

MEDIA OF LITERARY WORKS AND SYMBOLIC SOCIAL MOVEMENTS OF MAS MARCO KARTODIKROMO

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This study aims to identify and discover the ideas of social change offered by Mas Marco Kartodikromo through his work. Mas Marco Kartodikromo is an active person who writes literary works and articles in the early 20th century. The results of his writings present ideas for social change and the theme of the injustice of the system applied by the Dutch colonial government. The results of this study indicate that the idea of social change offered by Mas Marco Kartodikromo concerns the issue of nationalism for the Indies homeland, the idea of independence for the Indies homeland, defending the rights of indigenous women in the Indies, and improving the policy system in the Indies. Broadly speaking, the narratives written by Mas Marco Kartodikromo provide awareness to the readers so that the Indies quickly get out of the Dutch colonial shackles to become an independent state.

Keywords: narrative, indies, social change, and independence

INTRODUCTION

In a social movement, there are always goals to be achieved, whether the goals are critical or noncritical (Staggenbor, 2015; Martin, 2015; Almeida, 2019). Non-critical goals can be that the organization of the social movement is established for the benefit of pleasure, without having changed interests, revolution, contestation, and so on. Critical purpose means an organization of social movements that wants change due to disappointment, error, arbitrariness, injustice, discrimination, and so on. Thus, the birth of an organization of critical social movements is inseparable from the fatality that occurs in society so that it can elicit responses from individuals

to form a group of forces.

Mas Marco is part of an individual who has attention to the organization of critical social movements. He is not the decisive actor in any social movement. However, there are narrative strategies at play to take part in the organization's goals. In practical work, Mas Marco's decision to struggle in the realm of the narrative is quite a government calculation because he is very brave in conveying ideas.

Mas Marco is also a person who is not a fanatic on one thought, on the one hand, Mas Marco is a nationalist, sometimes socialist, or even communist. When examining all his writings, Mas Marco only had two great desires, namely to save the

Kromo people from oppression and save the land of the Indies from Dutch colonialists. However, Mas Marco is an important part of the symbolic national hero who is not as fortunate as Tan Malacca, Ki Hajar Dewantara, Tjipto Mangoenkoesoemo, Wahidin Soedirohoesodo, and so on.

Education does not get Mas Marco well enough, because Mas Marco was born from low *priyayi*. This condition was very different from his friends at the time, who were mostly born from scholars and European education so it was natural that Mas Marco was seen as a signet by historians or intellectuals of his time. The social movements carried out by Mas Marco are not much different from what has been done by Ki Hajar Dewantara.

So far, the research on the early 20th-century social resistance movement has only focused on crowd-mobilized social movements, such as the Budi Utomo organization, Youth Oath, Islamic Union, labor movement organizations, the Indonesian Communist Party organization, and so on. For example, the research of Dimjati (1951) and Muljana (1968), assesses the growth of soul nationalism seen in the Budi Utomo social movement. Poesponegoro and Notosusanto (1981) also have the same view, that the idea and spirit of Indonesian independence cannot be separated from the growth of nationalist movements in Indonesia. Meanwhile, Rutgers (2012) views the organization of Budi Utomo, Indische Partij, Indonesian Association, ISDV, and PNI as a national movement and national revival that has an important role in the idea of Indonesian independence. The social movement was a real action through the movement of the crowd.

Researchers of Indonesia's pre-independence social movement have never paid attention to the potential of movement organizations based on literary narratives,

such as Mas Marco's work. The narratives of the text in it qualify the importance of anti-colonialism propaganda and the spirit of independence of the Indian Ocean homeland. Even the narrative produced by Mas Marco also poses a threat to the ruler. The Dutch East Indies Government feels overwhelmed when there is a reading of propaganda or agitation that is insulting, defiant, criticizing, and insinuates the government. So through *wetboek van strafrecht*, the government adds articles about the seeds of hatred, such as articles 154, 155, 156, 157.

Mas Marco is one of the victims of these articles due to the resulting literary narrative. This makes evidence, that in maintaining the legitimacy of colonial power, the Netherlands not only imprisoned and alienated the people involved in the organization of the crowd but also circulated narrative texts containing propaganda, incitement, and agitation. Thus, the social resistance movement and the idea of Indonesian independence change cannot be measured from the crowd movement. Mas Marco's literary narrative also provides evidence of strength beyond the crowd movement.

