



CONTRADICTIONARY TRANSFORMATION OF AMBA NOVEL: CRITICAL RESPONSE WITH INTERTEXTUALITY APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

Amba, a novel written by Laksmi Pamuntjak, is one of the leading works in Indonesian literature and is classified as a world-class novel. From its title, characters involved, theme and story ideas, as well as excerpts taken from Udyoga Parva at the beginning of each chapter, it can be concluded that Amba is a transformation of Mahabharata, a great and famous story. What is transformed? What are the underlying motif and ideology for the transformation? And what are their effects? Those three questions are the focus of this research. The study was conducted using intertextuality approach (comparison technique) and critical response perspective, which states that no text is neutral; each text has a certain tendency – certain ideologies exposed behind the text. Research findings indicate that it is the intrinsic element that is absorbed by the novel. The transformation is a contradictory transformation with the perspective of emancipation. The author rejects the weak-willed Amba in the story of Bhishma Parwa, and gives birth to a tough, brave, and rational Amba in her novel. The contradictory transformation gives birth to a great work that has the same theme, but different in the ways of cultivating the story and the portrayal of women.

Keywords: contradictory transformation, novel amba, critical response, intertextuality approach, literature

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Amba, a novel written by an Indonesian female author, Laksmi Pamuntjak, is first published in 2012. The novel is categorized as a best seller novel and has been reprinted three times. Judging from the mastery of contents and materials, the depth of vision of humanity, as well as the expertise of forms, this novel is categorized as a world-class novel (Sugiharto in Pamuntjak, 2013).

This 'most taboo' historical novel in Indonesia is originally written in English because of the author's compelling desire to create a historical novel that can be appreciated globally (Pamuntjak, 2013). Goenawan Mohamad states that Amba is on the lists of prominent Indonesian literatures (Pamuntjak, 2013). It is a novel with riveting love story, captivating diction, and written in a way that is beautiful and intelligent (Heryanto, Lestari in Pamuntjak, 2013).

From the title, the characters involved in it, the theme and story ideas, the excerpts taken from *Udyogaparva* at the beginning of each chapter, as well as the structure of the book, which contains 7 books and each book contains sub-chapters/sections, it can be concluded that Novel Amba has a connection with another text (intertextuality), namely the great tale of *Mahabharata* in one of the chapters of *Adiparwa*, *Udyoga Parva*, and *Bhisma Parva* tales. The title of the novel is Amba, one of the main characters in the story. Important characters in the Amba novel are *Amba*, *Bhisma*, *Salwa*, and *Srikandi*. Those four characters are the central figures in one of the chapters of the *Adiparwa*, *Udyoga Parva*, and *Bhisma Parva* tales (*Mahabharata* consists of 19 books; each book contains more or less 10 chapters). Amba novel tells a dramatic and tragic love story, one which was also experienced by Amba and Bhisma in one of the chapters of *Adiparwa*, *Udyoga Parva*, and *Bhisma Parva* tales. The Great War between the Pandavas and the Kauravas was essentially derived from the story of the tragic heartbroken love between Amba and Bhisma, which led Amba to cast a curse that tragically impacted the lives of many people.

The author also explicitly cites excerpts of *Udyogaparva* tale at the beginning of each chapter, as can be seen in the following excerpts.

Book 1: Samuel and Amba (Buru, March 2006)

“Mendengar itu, Amba mendekat, dan menemui api yang berkobar. Lalu ia melihat sosok Yang Kekal itu. Ia pun menundukkan kepalanya sambil menyembah kaki yang bersinar-sinar itu, menyentuhnya dengan kedua tangannya yang mendadak menyerupai sepasang teratai. Ia duduk di hadapan Rama yang Abadi itu, dengan wajah yang dibasuh air mata.”

("Hearing that, Amba came closer, and found the fire blazing. Then she saw the figure of the Immortal. She bowed her head while worshiping the shining feet, touching it with both of her hands that suddenly resembled a pair of lotus. She sat in front of the Eternal Rama, with tears wetting her face. ")

Udyoga Parva, CLXXIX

(*Amba Novel, page 15*)

Book 2: Amba, Bhisma, and Salwa (1956-1965)

“Siapa yang akan kusalahkan? Diriku sendiri? Atau bapakku yang bodoh, yang mengatur siapa yang kupilih? Mungkin ini semua salahku! Mengapa tak kulemparkan tubuhku ke depan kereta perang Bhisma yang menderu, ketika pertempuran sengit itu berlangsung menghadapi Salwa?”

