



## The Narration of the Female Workers' Coffins in Literary Works

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### ABSTRACT

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This article describes the human trafficking and humanitarian violence experienced by the Indonesian Workers 'Tenaga Kerja Indonesia' (TKI) in general and the Female Workers 'Tenaga Kerja Wanita' (TKW) in particular employed abroad. The thing experienced by the TKWs is referred to as the coffin 'peti mati' by the writers through the poems and short stories in the Poetry Anthology Series One (2018) and Series Two (2019/2020) with the theme *The Massage of Peace from the Land of Flobamora* 'Pesan Perdamaian dari Bumi Flobamora'. What is the essence of 'the coffin' and why what is experienced by the TKWs employed abroad is referred as 'the coffin'? The paraphrasing method and the qualitative descriptive method and the structural and semiotic approach were applied to find the answer to this question. The result shows that the 'coffin' used in the poems and short stories denotatively and connotatively shows the suffering that the TKWs suffer from and how they struggle by themselves, showing that literary works have time, space and place for exposing different social realities, one of which is the tragic plight by the TKWs.

### KEYWORDS:

*Tenaga Kerja Wanita* (TKW), the Massage of Peace, human trafficking, the 'coffin'.

### INTRODUCTION

This article is written based on the results of the study exploring "the Oral Tradition in East Nusa Tenggara as the Regional Setting of the Writing of the Modern Literary Works" revealing the tragic plight undergone by the Indonesian workers as a social fact. The narration of 'the coffin' reflects the tragic plight undergone by the TKWs as the Indonesian Workers (TKI) employed abroad.

The writers reveal the conflict and the tragic plight of the TKWs through the literary works they write. For example, the tragic plight undergone by Adelina Sauk, a TKW coming from East Nusa Tenggara 'Nusa Tenggara Timur' (NTT) who was sent home within a coffin. Around February 2018 the news about Adelina was exposed in Indonesia in general and in NTT in particular. She was a TKW coming from Abia Village, Oenino District, South Central Timor Regency, East Nusa Tenggara. She was physically and mentally tortured by her employer in Malaysia. She stayed with a dog; she was sick and nobody took care of her. Her feet showed that she was bitten by the

dog. She died of hunger as her employer did not give her anything to eat (Suara.com/news 25 April 2019 and 26 February 2018; Kompas.tv/article 09 December 2021).

Adelina was one of hundreds of TKWs experiencing the bitterness of life resulting from poverty. She hoped for a better life but she was trapped in poverty. The poem entitled Litany to Women 'Litani Kepada Perempuan' written by Milla Lolong reflects this. The poem entitled "Sajak Minah Tetap di Pancung" written by Denny JA also illustrates the involvement of a poet in the conflict involving the TKWs. This poem narrates that Minah, a TKW employed in Middle East and raped by her employer, was finally executed for killing her employer. These two poems show the poets' involvement in the real story of Aminah as mentioned in the footnote that "the torment experienced by Aminah has become a common story among the TKWs, that in 2010 1,075 TKWs were tortured by their employers, that such a torture was frequently led to death, and that from 2007 to 2011, according to Migrant Care, 10 TKWs from different countries died of being tortured by their employers." (Denny, J.A., through Akbar Ilma, 2016: 196-197).

There are many literary works narrating TKWs, three of them are the novels entitled *Aku Bukan Budak* 'I'm not a Slave' (Triutami, 2012), *Dari Tanah Haram ke Ranah Minang* (From Tanah Haram To Ranah Minang) and *Jatiasaba* (Ramayda Akmal). The first two novels narrate how women are frequently described as the marginal people

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in the relation between TKWs, capitalism, employers, and their fellow beings. They are reflected as belonging to the powerless party. These two novels still articulate the discourse of TKWs that goes along with the dominant discourse (Nurisma Yuitamurti, 2013: 264). Jatisaba (Ramayda Akmal) narrates the illegal TKWs who make themselves heroes inviting their friends coming from the villages they come from to work as illegal TKWs. This novel is criticized using the theory proposed by Michel Foucault emphasizing crimes against humanity befalling the illegal TKIs (Muchlas, Abror, 2020: 1).

The awareness of the writers in NTT of the emergency of human trafficking experienced by NTT is expressed in the poem entitled *Litani Kepada Perempuan* "the Litany to Women" written by Milla Lolong as mentioned above.