Thus, the thing that is the focus of this study is to find the ideas of social change offered by Mas Marco Kartodikromo. These ideas can be found through the results of the texts he has written, either in the form of literary works or articles. The result of an idea can ultimately open up understanding to the reader or even encourage someone to do social movements. Therefore, the production of Mas Marco's text is part of language work for the benefit of symbolic social movements.

DISCUSSION

Social movements are not merely interpreted as crowd movements, but social

movements can be carried out by individuals, such as Mas Marco but have the same foundation as existing social movements.

Mas Marco himself repeatedly said that the social movements of his capital were only bold and consistent. An individual's education (intellectual) does not guarantee himself courage and defends the chromes. In fact, Mas Marco was very disappointed because many intellectuals who worked for him licked the majesty of the Netherlands, as the quote says:

Kalau saya mengingat keadaan pergerakan kita sungguhpun saya merasa malu sekali karena sebagian besar dari mereka itu masih seperti anak kecil! Si penakut! Si penlijat! Dia mengaku intelektual, terpelajar, enz.

Buat saya, lebih baik saya dirantai dan dibui lantaran membela bangsa kita yang tertindas, dari pada menjilat pada orang yang kuat.¹

If I remember the state of our movement even though I felt so ashamed because most of them were still like children! The coward! The tyrant! He claims to be intellectual, educated, enz.

For me, I should be chained and poached to defend our oppressed nation, than licking at the strong.¹

Mas Marco's confession gave a signal, that his courage and resistance were solely meta so that the land of the Indies was soon detached from Dutch colonialism. Higher education does not guarantee to accelerate the coming of independence in the Indies, but the courageous character and militancy strategy are the key to accelerating the coming of independence. Even arrogantly, Mas Marco acknowledged his knowledge as equal and equal to that of other intellectuals. According to Mas Marco, it's useless for higher education if it is

enabled to lick the shit of the people who robbed us.

Therefore, Mas Marco has his way to carry out social movements and offer ideas of social change to the people of the East Indies, through the narratives he creates. Based on the results of the writings Mas Marco has written, there are several social change ideas to offer, including:

Nationalism

Mas Marco's soul of nationalism began to grow when he joined the *Medan Prijaji newspaper*. In the newspaper, Mas Marco learned a lot from the radicalism from STOVIA, from learning to build a critical mentality to studying politics, governance, law, and so on. During his life, Mas Marco hung on to journalism and writing. According to Mas Marco, writing is one of the means to change a person, an institution, or even a country.

Loving the journalistic profession is as meaningful as loving his homeland because journalism is part of the effort to save the Indian Ocean from Dutch colonialists. Therefore, on one occasion Mas Marco once wrote an article in the *Indian Ocean*, on August 28, 1918:

Saya merasa malu dengan muka saya sendiri, sebab tidak seharusnya bangsa Jawa tinggal diam melihat keadaan seperti sekarang ini, keadaan yang mana semata-mata menghinakan kepada bangsa kita Bumiputera lebih rendah dari pada orang-orang Eropa yang ada di tanah kita. Ada juga bangsa kita yang tidak membaca buku-buku itu, tetapi hatinya tidak bebas apa-apa. Sebab dia tidak suka memikirkan lebih jauh, dan tidak punya perasaan cinta bangsa.

I feel ashamed of my face because it shouldn't be the Javanese living quietly looking at the situation as it is today, a situation that is solely insulting to our nation

1 *The rays of the Indies*, August 28, 1918.

Bumiputera is lower than the Europeans in our land. There are also our people who do not read the books, but whose hearts are free of nothing. Because he does not like to think further and has no feelings of love for the nation.

In that paper, Mas Marco felt that he saw the reality of the people of the East Indies whose conditions were very troubling due to their lower social level than the people of Europe. Europeans came to the Indies as guests, but guests who made the people miserable. So, Mas Marco tried to knock the reader's heart out so that he would not stand by looking at such suffering. Mas Marco has been very disappointed, many indigenous students who are smart and like to read at the same time understand the bad degree of indigenous people, but they do not want to do anything to defend their homeland, even educated in favor of the government.

