ERGESERAN PARADIGMA PEMBANGUNAN
PEMBERDAYAAN PEREMPUAN MENUJU
PENGARUSUTAMAAN GENDER

Editor:
Ismi Dwi Astuti Nurhaeni
Insiwi Febriary Setiasih
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Sri Samiati Tarjana, dkk.

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Universitas Sebelas Maret
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TENTANG PENULIS 

PROFIL
CITIZENSHIP, CULTURAL MOBILITY, AND FEMALE IDENTITY IN THE POST-NEW ORDER ERA: READING THE SINETRON 'MYSTERY OF MOUNT MERAPI'

Sri Kusumo Habsari

INTRODUCTION

In this paper I analyse the relationship between cultural mobility and the construction of women's identities as represented in Indonesian “sinetron (V.S. Wardhana, 1997: 29, 85-98)” television series, “Misteri Gunung Merapi” (Mystery of Mount Merapi). This article considers how Indonesian women's identities are being transformed, focusing in particular on an increased awareness by Indonesian women of their membership as citizens of the polity and an increased desire to participate in it. I argue that traditional female identities and gendered citizenship, established by the New Order era as the dominant ideology, has begun to be fragmented in the Post New Order era with the spread of global flows of media and culture from Western countries.

Bignell has stated that “the ways in which television connects with the character of the society where it is watched raise the issue of the social significance of what television represents” (Bignell, 2004: 4). Similarly, Connell argues that the best way to study gender images is through media representations such as magazines, films, and television dramas, although gender representations in such media are often “simplified, stylised and exaggerated” (Clark, 2004: 114). In case of Indonesia, Blackburn said that Indonesian media often represented images that were “far from the reality of most women’s lives”. This happened in large part because the purpose of media in Indonesia was to propagate the dominant ideology of New Order government (Blackburn, 1994: 567). Similarly, “even if the state did not go so far as to dictate how women could be portrayed in the media, its messages linking good citizenship for women to good domestic qualities were
omnipresent” (Brenner, 1999: 15). I argue that although popular
often reluctant to deal with progressive ideas, this does not
*glorifies* the old traditional values. Since socio-cultural phenom-
from time over time, the values that popular culture responds to
also. I demonstrate this process in the course of an examination of
sinetron Misteri Gunung Merapi (Mystery of Mount Merapi).

Considerable attention has been paid to representations of
Order state’s gender ideologies and policies for women through
television series, or sinetron. Saraswati Sunindyo argues
representations in Indonesian sinetron in TVRI (Television of
Indonesia, government television) promoted patriarchy and reified
idea that a woman’s primary role is to be a mother and wife
(1993: 134). Similarly, Purnami asserts that stereotypes of women as
irrational, emotional, passive, and obedient were dominant in mo-
in TVRI. Such repeated portrayals of women in the sinetron pro-
models, informing people about what women were and who they

In 1994, based on her study of state policy documents and
images of the 1990s, Sen wrote that Indonesian women’s identi-
transformed in the late New Order not only as “daughters, wives and
but also as active members of capitalist markets (Sen, 1994: 37). In
her later article, which was based on political cartoons, she said
fact that the capitalist market does treat women as consis-
acknowledges their needs, “the position of women in the form
structures declined rather than improved after the collapse of the N
Implicitly, she said, women have been still experiencing ongoing
rather than developing a new identity (Sen, 2002: 61-62). In con-
despite the social and cultural mobility of recent years, women’s
status as citizens is still a problem.

SINETRON AS SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY

Since the fall of Indonesian cinema around 1990, television
known with as “sinetron” have become very popular. One of the mo-
sinetron, which has been broadcasted since 1998 up to present it
attained the highest ratings in Indonesia, is Mystery of Mount M

Television has connections with the real world of culture and
Television programs also present us with constantly updated versi-
relations and cultural perceptions. However, television i
representation of realities rather than realities themselves and these representations are ideological. In Indonesia, television is a powerful sign of modernity, reinterpreted from its Western origins and refashioned to accommodate local needs (Sutton, 1998: 1). Television is also important in the life of Indonesians as they spend a lot of time watching television (Nilan, 2001: 1). Television drama, especially, is considered the most prestigious and expensive program type, which is why it is often prominently scheduled and advertised. In Indonesia especially, with the fall of film, sinetron became the most popular entertainment program.

