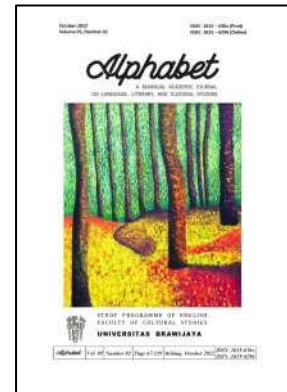


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Treatment of Gender in *The Knight's Tale*, *Pararaton*, and *Arok of Java*

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Abstract

This article compares the representations of gender dynamics in a medieval English tale, Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Knight's Tale*, an Indonesian translation of *Paraton*, a medieval Javanese text, and its twenty-first century Indonesian adaptation, Pramoedya Ananta Toer's *Arok Dedes*, which is translated in English as *Arok of Java: A Novel of Early Indonesia*. The feminist reading of the three texts aims to analyze the treatment of gender in patriarchal society in medieval and modern eras, both in Western and Eastern culture, to show the social constancy and variety of patriarchy that positions women as the Other. The two medieval literary works share similar assigned gender roles that position women in a more passive and submissive stand amidst political upheaval and power struggles. *Arok of Java* challenges such representation and gives more agency to the female characters. However, those three literary works show how patriarchy lingers across space and time that makes female agency and women's power almost possible, albeit hard to maintain.

Keywords: gender; patriarchy; the Subject; the Other; agency; gaze

Women in different parts of the world have shared similar opportunities with men, yet gender inequality has not completely ceased to be local, national, and global issues. Fighting for equal opportunities in terms of gender is still part of ongoing struggles in patriarchal societies. A feminist reading of three literary works from different eras and different culture exemplifies such struggles. This article compares an English medieval text, Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Knight's Tale* (from his canonical work, *the Canterbury Tales*) and a Javanese medieval text *Pararaton* in its twenty-first century adaptation written by Pramoedya Ananta Toer, *Arok of Java: A Novel of Early Indonesia* (originally written in Indonesian, titled *Arok Dedes*). These three texts portray gender dynamics in patriarchal societies. In

The Second Sex (originally published in French in 1948), Simone de Beauvoir observes that women's position is integrated around the question, "What is woman?" The initial answer puts man and woman in a binary opposition; woman is defined as not a man: "She is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her; she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the Subject; he is the Absolute – she is the Other" (Beauvoir, 1972). The main argument of Beauvoir's book is the notion of woman as the Other. Man sets himself up as the standard, the One, which consequently puts the woman as the Other. Woman is consistently defined as the other by man who takes on the role of the Self. In patriarchal societies, women are often forced

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into an oppressed position and unequal relationship with men through her relegation to being man's Other. Beauvoir also distinguishes sex from gender: "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman" (Beauvoir, 1972). Woman gradually acquires her gender, an aspect of her identity, through a socially constructed experience. In her book, Beauvoir examines women from their own lived experience perspective. Living in male dominated world, woman is forced to accept man's imposition upon her. Beauvoir rejects the notion that women are born "feminine," believing that women are constructed to be feminine through social indoctrination. Women are forced to give up their claims to transcendence and authentic subjectivity. They are severely made to accept their "passive" and "alienated" role to man's "active" and "subjective" demands. Such gender dynamics flourish in a patriarchal society where the power relations are defined by male domination.

In her book, *Sexual Politics*, a landmark feminist critique, Kate Millett claims: "While patriarchy as an institution is a social constant so deeply entrenched as to run through all other political, social, or economic forms, whether of caste or class, feudality or bureaucracy, just as it pervades all major religions, it also exhibits great variety in history and locale" (Millett, 2016). In comparing and contrasting *The Knight's Tale*, *Pararaton*, and *Arok of Java*, this article aims to analyze the treatment of gender in patriarchal society, both in Western and Eastern culture in two distinct periods: medieval and modern eras, to show such social constancy and variety of patriarchy that positions women as the Other.

