



**Women's Rebellion against Patriarchal Society as Reflected in
Ayu Utami's *Si Parasit Lajang* and *Pengakuan Eks Parasit Lajang***

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Abstract: This study examines the influence of patriarchal culture in Indonesia and the active response of feminist literary criticism through the analysis of Ayu Utami's novels "*Si Parasit Lajang*" and "*Pengakuan Eks Parasit Lajang*." Using qualitative research method, consisting of primary and secondary data such as bibliography and content analysis, the research reveals the resistance of women against the patriarchal society. The analysis indicates that the novels are an expression of gender equity and the struggles that women and other form of marginalized constituents in Indonesian society encounter. The novels endeavor not only to generate this comprehension of feminist ideas but also awake in women consciousness of their identity and a readiness to assert their identities. The results imply education reform, suggesting the integration of literary works into the approved program to test the students' language proficiency and, in addition, to interest students in the complex situations illustrated in literature. In conclusion of this study, research can take steps forward in analytic skill improvement.

Key words: women, rebellion, against, patriarchal, society, feminism

Abstract: Studi ini mengeksplorasi pengaruh budaya patriarki di Indonesia dan respon aktif dari kritik sastra feminis melalui analisis novel Ayu Utami "*Si Parasit Lajang*" dan "*Pengakuan Eks Parasit lajang*." Menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif, yang terdiri dari data primer dan sekunder seperti bibliografi dan analisis konten, penelitian ini mengungkapkan ketahanan perempuan terhadap masyarakat patriarki. Analisis menunjukkan bahwa novel-novel tersebut merupakan ekspresi dari kesetaraan gender dan perjuangan yang dihadapi wanita dan bentuk-bentuk lain dari anggota yang termarginalisasi dalam masyarakat Indonesia. Novel-novel ini berusaha tidak hanya untuk menghasilkan pemahaman ini tentang ide-ide feminis, tetapi juga membangkitkan kesadaran pada wanita tentang identitas mereka dan kesiapan untuk mengklaim identitasnya. Hasilnya menyiratkan reformasi pendidikan, yang menyarankan integrasi karya sastra ke dalam program yang disetujui untuk menguji kemampuan bahasa siswa dan, di samping itu, untuk menarik minat siswa dalam situasi kompleks yang diilustrasikan dalam sastra. Sebagai kesimpulan dari penelitian ini, penelitian dapat mengambil langkah maju dalam meningkatkan keterampilan analitis.

Kata Kunci: perempuan, perlawanan, terhadap, patriarki, masyarakat, feminisme

1. INTRODUCTION

Literature extensively explores one recurrent theme, feminism, particularly in the contemporary era when women assert their rights as human beings. Today, women recognize that constraints impede their freedom. The root cause of such constraints lies in a patriarchal society, leading to persistent inequalities in our communities. In various parts of the world, women are often perceived as belonging to a lower social class, resulting in limitations on their rights.

Women's engagement in literature serves as a manifestation of feminist criticism. During this movement, women had the freedom to express their thoughts through literature, with many of their works gaining global fame, particularly in novel form. Novels, as a form of fiction, are deemed more conducive to comprehending underlying meanings. This inclination towards equality contributes to the objectives of the women's movement.

Addressing issues during the late 1990s and early 2000s, also known as the turn of the millennium, this study focuses on a literary form based on factual events, concentrating on feminist themes. A novel, an extensive fictional narrative typically grounded in realism, is presented in prose and published as a standalone book. A novel is derived from the Italian word "novella," meaning "new." It includes character development, dialogue, setting, plot, conflict, climax, and resolution. A novel presents a comprehensive view, allowing readers to immerse themselves in the depicted era, unlike a short story. Additionally, a novel introduces and resolves conflicts, serving as a potent tool for conveying philosophical, historical, social, cultural, and moral perspectives.

Ayu Utami, an Indonesian novelist, explicitly explores feminist issues in all her works. The prevalent gender inequality in Indonesia, rooted in a patriarchal culture, evokes her concern for women and feminism. This study will examine feminism as reflected in Ayu Utami's (2015; 2016) *Si Parasit Lajang* and *Pengakuan Si Parasit Lajang*.

The political side, the cultural side, and the religious side are three factors influencing the choice of this study, considering the critics of feminism in Indonesia's patriarchal culture. These factors are based on the following reasons:

First, the patriarchal social structure brought about gender inequality. Secondly, having an equal position with men, women freely exercise their prerogative rights for themselves. Third, *Si Parasit Lajang* and *Pengakuan Eks Parasit Lajang* are statements of the independent women's movement, and A is the main character and the base of this study of feminism because she bravely states herself despite all the rules and norms in her society.

There is a relationship between A and feminism. Women, who are always considered weak and have no right to determine life choices, encourage A to revolt and oppose the continued patriarchal system in Indonesian society. The theory of feminism itself is a range of political movements, ideologies, and social movements that share a common goal: to define, establish, and achieve the political, economic, personal, and social equality of the genders. These include combating gender stereotypes and attempting to establish equal educational and professional opportunities for men and women.

