

Race, Reason, and Emotion:
Reading Pramoedya Ananta Toer's *House of Glass*

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Abstract

In the early 20th-century Dutch East Indies, through domestic espionage and scholarly research, the colonial state produced strategic knowledge about its Native subjects. The state used such knowledge to keep the Natives under control. *House of Glass*, the fourth and last novel in Pramoedya Ananta Toer's "Buru Quartet," offers a fictionalized historical account of how the domestic spy work and scholarly studies responded to the emergence of Native nationalist movement. This paper examines one product of the colonial state's knowledge-production activities: the colonial discourse on Natives revolving around the notions of race, reason, and emotion. A critical reading of this discourse suggests that it contains not merely racial prejudices on the part of European colonial masters against Natives but also elements of truth about them. Pramoedya seems to have used the narrator Jacques Pangemanann to draw attention to the troubling weaknesses he saw in Indonesians, both in the colonial era and under the New Order.

Key Words: colonial discourse, emotional history, intellectual history, Dutch East Indies, Indonesian literature, Pramoedya Ananta Toer

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“Natives who had grown used to living in a world of illusions, who had surrendered all their reason and emotions to such illusions, could turn into wild beasts whose ferocity knew no bounds.”

—Jacques Pangemanann(Toer 1992: 318)

I. Introduction

This paper looks into the colonial discourse on race, reason, and emotion as it appears in *House of Glass*(henceforth *HG*), the last novel of Pramoedya Ananta Toer’s Buru Quartet. Like the three novels that precede it, *HG* tells the story of the nationalist awakening among Natives in the Dutch East Indies in the 1910s(Anderson 1998).¹⁾ Yet, different from all the rest, *HG* recounts the history of the Native nationalist movement from the Dutch colonizer’s point of view. Through *HG*, we readers get some idea of the ambition on the part of the Dutch police state to put every social organization in the colony under close, constant watch. In particular, we learn that by spying on the political behavior of Natives, the colonial state accumulated strategic knowledge of them. One key element in such a body of knowledge is something like “the colonial psychology of the Indies Natives,” which consists, among other components, of the

1) On page 292, Anderson(1998) has accurately summarized the themes of the Buru Quartet. *This Earth of Mankind*, he argues, is about the idea that “Indonesia is for all those who love it, not merely its passport-carrying citizens,” while *Child of All Nations* makes the point that “the heroic originator of Indonesian nationalism was the heir of emancipatory nationalists in every country.” Further, *Footprints in the Mire* is about “all those who left nothing behind them in the struggles except ‘footprints in the mire,’” while the *House of Glass* deals with the Dutch colonial Benthamite panopticon.

cognitive and affective dimensions of their behavior.

To understand the colonial discourse on race, reason, and emotion as it manifests itself in *HG*, I will put Jacques Pangemanann inside something like an analytical house of glass. Subjecting him to a constant surveillance, I will observe what he thinks of the interplay between race, reason, and emotion among Natives in the colony. At this point, you, the reader, might ask why of all the major characters in the novel I have singled out Pangemanann. I have two reasons for doing so. First, he is, after all, the narrator of the novel; it is from his eyes that the story is told. Second, the character seems to represent the very ambivalence of the colonial psychology of the Native, that is, as Pramoedya Ananta Toer understands it.

As far as method is concerned, I will follow this procedure. First, I will isolate certain passages in *HG* that contain Pangemanann's portrayal of the ways Natives think, feel, and act. I will also include, however, the psychological discourse on the Native that Pangemanann has adopted from other people. Second, I will classify the passages under a small number of emerging themes. Third, under each theme, I will analyze the passages to identify their manifest contents and uncover their latent contents. Finally, I will conclude this essay by setting forth some general remarks on my findings.

