

# Understanding Pramoedya Ananta Toer's Thoughts Through The Novel Bumi Manusia

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## **Abstract:**

*This article reveals Pramoedya Ananta Toer's thoughts in the novel Bumi Manusia (1980) on the formation of a dignified nation equal to Western nations, including: the awakening of Nyai Ontosoroh against the oppressive colonialism system; criticism of the Javanese priyayi tradition that degrades human dignity; criticism of modernisation.*

*The urgency of Pramoedya Ananta Toer's thoughts in the novel Bumi Manusia is based on the originality of his thoughts as the embryo of nationalism, in shaping the nation. According to Pramoedya Ananta Toer, the formation of nation that was dignified and equal to Western nations which was based on the acceptance of science and modernisation. The formation of nation was shown through the struggle of Minke and Nyai Ontosoroh in the "White Court" against the Dutch colonialism system that robbed them of all their rights. He also criticised the primordialist, patriarchal Javanese Priyayi tradition as a barrier to the formation of the nation.*

**Keywords:** *colonialisme system, nation, modernation, Javanese priyayi tradition, White Court.*

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## **I. Introduction**

Pramoedya Ananta Toer was born in Blora, Central Java on 6 February 1925. He spent half of his life in prison (Pramoedya, 2011:11-18; 2003:1; IG. Krisnadi, 2001:188). His imprisonment and prisoner status did not stop him from writing, as he proved to be a prolific novelist, full of awards. More than fifty of his works were published and translated into 42 foreign languages (Pramoedya, 2003:1). In the 1951-1995, he received 14 national and international awards in the fields of journalism, literature, art, and creative communication (Pramoedya, 1995:xix-xx). His productivity and creativity were evident during his 10 years in Buru Concentration Camp (1969-1979) producing quality historical novels, such as: *Bumi Manusia* (1980), *Anak Semua Bangsa* (1980), *Jejak Langkah* (1985), *Rumah Kaca* (1988), *Arus Balik* (1995), *Arok Dedes* (1999), *Mangir* (2015), and *Mata Pusaran* (19 January 1996).

*Bumi Manusia* as a literary work in the form of a historical novel was the result of Pramoedya Ananta Toer's reflection on the wisdom of history. Historians in writing history are bound by a fact, so they are not free to write history (historiography). However, a writer of historical novels was free to create his own story (Koh, 2011: 250). In this regard, A. Teeuw argued that a historical novelist built a narrative using historical figures and fictional characters told according to his wishes, which were often not factually correct, but made sense in a meaningful way (Koh, 2011: 255). In this context, an author of a historical novel gave his own meaning to historical facts with his own highlight. Therefore, analysing historical novels should focus on the thoughts of historical novelists rather than highlighting historical events. In this regard, Sulastin Sutrisno, a philologist from Universitas Indonesia, argued that a historical novelist did not only intend to explain historical events as they were, but she explained her thoughts based on an understanding of past events. In this case, a historical novelist only took the historical figures and imaginative characters as material, thus he strengthened the integrity of the historical novel (1982: 210).

Pramoedya Ananta Toer as a novelist of *Bumi Manusia* (1980) was based on a "small piece" of archive about the verbal process of Mauritz Mellema's (son of Herman Mellema and Amelia Hanna) to Mr. Herman Mellema (birth father) who abandoned his birth mother Amelia Anna as his legal wife. This archive was read by Pramoedya Ananta Toer before being exiled to Buru Concentration Camp in 1969-1979 (Pramoedya, 19 January 1996). He wrote *Bumi Manusia* in the form of a historical novel by breaking away from the bonds of the discipline of history, which was bound to historical facts. However, he was free to create and shaped historical characters of his desired while he insisted on the "truth of history." (Hilmar, 2008:103-105).

This article reveals Pramoedya Ananta Toer's thoughts in the novel *Bumi Manusia* (1980) as an embryo of nationalism about the formation of a dignified nation that is equal to nations in Europe. The discussion focused on: the awakening of Nyai Ontosoroh against the oppressive colonialism system; Minke's critique of the primordialist and patriarchal Javanese *priyayi* tradition that was not only demeaning to human dignity but also considered as a barrier to the formation of nation.