"Litani Kepada Manusia" is included in the Poetry Anthology of the Message of Peace for NTT Series One entitled *Bulan Peredam Prahara* (2018) (hereinafter shortened to the Poetry Anthology Series One). The Poetry Anthology of the Message of Peace for NTT Series Two entitled *Kepada Pedang dan Nyala Api* (To the Sword and Flame) (2019/2020) (hereinafter shortened to the Poetry Anthology Series Two), in addition to the Poetry Anthology of the Message of Peace for NTT Series one, is also explored. The theme and mandate of this anthology are that it is important to be responsive to various social conflicts, tolerances, love relations and personal and family longings, the ancestors' messages, love for the motherland, humanitarian violence and the TKW-based human trafficking). The specific theme about the sad fate of TKWs and TKIs, the longing for the ancestral land, the belief to return to the realm of weaving as a traditional craft, and the coffins sent by the TKWs and TKIs, as the heroes of foreign currencies from NTT are referred to as *Nusa Peti Mati* by the writers,

The two short story anthologies, namely the Short Story Anthology of Peace for NTT Series One entitled *Perempuan dengan Tiga Senyuman* (The Women with Three Smiles) (2018) is hereinafter shortened to the Short Story Anthology Series One) and the Short Story Anthology Series Two entitled *Narasi Rindu* (the Longing Narration) (2019) is hereinafter shortened to the Short Story Anthology Series Two). The former contains five groups of themes and 13 short stories; they are the human trafficking, the traditional belief, *Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia (NKRI)* (The Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia), the willingness to sacrifice, and the relationship among religious (tolerance) (Banda, 2018: ...). The latter contains four groups of themes and 36 short stories; they are beliefs, ethnic groups, land, customs and traditions; faithfulness and family problems; criticism of development and social problems; sexual violence and betrayal (Banda, 2019/2020: ...)

Among the four anthologies the TKW themed poems and short stories were chosen for several reasons.

First, the poems and short stories show the extent to which the writers understand the social conflicts resulting from the ways in which the TKW-related cases have not been on the side of the victims.

Second, the poems and short stories in the four anthologies clearly reveal that TKWs are marginal people. They are treated as the powerless people (Yuitamurti, tth:1).

The writers are also responsive to the crimes against humanity experienced by women through the four anthologies with two problem formulations; they are how are the narrations of death are reflected through poems and how are the narrations of death are expressed through short stories.

This current study applies the structural approach and the semiotic approach. The structural approach underlines the strength of the building structure of the poetic and prose texts objectively. The poetic structure is developed by the form elements such as dictions, sentences, and baits, whereas the content elements are formed by themes and mandates (Emzir, 2015: 242; Wachid B.S., 2018: 67). The prose structure is built by the elements of plot, characterization, and setting. In fact, the reality-based imaginative work refers to the understanding that every literary work reflects its society (Banda, 2019: 1).

The semiotic approach underlines that the literary work refers to the code system (Barthes in Rina, 2016: ). This current study further analyzes the relationship between the literary work and cultural convention. In particular, it is concerned with the culture underlining the literary work that the language system and literary system contain (Teeuw, 2015: 78-79). The cultural codes that the literary work contains support the attempt that is made to understand the poems and short stories specifically themed TKWs and the narration of the 'coffins' shackling them.

## II. METHOD

Four poetic and short story anthologies with NTT as their setting are used as the primary data; seven poems out of 255 titles of poems in the Poetic Anthology Series 1, and thirteen poems out of 217 in the Poetic Anthology Series 2, six short stories out of thirteen titles in the Short Story Anthology Series 1, and seven short stories out of 36 in the Short Story Anthology Series 2.

The paraphrasing method was used to analyze the poetic structure. In poetry, paraphrasing means describing the content of a poem in the form of sentences explaining its hidden meaning. The poems entitled *Kepada Kita Kaum Lelaki Negeri Foobamora* (To Us the Men of the Land of Flobamora) (Agust Dapa Loka), *Litani Kepada Perempuan* (the Litany to Women" (Milla Lolong), and "Bhiju" (Nikolaus Loy) explain the diction and denotative and connotative meanings relevant to the narration of the coffin, the physical death of TKWs and the absence of sensitiveness or the ignorance of the humanitarian disasters taking place.

The short story structure was analyzed based on the short story text as the data to answer the second problem. The

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understanding of every text directly underlines the principle of the literary work structure, that is, the interrelationship among the elements building it, forming the plot, characterization, and the setting. The analysis followed the following steps; reading the short stories, recording the plot, characterization, and the setting before determining the theme and meaning of every short story (Emzir, 2015: 254-257).

### III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION THE NARRATION OF THE TKWS' COFFINS IN THE POEMS AND SHORT STORIES

The result of the study shows that human trafficking is one of the main problems to which attention is always paid. This is one of the themes that interests the writers and completes the reflection of the setting of the poetic works as shown in the following excerpt.

