

# IMAGINING INDONESIA IN LEILA S. CHUDORI'S *PULANG* AND AGAM WISPI'S *PULANG*: AN INTERTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

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**Abstract.** Menjadi seorang *exile* dan kerinduan akan tanah air adalah tema yang di-ekspose oleh dua penulis yaitu, Agam Wispi dan Leila S. Chudori. Karena alasan politik Agam Wispi harus meninggalkan negara asalnya yaitu Indonesia dan hidup sebagai seorang eksil. Kerinduan akan tanah airnya diungkapkan dalam puisinya yang berjudul *Pulang*. Novel Leila S. Chudori yang berjudul *Pulang*, juga bercerita tentang kehidupan seorang eksil yang bernama Dimas Suryo. Latar belakang *Pulang* dimulai pada tahun 1965 dan berakhir pada tahun 1998. Dimas Suryo, dan rekan-rekannya yang menghadiri konferensi wartawan di Santiago, Chili, pada saat terjadinya peristiwa G 30 S tidak bisa pulang karena paspor mereka dicabut dan mereka tidak bisa kembali ke Indonesia. Pindah dari Cile ke Kuba kemudian ke China, akhirnya berakhir menetap di Paris di mana mereka membuka restoran. Meskipun dipisahkan oleh jarak yang jauh dari tanah air mereka, kerinduan mereka untuk berhubungan dengan Indonesia adalah kunci dari novel tersebut. Tulisan ini mengeksplorasi hubungan intertekstual antara *Pulang* karya Agam Wispi dan *Pulang* karya Leila S. Chudori. Dengan menggunakan teori interteks yang diekspose oleh Roland Barthes dan Riffaterre, makalah ini berupaya untuk melihat bagaimana *Pulang* karya Agam Wispi, seorang penulis eksil Indonesia, memiliki persamaan dan perbedaan dengan *Pulang* karya Leila S. Chudori, seorang penulis wanita Indonesia yang terkenal pada saat ini.

**Keywords:** *intertextuality, exiles*

## INTRODUCTION

Intertextual relationship means the shaping of texts' meanings by other texts. It can refer to an author's borrowing and transformation of a prior text or to a reader's referencing of one text in reading another. The term intertextuality is proposed by Julia Kristeva, drawing on Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of dialogism ("the necessary relation of any utterance to other utterances") to indicate a text's construction from texts: a work is not a self-contained, individually authored whole, but the absorption and transformation of other texts, "a mosaic of quotations" (Kristeva, 1967).

Two literary works that have intertextual relationship are Agam Wispi's *Pulang* and Leila S. Chudori's *Pulang*. Agam Wispi, an Indonesian exile,

was a writer and journalist. He was born in Pangkalan Susu, North Sumatra, December 31, 1930. His fate changed after the month of May 1965, he was invited to Vietnam for several months and had met Ho Chi Minh. His poem entitled *Pulang* expressed his life as an exile living in Amsterdam and the longing for what is lost as well as the desire to preserve cultural memory. A sense of a longing for home characterizes his poem.

Leila S. Chudori's *Pulang* also tells the story of two generations that witnessed political turmoil in Indonesia. Dimas Suryo, an exiled 60s, stuck in Europe and could not return to his homeland because even though he was not directly involved with the Communist Party, but he was dealing with people who were involved in the organization. Though he loved his homeland, he was not welcome back to his

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beloved country. He was married with a French woman, who later had a daughter named Lintang Utara. To complete the final task of her study, Lintang Utara flew to Indonesia to interview the families of political exile. At the same time Indonesia faced financial crisis that lead to political turmoil of 1998. Lintang witnessed the tragedy of reform in May 1998. She also caught up in a family drama and romance between the father and Surti Anandari, and Surti youngest son, Alam.

There are seven narrators in *Pulang*: Hananto Prawiro, Dimas Suryo, Lintang Utara, Vivienne Deveraux, Segara Alam, Bimo Nugroho, and the third person. Except for the last narrator who only used Leila in Section Family Aji Suryo (pp. 329-363), six narrators talk about themselves and those around them personally. The most dominant voices in this novel are Dimas and Lintang. Dimas as the representative of the Indonesian exiles, the generation that relate directly to the event of 1965 and Lintang and Segara Alam represent for the second generation, the generation that is affected by the past and are required to bear the burden of history.

### **Theory of Intertextuality**

In reading a text, one cannot separate what is read from the readers who read. One should not forget that the reader is located within a set of circumstance, be the historical, social, political or cultural, which result in a particular reading process and understanding of what has been read. In the reading of Agam Wispi's *Pulang*, Chudori acts not just as the reader, she is also the interpreter, and whatever comes out of her reading process is the interpretation. Her position in socio historical context becomes a matter of importance. Wolfgang Iser states that "reading is an activity that is guided by the text; this must be processed by the reader, who is then, in turn affected

by what he has processed" (1978:163). As suggested by Iser, reading is thus an asymmetrical process where a "text cannot adapt itself toward each reader with whom it comes in contact (1978:166). It is the reader who should adapt toward the text, for it is the reader who moves, while the text stays the same. As reader of Agam Wispi's *Pulang*, Leila S Chudori absorbs the printed material, appropriates and transforms it into new ideas, and into new writings.