Etymologically, the term nationalism comes from the word nation (French and English) or *natie* (Dutch) which means nation. According to Ernest Renan (1984:53-54), the term nation was defined as a great solidarity formed because of the awareness that people had sacrificed a lot for continuing to live together. Meanwhile, Hans Kohn thought that nationalism was an understanding that the highest loyalty of individuals was given to the national state. Therefore, nationalism showed a deep feeling of being closely related to the land of his blood, (Kohn, 1984: 11). According to Indonesian historian Sartono Kartodirdjo (2001), in nationalism colonial countries, including Indonesia, emerged and developed as a form of ideology of resistance to the domination of colonialism. However, Benedict Anderson (2006) asserted that a nation was formed when each citizen imagined themselves as part of an aspired community, rather than interactions between citizens on a daily life. A citizen never knew, met, or heard all of their countrymen in person. However, in their minds they identified themselves as part of the same nation with various national symbols and identities: language, national anthem, national heroes, national films, and various other expressions of national culture including food. In addition, John Milton argued that nationalism was not merely a struggle for collective freedom from foreign oppression, but a struggle for individual freedom from oppressive political, social, and cultural power (Kohn, 1984:22) as shown by the characters Nyai Ontosoroh and Minke in Pramoedya Ananta Toer's rich novel *Bumi Manusia* (1980). In this case, his thoughts on nation formation in the novel are shown through the awakening of Nyai Ontosoroh in the "White Court" (European Court) of Surabaya against the Dutch colonial power that oppressed and deprived her of all rights and the rebellion of a character Minke (Javanese *Priyayi*) against the primordialistic-patriarchal Javanese *priyayi* tradition that was considered as an obstacle to the formation of the nation.

## II. Material And Methods

The understanding of Pramoedya Ananta Toer's thoughts in the novel *Bumi Manusia* involved the study of the history of thought. This study uses a combination of historical methods and literary sociology and societal approaches. The historical research method encompassed four stages of work as follows: (1) heuristics (searching and finding relevant data); (2) data criticism (critical treatment of data internally and externally to ensured authenticity and credibility of information to be historical facts); (3) interpretation (transforming historical facts to compiled historical arguments); (4) historiography as a stage of pouring arguments as a synthesis or historical construction (Sartono, 2001, Storey, 2011, Cullom Davis, 1978). Meanwhile, according to Swingewood, the sociology of literature examined contextual literary works as socio-cultural documents and as a mirror of the times that recorded the socio-cultural reality of a society at a certain time. According to Hashim Awang, the sociology of literature approach was expected to track Pramoedya's thoughts in the novel *Bumi Manusia* on various matters concerning society, culture and nationality (Koh, 2011:256). In addition, according to Hashim Awang, in understanding Pramoedya's thoughts, a societal approach was needed. This approach as a tool for dissecting all kinds of problems was rooted in the goal of seeking goodness and justice in society. This was related to the purpose of writing literature, namely dissecting hypocrisy, immorality, injustice, deception, riots, pretence and other problems considered to be the cause of societal inequality or disparity (Koh, 2011:256).

## III. Result

### The Awakening of Nyai Ontosoroh Against Oppressive Colonialism

Pramoedya Ananta Toer in the novel *Bumi Manusia* narrated the "pockmarked" face of colonial power and society in the Dutch East Indies hidden in the folds of social stratification of Dutch Indies society by placing the *Totok* community at the top using the "White Court" to hegemonised the lower layers of society (Totok, Indo, Pribumi, Nyai), especially the natives and Nyai. The *Totok's* hegemony over the Indigenous and Nyai was shown by the Master Administrator of the Tulasan Sugar Factory, Sidoarjo, Herman Mellema who wanted Sanikem, the daughter of the Tulasan Sugar Factory Scribe, Raden Sastrotomo as a slave. In the patriarchal Javanese *Priyayi* tradition, there was an assumption that the world belongs to men, so that women were likened to *swarga nunut* (heaven follows), *neraka katut* (hell follows), manifested in the issue of executing children's matchmaking issues in the hands of parents (fathers), while a mother and daughter had no right to speak (IG. Krisnadi, 1993: 24). This was experienced by Sanikem, who was sold by her father (Sastrotomo) as a slave to Mr Mellema for 25 guilders and promised to be promoted a position as a factory paymaster (Pramoedya, 1980:77). In this regard, Sanikem said:

"I am ashamed, Anne, to have a father who is a Sastrotoem clerk. He doesn't deserve to be my father. But I'm still his child, and I can't do anything about it. Mum's tears and tongue can't be a deterrent. What's more, I don't know and don't own this world. I don't even have my own body. The Lord Administrator handed over 25 guilders to my father, which was followed by my handing myself over to him, and promised my father that he would be appointed to be a cashier after completing a two-year apprenticeship. From that moment, I lost all respect and honour for my father and for anyone who had ever sold his own son in his life. For whatever purpose." (Pramoedya, 1980:77).