*Persoalan perdagangan dan perbudakan manusia merupakan sebuah permasalahan besar yang dihadapi bangsa Indonesia umumnya dan NTT khususnya. Kisah-kisah mengenaskan yang menggugah rasa kemanusiaan kita tentang Tenaga Kerja Indonesia(TKI) tak henti-hentinya kita dengar setiap hari. TKI yang disiksa, dibunuh, diperkosa, dikejar-kejar seperti tikus karena dianggap sebagai penduduk liar, dipenjara, diperlakukan tidak adil, tidak dibayar upahnya selalu menyentuh nurani kita. Milla Lolong mengangkat salah satu kisah mengenaskan yang menimpa Adelina (21). TKI asal desa Abi kecamatan Oenino Kabupaten TTS, NTT yang tewas di Malaysia karena dibiarkan mati kelaparan, tidak diberi*

*makan, dan tidur bersama anjing. Berbagai pemberitaan menyebut Adelina mengalami penyiksaan fisik dan nonfisik dari majikannya (Taum, 2018).*

The free translation is as follows:

Human trafficking and slavery are two serious issues faced by the nation of Indonesia in general and NTT in particular. The sad stories inspiring our sense of humanity about TKIs are heard every day. The news that the TKIs are tortured, killed, raped, and chased like mice as they are regarded as squatters, imprisoned and unfairly treated and their wages are not paid always touches our conscience. Milla Lolong brought up one of the sad stories experienced by Adelina (21). She came from Abi village, Oenino District, South Central Timor Regency, NTT and died in Malaysia as she was left starving. She was not given anything to eat, and was left sleeping with a dog. Various news mentioned that Adelina was physically and mentally tortured by her employer (Taum, 2018).

As far as the setting of the TKWs and the women's suffering are concerned, the literary works are written and defined in their function as one of the media used to pass on values. The poetic and short story data analyzed in the current study explain the narration of the coffin implicitly and explicitly. Such a narration is revealed through the theme of every poem and short story presented in the following data.

Data 1

No.	The Poetry Anthology Series 1	Theme
1.	<i>Nyanyian Duka Pertiwi</i> (The Motherland's Song of Sorrow)	The TKW's death is compared to the greatest suffering of Christ's Death on the Cross. A call for the Almighty to open a way of eternal salvation for the victims. There is no place to lean on at the end of life except on Him who reigns.
2.	<i>Bangsawan Zaman Now</i> (The Modern Noblemen (Aster Bili Bora)	The attitude and behavior of the modern noblemen who always do their best to uphold their self-esteem by boasting their wealth in the past. They are proud of what they have but, actually, they do not have anything. Living in the pride of all is completely different from the fact that women work hard as TKWs.

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3.	<i>Au Loim Fain</i> (I Want to Come Back) (Atanasius Dula)	The poem that is written for Adelina (a real story), a TKW who went back to her home village within a coffin. Her physical and mental death also reflects the absence of justice for the victims of human trafficking, TKWs.
4.	<i>Litani Kepada Perempuan</i> (The Litany To Women) (Milla Lolong)	The sharp criticism of Adelina Sauk's fate (a real story). The TKW, as the victim of humanitarian crime, went home within a 'coffin'. The question is not only addressed to the death of Adelina but it is also addressed to the death of the human conscience, the absence of various policies properly designed to save.
5.	" <i>Bhiju</i> " (Nikolaus Loy)	The fate of women returning from the neighboring country in airplane cargo as crates, 'coffins'. The physical, psychological, moral, and social deaths of the TKWs returning to the homeland are followed by the wailing over the justice for them.
6.	<i>Tentang Surga di Telapak Kaumku</i> (Of Paradise in the Palm of My People) (Yohanesta S. Lamalela).	The sad fate experienced by women that is opposed to the words of wisdom "Heaven is under the mother's feet".
7.	<i>Perempuan Penjaring Hari</i> (The Catcher Girl) (Yohanesta S. Lamalewa)	The struggle of woman passes on all day long for the sake of their responsibility to their families.

Specifically, the theme of humanitarian crime and how the TKWs, as the breadwinners, sacrifice themselves are revealed through the seven poems. The poem entitled *Litani Kepada Perempuan* (the Litany to Women) explicitly and implicitly reflects one of the prominent things related to 'the coffin' as

can be seen in the following complete excerpt. The denotative meaning explicitly reveals death, and the implicit meaning reveals the absence of conscience when responding to the suffering experienced by the TKWs.

### Data 2

No.	Poetry Anthology Series 2	Theme
1.	<i>Kepada Kita Kaum Lelaki</i> (To Us Men) (Agus Dapa Loka)	The harsh rebuke to men when seeing the fact that a TKW goes home to her home village within a coffin.
2.	<i>Balada Para Perantau</i> (the Ballad of Nomads) (Arkas Aran)	Longing to return to the hometown. After enjoying Malaysia either as heaven or hell. The main heaven is the ancestral land.
3.	<i>Perempuan Berbalut Tenun Ikat</i> (The Women Wrapped in Woven Cloth)	It is about a choice made by women to remain in the ancestral land. Weaving and dancing are part of pride.
4.	<i>Ingatan Pada Suatu Pagi</i> (the Memory of One Morning) (Fani Stefani).	The Shady Flobamorra (the ancestral land) with its various traditions: the <i>sasando</i> music, traditional foods, and the weaving mothers.
5.	<i>Perempuan yang Pura-pura Kuat</i> (the Women Pretending to Be Strong) (Fian Watu),	It is about the women weaving threads with beautiful colors and motives. The threads refer to tears, and color refers to smile and motive refers to beauty in spite of suffering.
6.	<i>Perempuan dengan Senyuman Fajar</i> (The Women with Morning Smile) (Fandy Lahurus)	It is concerned with the women's endurance and anxiety removing smile.
7.	<i>Perihal Menenun</i> (Pertaining to Weaving)	It is about the weaving women with endurance. Weaving as heritage.