("Who is going to be blamed? Myself? Or my stupid father, who decided who was chosen? Maybe all of this is my fault! Why don't I throw myself in front of Bhisma's roaring chariot, when the fierce battle against Salwa happens? ")

Udyoga Parva, CLXXVII

(*Amba Novel, page 83*)

Book 3: Amba & Adalhard (Yogyakarta, 1965)

“Kepadanya o, Tuanku, Salwa berkata seraya tertawa, ‘Wahai putri yang gemilang, aku tak ingin memperistrikan dirimu, engkau yang telah terjalin dengan seorang yang lain. Wahai yang diberkati, pergilah ke sana ke hadirat Bhisma ...Sebab

setelah mengalahkan para raja, Bhisma membawa engkau pergi, dan engkau menyertainya dengan sukacita...”

("To him o, Lord, Salwa said, laughing, ‘The glorious daughter, I do not want to marry you, you who have been intertwined with another. O the blessed, go there to the presence of Bhisma ... Because after defeating all of the kings, Bhisma took you away, and you followed him gladly ... ")

Udyoga Parva, CLXXVI
(*Amba Novel, page 333*)

Through the excerpts above, the author expressly states that *Amba* novel has a close tie with another text, which is the Mahabharata tale in one of the chapters of *Adiparwa*, *Udyoga Parva*, and *Bhisma Parva* book. The relationship between one text and another text is called intertextuality. Intertextuality theory was originally introduced by Julia Kristeva, a researcher from France, who states that there is no independent text, each text depends on, absorbs, or changes the appearance of previous texts (Kristeva, 1980). Furthermore, Kristeva expresses that intertextuality is something unavoidable, since intertextuality can actually make a text more profound/more meaningful (Kristeva, 1980).

Each text is basically cannot arise from a vacuum. An author is a reader who has absorbed a variety of information from other texts, which most likely will influence and inspire new works, whether the author agrees or rejects ideas from the work of others. A text that takes, quotes, or absorbs information from other texts is referred to as a transformation text while a text that inspired a new text is called hipogram text.

Through intertextuality approach, this study examines various aspects of what is absorbed by *Amba* from the Mahabharata. Study of intertextuality formulates the elements absorbed by a text from its hipogram text, whether in the form of words, forms, ideas, or various intrinsic and extrinsic elements of the text, or even contradiction aspect that allows for the birth of two works that have a similar theme, but different in the ways of presenting the story, or works with similar ways of presenting the story, but different in terms of its themes (Culler, 1977). Pradopo (2003) even stated that hipogram text is not only written text or spoken text, but can also be custom, culture, religion and even the universe (world).

Why writers do the transformation? A writer takes, absorbs or rejects other works with a particular motive, intent, aspiration, or purpose. Therefore, it is necessary to study why he or she does that? Why does the author not use other names for his/her characters, even though the setting of places, events, and background history used are clearly different?

Through critical response perspective, this study examines the underlying motives and ideology of the transformation, and the impact of the transformation based on its hipogram text? Critical response perspective was adapted from the critical discourse theory put forward by Fairclough (1995). Fairclough (1995) states that no text is neutral; that each text has a certain tendency, a certain ideology to be expressed, a domination, and a hegemony behind the text. Text is seen as a form of social practices that make up the social world and is compiled by other social practices. Critical response perspective is used as a reference to express underlying motives and ideology of transformation and as well as its transforming effect.

This study with intertextuality approach (comparison) is expected to reveal aspects

absorbed by Amba novel from the great epics of Mahabharata. A study that employs critical response perspective will answer underlying motives and ideology of transformation and its impact.

2.0 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

This study specifically describes the following three questions.

- 1) Which elements are absorbed by Amba novel from the Mahabharata tale, particularly from one of the chapters of *Adiparwa*, *Udyoga Parva*, and *Bhisma Parva* book?
- 2) What are the motive, desire, and ideology that underlie the author to transform and choose the Mahabharata tale as the hypogram of her novel?
- 3) Is there any transformation impact to Amba novel from its hypogram text (Mahabharata)? For example, the source text leads to the creation of a new genre; the source text influences the norms and conventions?

3.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Every text, including literary texts, is a mosaic of quotations and is a response or absorption (transformation) of other texts (Kristeva, 1980). Therefore, a new text obtains whole meaning in conjunction with other texts (Teeuw, 2013). A certain text that becomes the background of creation or inspires a new text is called hypogram, while a text which absorbs or transforms the hypogram is called transformation text (Riffaterre, 1994). The relationship between the previous text and the new text is called intertextual relationship.

In the literature research, intertextual has a few rules, which are: (1) intertext perceives the essence of a text which contains a variety of texts, (2) intertext analyzes a work based on the constructive aspects of the work, such as theme, plot, character, language, as well as elements outside the structures of the text, such as history, culture, and religion, (3) intertext examines the balance between intrinsic and extrinsic aspects by looking at the function and purpose of the existence of these texts, (4) the theory of intertext also states that a text is created based on the works of others, therefore, the study of intertextuality does not only concentrate on the text being read, but also examine other texts to see the aspects seeping into the text being studied, and (5) the emphasis of intertext is appreciating the retrieval, the presence, and the inclusion of other elements into a certain work (Kristeva, 1980).