Patriarchy as an ideology and as an institution is as old as time, so it is not surprising that literary texts from the medieval period are imbued with such doctrine. Many critics generally agree to position Geoffrey Chaucer as a patriarchal figure in medieval English lit-

erature. Analyzing Chaucer's canonical work, *The Canterbury Tales* (an assortment of twenty-four stories, one of which is *The Knight's Tale*), as a romance, Roberta Magnani and Liz Herbert McAvoy argue: "the brutal erasure of the feminine is an integral part of the genre and the patriarchal autocratic ideologies it reproduces" (Magnani & McAvoy, 2020). Similarly, in what he calls "the tradition of stories that idealized male friendship and brotherhood" (Stretter, 2003), Robert Stretter compares two English medieval texts, Chaucer's *The Knight's Tale* and Lydgate's *Fabula Duorum Mercatorum*. He points out a different aspect of woman's position as the second sex: "these tales establish a world of intermasculine priorities, firmly relegating relationships with women to a place of secondary importance" (Stretter, 2003). The Javanese *Pararaton*, undeniably, also places woman as an accessory in the male power relations. In her analysis of Pramodya Ananta Toer's novel, *Arok Dedes*, as "an adaptation of an epic tradition as an example of socialist-realist prose," Annette Damayanti Lienau (2012) argues on Toer's use of the casteless language that enables the low-caste Arok to become the positive hero of the novel. Purwantini, Kusumayanti, and Sudaryani read *Arok Dedes* as an Indonesian political novel, a criticism to the Old and the New Orders, and the focus accordingly is on the political battle between the two male rulers in the novel. Acknowledging the critics on *The Knight's Tale* and *Arok Dedes*, this article brings the three texts together to analyze their representation of gender dynamics in patriarchal societies.

Set in Athens and Thebes, Chaucer's *The Knight's Tale* (c. 1400) starts with Duke Theseus of Athens on his way home.² He has conquered the land of the Amazons and has taken their queen, Ypolita, as his wife and brings her to Athens. The story of Ken Arok in the medieval Javanese (of Indonesia) text *Pararaton* (c. 1400) would not proceed if the Governor of Tumapel, Tunggal Ametung did

² References to *The Knight's Tale* in this essay is taken from Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Riverside Chaucer* published by Oxford University Press

not kidnap Ken Dedes and force to wed her.³ Written in two different continents with different cultures, both medieval texts are part of *foundation* tales, supposedly historical tales which politically rationalize the existence of a nation or state⁴. Both stories of the founding of a state/kingdom feature the forcible removal or kidnapping of an important woman, who probably represents the sovereignty of the conquered state or the new founded one. In the twentieth century adaptation of the Javanese text, Pramoedya Ananta Toer's *Arok of Java*, Dedes learns that being Lady Consort of Tumapel allows her to exercise power. Is the treatment of gender in a medieval English text different from that of its Javanese counterpart? Does the treatment of gender roles change when the Javanese story is modernized by the 1995 winner of the Ramon Mag-saysay Award for Journalism, Literature, and Creative Communication Arts into a tale of palace politics, conspiracy, and revolution? It would not be surprising to find both medieval myths to be patriarchal, yet they provide an interesting ground to compare with the recent version of the Javanese myth in Toer's *Arok of Java*. In *Arok of Java*, Dedes is given more feminine agency and active roles both in her relationship with men and in the political conspiracies of the first *coup d'état* in Indonesian history, but the story also represents the notion that patriarchy lingers across space and time that makes female agency and women's power almost possible yet hard to maintain.

GENDER AT PLAY

The Knight's Tale exemplifies women occupying the position of the Subject in their community of women, but men rip them off

such a position and force them to become the Other. As we start reading the first tale of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tale*, we immediately witness the triumph of men over women as Duke Theseus, after conquering so many powerful countries, is riding home to Athens with her newlywed wife and her sister. The victorious Duke is pictured in his grandeur as "That gretter was ther noon under the sonne" (Chaucer, 2008). His latest greatest victory is the conquest of the land of the Amazons which brings him the prize of a wife, the Queen Ypolita.

