

The Role of Papuan Women in *Isinga* and *Namaku Teweraut*

Arief Kurniatama¹, Suyitno², St. Y. Slamet³

¹Magister of Indonesian Language Education, Sebelas Maret University, Indonesia

^{2,3}Lecturer in Indonesian Language Education, Sebelas Maret University, Indonesia

Abstract—The role initiated by Papuan women in providing balance and survival can in fact be realized by caring for others. This study aims at describing the role of Papuan women in *Isinga* and *Namaku Teweraut*. This research method uses content analysis with a feminist literary approach. The data is obtained using literature and interviews. The results of this study indicate that by managing the potential in women it will be able to anchor the nation's rank, improve the fulfillment of the needs and quality of life, give a positive influence on survival, and women have a big contribution in creating peace.

Keywords— the value of feminism, *Isinga* novel, *Papua*.

I. INTRODUCTION

The role of women is often a debate. Many people consider women to have a greater role in people's lives. On the other hand, there are those who see women as having only a role in the domestic life. However, it needs to be realized that the role of women is quite influential in development.

Role is an action or behavior carried out by someone who occupies a position in social status, if someone carries out their rights and obligations in accordance with his position; he carries out a role (Soekanto, 2002: 243). Roles can also be interpreted as demands given structurally through norms, expectations, and responsibilities (Suhardono, 1994: 15).

The increasing number of women is an asset and a problem in the field of employment. By managing the potential of women through various fields, it will have a positive impact on women's progress and personality. For example, managing the potential of women through the education and training sector, the female workforce will increasingly occupy a position that is more respectable and able to raise the rank of the nation.

In novel *Isinga* by Dorothea Rosa Herliany and the novel *Namaku Teweraut* by Ani Sekarningsih, women have a significant role in survival. Women are able to harmonize their gender identity through roles. Papuan women take advantage of the roles they can play. This is a manifestation of the feminist movement.

Feminism is a women's movement that wants equality between men and women. This movement is ideological, symbolic and political in nature which aims to dismantle and restore the roots of women's oppression to be equal in life and treat women fairly (Humm, 1986: 4). Feminism is not against men, but against endocentric notions that have taken root in the history of human life.

In relation to literature, feminism as a theory aims to analyze literary works in relation to the production process or reception of women's emancipation (Herawati, 2013). Wolf (1979: 139) states that feminism is a theory that expresses personal dignity and the dignity of all women. Meanwhile, Marry Wollstonecraft (in Djajanegara, 2000: 30) states that women, especially from the middle class, are an oppressed class that must rise from the shackles of the household.

For this reason, in this study, the author tried to analyze the novel *Isinga* by Dorothea Rosa Herliany and the novel *Namaku Teweraut* by Ani Sekarningsih in terms of feminist literary approaches or literary feminism. The main problem raised in this study is how the role of Papuan women in the novel *Isinga* and the novel *Namaku Teweraut*. The purpose of this paper is to describe the role of Papuan women in the novel *Isinga* and the novel *Namaku Teweraut*.

II. THEORETICAL BASIS

Feminism is interesting to study because it is an attempt to reorganize the stereotypes of women who have been standardized by patriarchal ideology of gender differences. The word feminism comes from the Latin word *femina* (female) which means "has the quality of women" (Arivia, 2003: 90). Aristoteles in his philosophical work states that naturally between men and women there are differences in which men are considered superior and women are considered inferior (Simone, 2003: 116; Alazzawi, 2018).

The position of women is always placed second only to men. Women have the duty to serve and satisfy the needs of men. Women are more often portrayed as patriarchal women, namely the image of women overshadowed by men. Therefore, in the 1960s the

movement of feminism understood in various fields and was a form of reform for women (Aziz in Irmayani, Asfar & Fuad 2005: 7). This is because people assume that feminism has not been well received by most people, especially in Indonesia (Suyitno & Nugraha, 2014: 34).

For this reason, feminism agrees to voice aspirations and freedom to choose and manage life both in the domestic and public sphere. Thus, women must be able to fight for their rights that are marginalized so that they can become women who have the agency to fill and live the life they want.

III. RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses qualitative methods, namely methods that are systematic, factual, accurate, and produce descriptive data in the form of written words (Bogdan & Tylor in Moleong, 2001: 3). This research strategy uses content analysis which aims to describe various situations or conditions that are the object of research. The data source consisted of primary data sources which included the novel *Isinga* (2015) by Dorothea Rosa Herliany and the novel *Namaku Tewriteraut* (2006) by Ani Sekarningsih and secondary data including books, relevant journals, and informants consisting of novelists and indigenous Papuan women.

Data collection techniques in this study use library techniques and interviews. This technique is used to analyze attitudes and views so that they can find the role of Papuan women contained in the novel *Isinga* by Dorothea Rosa Herliany and the novel *Namaku Tewriteraut* by Ani Sekarningsih with the work steps of determining novels that are understood as research objects, reading novels repeatedly and giving special marks on the data needed, classifying data and analyzing data and making conclusions.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Papua is one of the provinces located on the eastern tip of Indonesia and borders on Papua New Guinea. Topography of Papua consists of lowlands, highlands, and mountains that surround forests, rivers, and settlements of Papuan people. The life of the Papuan people is still closely related to the 'Bapak' system of customs and governance. This is because men still have inheritance rights, the right to control property, the right to lead the family, and the right to take care of other public problems. As Aristoteles stated that there are differences between men and women naturally, men are considered superior and women are considered inferior. In addition, because the Indonesian people are still colored by the remnants of patriarchal feudalism so that

men determine and women are determined (Suryana & Gunawan, 2001).

Since childhood Papuan women have always been given advice by the Mothers. This aims to encourage them so that they are not weak under the power of men and can provide survival. For Papuan women, enthusiasm is important because it can be used to do various jobs if there are difficulties both in the garden, in the forest, and in the household environment. With enthusiasm and unyielding work can be done well (Herliany, 2015: 23).

1. *Isinga* (2015) by Dorothea Rosa Herliany

Dorothea Rosa Herliany is an Indonesian female writer who has produced literary works in the form of poetry, short stories and novels. This woman born in Magelang, October 20, 1963, has been recognized by various Indonesian writers including Joko Pinurbo, Lucianus Bambang Suryanto, and Korrie Layun Rampan. According to the three writers, Dorothea's literary works were able to surprise readers. In addition, the literature written by Dorothea is not merely a mere imagination but a reality that exists in a society where the telling of novels is based on real problems. That is why novels, including in the most sociological and responsive literary works, are very sensitive to sociohistorical fluctuations in society (Ratna, 2004: 336).

The novel *Isinga* tells the story of the struggle of a Papuan woman called Irewa Ongge from Aitubu village. Irewa was the daughter of Mama Kame and Father Labobar. Since childhood, Irewa and Aitubu women had been bound by customary rules. Women were only allowed to do domestic activities, such as serving husbands, taking care of children, gardening in the fields, and raising pigs.

Papuan women in this novel had never been given education. Education was only for men including hunting skills. However, due to high curiosity, finally Irewa ventured to join a class opened by Reverend Ruben. With education, Irewa was able to provide survival for her children and other women in her village.

In addition to facing the rules of customs and the power of patriarchy, Papuan women in the novel *Isinga* also had to deal with the entry of foreign cultures (Wiyatmi, Suryaman, Swastika, 2017: 105). Outside culture was free association and the emergence of various venereal diseases (syphilis or HIV / AIDS). From that incident, the role of women changed to the public sphere.

Women like Irewa Ongge, dr. Jingsi Pigay, and Ms. Selvi were movers for other women. They took concrete actions in the fields of education, economy, health, environment, family and society. This was also supported by the principle that is known to everyone "*Akahi paekahi*

yae ewelende, wali onomi honomi eungekende" which means "If all of you consider your brother, your life will be safe and peaceful (Herliany, 2015: 158).