The theoretical framework that grounds this paper is informed, rather loosely, by some of the ideas I have encountered in the works of Frantz Fanon(1986), Edward W. Said(1978), Michel Foucault (1995),²⁾ and Sigmund Freud(2010). Under Fanon's influence, I want

2) An encounter with Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* has led me to the view that what Pramoedya presents in his novel as a "house of

to see if and to what extent colonial, psychological descriptions of the colonized Native are at the same time *indirect* descriptions of the European colonizer himself. Seeking to define themselves, colonizers might have had to refer to their colonized Other in terms of a binary opposition. In the context of British colonialism in Malaya, for instance, the British colonizer constructed the myth of “the lazy Malay”(Alatas 1977). In the binary opposition of diligence versus indolence, the Native was made to embody “laziness” while the European was made the icon of “industriousness.” On other occasions, as in Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*, the Native was associated with Nature whereas the European was associated with Culture(Conrad 1996).

Nonetheless, bearing Freud’s *Interpretation of Dreams* in mind, I suggest that colonial, psychological discourses operate at two levels: conscious and unconscious(Freud 2010).³⁾ What we find at the unconscious level could be the opposite of what we see at the conscious one. Thus, at the unconscious level, the colonized Native sometimes stood for the darker aspects of the colonizer’s self that he wanted to disavow. For instance, the colonizer sought to deny his own sexual desires by projecting them on to Natives, labeling them as licentious or promiscuous or sexually immoral.

Finally, invoking the specter of Foucault, it is important to note that the Dutch colonial mission of state-building had transformed the

glass” might have been the colonial, Dutch East Indies form that Foucault’s *panopticon* took in early 20th-century Southeast Asia.

3) Freud makes the useful distinction between the *manifest* and the *latent* content of dreams. The former refers to dreams’ literal but disguised themes, while the latter points to those dreams’ true, hidden, and underlying messages.

early twentieth-century East Indies into a political “glass house” in which Native, nationalist activists were put under the constant scrutiny of the colonial gaze. Scholars, colonial officials, intelligence officers, and thugs served the colonial state and formed its apparatus for monitoring, describing, explaining, and keeping under control the lives and works of the major leaders of the Native nationalist movement. The fruits of this intellectual and intelligence project were knowledge and power. As Said(1978) argues in *Orientalism*, constructing knowledge about the Orient is part of the project to dominate, restructure, and rule over it. By extension, I suggest that amassing knowledge about the Natives in the Dutch East Indies in the early 20th century was part and parcel of the colonial state's attempt to discipline them. The colonial state required systematic knowledge about the structure, dynamics, and leadership of Native nationalist movement. This type of knowledge was believed to provide the state with greater power to subvert, destroy, and conquer the movement. Part of the system of knowledge thus obtained was what I call “the colonial psychology of the Indies Native.” The point I want to make is that such a psychology is organized around perceived racial differences between the Native and the European in terms of two key concepts: reason and emotion. By analyzing particular fragments in the story that the narrator, Jacques Pangemanann, tells us, I hope I can identify and present several major themes in the colonial psychology of the Indies Native: the rationality and emotionality of Natives, the structure of reason-emotion relations in their psyches, and the ways in which they differ from Europeans in terms of reason and emotion. Having described my aims, method,

and basic assumptions, I would like to turn to the study itself.

II. A Colonial Discourse on the Native's Reason and Emotion

1. The Dutch Colonial Power in Trouble

The time period in which *HG* is set(roughly 1912 - 1916) was the early years of what historian Takashi Shiraishi refers to as an “Age in Motion”(1912 - 1926), one that saw the birth, growth, and demise of popular radicalism in Java(Shiraishi 1990). It was the time when subaltern peoples in the colony—Peranakan Chinese, Peranakan Arabs, and Natives—commenced their struggle for socioeconomic and political emancipation by employing a repertoire of modern “political weapons” that they adopted and adapted from Europeans, including rallies, boycotts, industrial strikes, political associations, and the press. It was also the time when Peranakan Chinese, Peranakan Arabs, and Natives developed and experienced a new form of political consciousness: nationalism.

