



Between Memory and Trajectory: Gendered Literary Narratives of Javanese Diaspora in New Caledonia

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to explore the memory and the trajectory of the Javanese diaspora on the novels written by two female authors of Javanese descent in New Caledonia using a gender perspective. The Javanese diaspora in New Caledonia is a community that has left their homeland (Java) to start a new life in their destination land (New Caledonia) since 1896. They are descendants of the contract coolies (laborers) sent by the Dutch colonial government who controlled the Dutch Indies, including Java, at the request of French colonial government. The delivery of contract coolies was based on an agreement called the “Koeli Ordonatie” which had become a legal regulation and was implemented since the 1880s. It was a regulation signed by the Governor-General of the Netherlands Number 138 whose purpose was to find unskilled laborers willing to work in the Dutch colonies, especially in the plantations and mining. The coolies, especially from Java, were mostly used as manual laborers in various parts of Dutch colonies, such as in Suriname. Seeing that this Dutch policy brought positive results for the exploitation of natural resources in the Dutch colonies, the French colonial government asked the help from the Dutch colonial government to recruit the laborers to be sent to French colonial region, New Caledonia.

Keywords: Gender, literary narrative, Javanese diaspora, New Caledonia

Introduction

The French colonial government took advantage of this program because they had problems with their colonies in the Southwest Pacific, especially in terms of cultivating agricultural land and exploiting nickel mines. The first

wave of contract laborers arrived in New Caledonia on February 16, 1896. The second wave was carried out in the 1950s after the Second World War. The third wave was sent in the 1970s (Adi, 2014).

In general, Javanese women and

men who came from various regions, including East Java, Central Java and West Java, had the same expectation when departed to New Caledonia. They wanted to get prosperity they did not have when living in Java. On average, they earned as farmers or farm laborers who worked on their neighbors' land. Poverty in the land of origin gave rise to the idea of leaving their ancestral land. This was actually against the philosophy believed by the Javanese "*mangan ora mangan asal kumpul*" (eat or not the important thing is to gather). Culturally, this slogan was part of the attachment of the Javanese to their homeland. They did exile forcefully because they felt that it was the only hope to get a better life. For this reason, Koeli Ordonatie's offer was an opportunity structure (Caruso, 2015) for the lower class to meet new hopes in the new land outside Java.

However, of those who chose to go to the destination land, there were quite significant differences between men and women. The difference was not only in term of their experience when living in the new land, but also from how the original land became the building of the identity they wanted to preserve. They had differences in conveying memories and building trajectories. In terms of gender, there was a different pattern between male and female diaspora in seeing the past. They also had different trajectory when living in New Caledonia. In addition, they

had different challenges and survival strategies.

The novels *La Bayou: de Djakarta à Nouméa* by Liliane Saintomer (Saintomer, 2001) and *Le Rêve Accompli: de Bandung à Nouméa* by Ama Bastien (Bastien, 2008) are some of the literary works of Javanese women's diaspora in the Southwest pacific region. The two authors wrote about the experiences of their Javanese parents who became the contract laborers. These two authors provided illustrations of respects for their parents and their origin even though their works were written in French. Their transmitted memory to the next generation about what Java was and who the Javanese people were according to their experience of understanding through family narratives that they were limited in source.

Liliane Saintomer wrote her novel based on the experience of her mother, a Javanese woman who experienced the pains of life both while still in Java and when she was in New Caledonia. Meanwhile, Ama Bastien wrote about the experience of his father, a Javanese man, who also experienced a fate not so different from the woman described by Liliane Saintomer. However, the man character in Ama Bastien's story was described as not having a difficult economic life.

In the context of the French colony, many works of diaspora originating from Francophone countries, such as

West Africa or North Africa showed their subordination towards France as the colonizer. They also showed an ambivalent attitude because they had to live in two different cultures. However, these two Javanese diaspora authors, without any moral burden, explained the memories associated with their Javanese identity. They also openly described how life continued in completely different contexts. Memories of their origin and trajectories were part of the life they strived for in the search and preservation of their “Javanese” identity.

