

## Postcolonial Feminism Discourse in Pramoedya Ananta Toer's Novels

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### ABSTRACT

The portrayal of Indonesian women during the colonial era cannot be separated from the construction of the patriarchal and the colonial system, which gave rise to the burden of colonization and double oppression during that period. However, this did not deter Indonesian women from continuing to struggle and resist against the patriarchal and colonial systems at that time, even though some of them did not succeed in getting what was their right, both rights as women and as human beings. This is represented in Pramoedya Ananta Toer's novels. This study aims to explore Pramoedya Ananta Toer's thoughts on women in his works (in the form of novels) that intersect with the issues of feminism and colonialism. These works include the novels *Gadis Pantai*, *Larasati*, and *Bumi Manusia*. This study uses a qualitative method with a postcolonial feminism theory approach. The data analysis techniques in this study are (1) identifying; (2) classifying; (3) describing; (4) analyzing; and (5) drawing conclusions. The results of the study indicate that women face a double burden of colonization and oppression. This is because women are victims of both patriarchal and colonial systems. Furthermore, despite being caught between these two systems, they continue to struggle and resist both systems.

### KEYWORDS

burden of colonization,  
double oppression,  
resistance efforts,  
postcolonial feminism



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## Introduction

The issue of the existence of women in developing countries as victims of the colonial and patriarchal systems is still relevant to discuss today. This is a historical reflective effort to trace the traces of women's existence as victims of colonialization carried out by colonizers, and the colonial narrative inherited by colonial nations towards "third world" countries, including the Indonesian nation. Colonization has positioned women as victims of the colonial and patriarchal systems. Women as victims of the colonial system are proven by the existence of a concubinage/slavery system during the colonial period, both during the Dutch colonial period and the Japanese colonial period. In addition, women as victims of the patriarchal system are shown by the existence of stereotypes of women who are considered "second-class humans" or "the other". This causes women not only get oppression from colonial men, but also from native men.

Therefore, the experiences of women in various parts of the world cannot be generalized and homogenized considering that women's experiences are different.

This can be observed from the experiences of "third world" women such as Indonesia who became victims of concubinage/slavery during colonialism. The emergence of concubinage at the beginning of colonialism itself, namely the end of the 16th century/early 17th century when a large number of European trading groups arrived in Asian countries, including the Dutch trading group to Indonesia or at that time called the Nederlands-Indie colony (Dutch East Indies). The group was dominated by men, only a few women participated. In addition, there were more than half of the total number of European men in the colony who lived with *nyai* (native concubines) in the last 25 years of the 19th century [1]. In addition, in an effort to enrich their country, the Dutch not only exploited natural resources and monopolized trade, but also exploited the people's labor through the recruitment of slave labor. As slaves, the natives were completely controlled by their bodies and services, placed in the lowest social class, and were required to carry out all the orders of the ruler [2].

This shows that the way colonization works is different for women and men. Women (especially in third world countries) are the ones who experience double colonization, both colonization from the colonial nation and from native men. Women, especially in the Third World, have borne the burden of double oppression: from the colonial nation and from native men. Postcolonialism postulates "Women in the Third World" as victims par excellence - victims of imperial ideology and native patriarchy or forgotten foreign patriarchy [3]. Besides, Spivak, Mohanty, and Suleri (in Ashcrof, Griffiths, dan Tiffin) stated that colonialism operated very differently for women and for men, and the 'double colonization' that resulted when women were subject both to general discrimination as colonial subjects and specific discrimination as women needs to be taken into account in any analysis of colonial oppression [4]

This problem is represented in Pramoedya Ananta Toer's novels such as *Larasati*, *Gadis Pantai* (*The Girl from the Coast*), and *Bumi Manusia* (*This Earth of Mankind*). In these novels, Pramoedya Ananta Toer not only discusses the issue of feminism, but also the issue of colonialism. This shows Pramoedya Ananta Toer's concern for women's issues in Indonesia during the Dutch colonial period. Furthermore, his thoughts not only reflect women's socio-cultural conditions, constructed by both patriarchal and colonial systems, but also women's resistance to both.

However, these works are not without flaws, such as Pramoedya Ananta Toer's ambivalence. On the one hand, this ambivalence demonstrates Pramoedya Ananta Toer's resistance to colonialism, but on the other hand, it seems to demonstrate how colonialism shaped and transformed women into intelligent, courageous, and superior women. This is evident in the character of Nyai Ontosoroh in *Bumi Manusia* (*This Earth*

of *Mankind*). In the novel, Nyai Ontosoroh is shown to be a woman who has skills, courage, independence, and superiority as if she was civilized by the colonial authorities (in this case Herman Melema who made Nyai Ontosoroh his concubine and who taught Nyai Ontosoroh various things such as reading, writing, speaking Dutch, and how to manage a company). Despite this, Nyai Ontosoroh demonstrated her willingness and perseverance to learn the various lessons taught by Herman Mellema, leading to her continued development and courage, even though Herman Mellema ultimately withdrew his support. In fact, Nyai Ontosoroh bravely confronted the surroundings indigenous communities and the colonial government.

Despite this, these novels have a long and profound impact on Indonesian civilization because they address issues of history, humanity, colonialism, women, and the struggle and resistance against oppression, both those caused by patriarchal and colonial systems. Furthermore, his works have received numerous awards, both nationally and internationally. Although his works have been banned or even suppressed, they remain sought after and read by readers in Indonesia and other countries, even now that the author is no longer with us and his works are accessible to the Indonesian public, albeit through a long journey. The ideas represented in his works are still relevant in the current context.