Symbolically, Mas Marco's writing proposes the idea of social change so that the people of the East Indies are aware of the actual conditions. The realization was not done silently, Mas Marco suggested carrying out a social resistance movement. It is the only alternative that the Indians have higher degrees than the Europeans.

...Jangan putus pengharapan pembaca! Di sini ada banyak sekali anak-anak muda yang berani membela kepada rakyat, dan kalau perlu sampai perbatas yang penghabisan. Dari itu orang tidak usah takut dengan bangsa kita makhluk yang lidahnya panjang, lidah mana yang hanya perlu dibuat menjilat makanan yang tidak banyak, dan dia bekerja dibuat mesin melawan bangsanya sendiri yang ini waktu masih jadi injakan-injakan.²

...Don't break the reader's expectations! There are a lot of young people here

who dare to defend the people, and if necessary to reach the final limit. Therefore people do not have to be afraid of our nation of creatures whose tongues are long, which tongues only need to be made to lick food that is not much, and he works made machines against his own people which is still a time of trampling.²

In this statement it is very visible, that Mas Marco reminded readers not to worry about the conditions that occur in the Indies because there are still many young people who dare to fight against the ruler to defend the people and the homeland to the point of ending blood. Mas Marco also hates indigenous people who have been licking at the colonials. Those people were just part of the colonial machine that moved itself for the benefit of the Dutch. In the next text, Mas Marco advises that readers must dare to compete against the colonial, against the money people, and against the nation itself whose tongue is long so that the Indies are not constantly oppressed. Then the reader people must have the soul of nationalism and have the heart of socialism.

Indian Independence Ideas

Through the literary narratives created by Mas Marco, a description of the context of the events in which the literary work was born can be found. Through literary works, Marco illustrates the important role of social movements because through these organizations a force will be realized and have the same goals. In the sense of Mas Marco, the movement does not need to be crowded, the movement can be carried out by each individual in various ways, as long as they have the same agreement and mission.

Mas Marco's social movement is a movement that aims to oppose the dominati-

on of power that does not favor the people while longing for independence from the Dutch colonialists, imperialists, and capitalists. For Mas Marco, independence was not immediately seized by war but formed critical awareness to the community, for example equal rights, anti-racism, the idea of modernity, the importance of education, and so on. That critical awareness can be created through the reading of newspapers, magazines, and literature.

According to Moeso (1925), to accelerate the coming of independence, all the indigenous people of the Indies must read books produced from their own class, namely the class that defends the people of Kromo. Do not read books produced by the capitalist class because they can mislead and confuse the people of Kromo. Capitalist product books teach a lot of fake news so that people do good and are loyal to it. In that case, the people do not even have the resources to fight against the capitalist class and the colonial government as they should.³

Even though Mas Marco failed the war with Dutch colonialism, at least Mas Marco has built a footing ladder so that the generation after him can learn from the failures of previous movements until the 1926 uprising movement. In the writings of Mas Marco in the newspaper *Pewartu Deli*, December 9, 1931 at least as evidence of movement through highly effectual narratives to counter the dominance of power. Mas Marco's attitude of resistance to Dutch colonial power is a reflection of his work entitled *Babad Tanah Djawa*. According to him, Java has experienced social, economic, and political shifts that are not the same as the identity before the colonial era. Colonial is considered the cause of damage and displacement in Java, so Mas Marco's

narratives are narratives of discourse texts and ideas of social change that long for the coming of peace with modernity.

In the poem *of Wisdom* gathered in the *Sair of Spices*, there is Mas Marco's desire for the land of the Indies to become an independent country, in spite of Dutch colonialism. Mas Marco also gave a clue to the reader that today (the beginning of the 20th century) the people of the East Indies are under pressure and oppression. People are afraid to resist because the military power of the Indies is not comparable to the Dutch. Then the only way Mas Marco teaches is with a strong determination of heart and upright principles.

Mas Marco is also aware, that if seizing independence is not a wealth or a position obtained, even punishment and death often face in front of the eyes. Even loudly, the poem says, the threat of harm is not a tiger or a crocodile but a human who eats human flesh, drinks human blood and has a devil's heart. So, Mas Marco openly referred to the Dutch or invaders as satanic habits.