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8.	<i>Selendang Mama</i> (the Mom's Scarf)	It pertains to the weaving woman with endurance, weaving a scarf for the daughter whom will soon be taken away by her prospective husband to remind the daughter of the woman as the mother.
9.	<i>Ferik Terin Masin</i> (Mario Kalin)	It is concerned with an old woman ( <i>ferik</i> ) who died young in Malaysia. Ferik symbolizes Mother Lazarus, Mother Veronika, two women who played a role in the saving plan.
10.	<i>Perempuan Dalam Pertempuran</i> (The Women in Battle) (Mezra E. Pellondou)	It pertains to the woman that must be steadfast in the battle of life. She only needs to be brave enough to challenge life; she does not only need a bun, <i>kebaya</i> (the woman's blouse the front of which is pinned together), and a high slide).
11.	<i>Bersatulah Para Leluhur</i> (Unite the Ancestors)	A hope that the ancestors become united and mention the name of every man with whom they ever slept.
12.	<i>Pahlawan Devisa</i> (Heroes of Foreign Currencies) (Suster Luisia Maria Emerensiana Enin)	Generally, TKWs and TKIs are the heroes of foreign currencies. The question is why there are always some who return to the home country when they become corpses (they die abroad).
13.	<i>Nusa Peti Mati</i> (the homeland of Coffins)	It is concerned with the coffins of TKWs-TKIs sent from abroad. NTT is referred to as <i>Nusa Peti Mati</i> (the Land of Coffins)

Poem 1, 2, 9, 11, 12 and 13 explain the suffering of the TKWs. It is explicitly explained using the real coffin-related diction. The heroes of foreign currencies who are dead abroad are referred to as *Nusa Peti Mati* (the Homeland of Coffins). These five poems also implicitly explain the responsibility of men, families, society, and the nation for what is experienced by the TKWs.

The gloom of women's fate is revealed in the six poems. They are different from poem 3, 4, 5, 7, and 8 which reveal optimism, women, the weaving tradition inherited by the ancestors, the choice that can avoid persuasion of going abroad as TKWs. The skill inherited by the tradition is confronted with the women's departure without any skill at all.

### Data 3

No.	The Short Story Tittle	Theme
1.	<i>Kambing Hitam</i> (The Scapegoat) (Fian Watu)	The human trafficking accompanied with deception that the missing women are hidden by what is called <i>nitun</i> (ghost). The fact is that they are hidden and traded as TKWs.
2.	<i>Percakapan Dua Perempuan</i> (The Conversation between Two Women) (Fian Watu)	It is about the human trafficking as prostitutes in their own country by pretending to be restaurant servers. It underlines that education is important to avoid being easily tricked.
3.	<i>Patahnya Sayap Kupu-kupu</i> (The Broken Buttery Wings) (Fian Watu)	The incest resulting from what is done by a man when he has sex with a prostitute named Amelia, who turns out to be his own daughter.
4.	<i>Catur</i> (Chess) (Eko Kwuta)	The powerless TKIs. They are made to 'die' by themselves in another country, Malaysia.
5.	<i>Perempuan dengan Tiga Senyuman</i> (Women with Three Smiles) (Christian Dan Dadi)	The human trafficking as prostitutes. Hiding their profession as prostitutes by smiling. A physical phenomenon does not necessarily reflect what the fact is.
6.	<i>Dona Nobis Pacem</i> (Eko Kwuta)	A woman named Sharina who works as a prostitute in Jakarta, Hongkong, and America. She is finally killed by her own father.

Six short stories in the Short Story Anthology Series 1 (2018) show the theme of the human trafficking. Short story 1 shows every attempt made by the society leaders to attract women

using the tradition in such a way that they are not aware that they will be traded. Short Story 4 shows the reality that TKIs know what their weaknesses and powerlessness will be when

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living abroad. The other short stories talk about the prostitutes with many faces. The essence is that the expression 'the

coffins' refer to the women who are the victims and sacrificed.