The specifics of the sinetron are located in the serialisation of its narratives. Unlike series or serials in Western terms, the story of Mystery of Mount Merapi is divided into many episodic stories, each broadcasted over two or three weeks. Each episode can stand individually, however, every episode ends with a situation that leads to the next episode, as this is the way audiences are kept. The episodes are only subplots that constitute the main plot, which continues on endlessly. In the viewers’ imagination there are many stories but the one big story has not ended yet.

Comparable with the Western television series Superman, this sinetron tells a story of an evil and powerful witch woman, Mak Lampir, who tries to spread evil and terror among human beings. Sembara always opposes her efforts because his lover, Farida, is Mak Lampir’s main target of revenge. The episodes are about the success of Sembara in restoring the society. However, the audiences are curious to know the end of Sembara’s love story as the red line of the episodes. As a long story with many episodes, this sinetron presents large casts of characters. The audiences meet different main characters in each episode with their own specific problem that moves the plot of the story. Although the geographical setting of the story is seventeenth century Java, the problems, conflicts, situation, and reality of the story mirror present day concerns.

Around 300 episodes of this sinetron have been broadcast on Indosiar television. However, I am just concentrate on the 37 episodes that are available for sale as VCD’s. Through my study of these earlier episodes of Mystery of Mount Merapi, I will demonstrate how the sinetron portrays the transformation of women’s identities in the Post New Order era. By analyzing the story plot, drama and dialog development, character and characterization, background of the story as well as from its frame, shots, action and images, it is possible to find indications of the way in which cultural mobility is changing women’s identities and their awareness of themselves as members of the polity in the post-New Order era.
GENDERED CITIZENSHIP

Talking about citizenship reminds me of the induction I attended as a university student in Indonesia. During the New Order, all students had to attend a 100-hour induction in which we learned about the “Five State Ideology”, the sole ideology to which all students were required to adhere. Through this induction, we learned how to be good citizens. Any criticism of Pancasila was considered as subversive during the New Order. The government had the monopoly over the identity of citizens.

Citizenship refers to “the relationship between the individual and the state in a way that highlights important political concepts: identity, freedom, equality, justice, care, participation, and power” (Dulka, 1999: 189). In Indonesia, since the colonial era, women’s identity depended on the “ethnic and religious group to which they belong” (Dulka, 1999: 189). The state has preferred to treat women as a part of the community rather than on an individual basis. Even when the state has tried to ensure women’s lives, community expectations have defeated these attempts. For example, during the colonial era, the government tried to suppress the practice of parents marrying their daughters off at a very young age. Independence, again, the state tried, but failed, to eliminate discrimination against women in marriage with the marriage law of 1974, which was subject to religious code and ethnic tradition. Because of such strong influence on the lives of women, arranging marriage and public affairs, while there is considerable freedom, physical and social mobility, economic activity, control of their own affairs, and the right to acquire knowledge, they are still likely to see themselves as members of their community or ethnic group rather than citizens of the state. Further, between ethnic groups there are different expectations of roles and obligations of women. This situation is strengthened by the prioritization of the community, that is, considering the rights of the group to be more important than the rights of individuals. This consideration of the importance of women’s membership of their community rather than the polity (Blackburn, 1999: 191-2). However, with the increase in education levels, the spread of modern values and enhanced awareness of the value of individualism, some groups of women have begun to assert their membership of their community, as they feel that they control their lives rather than free them to make their own choices.
stated by Holzner and Oetomo, "a citizenship discourse supports a belief in self-control through rational choice, not requiring outside control" (Holzner and Oetomo, 2004), and this awareness is more a product of modernity.

Indonesian women have traditionally been subordinate in their communities. However, not all women are subordinated completely, the extent of their subordination is largely dependent on class and age. In the New Order era, women had moved from community to state subordination (Blackburn, 1999: 193). With the gendered state ideology of "State Ibuism", state motherhood, women became mother-citizens (Suryakusuma, 1996: 98), as women's citizenship is defined in terms of their difference from men. Through Panca Dharma Wanita (the five women's duties) which was repeatedly written in GBHN (Broad Guidelines for State Policy) and propagated in Dharma Wanita, the state-wide wives' organization for the civil service, a woman's role was primarily as a supporter of her husband's career, a procreator and an educator of children, and a supplementary income earner rather than a citizen of the state. Hence, through this ideology the state dictated that to be good citizens, women should embody domestic qualities, to be a wife and mother. With this gendered responsibility, women have been disadvantaged and treated as second-class citizens in Indonesia as women had repressive and restrictive representation and roles in social life as well as political system.