*He conquered al the regne of Femenye,
That whilom was ycleped Scithia,
And weddede the queene Ypolita,
And broghte hire hoom with hym in his contree
With muchel glorie and greet solempnytee,
And eek hir yonge suster Emehye.*

(Chaucer, 2008)

None of the many countries that Theseus has conquered is mentioned but one: "al the regne of Femenye" (Chaucer, 2008). It is important to mention the Amazons because it is a race of single women warriors. Women are not supposed to have control over their own lives, so men must tame them. Taking their leader as a wife after conquering the female warriors, Theseus has just exerted cruelty to win a bride. The wedding ceremony and festivity are great, but the emphasis is on the glory of the conquest. There is no hint of Theseus' love or erotic passion. Ypolita is simply the war prize. The account of the conquest is given in six lines quoted below:

*How wonnen was the regne of Femenye
By Theseus and by his chivalry;
And of the grete bataille for the nones*

³ Pararaton or Book of Kings narrates the genealogy of the Kings of Singasari and Majapahit Kingdoms in Java, Indonesia. Ken Arok is the first ruler of the Singasari Kingdom and founder of Rajasa dynasty (founded in 1222 CE) of both the Singasari and Majapahit line of monarchs. Pararaton is believed to be written shortly after 1481 CE and was studied and translated for the first time into Dutch by a Dutch scholar J.L.A. Brandes in 1897. This essay refers to the Indonesian translation of Pararaton by R. Pitono Hardjowardojo

⁴ The ancient Greek city of Athens is believed to exist between the 11 and 7 BC. Modern city of Athens is the capital city of Greece. Tumapel was a district under the Kingdom of Kediri whose downfall in the 13th century marked the beginning of Singasari Kingdom, the dominant kingdom in Java. Tumapel is now the city of Malang in East Java, Indonesia

*Bitwixen Atthenes and Amazones;
And how asseged was Ypolita,
The faire, hardy queene of Scithia;*
(Chaucer, 2008)

It is unlikely that Ypolita has erotic fascination towards Theseus either. Ypolita must have fought ferociously to defend her race in the so called “the grete bataille” between the supposedly all male Athenians and the female warriors of Amazons. The war is necessary so that Theseus can show his chivalry before he can finally defeat the Queen of Scithia. To prevent “The faire, hardy queene of Scithia” from re-exercising her power in “the regne of Femenye”, Theseus removes her from her homeland and brings her to Athens, “And broghte hire hoom with hym in his contree” (Chaucer, 2008). The removal is necessary for Ypolita to remain tamed. Theseus needs to also “kidnap” Emelye because she is the sister of the leader of the Amazons. The blood of a warrior and leader runs in her vein, and it is highly probable for Emelye to resume her sister’s position when opportunities occur. Theseus will not let that happen. He needs to make sure that his elimination of the feminine is long lasting.

In *Pararaton*, Ken Dedes is kidnapped from her father’s house and forced into marriage by the Governor of Tumapel, Tunggul Ametung. The forcible removal of Ken Dedes is necessary for the story to progress as it is in the palace garden of Tumapel that Ken Arok initially sees her. One day, Ken Arok, who happens to be working for Tunggul Ametung, catches a glimpse of Ken Dedes’ glowing private area when her clothes are accidentally parted as she gets off the royal carriage. A woman’s glowing private part signifies the divine quality, and whomever marries her will be a great king. Learning from his Brahmin teacher about the importance of such a woman, Ken Arok decides to kill Tunggul Ametung. Afterwards Ken Arok marries Ken Dedes and becomes the ruler of Tumapel and subsequently founds the new Kingdom of Singsari. Ken Arok’s rising power is believed to be the result of his wife’s divine quality.

Had Ken Dedes not been removed from her original place to the center of power, Ken Arok might not have become a king at the first place.

Ypolita’s power is taken by being removed from her homeland, and forced removal of Ken Dedes is the prerequisite of her husband’s power, but Dedes in Toer’s *Arok of Java* has the chance to experience power in her new place. Initially lamenting her destiny of being taken away from her father and forced to marry a middle-aged man, Dedes eventually earns the advantage of her position as Lady Consort.

She smiled with satisfaction at the reality of her power as Lady Consort. She stood in the middle of the pavilion. In her heart she gave thanks to the Lord God. This power was beautiful and to be savored. She would never let go of it and she would make it a fortress for herself and against all sadness and turmoil of the heart (Toer, 2007).

What we see in *Arok of Java* is a woman who learns to exercise her feminine agency. The question is whether the men in the narrative let her do that.