Intertextuality theory is inspired by the thought of a Russian philosopher who had a great interest in literature, Mikhail Bakhtin. Intertextuality theory views that a literary text is an inset or graft of the framework of other literary texts, such as traditions, literary genres, parodies, references or citations. The intertextual theory is finally developed by Julia Kristeva, a researcher from France, who states that no text can stand alone for each text depends on, absorbs, or changes the appearance of its previous texts (Kristeva, 1980). Furthermore, Kristeva states that intertextuality is something that cannot be avoided; instead, intertextuality can actually give a text some meanings/more value (Kristeva, 1980).

A text should be read, understood, and interpreted. The result of comprehension, reading, and interpretation that are poured into the new text, either similar or different in terms of languages, types, and functions, is called transformation text (Teeuw, 1984). Certain text that becomes the background of creation or inspires a new text is called a hypogram, while a text that absorbs or transforms the hypogram is called a transformation text (Riffaterre, 1994). The relationship between the previous text and the new text is called intertextual relationship.

The objective of intertextual study is to give fuller meaning to the work (literature). The writing or the appearance of a work is often related to some historical elements, thus the act of giving meaning would be more thorough when it is associated with the historical elements (Teeuw, 1983). The main principle of intertextuality is the principle of understanding and giving meaning to the work in question hipogramically based on the perception, understanding, knowledge, and experience in reading other texts previously. The most outstanding recent literature intertextuality study is the intertextual relationship between literary texts and a variety of other texts, all of which are seen as particular product of culture at a certain time.

Transformation text is arranged for a particular purpose or reason. Fairlough (1995) states that every text is constructed using a particular point of view and is produced for a specific purpose. Critical awareness and critical responsiveness are necessary to understand the purpose or reason of why the author creates a transformation text. Critical response perspective was adapted from the critical discourse theory put forward by Fairclough (1995). Fairclough (1995) states that no text is neutral; that each text has a certain tendency, a certain ideology to be expressed behind the text. Therefore, having critical attitude is necessary to questions what lies behind words and from who does those words originates (Ibrahim, 2008). Language as a social practice that requires us to be critical – we should not simply accept opinions, concepts, or collection of ideas that are considered established. The underlying assumption is that no word is pure or plain.

There are five characteristics of critical literary analysis adopted from the theory of critical discourse, namely (1) each text is categorized as *an action* and there is a purpose behind each action, (2) context (background, circumstances, events and conditions) becomes a major tool in text interpretation, (3) historical aspects is put into consideration in defining the text, (4) every text is perceived as power struggle (no text is neutral, fair, and with no tendency), and (5) there is a certain ideology behind the text (Darma, 2009).

Critical discourse analysis proposed by Fairclough (1995) provides theories and methods that can be used to conduct empirical studies on the relationship between discourse and social and cultural development in different social domains. It is this theory that is adapted to analyze Amba novel.

4.0 RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a critical-comparative-qualitative_research design. Qualitative research is used because the research data is in the form of natural verbal data without given any treatment. Comparative research because this study compares Amba novel and its hypogram, the Mahabharata, especially on the story in one of the chapters of the *Adiparwa*, *Udyoga Parva*, and *Bhisma Parva* book. This study also uses critical responsive approach to find a motive and ideology that underlies the author to do the transformation and its impact.

Research data of this study is verbal data in the form of text and sections of the text that represents intertextuality relationship. The data source of this research are: (1) Amba by Laksmi Pamuntjak (Pamuntjak, 2013), (2) The Book of Mahabharata by Rajagopalachari (1959), translated into Indonesian by Yudhi Murtanto (Rajagopalachari, 2012), and (3) The Mahabharata (English translation) by Buitenen, J.A.B. van (1978a, 1978b, 1978c), which is the book of Adi Parva, Parva Udyoga, and Bhishma Parva, University of Chicago Press.

Technique for data collection is conducted by the following four stages: (1) reading the text repeatedly, (2) conducting critical response of the text on the subject of intertextual

relationship, (3) identifying the elements that are transformed, and (4) marking the results of identification.

Methods of data analysis is done in the following manner: (1) reducing improper data by simplifying and reducing parts that have been marked, (2) classifying the data that has been marked using classification instruments and data codification, (3) interpreting the data by linking relevant theories, (4) describing the data elaboration, analysis, and findings, (5) discussing the findings based on the study of theories, (6) summarizing the results of the research and findings, (7) repeating the process of interpretation if it is deemed less adequate and discussing it with experts and peers, and (8) summarizing.

The validity of the data is confirmed by (1) observing text that is being read carefully and repeatedly with deep attention, (2) conducting study of intertextuality by referring to the discourse beyond the related text, and (3) having discussions with colleagues and literature experts.

