

WOMEN'S PROTESTS IN RENDRA'S POEMS

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Abstract: Women's suffering appears in many literary works, including Indonesian literature. Gender injustice is not only voiced by female authors, but also by male writers. In Indonesian literary works, both short stories, poetry, and novels, women are always interesting objects from time to time. Among the many poems of Rendra, many talks about women. Rendra does not only talk about women who are marginalized in their normal environment, but in several of his poems, Rendra talks about women's protests. They expressed dissatisfaction with the behavior of society and the state that made women accept unfair treatment. The approach to this research was descriptive qualitative. There is a poetry collection of books that are the object of this research, namely *Blues untuk Bonnie* (Blues for Bonnie). The theory used to analyze Rendra's poetry is based on Simone de Beauvoir's view of women. This study produces a description of the influence of the third wave of women's movements that occurred in the United States on Rendra's poetry. This is very reasonable because some of Rendra's poetry on women was written when he was living in the United States, where at that time there was a wave of women's movements demanding equality in almost all fields with men.

Keywords: Rendra, Beauvoir, feminism, prostitution

INTRODUCTION

Rendra is Indonesia's greatest poet after Chairil Anwar. Rendra's greatness cannot be separated from his trademark that distinguishes him from other writers of his time. Both his style and rebellious spirit were widely followed by writers in the following period. His unusual use of language and creativity in constructing metaphors and images have made Rendra the most studied poet to date.

In Indonesian literature, Rendra is a rebel against the traditions of his era. Rendra is well known as a writer who voices social protest. In many of his writings on social criticism, Rendra voiced the suffering of women over male domination in their social and private lives. So far, women's voices have always been echoed by women writers. Indeed, many literary works that talk about women are written by male authors, but in general these writings reflect men's views on women. Women are usually depicted from a patriarchal perspective.

The assumption that all male writers always voice their views in their writings is not always true. Not all male writers are always misogynistic in writing issues related to women. So far, male writers have always been accused of being one of the parties to taking part in contributing to stereotypes about women. Women when written by men will get an image like the image that is built in the perspective of men.

In Rendra's poems we find something completely different. Rendra not only places women as honourable beings, but instead he invites women to fight to improve their fate. Departing from personal experience about the relationship between Rendra and his mother, he placed the figure of a personal woman who deserves to be respected and defended. Women¹ must have great power to make movements. The fate of women is not determined by men,

but is largely determined by their own efforts to do many meaningful things for themselves and their people.

In the study of Indonesian literature, Rendra is rarely discussed by feminist researchers who associate his works with the struggles of women. Marshall Clark (2012) mentioned that during the colonial era, the views of Sutan destiny Alisjahbana and Armijn Pane were denouncing new freedoms that were too westernized, which they believed would lead Indonesian women to moral degradation, free sex, and other social disasters. Clark does not mention Rendra in his thinking about women in later periods, but authors such as Umar Kayam, Ahmad Tohari, and Linus Suryadi who elevate the image of indigenous women which is always an ordinary event with traditional images, mythological archetypes of female submission and submission. Perhaps Clark really focuses on women who are bound by tradition, while in many of Rendra's writings he never explicitly mentions a particular tradition, especially the very diverse backgrounds of his poetry creation.

For Goenawan Moehamad (2000), Rendra's appeal is precisely because while not mentioning anything about Indonesia, he has formulated our actual problem. Rendra's poems, written during the romantic period, voice the suffering of women in various forms and settings. These women are those who are excluded from the social environment.

In Indonesian literature, the female protests that Rendra narrates in his poems may not be too familiar. Rendra's poems in *Blues untuk Bonnie* (Blues for Bonnie) were indeed mostly written by Rendra in the United States, where he was studying drama professionally. In 1964 Rendra received an invitation to attend a literature seminar in the United States. The 2nd wave of the women's movement in the United States had quite an influence on her works. One of the leading women in the movement was Simone de Beauvoir. Therefore, in this study the discussion of Rendra's poems is based on Simone de Beauvoir's perspective, which covers (a) women's lives as wives and prostitutes, (b) women's protest forms in fighting for their rights. Rendra's poems in *Blues for Bonnie* are indeed one of the most studied collections of poetry, both by Indonesian and foreign literary critics. Sudewa (2016) stated that Rendra expressed various forms of dehumanization experienced by women, especially in the field of sexual and other social services. Dehumanization of women is carried out by officials or people who have a lot of money.