WOMEN’S PLACE IN MEN’S WORLD

There is an immediate need in *The Knight’s Tale* to show men’s chivalry and victory. On his way home Theseus encounters a group of ladies who lament their dead husbands because Creon of Thebes does not allow them to bury the deceased. Out of chivalry, Theseus conquers Thebes, kills Creon, but spares the lives of two Theban young knights, Palamon and Arcites, whom he holds as prisoners. Of the scene, Michael Murphy (n.d.) gives the following comment:

So the conquering hero turns around, starts and finishes another widow-making war, so that even more widows can now live happily ever after, manless like Amazons. The act is at once his homecoming gift to his bride, the manned and tamed Amazon, Hippolyta, who proceeds obediently and placidly to Athens; and at the

same time his sacrifice to the minotaur, War (Murphy, n.d.).

The comment sarcastically points out to the necessity to show men's superiority. It is vulnerable being women. To help women who have lost their men, Theseus creates more hopeless and helpless women without their men. A race of self-sufficient and self-willed female warriors is not deemed natural, so the race must be eliminated and its queen is to be domesticated. Never again would we see "the faire, hardy queene of Scithia" exercises her courageous combatant acts for the rest of the story.

The other Amazon warrior, Emelye is also not given feminine agency. ,Going for her usual garden visit, and being caught in sight by Paloman and Arcite, Emelye causes them to be smitten in love. The young knights are the subjects of love while Emelye does not even have the slightest idea of what she has done to them (in fact she does not do anything). William George Dodd (1913) notes three changes that make Chaucer's Emelye different from Boccaccio's Emelia. Emelia hears Palamon's exclaim "Alas," looks to the window, and blushes.

Although she was a young girl, too young, indeed, for Love to claim, still she understood what the "Alas" meant; and she was pleased with herself and counted herself beautiful. Therefore, she adorned herself the more when she returned to the garden... And she continued to go, always keeping her eyes on the window (Dodd, 1913).

Emelia is given voice on what she thinks while witnessing the tournament and at the death scene of Arcite. Emelia also mildly protests in accepting Theseus' command to marry Palamon. Chaucer omits all of those. In crafting those changes, Chaucer, according to Dodd, "has accomplished in a much more effective manner his purpose of showing the conflict between the love and friendship of Palamon and Arcite" (Dodd, 1913). In Dodd's opinion, by making Emelye characterless, Chaucer succeeds in directing readers'

attention to the cousins. This perspective shows that female characters occupy only marginal positions in the narrative. Comparing Chaucer's, *The Knight's Tale* with Boccaccio's *Troilus and Criseyde*, A.C. Spearing (1999) concludes:

Chaucer's Athens and Thebes are structured by male bonding, and the crucial emotional relation is the comradeship between the Theban blood-brothers Palamon and Arcite. The position occupied by women are emotionally as well as politically subordinate, and women's chief function is to be objects of rivalry and exchange among men and thus to mediate men's feelings toward each other (Spearing, 1999).

Therefore, even though Emelye expresses her wish "A mayde, and love huntynge and venerye/And for to walken in the wodes wilde/And noght to ben a wyf and be with childe./ Noght wol I knowe compaignye of man" (Chaucer, 2008) and prays for Diana to grant her wish, she learns that even Gods side with men. Her wish that represents her Amazonian traits need to be repressed. She will have to marry one of the two young knights, Palamon and Arcite, who see her differently. Crocker claims that such "contrasting views of love—Emelye as "goddess" versus Emelye as "woman"— affirm that this tale is about the construction of elite masculinities, and the negotiation of men's power through the bodies of beautiful women" (Crocker 2019). Theseus, the representation of Gods in the world says assertively, "'Suster,' quod he, 'this is my fulle assent,'" (Chaucer, 2008), and Emelye must consent. It is God's will and Emelye should not complain.

The account of Ken Arok and Ken Dedes in *Pararaton* focuses on Ken Arok's being and doing. Ken Arok's parents are said to be peasants. God Brahma, wanting to have sex, rapes Ken Endok on her way to bring food to her husband, Gajahpara, in the field. Brahma forbids Ken Endok to have sex with her newlywed husband as it will contaminate Brahma's son who is then in Ken Endok's womb. Five days later, Gajahpara dies. Afraid of the evil power of her baby, Ken Endok casts him

away to be found by a thief who becomes Ken Arok's first foster parent. Ken Arok grows up to be a brigand and moves from place to place. He always finds new foster parents; some are the Brahmin priests which allows him to be educated. Despite his crime, Gods always protect him as he is destined to be the ruler of Java. Ken Arok's life starts changing when the Indian priest Lohgawe takes him as a foster son and pupil. Lohgawe asks Tunggul Ametung to let Ken Arok work in his palace. It is in the palace garden that Ken Arok sees Ken Dedes for the first time.