Based on the background, the problem of the study is formulated into questions as follows: (1) How is the characterization of the main character in *Si Parasit Lajang* and *Pengakuan Eks Parasit Lajang*?, (2) How does the main character in *Si Parasit Lajang* and *Pengakuan Eks Parasit Lajang* rebel against patriarchal society in

tradition, religion, and national laws? and (3) How does the main character's sense of social awareness affect others?

According to the problems of the research, the position of this study develops the research. This study is done under the following focuses: (1) To investigate the characterization of the main character in the novel entitled *Si Parasit Lajang* and *Pengakuan Eks Parasit Lajang*, (2) To examine the main characters in *Si Parasit Lajang* and *Pengakuan Eks Parasit Lajang* rebel against patriarchal society in tradition, religion, and national laws, and (3) To explore how the main character's sense of social awareness affected other women.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

(1) Theory of Character and Characterization

Character and characterization are among these elements, playing a crucial role in forming a cohesive and complete story. Character and characterization, functioning as a unified entity, complement each other and are inseparable.

a. Character

A character refers to sentient or non-sentient beings, whether alive or deceased, who serve as the actors in the events of the narrative. In simpler terms, a character is an imaginary person depicted in a work of fiction, be it a play, film, or story.

According to Abrams (1981), individuals depicted in a narrative or dramatic piece are characters. Readers attribute specific moral, intellectual, and emotional traits to these characters based on their dialogue and actions. The character's speech and actions derive from their temperament, desires, and moral nature. The character may maintain a consistent outlook and disposition throughout the entire work, remaining essentially "stable" from start to finish.

As per Stanton's (1965) "An Introduction to Fiction", the term "character" is commonly used in two ways. Firstly, it denotes the individual present in the story. Secondly, characters encompass the amalgamation of interests, desires, emotions, and moral principles that constitute each person in the narrative. In essence, a character serves to represent the individual and their personality traits within the story. By those definitions, characters are divided into two types: Round characters and Flat characters.

In *Understanding Unseen* Murphy (1972) outlines nine methods through which an author endeavors to render a character in a story comprehensible and vibrant for readers. These explanations include: Personal Description, Character as Seen by Another, Past Life, Conversation of Others, Reactions, Direct Comment, Thoughts, and Mannerism.

b. Characterization

Characterization is how a writer informs readers about the physical and non-physical traits of a character in a story. It has four levels for perceiving basic character, that are: physical, social, psychological, and moral. Writers employ various methods to convey information about and bring characters to life in literature. Examples include characters' words and actions, their thoughts and actions towards others, how they respond to crises and opportunities, and how they change in response to narrative events. Well-developed characters contribute to the plot's internal coherence by acting in ways the author intends. Therefore, character development is intricately linked to narrative development because a character's actions, emotions, and decisions influence later events.

c. Definition of Feminism

At the chores, feminism theory examines women's and men's social roles, experiences, interests, and feminist politics in varied fields, such as anthropology and sociology, communication, media studies, psychoanalysis, home economics, literature, education, and philosophy. Here, we can define feminism as gender equality for women and men.

According to The Oxford Learner's Dictionary, feminism is defined as the belief and aim that women should have the same rights and opportunities as men; this aim is being striven for.

Feminism is a social movement and ideology that encourages women and defends the political, social, and economic rights that belong to all human beings. The aim is to eliminate all forms of oppression for all people without limitations based on sex, gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, age, or religion. Feminism persuades both men and women to challenge social norms that systematically oppress women. Oftentimes, it may be difficult to find or detect inequality because it is built into the very framework of culture.

The term feminism, according to The Dictionary of Feminist Theory, refers to the philosophy of women's liberation. This philosophy arose from the concept that women face injustice because of their gender. Feminism seeks to disprove traditional thinking, which makes understanding women's participation in social life difficult.

In other words, feminism is defined as a set of political movements, philosophies, and social movements with a common goal: to define, establish, and achieve gender equality on political, economic, personal, and social levels. This involves combating gender stereotypes and working to equalize educational and professional opportunities for men and women.

However, feminism's issues vary by society and culture, but they are all rooted in the underlying philosophy of achieving gender equality in all aspects of life that cannot be reduced to restrictive classifications based on class, race, or religion. Feminism is also associated with men in the sense that all gender-based equality is a balance between the male and female to liberate the individual. In that sense, feminism encompasses all movements and campaigns that target men and boys for gender sensitization to end gender-based discrimination and achieve gender-based equality.

d. Theory of Feminist Literary Criticism

Traditionally, feminist literary criticism has aimed to reexamine old texts within the literary canon through a new lens. This type of criticism has specific goals, such as developing and rediscovering the female writing tradition, interpreting the symbolism of women's writing to prevent it from being overlooked or dismissed from a male perspective, resisting the sexism in mainstream literature, and raising awareness of the sexual politics of language and style. In the 1980s, Lisa Tuttle articulated these goals, and the majority of feminist critics have since adopted them.