Under the New Order, ordinary women were imposed to join the state organisation known as PKK (Pembaraan Kesejahteraan Keluarga), "Family Guidance Movement", in which the five women's duties were implemented. The purpose of PKK is to make the women active in contributing national development programs. There are ten main themes of the PKK programs: (1) comprehension of Pancasila as the national state ideology, (2) mutual help, (3) food, (4) clothing, (5) housing and household management, (6) education and skills, (7) health, (8) preserving the emotional and physical security and tranquil environment of the home, (10) developing family attitudes appropriate to the modernisation process and future planning" (Chapman, 1996: 21). One of the main activities of PKK was an induction to be a 'responsible mother' which entailed limiting the number of their offspring. Women used contraception without broad information about side-effects and little or no after care. (Blackburn, 1999: 196). This organization did not only limit women's activity in the public sphere but also indicates how the state controlled sexuality.

During the New Order the state also controlled sexuality. It was difficult to control the sexuality of all Indonesians, however it was easier to control the sexuality of civil servants. Through a marriage law in 1974 the state
regulated marriage and divorce of civil servants. The state declared legality and the registration of marriage, the minimum marriage rights of women and men in marriage, annulment, divorce, and in 1983 the marriage law, which is still the legal situation in Indonesia, reformed covering marriage, divorce, polygamy, and concubinage. The requirement of husbands to obtain permission from their superior to take a second wife or divorcing. For women, they are prohibited to marry a second, the third or the fourth wife of a civil servant, but she is a private citizen if she gets consent from her first wife. Living together in legal marriage has been also prohibited.

Another important social group is youth. In terms of citizenship (age between 15-19) should have a right to freedom of expression. In relation to sexuality, for example, they have information and education about their reproductive system. (Oetomo, 2004: 46) However, since conversation about sex is considered taboo in Indonesia, many young people get this information from sources that could mislead them. This phenomenon shows that this right is still not assessed.

Until today the citizenship law implemented in Indonesia in 1958. The law, which still positions men as the head of the family, the children to belong to the citizenship of their father. The citizenship of the children after they are grown up. The draft of the law establishes the principle of equality between women and men, between husband and wife in determining the children's citizenship, accepted by the parliament (Jurnal Perempuan, 2001).

Although during the New Order the state provided civic education elementary to university level, most Indonesian women, especially lower classes of society, are not aware of the meaning of citizenship. They know that they should have an identity card to prove citizenship but they do not understand their rights as Indonesian citizens with the increasing rate of literacy and the importance of new roles in their daily life, women, especially from the middle and upper classes, have become more aware of their rights as citizens and want to have political organization and expression. As noted by Blackburn, women now expect gender equality. "most women want many things that most men do" (Blackburn, 2001: 271). Budianta (2002) in the post-Reformasi era, in terms of identity outside and within the paradigm of state-defined womanhood, women have begun to reformulate the New Order gender ideology. However, these pr
at grassroots level “of plural, community-based groups in less structured organizations, working on basic humanitarian issues (land rights, human rights, and economic rights) with a growing political consciousness”.

(Budianta: 35).

Robinson, in response to both Sen’s and Budianta’s arguments, stated that “the apparent contradictions in the perspectives of the two papers can be reconciled by way of a consideration of the conditions under which women can speak for themselves” (Robinson, 2002: 152). Thus, similar with Budianta, Robinson also noted the increase of women’s activism, especially in the grassroots level, but she also agrees with Sen’s that the political position of women has only improved slightly and the achievements have been largely rhetorical rather than practical. Later in this paper I discuss how Indonesian women have begun to resist and reformulate the new identity based on my semiotic reading of sinetron Misti Guntung Memapi.