METHOD

This research uses descriptive qualitative approach. The data source in this research is Rendra's poems in the book *Blues untuk Bonnie* (Blues for Bonnie). Not all of the poems in the poetry collection (Rendra, 1971) were examined, but poems with topics related to women's protests were selected. Words, phrases, lines, and stanzas are the direct objects of this analysis. Some words may not have a direct connection with women's protest, however, judging from the context they contain the meaning of women's protest.

The grouping of data is based on the focus of the problem in this study. In describing the results of the research, it is done by combining theories related to women's lives, especially in the perspective of Simone de Beauvoir, with the object of study, namely Rendra's poems.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Women as Wife and Prostitutes

Even in the name, all over this earth prostitution always exists. Opinions about prostitutes have also been the subject of longstanding debate. There are those who think that prostitution is a social problem that must be eradicated, because the profession is categorized as a crime and contrary to morals, but here, many other opinions consider this profession as a natural thing. A prostitute is not necessarily labelled as a criminal, because the background why

they choose this profession is very diverse. Poverty is the main factor that brings them into this world they do not want at all. In her poem that is shown in Table 1 “Nyanyian Angsa” (The Song of Swan) for example, we find that Maria Zaitun became a prostitute because she was pressed by poverty.

Table 1. Part of Poem Nyanyian Angsa by W.S. Rendra

<i>Poem (Indonesian)</i>
<p>Lalu pastor kembali bersuara: “kamu telah tergoda dosa.” “Tidak tergoda. Tapi melulu berdosa.” “Kamu telah terbujuh setan.” “Tidak. Saya terdesak kemiskinan. Dan gagal mencari kerja.”</p>
<i>Poem Translated (English)</i>
<p>(Then the priest spoke again: “You have been tempted by sin.” “Not tempted. But only sinful.” “You have been seduced by the devil.” “Not. I am desperate for poverty. And failed to find work.”)</p>

Beauvoir (2016) claims that a prostitute is a scapegoat; men hurl their hatred at him and reject him (shown in Table 2). Whether he is under the legal supervision of the police or working illegally and in secret, however, he is treated like an ostracized person. The exclusion of prostitutes, in Rendra's poems, is not only carried out by ordinary people, but also by all levels of society. Those who exclude prostitutes are also social workers who are public servants, such as doctors, nurses, and so on.

Table 2. Part of Poem Nyanyian Angsa by W.S. Rendra

<i>Poem (Indonesian)</i>
<p>Dokter geleng kepala dan menyuruhnya telanjang. Ia kesakitan waktu membuka baju Sebab bajunya lekat di borok ketiaknya. “Cukup,” kata dokter. Dan ia tak jadi mriksa. Lalu ia berbisik kepada jururawat: “Kasih ia vitamin C.” Dengan kaget jururawat berbisik kembali: “Vitamin C. Dokter, paling tidak ia perlu Salvarzan.”</p>
<i>Poem Translated (English)</i>
<p>(The doctor shook his head and told him to get naked. It hurts when you take off your clothes Because his clothes are stuck to his armpit ulcers. "Enough," said the doctor. And he didn't check. Then he whispered to the nurse: "Give him vitamin C." Surprised the nurse whispered back:</p>

"Vitamin C.
Doctor, at least he needs Salvarzan.")

Likewise, in the name of moral standards, clergy also take the same action against prostitutes. After being rejected by the people around her, including the doctor who usually treats her, Maria Zaitun's hope in "Nyanyian Angsa" (The Song of Swan) is to confess her sins, however the church also treats her not as a human (shown in Table 3).

Table 3. Part of Poem *Nyanyian Angsa* by W.S. Rendra

<i>Poem (Indonesian)</i>
Dan muka pastor menjadi merah padam. Ia menuding Maria zaitun: "kamu galak seperti macan betina. Barangkali kamu akan gila. Tapi tak perlu pastor. Kamu perlu dokter jiwa."
<i>Poem Translated (English)</i>
(And the priest's face turned bright red. He accused Mary of olives: "You are fierce like a tigress. Maybe you're going crazy. But you don't need a priest. You need a psychiatrist.")

Montaigne, as quoted by Simon de Beauvoir, does not distinguish between marriage and prostitution in sharp terms. The only difference between women who sell themselves in prostitution and those who sell themselves in marriage is the price and the length of the contract that elapses. For both, the sexual act is a service; one is rented for life by a man; the other has several customers who pay for it with a piece of paper. The big difference between them is that the legal wife, being suppressed as a married woman, is valued as a human being, this award starts to stop the pressure if a prostitute is denied her human rights, at that moment she declares all forms of feminine slavery.