In the case of an application for the legal status of the marriage of Herman Mellema (*Totok*)-Ontosoroh (*Nyai*) and the legal status of his two children, Robert Mellema (*Indo*) and Annelies Mellema (*Indo*) in Surabaya's "White Court", the judge decided that the marriage of Tuan Administratur Herman Mellema-Ontosoroh (Sanikem) was legally invalid, and the children of the marriage were declared illegitimate. However, Robert Mellema and Annelies Mellema were only recognised as the children of Herman Mellema, and given the right to use the surname Mellema. Ontosoroh, who gave birth to the two children, lost her legal motherhood and guardianship rights over her children, and Ontosoroh's status as *Nyai* or Mistress of Tuan Herman Mellema remained with her throughout her life. In this regard, Nyai Ontosoroh said:

"Your dad and I (mom) to the "White Court" to recognise Robert and you Annelies as Mr Mellema's children. I had hoped that my children and I would be legally recognised. But that is not, you and your brother are not considered legal children, you are only recognised as Mellema's children, and are entitled to use his name. The law does not recognise you and your brother as my children, even though I gave birth to them. The Dutch law, you and your brother gain a father, but you lose your mother." (Pramoedya, 1980:86).

Like other children, Mr. Herman Mellema and Nyai Ontosoroh wanted their two children to be baptised in the church. However, Robert Mellema and Annelies Mellema were refused by the priest on the grounds that the parents could not show their marriage certificate in the civil registry and the birth certificates of their children. In this regard, Mr Herman Mellema said: "These children deserve a father. Why don't they have forgiveness from Christ. " (Pramoedya, 1980:86-87, Hugo Susdiyanto, 2015:30-31). Nyai Ontosoroh tried to persuade Mr. Mellema to take his marriage to the Civil Registry, in order his two children become legitimate children, However, Mr Herman Mellema refused without any reasons, so Robert Mellema and Annelies Mellema never obtained the status of legally legitimate children and never been baptised. Ontosoroh failed to gain the *mevrouw* status she dreamed of and she became Mr. Herman Mellema's mistress forever, and the *Nyai* status was always inherent in Ontosoroh.

In the view of the Dutch Indies society, whether *Totok*, *Indo*, or Indigenous, *Nyai*'s status was looked down upon. They considered that *Nyai* did not recognise legal marriage, thus giving birth to children that were not legally valid. *Nyai* was a kind of human being with low morals, low education, selling honour to live happily and luxuriously (Poerbatjaraka, 1957: 78). It was not even uncommon for them to participate in murder scandals in order to obtain their master's property. The issue of *Totok*, *Indo*, *Pribumi*, *Nyai* in Dutch Indies society at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was described by Pramoedya Ananta Toer as elements that form a web of life like a spider's net, in the middle of which was a spider or Nyai / Mistress who did not accommodate all the sacrifices that came to her, but her net caught all the humiliations to swallow alone. A *Nyai* was not a master even if she lived in the same room as him. She was not one of her own children. She was neither *Totok*, nor *Indo*, nor *Pribumi* (Pramoedya, 1980:285). However, Nyai Ontosoroh did not want to be a *Nyai* with low dignity and a bad stigma in society, rather she raised herself from the oppression of her parents who had made her a slave, as a *Nyai*, as the mistress of Mr Herman Mellema. She wanted herself to be an educated *Nyai*, with a good personality, wise and open to her children, as a strong, independent person in leading the company (Boerderij Buitenzorg) which she had obtained by studying with Mr. Herman Mellema. Nyai Ontosoroh's hard work brought her success in leading Boerderij Buitenzorg. This success brought honour to herself and her daughter, Annelies Mellema in the community. Nyai Ontosoroh always kept her company running well, because if she did not, she would lose her honour, degenerating into a despised *Nyai* in the community. This is said by Nyai Ontosoroh to Minke in the following quote:

"...Son (Minke), without the company doing well, this family will lose its honour. I hope you (Minke) can understand.... If I don't manage to save the company, I'll degenerate into an ordinary nyai that everyone can be insulted, looked down upon. Annelies will suffer greatly. It's useless for me to be her mother. She must be more honourable than an ordinary Indo. She must be an honourable native in the midst of her people. That honour can only come from this company. It's strange, that's the way the world wants it." (Pramoedya, 1980:285).

