang.”/ “true, but I don’t want to go home” (RDP, 200: 119)

Based on the analysis above, it is clear that the efforts in conserving nature, conflict roles are often experienced by women. The environmental preservation access is carried out by the Srintil character within the RDP novel. Wise natural conservation needs to be done to maintain and create a balance of the ecosystem at Dukuh Paruk. This study reveals that within the RDP novel, Srintil is portrayed as a character that accesses the natural resources wisely and naturally.

IV. CONCLUSION

Within natural conservation efforts, women usually experience various conflicts on roles. The access in nature conservation is executed by Srintil character within the RDP novel. However, in accessing her roles, there are conflicts due to the double burden for Srintil as a working woman. The conflicts are rooted in the double burden experienced by the woman. There are three types of conflicts found in this novel: 1) time-based conflict, when the time needed by the woman to execute the conservation effort diminish her time demanded to carry out her other role; 2) strain-based conflict due to the pressure of one role that influences other roles; 3) behavior-based conflict when there is a mismatch of behavioral pattern expected by two parties or more.

REFERENCES

- [1] Alexander, Richard., 2003. Resisting Imposed Metaphors of Value: Vandana Shiva’s Role in Supporting Third World Agriculture. *The Online Journal Metaphorik. de.* 4, halaman 6-29.
- [2] Andersen, M. H. 1988. *Thinking About Women: Sociological and Feminist Perspectives.* New York: Macmillang Publicing Co inc.
- [3] Chan, Kai M.A., dkk. 2016. Why Protect Nature? Rethinking Values And The Environment. *PNAS.* 113 (6): 1462-1465.
- [4] Chatman, Seymour. 1971. *Literary Style.* London: New York
- [5] Kayam,Umar. 1988. “Memahami Roman Indonesia Modern sebagai Pencerminkan Ekspresi dan Masyarakat dan Budaya Indonesia. Suatu Refleksi” dalam *Menjelang Teori dan Kritik Susastra Indonesia yang Relevan/”understanding Indonesia modern*

- novel as reflection of Indonesian community expression and culture. A reflection” toward a relevant Indonesian literary critics. Bandung: Angkasa
- [6] Krishnasamy K. 2018. Ecocriticism-A Good Significance in Literature and Environment. *OSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)* e-ISSN: 2279-0837, p-ISSN: 2279-0845 PP 55-56.
- [7] Kronlid, David, 2003. *Ecofeminism and Environmental Ethics. An Analysis of Ecofeminist Ethical Theory*, Uppsala Studies in Social Ethics, 28, 227 pp., Uppsala. ISBN 91-554-5516-6.
- [8] Miles, Matthew B. dan A. Michael Huberman. 2009. *Analisis Data Kualitatif/Qualitative Data Analysis*. Translated into Bahasa Indonesia by. Tjetep Rohendi Rohidi. Jakarta: UI Press.
- [9] Ruthven, K.K. 1990. *Feminist Literary Studies: An Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [10] Sharnappa, Patil Sangita. 2016. *Reconstructing Ecofeminism: A Study of Kamala Markandaya’s Nectar in a Sieve*. *Cogent Social Sciences* (2016), 2: 1243772.
- [11] Shiva, Vandana dan Maria Mies. 2005. *Ecofeminism Perspektif Gerakan Perempuan dan Lingkungan/Ecofeminism: perspective of women movement environment*. Yogyakarta: IRE Press.
- [12] Tohari, Ahmad. 2003. *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk*. Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama.
- [13] Wellek, Rene dan Austin, Warren. 1968. *Theory of literature*. Penguin Book: Harmondsworth, Middlesex.