



Me(Pe)rantau “si Malin Kundang” in the novels of Minangkabau authors after PRRI

Ronidin*, Universitas Gadjah Mada and Universitas Andalas, Indonesia

Sudibyo, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Indonesia

Novi Siti Kussuji Indrastuti, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

This article is about the phenomenon of me(pe)rantau tragic among Minangkabau people in four novels by Minangkabau authors after Pemerintahan Revolusioner Republik Indonesia (PRRI), namely *Panggilan Tanah Kelahiran* by Dt. B. Nurdin Jacob, *Saraswati Si Gadis dalam Sunyi* by A.A. Navis, *Warisan* by Chairul Harun, and *Bako* by Darman Moenir. These famous novels after PRRI are sociological and philosophical based novels that express the author's worldview at the maximum level of coherence. In the analysis of these four novels, Lotman's narrative text theory is applied to elaborate the structure of literary works as a conceptual construction centered on the idea of binary opposition. Lotman's elaboration reinforces Eco's view that certain cultural units become meaningful when placed within another cultural unit that is opposed to them. Based on the analysis, the novels that are the subject of this study place the overseas world (*dunia rantau*) as a source of problems for the Minangkabau people. The characters who encounter the overseas world (*dunia rantau*) are positioned as "the disobedient" when they face the village world (*dunia kampung*) as an oppositional relationship.

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*CORRESPONDENCE AUTHOR

✉ ronidin502@gmail.com

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INTRODUCTION

The topic to be discussed, as indicated in the title of this article, encompasses three important concepts. First, the me(pe)rantau of “si Malin Kundang”, second, the novels of Minangkabau authors, and third, the period after PRRI or Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia. These three concepts will be explained as follow.

First, me(pe)rantau “si Malin Kundang” means a tragic phenomenon of migration among the Minangkabau people because it produces migrants “si Malin Kundang”, a prototype of Minangkabau migrants who are disobedient after achieving success overseas. They “forget” their villages and origins and “deviate” from their traditions and customs. Those who initially migrated to change their destiny and alleviate trauma, as happened after the PRRI war, eventually became disobedient like si Malin Kundang migrants (Naufalia, 2020). They made the overseas world as everything and saw their home village as a “*batu berlutut*” that no longer gave them anything. They nullified their indigenouness.

Second, the novels of Minangkabau authors are Indonesian novels written by Minangkabau authors with the characteristics of the minds of the story actors based on the social life and the nature of the Minangkabau ethnic mind, which is geographically located in the province of West Sumatra. The indicator is not only because the story is set in Minangkabau, but also shows the characters, ideas, and identity of Minangkabau ethnic matrilineal characteristics even though the story actors are located outside West Sumatra (Minangkabau) or in areas culturally referred to as *rantau*. Other indicators may include language units in dialogue and expressions that are typically Minangkabau, as well as Islamic identity, customs, the matrilineal system, and the mental attitude of the characters. The names of Minangkabau characters can also be used as indicators (Navis, 1999).

The third, “after PRRI” period, means the period after the end of the PRRI war that occurred in West Sumatra in 1958-1961. The PRRI war for the Minangkabau people is known as the *bagolak* period or peri-peri (PRRI) war, while it is commonly known as the PRRI rebellion (Zed et al., 1998; Asnan, 2007; Fogg, 2015; Madinier, 2015). The period of “after PRRI” in this article is limited to the mid-1980s



era. This limitation is based on the consideration of the socio-political situation, in the mid-1980s, West Sumatra was reintegrated into Indonesia in the sense that West Sumatra's local policies were back in line and in accordance with the actions of the central government. In the mid-1980s, President Soeharto rehabilitated the name of West Sumatra after its involvement in the PRRI to return step by step to its integration under the Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia (Kahin, [2008](#); Asnan, [2008](#)).

The PRRI had a devastating impact on the people of West Sumatra during and after the end of the war. Kahin ([2008](#)) and Hadi ([2013](#)) mentioned that PRRI was the gateway to the tragedy that befell the Minangkabau. After PRRI, the social structure of Minangkabau society collapsed and most Minangkabau people experienced acute sociological and psychological distress (Narny, et al., [2019](#)).

This alarming situation prompted many Minangkabau to leave their homeland and migrate outside West Sumatra. Their aim was to alleviate trauma and improve the family economic condition. Kato ([2007](#)) and Naim ([2013](#)) mentioned that after PRRI period was the peak of Minangkabau migration from West Sumatra. Their destinations included Aceh, Medan, Pekanbaru, Palembang, Lampung, Jakarta, Bandung, Yogyakarta, and other cities in Java (Nelmawarni et al., [2020](#); Iswanto et al., [2022](#); Auliana et al., [2023](#)). In addition to these cities, some Minangkabau migrate to Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, Philippines, and even Australia and Europe (Maher, [1994](#); Omar & Nelmawarni, [2008](#); Suryadi, [2015](#); Tjoa-Bonat, [2019](#)). Migration became an option because life in the village was stressful and no longer promising. For PRRI supporters, migration was also a form of silent resistance to the situation that developed in West Sumatra after the defeat of the PRRI (Navis, [1999](#)).

The large number of Minangkabau who migrated after the PRRI was due to poor political and economic factors, although Minangkabau had migrated for cultural reasons long before. Based on the studies of previous Minangkabau researchers, it is found that migration is a cultural activity of the Minangkabau people that has been institutionalized for a long time (Kato, [1980](#); Kato, [2007](#); Chadwick, [1991](#); Ronidin, [2006](#); Stark, [2013](#); Naim, [2013](#); Suryadi, [2015](#); Iskandar, [2016](#); Downes & Kobbe, [2017](#); Nurdin & Rido, [2020](#); and Yoeti, [2021](#)). In the past, Minangkabau people migrated in search of new hopes outside their home region (*darek*), as well as a place for self-maturation. The deep-rooted tradition of migration among the Minangkabau has been passed down from generation to generation. Initially, the Minangkabau living in the central Minangkabau area (*Luhak Nan Tigo*: Agam, Lima Puluh Kota and Tanah Datar), they left their villages and moved to new areas along the west coast of West Sumatra. Later, the area was extended to other areas outside West Sumatra.