Many studies about New Caledonia had been carried out, especially by French scholars. However, their research mostly focused on political and sociological issues. The researches conducted were mostly related to political tendencies as well as opinions about referendums. They were interested in the political choice of whether the New Caledonia people would remain with France or become independent (Chappell, 1993; Connell, 1987, 2021). Research on diaspora, language and cultural identity, which explored the relationship between the colony, its culture and its subject had also been conducted by French scholars. These researches included the Javanese language still used in that island. The research focused on this language, for example is ‘Diasporic representation of the home culture: case studies from Suriname and New Caledonia’ by

Pamela Allen (Allen, 2015). This study discussed the Javanese cultural practices in Suriname and the use of the Javanese language in New Caledonia. Researches on languages were also conducted by Indonesian scholars who argued that the Javanese language in New Caledonia had hybridized with French as an attempt to survive from generation to generation (Subiyantoro, 2014; Subiyantoro, Marsono, & Udasmoro, 2017).

Previous studies had also taken many aspects of history and anthropology. Research on the Javanese diaspora as contract laborers had been carried out by the Javanese diaspora themselves, namely by Catherine Adi and Fidayanti Muljono-Larue (Adi, 2014; Muljono-Larue, 2015). Another research was a historical research with a strong sociological approach conducted by Jean-Luc Maurer. Maurer provided a very comprehensive picture of the presence of the Javanese diaspora in New Caledonia since the arrival of their first step on the island (Maurer, 2006).

This study will focus on the literary works of Liliane Saintomer and Ama Bastien that have not been widely discussed. The memory and trajectory of the man and the woman as the main characters in the novels are the main aspects explored in this research. Some questions raised are how men and women had different motivations when they decided to go to a new area. Second, how were their memories

and trajectories differently built in the novels.

This study uses a theoretical lens related to memory and trajectory. In the development of the theory on memory, especially when it comes to the issues of postcolonial studies, great writers, such as Homi Bhabha in his book *The Location of Culture* (Bhabha, 1994), Edward Said in his book *Orientalism* (Said, 1978), Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Griffin in the *Postcolonial Studies Reader* (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Griffin, 1995), and even Gayatri Spivak in *Can the Subaltern Speak* and in *Critique of Postcolonial Reason* (Spivak, 1988, 1999), did not mention the problem of collective memory. On the contrary, memory studies, such as those developed by Susannah Radstone and Bill Schwarz in *Memory: Histories, Theories, Debates* (Radstone & Schwarz, 2010) did not link the concept of memory at all with postcolonial studies. Studies in the 1980s and 1990s later discovered this gap, which gave rise to critical reflection by theorists for linking postcolonial studies to memory studies such as the research conducted by Anne McClintock (McClintock, 1992) and Ella Shohat (Shohat, 1992). Connecting memory with the postcolonial context is very important because in memory, there are past issues that are historical and collective.

According to Michael Rothberg, the study of memory was first proposed

by one of Emile Durkheim's students, Halbwachs, in his writing on cultural memory. Halbwachs argued that social force shaped individual memory.

“The frameworks of memory rely in turn on the existence of groups of various kinds: individuals exist not in isolation but in series of interlocking communities –families, religions, professions, civil society organizations- that contour social identities and consequently their practices of remembrance (Rothberg, 2013: 362).

Memory becomes part of the collective. Each individual is always there in the surrounding context. The surrounding communities build identity and memory, as well as memories of the community. Meanwhile, in the view of Anthony Giddens, trajectory is a self project (Giddens, 1984). In this project, the individual has full responsibility for himself/herself. The purpose of building this self project is to build its identity. This trajectory building takes place from the past to the future. According to Giddens, individuals in the trajectory process have reflexivity. The goal is to change something in his or her life. Actualization of this trajectory indicates control over time. In this context, time implies the connection between the past and the present. Connecting the past and the present is part of self-realization. Self-realization can only be done with an awareness of the importance of opportunity and risk.

Memory and trajectory are important as lenses considering that the Javanese diaspora in New

Caledonia experiences past and present connectivity continuously. Past and present are experiences that build their identity. This research uses a story content analysis method. The data is collected from sentences and paragraphs that have relevance to the memory and trajectory problems of the characters in the novel. These data are then categorized by into patterns which are then selected as the main point of arguments. The next process is data analysis which is carried out by connecting empirical findings with the theoretical lens of memory and trajectory. The important step is to build an understanding of the identity structure in the story.