1.1 The Role of Papuan Women in Education

Education is an important process in human life. Through education, one can share with others, teach goodness and knowledge, and give a positive reflection of behavior. In the novel *Isinga*, the role of Papuan women in education lies with the Irewa Ongge figure. Irewa is the main character in this novel who was abused by her husband and got injustice from the rules of customs.

However, Irewa's passion for sharing and giving knowledge to fellow women was very high. When Irewa moved to Yar District, she felt sympathy for her neighborhood. Many women got venereal disease or syphilis from sexual relations with their partners. This disease originated from a place of prostitution that was increasingly mushrooming in the Yar District.

From this incident, Irewa was determined to improve the lives of the Yar District people and provide knowledge about the dangers of syphilis or HIV / AIDS, as shown in the following quote:

Irewa mulai menyampaikan pendapatnya tentang pelacuran. Ia menceritakan pengalamannya saat terkena penyakit sifilis. Ia menceritakan walau perempuan hanya melakukan hubungan badan dengan suami saja bisa saja terkena penyakit kelamin. Ia juga mengajak perempuan pedagang di pasar menjaga anak lakinya hati-hati (Herliany, 2015: 157).

Irewa began to express her opinion about prostitution. She recounted her experience when exposed to syphilis. She told me that even though women only had had sexual relations with their husbands, they could have contracted venereal disease. She also invited women traders in the market to look after their sons carefully (Herliany, 2015: 157).

Irewa was able to convey the dangers of syphilis from her own experience and the knowledge provided by Dr. Jingi Pigay. According to her, the spread of syphilis occurred because of the entry of a number of people from outside Papua who came to look for expensive Gaharu wood. In addition to timber seekers, also came groups of migrants from other islands who eventually settled in Papua. From there various public facilities emerged including brothels.

Therefore, Irewa invited women traders in the market to guard their sons carefully and unite against them by forcing the businessmen in prostitution to close down their businesses and repatriate prostitutes to their home areas.

1.2 The Role of Papuan Women in the Economy

In the novel *Isinga*, the role of Papuan women in the economy is reflected in the character of Ms. Selvi Warobay. Ms. Selvi was a woman who served as a sub-district head in Yar District. Ms. Selvi's role in the economy was to collect *noken* and necklaces from moms in the village and help to sell them. The activities carried out by Ms. Selvi sought to build the economy of women and harmonize women's lives. *Nokens* that had been sold were special *nokens* made of hardwood leather which was hard to come by. Here's the quote:

Sebelum menjadi kepala distrik. Ibu Selvi punya kegiatan dengan para perempuan lain di sebuah kelompok kerja. Kegiatan mereka antara lain mengumpulkan noken dari mama-mama di kampung dan membantu menjualkannya. Noken ini adalah noken khusus yang terbuat dari kulit kayu yang susah didapat. Juga kalung dari manik-manik dan mata kalungnya dari buah di hutan (Herliany, 2015: 189).

Before becoming head of the district, Ms. Selvi had activities with other women in a working group. Their activities included collecting noken from mothers in the village and helping sell it. This noken was a special noken made of hardwood leather that is hard to come by, also necklaces from beads and necklace eyes from fruit in the forest (Herliany, 2015: 189).

From the quote, Ms. Selvi wanted to invite women to abandon bad habits and turn to good habits that could make money. The money obtained from handicrafts would be women's rights, although sometimes if a woman was generous, she could only give money to men as a sign of affection (Wasaraka, 2019: 111).

In addition, Ms. Selvi also taught teenagers to make *noken* using materials from wool yarn and manila yarn. *Noken* was a mandatory skill that must be owned by Papuan women. *Noken* was not only valuable for trading, but also to express the feeling of falling in love.

1.3 The Role of Papuan Women in Health

Health is an important aspect of life, because if the community is healthy, all activities can be done well. In the novel *Isinga*, the role of Papuan women in health is reflected in Jingi Pigay. Jingi was Irewa's twin and a doctor. Jingi was very concerned about the lives of Irewa and other women. Jingi's concern was higher when Irewa was exposed to venereal disease. From that incident, Jingi and the nurse were always on duty to ensure the existence of the disease and to give drugs or injections to patients. Here's the quote:

Jingi dan para perawat yang bertugas keliling mendengar tentang banyaknya orang yang sakit karena penyakit kelamin. Ia datang dan membagi-bagikan kondom ke masyarakat (Herliany, 2015: 158).