The lives of post-PRRI Minangkabau migrants are interesting to study because there are parts of the migrants' generation who have directly dealt with various political, economic, and cultural issues. They were part of the generation of Minangkabau migrants who overturned the values of their ancestors. They are part of the pragmatist generation of Minangkabau migrants because of the PRRI incident (Ma'arif, [2004](#)). In the post-PRRI period, most Minangkabau hid their identity. They did not claim themselves as Minangkabau. For the sake of pragmatism, Minangkabau children born after PRRI, especially in the 1960s, were given strange names, westernized, *kejawa-jawaan*, and sometimes used certain acronyms (Chadwick, [1991](#); Zed et al., [1998](#); Kato, [2007](#); Naim, [2013](#)).

The Minangkabau migrants who hid their identity are slowly becoming migrants who forget themselves. They are moving away from their traditional and cultural roots. The 12th of July 1986 issue of *Tempo* magazine reported that there had been various changes among the Minangkabau, especially those living overseas (*rantau*) (“Orang Minang telah berubah”, [1986](#)). These changes include the use of the matrilineal system. In general, Minangkabau families in the overseas areas live in a nuclear family pattern. The role of the father shifts the role of the *mamak*. According to Rozi ([2013](#)), the changes that occur are a result of the high mobilization, interaction, and assimilation of the Minangkabau with other ethnic groups in the overseas areas (*rantau*). Meanwhile, according to Ma'arif ([2004](#)), another factor that promoted change was the pragmatism of the Minangkabau people,

which became stronger after the PRRI that makes Minangkabau migrants moved away from their traditions and customs.

In principle, the post-PRRI period was a difficult time for the Minangkabau people, both those living in the village (*kampung*) and those living overseas (*rantau*). This phenomenon was then absorbed, developed, and modified by post-PRRI Minangkabau authors to be presented in their novels. Novels represented the tragic phenomena that the Minangkabau people faced because of the PRRI. The problem is how the authors in these novels structure the ideas, aspirations and relationships between the village world and the overseas world among the Minangkabau people, which in turn represents a phenomenon perceived as tragic me(pe)rantau or me(pe)rantau "si Malin Kundang".

In the novels of Minangkabau authors after PRRI, the authors reflect the lives of the story actors and the relationships established between them in the village (*kampung*) and overseas (*rantau*) in a problematic way. The source of the problem begins with the story actors who encounter the overseas world (*dunia rantau*) when they establish relationships with the village world (*dunia kampung*). In this case, the story actors are described as culturally problematic migrants. Why is this so? The story actors who are successful and famous overseas generally deny their home village, refuse to return to the village, and deviate from the customs and traditions of the village. Their attitude is not unlike the story of Malin Kundang, who left the village to change his destiny, but after he became successful overseas, he turned away and disobeyed the village. This problem is interesting to study as a representation of the tragic symptom of Minangkabau life after PRRI, as depicted in the novels that are the subject of this research.

So far, there has been no study of the tragic migration culture in the novels of Minangkabau authors after PRRI. Existing studies include discussions on the relationship between the novel and the author's background, tragedy in PRRI war, injustice against women, social issues such as matrilineal customs and inheritance, and so on. Adilla (2015), in dissertation at the Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, discussed the contribution of A.A. Navis in the Indonesian literary arena. In his study, Adilla mentioned that A.A. Navis was a prolific Minangkabau author after PRRI. In his works, A.A. Navis was influenced by social and political factors, including the PRRI incident and living under the New Order regime. These works are the result of A.A. Navis' deep observation and contemplation of his social environment. In other studies of the novel *Saraswati Si Gadis dalam Sunyi* by A.A. Navis, Adilla (2003) and Farkhatunnisa et al. (2023) described the novel as a tragic novel about Minangkabau women in the chaos of the PRRI war. The novel shows the character's problematic attempts to achieve her life goal as a meaningful cripple.

Meanwhile, Solissa (2012) in her article titled *Citra Perempuan dalam Novel Saraswati Si Gadis dalam Sunyi* stated that the theme in A.A. Navis's novel is a humanitarian issue that shows injustice towards disabled women like Saraswati. This is a bad effect of the PRRI war which is being the background of this novel. Fauzana (2021), studied the *Saraswati Si Gadis dalam Sunyi* novel with a subaltern approach, concluded that subaltern in the *Saraswati Si Gadis dalam Sunyi* novel is in the form of oppression and discrimination by the majority group against minorities, especially against Saraswati, a deaf-muted female character. Subaltern in *Saraswati Si Gadis dalam Sunyi* is reinforced by the humanitarian facts of the PRRI incident, which psychologically suppressed the mentality of the people of West Sumatra because they were labelled as rebels by the central government in Jakarta.

Different with Adilla (2015), Solissa (2012) and Fauzana (2021), Djamari (2010) discussed Chairul Harun's novel *Warisan* in his article *Masalah Kemasyarakatan dan Pandangan Chairul Harun dalam novel Warisan*. Djamari (2010) mentioned that the novel *Warisan* represents societal problems in Minangkabau families, such as the problem of inheritance, marriage, and the matrilineal family, which is almost extinct. These problems, according to Djamari, are Chairul Harun's points of views in

response to various problems that arise in Minangkabau society, which looks good on the surface but is porous on the inside. Like Djamari (2010), Zulfardi (2016) provides an overview of the social context of Chairul Harun's novel *Warisan*. According to Zulfardi, the novel *Warisan* represents the deviations of the Minangkabau society from its traditions and customs. The poor social structure shows that Minangkabau people have been uprooted from their cultural roots and customs. Meanwhile, Watson (2023) in his analysis of Darman Moenir's *Bako* mentioned that the novel describes the tensions experienced by the character Man (Aku) and Ibu Aku, who came from overseas, when living in her husband's family home in the village. Aku and Ibu Aku are not accepted as natives in their father's village because they are not part of their father's family. This situation has caused Ibu Aku to develop mental disorders due to severe psychological pressure.

Based on the literature reviews presented above, there is a space to discuss the representation of Minangkabau authors' novels after PRRI in relation to the problem of structuring the relations between the village world (*kampung*) and the overseas world (*rantau*) of the Minangkabau people. The structuring of these problematic relations then rise the phenomenon of me(pe)rantau "si Malin Kundang", a tragic phenomenon for Minangkabau society after PRRI.