As explained at the beginning of this article, the novels discussed in this article depict Indonesian women who are victims, both of patriarchy and colonialism, in their struggles and resistance against oppression perpetrated not only by colonial men but also by indigenous men. The novel *Larasati* [5] tells the story of a woman named Larasati, often referred to as Ara, who has a public role as a famous Indonesian film star and carries out her own revolutionary struggle. Her struggles encounter various obstacles, resulting in her becoming a victim of the patriarchal system (stereotyped as second-class) and a victim of the colonial system (being used as a prisoner for work or as an object of sexual gratification).

The novel *Gadis Pantai* (Beach Girl) [6] tells the story of a young woman from a fishing village in Central Java, Rembang Regency. This young woman, often called "beach girl" or "Mas Nganten," is taken as a probationary wife by a nobleman often referred to as "Bendoro." The beach girl and her family initially do not know or understand that Bendoro is only using her as a probationary wife. However, they eventually come to understand and understand this. In the novel, the beach girl is depicted as a woman who only has a domestic role because she is shaped by the patriarchal system and feudalism. Furthermore, the Beach Girl is shaped as a strict noblewoman, with strict rules such as not laughing carelessly, asking too many questions, always being obedient and devoted to the Bendoro, and so on. The Beach Girl's resistance to the oppression perpetrated by the native man (Bendoro) involves attempting to take her newborn daughter from the Bendoro's house and resisting by speaking words that the Bendoro

deserves. However, her resistance is ultimately futile, as she is constructed by the system (patriarchal and colonial) as an inferior being, with no power over her rights.

The novel *Bumi Manusia* or *This Earth of Mankind* [7] also tells the story of an indigenous woman who is forced and sold by her own father to become a Dutch concubine, or *nyai-nyai*, for his ambition to rise in power. This indigenous woman, originally named Sanikem, becomes Nyai Ontosoroh after becoming a Dutch concubine and managing a large agricultural company, known in Dutch as *Borderij Buitenzorg*. The name "Ontosoroh" comes from "Buitenzorg," the Javanese pronunciation of the word "Wonokromo" in Surabaya at the time. In the novel, Nyai Ontosoroh plays a public role. She manages the Buitenzorg Agricultural Company and even becomes its owner. When Sanikem (Nyai Ontosoroh) is sold or forced by her father to Mr. Herman Mellema and made his concubine, she is unable to resist because, in addition to being young, she is constructed as an inferior by the patriarchal and colonial system. However, over time, she struggles to change her fate, becoming not just a *nyai* (a concubine) with the stereotype that has stuck with her, but also gaining control over herself and her abilities, particularly her ability to manage a company. She even resists those who belittle her and attempt to take away her rights, such as by resisting the Dutch colonial government.

The issues depicted in these three novels clearly highlight issues of feminism and colonialism, making them relevant to be studied using postcolonial feminist studies. This is to achieve a comprehensive interpretation, as feminist theory has traditionally focused on the experiences of white women and First World countries, typically being Eurocentric. Postcolonial studies, on the other hand, tend to discuss mainstream postcolonial issues and theories, thus under-emphasizing gender/feminist issues. As Mills points out, postcolonial feminist theorists are not a unified group. However, it can be said that they are feminists who react against the lack of attention to gender issues in mainstream postcolonial theory and against the universalizing tendencies in Western feminist thought [8].

Furthermore, Tong argues that, closely related to global feminism, postcolonial feminism recalls the era when developed countries attempted to colonize developing countries for their own purposes, such as extracting non-renewable resources like oil for their own use. Actively involved in combating the persistent and detrimental effects of colonialism, postcolonial feminists are primarily concerned with warning former colonized peoples not to allow their former colonizers to define, control, regulate, marginalize, stigmatize, belittle, or otherwise demean them and their cultural environment [9].

Postcolonial feminists, in other words, refuse to allow Eurocentric standards to define or judge themselves or their problems. They problematize the division of Western

countries into “First World” (i.e., advanced industrial and market-based countries located mostly in the northern hemisphere) and “Third World” (i.e., countries with economic difficulties located mostly in the southern hemisphere). In particular, they examine how these divisions serve to weaken, delegitimize, and disadvantage former colonial societies, particularly women. Postcolonial feminists focus primarily on economic and political issues, emphasizing that the oppression of women as members of formerly colonized societies often exceeds the oppression they experience as women.

Based on this, the study in this article is to discuss the burden of colonialization and double oppression on women during the colonial era as well as the efforts of women’s struggle and resistance against the patriarchal and colonial system represented in the novels *Larasati*, *Gadis Pantai*, and *Bumi Manusia*. The discussion of the analysis of the burden of colonialization and double oppression of women is to reveal the position of women during the colonial period who were trapped in the patriarchal and colonialism system and to explore the issue of post-colonialism in Indonesia as a “third world” country. In addition, the discussion of women’s struggle and resistance against the patriarchal and colonial system during the colonial period is to explore the extent to which women’s efforts to face the burden of colonization and double oppression between the patriarchal and colonial system that constructed it.

## **The Burden of Colonization and Double Oppression in *Larasati*, *Gadis Pantai*, and *Bumi Manusia***

### **a. Women as Victims of the Patriarchal System**

Pramoedya Ananta Toer clearly portrays women as victims of the patriarchal system in these three novels. This discussion examines how women become victims of the patriarchal system. In the novel *Gadis Pantai*, the main female character, Gadis Pantai, is described as a victim of the patriarchal system, becoming a probationary wife for a nobleman often referred to as Bendoro. She is even separated from her own child by the powerful person (Bendoro). This patriarchal system manifests itself in feudalism, stereotypes, and marginalization of women. Furthermore, in the novel *Larasati*, the character Larasati, or Ara, becomes a victim of the patriarchal system. This is due to stereotypes and marginalization of women, such as the general assumption that men play a greater role in the revolutionary struggle than women. Furthermore, Larasati, or Ara, is made a prisoner of labor or a victim of sexual violence due to her powerlessness in the face of the patriarchal system. Meanwhile, in the novel *Bumi Manusia*, the character Sanikem or Nyai Ontosoroh was even sold by a native man who was none other than her own father to a Dutch official named Herman Mellema to be made a Dutch concubine or nyai-nyai for the sake of the position of cashier which had always been

her father's ambition. Further discussion is presented through quotations from the three novels.