According to Daly (Tong, 2010), a Nietzsche follower, women who are considered evil by the patriarchy are good, while women who are considered good are actually bad. This opinion is in line with Beauvoir, who cannot accept Lombroso's theory of equating prostitutes and criminals together and sees immorality in both. Rendra considers prostitutes not as social enemies. Rendra in "Bersatulah Pelacur-pelacur Kota Jakarta" (Unite Jakarta Prostitutes) contrasts prostitutes with officials who commit acts of corruption who have very low moral standards (shown in Table 4).

Table 4. Part of Poem *Bersatulah Pelacur-Pelacur Kota Jakarta* by W.S. Rendra

<i>Poem (Indonesian)</i>
Dan kau, Dasima kabarkan kepada rakyat bagaimana para pemimpin revolusi secara bergantian memelukmu bicara tentang kemakmuran rakyat dan api revolusi sambil celananya basah

<p>dan tubuhnya lemas terkapai di sampingmu. Ototnya keburu tak berdaya.</p>
<i>Poem Translated (English)</i>
<p>(And you, Dasima tell the people how are the leaders of the revolution alternately hug you talk about people's prosperity and the fire of revolution while the pants are wet and his body limp reach beside you. His muscles are suddenly helpless.)</p>

Beauvoir also reveals that in some ways, stories about prostitution are also related to the classic story in which a girl is put in the street by her pimp. Sometimes that pimp's role is performed by her husband. In many cases, a prostitute chooses this profession to make a living because her husband doesn't care much for her life, as told by Rendra in "Rick dari Corona" (Rick of Corona) shown in Table 5. Although it is not explicitly stated that the husband has a role in peddling his wife's body, the following lines indicate that the husband has allowed his wife to increase the family's income by prostitution.

Table 5. Part of Poem *Rick dari Corona* by W.S. Rendra

<i>Poem (Indonesian)</i>
<p>Suamiku penjaga elevator Pedro Gonzales dari Puertorico suka mabuk dan suka berdusta. Kalau ingin ketemu, telpon saja aku. Pagi hari aku kerja di pabrik roti Selasa dan Kamis sore Aku miliknya Mickey Rogolsky si kakek Polandia yang membawa sewa kamarku.</p>
<i>Poem Translated (English)</i>
<p>(My husband is the elevator keeper Pedro Gonzales from Puertorico drunk and likes to lie. If you want to meet, just call me. In the morning I work at the bakery Tuesday and Thursday afternoon I belong to Mickey Rogolsky Polish grandpa) who brought my room rent.)</p>

In some of his poems, Rendra tells that the prostitutes he tells do not live without love. In "Pesan Pencopet kepada Pacarnya" (Message of a Pickpocket to His Girlfriend) shown in Table 6, for example, Sitti is the girlfriend of a pickpocket who is the mistress of a head of service.

Table 6. Part of Poem *Pesan Pencopet kepada Pacarnya* by W.S. Rendra

<i>Poem (Indonesian)</i>
Nasibmu sudah lumayan. Dari babu jadi selir kepala jawatan. Apa lagi? Nikah padaku merusak keberuntungan. Masa depanku terang repot. Sebagai copet nasibku untung-untungan. Ini bukan ngesah. Tapi aku memang bukan Bapak yang baik untuk bayi yang sedang kau kandung.
<i>Poem Translated (English)</i>
(You have had good luck. From a babu to a concubine for the head of the office. What else? Marrying me ruined my luck. My future is bright. As a pickpocket my luck. This is not a sigh. But I'm not a good father for the baby you are carrying.)

Prostitution is purely because of economic pressure, while love is only devoted to the girlfriend. The boyfriend realized that the future of his girlfriend and the child she was carrying could not depend on a man who only worked as a pickpocket.

Women's Protest

In this collection of poems, entitled *Blues for Bonnie*, which contains 13 poems in total, all of them talk about women, or at least women are one of the objects of Rendra's inspiration. Some of these poems, some of which provoke women to do something meaningful for their self-esteem. Rendra's provocation was carried out against prostitutes who had been seen as useless members of society.

As a person or a poet, Rendra (2001) defends the three laws of naturalness and fights forces in society that abuse him, because of his commitment to the life force. According to Rendra, the three laws of fairness are natural law, community law, and common-sense law.

Table 7. Part of Poem *Pesan Pencopet kepada Pacarnya* by W.S. Rendra

<i>Poem (Indonesian)</i>
Janganlah tanggung-tanggung menipu lelakimu. Kuraslah hartanya. Supaya hidupmu sentosa. Sebagai kepala jawatan leleki normal Suka disogok dan suka korupsi. Bila ia ganti kautipu Itu sudah jamaknya. Maling menipu maling itu biasa.