The Past, Escapism and Adventure

Fidayanti Muljono-Larue makes a strong statement in her book on contract labor that the Javanese diaspora actually does not like to discover their identity as Javanese (Muljono-Larue, 2015). This is because they are contract laborers or descendants of contract laborers, a social class that is often looked down upon in any society. Sociologically, the descendants of the Javanese diaspora who return to Indonesia often do not want to openly reveal who they are. Many of them hide their past identity.

Contrary to Muljono-Larue's view, the two novels written by Liliane Saintomer and Ama Bastien openly described the experience of their parents. In a virtual conversation done

in June 2021, both of them stated that the stories they wrote were part of their parents' past memories. Saintomer dedicated her writing 'La Bayou: de Djakarta à Nouméa to her mother who shared her life experiences. Meanwhile, Ama Bastien, in her novel 'Le Rêve Accompli: de Bandung à Nouméa recounted the memory of his father whom she greatly admired.

The settings of the place and time of the novels were very different. It was not explained explicitly but was in a different place. One was taking place in Jakarta while the other was around Bandung. However, both stories told the life of farmers in those areas. Meanwhile, related to time, the time setting of Saintomer's work was indicated to be earlier than in Bastien's work. Ama's Bastien's work has explained the existence of modern equipment owned by a rich farmer, such as car, air conditioning and so on. In terms of storyline, the two novels narrated almost the same story. They narrated about the journey of a Javanese woman named, Nadiem and a Javanese man, named Ata who worked as contract coolies in New Caledonia.

From the two novels, it was described how the two characters had different reasons for leaving the land of Java. The female character, Nadiem, depicted by Liliane Saintomer, came from a poor family. Her daily occupation was working in the fields. She had to do hard work as a farmer

even though she was only fifteen years old. This severe suffering was explicitly used as one of the reasons to exile to another country.

Nadiem, c'est la chance de notre vie! Ici tu n'as plus rien à perdre. Plus de récoltes de riz courbées et trempées jusqu'aux os. Plus d'ampoules aux mains à force de râper le coco. Plus de brûlures à cuire ces horreurs (Saintomer, 2001: 18).

Nadiem, this is the chance of our lives! You've got nothing here. You no longer need to get wet and gout to plant rice. No need to bother with your hands anymore because of peeling coconut. And you no longer need to live in this misery

The lure of a sufficient salary, a house provided and the opportunity to return home when the contract expired encouraged Nadiem to make up his mind to go with her best friend, Savia. In addition, the message from her grandmother before she died that she had to live independently and go to New Caledonia made her even more determined to go.

Nadiem, réfléchis bien à tout cela. Bien sur toute chose a son importance. Ta vie ici qu'il faudra laisser, mais pense à l'avenir. La possibilité de fonder un foyer autre part qu'à Ajamalas. Ne trouves-tu pas que tu as assez supporté de l'autre folle, ses sautes d'humeur, sa mechancete gratuite et son cynisme? Crois-tu qu'à plus de cinq mille cinq cents miles d'ici, tu regretteras tout cela? Ta grand-mere elle, prefererait te savoir loin mais heureuse plutôt qu'à portée de main de la femme de

son mari. Ici tu es ruinée, la-bas, tu ne manqueras de rien, on nous l'a promis (Saintomer, 2001: 19-20).

Nadiem, think carefully. Of course all things are good. Indeed you should leave this land, but think about your future. There is a chance to find a (better) life other than in Ajamalas. Aren't you fed up with your stepmother, with her temper, cruelty, and cynicism? Your grandma wanted you to be happy even if you have to go away from home instead of being under the same roof with your stepmother. Here you are miserable, there you will not lack because we have been promised.

However, Nadiem's departure to New Caledonia was actually not only because of planning to get a better life. Nadiem actually did escapism from the life she lived in Java. She had a stepmother whom she referred to as "Other". She called this woman "Other" because of her incompatibility with her. Nadiem was often the object of her "Other's" exploitation. She had to work hard all day in the fields as a farmer at her young age. In the context of gender, Nadiem got unfair treatment from another woman. The age hierarchy, where her stepmother controlled her father's land became an important part of the novel. It explained that exploitation was also happening among women when they were in an unequal position of power.