5.0 DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

5.1 The elements absorbed by Amba Novel from the Mahabharata Tale

5.1.1 Theme

Novel Amba has similarities with the theme of the Mahabharata story, yet different in its conclusion. Theme in prose fiction has a very important position because all the elements in the fiction's operational systems will pace and support the theme (Priyatni, 2010). This opinion is in line with the opinion of Sutejo and Kasnadi (2014) who states that theme is the embodiment of ideas and worldview of authors, so it serves as a starting base in describing the their work of fiction.

A tragic love story, the misfortune of love, a love that cannot be returned because of unforgiving fate is the central theme in the story of Amba and Bhishma Mahabharata. Love cannot be separated from misfortune. Misfortune makes love that should have been wonderful and happy into sad and tragic occurrence (Triatmoko, 2014). The tragic love is what creates the drama in the story.

The tragic story of Amba in the Mahabharata story began when Bhishma, to secure happiness for his brothers, went to Benares Kingdom and won a contest so that he managed to bring home three princesses named Amba, Ambika, and Ambalika, to be married of to two of his half brothers named Citrāngada and Wicitrawirya. Even though Amba was won by Bhishma, she actually had already chosen Salwa, a king of Saubala, in her heart and vice versa. King Salwa intercepted Bhishma and they fought. The battle was won by Bhishma.

Amba refused to marry Citrangada and requested to be returned to King Salwa (Rajagopalachari, 2012), but King Salwa rejected her. Therefore, Amba returned to Bhishma. Due to his oath to never marry, Bhishma refused. It was a pitiable fate for Amba – spending years in unknown fate – thus she held enormous grudge against Bhishma for she felt that all of the problems happened due to his fault; she vowed to kill Bhishma. After doing a long and hard asceticism, Shiva finally came before her and gave blessing that in the next life she will be able to kill Bhishma. Amba was happy to hear this, but she is impatient for the moment to arrive. She then burned herself so that she could kill Bhishma with her own hands soon.

Similar central theme is also carried in the novel *Amba*. In this novel, *Amba* is the central figure who suffered a tragic romance. *Amba* was the eldest daughter of a teacher in Kadipura, Central Java. *Amba* was described as an educated woman, critical and independent, in contrast to the women in her surrounding villages and also with both her twin sisters, *Ambika* and *Ambalika*. When most women her age chose to settle down, she chose to leave her small town to study.

When his father, a teacher, was invited to the campus to provide input for curriculum improvement, her father met with *Salwa*, a young professor. From that meeting, her parents became fond of *Salwa* and wished for *Salwa* to marry *Amba*. Their wish came true and *Amba* finally engaged with *Salwa*. However, when working as an interpreter in the hospital, *Amba* met *Bhisma Rashad*, a young doctor, and she fell in love with him and one-sidedly decided to end her engagement with *Salwa*. Unfortunately, her relationship with Dr. *Bhisma Rashad* foundered amid political tensions and violence. *Bhisma* suddenly disappeared leaving a pregnant *Amba*.

A few years later, *Amba* decided to marry *Adalhard Eilers*, still the proof of her love with *Bhishma*. Together, *Amba* started a new life without *Bhisma* or *Salwa*. However, when her husband died, she got a word via email that *Bhisma* had died in *Buru Island*. *Amba*, who never stopped loving *Bhisma*, came to look for traces of *Bhisma* in the *Buru Island* with *Samuel*. Although getting on her age, she remained eager to find her lost lover.

The story of tragic love, love misfortune, unattained love because of situation or because of fate are the central themes in the story of *Amba* and *Bhisma* in *Mahabharata* tale. Love cannot be separated from misfortune. Misfortune turns love, which should be beautiful and joyful, into a miserable and tragic experience (Triatmoko, 2014). This tragic love is what makes the love story dramatic. This central theme is also carried out in the *Amba* novel, but differs at the solutions. *Amba*, in the *Mahabharata* tale, chose a path of suicide and revenge to deal with love misfortune, but *Amba*, in *Amba* novel, was realistically accepting the misfortune of her love. She acknowledged that misfortune is a part of love. When *Bhisma*, her lover, disappeared she decided to start her life afresh.

Mungkin ini saatnya aku henggang ke Jakarta, pikirnya. Di sana tak seorang pun mengenalku, di sana aku bisa mencari pekerjaan dan mulai lagi dari awal (Novel *Amba*, hal.341).

(Maybe it's time I move to Jakarta, she thought. There, nobody knows me, there, I could find a job and start again from the beginning (*Amba* Novel, page 341).

Ketika seminggu berlalu dan *Bhisma* tetap hilang, *Amba* merasakan kehadiran sesuatu yang baru dalam tubuhnya, sesuatu yang mulai hidup dan makin menghuni kesadarannya. Buah percintaannya dengan *Bhisma* itu harus diterimanya dan menerima berarti melindungi. Yang ada dalam kandungannya itu harus jadi prioritasnya. Begitu cepat ia belajar tentang tubuhnya yang baru kini (Novel *Amba*, hal. 342).