Ken Dedes in *Pararaton* occupies the position of the Other; her existence is defined by the man who happens to possess her. Ken Dedes is mentioned for the first time as the beautiful daughter of a Buddhist priest. Three sentences later, she is already kidnapped by Tunggul Ametung, brought to Tumapel, and forced to be Tunggul Ametung's wife. There is no account on how she thinks or feels.

Sedatangnja di Tumapel, Ken Dedes diadjak bersetubuh dengan Tunggul Ametung, sangatalah besar kasih Tunggul Ametung. Ketika Ken Dedes mulai menundjukkan tanda2 hamil, maka bersuka tjitalah Tunggul Ametung, bertjengkerama dengan istrinya di ketaman Boobji, Ken Dedes menaiki sebuah kereta. Setibanya ditaman, Ken Dedes turun dari kereta, kebetulan dengan takdir dewa, terbukalah pahanya, sampai sebagian pusatnja lalu tampak bersinar oleh Ken Angrok ketjantikannya jang murni, tak ada jang menjamai tjantiknja, djatuh tjintalah Ken Angrok tak tahu apa jang diperbuatnja (Hardjowardojo, 1965).

(As they arrived in Tumapel, Tunggul Ametung made love to Ken Dedes, and Tunggul Ametung loved her dearly. When Ken Dedes showed signs of pregnancy, Tunggul Ametung was very happy that he took his wife to garden Boboji for amusement. Ken Dedes was riding a carriage. Arriving at the garden, Ken Dedes was getting off the carriage. It is Gods' willing that her thighs were exposed up to her private part which Ken Arok caught glimpse of it glowing. Ken Arok was captivated by her

incomparable pure beauty. He was falling in love and did not know what to do.)

Ken Dedes exists as an object of desire for men, and she is "transferred" from one man to another without being given any right to consent. The young Ken Arok is a Javanese version of Palamon and Arcite who fall in love with a woman who does not even know that they exist. Luckily, he has a few (wise) men whom he can consult and who show him what to do. A few pages later, he marries Ken Dedes after killing Tunggul Ametung.

Both Ken Dedes and Emelye are totally passive objects of men's gaze and desire. Emelye does not know that the young Theban knights love her until Theseus declares a tournament to decide who should win her. Ken Dedes does not know that Ken Arok falls in love with her until after they get married. *Arok of Java's* Dedes is also the object of Tunggul Ametung's gaze, which results in her being desired and kidnapped. However, Dedes as Lady Consort of Tumapel steals the first gaze from Arok. She has heard about the young Brahmin and is curious to meet him. When Tunggul Ametung accepts Arok who comes with Lohgawe, Dedes is filled with joy to finally see him. "She had to visit the Forbidden Garden to pay homage to Dang Hyang Lohgawe. Dedes gazed upon Arok who was sitting on the ground" (Toer, 2007). With his status and at this situation, Ken Arok is not allowed to look at Lady Consort. The table is turned nevertheless at their second meeting when Arok is invited to a palace meeting.

The Consort alighted from the divan, He was taken by her beauty immediately. The wind blew and her kain lifted a little, revealing her marble smooth thighs. Arok lifted his face and looked upon Dedes. The ekagatra teachings of Tatripala immediately began to work. His eyes shot out wave-like rays to subdue the woman standing before him.

Dedes was rooted to the ground. She bowed her head, feeling the eyes of some god bearing down on her with all his power. She trembled (Toer, 2007).

The gaze now belongs to Arok. It is Dedes' beauty which captivates Arok at the first place. Dedes becomes the passive object of men's gaze. Even in her position as Lady Consort, she does not have the power to return the gaze. However, earlier in the novel, Dedes is shown to start exercising feminine agency despite her feeling hopeless during her first months in Tumapel. Feeling humiliated and guilty for not being able to defend herself, Dedes swears in the name of her father: "Father, your daughter submits for the moment to her fate. But hear my vow: in the end, I will emerge Triumphant" (Toer, 2007). We do not see the same determination in Ypolita or Emelye. Being educated, Dedes quickly learns her surroundings. Her husband is the appointed Governor Tunggul Ametung, an oppressor who must pay tribute to and take order from Kediri Kingdom while also deal with peasants' rebellions. In addition to having several concubines, Tunggul Ametung also keeps slaves. Dedes eventually learns her power as Lady Consort as it is being explained to her:

"It is My Lady who rules here, even over life and death."

