

ABSTRACT

MY Ami Priwardhani, 2006. **The Body, Art and Male-Female Relationship: A Reading on the Socio-political Context in Kundera's *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* and *Life is Elsewhere***. Yogyakarta: Department of English Letter, Sanata Dharma University

Milan Kundera is a Czechoslovakia-born writer whose life history is closely entangled with the country's political upheaval. Written in different time and represented different period of Czechoslovakia's history, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* and *Life is Elsewhere* are his two novels which represent the author's experience. Both novels, however, share some similarities and differences in the discussion on the body, arts and male-female relationship according to their male and female characters' perspectives.

There are three objectives suggested by this study. The first is to find out the portrayal of female characters through their perspective of the body, arts and male-female relationships. The second is to examine the portrayal of the male characters through the body, arts and male-female relationship. The third is to contextualize those portrayals with the author's socio-political background.

This study applies intertextuality as its approach. This approach suggests that the author's depiction on his characters through the body, arts and male-female relationship can be understood by looking at the other text, namely his socio-political background.

There are many result findings in this study. Some of the female characters deny the body and some of them celebrate it. In terms of arts, some of them escape the reality, yet all of them rebel the authority. In terms of male-female relationship, the majority of female characters are depicted as romantic, though there is one who is free. The male characters are depicted as obsessed to female body, yet at the same time they fear it. Yet, there is different attitude on female body. Some of them think that the body should be possessed as a trophy of manhood, while the other frees the body. In terms of arts, the male characters tend to pursue imagined reality. Next, in terms of male-female relationship, the male characters are self-centered. They, however, have different attitude about sex and love. One thinks that sex does not have something to do with love, while the others think the contrary. This type of characterization represents the author's socio-political background. It is implied by the pattern of disharmony between characters which shows the author's criticism to the communist regime in the country. The regime imposes the sameness in attitude and absolute obedience to the state. The deep exploration of each character also shows how complex human being is, which cannot be simplified by single interpretation. The author's characterization also shows that every character in both novels is the representation of historical situation.

ABSTRAK

MY Ami Priwardhani, 2006. **The Body, Art and Male-Female Relationship: A Reading on The Socio-political Context in Milan Kundera's *The Unbearable Lightness of Being and Life is Elsewhere***. Yogyakarta: Jurusan Sastra Inggris, Universitas Sanata Dharma.

Milan Kundera adalah seorang pengarang yang lahir di Cekoslowakia. Karyanya berkaitan erat dengan kondisi sosio-politik di negara asalnya. *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* dan *Life is Elsewhere* ditulis dalam kurun waktu berbeda dan bercerita tentang kurun sejarah yang berbeda pula. Meski demikian, ada beberapa persamaan dan perbedaan dalam kedua novel tersebut, yakni penggambaran soal tubuh, seni dan relasi laki-laki – perempuan yang diartikulasikan lewat tokoh-tokoh dalam dua novel tersebut.

Studi ini bertujuan untuk, pertama, mengetahui bagaimana penggambaran karakter perempuan lewat persepsi mereka tentang tubuh, seni dan relasi laki-laki – perempuan. Kedua, mengetahui bagaimana penggambaran tokoh laki-laki lewat persepsi mereka tentang tubuh, seni dan relasi laki-laki- perempuan. Ketiga, untuk mengetahui bagaimana penggambaran-penggambaran itu terkait dengan konteks sosio-politik pengarangnya.

Studi ini menggunakan pendekatan intertekstualitas. Pendekatan ini melihat bahwa penggambaran para tokoh tentang tubuh, seni dan relasi laki-laki – perempuan dapat dipahami dengan cara melihat ‘teks’ lain, yaitu konteks sosio-politik pengarangnya.

Ada beberapa poin penting yang ditemukan lewat studi ini. Beberapa tokoh perempuan menolak tubuh mereka dan beberapa merayakannya. Sebagian tokoh perempuan menggunakan seni untuk melarikan diri dari kenyataan hidup mereka, namun semua tokoh perempuan juga menggunakan seni sebagai medium pemberontakan terhadap tatanan masyarakatnya. Dalam hal relasi laki-laki – perempuan, sebagian dari mereka sangat romantik dan cenderung terikat dengan pasangan hidup mereka. Namun ada juga yang bebas. Tokoh laki-laki digambarkan terobsesi atas tubuh perempuan. Akan tetapi, pada saat yang sama, mereka takut akan tubuh perempuan. Tokoh laki-laki cenderung menggunakan seni untuk mengejar realitas imajiner. Soal relasi-laki-laki – perempuan, tokoh laki-laki digambarkan punya persamaan: mereka cenderung egois. Tetapi ada perbedaan dalam memandang seks dan cinta: sebagian menganggap seks ada karena cinta, sebagian beranggapan sebaliknya. Pola penokohan semacam ini jelas menggambarkan konteks sosio-politik

pengarangnya. Ketidakcocokan pendapat antar tokoh-tokoh dalam dua novel ini menggambarkan kritik pengarang atas situasi di Ceko pada waktu itu. Rejim komunis di negara itu memaksakan sikap patuh dan keseragaman pendapat pada warganya. Penokohan yang dalam juga menggambarkan betapa kompleks manusia sebenarnya. Kompleksitas itu tidak bisa disederhanakan hanya dengan interpretasi tunggal. Para tokoh juga digambarkan sebagai sebuah representasi situasi sejarah pada masa itu.