CULTURAL MOBILITY

We live in an intensely mobile society. In a highly literal sense mobility refers to “the physical, infrastructural, and institutional conditions of movement”, however mobility is also about “hidden as well as conspicuous movements of peoples, objects, images, texts, and ideas” (Greenblatt, 2004: 2). Indeed, Indonesian women have been familiar with mobility. Since most of Indonesia is still rural, urbanization for working and getting higher education is a common phenomenon. Recently, with the rise of poverty levels accompanying the economic downturn in Indonesia, the migration of women as domestic workers has increased. This physical mobility opens up the possibility of social mobility, a class transition from lower to middle class society and cultural mobility, including both feelings of uprootedness and subsequent cultural adjustment. Urbanization is powered by the very different socio-cultural conditions in rural and urban in Indonesia. Unlike Western society, the difference between rural and urban in Indonesia means the different access to technology and modernity. As noted by Van der Kroef, “The Indonesian village is a closed society, traditionally self-sufficient and exclusive, with its own customs, its own law, and often its own religious practices”, while the cities of Indonesia have, since the colonial period, been culturally dominated by European elements (Van Der Kroef, 1952: 11-12). Although Van Der Kroef’s notion is based on research undertaken in the 1950s, it remains relevant today.

I suggest that it is the experience of cultural mobility among Indonesian women that is having a major impact on their awareness of their rights as
freedom of expression such as “to choose their education, marriage partner, career and goals in life and more and more are living away from home for educational or work purposes”, conflicts between the two generations are more apparent. (Robinson and Utomo, 2003: 7)

One notable impact of cultural mobility in Indonesia is in the definition of sexuality. The global information circuits Western culture indirectly imposes through television programs have transformed the behaviour of the people, especially the young. They reformulate the definition of sexual identities, sexual practices, and marriage. Although the 1983 marriage law has not been renewed and still applies, most young people now tend to delay their marriage. Many still hold the opinion that life without marriage and children is meaningless, but they refuse arranged marriage, practice dating, and some lose their virginity before marriage although virginity is still considered important (Robinson, 2000, Robinson and Utomo, 2003).

In can be concluded that cultural mobility accompanying modernity produces contradictory effects. In some ways, it destroys the local cultural values and for some groups of people, especially the older generation, it creates the danger of loose morality. On the other hand, it opens up women’s awareness of increasing their degree of independence in their family and in their community, which further increases their citizenship awareness. However, as noted by Blackburn, Indonesian women still have problems identifying and defending their own rights, as they had been accustomed to caring for others rather than themselves (Blackburn, 2001: 281).

**FEMALE IDENTITY IN MISTERI GUNUNG MERAPE**

As stated in the introduction, although the setting of this story is Java in the seventeenth century this does not mean that issues represented in the story are not current. Instead, this sinetron depicts modern issues in Indonesia in the setting of seventeenth century Java.

There are three woman characters in this sinetron who can serve to reveal the transformation of women’s identity in the Post New Order era: Farida, Mayang Sari and Pinaloka. Farida and Pitaloka represent good women while Mayang Sari is the antagonist. As the main female character of the story, Farida is portrayed as beautiful, refined, and dependent on men for protection and guidance. Mayang Sari and Pitaloka, in contrast, are pictured as powerful women with skills in martial arts.

The portrayal of these three female characters also shows how mobility, in literal reading, changes their identity and how cultural mobility, reading the
(Aripurnami, 1998: 57). However, she is also portrayed as an individual. She doesn’t want to be oppressed by her aunt and her father and she runs away to show that she wants to have her own choice.

As a beautiful woman without any martial art skills, Farida experiences many troubles in her journey. She always needs protection for her safety and guidance to keep her away from dangerous situations. However, because she is basically a good woman, every time she is in danger there is always someone who saves her. The character of good woman who always gets a lot of help, protection, and guidance from her surroundings is dominant feature in Indonesian television cinema. It seems that this character type functions as a kind of education for Indonesian women to remain well behaved, because by maintaining good deeds there is always someone who will help her out of the dilemma she faces.

It is interesting that although Farida often gets into trouble because of her beauty – Mak Lampir wants her life, some men try to rape her, and a spirit forces her to be his bride – she does not think of learning martial art skills for her own self-defense. These difficult situations are repeated in many episodes of the story and it is only in the 20th episode that Farida begins to learn martial art skills. Furthermore, the idea of learning the martial arts does not come from Farida herself but from a spirit who feels sympathetic with Farida’s sufferings and decides to teach her some skills of self-defence. The creation of Farida as the main character also reflects the tendency of glorifying women’s position in the domestic area. When Farida becomes powerful after mastering martial art skills her role in the story becomes less and less. She is dominant in the story only when she is passive.