Michael Riffaterre defines intertextuality as the reader's perception of the relations between a text and all the other texts that have preceded or followed it. He states that all texts are transformations of small units of meaning, the hypogram is the series of basic units upon which the text is built: 'The *hypogram* may be made out of clichés, or it may be a quotation from another text, or a *descriptive system*' (1978:63-4). Furthermore, hypogram is 'the text imagined in its pre-transformational state' (Riffaterre 1978:63).

Roland Barthes (1915-1980), social and literary critic and theorist makes use of intertextual theory. He proclaims the "death of the Author", and views this situation as a liberation for readers. For him authors cannot be held responsible for the multiple meanings readers discover within literary texts because the intertextual nature of literary works always leads readers on to new textual relations. He believes that all literary productions take place in the presence of other texts, and only through intertextuality are texts allowed to come into being:

"Any text is a new tissue of past citations. Bits of code, formulae, rhythmic models, fragments of social languages, etc., pass into the text and are redistributed within it, for there is always language before and around the text.

Intertextuality, the condition of any text whatsoever, cannot, of course, be reduced to a problem of sources or influences; the intertext is a general field of anonymous formulae whose origin can scarcely ever be located; of unconscious or automatic quotations, given without quotation marks” (Barthes, 1981:39).

Writing is always an iteration which foregrounds the trace of the various texts in both knowing and unknowing places. It is important to note that these elements of intertextuality need not be simply “literary.” One also has to take into account of historical and social determinants which, she herself, transforms and change literary practices. Moreover, a text is constituted only in the moment of its reading. The reader’s own previous readings, experiences and position within the cultural formation also form crucial connections, and open new doors to intertextuality.

Barthes emphasizes the role of the reader in the production of meaning, and he distinguishes two types of readers: on the one hand, “consumers” who read the work for stable meaning, and on the other hand, readers who are productive in their reading, which he called “writers of the text”. The readers that engage themselves in the second kind of reading are, in Barthes words, doing “textual analysis,” in contrast with the more traditional “criticism.” This practice of reading, seen as re-writing, is at the basis of Barthes theory of intertextuality. (*Ibid*: 62).

Barthes suggests that the meaning of the author’s words does not originate from:

the author’s own unique consciousness, but from the place of those words within linguistic and

cultural systems. The author has the role of a compiler, or arranger, of pre-existent possibilities within the language system. Each word, sentence, paragraph or whole text that the author produces takes its origins from the language system out of which it has been produced. Thus, the meanings are expressed in terms of the same system. The view of language expressed by Barthes in this way is what theorists have stated intertextual. (Allen, 2000:79-84).

### C. Discussion

#### 1. Titular Intertextuality in Agam Wispi’s *Pulang* and Leila S Chudori’s *Pulang*

Titles play important roles since “titles introduce the poem they crown, and at the same time refer to a text outside of it” (Riffaterre, 1978:99). Riffaterre further says that a title is a sign since it is supposed to inform the reader to the text by stating its subject, its genre or its code.

The title invites readers to know more about the content of a book so title has the same issue as the content, just in a more concentrated form in the title’s case. A book’s title is less than a sentence — possibly as little as *one word*, but needs to be memorable, indicates the genre/ tone, gives and intrigues the reader. As Lodge said that title as part of the text, “has considerable power to attract and condition the reader’s attention” (1992:193). Since the purpose is to attract the readers, a title should be unique enough to make the first page.

Agam Wispi’s poem entitled *Pulang* and Leila Chudori’s *Pulang* have similarities in title and theme. Both express the life of Indonesian exiles. Their identities as exiles are created through the articulation of loss. Both share a sense of not belonging

to the nation one is exiled to and a longing for home.

In the first stanza Agam Wispi expresses his longing for the homeland, as well as expressing his fears that his presence would not be known and familiar to many people.

*Di mana kau  
Pohonku hijau?  
Di sini aku  
Sudah jadi batu*

His loneliness living in a foreign country and his love for his homeland dominate the themes that he exposed in this poem. At the end of the poem he gave up because of the reality. He decided not to set foot in his homeland because he realized that his homeland has changed a lot. His decision to remain an exile shows in his last stanza.

*Puisi, hanya kaulah lagi  
tempatku pulang  
Puisi, hanya kaulah lagi  
pacarku terbang  
Puisi generasi baru bijak bestari  
menerjang  
Keras bagai granit cintanya laut  
menggelombang  
Di mana kau  
Pohonku hijau?  
Dalam puisimu, wahai perantau  
Dalam cintamu jauh di pulau*

*Pulang* is Leila S. Chudori's novel published in 2012. The title is derived from Wispi's *Pulang* (1996). Sets in 1965 to 1998, in *Pulang* Chudori plays important role in transferring the message of Wispi's *Pulang*. She constructs meaning by using ready-made shared codes and conventions. She activates the text in the present moment. Therefore, Chudori's *Pulang* is the echo of Wispi's *Pulang*.