RESEARCH METHOD

This article discusses the *merantau* culture in Minangkabau society through analysis of literary works. The data were obtained from four novels by Minangkabau authors after PRRI, namely (1) *Panggilan Tanah Kelahiran* by Dt. B. Nurdin Jacub [first published 1967, 5th edition 2011] (Jacub, 2011); (2) *Saraswati, Si Gadis dalam Sunyi* by A.A. Navis [first published 1970, later 2002] (Navis, 2002); (3) *Warisan* by Chairul Harun [first published 1979, 2nd edition 2002] (Harun, 2002); and (4) *Bako* by Darman Moenir [first published 1983, 2nd edition 1994] (Moenir, 1994). The data are analyzed by using the dialectical method, which is a method developed by Goldmann (2013) by placing the concept of structural coherence as a basic principle to reveal abstract human facts in a literary work. The dialectical method is expected to achieve the totality of answers to holistic questions about the literary work under study. The dialectical method used here is reinforced by Lotman's (1977) narrative text approach, especially in terms of elaborating the structure of literary works as a conceptual construction centered on the idea of binary opposition. The essence of Lotman's (1977) idea, as highlighted by Faruk (2016), emphasized the relationship between the structure of literary works and the dialectic of binary opposition. The elements outside the structure of literary works in the form of certain cultural units become meaningful when placed within other cultural units that are in opposition to each other (Eco, 2009). It means that the opposing units are placed as a meaningful semantic field.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Migration (*Merantau*) Orientation

In the novels of Minangkabau authors before and after PRRI, living in the village (*kampung*) and living overseas (*rantau*) are portrayed as two opposing and problematic worlds. The villagers see the overseas world as the ideal world in which to live, while the overseas people see the village as the world of the past. In the novels of Minangkabau authors before PRRI, the protagonists (characters) generally went overseas because they wanted to maintain their self-esteem (*membangkit batang terendam*), especially in the economic field. For them, it is better to go overseas to confront the world of people than to live in poverty in the village (Arbain, 2022).

Furthermore, in the novels of Minangkabau authors after PRRI, the orientation develops from merely upholding self-esteem and improving the family economy. In the novels published after PRRI, the characters migrate to strengthen their self-existence, improve their education, seek fame, and

sometimes also to hide their shame. The story actors who migrate are no longer orientated towards tradition, but rather towards developing their own abilities. If previously the nomads developed themselves in the overseas with traditional causality patterns, afterwards they developed into a more modern world including higher education, government, and large-scale business.

Rusman's character in novel *Panggilan Tanah Kelahiran* by Nurdin Jacob travelled overseas to get a bachelor's degree to elevate his existence. Tuan Yusuf, character in the same novel, works as an import-export businessman in Jakarta, which makes him a famous migrant. Saraswati's father, mother, brother, and sister in novel *Saraswati Si Gadis dalam Sunyi* by A.A. Navis settled in Jakarta to accompany her father, who works in a government official. Rafilus, his mother and younger siblings in novel *Warisan* by Chairul Harun also live in Jakarta, running a fast-growing family business. Rafilus and his younger siblings are highly educated expatriate children. Man's father and Man (Aku) in novel *Bako* by Darman Moenir migrated to Padang city to continue their education. Man's father then works as a teacher in overseas, Riau. Meanwhile, the character Bu Yuk in Wisran Hadi's novel *Orang-Orang Belanti* goes overseas to escape from the shame of getting pregnant out of wedlock while dating a man of a different religion.

Binary Opposition between *Kampung* (village) and *Rantau* (overseas)

The problems faced by the characters in each novel, as mentioned above, are then seen in the concept of binary opposition that contrasts *kampung* and *rantau*. The opposition between *kampung* and *rantau* in the novels of Minangkabau authors according to PRRI is set up as an artificial semantic field. In this case, the author tends to make the *kampung* as a unit that functions to collect various problems that develop among the story actors and contrast it with the *rantau* unit as the center of the problems experienced by the story actors. The *kampung* represents the problematic matrilineal world, while the *rantau* represents the opposite, which is also problematic. These oppositions jointly structure the changes in Minangkabau society.

Binary Opposition between *Kampung* and *Rantau* in the Novel *Panggilan Tanah Kelahiran*

The opposition between *kampung* and *rantau* in the novel *Panggilan Tanah Kelahiran* by Nurdin Jacob is implicit in the title of the novel. The phrase "Tanah Kelahiran" in the title of the novel means 'hometown', while the word "Panggilan" means an invitation to return or go home. Thus, *Panggilan Tanah Kelahiran* means a request to return (go home) to the village, addressed to people overseas (*rantau*). The opposition between *kampung* and *rantau* in the novel *Panggilan Tanah Kelahiran* contrasts the lives of the characters in *kampung* and *rantau*. The village (*kampung*) is identified as traditional area of origin, countrified, many problems, poor, stupid, fanatical about customs and traditions, natural, and so on. *Rantau* is identified as the city, developed, a place of brilliance and modernity, a place to change one's destiny, to seek wealth and popularity, a place of ideological struggle, the center of the economy and government, and so on.

The opposition of *kampung* and *rantau* contrasts the relationships of Rusman's character establishes in both regions. Rusman, who has a bachelor's degree in Jakarta, is requested by his uncle (*mamak*) named Tabrani to return to his village in Solok. Tabrani was the regent of Solok at the time. Tabrani's aim was to call Rusman home so that the young man could devote himself and his knowledge to the village. As a university scholar, Rusman's brilliant mind was more needed in the village than overseas. The presence of a scholar is needed to develop all the potential in the village. This became a tangible reason for the Tabrani to call Rusman home, although in disguise he intended to unite Rusman with his only daughter named Laila. This was done by the Tabrani so that Rusman would not fall in love into other women, *indak lapeh kijang ka rimbo*.