(When a week passed and *Bhisma* remained missing, *Amba* felt the presence of something new in her body, something began to inhabit life and consciousness. The fruit of romance with *Bhisma* should be accepted and accepting meant protecting.

What was in her womb should be the priority. Quickly she learned about her new body now (Novel *Amba*, page 342).

Bhisma's disappearance makes *Amba* even more determined to turn over a new leaf.

Sekarang *Amba* tahu mengapa ia tak boleh menunda kehidupannya sendiri, untuk mencari kehidupan lain yang telah raib dari genggamannya (Novel *Amba*, hal.353).

(Now *Amba* knew why she should not bring her life to a stand still, to seek for another life to replace what had disappeared from her grasp (Novel *Amba*, page 353).

Amba's attitude in the novel is very different from the *Amba* in Mahabharata tale. When *Amba*, in the Mahabharata tale, objected to be married to Wicitrawirya, Bhisma accepted *Amba's* objection and returned her to her lover, which was Salwa. Salwa refused to accept *Amba* because he felt insulted for his defeat at the hands of Bhisma and for the abduction of his lover, *Amba*, by Bhisma in front of the public crowd. *Amba* asked Bhisma to marry her because she judged him as the reason of why Salwa refused to accept her back. However, Bhisma refused because he was oath bound not to marry throughout his life. Finally, in despair, *Amba* tried to return to King Salwa. Once again Salwa firmly rejected her (Mahabharata, page 28-29). As seen from this, in the Mahabharata tale, women did not have the right to determine who they would marry.

The lovely *Amba* underwent six years in melancholy and hopelessness. Her heart was eaten by the grief and turned into hatred and revenge against Bhisma which she believed had destroyed her life. Finally, *Amba* did the most severe form of asceticism to invoke the blessings of the gods so that there was a knight who managed to kill Bhisma. However, nobody dared to fight Bhisma. After she failed to ask for humans' help, eventually *Amba* went to the Himalayas to do a very difficult asceticism. At last Batara Shiva gave his blessing that in her next life *Amba* will be able to kill Bhisma herself. *Amba* was impatient to wait for the next reincarnation, so in the end she jumped into the fire, shedding the fire of vengeance into the burning flames (Mahabharata, page 28-29).

5.1.2 Characters

Characters are those who drive the story forward (Priyatni, 2010). Judging from their role in the story, characters may be classified into two, which are main character and supporting character. Main character is a character that has a central role in the overall story and the frequency of occurrence is very high, while character whose presence complements the main character is called supporting character (Priyatni 2010; Sutejo & Kasnadi, 2014).

Character *Amba* in the *Amba* novel is the main character who becomes the center of storytelling. Other characters supporting the main character are Bhisma and Salwa. The selection of the three characters, as expressly stated by the author, is mostly inspired by the Mahabharata tale. "I was fascinated by Javanese mythology, such as the Mahabharata. Each contains complex human characters, tales that are carrying the message that no man is perfect (Tempo, 2012). Further, Laksmi states that the writing of *Amba* novel stems from her desire to revive the existence of historical epic novels, (Tempo, 2012).

Amba from the novel had two twin sisters called Ambika and Ambalika. This is exactly the same with character *Amba* in the Mahabharata tale, which also had two twin sisters named

Ambika and Ambalika. Although not as pretty as her younger twin sisters, character Amba in the Amba novel did not worry over it, for her, the attractiveness of oneself did not depend on the physical appearance. Thanks to her belief, she grew into an independent, quick-thinking, and intelligent woman. Amba struggled to continue her study at UGM even though her mother opposed it. When working at a hospital, she fell in love with a doctor, Dr. Bhisma Rashad, even though she had had an arranged marriage with a man her parents liked, Salwani Munir.

In the riots in 1965, Bhisma was arrested and exiled on Buru Island. Losing her lover made Amba sad, but then she woke up and started a new life. This distinguishes character Amba in Amba novel and character Amba in the Mahabharata tale. The author of the novel deliberately wants to oppose the low appreciation of women. This is expressly stated in the following quotation.

Amba umumnya menyukai kisah-kisah Mahabharata termasuk kisah Amba, Salwa, dan Bhisma, meskipun ada beberapa bagiannya yang ia sama sekali tidak suka. Mahabharata bicara tentang sebuah zaman ketika hidup perempuan tak jarang dihargai sangat rendah, lebih rendah bahkan ketimbang hidup binatang (Novel Amba, hal.133).

(Amba generally liked the stories in Mahabharata tale, including the story of Amba, Salwa, and Bhisma, though there are some parts that she did not like. Mahabharata talked about a period time when women's life was often regarded very low, sometimes even much lower than animals (Novel Amba, page 133).