The history of feminist literary criticism is wide, ranging from classic works by nineteenth-century women authors such as George Eliot and Margaret Fuller to cutting-edge theoretical work in women's studies and gender studies by "third-wave" authors. Earlier than the 1970s, during the first and second waves of feminism, feminist literary criticism was concerned with women's authorship and the representation of women's conditions in literature, particularly the portrayal of fictional female characters. Furthermore, feminist literary criticism is concerned with the lack of women in the literary canon, with theorists such as Lois Tyson stating that this is because female authors' perspectives are not often regarded as universal.

Furthermore, feminist criticism has been directly linked to the origin and development of queer studies. Modern feminist literary theory seeks to understand both the literary portrayals and representations of both women and people in the queer community, expanding the role of a variety of identities and analyses within feminist literary criticism.

Feminist theory covers many different aspects of human life. In the literary context, feminist theory appears in the form of feminist literary criticism. According to Humm in her book *Contemporary Feminist Literary Criticism*, feminist criticism seems to share three basic assumptions. She states, "The first is that gender is constructed through language and is visible in writing style, and style therefore must represent the articulation of ideologies of gender" (Humm, 1994). This means that gender influences the writing style and the ideology of each gender can be seen in literary work. There is a relationship between each gender ideology and the literary work. The writing style can show the ideology that is believed by each gender. "By giving a systematic account of the interaction between gender and literary form, feminist criticism opens up questions about language to include general issues of power and sexual division" (Humm, 1994).

Feminist criticism can be divided into distinct varieties. The first is concerned with women as readers, and the second one is concerned with women as writers (Rice and Waugh, 1996). Women as readers mean that women are seen as consumers of male literature products. The feminist critics analyze the text and find the significance of its sexual codes. Women as writers mean women as the producers of literary work. The feminist critic analyzes the creativity of female writers and the problem of female language.

Feminist criticisms have developed over time. "The growth of the feminist movement is inseparable from the growth of feminist criticism" (Humm, 1994). Each criticism has a point of view that constructs feminism as a whole. It was divided into: The First Wave Movement, The Second Wave Movement, Myth Criticism, Marxist/Socialist-Feminist Criticism, French Feminist-Criticism, Psychoanalytic Criticism, Post-structuralism/Deconstruction/Postmodernism, Black Feminist, The African Diaspora, and Lesbian Feminist Criticism.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses qualitative methods, which use library approaches, while data sources use literature data. The sources are divided into primary data and secondary data. The primary data sources that became the basis for this study were taken from Ayu Utami's *Si Parasit Lajang and Pengakuan Eks Parasit Lajang*. The sources for the secondary data are taken from the Bible, books, journals, and articles related to feminism, gender roles, Catholic Church's law of marriage, and Indonesian marriage law to support the analysis.

This study uses two kinds of data sources: primary sources and secondary sources. The works chosen will be examined in three main ways: bibliographical technique, interview, and note-taking. The first step is the bibliographical technique, which is composed by reading the entire work, paying extra attention to the lines that will be studied, and trying to get the essence and the messages that the novelist wants to convey to the readers. The next step is to take some important notes related to these aspects to make the collection of the data easier. Furthermore, browsing the internet adds references to the case being studied.

The study uses content analysis to analyze all the data. According to Purba (2014), data analysis is the activities or actions done to the data to get the result of the

research or to answer the research question. Analyzing the novel reveals the characterization of the main character, the rebellion of the main character, and the effects of social awareness on other women.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

a. The Characterization of *Si Parasit Lajang* and *Pengakuan Si Parasit Lajang*

Si Parasit Lajang for the first version published in 2003 and the new version published in 2013. The novel tells about the journey of an urban young woman in her twenties. *Pengakuan Eks Parasit Lajang* is the last part of the trilogy and, for the first time, was published in 2013. It tells about the autobiography of sexuality and spirituality. Both novels introduce A as the main character. The supporting characters that influence her throughout the story are her best friends, family member and her boyfriend. The explanation below is to show the character's characterization:

1. Single

As an unmarried woman who is not celibate, A admits that she is not a devout Catholic. Even if she is in a relationship with a man, she is unwilling to marry him for personal reasons. When she finally marries, she keeps her single status on her ID because the state does not recognize her marriage. It is her decision, which she has carefully considered. As a single woman, her bravery in revealing her identity deserves to be admired. The same is true for any woman who chooses to live her life independently of men.