<i>Poem Translated (English)</i>
Don't be afraid to deceive your man. Drain his wealth. So that your life is peaceful. As the head of the normal leleki Likes to be bribed and likes corruption. When he replaces you cheat That's plural. It's common for thieves to cheat thieves.

Prostitution is indeed the object of a multidimensional study. In terms of different approaches, prostitution finds its position in various responses. Positive law in general is not always in harmony with moral views. For those who view prostitution from a social and legal perspective, it may be seen that prostitution is a gateway to sexual slavery (Shively et, al., 2012). Here, on the other hand, prostitution is always juxtaposed and contrasted with certain moral standards. In *Measure for Measure* Shakespeare (Roberts, 2017) underlines the dichotomy of virgins/prostitutes by juxtaposing monasteries and brothels, both institutions that accommodate and dominate women. The novice Isabella vows sexual abstinence; Overdoing Mrs, who is a pervert, for sexual availability. They could not talk to each other: the official morality of the time fostered mutual distrust. Shakespeare's dramaturgy, however, encourages audiences to relate them in imagination. Likewise, in Rendra's works, prostitution is faced with official moral institutions, that prostitution is a serious offense that will not be forgiven.

In "Nyanyian Angsa" (The Song of Swan) Rendra criticizes the church institution for rejecting and hearing confessions from a prostitute named Zaitun. In "Bersatulah Pelacur-pelacur Kota Jakarta" (United Jakarta Prostitutes).

Table 8. Part of Poem *Bersatulah Pelacur-Pelacur Kota Jakarta* by W.S. Rendra

<i>Poem (Indonesian)</i>
Para kepala jawatan Akan membuka kesempatan Kalau kau membuka kesempatan Kalau kau membuka paha Sedang diluar pemerintahan Perusahaan-perusahaan macet Lapangan kerja tak ada
<i>Poem Translated (English)</i>
(Department heads will open up opportunities if you open your thighs. Currently out of government bogged down companies no job opportunities.)

As someone who has lived in America, Rendra was strongly influenced by the feminist movement there. In Indonesia, protesting by using a kutang as a symbol is not a common method (Wadji, 2021). so, when Rendra wrote the poem "Bersatulah Pelacur-pelacur Kota Jakarta" the public saw it as something new, especially since Rendra is known as a writer who is rich in symbols and metaphors. Rendra invited the prostitutes of the city of Jakarta to fly a bra as a form of protest the arbitrariness of the authorities.

Table 9. Part of Poem *Bersatulah Pelacur-Pelacur Kota Jakarta* by W.S. Rendra

<i>Poem (Indonesian)</i>
<p>Saudari-saudariku. Bersatulah. Ambillah galah. Kibarkan kutang-kutangmu di ujungnya. Araklah keliling kota sebagai panji-panji yang telah mereka nodai Kini giliranmu menuntut. Katakanlah pada mereka; menganjurkan mengganyang pelacuran tanpa menganjurkan mengawini para bekas pelacur adalah omong kosong.</p>
<i>Poem Translated (English)</i>
<p>(My sisters. Unite. Take the pole. Fly your dumbbell at the end. Parade around the city as the banners they have tarnished Now it's your turn to sue. Tell them; advocate crushing prostitution without recommending marry former prostitutes is bullshit.)</p>

The prostitutes' protest, as suggested by Rendra, clearly departs from natural law, community law, and common sense. The three laws in Rendra's poems are never separated. Prostitutes are part of society too. He is a human being who has the natural right to try to survive. In terms of common sense, is being a prostitute an ideal? It is clear that those who choose this profession are those who for one reason or another experience various compulsions, and some of the causes are actually men, starting from women who are abandoned by men, abandoned, and also whose husbands are not economically able to provide for their needs. his life.

CONCLUSIONS

The profession of being a prostitute, which most people view as a very despicable job, is actually a reality that no one can deny. Prostitution is a social product, some of the contributors are men. Even though it is men who demand the most chastity over women with certain moral standards, however, men have responsibility for the life choices of women who end up becoming prostitutes. In Rendra's poems, prostitutes are explicitly or implicitly victims of men, both psychologically and economically.

The protest of the women who in Rendra's poems are prostitutes, departed from Rendra's anxiety to see economic and political injustice in the country. Injustice that mostly befalls women. The dominance of power in favour of men gives birth to moral standards which are also held by men. Holy and unholy, moral and immoral are determined by men.

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