Le warong donc que tenait cette femme, engloutissait tout l'argent du grand-père qui écoutait béat,

le caquetage de l'autre. Il avait vendu tous ses biens, ceux de la grand-mère et maintenant ceux de l'adolescente... Elle ne sut que bien des années plus tard qu'ils l'avaient depouillée de dizaine d'hectares de terrain cultivé et de tous les biens que lui avait laissés sa grand-mère... Chez elle, les enfants ne parlaient pas aux adultes, leur posaient encore moins de questions. Malheureuse, Nadiem faisait des fugues (Saintomer, 2001: 10-11).

The shop run by her stepmother was able to run because she spent the wealth of Nadiem's grandfather, who just obeyed her tricks. Her grandfather sold all his property, his wife's property and Nadiem's property. Nadiem only realized after a few years that her stepmother also confiscated tens of hectares of rice fields and inheritance from her grandmother... At home, children were forbidden to talk their to their parents, nor were they allowed to ask questions. Feeling very sad, Nadiem ran away from home.

Thus, leaving for New Caledonia first, was an attempt to escape the realities of life as a poor farmer in Java. She was tired of living in poverty because she had to work very hard to support herself and the rest of her family. Second, she also ran away from someone who had become an enemy, "the Other". Third, the only person she loved, her grandmother, had also died. Fourth, the sense of solidarity with her best friend, Savia, who also planned to leave the homeland, encouraged her to depart for New Caledonia. Lack of love from her family was the part told very

deeply by the author to justify why the female character left.

The justification for this departure was important considering that staying was a matter of loyalty to the place of residence, as was the philosophy in Javanese society at that time "mangan ora mangan asal kumpul" (eat or not the important is to gather). Thus, it can be seen that the author positioned Javanese woman who went to New Caledonia in the context of an escapism process out of compulsion. The female character was described as strong and brave but she was unable to live in Java because of the economic and social structure that she could not deal with.

Meanwhile, in *Le Rêve Accompli: de Bandung à Nouméa*, Ama Bastien explained that the departure of the male character named Ata was not because of poverty. The story was quite elaborative about Ata's background. He was described as the son of a wealthy agricultural entrepreneur. Her family had everything they needed. It was described in the novel that they had the symbols of modernity in their house, such as car, air conditioning and so on. These symbols of modernity explained the time setting of the novel.

Un lustre de cristal illuminait
l'imposante salle à manger,
éclaboussant de lueurs les meubles
d'ébène. Une longue table, qui
pouvait recevoir vingt convives, était
au centre de la pièce. Richement
parée, elle était dressée pour dix
personnes (Bastien, 2008: 12).

Rows of crystals illuminate the

majestic dining room, casting light onto the glossy black furnishings. A long table, which can seat up to twenty guests, is in the middle. Beautifully appointed, the dining area is set up for ten people.

The story also described the modernity in Bandung, the hometown of the main character.

Ville moderne fondée par les Hollandais, Bandung est située dans une région montagneuse de l'île de Java, à huit cents mètres d'altitude... Il se plaisait à regarder les marchands ambulants qui envahissaient les rues aux heures des repas. De leurs petites voitures à deux roues surmontées d'une grande boîte vitrée s'échappaient des odeurs appétissantes qui lui mettaient toujours l'eau à la bouche (Bastien, 2008: 19).

A modern city built by the Dutch, Bandung is located in the mountainous region of the island of Java, 800 meters above the seal level... Or enjoy the street vendors who fill the streets at mealtimes. From the two-wheeled vehicle covered with large windows, there is an appetizing aroma that makes you drool.

Tout en continuant ses classements, il sentit son front se couvrir de sueur et ses mains devenir moites malgré la relative fraîcheur quiregnait dans le bureau (Bastien, 2008: 23).

While continuing his administrative work, Ata felt his forehead and hands sweat even though the air conditioner was running in his office.