The following are quotations from the novel *Gadis Pantai*:

*"Beruntung kau menjadi istri orang alim, dua kali pernah naik haji, entah berapa kali khatam Quran. Perempuan nak, kalau sudah kawin jeleknya laki jeleknya kita, baiknya laki baiknya kita. Apa yang kurang baik pada dia?" [6, hlm. 14]*

*"'Setiap perempuan mesti ikut lakinya. Emak sendiri juga begitu,' emak menghiburnya. 'Biar di pondok buruk, biar dia tidak senang, dia harus belajar menyenangkan lakinya.'" [6, hlm. 67]*

The first quote is the opinion of the Beach Girl's mother, who states that the Beach Girl is fortunate to be the wife of a pious man, who has performed the Hajj twice, and has completed the Quran several times. Furthermore, her mother advises her that once a woman is married, the badness of a man is the badness of a woman, and the goodness of a man is the goodness of a woman.

The second quote is a statement from the Beach Girl's mother to her daughter, the Beach Girl, because the Beach Girl prefers to live in her hometown (a fishing village) rather than living in Bendoro's house. These words are advice to her child that every woman should follow her husband or man, as her own mother was like that. Furthermore, her mother says that even if she lives in a poor, unhappy home, a woman must still please her husband or man.

These two quotes demonstrate the deep-rooted patriarchal system, not only in the city, where many nobles live, but also in rural areas such as the fishing village, the Beach Girl's hometown. These quotes confirm that women are victims of the patriarchal system due to stereotypes and marginalization of women. Women are constructed as always being inferior, second-class citizens, and are not allowed to resist or even express disagreement. It is clear that these quotes do not demonstrate equality in the relationship/bond between husband and wife or between women and men.

*"Nampak bujang itu merasa kasihan kepada Gadis Pantai. Pengalaman selama ini membuat ia banyak tahu tentang perbedaan antara kehidupan orang kebanyakan dan kaum Bendoro di daerah pantai. Seorang Bendoro dengan istri orang kebanyakan tidaklah dianggap sudah beristri, sekalipun telah beranak selusin. Perkawinan demikian hanyalah satu latihan buat perkawinan sesungguhnya: dengan wanita dari karat kebangsawanan yang setingkat. Perkawinan dengan orang kebanyakan tidak mungkin bias menerima tamu dengan istri dari karat kebangsawanan yang tinggi, karena dengan istri asal orang kebanyakan - itu penghinaan bila menerimanya." [6, hlm. 80]*

*"Ingin sekali wanita tua itu mengingatkan Gadis Pantai, tapi ia tak berani. Ia takut. Ia tahu benar, dalam sehari wanita utama bisa berganti 25 kali tanpa sedikit pun mengurangi perbawa Bendoro. Ia tahu besok atau lusa paling lama setelah Gadis*



*Pantai melahirkan anaknya yang pertama, wanita muda tak berdosa ini pun mungkin akan langkahi dan lalui jalan hidupnya sendiri tanpa ragu-ragu lagi: jalan hidup sebagai sahaya. Dan ibu muda ini lebih menderita daripadanya karena ia punya anak tapi harus pergi dari anaknya. Ia tak boleh bertemu. Dan bila bertemu anak, maka itu bukan anaknya, tapi Bendoronya, orang yang harus disembah dan dilayaninya. Ditindasnya perasaannya sendiri, dan dengan lemah lembut dicobanya juga memperingatkan Gadis Pantai akan nasibnya yang akan datang.” [6, hlm. 98]*

The first quote is the thoughts of an elderly female servant who is experienced in handling the probationary wives (main wives) of her employer, the Bendoro. The elderly female servant feels pity for the Beach Girl, who doesn't realize that she (the Beach Girl) is a commoner (not a noble) and is merely one of the probationary wives who is not considered the Bendoro's official wife. This is because the Beach Girl is not a noble on the same level as the Bendoro, and the Bendoro will only be recognized as a wife if he marries another noble. Therefore, marrying the Beach Girl is merely a practice/trial in preparation for a real marriage someday to a woman of his own clan (noble).

Furthermore, the second quote is also stated by the same person, the female servant often referred to as Si Mbok by the Beach Girl. Si Mbok feels pity for the Beach Girl and wants to warn her, but she doesn't dare. She wants to tell the Beach Girl that the main wife seems to change 25 times a day without diminishing the Bendoro's prestige in the slightest. In addition, based on his observations and experiences in accompanying several main women (Bendoro's trial wives), he knew that tomorrow or the day after the Beach Girl gave birth to her first child, the Beach Girl would likely live as a sahaya (slave) like himself. And the Beach Girl will suffer even more than she does because she will have a child, but she must leave him. She is not allowed to see him. And even if she does meet the child she gives birth to, it will not be her own, but the child of her Bendoro.

This demonstrates that the patriarchal system, in the form of feudalism, has constructed women as oppressed and inferior, so they can only accept this as something they must accept, even though it is unfair and causes them suffering. Thus, this confirms that women (in this case, the Beach Girl) are victims of the patriarchal system, in the form of feudalism.

The following are excerpts from the novel *Larasati*.