The legal discrimination in the "White Court" was experienced by Nyai Ontosoroh (Indigenous) in the trial of the death of Mr. Herman Mellema and the lawsuit of Ir. Maurits Mellema against Nyai Ontosoroh regarding the ownership of Boerderij Buitenzorg. In the court proceedings of both cases, the judge prohibited Nyai Ontosoroh to use Dutch in the court either as a witness or a defendant on the grounds that Dutch law did

not allow a *Nyai* or a Mistress to use Dutch, and she was allowed to speak Javanese in the court. However, Ontosoroh refused, so the judge told her to use Malay.

At the "White Court" trial, Nyai Ontosoroh protested against the custody of Annelies Mellema going to Ir. Maurits because Anelies Mellema was underage. According to Nyai Ontosoroh, she was the one who gave birth to Annelies Mellema, thus she was the only one eligible for the custody of Annelies Mellema. However, the White Court judge stated that Sanikem, a.k.a. Ontosoroh was not Meuvrow Mellema. Hence, Annelies Mellema (*Indo*) was under European law. At the same time, Ontosoroh, a Nyai (Mistress) and Indigenous was outside Dutch law or had nothing to do with this Court (White Court). In addition, Nyai Ontosoroh rejected the judge's decision which stated that Annelies Mellema was underage because she had a husband. Yet the judge argues that Annelies Mellema's marriage was underage and invalid. Nyai Ontosoroh was accused of committing an illegal act, as she was considered an ally in the rape. (Pramoedya, 1980:323-325).

Pramoedya Ananta Toer showed another humiliation committed by the *Totok* towards the natives through the statement of Mr. Herman Mellama (*Totok*) to Minke (native) who dehumanised the natives as monkeys rather than humans. Tuan Herman Mellema was annoyed about Minke (Indigenous) entering his house without his permission by stating "*kowe (anak monyet) sekalipun sudah berpakaian Eropa, bisa sedikit berbicara Belanda, dan bersama orang Eropa, tidak mungkin menjadi Eropa, dan tetap menjadi pribumi setara dengan binatang yang bernama monyet.*". Tuan Herman Mellama's annoyance was expressed in the following passage: "Who gave you permission to come here monkey!" He hissed his sentence in rude Malay, awkwardly and, in accord with its contents, crudely. "You think, boy, because you wear European clothes, mix with Europeans, and can speak a little Dutch, you then become a European? You're still a monkey." (Pramoedya, 1980:37).

#### **IV. Minke's Resistance Towards The Javanese Priyayi Tradition**

Pramoedya Ananta Toer portrays Minke as a counter to the Javanese Priyayi tradition that degrades human dignity. Minke represents an indigenous person struggling to raise the dignity of his people to be equal to European people. Minke studied science and knowledge from the Western world to fight against any traditions, views, or attitudes that humiliate human dignity ("Native"). He portrays an Indigenous man with a modern outlook who prioritises science and education, aesthetics, and efficiency and places human dignity on a high level. Minke believes mastering science and knowledge is an absolute requirement for the nation's excellence. However, the natives distanced themselves from science and knowledge. Still, instead of upholding the honour of Priyayi without realising it has degraded their dignity, the natives are considered a slithery nation like a worm in the heat of the sun. Hundreds, thousands of Indigenous heroes and leaders, in their efforts to repel the invaders, one after another, lost, surrendered, went mad, died in disgrace, and were forgotten in the exile of Digul (I.F.M. Chalid Salim, 1977). No one has ever won a war. The native leaders emerged from constant sales of concessions to the VOC, thus the natives were condemned to defeat and were constantly ignorant of the causes of defeat (Marwati Djoened Poesponegoro, Nugroho Notosusanto, 1984). The natives hoped for the coming of the "Messiah" as a vain hope instead of looking for the causes of defeat in the mastery of science and knowledge (Addas, 1988:123). Everything will fall without possessing science and knowledge (Beerling, 1976:83-87). Minke believes that resisting the knowledgeable means surrendering oneself to death and humiliation (Pramoedya, 1980:186-187).