Character Bhisma in the Amba novel is a supporting character purposely used by the author as the mouthpiece of the author to reveal what was happening, what is being experienced by the political prisoners on Buru Island, through his letters to Amba. The author consistently makes Amba as the main character. This is clearly different from character Bhishma in the Mahabharata tale, which is the central figure. Dewabrata, which later be known as Bhishma after vowing not to ever marry throughout his life, is the central figure in the Mahabharata tale. Bhisma is described as an archer, a hero, a great statesman, and of course a warlord in the Bharatayudha war, which establishes the storyline of Mahabharata tale. In the Amba novel, Bhisma is described as a man who has lost all of his life, dreams, personality, and love, but is still fighting for his life.

5.1.3 Structure

The inspiration of Javanese version Mahabharata can be clearly seen from the structure of the Amba novel. In the Javanese version of the Mahabharata, the Mahabharata tale is divided into several books and each book consists of several chapters. It is this structure of Mahabharata tale that is adopted in the Amba novel.

Amba novel consists of 577 pages, divided into 7 books (what the author calls the chapters/sections of the book), each book containing 1-7 sub-chapters. The storyline employs flashback technique, starting with the climax, continuing to the orientation phase/introduction, the beginning of the conflict, the rising of the conflict, the climax, and the resolution. The story began with a story marked 2006 on Buru Island titled Samuel and Amba, which was about the searching effort to find Bhisma (Amba's lover) in Buru Island. The story then backtracked to the years of 1956-1965, titled Amba, Bhisma, and Salwa, which told a story of a love triangle between the three characters. The third book, which was still marked 1965, told a story of Amba with Adalhard who eventually became her husband, even though Amba's heart was still

longing for Bhishma. Book 4, marked 1965, specifically told a tale of Bhishma. In the fifth book, the story came forward to year 2006 with the story of Samuel and Amba once more. Memories of Bhishma since 1965-2006 was revealed in the sixth book with the title Bhishma and the Lost Years. Book 7, marked year 2011, narrated a story of Srikandi (daughter of Amba and her lover, Bhishma) and Samuel.

5.1.4 Storyline

Storyline or plot is a series of events that have causal relationship (Priyatni, 2010). Flow is a construction made by readers regarding events that are logically and chronologically interrelated (Fanani, 2002).

Amba novel uses flashback. The story begins with a climax; it told the story of Amba being wounded after being attacked by a woman while she was in Bhishma's grave. From this story, the author began to reveal who Amba and the woman attacking her were and what Amba's relationships with Bhishma and Salwa were. The love triangle between Amba, Bhishma and Salwa was what started the conflict. Amba, who wish to continue studying at university, finally accomplished her dream. The meeting of Amba's parents, when they were invited to the campus to provide suggestions for the preparation of a new curriculum, with Salwa, made up the mind of her parents to wed Amba with Salwa. When Amba accepted an offer to work as a translator in a hospital, she fell in love with Dr. Bhishma. Her romantic involvement with Dr. Bhishma ended when Bhishma was arrested for suspected involvement with G30S PKI (The September 30th Movement was a coup d'état orchestrated by Indonesian Communist Party that killed seven Indonesia senior officers). The loss of Bhishma made Amba move to Jakarta to continue her life along with the fruit of her love with Bhishma. Although in Jakarta she had married to Adalhard, her love for Bhishma never stopped. The news about the existence of Bhishma on Buru Island that was received through email brought Amba to Buru Island and she ended up wounded after being attacked by a woman. From the plot, it is clear that Amba is the central character that determines the development of storyline in Amba novel.

The storyline of Amba is clearly inspired from the Javanese version of the Mahabharata tale. In the Adiparwa book, the first book/part of the Mahabharata, the storyline is also in flashback. The story began with Begawan Ugrasrawa's story about Samantapañcaka bathing place and about the storytelling of Mahabharata tale by Begawan Waisampayana. The lengthy tale was told at the request of Emperor Janamejaya, king of Hastinapur, the son of the late prabu Parikesit, great-grandson of the Pandavas. Begawan Waisampayana intended to entertain the emperor for the failure of the snake sacrifice that was held to punish Takshaka dragon, who killed King Parikesit. From the summary, it is clear that the story begins from the climax, which is after the end of Bharatayudha war and the death of King Parikesit. After the climax, the characters are then introduced, starts from the central figure, which is Dewabrata/Bhishma, to Bharatayudha war, Yudhishtira became a king, and ends with the final trial of Yudhishtira.