"I am: a woman without children, husband, an editor for unknown magazine and not a devoted Catholic." (SPL, p. 160)

2. Rebellious

In *Si Parasit Lajang*, A explains her reason for sex, which is not always related to marriage. This viewpoint is pertinent to the current state of our society. Nonetheless, for ethical reasons, people tend to disregard sex without marriage and sex with non-partners. A woman who chooses to be single does not necessarily have sex. Those women have their options. Furthermore, every woman who chooses not to marry does not necessarily escape the patriarchal system in her life. A single lady, for example, will mention another married woman's name by embedding her husband's name. Whereas a woman has the right and freedom to use her name without needing to include her husband's name as her new identity. A's resistance demonstrates her tenacity in coping with society's stigma surrounding marriage.

Another act of defiance by A is stating why she refuses to marry due to Indonesian marriage regulations. This regulation prioritized men which women are positioned as the second gender. When it comes to marriage regulations in Indonesia, patriarchal culture remains at the forefront. This viewpoint undermines women's positions because of the dual roles that women must play: wife and breadwinner.

Yet another example A's explanation of the concept of love and sex in religion for same-sex relationships is also unjust. In Indonesia, the combination of culture and religion forms a patriarchal view wherein the primary purpose of marriage is to have children. This goal is believed to be achievable only through a heterosexual couple, a man and a woman. The majority of Indonesians frown upon same-sex marriage, and all religions strongly discourage it. Religion requires its adherents to love one another, but religion forbids same-sex marriage. Society confronts the existence of the gay community, leading to their classification as a minority and poor treatment by society.

Whereas the LGBT community demands equality and the right to marry and have children, same-sex relationships are sinful and violate social norms.

“Well, first, this is the consequence of the fifth reasons: I have to prove that being an old unmarried woman and celibates are not related. Second, who says that married couple will not have intercourse with their partner?” (SPL, p. xviii)

“The marriage law is still not gender conscious, I said.” The law applies man as the head of the family. As the result, the wife pays more taxes than husband because her income is considered as extra income. There are many more consequences. If the rules are changed, then, I will finally want to get married.” (SPL, p. 95)

3. Critical

A is a young woman with a critical mind. The critic about emancipation in Soeharto era (1967-1998) was real evidence for women position in Indonesia. However, this idea for women takes them along to have “women double roles”. The system is not fair for women when they have to choose to be a career woman or being a housewife. It explains why women in that era are unable to reach their dreams, choose the right thing for their lives. A simple concept of emancipation is that women are free to state what they want for their lives.

Another evidence is when A was in junior high religion class. She learns how to value something smartly especially about human lives. Judging someone’s is not an easy or without problem. People only getting bad when he is in a bad place although he is not bad. This awareness is the exact way to judge someone when we are facing the reality of life. We have to see the problem in another point of view so we can decide the best value of someone’s.

Any man could be married but not a must. She does not agree when a marriage is used as an indicator of happiness in human lives. There are a lot of things to explore for having happiness in life. It is personal choice to married or not, without any compulsion. It depends on someone’s willingness and capability to live and commit in a marriage. Happiness is not always focus on a marriage. People are free to choose their own happiness for their lives.

A has good qualities as a person. She always questions the fairness point of the virginity concept, which she considers discriminating against women. Besides, women and men are equal, and no one is more important than the other.

“... The New Order may still be very modest in developing the idea of emancipation. ... The Soeharto government wanted to honor women in a typical scouting way: putting them in the women's section. ... This simple system gave women a place, even if it only expanded the domestic sphere. ... evolved into the "double role of women." And this is the problem of the career woman: the demands of multiple roles. Marriage is not ready to let her off the hook. There comes a point when she has to choose between motherhood and independence.”

(SPL, pp. 25-27)

4. Smart

Her choice to date an intellectual man express her intelligence. She requires a partner who is as intelligent as her. Women are typically drawn to attractive or wealthy guys. Having a knowledgeable partner gives a woman a plus value-not just good involvement in conversation but also the chance to be a better person or to improve someone's personality positively.

As a journalist, A has her own writing style, and her assessment is favourable. This assessment is from her editor in Tempo weekly magazine. It demonstrates that

she has the intelligence to write any content for the magazine, whether news or an article. Moreover, a workplace will surround an agile, smart woman with positive environments that support her work, whether she works alone or in a team. In *Pengakuan Eks Parasit Lajang*, A proof her intelligence through her success in studying at the Russian Literature Faculty at the University of Indonesia.

5. Straight forward

A show of her true self, which is indifferent and straightforward, for a brief moment. Encouraging herself to state her choices is a brave step in facing people's curiosity. She also presents herself as a trustworthy individual. Her statement was depicted in her *Si Parasit Lajang* as a form of self-assurance to educate people about her decision not to marry but also not to be celibate. She clearly states this without doubt or shame. While some people disagree with her, society should respect this attitude.

“ . . . I decided and announced that I wouldn't marry . . . not marry is my choice of life, even though I will not be celibate. (PEPL, p. 1)

Another proof is her confession of herself as a *Parasit Lajang* (single parasite). Her confession is proof that she talks straightforwardly and is conscious of it. She realizes that she is a career single woman who still lives with her parents at their house. The evidences explain her attitude towards herself, something she is not proud of regarding her age. She compares herself to a parasite, which is usually harmful to the host. Nevertheless, she decides not to care too much about her surrounding environment.