*“Kadang-kadang memang terasa olehnya bahwa heroisme dan patriotisme wanita di jaman Revolusi ini terletak pada kepalangmerahan saja! Tapi ia takkan meninggalkan kejuruannya. Ia cintai kejuruannya. Dan ia yakin, melalui kejuruannya ia pun dapat berbakti pada Revolusi. Ia merasa dirinya pejuang, berjuang dengan caranya sendiri.” [5, hlm. 26]*

The quote above reflects the thoughts of *Larasati*, also known as Ara. In the quote, Ara sometimes feels that women's heroism and patriotism during the revolution were limited to their involvement in the Red Cross (Jerusalem Red Cross). However, this

doesn't make Larasati or Ara abandon her profession and abilities as a film star, as she loves it. Furthermore, she believes that through her profession and abilities as a film star, she can also serve and fight for the interests of the revolution.

This demonstrates the general perception at the time (the revolutionary era) that women's heroism and patriotism were limited to involvement in the Red Cross. However, this general perception doesn't make Larasati or Ara abandon her profession and abilities as a film star. In fact, Larasati or Ara believes that she, too, can participate in the revolutionary struggle through her profession and abilities. This general assumption is shaped by a patriarchal system that constructs women's roles in the revolutionary struggle as limited to supporting roles, rather than leading roles.

*"Diremas-remasnya selendang merah pemberian prajurit front yang tak dikenalnya. Kalau aku lelaki aku bakar seluruh perkampungan artileri ini. Dan untuk pertama kali dalam hidupnya ia menyesali kelahirannya sendiri sebagai wanita. Kalau aku lelaki - aku bisa berbuat banyak. Daerah ini bisa kalah berkali-kali. Tapi Revolusi tak bakal menyerah! Pada waktunya, mulut-mulut besar ini akan dibabat oleh Revolusi. Semua!" [5, hlm. 32]*

In the quote above, Larasati or Ara imagines that if she were a man, she would burn down the artillery village, which was a Dutch-occupied area occupied not only by Dutch soldiers but also by Dutch stooges (Indonesians who betrayed the revolutionary struggle and became Dutch stooges). Furthermore, Larasati or Ara, in the quote, for the first time regrets being born a woman. She imagines that if she were a man, she could have done so much. Even if she were a man, the occupied area would have been defeated many times.

This quote shows that Larasati or Ara is a victim of the patriarchal system because she is constructed by the system as an inferior, second-class human being, as "the other." In fact, she accepts the results of this patriarchal construction with regret at being born a woman because she cannot do as much as the men who fought and took up arms in the revolutionary struggle.

The following are quotes from the novel *\*This Earth of Mankind\**.

*"Dari kantongnya Tuan Besar Kuasa mengeluarkan sampul kertas dan menyerahkannya pada Ayah. Dari saku itu pula ia mengeluarkan selembar kertas berisi tulisan dan Ayah membubuhkan tandatangan di situ. Di kemudian hari kuketahui, sampul itu berisikan uang duapuluhlima gulden, penyerahan diriku kepadanya, dan janji Ayah akan diangkat jadi kassier setelah lulus dalam pemapangan selama dua tahun." [7, hlm. 123]*

*"Begitulah, Ann, upacara sederhana bagaimana seorang anak telah dijual oleh ayahnya sendiri. Jurutulis Sastroto. Yang dijual adalah diriku: Sanikem. Sejak detik itu hilang sama sekali penghargaan dan hormatku pada ayahku; pada siapa saja yang dalam hidupnya pernah menjual anaknya sendiri. Untuk tujuan dan maksud apapun." [7, hlm. 123]*



This quote was delivered by Sanikem or Nyai Ontosoroh to her daughter, Annelies. Nyai Ontosoroh told how she was once sold by her own father, Jurulis Sastrotomo, to Tuan Besar Kuasa (Herman Mellema) to be used as a concubine/concubine of Tuan Herman Mellema in order to obtain a position as cashier. At that time, Nyai Ontosoroh witnessed Tuan Besar Kuasa (Herman Mellema) take out a paper envelope and hand it to her father. In addition, Tuan Besar Kuasa took out a piece of paper containing writing for her father to sign. Then, later on, Nyai Ontosoroh learned that the envelope contained twenty-five guilders as a token of her surrender to the great master. In addition to being given the money, her father was also promised to be appointed cashier. Since then, Nyai Ontosoroh lost all respect and appreciation for her father and for anyone who had ever sold her child for any purpose or intention.

This shows that Nyai Ontosoroh was a victim of the patriarchal system. She was constructed as someone who could not resist at that time, a second-class human being, who was not given the opportunity to defend and maintain her rights as a whole human being with freedom over her body and herself. She was treated like an object to be bought and sold, even by the native man who became her own father. However, after that, Nyai Ontosoroh had a firm stance that she would never respect or honor her father or anyone who had ever sold their own child for any purpose or intention.

*“Aku masih tetap menunduk, tahu takkan ada seorang pun tempat mengadu. Di dunia ini hanya Ayah dan Ibu yang berkuasa. Kalau Ayah sendiri sudah demikian, kalau Ibu tak dapat membela aku, akan bisa berbuat apa orang lain?” [7, hlm. 123]*

The quote above is Nyai Ontosoroh's heartfelt confession to her daughter. She recounts that when her own father handed her over to Mr. Herman Mellema as a concubine, she realized that there was no one she could turn to because, in her opinion, only her father and mother had power in this world. If her own father had sold her and her own mother couldn't defend her, then how much more could anyone else?

This quote emphasizes how the patriarchal system has constructed women as inferior, powerless over themselves and their lives. These women include Nyai Ontosoroh herself and her mother. Nyai Ontosoroh lacked the power to reject or oppose her father's wishes. Likewise, her mother lacked the power to defend her own daughter.

*“Ikem, kau tidak keluar dari rumah ini tanpa ijin Tuan Besar Kuasa. Kau tidak kembali ke rumah tanpa seijinnya dan tanpa seijinmu.” [7, hlm. 123]*

This quote is from Sanikem's father, or Nyai Ontosoroh, to his daughter, telling her not to leave Mr. Herman Mellema's house without his permission. Likewise, Sanikem or Nyai Ontosoroh is not to return to her parents' house without her father's permission. This clearly demonstrates the superiority of the colonial man (Herman Mellema) and the native man (her father), who has power over Nyai Ontosoroh.