HG tells us that in 1912 Raden Mas Minke⁴⁾—a Dutch-educated, Javanese aristocrat, and a STOVIA medical school dropout—founds the Sarekat Dagang Islam(SDI), a nationalist association for Natives

4) Raden Mas Minke is Pramoedya's fictionalized version of Raden Mas Djokomono Tirta Adhi Soerjo(c. 1880-1918). For a biography of Tirta, see Toer(1985). For a good analysis of Tirta's role in the early stage of the Indonesian nationalist movement, see Shiraishi(1990), especially pages 33-35, 38, 40, 42-45, 48, 57, 60, and 80-82.

using Islam as the broad umbrella under which they can unite. He also edits the SDI's magazine *Medan Prijaji* (Forum of priyayi). The main purpose of the SDI is to advance the socio-economic status of Natives and to make sure that justice is done to them. The membership of the SDI grows so rapidly that the Dutch colonial power feels threatened. A quotation from *HG* below illustrates the extent to which the colonial power is alarmed by the dynamism on the part of the SDI:

Minke and his SDI had moved more quickly and grown much bigger than anyone had predicted. The concentration of power in his movement now hung like the sword of Damocles (Toer 1992: 9).

In fact, there is nothing particularly illegal in what Minke and his SDI are doing. Nonetheless, "any activity that tended to lead towards the accumulation of power was a danger to the Government. At the very least, the coming into being of powerful groups would diminish the Government's authority" (Toer 1992: 8). From such a perspective, the SDI appears to be a political time bomb. The Dutch colonial regime must therefore demolish the SDI immediately. The trouble is that since the SDI is a legal organization engaging in legal activities, the Government cannot destroy it by legal means. To annihilate the SDI, the Government has to act outside the law. It thus needs to employ a secret, illegal weapon. And this weapon is Jacques Pangemanann.

2. Jacques Pangemanann: The Colonial Spy-Scholar

Jacques Pangemanann is an ambivalent character that embodies contradictions. Sometimes he describes himself as a Native, a member of the Minahasan ethnic group of North Sulawesi. Sometimes he views himself as a Eurasian. Adopted by a French chemist from Lyons named De Cagnie, he earned an academic degree at the Sorbonne before he pursued a career in the Batavia Police Department. He was promoted to Chief Inspector after his success in capturing Si Pitung, a famous Native bandit whose gang terrorized the landowning class around Batavia in 1892 - 1893(Schulte Nordholt et al. 1999).

The *Algemeene Secretariat*(General Secretariat)—the top government agency responsible for implementing the policies of the Governor-General—sends Pangemanann on a mission to demolish the SDI. The mission has two parts: a secret-police component and a scholarly one. As a secret agent of the Government, he is to spy on Raden Mas Minke, the SDI leader, and keep him under control. Pangemanann is also to launch a psychological war against Minke by employing a group of Eurasian thugs to terrorize him. Finally, Pangemanann must paralyze Minke to neutralize his influence and destroy his organization. At the same time, as a scholar in the Government's think tank, Pangemanann has to research Minke and the SDI to build a strong knowledge base about the two of them, a knowledge base necessary for designing the efficient method to dismantle the SDI once and for all. Pangemanann's research method includes such activities as a close reading of newspapers and

magazines of the Dutch East Indies, interviewing informants, observing people, studying historical archives, and preparing reports. By so doing, he hopes to be “able to explain the mentality of the people who lived in the estates and how it manifested itself in their actions”(Toer 1992: 45). Pangemanann's job description is defined in this way:

[M]y work has been nothing other than to monitor closely my own people for the sake of security and perpetuity of the[colonial] Government. [...]All Natives...who disturbed the peace and serenity of the Government...I will continue to put all of them into a house of glass which I will place on my desk. That is my assignment—to watch every movement that takes place in that house of glass(Toer 1992: 54).