6. Stubborn

A, the youngest of five siblings, is stubborn and always demands her mother's attention. She confesses about her childish attitude as well as confused about her relationship with her boyfriend. From the story she acts just like a mother who is taking care of her son when A is with her boyfriend. She considers this as a negative impact to herself. She wants to have a normal girl-boy relationship and not a mother-son relationship.

7. Beautiful

A's physical appearance is attractive. This is evident from her presence on the cover of a well-known magazine in Indonesia, and she admits it. Her modelling career bring a new consciousness of her personal appearance and give a pleasure for her.

b. Women's Rebellion Against Patriarchal Society in Tradition, Religion, and National Laws

The rebellion inside the novels is the point that reveals A's critical thinking as a feminist in literary criticism. The following explanations provide evidence of rebellion against patriarchal society in tradition, religion, and national laws.

1. Tradition and National Laws Rebellion

The rebellion spin around someone's privacy regarding marriage, polygamy, virginity, and Javanese wedding ceremonies. Here, rebellion against tradition is linked to the rebellion against national laws that shown in Government Regulation No. 10 year 1983.

The concept that marriage is expected for everyone is familiar in Indonesian society. When a person decides to get married or not, society is inclined to question the decision, considering it abnormally from the values developed in society. Some aspects meant to be private are violated in the name of morality, leading to the loss of women's pride and dignity. In *Si Parasit Lajang*, A criticizes the concept of polygamy as a movement of anti-polygamy. The critics, based on the government's policy, shows a loss of a person privacy in deciding their marital life.

"It is rare that people will accept the rational explanation about being unmarried . . . On the other hand, there is no need for any explanation to justify marriage, even though statistics prove divorce. As if marriage, the rationalization of irrational, is rationality itself." (SPL page 112)

Also, Government Regulation No. 10 of the year 1983 not only restricts the act of polygamy but also limits individuals who decide to live together without a marriage commitment. A states that the government intrudes into one's private life, triggering defenders of women's rights to oppose the regulation. This opposition leads to another reaction where women are marginalized, reflecting a lack of support for civil rights.

"Government regulation number 10' is 1983 regulation made to compound government's employments, civil or military, for polygamy. Not prohibited, just compounded, but proven effective enough. To divorce or remarried, a government employment must get permission from their supervisor." (SPL, p. 175)

"Government's regulation no.10 violates a person's personal matters. For example, a government employment is not allowed to live with their spouse without marriage. By this rule, government's is too controlling toward its people's matters." (SPL, p. 175)

For A, polygamy is a mere formality without balance for women, putting them at a disadvantage. This has become the foundation for A to become an anti-polygamist. In Indonesia, the discourse on polygamy is common for some people based on the motive that men have the right to marry more than one woman, considering it adequate. However, A strongly opposes this idea because it implies unfairness for women in deciding on their marriages.

In this case, there is resistance to government regulation and to Indonesian people who encourage the idea of polygamy. While some people accept polygamy as a solution, especially for men intending to have more than one wife, these men do not support women's rights. Women lives are objectified, and decided by men. This undeniably reflects the superiority of a patriarchal system that does not side with fairness to women.

The concept of a man's position in a household, where men are the breadwinners and the heads of the family, guides A to conclude that this system has placed women in a subordinate position. Women are obligated to always obey to their husbands and do whatever they are asked to do, as stated by A in the story. Besides being the head of the family, a husband is allowed to have more than one wife without needing permission. Additionally, a husband is allowed to use their last name. Regarding divorce, it is easier for a man to seek divorce than for a woman.

The novel illustrates the subordinate position of women, where all their actions depend on their husband's approval. Despite this, A argues that the societal system fails to place women in a more advantageous position. Consequently, when a woman is married, she automatically puts herself in a position where she must depend on her husband. More, A states that the act of polygamy is acceptable, whereas the act of

polyandry is unacceptable. She continues argues the reasons why she strongly opposes the idea of polygamy.

A describes polygamy as men being greedy. Instead of avoiding adultery sin, this shows their greed level and putting themselves in a more favored position and violating the women's rights. From her point of view, a true marriage is a fair and equal partnership. It is not limited to men marrying women; women can also marry men, and a woman can be the head of a family. This argument serves as a counterattack against the patriarchal society in Indonesia.

Another issue is about women's virginity. Women are symbolized as products for men to buy and consume, denoting a perspective that A strongly opposes. She asserts that a women's body, viewed as a product, is interpreted merely as the fulfillment of men's sexual needs, reducing the relationship to mere intercourse and deeming a woman's body as an object. According to A, woman's value is determined by her virginity. If a woman is a virgin, she is valued; if not, she becomes less valuable and can be exchanged for a new product. A note of the double standard in society, where a man's virginity is not considered a problem, unlike a woman. Fortunately, A points out that religion does not demand this, whereas tradition or custom does.