## b. Women as Victims of the Colonial System

Women as victims of the colonial system are clearly depicted in the novels *Bumi Manusia* and *Larasati*. Meanwhile, in *Gadis Pantai*, women are predominantly depicted as victims of patriarchy and feudalism. However, *Gadis Pantai* is set during Dutch colonial times, just like *Bumi Manusia* and *Larasati*. However, the depiction of women as victims of the colonial system in *Gadis Pantai* is not as explicit as in the other two novels. However, it can be interpreted and concluded that the colonial system further strengthened patriarchy and feudalism. This is evident in the system of concubinage and slavery implemented by the Dutch colonial system, which did not completely eradicate the deeply rooted patriarchy and feudalism in indigenous society. Instead, it reinforced the existing systems, namely patriarchy and feudalism. Like lower class or non-noble/noble women who must be willing to be made trial wives/concubines and must be willing to carry out the marriage with a *keris* which is a representation of *Bendoro*, which is also a symbol that the woman *Bendoro* marries is a woman who is not equal to him or a lower class woman.

Based on this, this section will focus on *Larasati* and *Bumi Manusia*. This is because both novels explicitly and predominantly depict women as victims of the colonial system. Further discussion can be explored through the following excerpts.

*"Sekarang tak ada lagi permusuhan," Jusman meneruskan. "Yang ada sekarang cuma satu: kepatuhan. Barangsiapa tak sanggup patuh, dia dihancurkan." [5, hlm. 144]*

This quote describes the attitude of the character Jusman, a man of Arab descent who has lived in Indonesia for a long time, who is a Dutch accomplice and once threatened *Larasati* that he would hurt her mother if *Larasati* did not come to meet her mother at Jusman's house. *Larasati*'s mother is a household assistant at Jusman's house. However, *Larasati* ignored the threat until one day Jusman found *Larasati* on the street in a weak health condition due to starvation due to the incessant war between the Republicans and the Dutch who were assisted by the natives who became traitors (Dutch stooges) so that the position of the revolutionary fighters was almost lost at that time. Seeing *Larasati* on the street in such a condition, Jusman had the opportunity and succeeded in taking her to his house without resistance from *Larasati*. Upon arriving at Jusman's house, *Larasati* was put in his room and then said as quoted above to *Larasati*, that according to him at that time there was no longer any hostility between him and *Larasati* considering that *Larasati* was a Republican (revolutionary fighter), while Jusman as explained previously, was a Dutch stooge (anti-Republican). Furthermore, Jusman threatened *Larasati* that she had only one obligation at that time: obedience, and that anyone who failed would be destroyed. This demonstrates how the colonial system positioned women (*Larasati* or *Ara*) as the disadvantaged party, unable to resist due to pressure and threats.

*“Ara menggaruk muka Jusman sekuat ia dapat. Pemuda itu mendengus menghinakan. Dengan sabarnya ia letakkan ujung kukunya pada muka Ara. Katanya mengancam:” Kalau kukuku kusuruh bekerja, sekarang juga riwayatmu tamat. Akan kutamatkan riwayatmu? Ayoh bicara. Ha? Aku garuk? Matanya melotot, lebih kuning dari biasanya.” Ara tersedan-sedan. Ia rasai bagaimana pahit menderitakan kekalahan. ‘Jangan-jangan,’ pintanya, dan ia rasai bagaimana hinanya dirinya sekarang ini.” [5, hlm. 145]*

Based on the quote, Larasati resisted Jusman by trying to scratch his face with all her might. However, she was defeated and the situation reversed, becoming the one facing resistance from the stronger: Jusman. Jusman threatened to put the tips of his nails on Larasati's or Ara's face and said that he could end Larasati's life. This could be interpreted as Jusman threatening to destroy Larasati's career by destroying her face or even ending her life. Furthermore, the quote depicts Larasati's bitterness, sadness, and humiliation at having to accept defeat, both as a revolutionary fighter and as a woman.

The quote above demonstrates the impact of the colonial system on the oppressed, the inferior, and those without power and strength. It is clear that Larasati or Ara fell victim to the colonial system, which constructed her as weak and incapable of optimal resistance.

*“Telah sebulan Ara tinggal dalam genggam tangan kekuasaan pemuda Arab itu. Ia tak dapat merasakan lagi dirinya mati atau hidup. Hanya masih ada satu keinginan tinggal: ia ingin mendapatkan hubungan dengan dunia luar. Ia ingin tahu nasib Revolusi. Tapi tak pernah ada koran masuk ke dalam rumah itu. Tak ada selembarnya buku pun, selain buku catatan kecil yang selalu berada di kantong Jusman. Ia tak pernah tinggalkan tempat itu.” [5, hlm. 145]*

*“Aku hanyalah tawanan yang dipekerjakan.”*

The first quote tells us that Larasati, or Ara, has been under Jusman's rule for a month. Ara no longer feels whether she is dead or alive. However, she still desires to know the conditions of the outside world and the fate of the revolution. She observes that no newspapers have ever entered the house, and there are no books other than Jusman's small notebook. In fact, Larasati never leaves the house.

The second quote is Larasati's response to a question from Ahmad, Jusman's friend, who comes to Jusman's house to meet and inquire about Jusman's condition. He assumes Larasati is Jusman's wife or lover, but Larasati replies that she is not his wife or lover, but merely a captive he employs.

*“Kalau ini rumahmu mengapa aku sampai sekian lamanya di sini. Tanpa semau hatiku sendiri? Kau kuasa memang.” [7, hlm. 166]*

The quote above demonstrates how power has shaped the inferiority of the oppressed, in this case, women, namely Larasati in this novel. Larasati is trapped in Jusman's house and has no right to do whatever she wants. This emphasizes how the colonial system

has constructed the oppressed as victims because their rights as human beings have been stripped away.