Pramoedya's portrayal of Pangemanann suggests that this fictional character is the amalgamation of two historical figures. The first of these is the Eurasian police commissioner Adolf Wilhelm Verbond Hinne(1852 - 1915) of Batavia. The second one is the Leiden-trained scholar Dr. Douwe Adolf Rinkes(1878 - 1954), who served the colonial government as *Adviseur voor Indlansche Zaken*(Adviser for Native Affairs) from 1913 to 1916 and then as head of the *Commissie voor het Volkslectuur*(Bureau for Popular Literature) in 1917 - 1927(*Regeerings-Almanak* 1914; Drewes 1961). While Pangemanann's success is in capturing Si Pitung in the fictional world of *HG*, A.W.V. Hinne had his career breakthrough by shooting and killing Si Pitung in the real world of Batavia in 1893(Van Till 2011). Likewise, while Pangemanann conducts research into the nationalist movement among Natives to help the colonial Government destroy the movement, D.A.

Rinkes played a key role in “domesticating” the nationalist movement among the Natives. Rinkes did so by controlling the printed press and by intervening in the internal affairs of the Sarekat Islam(SI), a later outgrowth of the SDI(Shiraishi 1997).

After examining who Pangemanann is, let us have a look at the results of his research into indigenous political movement. In particular, I will present and examine several themes in Pangemanann’s colonial psychology of the Native and his ideas concerning the interplay between race, reason, and emotion.

3. The Image of Natives as Intellectually Retarded

In the course of his research, Pangemanann concludes that Natives have not yet accomplished any significant intellectual development. He gets this idea from Mr. L., an official who works at the State Archives. This is what Mr. L. tells Pangemanann:

The Natives’ way of thinking has not yet been changed by modern ideas[...]. They live in the same mental world as five centuries ago. Their way of dealing with the world has not changed. Natives who have absorbed some elements of modernity are not like anyone else—such a person is half European in a Native body(Toer 1992: 27).

This colonial representation of Natives’ way of thinking is partly accurate and partly biased. It is accurate in the sense that in the 1910s only a very small minority among Natives had access to modern, Western education. Lacking modern education, the majority of the

Natives were in no position to get in touch with modern ideas. Lacking decent education, they were illiterate and thus unable to learn modern ways of thinking by means of alternative media like newspapers, books, and magazines. It stands to reason that even though the world had changed considerably, they still dealt with it in a very old-fashioned way.

I find problematic, however, the claim that “Natives who have absorbed some elements of modernity are not like anyone else—such a person is half European in a Native body”. This statement implies that to become modern is to become European, which is not the case. The statement also wrongly implies that there is one single path to modernity: the European path. This is of course biased. A historical research by the late Denys Lombard(1938 - 1998), for instance, has demonstrated that prior to the colonial era, Islam had introduced the Natives in the archipelago to some basic ideas of modernity, including the notion of a linear, progressive time and the concept of individuality(Lombard 1996).

4. The Reluctance of the Javanese to Think Independently

[I]t was a general phenomenon in Java that the Natives preferred to surrender everything to leaders, so that they could be free of the need either to think or to take responsibility, because, in fact, neither of these things had yet to become traditions in Java. Indeed, the Javanese weren't even acquainted with these things(Toer 1992: 119).

Dangerous though it is to make such a sweeping statement about the Javanese habit of mind, the statement contains elements of truth. But I must hasten to add that the tendency to surrender to leaders was not, and still is not, the unique characteristic of the Javanese people alone. In the Second World War, for example, a large number of Germans submitted themselves to Hitler's vision and dictatorship. Rather than think on their own, they embraced what the psychologist Irving Janis(1973) calls "groupthink" or conformist thinking.

As far as the Javanese is concerned, there are at least three reasons why people prefer not to think on their own. First, submission to authority figures is generally considered a virtue. Children, for example, are not encouraged to have different ideas from those of their parents. To disagree with one's teacher in the classroom would be tantamount to disturbing social order by subverting the hierarchy. The teacher would take offense at what appears to him as insolence. For teachers are supposed to know more or better than their students do. Even if a teacher does make mistake, the students are supposed to pretend that they did not notice it. This tactic will provide the teacher with an opportunity to save his or her face in the classroom.