"Women are ready to be sent to Earth. As a product for male consumption. Men buy the product. If the seal is broken, the man has the right to change the product." (PEPL, p. 34)

"I don't accept values that I think are unfair. No one can answer me where is the justice of glorifying and demanding women to be virgin. Therefore, I crossed out this verse from my won morality system. Fortunately, no religion demand virginity as one of the conditions of the first marriage. Custom is the one who demands it." (PEPL, p. 35)

Growing up in a Javanese family, she reflects her mother's nurture. Yet, she rejects the concept of the marriage ceremony in Javanese tradition. A sees the Javanese tradition, where the bride washes her future husband's feet symbolizing devotion and service, as unfair. In her view, a marriage where only the husband is served by a woman and doesn't have to reciprocate is unequal. Marriage meant to unite two persons into one, should involve both sides' right and responsibility to serve each other and be devoted to each other. This obligation is not solely for the wife but for both the wife and the husband.

"... I don't like Javanese ceremonies. My first brother underwent a full custom ceremony. Starting from the engagement, serah-serahan, siraman, etc. I dislike the procession. Especially the part where the bride wash her future husband's feet. It's a sign of devotion and service." (PEPL, p. 75)

"There's nothing wrong with devotion and serving husband. Just if it is done equally. Otherwise, it is wrong. If only woman wash his feet and no vice versa, then, I can't accept it." (PEPL, p. 75)

2. Religion Rebellion

In this rebellion, A has pointed out some things that raised her criticism of the Church: their regulations and roles, the gay community, her respect for the Church, and the man/husband's position as the head of the family in Catholic marriage.

A is born Catholic and inherits the religion from her parents. This means she didn't choose to be a Catholic. Consequently, she grew up listening and learning a lot about Catholic doctrine and values, where a person must keep their body holy since the human body is considered the temple of God. However, she objects to some

regulations and rules by the church, expressing her disagreement with inequality in religious doctrines.

A decides to leave the religion behind because, in her opinion, the values built are unfair to women. For her, when two people commit to an intimate relationship, both sides are responsible for it. Nonetheless, A believes that women are always in a disadvantageous position compared to men. In religion, men are leaders who have the privilege to show their power freely. As a result, the product of this religion's values is women becoming the second-class gender, which is unfair.

“ . . . Religion prohibit intercourse outside marriage . . . isn't it suppose to be applied to men and women? . . . I admit I don't find the mistake or the injustice of the prohibition. . . The prohibition to commit adultery might not be a problem, but it might for religion. Religion builds values that are not fair for women in general. . . Making men the leader of women. . . So, if I am no longer a believer, why should I believe in the concept of adultery? . . . I believe that sex is being responsible to myself and my partner.” (PEPL, p. 36)

Another discussion is about A's concerns about the gay community. In her opinion, A finds that religion is not fair for gays. For her, everyone has the right to choose what they want to be. Although same-sex marriage is prohibited by any religion, the concept of loving each other shouldn't be an exception for them. Except for the act of sex, the relationship between human beings should be everybody's right. The fact is, many of them have certain beliefs about their religion even though they do realize their act is considered a sin. There is also the same-sex community who truly let go of the concept of divinity as the act of freedom to choose their path of life and to live their lives the way it is. The reason behind this decision is that they want to be themselves without any interference from religious doctrines and teachings.

“It is clear that marriage related to religion is meant for the continuity of the offspring. So, it's between man and woman. . . . Clearly, such kind of relationship, seeing from the concept of monotheism, is a sin. Love between same sex relationships might not be sinful. However, the realization of the act of same sex is considered as sinful. For me, Dalai Lama, Pope, and other religion leaders can defend their bibles. It's their right. But, gay communities have their own right and should be encouraged to not to be dependent to religion.” (SPL, p. 96)

Seen from the point of humanism, every religion should be able to embrace the gay community and treat them fairly, just like other people. Such things will have a positive impact on them. The best scenario is they would be back to being normal, or if not, at least they will feel accepted. On the contrary, being rejected or exiled will trigger hatred toward religion, straight people, the believers of the religion, and their surrounding environment.

A reaches the point where she realizes she has done something sinful and decides to let go of her religion to respect the religion itself. A is aware of herself. She explains explicitly that she left the Church not because she hates it but because of her consciousness. A realizes that she did wrong and seeks recovery. She has to be clean to take Christ's body (Eucharist) for granted. However, she is incapable of doing such a thing. She respects the Church and therefore decides to leave it because she cannot live in sinfulness while accepting the Eucharist. It is like a betrayal, and she decides to go as her responsibility. This attitude is a gentle way to confess a mistake. But it is better if she leaves her sinful life and lives in a good way, not to leave her faith in Christ for all that is wrong and bad.