The Javanese *Priyayi* world upholds the honour of the Priyayi (Haryanti Rukmana, 1987) by degrading human dignity ("Native") as a slithering nation like a worm in the heat of the sun (Pramoedya, 1980:116). Minke felt this when he was forced by Police Service B to go to Bupati B by walking like a slithering animal, as in the following quote:

"Yes, walk on your knees, *Ndoro Raden Mas.*" The officer was herding a buffalo into a mudhole. And I covered almost ten meters distance while swearing in three languages. Truly, my friends would ridicule me if they could see this play, where a human being, who normally walks on his two whole legs, on his own feet, now has to walk with only half his legs, aided by his two hands. "Ya Allah! You, my ancestors, you: What is the reason you created customs that would so humiliate your own descendants? You never once gave it any thought, you, my ancestors who indulged in these excesses! Your descendants could have been honored without such humiliation! How could you bring yourself to leave such customs as a legacy?" I stopped in front of the rocking chair. Good, now I had sat down cross-legged before that damned rocking chair. What business did I have with the bupati of B? None. Neither kith nor kin, not an acquaintance, let alone a friend. And for how much longer would this oppression and humiliation continue? Waiting and waiting while being oppressed and humiliated in this way? I raised my hands, clasped in obeisance ... And I did not now withdraw my pose until the bupati had sat himself comfortably in his place. In making such obeisance it felt as if all the learning and science I had studied year after year was lost. Lost was the beauty of the world as promised by science's progress. Lost was the enthusiasm of my teachers in greeting the bright future of humanity. And who knows how many times I'd have to make such obeisances that night. Obeisance—the lauding of ancestors and persons

of authority by humbling and abasing oneself! Level with the ground if possible! I will not allow my descendants to go through such degradation! ... what a beautiful life it would be without having to crawl in front of people" (Pramoedya, 1980:116-117).

Minke, a Javanese *Priyayi*, was determined to restore the dignity of his people by rebelling against the degrading traditions of the Javanese *Priyayi*. He rejected and even damned the Javanese *Priyayi* tradition which dehumanised people, and then embraced the Western civilisation which was considered to be more advanced and brighter, until he saw that it was this civilisation that made the people of the Dutch East Indies oppressed (Hilmar, 2008:103). In addition, he also rejected his mother's offer to become a *bupati*, as in the following dialogue between the Mother and Minke:

"Your father was appointed bupati very, very suddenly. No one guessed it would be so fast. You, one day, Pramoedya Ananta Toer will reach the same heights. You surely must be able to. You will surely become a bupati one day."

"No, Mother, I don't want to become a bupati. I only want to become a free human being, not given orders, not giving orders, Mother."

Pramoedya also showed the *Priyayi's* disrespect for *Nyai* through the character of Minke's father, who insulted the status of *Nyai* (Ontosoroh) as in the following quote:

"Crocodile!" he hissed angrily. "I took you out of the E.L.S. (Europeesche Lagere School). Dutch-language primary school at T for the same reason. As young as that! The higher your schooling, the more you turn into a crocodile! Bored of playing around with girls of your own age, you're now holing up with a *nyai's* nest. What do you want to become?... "Don't you think it's dangerous to take up with a *nyai*? If her master goes into a rage and you're shot dead by him, or perhaps attacked with a dagger, or a sword, or a kitchen knife, or strangled . . . how will it be? The papers will announce who you are, who your parents are. What sort of shame will you bring upon your parents? If you haven't thought things through as far as that. Break your relationship with that unlucky *nyai*! (Pramoedya, 1980:124).

Pramoedya, through Jean Marais character, advised Minke about the attitude of an educated person who should not follow the public perception that is not necessarily true about *Nyai*, who is of low morals, a prostitute, does not recognise legal marriage, sells her honour for a life of pleasure and luxury, is poorly educated, likes to play witchcraft, as in the following narration:

"You're in trouble, Minke. You've fallen in love. Listen, Minke, your young blood wants to have her for yourself, and you're afraid of what people will say. You must pay heed to and respect what people think if they are correct. If they're wrong, why pay them any heed? You're educated, Minke. An educated person must learn to act justly, beginning, first of all, with his thoughts, then later in his deeds. That is what it means to be educated. Go and visit this family two, or maybe three more times. Then you might be able to judge for yourself if *Nyai* and her family deserve their bad reputation. To go along with unfair gossip is wrong. You might find you're judging a family that is perhaps better than the judge himself. *Nyai* (Ontosoroh) doesn't manipulate you Minke, she does all the office work. Such a person would not play witchcraft, she would have more faith in personal power. Only people with no sense of self would play with sorcery, play with shamans. *Nyai* Ontosoroh recognises the solitude of her son's life." (Pramoedya, 1980:49).