### Data 4

No.	The Short Story Title and Writer	Theme
1.	<i>Kain Songke dan Kenangan Tentang Ibu</i> (The <i>Songke</i> Cloth and Memories of Mother) (Tommy Duang)	Respect for mother who is good at weaving <i>songke</i> (the Manggarai cloth). It is believed that those who are good at weaving are also good at knitting life.
2.	<i>Si Cantik Maysaroh</i> (The Beautiful Maysaroh) (Christian Dan Dadi)	The tradition of having more than one wife and that marriage is arranged by parents. With vengeance and jealousy, the third wife prepares the first night for the husband and his fourth wife who is still too young. The first night fails and the old man falls down after consuming too much male tonic.
3.	" <i>Jalan Perjuangan</i> " (The Way of Struggle) (Simon Petrus Soge)	A young woman who has worked in the health sector and earned more than enough is brave enough to leave the big city where she works in order to be able to serve in her isolate hometown that needs her support.
4.	<i>Catatan Lepas Saat Malang Menyapa Kota Ini</i> (Loose Notes When A Disaster Greet This City) (Marsel Koka, RCJ).	The nightlife and prostitution hiding behind it. The figure observing the nightlife prays for it in Church. The contradiction between prayer and sad reality.
5.	<i>Berita Heboh</i> (The Breaking News) (Marsel Koka RSJ)	The desire of improving the family's economy by working as an illegal TKI. The money earned turns out to be spent on extravagant things, and finally she returns to her hometown within a coffin.
6.	Viral (Mario D.E. Kali).	The sad case of rape. The character 'I' (a man) becomes powerless when watching his mother and younger sister being rapped and dead in a hit-and-run accident.
7.	The longing narration	The sad fate of a man (father) who became a victim of the tragedy taking place in 1998 when 'a certain ethnic group was slaughtered'. The father rapped his own daughter causing her to be pregnant. This short story contains one sad sentence "that is me, my daughter, Your father and your mother's Father".

Among the seven short stories, short story 5 narrates TKWs and humanitarian conflicts, short story 2, 4, 6 and 7 narrate prostitution, and short story 1 and 5 narrate the themes of struggle and weaving tradition. The narration of "the coffin" is clearly revealed in the plot of short story 5. It symbolizes the weakness of the policy needed to support employees.

### 1. Female Workers and the Narration of 'the Coffin' in Poetry

In general, the people of NTT socially and historically grow in the patriarchal culture. The social impact of the patriarchal culture can be observed from the life

activities within families and communities. Men have an important role in making important family decisions; they are responsible for being the breadwinners outside houses within the public context; whereas women are the breadwinners within the domestic context. This fact shows that the socio-cultural impact constitutes a reality of life for everybody, and this is so socially and historically contextual (Liliweri, 2018: 136).

Therefore, socially and historically, the decision made by women to work as TKWs abroad is within the men's supervision and responsibility. The humanitarian disaster experienced by TKWs constitutes a hard slap for men as

reflected in the poem entitled "Kepada Kita Kaum Lelaki Negeri Flobamora" (To Us, The Men of the Land of Flobamora). Flobamora is an abbreviation standing for Flores, Sumba, Timor, and Alor, a group of islands under the NTT territorial. This is opposed to the local cultural identity born based the oral tradition, gender, history, and belief, in which men play an important role in *dari nia pasi lae* (the Ende language in Flores) that means "standing at the front as the guardian pillar of the family", as explained by Liliweri (2018:140) concerning the cultural identity and its sign. This also proves that, in general, in the patriarchal culture, men weaken the women's position in almost every aspect.

This poem asks about the men's responsibility in the family when the female members (the wife, child, younger sibling, close relative) have to go abroad as TKWs. Those who go without being equipped with certain educational background and skill will fail. They are left to go to suffer and to pick their deaths up.

The paraphrased version of the poem explains that the poem is addressed to men and, at the same time, it is also a slap for men as those who are *dari nia pasi lae*. What to do to answer the fact that the coffins of the women of different ages who come from Flobamora and die abroad are always sent to us. This question is related to the implied system of knowledge and system of value that the text implicitly contains. This is the stereotype of what is understood of the human reality as explained by Barthes concerning the cultural code (Rina, 2016: 2-3).

The owners of the natural land of NTT, which is dry and less fertile, should implement the expression "Di mana tanah dipijak di situ langit dijunjung" (where the ground is stepped on, there the sky is upheld. It is necessary to touch the rock in such a way that it will become soil; the savanna can give a mouthful of rice; one can also change a stone into a marble. This spirit appears as the regional setting of the literary work. Soil, rice, and marble are the objects known as cultural objects as the textual references (Rina, 2016:3). It is not necessary for TKWs to return home within 'the coffins' if places are prepared for the cultural awareness of protecting themselves, families, and communities or seriously handled. This cultural code is clearly reflected through the diction used in the poem written for Adelina entitled "Litani Kepada Perempuan" (the Litany to Women) (Milla Lolong).