5.1.5 Setting

Novel Amba is a novel with historical background of Indonesia in 1965, which was a period that could be called as one of the most mysterious and perilous Indonesian history. G30SPKI (Gerakan 30 September, upaya kudeta yang didalangi oleh Partai Komunis Indonesia) affair is the climax and anticlimax of Amba novel and becomes the major background that makes the novel so attention-grabbing and noteworthy. The author illustrates the sequence of events that was experienced by the characters in 1965 through a number of neat and chronological letters written by Bhishma. The events that happened in Buru Island more or less give illustrations for

those who are not yet familiar with many works written by the residents of Buru (Pulau penjara untuk para tahanan politik). *Amba* is a historical novel that tells stories of political prisoners after the events of G30 S (*September 30th Movement*) 1965 in Yogyakarta. *Amba Novel* is a historical novel that can provide a deeper understanding of history (Tempo, 2012). *Amba* and *Bhisma* tale in the *Mahabharata* also uses a great war as the background, where this war determines the starting point of the beginning of civilization, namely the *Bharatayudha* war.

From the above explanation, it seems clear that all the building blocks of the novel *Amba* are inspired from the epic *Mahabharata*, from the theme – a tragic love story, the main characters – *Amba*, *Bhisma*, *Salwa*, *Ambika*, *Ambalika*, the flashback, and also the setting – the use of major events that influence a nation.

5.2 The Motive, Desire, and Ideology that Underlies the Transformation

From the description above, it is clear that the transformation of *Amba* novel is contradictory to/disproving of the hypogram (*Mahabharata* tale) and women emancipation ideology is what underlying author to do the transformation. It was explicitly stated by Laksmi Pamuntjak in *Amba* novel that she is very fascinated with Javanese mythology, *Mahabharata*. However, she refuses the character *Amba* in the *Mahabharata* tale, where she was depicted in the same way as a female giant in human history, who held onto resentment as big as the ocean towards men, who would eventually kill and incapacitate them (Novel *Amba*, p. 133). Therefore, in her novel, she describes *Amba* as a strong, opinionated, and independent female figure. In her novel, Lakshmi Pamuncak makes *Amba* as the main character, a central figure, instead of *Bhisma*. The failure of her love, her love misfortune does not make her weak but rather makes her stronger. This is the mission that the author wants to express through the main character, *Amba*, in the *Amba* novel.

The profile of character *Amba* in the *Mahabharata* tale, which is often portrayed as a weak woman, dependent on men, easily gives up and miserable, unhappy, is rejected by the author of *Amba* novel. According to her, character *Amba* in the *Mahabharata* is interpreted as a strong, opinionated, and independent woman. What the two men who cast her aside do, *Salwa* and *Bhisma*, are preparing her for her mission in life: to remind real men of their responsibilities and to bury the worthless under thousands of arrows (Novel *Amba*, p.133). Character *Amba* in the novel is used to reject character *Amba* in the *Mahabharata* tale which is portrayed as a weak woman, thrown away by men, and then become miserable, unhappy, harbored endless resentment, and finally throw herself into the fire.

The selection of *Amba* novel's title as well as using the character as the central figure in the novel, clearly reject the domination of men in the *Mahabharata* tale, which is represented by *Bhisma*. Character *Amba* in the novel is the central figure that determines the storyline, while character *Bhisma* in the *Amba* novel, who is the central character in the *Mahabharata* tale, is described as a character who has lost all of his life, dreams, personality, and love, even though he is still fighting for his life. This is the form of rejection in *Amba* novel against the low regard towards women in the *Mahabharata* tale.

Character *Amba* is the author's form of rejection towards the depiction of female characters in the *Mahabharata* tale, which are portrayed as very dependent on men, not having the right to determine the way they live and who they will marry. Character *Amba* in the novel is described as a woman who has the courage to act and to set goals, dare to fight for freedom in getting education and freedom in determining future spouse (Fitrahayunitisna, 2014).

Since the birth of her twin sister, Amba felt that she was not as pretty as her sisters, but she believed that the attractiveness of women was not measured by physical aspects. To her, beauty was not the path to happiness. It was both a burden and a curse. It upheld and restrained. So she did not need to be beautiful. Amba chose to befriend books (Novel Amba, p. 87). This positive self-concept is clearly contrary to the self-concept of women in the Mahabharata tale.

Character Amba in the novel also symbolizes a rejection of the culture where spouse is chosen by parents or the person in charge. Character Amba chose Bhishma, the young man whom she love, rather than Salwani, her parents' choice. As a transformation text, in Amba novel can be seen clearly ideas that loudly declare emancipation, the fight to demand equality in education, access to work, choosing spouse, and the freedom to act.

5.3 The Impact of the Transformation of Amba Novel

It cannot be denied that the selection of the title Amba has a major influence on the popularity of Amba novel. Amba is one of the characters in the epic Mahabharata, a very famous mythology. Together with the use of big names from the characters of Mahabharata, such as Bhishma, Salwa, Ambika, Ambalika, and Srikandi, piqued the readers' interest to take a look and read.

All of the elements that build Amba novel are inspired by the Mahabharata tale, from the theme, characters, plot, and also setting. Amba Novel absorbs all of the elements that build Mahabharata tale, yet the author still manages to change the image of the previous text, so that the transformation text gives birth to a new genre that is inspired by but has different motive, ideology, and desire.