The following are quotes from the novel *\*This Earth of Mankind\**.

*"Mamamu, hanya perempuan Pribumi, akan tidak mempunyai sesuatu hak atas semua, juga tidak dapat berbuat sesuatu untuk anakku sendiri, kau, Ann. Percuma saja akan jadinya kita berdua membanting tulang tanpa hari libur ini. Percuma aku telah lahirkan kau, karena Hukum tidak mengakui keibuanku, hanya karena aku Pribumi dan tidak dikawin secara syah. Kau mengerti?" [7, hlm. 112]*

The quote above is Nyai Ontosoroh's outpouring of her heart to her daughter, Annelies. She stated that she was only a native woman who would not have any rights. She could not even do anything for her own child, Annelies. She felt it was useless to work hard managing the agricultural company together with Annelies. In addition, she also felt it was useless to have given birth to Annelies because the applicable law did not recognize Nyai Ontosoroh as Annelies' mother because she was only a native and was not legally married (only as a nyai-nyai or Dutch concubine). This shows that the colonial system had given birth to a system of concubinage for the interests of those in power at that time, namely the Dutch colonizers by ignoring women's rights and even sacrificing native women for the satisfaction of Dutch men and perpetuating Dutch power in native lands.

*"Nyai sudah tidak menggubris kewibawaan sidang. Seorang agen diperintahkan mengeluarkannya dari ruangan. Dan ia ditarik dari tempatnya tanpa dapat melawan. Tetapi mulutnya terus juga melepaskan kata-kata, berisikan butiran-butiran dendamnya: Siapa yang menjadikan aku gundik? Siapa yang membikin mereka jadi nyai-nyai? Tuan-tuan bangsa Eropa, yang dipertuan. Mengapa di forum resmi kami ditertawakan? Dihinakan? Apa Tuan-Tuan menghendaki anakku juga jadi gundik?" [7, hlm. 427]*

This quote represents Nyai Ontosoroh's resistance and rebellion against the Dutch colonial system and the colonial system it established. Nyai Ontosoroh questions who made her a concubine and who made other native women become nyai-nyai. In addition, she questions why in the official forum (white court), concubines were laughed at and humiliated. This shows that Nyai Ontosoroh is challenging the concubinage system that has been established by the Dutch colonial system. In addition, the quote indirectly explains that becoming nyai-nyai or concubines is not the desire of native women, but they were made nyai-nyai or concubines and even made victims by the Dutch colonial system.

*"Dalam mendengarkan itu terngiang-ngiang kata-kata Bunda: Belanda sangat, sangat berkuasa, namun tidak merampas istri orang seperti raja-raja Jawa. Bunda? Tidak lain dari menantumu, istriku, kini terancam akan mereka rampas, merampas anak dari ibunya, istri dari suaminya, dan hendak merampas juga jerih payah Mama selama lebih dari dua puluh tahun tanpa mengenal hari libur. Semua hanya*

*didasarkan pada surat-surat indah jurutulis-jurutulis ahli, dengan tinta hitam tak luntur yang menembus sampai setengah tebal kertas.” [7, hlm. 487]*

The quote above reflects Minke's thoughts. Minke still remembers his mother's words: that the Dutch were indeed powerful, but they didn't steal people's wives like the Javanese kings. However, Minke eventually questioned and doubted his mother's words. Minke seemed to challenge his mother's statement and argued that the Dutch were now not only stealing wives from their husbands and children from their mothers, but also robbing native women of their hard work in managing large agricultural companies. This happened only because of the beautiful letters of skilled scribes or letters containing legal demands.

*“Kami hanya berurusan dengan Annelies, katanya. Kau seorang Nyai, Pribumi, tak ada urusan dengan Pengadilan ini,” [7, hlm. 489]*

This quote emphasizes that a native and a nyai-nyai had nothing to do with the white court held by the Dutch colonial government or in other words that the position of a native or nyai-nyai was different from that of a Dutch person who had special rights in the eyes of the law.

*Orang Eropa dapat membeli perempuan Pribumi seperti diriku ini. Apa pembelian ini lebih benar daripada percintaan tulus? Kalau orang Eropa boleh berbuat karena, keunggulan uang dan kekuasaannya, mengapa kalau Pribumi jadi ejekan, justru karena cinta tulus?” [7, hlm. 426]*

The quote above reaffirms that indigenous women could be bought by Europeans because of their money and power. This seems to imply that women were positioned as objects, while Europeans had the privilege of purchasing indigenous women through their money and power. This demonstrates that indigenous women were victimized by the colonial system.

### c. Women's Struggle and Resistance Within the Patriarchal and Colonial Systems

When women became victims of patriarchal and colonial systems, some attempted resistance, but others were unable to do so due to the inferiority complex created by both systems. In the three novels discussed by Pramoedya Ananta Toer, women such as Gadis Pantai (Beach Girl), Larasati, and Nyai Ontosoroh made these efforts, although their forms of resistance differed. Gadis Pantai makes an effort to resist when she tries to take her child from Bendoro's house, while Larasati tries to remain consistent as a Republican who fights for the revolution through acting which is her specialty and Nyai Ontosoroh makes an effort to resist the Dutch colonialists through a white trial (a trial held by the Dutch colonial government) to defend the right to custody of her daughter Annelies. The following is a further discussion through quotes from the three novels.