Jingi and the traveling nurses heard about the many people who were sick with venereal disease. She came and distributed condoms to the community (Herliany, 2015: 158).

Condoms are contraceptives or devices to prevent transmission of venereal disease. Condom distribution carried out by Dr. Jingi and the nurses were intended to help and maintain the harmony of the people in Yar District. Jingi also did not want the spread of the HIV/AIDS virus to be a terrible plague for local people.

1.4 The Role of Papuan Women in the Environment

Patriarchal power over nature and the environment that directly affects women was seen in the novel *Isinga*, especially through the voices of women in the interior. They had lost food, medicine, and income sources due to logging and replacing trees in the forest that did not pay attention to the basic needs of indigenous people.

In the novel *Isinga*, the role of Papuan women is reflected in the figures of the Mama and Irewa. The Mama always said that since the ancient ancestors, parents taught to respect nature, respect others, and respect the forest. This method was carried out to protect natural and environmental ecosystems. If the sago trees were cut down replaced with oil palm, then the indigenous people were not capable of eating.

Therefore, the women who met with Irewa also said:

Tanah, hutan, dan air adalah sumber kehidupan. Baik bagi manusia, hewan, tanaman, dan berbagai makhluk hidup lainnya. Masyarakat adat setempat secara turun temurun memiliki sejarah. Batas-batas wilayah dan tanda bukti alam. Ada lembaga adat yang mengurus dan mengatur masyarakat dan hak atas tanah. Hubungan antara tanah dan manusia ibarat ibu dan darah. Memberikan napas dan kehidupan bagi manusia sejak lahir. Tumbuh besar hingga mati. Karenanya tanah dan hutan harus dijaga, dilindungi, dikelola, dan dimanfaatkan untuk kelanjutan hidup manusia (Herliany, 2015: 163).

“Land, forest and water are sources of life for humans, animals, plants, and various other living things. Local indigenous peoples historically have a history, regional boundaries and natural evidence. There are customary institutions that manage and regulate the community and land rights. The relationship between land and humans is like mother and blood, giving breath and life to humans from birth, growing to death.

Therefore land and forests have to be protected, managed and utilized for the continuation of human life.” (Herliany, 2015: 163).

2. *Namaku Teweraut* (2006) by Ani Sekarningsih

Ani Sekarningsih is an Indonesian female writer who has a concern for the lives of the Papuan people, especially the *Asmat* people. She founded the *Asmat* Foundation along with M. Kharis Suhud, Muchroddji, Mashud Wisnoesapoetra, and Syarif Tando in 1986. In addition to literary works in novel form, Ani also has literary works in the form of poetry. The novel *Namaku Teweraut* received an award from the Main Book Foundation of the Indonesian Ministry of National Education in 2002 (Wiyatmi, Suryaman, Swastika, 2017: 106).

The novel *Namaku Teweraut* tells the story of the struggle of a Papuan woman named Teweraut who came from a remote indigenous community within the *Asmat* tribe. In the Tewe's family, women were not entitled to education. Because women only served families, gave birth to children, and care for them, and found good food (Sekarningsih, 2006: 63). Even so, Endew (Mother) Teweraut opposed the demand and asked permission from nDiwi (Ayah) to allow Teweraut to get an equal education.

From the tradition that marginalized women, the role of women also extended to the public sphere including in the fields of education, health, family, society, and social status. The female figures who held the role of control were Teweraut, Endew, and Mama Rin.