When looking at the emergence of modernity symbols, such as air conditioning, cars, and so on there

are several possibilities for the time setting. Ama Bastien herself is well over her 80s at this point. There have been several waves of the arrivals of the Javanese as explained in this article previously. From the depiction of this wave of arrivals and the indications that the village farmer already had those modernity symbols, it is possible that the departure of the male character was around the Second World War. This can also be seen from Ama Bastien who is currently more than 80 years old. However, to describe the existence of Air Conditioners, this seems quite problematic considering that Bandung was a very cool place, especially at that time in the rural areas. In addition, air conditioners were not yet popular in the society to be used. Most likely, this was just the imagination of the author.

However, the important depiction apart from the time setting was about the background of the male character. It was explained that Ata was a son of an upper-class family. He could get whatever he wanted.

Chaque soir, quelque soit le temps—il n'y avait que la saison des pluies qui empêchait l'exécution de ce rituel—, ce fils d'un riche propriétaire terrien venait se recueillir sur cette colline qui dominait la ville (Bastien, 2008: 7).

Every afternoon, regardless of the weather-only the rainy season hinders this rituals- the son of a rich paddy lord comes to mediate on the hills that cover the city.

De plus, Ata adorait ne porter

qu'un sarong et rester les pieds nus. Cela exaspérait son paternel qui lui répétait souvent: « Respecte tes parents et ta condition, tu es le fils du patron! » (Bastien, 2008: 8).

In addition, Ata likes to only wear a sarong and not wearing footwear. This made his father angry and said, “*respect your parents and your position, you are the son of a rice boss!*”

However, this male character thought that the treasure was not the result of his hard work. The property belonged to his parents. For this reason, he had long intended to be a volunteer at the Nickel mines in New Caledonia.

Ata détestait la maison familiale qui était immense. Le moindre des bibelots avait coûté une fortune. Il avait compris, dès son plus jeune âge, la différence qui existait dans son pays entre les castes. Il trouvait injuste d'être privilégié alors que certains n'avaient même pas l'essentiel pour vivre (Bastien, 2008: 9-10).

Ata hates his family's house, which is so big. Even small trinkets are very expensive. He understood from his childhood that there are social class differences that occur in his country. He feels it is unfair to enjoy his wealth when there are people who even find it difficult to survive in their daily lives.

Les filles déployaient tous leurs charmes pour attirer ses regards, mais il était indifférent à leurs petits jeux tant son esprit était occupé par une seule idée, un seul but : partir, s'exiler vers un monde meilleur selon lui (Bastien, 2008: 8).

The women spread their beauty to seduce Ata, but he doesn't care about

their flirting because his mind is centered on one idea, one goal: to leave, to exile himself to a better world according to him.

In certain context of Javanese men, leaving Java and wandering showed the practice of manhood. In addition, wandering was also a symbol of men's liberation.

However, Ata also experienced pain in his life, which made him more motivated to go abroad. He lost many people he loved in tragic ways. He lost his father who died some time after he openly admitted that he planned to wander. He felt guilty because of his death. Another tragic experience was the death of Laila, a little girl, the daughter of her mother's friend caused by brain cancer.

Le lendemain de l'enterrement, les coeurs n'étaient pas à l'ouvrage. Le chagrin minait les visages de tous les membres de la maisonnée, car chacun des recoins, chacun des objets de la résidence leur rappelaient la petite Laila... Dès l'aube, Ata et Krasa se retrouvèrent à la cuisine, assis à la longue table, devant leur bol de café qu'ils laisserent refroidir sans y toucher. Les mots étaient inutiles, ils se comprenaient. Miran les rejoignit peu après, suivi de Kembin et de Waty qui s'activerent pour préparer le petit-déjeuner. A part un bol de café, Miran refusa de prendre quoi que ce soit (Bastien, 2008: 135).

The next day after the funeral, everyone felt they couldn't let Laila go. Sadness ran down everyone's face because every corner and object in the house reminded them to Laila. Since

morning, Ata and Krasa have been in the kitchen, sitting at the long dining table, overlooking their cup of coffee which has been left cold without drinking it. There was no point in talking, and they understood each other. Miran joined a few moments later, followed by Kembin and waty who rushed to prepare breakfast. Apart from a cup of coffee, Miran didn't want to eat anything.