*“Aku Cuma bawa bayiku sendiri. Bayiku! Bayi yang kulahirkan sendiri. Dia anakku, bapaknya seorang setan, iblis. Lepaskan!”*

*la tak tahu kepala tongkat Bendoro mengucurkan darah pada bibirnya. Bayu itu tahu-tahu telah lepas dari tubuhnya, dan selendang itu tergantung kosong di depan perutnya."*

*"Anakku sendiri dia!" raungnya*

*"Lempar dia keluar!" Bendoro berteriak. [6, hlm. 263-265]*

The quotes above are excerpts from the novel *Gadis Pantai*. In the quote, *Gadis Pantai* is depicted as making an effort to resist Bendoro as a native man who represents the patriarchal and feudal system. *Gadis Pantai*'s struggle is to defend what has become her right as a mother, namely to defend the child she has given birth to. This effort is an effort that breaks the tradition at that time. This is because the feudal tradition at that time was that women who were made trial wives no longer have the right to live in the house of the nobleman who became her husband (Bendoro) and lost their rights as a mother (the right to care for and have children) after being divorced by Bendoro. In addition, this has become a feudal tradition that cannot be negotiated, even this decision must be accepted by the women who were made trial wives without resistance. However, *Gadis Pantai* tries to break this tradition by resisting Bendoro, both with words and actions, namely taking her child from Bendoro's house, although this effort was ultimately unsuccessful.

Another female character in Pramoedya Ananta Toer's novel, *Larasati*, also known as *Ara*, is involved in the struggle and resistance. *Larasati* committed to only acting in films that supported the revolutionary struggle for Indonesian independence, declaring herself an anti-colonial figure. She even resisted the Dutch colonialists, including traitors to the nation and Indonesians (who were former fighters) who collaborated with the Dutch. This resistance was not only expressed through words and commitment, but also through her involvement in and witnessing the war between revolutionary fighters and colonial agents, albeit only once. The following quotes narrate the points discussed above.

*"Bekasi yang bakal menentukan! Bekasi! Tapi biar bagaimana pun, aku tidak akan berkhianat. Aku juga punya tanahair. Jelek-jelek tanahku sendiri, bumi dan manusia yang menghidupi aku selama ini. Cuma binatang ikut Belanda." [5, hlm. 13]*

This quote is *Larasati*'s commitment to herself that she will never betray her own homeland because according to her, only animals would want to be Dutch lackeys or side with the Dutch.

*"Waktu melihat Ara tak mengikuti perintahnya, ia bangkit. Matanya berapi-api. Ditariknya kain kurbannya. Tangan Ara menangkis. Selendang merahnya jatuh. 'Binatang' Ara memekik" [5, hlm. 34]*

*"Terdengar sekali lagi Larasati meradang karang, 'Ayoh, sentuh kalau berani. Aku garuk mukamu yang jelek sampai dadal!" [5, hlm. 34]*



*"Setelah menggabungkan diri dengan yang lain-lain ia menggerutu, 'Sangkanya kala sudah punya pistol, lantas boleh sembarangi setiap orang. Kurang ajar!'" [5, hlm. 34]*

These quotes depict Larasati or Ara's resistance against Dutch stooges or Indonesians who sided with the Dutch. Even when threatened by them, Larasati or Ara was able to threaten them back.

*"Tahu apa kau tentang perjuangan bintang film? Sedang para pemimpin bisa hargaijuanganku, mengapa kau tidak? Apa kau lebih besar dari mereka? Lepaskan ikatan dia. Kalau hanya bertempur, ayoh. Aku juga bisa bertempur di bawah komando yang baik. Kapan kau mau bertempur? Sekarang?" [5, hlm. 93]*

The quote above is Larasati's statement to the revolutionary fighters in Jakarta, who initially held Larasati and Tabat (also a revolutionary fighter but not from Jakarta) hostage, suspecting them of being Dutch stooges or spies. Larasati then attempted to resist by challenging the assumptions and attitudes that disrespected the struggle of a film star. Furthermore, she questioned why the revolutionary fighters failed to appreciate her struggle when the leaders of the revolutionary fighters did. Larasati even ordered the revolutionary fighters and her comrades to untie Tabat and challenged her to fight (war) immediately.

This demonstrates Larasati's efforts to fight and resist against attempts to belittle her abilities and commitment, both as a pro-revolutionary film star and her commitment to the revolutionary struggle. Furthermore, it is clear that Larasati engaged in direct struggle and resistance on the ground (fighting/war), demonstrating her commitment and consistency to the revolutionary struggle.

*"Malam ini kami ikut bertempur. Mengapa diam semua?"*

*"Ara!" seru Ibunya.*

*"Apa yang ditakuti, Bu? Kita semua hidup terus-menerus dalam ketakutan. Apa kalian biasanya ketakutan? Tidak ada. Kalau Revolusi menang, tidak seorang pun perlu takut lagi. Mari berangkat!" [5, hlm. 93]*

The above quote confirms that Larasati fought and resisted not only the revolutionary fighters and those closest to her who doubted her spirit, courage, and commitment, but also the enemy, the Dutch.

Next, we see the struggle and resistance undertaken by Sanikem, also known as Nyai Ontosoroh, in the novel "This Earth of Mankind." Nyai Ontosoroh's struggle and resistance are clearly and prominently displayed when she faces the white court held by the Dutch colonial government. This struggle and resistance were undertaken to defend her rights as a mother, namely the right to custody of her daughter, Annelies. This is as described in the following quotes.