People who have demonic habits must be fought. According to Mas Marco, if the people of the East Indies do not have courage, then independence will not be achievable. The meaning of independence for Mas Marco is that the Indian nation has the same degree among other nations.

*Keerdikaan yang kita cari
Yaitu kemanusiaan kami
Supaya bangsaku memadahi
Dengan bangsa yang dipandang tinggi*

The ingenuity we seek
That is our humanity
That my people may serve
With a nation that is seen as high

Mas Marco recalled, that the path of

3 Moeso, *his own books, his own thoughts, his own morals. Proletariat*, July 23, 1925.

independence is not only through prayer and avoiding something abominable, like the guardians.

This can be seen in articles, poems, or novels by *Matabarian* and *Student Hidjo*. The issue of racial and social differences has always been the voice of Mas Marco's writings and friends in the movement. That is why Mas Marco often campaigned for the slogan '*feel equal and equal*'.

*Supaya jalannya Sama Rata
Yang berjalan pun Sama me Rasa
Enang dan senang bersama-sama
Yaitu: Sama Rasa Sama Rata⁴*

So that the road is the same
The same goes for me Rasa
Enang and happy together
Namely: Equal Taste⁴

Mas Marco also has the hope of independence from colonization and social inequality. There is no capitalist class sucking up to the laboring class and there is no difference between the Dutch, Chinese, Arabs, and the locals of the Indies. Mas Marco has a desire, if life can be *the same and equal*, then there is no more enmity on earth among fellow human beings. Even before his death, Mas Marco once revealed a confession in an article in the newspaper

Pewarta Deli, December 9, 1931:

Een vreemd gebeuren daar waar de beschaving ophoudt aan de zelfkant der samenleving. Gij intellectuelen, nationalisten aan u het verzoek mild te zijn in u oordeel over ons verworpelingen, uitgestootenen uwer maatschappij, politieke banningen van Digoel, aan ugen}iers richten wij het woord. Bedenk wat wij geleden en gestreden hebben. Denk eens aan 't offer dat wij "Ibu Indonesia" gebracht hebben.

An odd occurrence where civilization was in the valley of communion. O you

scholars and nationalists, we ask that you do not judge us too harshly as outcasts, the scum of your society, the political outcasts of Digoel. To you Indonesians, we show you these words. Reflect, on what we have fought and suffered. Remember, that we have sacrificed for "Ibu Indonesia."

From the writing, it can be concluded that the radicalization that Mas Marco did was solely for his love of the country. There was a desire and hope of Mas Marco for Indonesian independence that could not be translated by the majority of the people at that time. Although he suffered considerably during his time at Boven Digoel, he still firmly maintained the ideal of not supporting and agreeing with the colonial government. Friends of the movement during the Earth used to loudly shout anti-colonial government, but during the exile of Boven Digoel the ideal was no longer raised. Not even a few of Mas Marco's friends turned their backs, supporting the power of the colonial government.

Defending Women's Rights

Mas Marco is one of those who defend the role of women. This is evidenced by the presence of *Doenia Mobil* magazine, one of which has a mission as a women's voice and defends the rights of women. In addition, Mas Marco's writings often position women to the same degree as men, as the quote:

...Sebagai kaum muda saya mesti membak kepada kaum perempuan, sebab pada saat ini perempuan banyak yang ditindas dari pihak lelaki, padahal kemajuan kita perlu dapat bantuannya.⁵

...As a young person, I must favor women because at this time many women are oppressed by the male side, even though our progress needs to be helped.⁵

⁴ *Sinar Djawa*, 10 April 1918.

Mas Marco saw that women were still under the position of men, and women received arbitrary treatment from men. Even though the role of the advancement of the nation is inseparable from the role of women.

Based on the narratives of the text he wrote, Mas Marco wants women to be equal in position to men, especially in the world of the movement against government and capitalism. Mas Marco has always positioned the image of the ideal woman as a brave and modern figure. In *Doenia Mobil magazine* also treat the figure of a modern woman must be able to access education like a man and have a brave soul. This can be seen in the writings of Mas Marco, Sadikoen, Een Opzichter, and The Girl, that women have to leave ancient customs to enter European customs, ranging from clothing to be active in an organization. The magazine text also glorifies the figure of Siti Soendari, a priyayi child and higher education but with his education, Siti Soendari fought against his people and the Christians.