In addition, Ata also lost his future wife, Miriam. He accidentally pushed Miriam's father. Miriam's father passed away because of the injure caused by that accident. Miriam blamed him and refused to get married with him.

C'est toi qui lui as fait ça ? ça ne m'étonne pas ! Mon père avait raison ! J'aurais du l'écouter ! À part tes misereux, tu n'as de compassion pour personne. Je ne veux plus te voir ! Retourne t'habiller en sarong et marcher pieds nus ! Va courir dans la poussière et manger avec les doigts ! Sasminah est comme toi puisqu'elle aime un simple ouvrier qui travaille dans les rizières. Si elle croit que je vais assister à son mariage ! Mon père veut pour moi un grand et riche mariage, et moi aussi ! Je suis belle et je trouverai un riche mari ! (Bastien, 2008: 220).

You did this? I'm not surprised at all! My father was right! I should have listened to him! Apart from your suffering, you have no compassion for others. I don't want to see you anymore! Go back and put on the sarong and walk barefoot! Go back and run in the fields and eat with your hands! You are more compatible with Sasminah because she

likes laborers who work in the fields. That's if Sasminah wants me to come to her wedding! My father wanted a big, lavish wedding for me, and I agreed! I am beautiful and I will find a rich husband.

The explanation above shows that between the male and female characters, there were different backgrounds that gave rise to different memories of Java. During the interview with Ama Bastien through a virtual discussion in 22nd of June 2021, Ama Bastien said that her father did not want to talk anymore about Java. He wanted to forget Java. Meanwhile, from the side of Liliane Saintomer (interviewed on the 30th of June 2021), Java was a memory that would always be remembered. There were different aspects of forgetting and remembering. The male character in the story tended to erase his past while the female character kept it as part of herself even though her life was full of suffering in the past.

Trajectory, Challenges and Struggles

During the trip to New Caledonia, the two authors explained the difficulties of each character. These two female authors described their trajectories with a story full of challenges and struggles. The female characters had very different challenges and struggles. Other characters in the story treated Javanese woman's body as sexually exotic. There was also a

hierarchy emerged, even since Nadiem, got on the ship. She became the sexual object of the sailors who tried to harass her.

Un marin, sur le pont, Nadiem se trouva nez à nez devant un matelot vêtu d'une simple chemise. Il la portait grande ouverte et la défiait du regard. Jarry qui la rejoignait, ne le vit pas, il lui tournait le dos. Nadiem ne fit pas attention tout de suite. Réalisant soudain, elle s'enfuit à toutes jambes tandis que résonnait derrière elle le rire gras du matelot et de ses comparses venus le rejoindre (Saintomer, 2001: 31).

Nadiem made eye contact with a sailor who was on deck wearing a light t-shirt. He wore it vulgarly and looked at Nadiem coquettishly. Jarry who was with him, pretended not to see and just walked away. At first, Nadiem did not understand, when she realized what had happened, she fled as quickly as possible while being laughed at by the fishermen and their friends.

After arriving in New Caledonia, she also found herself in a difficult position because her female employer did not like her. Her male employer positioned her as property. Nadiem did not have freedom even to choose her life partner. Both were white French employers who had dominant power in social structure of New Caledonia. They abused her verbally and physically.

In the author's description, it appeared that there was a struggle to be carried out by the female character. She had to fight alone in order to survive in the land of exile. She was not only

struggling against other individuals but also against the system that favors white people in that island. For example, Nadiem was married to her boyfriend, Senen, in an Islamic way. After her male employer found out, unilaterally he cancelled her marriage. Nadiem could not do anything. Her boss, by the state law was the owner of the employer. Finally, the marriage was annulled. The following quotation was a description of the Javanese diaspora position in relation to individuals and institutional hierarchies found in the novel.

Sur ordre du patron, chacun rentra chez soi, un goût amer dans la bouche. Monsieur Loulou fit annuler le mariage de Nadiem et de Senen par le Hadji même qui l'avait prononcé. Ils divorcèrent donc sans en être avertis! (Saintomer, 2001: 67).