### **LITANI KEPADA PEREMPUAN**

*Untuk Adelina*

*Pergi ke negri jiran Atas nama palsu  
Dari orang-orang palsu Dengan senyum bahagia yang engkau  
palsukan juga*

*Di negeri jiran  
Engkau berjuang melawan takdir Engkau pasrahkan nasibmu  
Pada tangan-tangan mereka yang berduit*

*Kemudian,  
Bergulat dengan sakit yang ngerih  
Engkau di(pulang)kan: sudah kaku di peti  
Di sambut dengan air mata yang ranum*

*Pun ada yang tumpah dari pelupuk yang buta Dan kuping yang  
tuli  
Yang tak mendengarkan Jerit ngeri kaum-kaummu Lalu  
mengabadikanmu  
di(N)egeri pe(T)i ma(T)i*

The free translation is as follows:

### **THE LITANY TO WOMEN**

For Adelina

Leave for the neighboring country Using  
false names  
From false names With their happy smiles which  
you also falsify

In the neighboring country  
You're fighting against fate  
You surrender to your fate  
To those who have money

Then,  
Grappling with terrible pain  
You're sent home when you're already stiff in the coffin  
Greeted with fresh tears

And some is spilled from the blind eyelids And  
the deaf ears  
That cannot hear the horrible Scream  
from your fellow beings who Then  
immortalize you  
in the Land of the Coffins  
Go to sleep, nothing hurts anymore.

February, 2018

"Litani Kepada Perempuan" (The Litany To Women) is a terrible picture of the TKI-related business revealed by Milla Lolong. Making passports with fake names, fake ages, and fake addresses are not secrets anymore. Alfred B. Jogo Ena refers to the TKI-related service industry as "the fortune tellers". The fate of the TKWs coming from NTT is similar to that of the character 'Yem'. As narrated in the short story entitled "Bukan Yem" (Not Yem) (Juwita, Etik, 2006), on the way from the airport to their hometown by bus they stopped at several places. The journey was accompanied with verbal abuses, intimidations, and had to be ransomed with a sum of money. It is clear that that was a covert business taking advantage of TKWs.

The other poem that narrates the bad luck experienced by the women coming from NTT can be read in its segment entitled "Bhiju" written by Nikolaus Loy.

Its paraphrase shows that a woman named Bhiju was suffering when she worked in Tawau, Malaysia. After fifteen years, she was sent home lifeless and was tucked away in cargo without any tears except a certificate of death. Taum says that the bad luck experienced by the woman coming from NTT when she was working in the neighboring country (Tawau, Malaysia) stabbed Nikolaus Loy's feeling and conscience. In his aching reflection, Nikolaus reflects the fate of his former lover who was sent home by 'freight'. He still reflects her (referred to as Bhiju in the Ngada tradition, Flores) as his lover (Taum, 2018: 15-17).

'Death' in the poems and short stories is denotatively identified through the diction used. It connotatively shows that the crime against humanity experienced by the women working as TKWs (abroad) and prostitutes (in their own country) comes to an end as death. Dying can mean being in the sense of despair and loss of life as a fact, and losing hope and self-esteem. The word 'death' and the expression 'the coffin' in the above poems explain the connotative code (Rina, 2016:4) attached to a particular name (Adelina, Bhiju, and cross-cultural women) emphasizing the cultural code shown through the stereotype of understanding human realities as references (Rina, 2018:3).

## **2. TKWs and the Narration of 'the Coffin' in the Short Stories**

The cases of TKW and human trafficking have never come to an end; they have taken place in different ways involving those from the same region. There are syndicates involving respected figures in the grassroots society; as a result, the cases of illegal TKWs have repeatedly taken place. Such a setting can be found in the short story entitled "Kambing Hitam" (The Scapegoat) written by Fian Watu in data 3, the Short Story Anthology Series 1.

"Kambing Hitam" (hereinafter shortened to KH) focuses on trafficking in women under the guise of the traditional belief as part of the oral tradition. However, such a belief is made use of by the traditional elders and several persons involved in the human trafficking. KH explains how the human trafficking is shrouded in evil plans in order to eliminate traces of the perpetrators. As what is known as *molan* or *the* traditional elders, they should have protected their citizens. However, the fact shows that they are tricky for personal interests and purposes, as if *Kewa* were hidden by *niton* (spirits) according to the local belief.

*Setiap tetes darah yang dilabur pada pohon beringin itu kata ayahku, bisa meluluhkan hati niton untuk mengembalikan Prada (hlm. 54). Ketua adat menipu kita. Dia menjual Prada dan Kewa kepada seseorang. Dia ditangkap di pelabuhan bersama beberapa orang yang hendak menyeberangkan*

*beberapa gadis. Prada dan Kewa termasuk di dalamnya. Ketua adat menjual mereka (hlm. 55).*

The free translation is as follows.

My father said that every drop of blood smeared on the banyan tree can make *niton* bring Prada back (page 54). The traditional elder deceived us. He sold Prada and Kewa to someone. He and several other people who were going to cross several girls were caught in the harbor. Prada and Kewa were some of them. The traditional elder sold them (page.55).

