

POSTCOLONIALITY IN ERWIN CLARKSON GARRET'S *THE DYAK CHIEF* BALLAD

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ABSTRACT

This research analyzes the postcoloniality of Erwin Clarkson Garret's *The Dyak Chief* Ballad. This research using the elements of poetry theory, poetry and history and postcolonial theory. The method of this research using structural approach and postcolonial analysis. This research analyzes the elements of poetry, the historical context of the poetry, and postcolonial aspect of the poetry. The results of this research are based on the identification of intrinsic elements, the historical context of this ballad that related to early first world war, and the representation of the native (the East) by the West which is the Dayak people in the middle of tropical rainforest of Kalimantan. In addition, Garrett as an American writer also describes his white rival, the Dutch, as a colonizer who is not liked by the Dayak people in Kalimantan. This means that Garrett also practices representation of other Western nations who became his rivals before the first World War. Thus, Garrett's *Dyak Chief* was a political tool to delegitimize Dutch rule which was still entrenched in Kalimantan at that time.

Keywords: *Dyak Chief*, ballad, history, postcoloniality, Kalimantan tropical rainforest

ABSTRAK

*Penelitian ini menganalisis postkolonialitas puisi balada *The Dyak Chief* karya Erwin Clarkson Garret. Penelitian ini menggunakan teori unsur puisi, puisi dan sejarah, serta teori postkolonial. Metode penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan struktural dan analisis postkolonial. Penelitian ini menganalisis unsur-unsur puisi, konteks sejarah puisi, dan aspek postkolonial puisi balada ini. Hasil dari penelitian ini adalah identifikasi unsur intrinsik balada, dan konteks sejarah puisi Balada yang berkaitan dengan awal perang dunia pertama, dan representasi penduduk asli (Timur) oleh Barat, yaitu orang Dayak di tengah hutan hujan tropis Kalimantan. Selain itu, Garret sebagai penulis Amerika juga menggambarkan rival negaranya sesama kulit putih, yakni Belanda, sebagai penjajah yang tidak disukai oleh orang Dayak di Kalimantan. Artinya, Garret juga melakukan praktik representasi terhadap bangsa Barat lainnya yang menjadi rivalnya menjelang perang*

Dunia pertama. Dengan demikian, Dyak Chief-nya Garret ini merupakan alat politis untuk mendelegitimasi kekuasaan Belanda yang masih bercokol di Kalimantan pada masa itu.

Kata kunci: *Dyak Chief, balada, sejarah, pascakolonial, hutan hujan tropis Kalimantan*

A. INTRODUCTION

The Dyak Chief is one of poems from a book who written by Erwin Clarkson Garrett. The book title is "*The Dyak Chief and Otherverses*". In his book, the author said that *The Dyak Chief* is a long poem. The *Dyak Chief* many tells about savage people in Kalimantan (Borneo). The author had tried to use delicate language. But he said it was same as logical and apropos as for the manager in the Zoo to use lavender water and talcum powder for the laughing hyena. This work describes the situation of hinterland of Borneo at that time.

The Genre of *The Dyak Chief* is narrative poetry. And, the type of this genre is ballad. Ballads is the narrative poetry that called as the long poetry. *The Dyak Chief* is the ballad that story about the adventure of an USA army into wild forest Kalimantan, Indonesia, in the early of 20th century. The army takes the contact with the tribes' people in the middle of wild forest Kalimantan called as Dyak (Dayak) People. Dayak people are one of native people or ethnic in hinterland of Borneo (Kalimantan). The analysis of this research would give the significant contribution to Mulawarman University to explore the Tropical Rain Forest Cultural Studies in Kalimantan, Indonesia. This is also the main reason why the researcher chooses this work as the object of material for this research. Therefore, in this research, the researcher translates this ballad into Bahasa Indonesia in order to Indonesian reader could understand the contents and the context of this ballad.

This research would elaborate and analyze the postcolonial aspect of *The Dyak Chief* Ballad. The first way in elaborates the postcolonial aspect in this ballad, the researcher would identify the elements of the poetry first. Secondly, the researchers would translate the poetry into Bahasa Indonesia. Thirdly, the researcher would analyze the historical and postcolonial aspects of the work. The identification of elements of the poetry using Ruth Miller and Robert A. Greenberg (1981) book about the introduction of poetry. Meanwhile, the contextuality of the poetry toward history and the analysis of postcolonial aspect.