Ordered by their employer, everyone went back to their respective homes with annoyance Monsieur Loulou unilaterally canceled Nadiem and Senen marriage through Pak Hadji (the moslem cleric), even though it was legal, Nadiem and Senen divorced without their knowledge

Meanwhile, the female character also got her challenge in relation to other male character, her husband. Her husband's infidelity that caused her misery illustrated that a Javanese woman was in a subordinate vis-à-vis Javanese man. There was an intra-Javanese power relation in this context. This Javanese woman experienced multiple-subordination in the context of

gender, social class, and ethnicity.

Meanwhile, male character in Ama Bastien's novel *Le Rêve Accompli*: de bandung à Nouméa was described in a different way. In the story, the parts when he was in Java were more narrated. The parts on the ship and in New Caledonia were less narrated. However, from this little part, it was illustrated how he had an easy life in his trajectory although he was in the same social status as Nadiem. For example, on a trip to New Caledonia, Ata was positioned as a very empowered character. He was described as very diligent and having extraordinary skills. When a crew member of the ship had his leg crushed due to a fall of a wooden block, during an amputation, Ata was described as being very brave and helpful.

Il faut lever encore un peu, dit Ata, il souffre trop. Essayons encore une fois ! Le commandant et toi, Ugo, vous le tirerez vers vous dès que nous aurons soulevé davantage la caisse. Mettez-vous au-dessus de lui. Commandant, vous le prendrez sous les aisselles. Ugo, tu le prendras par le bassin. Ainsi vous le soulèverez et le tirerez en même temps (Bastien, 2008: 273-4).

Please lift him up a little more, said Ata, he was in a lot of pain. Let's try one more time! Commander, and you, Ugo, please lift Min Ha towards you when we put the box away. Then you stand on top of Min Ha. Commander, please lift up at the armpit. Ugo, you lift your hips. Som you will lift and pull at the same time.

He was even considered a doctor. He was then described as a hero in the story.

Ismail, de sa voix grave et posée, s'adressa à Ata :

Tu as l'air de t'y connaître, mon garçon. As-tu fait des études de médecine ?

Non, mais je travaillais une fois par semaine à l'hôpital. J'étais bénévole et je m'occupais des enfants. Parfois, il m'arrivait d'aller prêter main forte dans d'autres services (Bastien, 2008: 276).

Ismail, in a deep and calm voice, asked Ata, "You looked good earlier, did you go to medical school?", "No, but I have worked a week at the hospital. I used to be a volunteer working with children. Sometimes I went to help people in other places.

Likewise, when Ata arrived in New Caledonia, it was explained that he was happy in that new place. In his love life, he also easily found a wife, a Javanese descendant who was born in New Caledonia, named Ostein Anewy. All went smoothly. They had a daughter named Laila, the name they took from the small girl Ata loved very much when he was in Java.

At the end of the story, it was described that Ata died in an accident. However, the important point of the author was Ata's message that Laila, his daughter, was asked not to go to Java and forgot that island forever. Laila obeyed her father's message although the memory about Java was still be kept through the writing.

Conclusion

From the two novels above, it can be concluded that the male and female diasporas had different memories and trajectories. The memories and trajectories were gendered. It was not because they were individuals so they had personal experiences. There was a system in the society that placed them in different position collectively.

In the context of memory, the Javanese woman diaspora experienced sadness in her lives. As a result, she had to exile and escape from her homeland. However, this condition did not make her throw away the memory of Java. She valued Java as part of her identity. Meanwhile, for the male character, he actually interpreted going to New Caledonia initially as an adventurer. However, in his waiting to leave, he experienced grief that made him even more determined to leave and not willing to come back.

In terms of trajectory, the woman and the man characters had the same

courage and skills. However, in the society, they had different situation because of the collective system that positioned women as powerless objects. The woman was more positioned in the power hierarchy with a fairly complex matrix. She was not just under the rule of Javanese man (her husband) but also under the rule of other Javanese woman (her step mother). In addition, she was below the white men and women who were economically above her. Thus, she experienced multiple subordination in the context of gender, ethnicity and social class.

Meanwhile, the Javanese man was described in a position that was not too weak especially in New Caledonia. He was the image of a hero admired for his intelligence and skills. He had smooth life in New Caledonia because the system allowed him to be in that position. The Javanese man was narrated to deal with his own psychological burden rather than with the social system in the place he lived.[]

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