Dedes closed her eyes a little and looked at Rimang.

"And the Lord Governor?"

"The Lord Governor does not tend to the Court, My Lady, but to the affairs of the state itself. This is My Lady's domain. My Lady only needs to give the order and it shall be done" (Toer, 2007).

Dedes begins to see that she can change her fate. The virgin blood that spotted the sheets on that first night is the price that she needs to pay for her position as Lady Consort. She no longer regrets it. Her father can only curse and condemn Tunggul Ametung, but she will finally be able to defeat Tunggul Ametung.

In a Javanese-Hindu society, people are categorized into three castes: the Brahmins, consisting of holy men and priests; the Ksatrias, the warrior caste which also include nobles and kings; and the Sudras, which are the lowest caste made up of peasants⁵ (Powell, 1994). The Brahmin and the Ksatria have Hindu blood which separate them from the peasants. The peasants can also be easily recognized from their physical features. Dedes recognizes Arok as a sudra.

She saw immediately that Lohgawe's champion was of pure sudra blood. He had no Hindu blood in him. He had no Hindu blood in him. His cheekbones were high and his nose curved inwards, his mouth was too wide and his face too broad, not too different perhaps from how Tunggul Ametung looked when he was young (Toer, 2007.).

Dedes' priest father has taught her that no single person without Hindu blood has proved himself or herself capable of great things, but Arok is not an ordinary sudra. He has his education from both Buddhist and Hindu priests. His special capacity to learn makes him even more knowledgeable than most Brahmin. However, Arok needs Dedes as a Brahmin and of Hindu blood to legitimize his power. After listening to Arok's description of his meeting with Dedes, Lohgawe says:

"It is only someone such as you who is worthy to possess her. Remember Arok, she is of Hindu blood. If she holds power in Tumapel, it will be looked upon as acceptable, according to all old traditions. And your marriage to her is the only path open to you."

"Does not my teacher place too much hope in me?"

"You are just carrying out the will of Brahman." (Toer, 2007).

⁵ This medieval Javanese-Hindu social segregation is similar to the European medieval social orders which divides the society into the clergy, the nobility and the peasant representing "those who pray, those who fight, and those who work" (see Timothy E Powell's "The 'three orders' of society in Anglo-Saxon England"). All seem to generally refer to men

Unlike Ken Arok in *Pararaton*, Arok in *Arok of Java* is not the son of God Brahma, but he is believed to carry the same fate from the God of creator. Dedes knows that the illiterate Tunggul Ametung fears her, not as a woman but as a Brahmin. Dedes may not know that she is being used as a devise for Arok to gain his power, but she understands that as a Brahmin and Lady Consort, she has choices to make. She chooses to conspire with Arok.

Dedes gains another advantage as a Brahmin and Lady Consort. The sergeants of the Tumapel army create a movement under the leadership of *Empu Gandring*. They are the Ksatria, but Tunggul Ametung treats all his soldiers as sudra. They detest Tunggul Ametung, a sudra who does not respect their better caste. When they see the time is right, they vow loyalty to Dedes: “We of the *Empu Gandring* Movement, My Lady, wish that My Lady Consort wield power over Tumapel” (Toer, 2007). As mentioned earlier, with her Hindu blood and her position as Lady Consort, Dedes is seen to be a more acceptable leader than her husband. They do not know that *Empu Gandring* wishes the throne for himself. They also do not know that their Lady has surrendered her blood to Arok.