After Farida undertakes a journey into the world of spirit she experiences a transformation from a weak and dependent woman into a powerful and independent woman. She moves from the domestic into the public sphere, from her ambition simply to be Sembra’s wife into a woman who is active in society’s matters and she becomes one of the team who has to destroy evil in the world. It could be argued that with the development of her individuality she becomes aware that she is a member of the polity and she wants to be active in the society. Her contact with the spirit world also changes her appearance. In the beginning of the story Farida wears traditional Javanese costume, but later her costume is more modern and lacks signifiers of any particular ethnic background. Reading Farida’s transformation, it shows that Farida has experienced a cultural mobility since she adopts new values she has learned from her contact with the spirits.
In the context of Indonesia, Farida represents most girls moving from rural to urban areas for education. In the urban setting, with its spiritual world in which the world of martial arts plays a prominent role, as represented by Farida, most rural girls experience a sense of uprootedness upon leaving their home. From their contact with the urban people they learn and adopt new values that transform their way of thinking. Semiotically, this also refers to the urban, the town in Indonesia with all modern thinking while the human world is the rural Indonesia within. Although rural people now have electricity and television, they are still far from their reach. However, young rural people move to be part of modernity.

In the 11th episode another beautiful woman is introduced. Pitaloka runs away from her parents for the same reason as Farida: to marry her parents’ prospective husband. Although the arrangement and the effort to refuse it were a dominant theme in the cinema, the theme of women delaying marriage for higher education is a common one. While Farida refuses her father’s prospective partner, she wants to marry Sembata, Pitaloka refuses the arrangement because she does not like her prospective husband but also because she is not yet ready to get married. This phenomenon is also reflected in Indonesia, as noted by Holzner and Oetomo that “the average age of marriage has been rising since 1994” with “30 years old in 1994” (Holzner and Oetomo, 2004: 41). Having martial arts skills she can protect herself from any disturbances that occur. She comes to her uncle and asks him to give her parents why she was disobedient.

In her journey she meets Lindu Aji and they fall in love. She decides to accompany her on the journey to see her uncle and also to experience many difficult situations and try to solve all their problems. Along their journey they learn about mutual help and companionship. These scenes show us the practices of dating and marriage that are uncommon in the past in Indonesia. Just a few decades ago, a man would be accompanied by a woman and the two should be accompanied by another woman. Otherwise the society would accuse of the woman of impropriety.

From the beginning, Pitaloka shows that she wants to get higher education as compared to Farida. While Lindu Aji and she learns that Lindu Aji is a Mataram soldier, she wants to be active in Sultan Agung’s plan to.
knows that her fighting ability will be useful for this plan. Her journey and all her experiences open her eyes to other possibilities in her life. The martial art skills she has are useful not only for protecting herself from danger, but also for dedicating herself to her country. She becomes aware that she is not only part of her family but also her community and polity. She transforms into a woman with bigger ambitions, to be a soldier of Mataram to help the country to be free from Dutch colonialization. However, her dream is hindered by Mayang Sari. Defeated in a fight with Mayang Sari, Pitaloka becomes helpless. She is severely poisoned by Mayang Sari’s weapon and her life is in Mayang Sari’s hands since only Mayang Sari has the antidote. As the enemy of Sultan Agung, Mayang Sari uses Pitaloka to prevent Lindu Aji from doing his duty. For many episodes after that Pitaloka, as a woman active in the public sphere, becomes inactive in the story.

This storyline indicates that the sinetron still does not fully support the idea of women being active in the public sphere. Although Indonesian women have traditionally been active in economic activity and have dominated markets with all transactions, economic activity is not considered as part of the public sphere, rather it is domestic because economy is part of a woman’s duty to her family’s welfare. It also shows that the story is more a representation of New Order ideology rather than the actual picture of Indonesian women earlier in the twentieth century, when Indonesian women were active in organization based on their membership of their different classes, regions, ethnic and religious groupings (Blackburn, 1994: 560). However, after “the onslaught of war and civil strife, women gave priority to their families” to provide basic requirements such as “shelter, food, clothing and basic health and education” and “were engaged in social welfare work, trying to meet these needs” (ibid). But as Budianta has shown, women are again becoming active in grass-root community organizations.