2.1 The Role of Papuan Women in Education

Education cannot be separated from the reality and socio-cultural context because education has a big contribution (Wiyatmi, 2018: 43). In the novel *Namaku Teweraut*, the role of Papuan women in education is reflected in the character Endew (Mrs. Teweraut). Endew had understood the importance of education for children, especially women. Endew was even willing to oppose traditions that apply in customs. Endew wanted her child to be able to read and write. According to Endew, by prioritizing education someone would be able to prepare themselves and their future. Here's the quote:

“Sudah waktunya kita mempunyai sikap. Waspada menerima perubahan zaman yang semakin maju. Hal Tewe, biarkan ia sekolah. Agar nasib masa depannya berubah lebih baik. Bisa kerja di kantor kecamatan atau di kantor keuskupan,” begitu selalu Endew meyakinkan tiap anggota kerabat tentang harapannya dalam

mempersiapkan kesejahteraan masa depanku (Sekarningsih, 2006: 12).

"It's time we have attitude. Beware of accepting increasingly advanced times. About Tewel, let her go to school, so that her future fate changes better. She can work in the sub-district office or in the diocesan office, " Endew always assured each member of his family about her hopes in preparing for my future welfare (Sekarningsih, 2006: 12).

2.2 The Role of Papuan Women in Health

Meanwhile, in the novel *Namaku Tewelaut*, the role of Papuan women in health is reflected in the figure of Mama Rin. Mama Rin was a female researcher and assistant to the Asmat tribe. When there was a cultural mission between Indonesia and Amsterdam, Mama Rin always reminded the dancers to maintain cleanliness and not to have sex or *papisy* carelessly. This is to guard them and maintain the honor of the nation. Here's the quote:

Akhir-akhir ini Mama Rin sering uring-uringan. Kuakui kamarku dan teman-teman selalu berantakan. Pakaian-pakaian yang bersih dan kotor bercampur menjadi satu. Bergantungan di kamar mandi atau teronggok disetiap sudut kamar.

"Mama telah membacakan aturan bahwa semua duta seni harus bisa menjaga diri" (Sekarningsih, 2006: 116).

"Lately, Mama Rin has been furious. I know that my room and my friends' have always messed up. Clean and dirty clothes are mixed together, hanging in the bathroom or thrown away in every corner of the room."

"Mama has read the rules that all art ambassadors must be able to protect themselves" (Sekarningsih, 2006: 116).

Every person must be obliged to participate in realizing environmental health. This is to prevent the occurrence of diseases or health problems. Mama Rin responsibility to remind her needs to be appreciated because is not easy to organize everyone to lead a healthy life.

2.3 The Role of Papuan Women in the Environment

In the novel *Namaku Tewelaut*, the role of Papuan women in the environment is reflected in the figure of Mama Rin. Her concern for illegal logging affected forest loggers to no longer cut down forests. Here's the quote:

"Tidakkah kamu sadari bahwa hutan yang sedang kamu babat itu sesungguhnya pinjaman dari anak cucumu?" kata Mama Rin dalam suatu kesempatan tatap muka dengan beberapa penebang.

"Bayangkan, kamu dituntut menyediakan 1500 batang pohon untuk memenuhi kebutuhan 4300 kubik setiap bulan dan sekian ratus batang rintisan yang juga harus ditebang! Dan kamu jangan lupa, selama ini erosi hutan rawa ini tertunda keparahannya karena tertahan oleh akar-akar pohon. Apa yang akan terjadi beberapa tahun mendatang kalau tidak diadakan pencegahan sejak dini? Asmat akan berubah menjadi lautan, karena sudah tak ada penahannya!"

"Don't you realize that the forest you are tripping is actually a loan from your children and grandchildren?" said Mama Rin on one occasion to face several loggers.

"Imagine, you are required to provide 1500 trees to meet the needs of 4300 cubic feet per month and several hundred stems that must also be cut down! And don't forget, all this time the erosion of swamp forest has been delayed due to being held by tree roots. What will happen in the next few years if prevention is not done early? Asmat will turn into an ocean, because there is no barrier!"

Mama Rin called for this insistence on loggers so they could think about survival. Mama Rin also warned about the dangers of illegal logging, as the impact on erosion and the Asmat nature would turn into the ocean. As a report from Greenpeace that between 2000-2005 the rate of loss of forest areas in Papua reached 2% or 2.8 million hectares per year (<https://p.dw.com/p/FpFb>). For this reason, Papuan must be careful so that they can prevent erosion, flooding, and global warming.