Second, thinking itself can be a painful experience, let alone thinking independently. It is interesting to note that university students in Indonesia, when faced with a tough question in an examination, would often say, "Soal ini *susah*," as opposed to "Soal ini *sukar*." The first statement can be translated as "This question is sad"—which is weird—whereas the second statement can be rendered as "This question is difficult." This phenomenon seems to indicate that Indonesians tend to respond in an *emotionally* unfavorable

manner to an *intellectually* challenging task.

Finally, to make a decision based on independent thinking is to take a risk because in this case people will hold you responsible for the consequences of your decision. It is completely all right if the consequences are favorable. But what if the decision leads to a disaster. Many would rather take orders from their leaders. By doing so, one can be saved from the necessity to think at all and from the possibility of being held responsible for one's action.

We should not forget the role of culture in this context. On one hand, Javanese culture stresses the importance of relying on tradition as a source of guidance in life. Permanence is more important than change. On the other hand, modern Western European cultures prioritize change over permanence, and doubt over certainty. Indeed, doubt is a method to achieve knowledge. To think is to have doubts. In order to have doubts at all, one must be courageous enough to think independently.

5. The Native's Superficial Thinking: European Concepts as Fetishes

They[Javanese village school graduates] all started using European terms and concepts even though they did not really understand what they meant or when and where they should be used.[...] [T]his was in fact a real process of Europeanizing people's way of thinking. These new[European] terms and concepts were something new altogether, products of a civilization that they had never experienced in their villages. And like gold and diamonds these new products of civilization were worn like jewelry around

their necks(Toer 1992: 210).

At first glance, the statement above may sound insulting to the Natives. It is as though Natives are parrots clever enough to pronounce great Western concepts but too dumb to grasp their meanings. The parrots continue to pronounce all the new European slogans simply to impress their fellow parrots. Nonetheless, the cynical statement, I think, contains an element of truth about the Natives. Even today, more than seven decades after Indonesia's independence from the Dutch, many Indonesians take pride in using pretentious intellectual jargon in casual talks or on social media without bothering to grasp their accurate meanings. It is perhaps too painful for them to conduct studies in a systematic manner. They want to look educated without willing to pay the price of becoming one through hard work. Parroting is as prevalent among Indonesians today as it was among Natives in the pre-independence era.

All these foreign words meant that people often ended up speaking only to themselves. Those who had learned to read and write in the village schools never really knew what their leaders were telling them. And these great, impressive foreign words seemed to take on the power that the *mantra* of their ancestors once contained and became new *mantra*. [...] And even the leaders, who themselves did not have sufficient schooling, often did not know the real meaning of the words they used. Inadequate knowledge, unclear concepts were all passed on to followers who themselves were not yet ready(Toer 1992: 272).

There might be some truth in the colonial representation of the

Natives' behavior with foreign words. The villagers attending the Sarekat Islam(SI) rallies might have had difficulty understanding the speeches delivered by their leaders, speeches that might have contained foreign words. But to have power over people, words do not have to be coupled with meanings. Charismatic public speakers such as Soekarno were able to hypnotize a huge crowd of people in political rallies through clever handling of words, native and foreign. The stranger the words, the more powerful they would be. The more they were detached from their meanings, the easier it would be for them to morph into political mantras and incantations.

Transforming words that one does not understand into powerful verbal fetishes occurs not only in modern political arena. It may have been going on in the religious life of the Natives since the 13th century. There are quite a few Indonesian Muslims today who can live with the fact that they understand little of the Arabic prayers that they utter five times a day. They are not driven enough to learn to speak Arabic. There is a chance that to a certain degree, the very foreignness of Qur'anic Arabic contributes to its spiritual power.

6. Marrying European Women: The Triumph of Passion over Reason, or an Emancipatory Strategy?

Unlike their counterparts in the Philippines, the educated Natives of the Indies were still preoccupied with matters of sex. There was plenty of evidence that they were busy working out ways to win European women, or their Eurasian descendants. For most of them, organizations were a new toy(Toer 1992: 209).