*“Tuan Hakim yang terhormat, Tuan Jaksa yang terhormat, karena toh telah dimulai membongkar keadaan rumah tanggaku .... (ketokan palu; diperingatkan agar menjawab langsung). Aku, Nyai Ontosoroh alias Sanikem, gundik mendiang Tuan Mellema, mempunyai pertimbangan lain dalam hubungan antara anakku dengan tamuku. Sanikem hanya seorang gundik. Dari kegundikanku lahir Annelies. Tak ada yang menggugat hubunganku dengan mendiang Tuan Mellema, hanya karena dia Eropa Totok. Mengapa hubungan antara anakku dengan Tuan Minke dipersoalkan? Hanya karena Tuan Minke pribumi? Mengapa tidak disinggung hampir semua orangtua golongan Indo? Antara aku dengan Tuan Mellema ada ikatan perbudakan yang tidak pernah digugat oleh hukum. Antara anakku dengan Tuan Minke ada cinta-mencintai yang sama-sama tulus. Memang belum ada ikatan hukum. Tanpa ikatan itu pun anak-anakku lahir, dan tak ada seorang pun yang berkeberatan. Orang Eropa dapat membeli perempuan Pribumi seperti diriku ini. Apa pembelian ini lebih benar daripada percintaan tulus? Kalau orang Eropa boleh berbuat karena, keunggulan uang dan kekuasaannya, mengapa kalau Pribumi jadi ejekan, justru karena cinta tulus?” [7, hlm. 426]*

The quote above is a form of resistance by Nyai Ontosoroh against the colonial system in the Dutch East Indies. She challenges and questions the system of concubinage/slavery that was not a problem for the Dutch colonialists, while the Dutch colonialists questioned Annelies' relationship with Minke, simply because Annelies was Indo and Minke was a native. In addition, Nyai Ontosoroh said that Europeans could buy natives because of their superiority in money and power. Meanwhile, natives became mocked just because they loved an Indo woman (of Dutch descent). This quote shows Nyai Ontosoroh's struggle and resistance against the Dutch colonial system that normalized the system of concubinage/slavery that was in effect at that time in the Dutch East Indies.

*“Annelies, anakku, Tuan, hanya seorang Indo, maka tidak boleh melakukan apa yang dilakukan bapaknya? Aku yang melahirkannya, membesarkan, dan mendidik, tanpa bantuan satu sen pun dari Tuan-Tuan yang terhormat. Atau bukan aku yang telah bertanggungjawab atasnya selama ini? Tuan-Tuan sama sekali tidak pernah bersusah-payah untuknya. Mengapa usil?” [7, hlm. 427]*

This quote depicts Nyai Ontosoroh's lawsuit against the Dutch East Indies colonial system, which prohibited women of European-Indonesian (Indo) descent from having relations with indigenous men. This demonstrates Nyai Ontosoroh's struggle and resistance against the colonial system, which positioned indigenous people as inferior.

*“Suaranya bergaung-gaung ke seluruh gedung. Dan semua hadirin terdiam. Agen yang menyeretnya lebih cepat dalam melaksanakan tugas. Pada waktu itu wanita Pribumi itu telah menjadi jaksa resmi, seorang penuduh terhadap bangsa Eropa yang menertawakan perbuatan mereka sendiri.” [7, hlm. 427]*

This quote tells the story of Nyai Ontosoroh's attitude, which cornered the Europeans (the Dutch) in the white court (a trial held by the Dutch colonial government), resulting in her being expelled and dragged out of the courtroom by officers. However, she continued to speak out and utter words that cornered the Europeans. This clearly shows

that Nyai Ontosoroh was resisting the Europeans who had created the system of concubinage/slavery as part of the colonial system.

*"Dan advokat itu orang Eropa juga, Ma?"*

*"Hanya pengabdian uang. Bertambah banyak uang kau berikan padanya, bertambah dia jujur padamu. Itulah Eropa." [7, hlm. 490]*

*"Aku begidik. Seluruh tahun-tahun pelajaran di sekolah dijungkir-balikkan oleh seorang nyai dalam hanya tiga kalimat pendek." [7, hlm. 490]*

Based on the quotes above, it can be concluded that Nyai Ontosoroh's resistance efforts can not only be observed from her words and attitudes, but also Minke's assumptions and opinions, who felt shuddered by Nyai Ontosoroh's courage in carrying out resistance efforts against the Europeans.

*"Minke, kita akan lawan. Berani kau, Nak, Nyo?"*

*"Kita akan berlawan, Ma, bersama-sama."*

*"Biarpun tanpa ahli hukum. Kita akan jadi Pribumi pertama yang melawan Pengadilan Putih, Nak, Nyo. Bukankah itu suatu kehormatan juga?" [7, hlm. 494]*

These quotes indicate that Nyai Ontosoroh and Minke would resist the White Court. Nyai Ontosoroh felt honored to undertake this resistance because they were the first native Indonesians to oppose the White Court, even without the assistance of legal experts. This demonstrates Nyai Ontosoroh's courage in her struggle and resistance against the Europeans and the colonial system of the Dutch East Indies government at the time.

## Conclusion

Women in these novels are described as victims of the patriarchal and colonial systems. The Pantai Girl, who was made a trial wife of a priyayi (Bendoro) and did not have the right to care for and have her own child, is evidence that the Pantai Girl is a victim of patriarchy and feudalism. In addition, Larasati is trapped by the common opinion/assumption that being a woman is something to be regretted because she cannot directly participate in war like men. This shows that Larasati is a victim of the patriarchal system that considers women as second-class human beings. Meanwhile, Sanikem or Nyai Ontosoroh is a victim of patriarchy because she was sold by her own father to be a nyai-nyai or concubine to his superior for a promotion. As a victim of the colonial system, Larasati was taken prisoner and used by a Dutch henchman (Jusman) as a sexual object. Furthermore, Nyai Ontosoroh does not have equal rights in the eyes of the law, either with the Dutch or the nobility. Nyai Ontosoroh even lost the right to her child.

Despite being victims of patriarchal and colonial systems, the three women continued their struggle. Gadis Pantai fought against Bendoro and broke through feudal traditions and the patriarchal system to defend what was rightfully hers: her own child. Larasati

fought against the Dutch colonialists and their henchmen through her mastery of acting, remaining committed to the revolutionary cause and even taking part in the war. Nyai Ontosoroh bravely fought against the white court held by the Dutch colonial government to fight for the custody of her child, Annelies.

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