The short story of KH narrates that the traditional elder is preparing 'the coffins' for Prada and Kewa who intend to be crossed abroad as TKWs. Molan drowns and makes the role he plays as the traditional elder disappear for his personal interests. Based on the cultural code, Molan is the enforcer of the systems of knowledge and values (Rina, 2016:3). However, this short story shows that he creates 'the coffin' for himself.

In "Berita Heboh" (the Breaking News) (hereinafter shortened to BH) (Marsel Koka, RCJ) focuses on another thing. This short story describes the desire of improving the family fate by working as illegal TKIs in Malaysia. The money earned is spent on spree. The story ends with the return of the character as a corpse with an incomplete body. This short story voices the society's anguish that the expectation of achieving a more prosperous life economically by working abroad turns out not to be easy. Even many people died of what they had done.

*Kalau dulu aku selalu memberi kabar untuk Sela (istri) dan Sherly anaku kini sudah jarang. Kalau dulu aku selalu kasih uang untuk biaya hidup mereka sekarang aku sudah semakin pelit. Jane, pacar baruku ini menjadi alasan di balik semuanya ini. Kehadiran dirinya membuat aku harus mengkhianati janjiku pada Sela. Aku benar-benar merasa hidupku semakin tidak berarti... Setiap hari aku harus bertarung dengan nyawa. Menjadi tenaga kerja ilegal memang penuh resiko. Sudah berkali-kali aku dikejar, ditangkap, dan disiksa (Koka, 2018: 266).*

The free translation is as follows.

I used to always give news to Sela, my wife, and Sherly, my daughter, but now I seldom give news to them. I used to always send money for their living expenses but now I'm getting stingy. Jane, my new lover, has become the reason for me to do so. Her existence has caused me to break my promise to Sela. I really feel more and more insignificant ... Every day I have to fight with my life. Becoming an illegal worker is full of risks. I have been chased, caught, and tortured many times (Koka, 2018: 266).



The character 'I' in "Berita Heboh" emphasizes the fate of the migrant workers (TKIs). Unlike the poems, which narrate the deaths of the TKWs, the short stories narrate the TKWs who were dead and sent home within 'the coffins'. There were many illegal TKIs who were economically successful, but they had spent the money they earned on things they needed to satisfy their lust, causing them to die. If viewed from the perspective of literary sociology, this short story focuses on human problems and explains what people do to determine their future, based on imagination, feeling, and intuition (Endraswasra, 2008: 79). The character 'I' in this short story has determined its future to death.

*Yang lebih menarik lagi orang yang paling depan menyambut kedatanganku adalah kepala wilayah di Propinsi ini. Saat aku turun dari pesawat, aku mulai mendengar isak tangis istri dan anakku. Mereka seolah tak percaya dengan tubuhku yang sudah kaku dalam peti jenazah ini. Ya, aku mati disiksa majikanku. Dia menjual tubuhku ke rumah sakit dan sebagian organ tubuhku diambil pergi entah kemana. Aku pulang dengan kondisi tubuhku yang sudah tak utuh (Koka, 2018:266).*

The free translation is as follows.

What was more interesting was that the figure who welcome my arrival was the regional head of this Province. When I got off the plane, I started hearing the sobs of my wife and child. It seemed that they did not believe that my body had already been stiff in the coffin. Yes, I died of being tortured by my employer. He sold my body to the hospital and some of my organs had been removed and gone somewhere (Koka, 2018:266).

This fact is emphasized again by the short story entitled "Catur" (Eko Kwuta) in which the TKW (the character 'I') was made to be a prostitute by the male character 'the employer'. I felt that I was checkmating himself; I was trapped in the lust of my employer who preyed on himself physically and mentally. Pay attention to the following excerpt.

*Aku digilas sakit ketika tubuhku diolah seperti permainan catur. Harga diri tak ada. Aku terengah-engah. Sesak di kamar mandi sedangkan dia (majikan) mengencani aku selayaknya binatang. Vaginaku seolah dikeroyok ribuan tembakan peluru kendali jelajah, serupa bom terbang dikendalikan seorang pilot yang kejam (Kwuta, 2018:68).*

*Aku adalah catur di negeri orang. Ibu empat orang anak dan suami yang jauh di Indonesia (Kwuta, 2018:69). Allah, pulangkan aku kepada ibu pertiwi.*

*Besok atau lusa ya. Aku sudah rindu kampung halaman. Aku rindu anak-anak dan suami terkasih. Johor telah menjadikan aku Catur, seorang ibu tanpa ibu. Aku diolah dalam kotak papan catur yang selalu jatuh di bibir warna hitam nan kelam (Kwuta, 2018:71). Dalam diam yang sesak, aku memang sudah diam dan kaku. Semua diam (Kwuta, 2018:72).*

The free translation is as follows.