This advice inspires Minke to be fair in his mind, and he soon conducted an investigation by visiting *Nyai* Ontosoroh's residence to find the truth. The results of the investigation showed *Nyai* Ontosoroh to be an educated woman, a strong woman, independent and successful in leading the Boerderij Buitenzorg company, wise and open to her daughter, Annelies Mellema, and recognised the neatness and solitude of her daughter's life.

Pramoedya Ananta Toer in the novel *Bumi Manusia* presents the character Minke as a *Pribumi* (Javanese *Priyayi*) with modern views struggling to form a nation (later named Indonesia), raising the dignity of his nation (*Pribumi*) on par with nations in Europe, challenging the tyranny of the primordialism of the Javanese *Priyayi* tradition, and demeaning the dignity of his nation (*Pribumi*), even though he must lose his Javanese identity. As said by Minke in the following quotation: "Knowledge has blessed me infinitely beautifully. The knowledge I gained from school has made my personality different from that of my fellow citizens. Whether it violates my Javanese identity or not, I don't know."

Pramoedya Ananta Toer's opinion in *Bumi Manusia* shows his disapproval of the Javanese men's attitude of rudeness, polygamy and the tendency to disrespect the women's dignity, as doctor Martinet says in the following quote.

Dr. Martinet: "I speak to you like this, first of all, because Native men are not used to treating their women gently and politely, as friends and with sincerity, at least as far as I know, according to what I've heard and read. You have studied European civilization, so you no doubt know the difference between the attitudes of European and Native men towards women. If you are the same as most other Natives, this child will not live long. Quite frankly she could fall into a living death... If necessary I will propose on your behalf in order to save this girl."

Minke: "I had never intended to take more than one wife. I always remembered the words of my grandmother: Every man who takes more than one wife is a liar, and will certainly become a liar whether he wants to or not." (Pramoedya, 1980:198).

In the Javanese *Priyayi* tradition, a child's respect for their parents is a must, even if the parents are oppressive towards their children. Even Sanikem was helpless when she was sold as a slave by her father Sastrotomo to Mr. Administrator Herman Mellema, the owner of the Tulangan Sugar Factory in Sidoardjo. However, Minke, a native who had received a European education and was broad-minded, dared to fight against this oppression. This can be seen in his mother's letter to Minke, in which she informed him about his father's anger at the news that Minke was staying at the *Nyai's* house and was dealing with the police for insulting his position as Bupati B and refusing to recognise Minke as his son, as well as sending a letter to the Director of H.B.S. to have Minke expelled from school. Minke responded by sending a letter to his mother in response to his father's anger "Responding to Father's pronouncement I wrote: If that is what is desired by Father, so be it; so from now on I will devote myself only to my mother." In addition, Minke responded to his father's attitude and anger, as described in the following quote:

"Let my father be free with his own attitude. Especially too as I didn't really know my father well. Since I was little I had lived with grandfather, so father was really no more than a title to me. Every time I met him, all he wanted was for his authority as a father to be acknowledged. It was up to him! I had no business with his anger and his attitude. If Father withdraws me from H.B.S., that too is his right. And a Native only got into school if someone with position guaranteed him. Only it was not Father who guaranteed me, but Grandfather. And it was not certain that the school director would accept Father's request. If he did, so be it. I now felt that I had accumulated enough means to study by myself, to enter the world walking on my own two feet."

According to the Javanese *Priyayi* tradition, Minke's attitude is considered as a ungrateful child, who has the courage to confront his parents. A child should be submissive to parents, a child should be able to *mikul dhuwur mendem jero* (cherish their parents' services while their faults must be covered up) (Hardiyanti Rukmana, 1987: 1780). Minke's attitude contradicts the teachings of the Javanese *Priyayi*, the same as the following *Tembang Mijil*, a traditional Javanese song "*Dedalane guna klawan sekti; kudu andhap asor; wani ngalah luhur wekasane; tumungkula yen dipun dukani ...*" The *tembang* contains moral teachings. In order for people to be able to master all work (*guna*), and to work well and be able to please their parents or leaders (*sekti*), it is done by *andhap asor* (humble), daring to give in (*wani ngalah*), will gain honour (*luhur wekasane*). However, if they have worked well but are still getting scolded by parents or leaders, children are not allowed to talk back or protest. Instead they must remain respectful (*ora oleh mangsuli, ora oleh ndengengek, lan tumungkula yen dipun dukani*). even if it is for the sake of justice and truth, parents or leaders must be opposed (*aja pisan-pisan wani ngumandangake sesanti jejeging bener lan adil*). If faced with such parents or leaders, a child should be able to obey them and are required to follow the saying "the King can do no wrong.", because parents are the ones who should be respected by the youngs (Pamudji, 1998:11-12).