## 2. Hypogram

The hypogram in these two literary works is the word "Pulang". Chudori's *Pulang* is the receptive text of Wispi's *Pulang*. From its narration, it is a story telling about the life of Indonesia exiles living in European cities: Amsterdam and Paris. Chudori's *Pulang* is a receptive as well as an adaptation text written by Agam Wispi. Before Chudori's text was created, Wispi's text was received by the text entitled *Pulang*. As the titles of these two literary works are same, it is an evidence that Chudori's *Pulang* has received the text of *Pulang* written by Agam Wispi. So Agam Wispi's *Pulang* serves as the hypogram text.

The other evidence can also be seen in the individual responding text which shows similarity in the way in which the stories are narrated as in the hypogram text. This means that the text of Chudori's *Pulang* responds well to the hypogram text written by Agam Wispi. The receptive process of the text of *Pulang* written by Chudori is only taken place in the levels of variants and version. With regard to the variants, during the receptive process, there are some differences in the hypogram text written by Agam Wispi, and the responding text written by Leila S. Chudori. With regard to the version, additional narration was added to the end of the responding text.

## 3. Re-writing and Re-contextualizing *Pulang*

As Roland Barthes argues, "A text is ... a multidimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations. ... The writer can only imitate a gesture that is always anterior, never original. His only power is to mix writings, to counter the ones with the others, in such a way as never to rest on any one of them" (1975:146). Reading may be the earliest

form of intertextuality that readers encounter, to be familiar enough with “prior” texts that readers can appreciate the ways references to them reappear in other texts, allowing them to understand, for instance, the message of the author.

Unlike in Agam Wispi’s *Pulang*, Leila S Chudori’s *Pulang* does not just tell the life of Indonesian exile, but his family as well. The next difference between Wispi’s *Pulang* and Chudori’s *Pulang* is setting. As stated by Barthes (image 160) and Michael Riffaterre (1984:142-143), that intertextuality replaces the challenged author-text relationships with one between reader and text. As the reader of Wispi’s *Pulang*, Chudori created *Pulang* after she read his work. She repeats and echoes other text. Chudori’s *Pulang* can no longer be considered original, it would be only as a text in a form of re-contextualizing and re-writing. In Chudori’s *Pulang* the setting is between 1965 to 1998. As intertextuality offers a return to the past which means intertextuality offers a sense of the presence of the past which can only be known from its texts (Assem, 1992:166), setting of time is the important part of the discussion. Through the setting of time, the readers can recognize the social and cultural backgrounds that influence the creation of literary work. Chudori’s *Pulang* also displays the members of Dimas Suryo family that support him and rehabilitate his name. Dimas Suryo could return to his homeland and be buried in the Karet cemetery while in Agam Wispi’s *Pulang*, buried in the Karet cemetery remains only a dream that never come true. Through Chudori’s *Pulang* the readers recognize the meaning and significance of Wispi’s *Pulang*

### **Conclusion**

Barthes has said that all texts are potentially plural and that they cannot be

considered singular objects. What has been clear from the discussion is that Chudori’s *Pulang* implicitly and explicitly refers to Wispi’s *Pulang*.

The connections that Chudori established between *Pulang* and Wispi’s *Pulang* should be analyzed in order to discover their connotations. The writer argues that Chudori’s *Pulang* is a pastiche of Wispi’s *Pulang* in the sense that Chudori has taken the elements from Wispi’s *Pulang* and reconstructed them. Chudori’s *Pulang* has made new connections and has added new elements to the original one. On one hand, Chudori’s *Pulang* has made a faithful imitation, while on the other hand, the pastiche is more subconscious, since Chudori’s *Pulang* incorporated other texts and influenced into this new text.

Through the analysis, it can be stated that there are connections between Chudori’s *Pulang* and Wispi’s *Pulang*. Chudori’s *Pulang* reconstructs Wispi’s *Pulang*. Chudori underscores her points of view and elaborates on possible situations that Agam Wispi could not make happen. Rather than deconstructs his work, she enhances it and thereby encourages readers to also read Agam Wispi’s *Pulang*.

The differences in setting in these two literary works can be ascribed to the different time and place these works were written in and the subsequent differences in attitude the events are interpreted with. For all readers decode the texts differently, depending on their personal and literary backgrounds. Chudori elaborates on Wispi’s *Pulang* instead of replacing it. For it is almost impossible to appreciate Chudori’s *Pulang* to the fullest extent if one has not read Wispi’s *Pulang*. And this is why she considers the relationship among these two works to be continuous.

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