I was crushed sick when my body was processed as in the chess game. No self-respect. I was out of breath. I felt claustrophobic in the bathroom whereas he (the employer) was dating me as an animal. My vagina seemed to be attacked by thousands of cruise missiles, like flying bombs controlled by a cruel pilot (Kwuta, 2018: 68).

I was a chess in the people's land. I was the mother of four children; they and my husband lived far in Indonesia (Kwuta, 2018: 69). God, send me home to the motherland. The following day or the day after the following day, yes. I missed my hometown. I missed my lovely children and husband. Johor had caused me to be a chess, a motherless mother. I was processed within the chess box which was always far on the dark black lips (Kwuta, 2018:71). In silence and tightness, I was already quiet and stiff. All silent (Kwuta, 2018: 72).

The above excerpt underlines the sad fate of a TKW who called herself as Chess which was being choked to death (Kwuta, 2018:67). Chess is the sign. The physical sign that can be caught by the human five senses and is something that refers (represents) to another thing outside itself (Emzir, 2015: 49). The fate of the loser who is not able to free him/herself from different pressures. The sign of death takes place when there is not any physical and mental freedom anymore.

The saddest thing was the woman's fate when she was trapped by a man (the father of her own mother, who is also her own father) who should have maintained her dignity and his own dignity, as narrated in the plot of the short story entitled "Narasi Rindu (The Longing Narration)" (Tommy Duang), the Short Story no. 7 data 4. The sad thing was in the incest resulting from what had been done by the father.

*Coba kamu tanya orang-orang di kampungmu - kampung kita- tentang perempuan seperti apakah ibumu itu. Mereka akan menceritakan padamu tentang seorang gadis enam belas tahun yang sebatang kara dengan bakal bayi dalam perutnya. (Duang, 2019/2020:75). Malam itu aku pulang ke rumah dengan mabuk parah. Aku memukul ibumu,*

*sebelum -sangat sulit menulis ini, tapi sudahlah mungkin pengakuan ini akan membuka pintu rahmat Allah untuk mengampuniku- aku memukul ibumu sebelum memperkosanya. Itulah aku, nak. Ayahmu dan ayah ibumu (Duang, 2019/2020:76).*

The free translation is as follows.

Could you ask those living at your village – our village – what type of women does your mother belong to? They will tell you about a girl who was sixteen years old and an orphan with a baby in her tummy. (Duang, 2019/2020: 75). At that time, I came home when I got seriously drunk. I hit my mother, before I could not write this; however, that was ok, it was possible that this confession would open the door of God's grace to forgive me – I hit my mother before I raped her. That's me, my child. Your and your mother's father (Duang, 2019/2020: 76).

The confession in the short story "Narasi Rindu" (The Longing Narration) above implicitly and explicitly reveals destruction, adversity, murder, and even death where women are the victims. The story that boldly testifies to the 'coffin' proffered to TKWs working abroad and experiencing sexual violence in their own country. This shows that literary works cannot be separated from society (the writers) when presenting what is believed to be true. The extent to which what is believed to be true is determined by the connoisseurs of literature that generally relates different conflicts and series of events in literary works to the real daily life (Banda, 2016-565).

#### **IV. CONCLUSIONS**

Based on the analyses of the Poetry Anthology Series 1 (data 1), the Poetry Anthology Series 2 (data 2), the Short Story Anthology Series 1 (data 3), and the Short Story Anthology Series 2 (data 4) with the theme 'the message of peace from the land of Flobamora (NTT)', it can be concluded that literary works play their role as the socio-cultural representation.

The narration of 'the coffin' symbolizes the weakness of the policy supporting TKIs in general and TKWs in particular. Apart from TKWs, prostitution is another face of TKWs as the victims of the regulation and policy as 'the coffin'. The reason is that such regulation and policy are too weak in their implementation to guarantee the TKWs' welfare and to free women from prostitution. Data 1, data 2, data 3, and data 4 implicitly and explicitly reveal the coffin in death. Morally and socially, the local oral tradition positions women as the tradition guarded figures. It is when the local oral tradition is neglected or full of intrigues of interest, 'the coffin' is implicitly and explicitly proffered in poems and short stories

The narration of 'the coffin' in the poem shows the sensitiveness of the writer (poet) to respond to the social humanitarian issue taking place. The poem was written based on the true story experienced by Adelina Sauk, the victim of the human trafficking violence, whom was physically and mentally tortured by her employer as the main actor. Adelina went home within 'the coffin'. In this context, the coffin symbolizes death as the loss of life in its explicit meaning; it is also used to refer to the implicit loss of life.

Similarly, the narration of 'the coffin' in the short stories shows poverty as a social reality in society. The fate of the defeated characters who are not strong enough to free themselves from various pressures. The sign of death takes place when there is no physical and mental freedom anymore.

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