Ballads as Narrative Poetry

Ballad is the types of narrative genre in poetry. As we know that poetry consist of three genres of poetic discourse – narrative, dramatic, lyric (Miller and Greenberg, 1981: 158). Narrative poetry indicates the poetry in narrative model. This model articulates the long poetry in representing the reality. The story also included in this type of poetry.

Ballad is a classic model of the poetry. The poetical aspect in one side and narrative aspect in another side are two elements that construct the ballad. There is a long story that described by the ballad. In a ballad, the point of view and the characterization also have the

significant role to create the story. Ballad maybe could be said as the combination of prose and poetry.

Poetry, History, and Postcoloniality

Poetry as a part of literature is the reflection of reality. Another argument affirms that literature is the representation of reality. The representation of the reality or the fact in the past time emphasizes the poetry as the reflection and or the representation of history. The dictions of reflection and representation bring the significant consequence for the relationship of poetry and history. Reflection affirms the reality as the mirror of the literature. There is no the significant role of the author in political side. In another side, reflection is the neutral diction to explain the relationship between literature – especially poetry – and history (Ruth & Greenberg, 1981: 262-263). Meanwhile, the diction of representation indicates the significant role of the author to re-present the reality and history into literary work. This diction politically constructed.

Postcoloniality is the postcolonial condition itself. The statement indicates the condition of colonial and postcolonial aspects in the work (Gandhi, 1998: 4; Dobie, 2012: 204). The condition means aftermath the colonial affect a state or community. One of the articulations of colonialism is literary work. Literature is one of the articulations of cultural representation. Colonial era creates the effect until nowadays. The effect of colonial era and colonial practices in the past time called as postcolonial (Gandhi, 1998:141). And, Poetry as a part of literature is a representation of the past time, the representation of history into the literary work. Therefore, poetry indicates the political aspect through the role of the author in representing the reality in the past time. There is also the significant relationship between history and postcoloniality in poetry analysis.

Poetry, history, and postcoloniality have a significant relationship in representation practices of culture. Poetry, especially ballad, consist of representation of Eastern history that represented by the Western authors. Orientalism, and postcoloniality for general is the representation practices of the West as the Self toward the East/natives as the Other (Said, 1978; Nasrullah, 2019: 13-14). Poetry is a medium of history, medium of the text that represent the ideological and the political agenda of the collective subject called the Self/Western.

B. METHOD

The method of this research is using qualitative method. This research uses the literary research method as part of qualitative research, especially poetry research analysis. The researchers use the intrinsic analysis to identify how the author create the ballad in structural aspect. The next step of this research is translating the ballad into Bahasa Indonesia. The purpose of the translation is in order to the reader of Indonesian could understand the contents of this ballad. As we know that, the setting of place of this ballad was in hinterland Center of Kalimantan (Borneo) tropical rainforest.

This research also analyzes the relationship between poetry and history. The data of this analysis consist of the main data from the *The Dyak Chief* ballad as primary data. Secondary data consist of the data from other sources that explain the historical context of the *The Dyak Chief* ballad. After analyze the historical context of the ballad, the research would analysis the postcoloniality of this work. This step using postcolonial approach in analyze the ballad.

To collect the data, the researcher read the work as primary data. And, after that, the researchers identify the elements of the poetry. The data for historical context collected in secondary data in reading another reference. After that, the translation of the work use translation technique. And, the last, to analyze the postcoloniality, the researchers use postcolonial approach to identify how the representation of the East represented by the West in the *The Dyak Chief* ballad (Dobie, 2012: 209).

C. FINDINGS

Historical Context and Postcoloniality of *The Dyak Chief*

Historical context of this ballad is the early of pre-first world war. The context of tropical rainforest Borneo is Borneo as the source of natural resources for world war. This ballad indicates the competition of the north state to rule the south world. We know that Kalimantan (Borneo) is the oil producer that very useful in military resources in the war world. Balikpapan and Tarakan are both of them as a examples of oil producers in Kalimantan. Clarkson as the veteran of Philippines annexation by the America could be said do the mapping in hinterland Kalimantan to face the possibility of First World War at that era (Clarkson, 1914: 9).

As a traveler or adventurer, Garret explore the wild nature of Kalimantan. Beside he explores and do mapping in the Central Kalimantan Tropical rainforest, he representing the native of Kalimantan called Dyak people. Garret explores Kalimantan after he join to mission of annexation Philippines. Annexation of Philippines occurs before the 1st world war. And, we can conclude that, the exploration of Kalimantan through the Garrets ballads is one agenda to identify the opportunity how to rule the Kalimantan for preparation of 1st world war. Kalimantan at that time known as *Kalimantan Settlements* that initiated and held by Brooke's family as the White King of Borneo (Ricklefs dkk, 2013: 398-402, 405-412). Therefore, the interest of America to save Borneo as the next occupation for preparation of 1st world war is very important. And, in depression economy of the world, Kalimantan as a rich island is to potentially exploit by America as new colonialists state.