In his statement above, Pangemanann seems to imply that one defining characteristic of a rational, educated person is his or her ability to maintain the control of reason over sexual desires. But what Pangemanann finds lacking on the part of the Indies Native elite is precisely this rational restraint. Among indigenous intellectuals, the animal sexual drive, more often than not, gets the upper hand in its struggle with reason. It is interesting to note in this connection that some members of the male Native intellectual elite have the special preference for European or Eurasian women. Following Fanon's line of reasoning in his *Black Skin, White Masks*, there seems to have existed, at the unconscious level at least, the desire among male Native intellectuals to become Europeans. They seem to have wished to be recognized not as little brown men but as white men. The longing for this recognition can only be fulfilled by being loved by a European woman(Fanon 1986). If no white woman loves them, then a Eurasian, a half-white woman, will do as a substitute. The love of a white woman for him is the proof that he deserves what Fanon calls "white love." Underlying the desire for the love of a white woman is the feeling of inferiority of Native men vis-à-vis their European counterparts.

The fact that Pangemanann himself marries a French woman is significant. His critical remark against the Native male elite's sexual yearning for European women could have also been applied to himself. Is he not criticizing himself when he criticizes them?

7. Charisma as the Basis for Native Social Movement

Has[Mr. L.] studied the history of Diponegoro? People also followed him because of his charisma. Half a million people were prepared to die for him. And what kind of organization did his courageous followers have? Like all such organizations. As soon as the object of their awe, the center of charisma, disappeared, either because of age, or because some disaster befell them, it all vanished into nothingness(Toer 1992: 28).

This passage suggests that the Natives in the early twentieth century still relied on charismatic authority in their social organization. Even modern Native organization such as the SDI was considered modern only in its appearance. But the real basis of authority in the SDI was still traditional. The SDI was a charisma-based organization. It occurs to Pangemanann that this is precisely the major weakness of the SDI. Just by destroying the top leader of the SDI, Minke himself, one can dismantle the entire organization. This is why he comes to think that:

[S]ome disaster had to be planned for him[Minke]. Once our *raden mas* was no longer with us, his organization would also vanish, because organizations in the European sense did not yet exist in the Indies(Toer 1992: 28).

The Natives have not cultivated enough legal rationality to be able to manage a genuinely modern organization: an organization “in the European sense,” one in which the legitimacy of an authority is based on impersonal, formal set of rules, rather than on the awe-inspiring personality of the leader. As far as legitimacy of authority is

concerned, there is a grain of truth in Pangemanann's assessment of the SDI as, in a way, a traditional organization in that the SDI was a charisma-based organization despite its being significantly modern in other aspects such as identity, mentality, and organizing techniques.

8. Natives: Wild Beasts Demanding Self-Government?

Why was the Dutch colonial ruler so anxious when the Natives began to demand self-government? Pangemanann offers the reason why:

Self-government would be a beautiful dream for every Native no matter whom, because they would have the chance to fulfill their dreams to let loose all the animal passions that they had suppressed because of their fear of the Government(Toer 1992: 318).

This passage implies that Natives were not fully human as Europeans were. Uncivilized, the Natives had been living like wild beasts. The civilized European settlers came to the Indies to impose human government on the Natives. Peace and order came to prevail in a world that used to be in chaos. But animals were animals. There were limits to how much they could really be humanized. A slogan such as "democracy," borrowed somewhat superficially from school textbooks, newspapers, and magazines had preoccupied the minds of the Natives. They were led to believe that they, too, had the right to self-government. The trouble, however, was that the desire for self-government was motivated primarily by a primitive drive: the

drive "to let loose animal passions" that they had held back under the European government. As a consequence, unable to mobilize reason to hold emotion in check, the Natives were not ready yet to have self-government.

9. No Sense of Justice, No Legal Reasoning Ability

The Indies Natives had no sense of justice, no sense of law. Try taking away the property of a Native. If it is taken by a European or a Eurasian, the Native will not say a word. He does not feel that any of his rights have been violated. They don't understand the meaning of the word 'rights,' they understand nothing about law. All that they know is that there are judges who sentence them (Toer 1992: 60).