Arok of Java challenges the caste system by having a man from the lowest caste manipulates different castes to his advantage. Tunggul Ametung’s army are paid soldiers, so their loyalty is for the person who can buy them. They are not the medieval English knights who swear loyalty to their lord, and Tunggul Ametung is not lord by blood either. Arok knows that there is nothing to learn from those Ksatria as a caste. He has learned knowledge and rational thinking from the Brahmin, who never put the knowledge and rational thinking into actions. Therefore, Arok gathers his army from the peasants, creating rebellions. Combining the power of common people with palace conspiracy, Arok raises a revolution to overthrow the Governor of Tumapel. Arok defies castes. By his capacity and study, he becomes a Brahmin, the highest

caste; by his talent and consistency of struggle and leadership, he arises as a military leader, a ksatria.

In *The Knight’s Tale*, being in love is natural, and the young Palamon and Arcite need to experience the courtly love, but they also need to grow out of it. In the end of the story, Palamon and Emelye – who were initially not willing – love each other in a blissful matrimony. In *Pararaton*, Ken Dedes and Ken Arok are also said to love each other in their happy marriage. However, Dedes in *Arok of Java* experiences problematic love from the very beginning: “Sometimes, Dedes was embarrassed at her own behavior: a woman, somebody’s wife, two months pregnant, and she had fallen in love with a sudra!” (Toer, 2007). *Arok of Java*, unlike *The Knight’s Tale* and *Pararaton*, does not deny Dedes’ feminine agency in love. She is an active lover who chooses her own object of love. Little did she know that her object of love had fallen in love long before she met him.

The revolution succeeds, in an exact manner of the culture that Toer claimed Java still glorifies: “kampung” civilization and culture, with its “kampung” climax: “they bathed in the blood of their own brothers” (Toer & Bradsley, 1996). Tunggul Ametung is dead, along with many other lives in Tumapel. The Lady Consort is now the Governor of Tumapel. She orders the punishment or banishment of those considered as the enemies of Tumapel. For a moment, Dedes feels that she has fulfilled her vow and restore her father’s honor. Her blood has finally won its right place. However, Dedes soon learns the bitter truth. It is people’s revolution, and people do not want a woman to be their leader, especially that the woman does not share the same blood with them.

The pleasure of power suddenly slipped from her hand, smashing to the floor in pieces, and could not be put together again. She felt like a piece of weed in the middle of this tumult, an orphan in the middle of a field of stones. She saw that power had shifted, outside of her will, into the

bands of Arok and Lohgawe (Toer, 2007, p. 379).

Arok, the new Governor of Tumapel, calls out to people that he is also sudra and they should not fight among themselves, even when they worship different gods and exercise different religious beliefs, be it Vishnu, Budha, Kalacakra or Tantrayana. Although Dedes remains the Lady of Consort, she knows that her new husband has just stripped her privileged blood and he will not be forgiven by her father. Another bitter truth hits Dedes as Arok introduces her to a woman fighter, the Javanese Amazon who has helped him in his fight. Dedes now shares her husband with the other Lady Consort, Umang. She no longer has her position besides her husband, she has lost her army, and she will not get her father's trust. "She shut her eyes and squeezed them tight. She saw darkness before her, and did not want to accept this" (Toer, 2007). Her defeat is complete.

CONCLUSION

The power of Queen of Scithia, Ypolita, in Chaucer's *The Knight's Tale* has been taken away at the very beginning of the tale. The leadership of a race of female warriors is a threat to men's authority, so Ypolita needs to be tamed. Her sister, Emelye is traded around and is not even given a chance to fulfil her wish. Similar thing happens to *Pararaton's* Ken Dedes. She is taken from her father and forced into a marriage, and when her first husband is murdered, she is taken as a wife by the murderer. In *The Knight's Tale*, Theseus uses his marriage to Ypolita to secure loyalty from the Amazons. He uses Palamon's marriage to Emelye to ensure Thebes' loyalty to Athens. In *Pararaton*, Ken Arok marries Ken Dedes in her position as the wife of the Governor so that he can take over the position for himself. The women in those medieval texts are forced into a position of the Other. In *Arok of Java*, Dedes, the Lady Consort of Tumapel and the highest caste in society, is used to legitimize Arok's assuming power. Once the power is transferred, Dedes loses

her position as the Subject. The three texts show that women could have assumed power, but men move ahead. Their treatment of gender strengthens the notion that patriarchy lingers across space and time. In the twentieth century novel *Arok of Java*, social conventions are not ready to accept feminine agency, so once it is given away, it must be immediately retracted. In a patriarchal society, female agency and women's power are possible but hard to uphold.

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