Mas Marco illustrated the figure of Siti Soendari's design as an example of the ideal Javanese woman at that time. Mas Marco hopes that Indian women can model Siti Soendari's attitude. Mas Marco's thoughts tried to remove the stamp of the woman at that time, as a person who had a low degree, like a concubine. The concubine was defined by Mas Marco as a woman whose eyes and heart was dark, of low degree, and victims of colonial cruelty. This event appears in the figure of Retna Permata and Retna Poernama in the novel *Dark Eyes* by Mas Marco.

In the narrative of the text created, Mas Marco wants to raise the degree of indigenous Indian women to be able to enjoy education so that the degree of women is

equal to that of men. According to Mas Marco, starting from education, women's critical thinking can be born to help fight against policies that do not take the side of women or *Christians*.

Improving Policies in the West Indies
Mas Marco repeatedly criticized government policies that were not in line with the people. This criticism is part of the proof of his love for the Indian fatherland. Mas Marco has a desire to live in harmony with one another, and no one is harmed by both parties, through *the principle of equal treatment*. However, Mas Marco's wishes contradict the wishes of the holders of power so misunderstandings arise that result in resistance between the dominating party and the dominated people.

Based on the writings he produced, Mas Marco was sent to prison, even to the exile of Boven Digoel. This is evidence that Mas Marco's criticism is instead considered to interfere with the stability of government regulation, as is the existence of the *Indie Weerbaar*. The institution that the government formed was very unprofitable for the indigenous people of the Indies because it was seen by Mas Marco as a protection tool for the colonial government to maintain colonial status due to World War II. Mas Marco through his poems and articles loudly voiced anti-*Indie Weerbaar*. Mas Marco does not want the Netherlands to last in the land of the Indies, instead, he hopes for the Netherlands to quickly withdraw from the land of the Indies so that the government system can be managed by the indigenous population under the ideas of the people.

In Mas Marco's observation, Dutch colonization did not bring any benefits when compared to the profits obtained by the Netherlands. Systems and policies are managed based on the objectives of legitimacy, ranging from restrictions on the

acquisition of education, racial systems, public up-front dissent, low wages, not functioning properly, agricultural land monopolized for export commodities, and so on.

These issues are the subject of intense discussion and movement among indigenous educated people and Dutch socialists. This condition also stimulates the growth of social movement organizations and the emergence of indigenous people's media. Mas Marco is one of the people who took part in it to oppose the Dutch colonial government. Therefore, in his works, Mas Marco often brings up courageous ideal figures against the colonial or people who work in the government but are willing to sacrifice their work to defend the rights of the chromos who are betrayed by the government, for example, Djawijah. The figure is a design figure that aims to propaganda on the reader so that he can model the ideal figures as warriors.

This can be quoted as a benefit, that Mas Marco's narratives are not narratives without a clear thought basis. The process of its creation constitutes an event in the context of its time. The narratives are only texts that serve to lure the reader into an open insight into the territory, and finally can move to do something, whether it be building social movements, resistance, strikes, and so on.

CONCLUSION

In the early 20th century, the policy of the colonial party was seen by Mas Marco as unfriendly to the people of the East Indies, so the resistance path was an alternative to combat Dutch colonialism. Through the organization of the movement, Mas Marco tries to find a form of unity in realizing the steps for the life of the indigenous people of the Indies. In addition, movement is expressed through

various forms, such as involvement in organizations, being active in the press, producing literary narratives, and performing crowd action.

In general, the ideas offered by Mas Marco Kartodikromo from the narratives he wrote, include the idea of Indian fatherland nationalism, the idea of independence of the Indian motherland, defending the rights of Indian indigenous women, and improving the policy system in the Indies. All these ideas refer to the contextual situation that occurred in the East Indies at the time, for example, restrictions on access to education, employment, freedom of speech, cheap workers' wages, racial discrimination, and so on. Therefore, Mas Marco Kartodikromo felt encouraged to provide understanding, knowledge, protest, and propaganda so that the Indian Ocean homeland quickly came out of the Dutch colonial yoke.

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