If we consider martial art to be a form of education, Pitaloka and her decision to learn martial art skills represents many young women in the past Indonesia. Certainly, Indonesian women were free to gain higher education, however, the purpose was not in the value of the education itself but rather its value in terms of promoting better health and child-rearing practices. However, like Pitaloka who uses her martial art skills for wider advantage, many young women who move to urban areas have begun to see the importance of education from different perspective.

Another beautiful and powerful woman is introduced in episode five. Unlike Pitaloka who learns martial art skills in a school near her house, Mayang Sari goes to Mak Lampir’s school that requires her students to stay
with her during their learning. Mak Lampir teaches her to be powerful people but also ambitious ones. With the high arts as well as some magic spells to gain supernatural power, devils, being a housewife and mother is not Mayang Sari's, she wants to be active in the public area. She is representative of a number of Indonesian women who want to actively partake in organization in which most members are male. She is also picturized as an active woman in important political decisions. 

Because of lack of experience, most women usually lack participation in meetings and political discussions, however, in the context of post New Order Indonesia, it show Indonesians have new definitions of gender differences. Robinson, beginning in 1993 CBHIN introduced the new women's human resources in which to reach the goal the women as equal partner is articulated and stressed in many this policy, the equality of rights, duties and responsibilities of as citizens are acknowledged (Robinson, 2000: 159). However, while there changes are evident in policy, they are not yet occur in life. Nevertheless, Mystery of mount Merapi has responded to this by still positions this woman as an antagonist.

Like Farida and Pitaloka, Mayang Sari also represent modern girls, however she is more progressive. Her freedom in sex shows how she views her sexuality as her own personal freedom, instead of the context of family and motherhood. She also represents a group of Indonesian women who hold the opinion that sex is not for pleasure. As this story is narrated in episodes that shortly after the end of the New Order era, Mayang Sari is presented as an antagonist of the story. She is an antagonist because she works together with the Dutch, applying the skills she learned from Mak Lampir to people who are considered bad in society. She feels she gets power to express her own choices. With a combination of beauty, in power, Mayang Sari becomes a special woman. With all she has a duty to obstruct Sultan Agung's plan to attack the Bojonegoro. As an antagonist she is pictured as a cruel woman, for to reach her plan, she demonically kill the innocent. Her beauty combined with the power, a powerful-asset to influence a man to betray his duty as a so Agung.
There is a strong belief that the ordinary woman or good woman should be emptied of sexuality. However, Mayang Sari is portrayed as a woman with high sexual desire. She is easily attracted to a good-looking man who has high skills of the martial arts. When she is fascinated with a man she undoubtedly directs her desiring gaze at him. However, she will avert the controlling gaze of any man she is not attracted to. Such representation of female desire was uncommon in the New Order cinema. The New Order cinema glorified reproduction as women’s vocation and consistently described the danger of its denial. Women were only portrayed as a mother or a wife, or if the film exploited a woman’s body, she was represented as a prostitute (Sen, 1998: 297-9).

The representation of Mayang Sari shows how the production team looks at sexuality. Although premarital intercourse is becoming more common among the younger generation the media still doesn’t want to reflect this phenomenon in their productions, like Mystery of Mount Merapi which still positions Mayang Sari as an anti-heroine. However, there is a revolutionary change in her personality reflected on episode 24 when she is touched by some questions asked by a child. When she is badly injured a man fortunately finds her asking for help. This man brings her home and takes care of her wound helped by his daughter. Having lost her mother at a young age, the girl looks after Mayang Sari fondly. She also asks Mayang Sari about her husband and her child. Being touched by her care and her question Mayang Sari reflects on her life and she begins to ask herself about her goal in life. She suddenly realises that she feels lonely without any child in her life. And she decides to change her way of life.