For Rusman, the village is a memory of the past. During his studies in Jakarta, he never returned to his village. He returned to the village after graduation because his uncle (*mamak*) requested that

he return home, Rusman met Laila Tabrani, the daughter of his uncle (*mamak*), a high school teacher in Solok. Rusman's meeting with Laila Tabrani ignited a flame of love between them. However, for Rusman, the fire of love is like a double-edged sword. He is faced with the choice of remaining loyal to her or betraying her. The budding love between Rusman and Laila Tabrani contrasts with Rusman's engagement to another girl, Mirna Yusuf, who is already engaged in Jakarta. Mirna Yusuf is the only daughter of Tuan Yusuf, an import-export businessman of Minangkabau descent, Rusman's employer while he was studying in Jakarta. Tuan Yusuf's family had tied Rusman to his daughter so that the fruit would not fall far from the tree. The betrothal arranged by Tuan Yusuf's family was not approved by Tabrani, Rusman's uncle (*mamak*). Therefore, the Tabrani regent tried to send Rusman back to the village (Jacub, 2011, pp. 58-59).

The opposition between *kampung* and *rantau* in this novel intensifies as the two opposing parties try to overcome each other. In the village, Rusman's relationship with Laila Tabrani grows closer. Meanwhile, in Jakarta, after Rusman returns to the village because of his uncle's (*mamak*) invitation, Mirna Yusuf meets Navis Iskak, her father's business partner. Mirna and Navis became more than just friends. The conflict between them is eventually resolved by a tragic event. Rusman's relationship with Laila Tabrani in the village ends with Laila's death, while Mirna Yusuf's relationship with Navis Iskak ends when Navis Iskak's wife and child appear before Mirna. The reunification of Rusman's relationship with Mirna Yusuf, who had been engaged, failed to take place because of the growing opposition between *kampung* and *rantau*. Rusman's engagement to Mirna Yusuf was eventually broken off.

Rusman's engagement to Mirna Yusuf broke off when he returned to Jakarta to meet Tuan Yusuf, Mirna's father. Rusman expressed his desire to devote himself to the village and to invite Mirna Yusuf to return home, as she was also coming from Padang. Tuan Yusuf strongly objected to Rusman's plan. So did Mirna. The pampered girl, used to live in Jakarta, and she did not want to return to the village. Tuan Yusuf and Mirna not only disagreed with Rusman's plan to return to the village to devote himself, but also regretted Rusman's attitude, which he considered conservative (*ndeso*). For Tuan Yusuf, the village was a symbol of backwardness, so why bother to become a scholar if he would end up returning to the village.

Using harsh language, Tuan Yusuf scolded and insulted his own village, as the following quote illustrates:

“Sungguh sayang keserjanaan Ananda itu, jika demikian maksud Ananda”, kata Tuan Yusuf kepada Rusman. “Ilmu yang setinggi itu, yang sesulit itu mendapatkannya akan dibawa bertapa ke kampung-kampung. Akan disumbangkan kepada monyet dan kera, sedangkan bangsa Indonesia memerlukan ilmu yang setinggi itu. Sedangkan saya sendiri, bukan seorang sarjana, tidak mau tinggal di Padang. Padahal Padang adalah kota juga, ibu kota provinsi. Tetapi saya tahu, di sana bukanlah tempatku. Saya tahu akan harga diriku, akan pasaran ilmuku yang ada, walaupun tidak setinggi ilmu Ananda. Kenyataannya bagaimana? Memang di sinilah saya mendapatkan rezeki...” (Jacub, 2011, p. 46).

“... Dan sekarang, alangkah akan sedihnya hati kami anak beranak, jika bantuan kami yang tidak seberapa itu akan Ananda balas dengan cara yang menyedihkan hati kami itu. Apa sebabnya saya berkata begitu, ialah karena saya tahu benar, bahwa Mirna tidak akan suka berangkat dari Jakarta ini. Lebih-lebih akan pulang ke Padang. Walaupun kami orang Padang juga, tapi kami telah lama meninggalkan Padang. Karena adat Padang, adat Minangkabau pada umumnya banyak yang tidak bersetuju di hati kami. Lebih-lebih pergaulannya. Saya belum mendengar orang Padang yang dapat ternama dan termasyhur, jika ia berada di Padang saja. Tidakkah kalau di rantau, mereka banyak yang memegang peranan penting? Itu pulalah sebabnya Mirna tidak pernah saya biarkan ke Padang itu. Sekarang akan Ananda bawa ia ke sana, di mana orang-orang kolot dan fanatik masih hidup kuat dengan kekolotan dan kefanatikannya. Percayalah, ilmu dan keserjanaan Ananda itu akan dilulurnya, akhirnya akan bertekuk lutut kepada pengaruh sekelilingnya. Tidak Ananda, saya tidak menyetujuinya!” (Jacub, 2011, p. 47-48).

The above quote clearly shows that Tuan Yusuf sees the village as an unpleasant place and overseas as the opposite. In Tuan Yusuf's points of view, the village is inhabited by conservative and

fanatical people who cannot be expected to give anything, while overseas is the ideal place to achieve success. Tuan Yusuf's words to Rusman were a denial that hurt his heart. He wanted to refute what Tuan Yusuf had said, but there was no point. Tuan Yusuf and his family had completely wiped out the village they came from and rejected its customs.

Tuan Yusuf's attitude strengthened Rusman's resolve to return to the village. Rusman fought against Tuan Yusuf's attitude of glorifying overseas. Tuan Yusuf has made everything overseas and thinks the village has nothing to give. Tuan Yusuf's actions represent the tragic attitude of Minangkabau migrants. Tuan Yusuf's success overseas made him disobey his village. So that, Rusman wanted to prove that the village was not as bad as Tuan Yusuf said. Rusman wants to prove that he can build a village with the knowledge he has.

Rusman's decision to return to the village caused his engagement to Mirna Yusuf break off. Rusman's decision can be interpreted as his refusal to become a tragic nomad or the nomad of Malin Kundang. Meanwhile, Tuan Yusuf and his family, like the perfidious Malin Kundang, eventually received the karmic law. The glamour of their lives turned to misery. Happiness turned to sadness. This happened when Tuan Yusuf's cover was blown. A Minangkabau migrant who became famous in Jakarta for the progress of his business, he was eventually brought down by the business itself. Tuan Yusuf, who ran his business dishonestly, was eventually implicated in a case of corruption and embezzlement. As the wise words say, "as smart as a squirrel jump, he will eventually fall", as smart as Tuan Yusuf was in keeping his secrets and his business depravity, he was eventually exposed. Tuan Yusuf, who had been under surveillance by the authorities, was eventually arrested and jailed.