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and the discussion of the research, it shows that in the novel *Isinga* and *Namaku Tewelaut* there were various public roles in the fields of education, economics, health and environment. By managing the potential of women through education and training, the female workers will occupy an honorable position. In addition, women will have new and more complex knowledge and insights. The role of women in the economy will have an impact on economic growth which spurs on the growth of the industry and increase fulfillment of the needs and quality of life. In the world of health, women who prioritize healthy life have a positive influence on the survival of their families and those around them. Women also have great potential to participate in environmental management and planning. Further, to maintain the integrity of the nation it cannot be separated from the role of women because women have a big contribution in creating peace.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This article was taken from the thesis research in the Indonesian Language Education Master's Program at The University of Sebelas Maret in Indonesia. I would love to say my deep grateful to Prof. Dr. Suyitno, M.Pd. and Prof. Dr. St. Y. Slamet, M.Pd. as the supervisors and the reviewers. Also, thank you to all parties who have given assistance to complete this research and publish this article in the form of a journal.

REFERENCES

- [1] Alazzawi, A. J. M. (2018). A Feminist Perspective in Ngugi Wa Thiong's Novel "*Petal of Blood*". International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences, vol. 3 (5), pp: 849-853.
<https://dx.doi.org/10.22161/ijels.3.5.27>
- [2] Arivia, G. (2003). Filsafat Berperspektif Feminis. Jakarta: Yayasan Jurnal Perempuan.
- [3] Djajanegara, S. (2000). Kritik Sastra Feminis: Sebuah Pengantar. Jakarta: PT Raja Grafindo Persada.
- [4] Herawati, Y. (2013). Image Women in Novels *Upacara, Api Awan Asap, and Bunga* of Korrie Layun Rampan. Atavisme, vol. 16 (1), pp 43-56.
- [5] Herliany, D. R. (2015). Isinga. Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama.
- [6] Humm, M. (1986). Feminist Criticism. Great Britain: The Harvester Press.
- [7] Irmayani, Asfar, D., Fuad, K. (2005). Feminisme dalam Saman, Imipramine, dan Jangan Main-Main dengan Kelaminmu. Kalimantan: Balai Bahasa Provinsi Kalimantan Barat.
- [8] Purwaningsih, A. (2008, November 7). Berlomba-lomba Merusak Hutan Papua. [Online]. DW. Retrieved from <https://p.dw.com/p/FpFb>
- [9] Sekarningsih, A. (2006). Namaku Taweraut. Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia.
- [10] Soekanto, S. (2001). Sosiologi sebagai Pengantar. Jakarta: PT Raja Grafindo Persada.
- [11] Suhardono, E. (1994). Teori Peran, Konsep, Derivasi dan Implikasinya. Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama.
- [12] Suryana, N., Gunawan, D., & Hamid, A. (2001). Ironi Perempuan di Tengah Isu Sentimen Gender (Telaah Sosiologis Kontemporer Indonesia). Jurnal Harmonia, vol. 3 (3), pp: 187-198.
- [13] Suyitno & Nugraha, D. (2014). Canonization of Four Indonesian Contemporary Novels Written in The 21st Century: Questioning Public Recognition and Acceptance Towards The Ideas of Feminism. Journal of Language and Literature, vol. 5 (1), pp: 33-40.
- [14] Wasaraka, R. Y. (2019). Perempuan Perkasa: Belajar Praktik Kesetaraan dalam Budaya Suku Korowai. Papua: Papua Cendekia.
- [15] Wiyatmi, Suryaman, M., Swastika, E. (2017). Ekofeminisme: Kritik Sastra Berwawasan Ekologi dan Feminis. Yogyakarta: Cantrik Pustaka.
- [16] Wiyatmi. (2018). Feminist Education in Indonesian Novels Under the Domination of Patriarchy. International Journal of Gender and Women's Studies, vol. 6 (2), pp: 42-51,
<https://dx.doi.org/10.15640/ijgws.v6n2a5>
- [17] Wolf, V. 1979. Women and Writing: Introduction. London: Women's Press.