“ . . . since I was having an affair with someone’s husband, I really stopped going to church. Not even for Easter week and Christmas. . . But, cleanse myself to welcome the body of Christ? There is no other way than stop doing thefts. I couldn’t stand it. I chose to leave the church. . . I left my religion to respect it. ” (PEPL, p. 82-83)

In “Canon 1135, Each spouse has an equal obligation and right to whatever pertains to the partnership of conjugal life.” This law certainly explains about spouse position in marriage. There is no difference between husband and wife’s roles, each has equal position to develop their marriage. However, the Catholic Church issued a family card by placing husband as the head of the family. Nonetheless, this policy is only issued in the local parish. This statement indicates that it does not have to be a husband to be the head of the family. If this turns out to be a technical matter and is the policy of local parish where a marriage is going to be done, it is possible for a woman to be the head of the family. At this point, the Church is pro equality in terms of husband and wife in a household.

“ . . . Actually, is there is any rule in Catholic marriage stating that husband is the leader of the wife and family? There is none in Canon Law. ” (PEPL, p. 273)

“ Turns out that the Church its own family card too. And in the recording, the head of the family is the husband. . . Indeed, the technical matters will depend on the local parish policy. ” (PEPL, p. 273)

At the end of her rebellion, she found that being a woman is challenging in a patriarchal society, but there is no doubt stating women's position is a must to be equal with men and equality is for all, and for civil rights, too.

c. The Sense of the Character’s Social Awareness that Affect other People

The novel influences readers' lives, revealed in the prologue of *Pengakuan Eks Parasit Lajang* which encourages them to take it easy and not let themselves be swayed by the doctrine of getting married by their surroundings. Another proof is when A becomes a role model for a single parent, despite the disappointment in A's decision to marry in church and omit civil registration and Javanese wedding rituals.

A's decisions affect her readers, with positive effects on women who choose not to marry, facing society's questions without feeling pressured. However, when A decides to get married, it causes a sense of 'loss' for readers, especially affecting independent women who want to live their lives as A does.

“Slowly, I realized that my attitude helped many woman went through their surroundings. Some women, whenever there was question “Why are you not married yet?, will answer “Chill. The single parasite is also not married yet.” It relieved them. Well, of course there were also cynical people, but I also got to meet some readers who hugged me tight. ” (PEPL, p. 2)

“ . . . Three months after that, I met a woman. She said that she was in shock of what I did. She had been very depressed, she had experienced hemorrhage; her menstruation had not been well for two weeks The pressure she had felt had been so heavy, and apparently this book my choice of life had helped her psychologically to deal with her problem. So, when I ‘finally got married’, she felt like she’s been abandoned by a companion, who had been voicing for her. ” (SPL, p. 2)

Moreover, A's principled stance influences people around her, indirectly shaping the thinking of her best friends. They realize that people are allowed to choose different

paths in their lives, understanding the consequences that follow. A hopes not only her friends but also the wider community will be affected.

“ . . . I also want to give lesson to my family, that humans don't need to get married just to make themselves feel good about it. Humans can choose different path of life.” (Gofur in SPL, p. 190)

“In this case, Natalie, Gofur and I have something in common: I don't want to be chained in law I don't agree with. I also want my family and the society to acknowledge that humans are allowed to be different.” (SPL, p. 190)

Overall, A's life journey in *Si Parasit Lajang* and *Pengakuan Eks Parasit Lajang* against tradition, religion, and laws in a patriarchal society shows that discrimination occurs not only to women but also to the LGBT community. Indonesian society's strict adherence to patriarchal culture causes an imbalance in women's position in customs, religion, and law compared to men. This lack of appreciation and equal treatment extends even among well-educated and socially privileged women.

The feminist movement is not only about gender equality but also about recognizing and respecting women as individuals with rights. Women, as capable as men, can create and work in every aspect of life. Although physically different, women are intellectually, emotionally, and managerially capable, able to face pressure and shape their personalities. Many women work as both professionals and housewives, married or single, competing with men. While discrimination persists, Indonesia's society is beginning to accept the capabilities of women, even though some discrimination still exists, but not as severe. In religion, women's positions are starting to be recognized.

Feminism emphasizes that women can stay true to themselves, appreciate their qualities, be smart and tough, caring and loving, uphold good moral and ethical standards, respect those around them, take risks, decide their own lives, build positive relationships, and be a good influence on society.

Despite many women are still marginalized and live in discrimination, people who are more aware and understand about feminism expected to be more active in empowering women, eliminating violence to women and children, equal treatment to minorities, LGBT, disabilities, low class people and former prisoner who are considered as community waste. Concern for the minorities will bring positive impact to our society, because each one of us deserves the same right and responsibility to live a good life, no matter what the gender and the social status is.