As well as legal problems, Tuan Yusuf also faced domestic problems. As a husband who was considered faithful by his wife, this was not the case. After Tuan Yusuf was arrested and imprisoned, his wife found out that he had several mistresses in Jakarta, Bandung, and Surabaya. The mistresses that Tuan Yusuf had kept secret eventually met his legal wife. Tuan Yusuf's wife was very disappointed to discover this. Her trust in Tuan Yusuf reached rock bottom. She was devastated, as was her husband's career. The household they had built up over the years came to a tragic end.

The shame suffered by Tuan Yusuf's wife and daughter, Mirna Yusuf, is unbearable. They never imagined that they would be the sick people, the wife and daughter of a corrupt person who is publicly ridiculed every day. Since Tuan Yusuf's case broke and made headlines in various mass media, his wife has stayed at home to bear the shame. Mirna, too, was afraid to go to the campus, unable to hide her face from her friends. Day by day, the life of mother and daughter became more uncertain. After Tuan Yusuf's arrest, their once abundant possessions were gradually reduced to cover their basic needs. Accustomed to taking things as they came, they were at a loss to cope with the problems they were facing. Since discovering that Tuan Yusuf was having an affair and meeting her husband's mistresses face to face, Mirna's mother was no longer cared about the fate of Tuan Yusuf, the arrogant migrant who, at the height of his business, considered the overseas world to be everything.

Unable to bear the burden of life, which was growing heavier by the day, Mirna Yusuf and her mother agreed to sell all their possessions in Jakarta. After that, they were forced to "lick their own spit". They both left Jakarta to return to their hometown in Padang, which they had previously abandoned. This can be seen in the following excerpt:

"Mirna Yusuf dan ibundanya tidak tahan lagi tinggal di Jakarta. Mereka harus cepat meninggalkan Jakarta. Sekalian harta bendanya habis dijualnya. Jual murah saja! Impalanya diganti dengan sebuah chevrolet sebab di mana berada Mirna masih merasa perlu mempunyai mobil, sudah terbiasa tidak menginjak tanah.

Sesudah berembuk dengan ibundanya putuslah permufakatan mereka akan ke Padang ke tempat asli orang tua Mirna. Densanak mereka yang dekat di Padang sudah tidak ada lagi. Densanak-densanak jauh sudah sejak lama tidak ada yang tahu lagi pada mereka, karena mereka sendiri tidak mau tahu pula pada mereka

...Dan mulailah mereka dengan hidup baru di kota Padang yang selama ini agak sedikit pun tidak berkenan di hati mereka untuk kembali ke sana. Tetapi siapa yang dapat menerka, apa yang akan terjadi di masa datang. Jika dulu Mirna memaki-maki Drs. Rusman karena akan kembali ke tanah kelahirannya, tetapi ia kini telah bertekuk lutut di bawah kekuasaan yang maha gaib di tempat tersebut tanpa direka-rekannya terlebih dahulu” (Jacub, 2011, p. 110-111).

The above text describes the tragic situation of the Minangkabau migrants. Those who, when in power, make the world everything and act arrogantly, will eventually receive the karmic law from God Almighty. Tuan Yusuf, arrogant about his economic success, thinks success is forever, so he rashly insults his own village when Rusman offers a plan to return there. Mirna, who is used to live well in Jakarta, also follows her father in rejecting anything to do with the village. Because of their success, Tuan Yusuf's family have forgotten their relatives in the village. They don't want to know anything about them. Economic success has blinded the eyes of Tuan Yusuf and his family, like the "Malin Kundang" who no longer acknowledges his mother because he has become a wealthy man. Tuan Yusuf and his family denied the village because they were already rich overseas.

When the world changes and power relations break down, the law of karma applies. The world that was previously denied is explored again with all the regrets. When Tuan Yusuf and Mirna cursed Rusman for returning to his hometown, the power of God Almighty would turn all the curses on themselves. Punishment prevailed. Mirna was made to “lick her own spit”. The disobedient were punished by their own words and deeds. If previously because of their possessions they rejected and reviled the village, now they were forced to return there because the overseas region they were proud of had punished them as disobedient migrants.

Binary Opposition between *Rantau* and *Kampung* in Novel *Saraswati Si Gadis dalam Sunyi*

If in the novel *Panggilan Tanah Kelahiran* the semantic field sets the *kampung* in opposition to the *rantau*, in the novel *Saraswati Si Gadis dalam Sunyi* by A.A. Navis the opposition is reversed to the opposition of *rantau* and *kampung*. The essence remains the same, the opposition between two worlds in the lives of the Minangkabau people. The opposition between *rantau* and *kampung* describes the movement of the protagonists who start from *rantau* and move to the *kampung* (village).

The overseas world mentioned in the novel *Saraswati Si Gadis dalam Sunyi* is still the same as in the novel *Panggilan Tanah Kelahiran*, which is located in the city of Jakarta. In this context, Jakarta (*rantau*) is described as a pleasant world for Saraswati and all her family members. However, the pleasant overseas world suddenly turns into a tragedy in Saraswati's life. The deaf-muted girl is unexpectedly left by death by her father, mother, brother, and sister because of car accident in Bandung.

Saraswati did not get involved in the accident because she was left at home with the maid. She was ill at the time. The loss of her entire family was a heartbreaking tragedy for Saraswati. After the death of all her family members, the world became dark for Saraswati. As a result, Saraswati was forced to be taken home by Angah to her hometown of Padang Panjang. Angah is her father's older sister, known as *bako* in Minangkabau.

The comfortable overseas life for Saraswati and her family is a sign of Saraswati's father's success as a Minangkabau immigrant in Jakarta. This success allows Saraswati and her family to live comfortably. However, this contrasted with Saraswati's life in the village. In Jakarta, Saraswati is used to live happily and well, not having to leave the house every day because all her needs are already settled, but in village this is not the case. In the village, Saraswati suffered, was deprived, and had to leave the house every day to fulfil her duties to help Angah. While in Jakarta Saraswati has a nice room, in the village she must sleep in an inadequate room. In the village, Saraswati must help Angah's family that she could never have imagined in Jakarta. In the village, Saraswati had to help Angah herd ducks and goats. Navis writes, “*Luka benar hatiku. Coba kau rasakan, Saudaraku, aku anak seorang*

pegawai tinggi yang punya mobil dinas di Ibu Kota Negara, kini tiba-tiba menjadi gadis penggembala kambing" (Navis, [2002](#), p. 28).