The ideology of emancipation, the struggle demanding equality in education, access to work, choosing the spouse, and the freedom to act are the underlying desires in the creation of Amba novel. Amba Novel is a transformation that is contradictory, but gives birth to a great work, which has the same theme, the tragic love story, but different in the ways of cultivating the story and the portrayal women.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

Results of the study show that a tragic love story, the misfortune of love, a love that cannot be returned because of unforgiving fate is the central theme in the story of Amba and Bhishma in Mahabharata. Similar central theme is also carried in the novel Amba. In this novel, Amba is the central figure who suffered a tragic romance. The main character of novel Amba is Amba Kinanti, the eldest son of a teacher at Kadipura. Her father and mother's name are Sudarminto and Nuniek, respectively. In the novel, Amba is the main character. She became the most important figure because all of the stories in the novel were focused and directed to her. Stages of her life were completely described, from her childhood until after 1965 tragedy that changed her life.

Character Amba from the novel had two twin sisters called Ambika and Ambalika. This is exactly the same with character Amba in the Mahabharata tale, which also had two twin sisters named Ambika and Ambalika. Although not as pretty as her younger twin sisters, Amba in the Amba novel did not worry over it. To her, the attractiveness of oneself did not depend on the physical appearance. Thanks to her belief, she grew into an independent, quick-thinking, and intelligent woman. Amba struggled to continue her study at UGM even though her mother

opposed it. When working at a hospital, she fell in love with a doctor, Dr. Bhisma Rashad, even though she already had had an arranged marriage with a man her parents liked, Salwani Munir.

From the description of the characters in the *Amba* novel, it appears that the author deliberately naming her characters similar with the names of important figures in the *Mahabharata*, such as *Amba*, *Bhisma*, *Salwa*, *Ambika*, and *Ambalika*. *Amba* novel uses flashback. The story begins with a climax; it told the story of *Amba* being wounded after attacked by a woman while she was in *Bhishma*'s grave. From this scene, the author began to reveal who *Amba* and the woman attacking her were and what *Amba*'s relationships with *Bhishma* and *Salwa* were – this is called the orientation stage. The storyline of *Amba* is clearly inspired from the Javanese version of the *Mahabharata* tale. In the *Adiparwa* book – the first book/part of the *Mahabharata*, the storyline is also in flashback.

Inspiration taken from *Mahabharata* Java version can be clearly seen from the structure of the novel. In the Javanese version of the *Mahabharata*, it consists of 19 books; each book contains an average of 10 chapters. *Mahabharata* content structure is adopted in the novel *Amba*. The 577-page novel is divided into seven books (the name for the chapter/section); each book contains 1-7 subchapters.

From the above explanation, it seems clear that all the building blocks of the novel *Amba* are inspired from the epic *Mahabharata*, from the theme – a tragic love story, the main characters – *Amba*, *Bhisma*, *Salwa*, *Ambika*, *Ambalika*, the flashback, and also the setting – the use of major events that influence a nation. Thus, it can be concluded that the novel *Amba* is the transformation of the great epics of *Mahabharata*.

Although the story of *Amba* in the Epic *Mahabharata* has a common theme with *Amba* novel, they are still different in their conclusion. *Amba*, in the *Mahabharata*, choose the path of suicide and revenge, but *Amba*, in the novel, is realistically accepting her love misfortune. She accepted that misfortune is part of love. When *Bhisma*, her lover, disappeared, she decided to start her life from scratch.

In the epic *Mahabharata*, the main character is a male, which is *Bhishma*. However, in *Amba* novel, the main character is a female, *Amba*. *Amba* in the *Mahabharata* is often interpreted as a weak woman, dependent on men, easy to despair and suffer. *Amba* character in the novel is precisely the opposite, namely a strong, opinionated and independent woman. The role of the two men in her life, *Salwa* and *Bhisma*, is preparing her for her life mission: to remind men of their responsibilities and to bury those who fail under thousands of arrows.

Based on the explanation, it can be concluded that *Amba* novel's transformation is contradictory. Character *Amba* is the author's form of rejection on the subject of women's portrayal in the *Mahabharata* tale, which is very dependent on men, and they do not have the right to choose the way they live and who they will marry. Character *Amba* in the novel is a deconstruction of character *Amba* in the *Mahabharata* tale. Character *Amba* in the novel is described as a woman who has the courage to act and to set goals, dare to fight for freedom in getting education and freedom in determining future spouse. As a transformation text, in *Amba* novel can be clearly seen ideas that loudly declare emancipation, the fight to demand equality in education, access to work, choosing spouse, and the freedom to act. *Amba* Novel is a contradictory transformation, but it gives birth to a great work that has the same theme, the tragic love story, but different in the ways of cultivating the story and the portrayal women.

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