Pangemanann's assertion about the Natives hits the nail on the head. Even as late as the New Order era, Indonesians were expected to downplay their rights and to emphasize their obligations. In their childhood, they were taught to grin and bear it when someone violated their rights. Patience was what their parents and teachers recommended. New Order Indonesia was full of people who claimed and exercised their authority over the lives of others: the police, the military, top bureaucrats, political bosses, and major capitalists. But the idea of rights did not carry more weight than wealth and power in the everyday life of New Order Indonesia.

"Obedience," "conformity," and "compliance" seem to have been some of the legal keywords in the lives of people in premodern and colonial Indonesia. Legal discourses and practices were one-sided and

asymmetrical: there were obligations but next to no rights for them. The rulers, be they colonial or traditional, were sovereign but the Native subjects were not. When feudal rulers protected their subjects, the protection was not provided as a right. It was a favor. Commoners were not in a position to demand anything from their rulers. Rulers were rulers not because they received a mandate from the people. Rulers were rulers because God had conferred on them the authority to rule over people.

The time came when at last the Natives encountered the word “rights”. But this word, “*hak*,” was a loan word anyway, borrowed from the Arabic. The advent of this word in the Javanese society did not mean the advent of a new social order that supported the implementation of the concept attached to the word. As late as the 1990s, Indonesians still had to struggle to protect human rights from violation by the military.

It is sad that Pangemanann’s acerbic statement about the Native society as one that knew no sense of justice and no sense of law was true at the colonial era as it was in, say, the New Order era(1966 - 1998), despite the novelistic fact that Pangemanann is a scholar-spy working for the Dutch colonial government.

10. The Javanese: People without Principles?

As far as the Native’s capacity for rational thinking is concerned, Jacques Pangemanann takes a skeptic view. The encounter with European sciences through the medium of modern Western style education, he argues, will not help the Natives to develop a rational

attitude toward the world. It will only increase their level of intelligence. In his own words, Pangemanann says:

I think it is only their brains that are developing. Their mentality remains Javanese, carrying that burden of three hundred years of defeat—dispirited, frightened, submissive—or the reverse of all this, as compensation for all these things(Toer 1992: 76).

This passage suggests that rational capacity among the Natives cannot thrive because for too long they have been trapped in the straitjacket of a loser's mentality which, in turn, is deeply rooted in a sort of a cultural suicide. Echoing Mr. L., the archivist, Pangemanann writes that this cultural suicide consists in the Javanese having abandoned all their principles due to their "mad search for sameness in everything"(Toer 1992: 74). When, for example, the Javanese, as people without principles, came into conflict with Europeans, as peoples who were more principled, the outcome of such conflict was the utter defeat on the part of the Javanese.

It is as though the Javanese were afraid to suffer headache from sustained, intensive thinking. In order to eschew the headache, many a Javanese chose to think in a safe, sluggish manner. They failed to notice that by so doing they eroded their capacity to adapt intelligently to a brutal, fast-changing world. They were unaware that by so doing they ended up on the losing side in the struggle against peoples who dared risk terrible headaches inflicted by prolonged, heavy thinking. Hard thinkers choose to conquer nature. Soft thinkers would rather see themselves as part of nature. This, Pangemanann says, is the "unbridgeable gap between the European and Native way

of seeing the world”(Toer 1992: 166).

III. Conclusions

By examining the colonial discourse on race, reason, and emotion as articulated by Jacques Pangemanann, the narrator of Pramoedya Ananta Toer's *House of Glass*, this paper has produced a number of findings. First, Pangemanann is torn between two positions. On one hand, there is this colonial need in him to assert that Natives do not make(intellectual) history, for the way they think about the world has never changed. On the other, Pangemanann cannot help but acknowledge that at least a segment of the Native population(the Western educated ones) has manifested changes over time: by absorbing certain elements of European modernity, they have become, at least, “half Europeans.” Of these Natives, some are political troublemakers like Minke who are undermining the colonial order and should thus be immediately brought under control. In thinking this way, Pangemanann shows his blindness to the fact that Natives have historical agency and that they had already displayed a tendency toward modernity even prior to their contact with Europeans.