Living in the village, Saraswati had to adjust to her new environment with Angah's family. She had to forget all her fond memories of Jakarta. Saraswati's suffering increased when the PRRI war broke out. This war made life in the village very miserable, not only for Saraswati but also for the other villagers. Not only did the villagers have to deal with terror and insecurity, but they also had to deal with grief. Saraswati, caught in the maelstrom of the PRRI war, could not escape the tragedies that shook her. Navis writes, "*Selama hidup dalam perang, di samping melihat banyak kesengsaraan, aku juga melihat banyak korban yang mati, yang luka, banyak rumah yang hangus dan hancur. Jika aku kenang itu semua, terasa sekali betapa dunia ini begitu kelabu, begitu gelap. Kenangan itu selalu mengusik sanubariku, Saudaraku!*" (Navis, [2002](#), p. 125).

Saraswati's tragic life in the village is the antithesis of her pleasant life overseas. The various sufferings experienced by Saraswati in the village did not need to happen if only when she was still in Jakarta, after her father, mother and siblings died, she was not taken back to the village, but was cared for by her uncle (*mamak*). According to the matrilineal system, the uncle (*mamak*) is her protector. Unfortunately, her uncle (*mamak*) abdicated this responsibility. Saraswati's problem was solved in a strange way. Saraswati is picked up by her *bako*, whereas as a Minangkabau woman, she is the absolute responsibility of her uncle (*mamak*).

Thus, the opposition between *rantau* and *kampung* in the novel *Saraswati Si Gadis dalam Sunyi* is equivalent to the opposition between father and *mamak*, which is problematic in Saraswati's life. In the novel *Saraswati Si Gadis dalam Sunyi*, the role of the father is dominant, while the role of the uncle (*mamak*) is eliminated. When Saraswati loses her father, mother and all her siblings, the world is dark for her because her protector is gone. As a Minangkabau girl, Saraswati has little to worry about that. When her father and mother died, her uncle (*mamak*) took on the responsibility of looking after her. In the Minangkabau matrilineal system, the role of the uncle (*mamak*) is greater than that of the father. The father in a matrilineal Minangkabau family is only a *semenda*, while the *mamak* is the man who leads the extended his matrilineal family.

In the novel *Saraswati Si Gadis dalam Sunyi*, the opposite is true; the role of the father surpasses that of the uncle (*mamak*). In this novel, Saraswati is described as having an uncle (*mamak*). However, the uncle (*mamak*) in question does not show his responsibility as a Minangkabau uncle (*mamak*). He relinquishes his responsibility to Saraswati. In fact, for the matrilineal Minangkabau, the relationship between uncle (*mamak*) and niece is the same as that between father and son in the patrilineal system. The role of the uncle (*mamak*) is to nurture, protect and guide his nephews. If anything happens in the lives of his nephews, the uncle (*mamak*) is the first to solve the problem.

Thus, it can therefore be concluded that the uncle (*mamak*) presented by Navis (2002) in the novel *Saraswati Si Gadis dalam Sunyi* is not an uncle (*mamak*) based on the Minangkabau matrilineal concept. It is possible that the uncle (*mamak*) in question refers to the concept of "uncle" or "om" in the patrilineal system. According to Amir ([1999](#)), *mamak* is not the same as "uncle" or "om". *Mamak* is the mother's brother, the protector of her nephews. The concept of "uncle" presented by Navis in this novel may be because Saraswati's father married overseas to a non-Minangkabau woman. If this is the case, the concept of *mamak* changes to a non-matrilineal "uncle". This is why Saraswati was brought home by Angah, her father's sister, rather than being raised by her uncle in Jakarta. Navis writes, "*Aku harus kembali ke kampungku di kota kecil Padang Panjang. Ini adalah keputusan semua keluarga, baik yang berada di Jakarta atau di kampung. Angah yang menjemput aku ke Jakarta*" (Navis, [2002](#), p. 11).

This text shows something strange in terms of matrilineal concepts. Why was Saraswati picked up by Angah (her *bako*) instead of being looked after by her uncle (*mamak*) in Jakarta? The answer is that the Minangkabau overseas have been stripped of their traditional and cultural roots. The role of the father has become more dominant, and the role of the uncle (*mamak*) has disappeared. This phenomenon is a representation of the tragedies of the Minangkabau people in overseas.

Binary Opposition between *Kampung* and *Rantau* in the Novel *Warisan*

As in previous novels, the opposition between *kampung* and *rantau* in the novel *Warisan* by Chairul Harun functions as a semantic field that delineates the relationship between the Minangkabau world and the outside Minangkabau. In this novel, *kampung* is presented as a traditional world, whereas *rantau* is depicted as a modern. In the novel *Warisan*, *kampung* is presented as a symbol of the characters' adherence to customs and traditions that have undergone significant change. The lives of people in the *kampung* are described as looking good on the surface, but porous on the inside. In contrast, *rantau* is depicted as a world where the story's protagonists can pursue and enjoy worldly success. From overseas, a new identity is transformed into the village, thereby disrupting the prevailing customs in village.

Rafilus who lives in Jakarta and holds a bachelor's degree, returns to the village with a lifestyle that is incongruent with the customs of the village, having been shaped by the norms of an urban environment. Rafilus, the son of a dashing man and an economically successful overseas individual, can exert considerable influence over the social dynamics of the village. The young widows he encountered in the village were relatively easily influenced. Rafilus treated them as he saw fit, in accordance with the libertine lifestyle he had adopted in Jakarta. He engaged in sexual relations with two young widows, his father's distant niece who was responsible for the upkeep of the household and his father's needs, Farida, and Maimunah, outside of wedlock. Harun writes, “*Farida pergi meninggalkan Rafilus dan Maimunah setelah menerima uang untuk membeli kambing dan keperluan lainnya. Malamnya ia tidak muncul. Ia sudah maklum malam-malam selanjutnya adalah untuk Maimunah, seperti malam-malam yang silam adalah untuk dirinya*” (Harun, 2002, p. 116).