The postcoloniality of this work founded in the colonial point of view when the white man army show the native Kalimantan called Dayak (Dyak) as the savage and chaotic people. This is the negative image that represent the orientalist point of view in representing the native Kalimantan into the literary work (Clarkson, 1914: 7-8). Orientalism is the way of Western people show the eastern people in hierarchal point of view. The Western people construct their self as the Self and the Eastern (native) as the

other (*liyan*). In *The Dyak Chief*, Garret using 'head-hunter' (*pemburu kepala*) diction to represent the characteristic or image of Dyak tribes in Central Borneo.

*"Poeroek Tjahoe was the last white (Dutch) settlement, and from there I went with three Malay coolies five days tramp on foot through the jungle, northwest, penetrating the very heart Borneo, sleeping the first three night in the houses of the Dyaks, some nomadic tribes of whom still roam the jungle as **head-hunters**,*

(Garret, 1914:7)

The postcolonial condition of this ballad represented through the setting of time in Borneo that including into colonial period at that time. The Dutch colonial that still existed in Kalimantan at that era and British colonial that existed in North Borneo are the real condition of colonial existence of the setting of time of this ballad. The strong indication that emphasizes the colonial condition in cultural aspect is the way of the Clarkson as the West represents the East. Clarkson and the army as the West representing the Dyak people as the East. The West, the white man army as the subject, and the Dyak people as the object is the evidence of the postcolonial condition (postcoloniality) that represented in *The Dyak Chief* ballad.

.....
*Hour by hour I heard him shriek
To the skies and the White Man's God
But only the gluttons came again
And reddened the reeking sod.*

*Weeping, writhing, groaning –
Paled to an ashen dun –
And the clotted blood turned black as mud
And stunk in the midday sun. (Garret, 1914: 26)*

.....
*From east and west and south and north
The mighty warriors came,
To prove the weight of Dyak hate
And the shame of the naked shame. (Garret, 1914: 27)*

.....
*In Sullen, **savage** silence
They watched the streamlets flow:
In **savage**, sullen silence –
The war-lords – row and row – (Garret, 1914: 27)*

The data and evidences above emphasize the postcoloniality in *The Dyak Chief* Ballad. The (Dutch) postcolonial condition in the Central Borneo indicated by the hate of Dyak people to the white man (Dutch). The representation of Dyak people as 'savage' and

using violence in facing the annexation of the white man (Dutch). Garret objectified the Dyak People as a 'uncivilized' and 'chaotic' people, although in the writing technique, Garret use the Dyak Chief point of view. But, the Dyak Chief point of view is used by Garret to declare Dyak people itself as a subordinate human in the front of white man (Western). In short, Garret represents the Dyak People as the Other (*liyan*) in his representation in this ballad.

The findings above indicate how Garret as American (although also as white man) describes the hate of Dyak as the Kalimantan's native to the Dutch (as a white man that colonized Central of Borneo at that time). This work can be identified as a sign of the will to power of America in Kalimantan in the beginning of 20th century. This condition explains us that there was a competition of colonialist among the white man (the West) to colonize/rule the native people in Kalimantan (East). And, this is the real postcolonial condition which called 'postcoloniality' that represented in *The Dyak Chief* ballad.

D. CONCLUSION

The literary work was used by the author to declare the colonial and postcolonial condition in the Central of Kalimantan (Borneo) in 1908 when Garret visited that place. Beside of the representation of the situation of colonial condition in Borneo at that time, this work also articulated the political and ideological practice of Erwin Clarkson Garret as American army that travelled to South East Asia in the early of 20th century and also in immediately before the first world war. Garret as American author represents two objects. First, the Dyak People as the savage, chaotic, and uncivilized. Secondly, the Dutch white man that represented as the white man who hated by the Dyak people in Borneo. Therefore, America as a new colonialist and new orientalist has the opportunity to change the Dutch as the colonizer in Borneo specifically and maybe in East Indies for generally, at that time. Therefore, the literary work can be seen (more) as the political gun to win the competition among colonialist/colonizer in postcolonial condition, not only to colonize the native (Dyak people in central Borneo), but also toward the other colonizer (Dutch) as its rival.

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