The characteristics of *Si Parasit Lajang* and *Pengakuan Si Parasit Lajang* give their feedback regarding the polygamy law and religious doctrine that women should not be stocked in patriarchal society. They need to fight to be able to express their freedom of choice. Women should be treated equally the same as men. That's why the novels *Si Parasit Lajang* and *Pengakuan Si Parasit Lajang* prove to the society that women can also do what men do until the society slowly realizes that women cannot just be treated as wives or sexual objects; they can also work and provide for the needs of the family, and they can live as happily as they want without the dictation of others and not the patriarchal society that they should obey.

Women's rebellion against patriarchal society in tradition, religion, and national laws, in which A is anti-polygamy; she refuses the fact that patriarchal tradition is unfair for women. According to the main character of the novel; polygamy is a mere formality without balance for women, putting them at a disadvantage. This is the reason why the A's became an anti-polygamist. In Indonesia, the discourse on polygamy is common for some people based on the motive that men have the right to

marry more than one woman, which is inappropriate for a married couple because it can affect their families. For religion, the main character of the novel disagrees with gender inequality because religions do not allow same-sex marriage for the LGBT community. The point is that all of us are human beings who deserve to be happy and treated fairly, regardless of our gender. A's is also conservative, especially in a woman's virginity because it is a big deal for a woman that should be pure facing the church on her wedding day. Virginity of a woman is really sacred, that's why she's anti-polygamy.

The sense of the character's social awareness that affects other people. A's aware of how women struggle to obey polygamy and religion doctrines based on her experience. The reason why she chose to be an eye-opener for those women who want freedom to choose the life they want that can make them comfortable and happy. A's planned the so-called feminist movement the goal of this movement is not only about gender equality but also about recognizing and respecting women as individuals with rights. Women, as capable as men, can create and work in every aspect of life. Although physically different, women are intellectual, emotional, and managerially capable, able to face pressure and shape their personalities. Many women work as both professionals and housewives, weather it is married or single competing with men. While discrimination persists, Indonesia's society is beginning to accept the capabilities of women, even though some discrimination still exists but is not as severe. In the aspects of religion, women's positions are starting to be recognized. The novels *Si Parasit Lajang* and *Pengakuan Si Parasit Lajang* is one of the novels that make women fight for their rights and prove that women can do things that men do, as women they also have civil rights. The writer is a fighter because she bravely asserts herself despite all the rules and norms in her society this novel is a stepping stone for the women to fight for their rights.

5. CONCLUSION

Today, our society is in a modern era where this study relates to patriarchal problems in our society, like the fact that most of the time women are struggling for better positions in our society. There is still discrimination and inequality in many areas, for example, women as sexual objects. Women who become victims of rape are often blamed and judged by society as guilty, whereas they are the victims that should be protected and helped. In addition, in education, even today, men are always accepted as having the best position, while women cannot possess the same position, despite their better educational achievement. In the same way, discrimination also happens in the workplace. In Indonesia, we can still find situations where a man is paid more than a woman in the same work field. Another case is women's position in politics. Women's freedom in determining their political views is still limited. In family life, discrimination for women's positions, such as a limited chance to give their voice or opinion, can still be found. Women also become the second class in society and are rejected from being treated equally because of the patriarchal system.

As eras change the concept of gender equality is slowly began to expand and accepted by society. Women are no longer living under patriarchal system but are able to align their position with men. In the new paradigm it is showed that women has the same opportunity as men. In working place, for instance, a woman who have better quality can lead a division where it has men worker than women. Beside, she also can gain salary according to her position without discrimination. Another example, the more parents in remote areas allow their daughter to get their higher education. This will surely shift the society's stigma in the remote area that women are

treated in house hold. Also, institution and ministry that protect women's right in Indonesia has wider scope to women's endeavor in which all the management is watched and protected by the government.

Based on the research entitled "Women's Rebellion Against Patriarchal Society as Reflected in Ayu Utami's *Si Parasit Lajang* and *Pengakuan Eks Parasit Lajang* it can be concluded that the characterization of A as the main character is a young woman with these personalities: single, rebel, critical, smart, straight forward, stubborn, beautiful and smart-critical. Her rebellion is to get equality not only for women but also for the minority on all sides, especially for tradition, religion, and national laws in our patriarchal society. The effects of her rebellion are helping people to understand the concept of equality as feminism aims and motivate other women to stand up and be themselves while living in a patriarchal society.

This work suggests two main points, i.e. for future researchers and teachers. For future researchers, it is suggested to develop more studies from the two selected novels since in this study, the researcher only analyzed the characterization of the two novels. Future researchers can analyze other elements of the two novels, including allusion, symbols, and more of each novel.

This study also suggests teachers infuse literary works in teaching because by using novels as teaching material, students learn not only language but also morals, culture, and others through the characters in the novels. Several skills that can be taught to the students are speaking and reading. The teacher can give the summary plot of one of the novels as teaching material for the students. For speaking skills, the researcher suggests debate or discussion as the activity. The students also can improve their confidence in stating opinions through debate. For reading skills, the teacher can ask students to find the difficult words and some questions given.

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