The text corroborates the assertion that Rafilus alternated between satisfying the sexual desires of Farida and Maimunah. Despite the act being considered taboo by the villagers, the two widows complied without any indication of resistance. Furthermore, another woman named Upik Denok, who was also a widow, felt a sense of pride at being introduced to and subsequently engaged in sexual intercourse with Rafilus. Harun writes, “*Upik Denok bersorak dalam hati. Ia mengira laki-laki gagah itu tertarik padanya. Kalau bekas suaminya tukang panjat kelapa itu tahu, alangkah hebatnya. Ia akan menceritakan kejadian itu pada perempuan-perempuan lain*” (Harun, 2002, p. 34).

As for Arneti, the young girl who was his childhood friend, Rafilus was also particularly close to her. “*Merbah bernyanyi di pohon bambu. Angin dari sawah bertiup makin keras. Wajah Arneti makin merunduk*” (Harun, 2002, p. 26). When he was alone with Arneti, Rafilus, as a male representative who grew up in the city of Jakarta with all his urban experiences, could easily find out Arneti's secrets as an experienced girl in bed. Rafilus said, “*Ketika kita saling berciuman, pada saat aku baru tiba, aku sudah punya kesan kau sangat berpengalaman. Sebagai laki-laki yang hidup di Jakarta, aku juga berpengalaman. Malah aku pernah berpendirian bahwa aku tidak perlu kawin*” (Harun, 2002, p. 73). What Rafilus said shows that he honestly recognition himself as a man who has been dragged into the free life in Jakarta.

The adverse experience that befell Rafilus was also endured by Arneti. When Arneti continued her higher education in Padang, Arneti was subjected to the corrupting influence of the city's society. Arneti, who in the village was often proud of her status as a girl from a wealthy and respectable family, was unable to resist the promiscuity of the city of Padang, which resulted in her losing her virginity.

The glamour of life became her lifestyle, and this led to her downfall. Her promiscuity in the city had a deleterious effect on her future among the villagers. Consequently, upon Rafilus's arrival in the village to visit his ailing father, Arneti perceived this as an opportunity to disguise her disgrace before the villagers by requesting Rafilus's assistance.

With her persuasion and coquetry, Arneti begged Rafilus to marry her officially. When the marriage proceeds, her status as a bad woman would be salvaged within the community. Arneti and her family were prepared to offer Rafilus a substantial financial reward in accordance with the prevailing custom of the village. The marriage that Arneti desired was ultimately consummated as a gesture of empathy from Rafilus to his childhood friend. However, on the day of the wedding, Rafilus became the bride who "*lari malam*." Rafilus left Arneti, who was absorbed in her party, moments before their first night. Rafilus departed from the party venue via the rear exit, as though he were merely relieving himself. The first night for Arneti is then given by Rafilus to Farida who accompanies him on his night run from the party at Arneti's house (Harun, [2002](#), pp. 99–100).

Thus, the behavior of Rafilus and Arneti, as representations of men and women contaminated by life abroad, and Farida, Maimunnah and Upik Denok, as representations of village women, really show that something tragic has happened to Minangkabau society. This representation is a form of deviation from social norms, customs and traditions in a society that still seems to honor these values.

Rafilus and the other characters mentioned above, as representations of Minangkabau society in the novel *Warisan*, have deviated from the social norms that characterize the local community. Rafilus not only deviates morally but has also abandoned religious values. When his father Bagindo Tahar dies, Rafilus is unable to pray for him because he has forgotten how to recite the prayer. Rafilus has not practiced prayer since he finished junior high school (Harun, [2002](#), p. 112). This means that Rafilus has not fulfilled his obligations as a Muslim for a long time, even though he still has this religion status as a Muslim.

In the world conception of Minangkabau people in the village, a person who does not perform prayers and other religious practices is labelled as an infidel, the subject of word-of-mouth gossip. This view may be different from that of overseas (*rantau*) people, especially those who have been dragged into the world of liberalism, where missing prayers and other religious practices is a normal thing. What is represented by Rafilus and the other characters in the novel *Warisan* is the tragic worlds by the Minangkabau community that originate from overseas and end up in the village. Here the world of overseas as a place to seek life and the village as a place to return become two tragic worlds. The people in these two worlds have been uprooted from the roots of tradition and basic values that are characteristic of the Minangkabau people.

Binary Opposition between *Kampung* and *Rantau* in the Novel *Bako*

First, it needs to be stated that the binary opposition between *kampung* and *rantau* in the novel *Bako* by Darman Moenir is equivalent to the opposition between village and city. The village (*kampung*) referred to in the novel *Bako* refers to the area of origin known as *darek*. *Darek* is the centre of the Minangkabau and includes *Luhak Nan Tigo* (Luhak Agam, Tanah Datar and Lima Puluh Kota). In this novel, the village of the character Ayah Aku is located at the waist of Mount Marapi near Padang Panjang. This village is part of the Luhak Tanah Datar. Meanwhile, what is meant by *rantau* in *Bako*'s novel is the extension of the Minangkabau *darek* area to the west coast of West Sumatra. The overseas area in question includes not only the city of P, which is called the coastal area, but also the eastern part of the R area, where Ayah Aku was first assigned as a teacher.

In *Bako*'s novel, *kampung* and *rantau* are opposed as two worlds that greatly influence the lives of the characters. The character of Ayah Aku, who comes from *darek*, migrates to the city of P to continue his studies. While in the P overseas, Ayah Aku is influenced by the promiscuity there. Ayah

Aku was forced to marry a widowed woman from the beach. His marriage to the widow was very problematic because it was against the customs of his village. In Ayah Aku's village, it was considered taboo for a man to marry a girl from overseas. Ayah Aku's marriage was even more problematic because after the wedding, Ayah Aku took his wife back to his hometown to live with his extended family.

What Ayah Aku did was taboo, something that is not common in the Minangkabau region. A man who marries a woman who is not from the same village is breaking the custom like “smearing charcoal on his forehead” (*mencorengkan arang di kening*). This is especially true if the man brings the overseas woman who has become his wife to the house of his extended family in the village. These two things are faults that cannot be accepted by the villagers, which then have major implications for Ayah Aku's marriage, as well as for the existence of Aku's character. Moenir writes,

Kemudian dari nenek aku mengetahui, perempuan yang dicintai dan kemudian disuntingnya bukanlah seorang gadis. Dan ini ia lakukan setelah menghadang dan menembus keketakan adat yang tidak mengenal maaf di kawasan M.