Second, over-generalization leads Pangemanann to see among Natives the lack of courage to think independently. What motivates this perception is the denial that Native commoners(the *rakyat*) have their own reasoning and genuine reasons to participate in political mass organizations like Sarekat Islam and to seek favorable changes in the colonial order. Pangemanann's denial results in his belief that

the rakyat engage in political activism mainly because they are provoked to do so by Native intellectuals like Minke and his colleagues.

Third, Pangemanann claims that the modernity of Native sub-intellectuals is nothing but an ornament. In doing so, he chooses to deny that modernity—not only in the colony but also in the metropole—comes in at least two different but intertwined shapes: softcore and hardcore. He loses sight of the fact that modernization is a learning process. Starting from softcore, popular modernity when young, some Natives may attain hardcore, high-brow modernity in their more mature years.

Fourth, Pangemanann expresses the familiar colonial claim that being not fully civilized or being politically immature, Natives are far from ready for self-government. To prevent Natives from hurting themselves and others, they need Europeans to lead and teach them. But the fact is that throughout the first half of 20th century, nationalist Natives were training themselves for eventual self-rule; they were building something like “a state within a state.” Rather than help them out, agents of Dutch colonialism like Pangemanann sabotaged these Natives’ efforts.

On the other hand, one of Pramoedya’s strengths as the author of *HG* is that he manages to develop full-fledged and complex characters rather than caricatures. He goes so far as to put bitter truths in the pen of a colonial scholar-cum-secret agent like Jacques Pangemanann.

Pangemanann’s colonial discourse contains nuggets of partial truths about the Natives in the Dutch East Indies of the late colonial era. The partial truths carry Pramoedya’s insider critique of his own

people, namely twentieth-century Indonesians. Through Pangemanann's colonial discourse, Pramoedya offers a diagnosis of what went wrong not only with the Natives in the Dutch colonial era but also Indonesians under the New Order. In *HG*, he calls attention to a set of enduring psycho-political defects that his New Order Indonesian readers had yet to overcome: the lack of sense of justice, the absence of the concept of rights, the fatalistic obsession with harmony to the point of sacrificing principles, the dominance of charisma-based authority over legal-rationality-based authority, and the lack of courage to think independently and intensively. By doing so, Pramoedya makes *HG* highly relevance to his contemporary Indonesian audience. It can be argued that to some degree, these psycho-political defects are still around even in post-Soeharto Indonesia.

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<국문요약>

Race, Reason, and Emotion:
Reading Pramoedya Ananta Toer's *House of Glass*

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20세기 초, 네덜란드령 인도네시아에서 식민 정부는 내부 첩보 활동과 학술 연구 진작을 통해 원주민들에 대한 전략적 지식을 축적했다. 이 지식을 활용해 식민 정부는 원주민들을 통제 하에 두고자 했다. <우리의 집 (House of Glass)> 은 프라 무디아 아난따뚜르(Pramoedya Ananta Toer)의 “부루 4부작 (Buru Quartet)” 중 마지막 작품이다. 이 소설에서 작가는 군도에서 민족주의 운동을 감시하고 추적하는 내부 스파이들의 활동과 원주민에 대한 학술 연구라는 실제 역사에 대해 허구적 상상력을 더하여 이야기하고 있다. 이 논문은 식민 국가의 “지식 창출” 행위와 원주민들을 둘러싼 인종과 합리성 (reason) 등에 대한 식민 담론을 분석한다. 식민 담론은 원주민들에 대한 유럽 식민주들의 인종적 편견만을 내포하고 있는 듯 보이지만 사실 원주민들에 대한 객관적이고 진실적인 평가도 담고 있다. 프라 무디아는 자크 빵에만 (Jacques Pangemanann) 이라는 소설 속 화자가 원주민들을 바라보는 방식을 통하여 식민 시대뿐만 아니라 작가가 작품을 쓰던 신질서기 (New Order)에도 여전히 “취약하고 힘 없는” 인도네시아인들에 대해 비판하고 있다.