In the New Order, marriage is still considered as a crucial social institution. People, women especially, choose to suffer in unhappy marriages rather than getting divorced. Single people, especially single women, also tend to suffer socially. Since the traditional role of women is to bear kinship relations and family honour in the next generation, women are dishonoured by being divorced or single. Mayang Sari’s choice to remain single and adopt the free-sex lifestyle was revolutionary in the New Order era although it is more common today. However, a child - the symbol of domesticity - forces her to reconsider her preference and decide to reverse her previous course of action. Mayang Sari’s decision shows that although she is liberal in her sexual attitudes and behaviour she still desires to marry and have children, which reflects the universal opinion of Indonesians. Also, it is still rare in Indonesia to choose to “never marry and look for fulfillment through pursuing a career” (Robinson and Utomo, 2003: 9).
New Order cinema glorified female reproduction and described the danger of its denial. In contrast, although in some sinetron is reluctant to deal with progressive ideas of female identity, no picture of glorifying domestic women. Instead, all female characters are active pursuing their career. It means that the New Order ideal ways has been contested and it will be possible for progress in this area.

CONCLUSION

I agree with Budianta that in the post New Order era women need to reformulate their own identity, and I suggest that this can be done through the depiction of female characters in the sinetron Mystery of Mount Merapi. Although the setting is the seventeenth century, the values presented through the depiction of characters are modern principles, that show how global change has been impacting upon new cultural forms. In some ways, the sinetron has already portrayed some mobility in women's identity. As Indonesia today, most female characters in the sinetron want to work and have a career. In the portrayal of three characters, reading symbolically between the world of human and the world of spirit, or, in modern Indonesia from rural to urban areas, all of them are able to express their individuality with the impact of modernization. The most important is their freedom of expressing their own choices. The meaning of freedom is translated differently; from something just for a woman's own pleasure to something that enables her to participate in the state and society. And this shows also some progress in how women become more active in membership as citizens of the polity and want to participate in society. As awareness, they begin to articulate new definitions of gender roles, and adopt the concept of men and women as equal partners. In this role, young people have new definition that creates a big gap between parents and grandparents.

In its early episodes this sinetron represents many features of modernity that accompanies modernization and globalization. In this way, the sinetron transforms women's identity. Nevertheless, it does not promote as desirable and admirable. The New Order ideology of women nature ruled by their reproductive responsibilities and childbearing is dominant and influences the way the sinetron creates the character of female protagonists and antagonists. Therefore, I also consider Sen's notion that Indonesian women's transformation is rather than practical, and publicly it is invisible. In Mystery of Mount Merapi, the representation of the transformation is limited to the gap.
and it is largely still on the stage of awareness rather than active participation. In my reading, this indicates that citizenship is still problematic in Indonesia. It still needs a long process for the Indonesian women to be actively participating in Indonesian policy making.

References


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Ketidakadilan gender dalam berbagai bidang pembangunan di Indonesia telah berlangsung cukup lama dan mendorong akademisi dari berbagai perguruan tinggi untuk melakukan kajian kritis terhadap fenomena tersebut. Buku ini bertujuan memberikan pemahaman lebih mendalam mengenai ketidakadilan gender dalam berbagai bidang pembangunan ditinjau dari berbagai disiplin ilmu. Pendekatan yang digunakan oleh para penulis dalam menjelaskan fenomena ketidakadilan gender tersebut bervariasi, dari pendekatan women in development, gender and development hingga gender mainstreaming (pengarusutamaan gender). Buku ini diorganisasi ke dalam 5 bagian, mencakup: (1) gender dalam dimensi sosial, budaya dan agama; (2) gender dalam dimensi pendidikan; (3) gender dalam dimensi politik dan kebijakan publik; (4) gender dalam dimensi tenaga kerja, ekonomi dan teknologi serta (5) penanganan kemiskinan dari perspektif gender. Penulis buku ini juga sudah merepresentasikan perempuan maupun laki-laki karena perjuangan untuk mewujudkan keadilan dan kesetaraan gender memang bukan milik perempuan saja, dan bukan pula merupakan perang antara perempuan dengan laki-laki, tetapi merupakan upaya untuk mewujudkan hubungan yang saling menguntungkan dan harmonis antara laki-laki dan perempuan dengan berlandaskan pada prinsip-prinsip egaliter dan adil gender. Dengan demikian, perempuan dan laki-laki diharapkan dapat mengembangkan potensinya secara optimal tanpa terkendala oleh jenis kelaminnya.