Tidak beristri dengan perempuan sekampung jelas merupakan suatu cacat cela yang digunjingkan berkepanjangan oleh orang kampung. Tidak dapat tidak! Dan ia berani menanggung risiko itu.

Dan seperti kakekku, ia pun menikah dengan perempuan yang bukan orang kampungnya. Dan anak-anaknya, seperti juga anak-anak kakekku, tidak diterima kehadiran mereka sebagai yang asli di kampung itu. Begitulah asas dalam keluarga yang menjalankan sistem matrilineal.

Dengan demikian, sebenarnya aku adalah seorang anak pantai. Walaupun bagaimana aku berkaok-kaok (sic!), bahwa aku adalah anak yang berasal dari pinggang gunung Merapi, pada kenyataannya bukan (Moenir, 1994, pp. 4-5).

The above quotation illustrates that Aku, who was born and raised in the village (in the *bako* house) by a mother who came from the coastal area (*rantau*), was in fact not accepted as an indigenous person in Ayah Aku's village. I was still considered a coastal child according to my mother's origins. More tragically, I was considered a child who did not have a clear *mamak* and *ranji*. “*Aku tidak mempunyai harta pusaka, tidak mempunyai mamak dan ranji yang jelas. Aku mungkin saja bisa diperhitungkan sebagai yang tidak mempunyai adat*” (Moenir, 1994, p. 90). The action that Ayah Aku had done was an oddity that became the gossip of the villagers all the time. Something they could not take for granted. In the future, Ayah Aku, who dared to take the risk, would have to face the fact that his wife and children would still be considered strangers in his village. This condition shook the psychology of his wife (Ibu Aku), who had been kept away from her matrilineal environment by Ayah Aku.

Thus, the opposition of *kampung* and *rantau* in Bako's novel emphasizes the unideal marital status of Ayah Aku, a *kampung* (village) man, and his *rantau* (city) wife. The marriage is against custom. The un-ideal status of the marriage is also exacerbated by Ayah Aku's reckless decision to take his wife out of his matrilineal environment and raise his children and wife in his own family environment. “*Adalah amat langka, bahkan tidak ada, seorang suami membawa istri ke rumah orang tuanya. Apalagi kalau sang istri bukan perempuan yang berasal dari kampung itu sendiri*” (Moenir, 1994, p. 7).

This action of Ayah Aku's naturally caused various problems in his family. Among the problems that arose because of Ayah Aku's actions in trying to overcome the rigidity of the customs and traditions of his village was the fact that his wife felt alienated during her husband's extended family and even experienced acute psychological distress. The wife was unable to bear the burden of living in this environment. Thus, the opposition of the *kampung* and the *rantau* in Bako's novel therefore points to two worlds that are difficult to unite.

In addition to the tragic world that Ibu Aku faces as a representation of an overseas/city woman living in her husband's village, the novel *Bako* also depicts the overseas world as a source of problems for Ayah Aku and Aku. The overseas life has changed Ayah Aku and Aku from village men who initially obeyed religion to men who neglected religion. The overseas world has changed Ayah Aku and Aku from being strong believers to neglecting God's commandments. This is because the strong influence of urban liberalism (overseas) ambushes the lives of Ayah Aku and Aku, who come from the village and do not have a strong base of self-defense.

CONCLUSION

From the four novels analyzed, it can be concluded that the overseas world of the Minangkabau people is placed by the author as a source of problems in its oppositional relationship with the village world. The overseas world has degraded the mentality of the story actors into a tragic world model like the world of the disobedient Malin Kundang. In these novels, it is depicted that the life overseas has resulted in the dislocation of the story actors from their cultural roots and traditions.

The characters Tuan Yusuf and Mirna in the novel *PTK* openly blaspheme and curse their home village. They refuse to return to the village, saying that the villagers are conservative and fanatical. Tuan Yusuf and Mirna's attitude is like that of the 'Malin Kundang' who disobeys the village after achieving success and famous overseas. Saraswati's father, mother, brother, and sister in the novel *Saraswati Si Gadis dalam Sunyi* live in Jakarta with a nuclear family pattern where the father is the one in charge of the family, completely negating the role of the *mamak* according to Minangkabau matrilineal custom. The changing role of the *mamak* to the father is a tragic phenomenon in the Minangkabau matrilineal family. Rafilus in the novel *Warisan*, who was raised and became successful overseas, was uprooted from his moral and religious values. Both in the village and in Jakarta, he has free sex and does not practice religious law, which is fundamental to the Minangkabau. Ayah Aku in *Bako's* fell into bad adolescent relationships while living overseas. Similarly, Aku (Man) changed from a strong believer to a Muslim who abandoned religion under the influence of liberalism while studying overseas. Thus, what is reflected by the characters in the four novels studied represents the phenomenon of me(pe)rantau "si Malin Kundang", which is a prototype of the overseas Minangkabau who are 'disobedient' after they succeed overseas. Not only do they turn their backs on their villages and origins, but also disregard their own traditions and customs.

In the four novels discussed, the characters who represent the Minangkabau people make the overseas world everything and the village nothing. For them, economic success represents the pinnacle of achievement. This success, however, leads to blindness to their traditions, customs, and cultural practices. The overseas world in which they reside is situated in a distinct manner in comparison to the village world from which they originate. The overseas cultural environment compels them to abandon the matrilineal extended family structure in favor of the patrilineal nuclear family. In the nuclear family, the role of the father is dominant, while the role of the *mamak* is degraded.

In addition, the overseas world also changes the personalities of the characters from firm believers to wavering believers. The character, who was previously inclined to adhere to religious orders, exhibited a decline in religious observance when he encountered the overseas world. This is a consequence of the pervasive influence of a culture of pragmatism, hedonism, and liberalism on the character. In essence, of the four novels analyzed, Minangkabau authors after PRRI presented the overseas world as a source of problems in opposition to the village world. From this conflict, the tragedies of Minangkabau society are represented through their novels as a social phenomenon that developed after PRRI.

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