Pramoedya Ananta Toer in his novel, *Bumi Manusia*, also showed a critique of Minke's Javanese identity, as expressed by his mother towards Minke as follows.

Mother: "Hush! Why-are you concerned with the Dutch? You're still not Javanese enough yet. You don't obey your own ancestors enough. People say you've become a man of letters, but where are your poems that I can sing at night when I miss you?"

Minke: "I cannot write in Javanese, Mother."

Mother: "And, if you were Javanese, you would be able to write in Javanese. You write in Dutch, *Gus*, because you no longer want to be Javanese. You write for Dutch people. Why do you honor them so greatly? They drink and eat from the Javanese earth. You do not eat and drink from the Dutch earth. Why, why do you honor them so greatly?" (Pramoedya, 1980:305).

In his mother's eyes, Minke was no longer Javanese, but his mother requested that in his marriage with Annelies Mellema, Minke should be a Javanese knight, dressed in Javanese batik, and equipped with a *keris*. The requirements to be a Javanese knight must have the following: *wisma, wanita, turangga, kukila, curiga*. Javanese knights must have a *wisma* or a home, without a home one cannot be a knight and will only be a homeless person. Home or *wisma* as the place from which a knight departs, and to which he returns. A Javanese knight must have a *wanita* or a woman. Without a woman, the knight violates his nature as a man. A woman is the symbol of life and livelihood, fertility, prosperity, and well-being. Women are not merely wives to their husbands but are the axis on which all life and livelihood revolve and originate. A Javanese warrior must have a *turangga* or a ride, as a vehicle that can carry the Javanese knight to carry out his duties properly, to seek education and knowledge, to improve his abilities, skills, and expertise and to improve his progress. Without a horse as the ride, a Javanese knight will not be able to proceed any further. A Javanese knight must have a *kukila* or a way of life which is symbolized as birds which represent beauty. Without it, a Javanese knight is just a hunk of stone without any spirit. A Javanese knight must have a *keris*. A *keris* is a symbol of vigilance,

alertness, warriorship. A tool for self-defence. Without a kris a Javanese warrior cannot protect himself, if he gets attacked (Pramoedya, 1980:307-308, IG. Krisnadi, 2013:61-87).

## V. Conclusion

Pramoedya Ananta Toer in his novel depicts a lost era, the era of late 19th century society in the Dutch East Indies in a detailed and profound way. He presented Nyai Ontosoroh as a Javanese woman who rose from the oppression of the man who sold her as a slave to his superior, the administrator of the Tulasan Sidoarjo Sugar Factory, Mr. Herman Mellema (*Totok*). She rose up and became a strong *Nyai*, educated, wise, open to her children, independent and successful in leading the Boerderij Buitenzorg, in contrast to other *Nyais* who were weak and had low morals. However, when she had to face the "White Court" in Surabaya, not only did she fail to achieve her dream of becoming a *mevrouw*, but she also lost all her assets (Boerderij Buitenzorg) and the custody of her two children, Robert Mellema and Annelies Mellema. This was a manifestation of resistance to the colonial powers of the Dutch East Indies and at the same time, an embryo of nationalism in forming a nation. Minke was portrayed by Pramoedya Ananta Toer as a Natives character who was expected to raise the dignity of the Natives who had fallen so low from the Europeans. He relied on European science and knowledge and the liberal Totok mindset to fight against the primordialist-patriarchal, regional, Javanese *Priyayi* tradition, to fight against the oppressive Dutch colonial power, to alleviate his people (Natives) to become a nation, free and independent nation from the colonial power of the Dutch East Indies, equal to European nations, even though he had to lose his original identity as a Javanese *Priyayi*. The invitation to return to being Javanese came from his mother, at least at the time of marriage, which Minke was powerless to resist.

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