

= Belenggu =

Belenggoe (Perfected Spelling : Belenggu ; translated to English as Shackles) is a novel by Indonesian author Armijn Pane . The novel follows the love triangle between a doctor , his wife , and his childhood friend , which eventually causes each of the three characters to lose the ones they love . Originally published by the literary magazine Poedjangga Baroe in three instalments from April to June 1940 , it was the magazine 's only published novel . It was also the first Indonesian psychological novel .

Belenggu was based on themes present in two of Pane 's early short stories : " Barang Tiada Berharga " (" Worthless Thing " ; 1935) and " Lupa " (" Forget " ; 1936) . The resulting novel , written to represent a stream of consciousness and using ellipses and monologues to show internal struggle , was very different from earlier Indonesian novels . Unlike said works , which kept to traditional themes such as good versus evil , Belenggu mainly focused on its characters ' psychological conflict . It also showed modernity and traditionalism as a binary system , unable to reach a compromise .

After completion , Belenggu was offered to the Dutch colonial government 's state publisher , Balai Pustaka , in 1938 , but rejected as " immoral " . It was then picked up by Poedjangga Baroe . Initial critical reception to the novel was mixed . Proponents argued that it served as an honest representation of the internal conflicts faced by Indonesian intellectuals , while opponents dismissed the novel as " pornographic " because of its inclusion of prostitution and adultery as normal facets of life . Later reviews have been more positive : in 1976 , the writer Muhammad Balfas called Belenggu " in every respect the best novel of pre @-@ war Indonesian literature " . The novel has been translated into several languages , including into English in 1989 .

= = Background = =

The first modern Indonesian novels published by the state @-@ owned publisher of the Dutch East Indies Balai Pustaka were often written to show intergenerational conflict and conflict between traditional (adat) and modern culture . These novels , published beginning in the 1920s , spearheaded the use of Indonesian as a national language . This national awakening , which was also realised through political actions , was followed in July 1933 with the establishment of the literary magazine Poedjangga Baroe (New Writer) . The literary magazine , which Belenggu 's author Armijn Pane helped establish , was the first written mainly in Indonesian and with exclusively Indonesian editors .

Of the staff and contributors to Poedjangga Baroe , Pane was one of the biggest proponents for Westernisation . While others , such as his elder brother Sanusi , stressed the need for " Asian " values , the younger Pane disregarded conventional Indonesian morality . The literary historian Heather Sutherland writes that this may have been a result of Pane 's education at a school for Dutch children ; the others received Dutch @-@ language education for Indonesians .

= = Plot = =

The novel begins as Sukartono (Tono) , a Dutch @-@ trained doctor , and his wife Sumartini (Tini) , residents of Batavia (modern day Jakarta) , are suffering a marital breakdown . Tono is busy treating his patients , leaving no time for him to be with Tini . In response , Tini has become active in numerous social organisations and women 's groups , leaving her little time to deal with household work . This further distances Tono from her , as he expects her to behave like a traditional wife and be waiting for him at home , with dinner ready , when he returns from work .

One day , Tono receives a call from a Miss Eni , who asks him to treat her at a hotel . After Tono arrives at the hotel where Eni is staying , he discovers that she is actually his childhood friend Rohayah (Yah) . Yah , who has had romantic feelings for Tono since childhood , begins seducing him , and after a while he accepts her advances . The two begin furtively meeting , often taking long walks at the port Tanjung Priok . When Tini goes to Surakarta to attend a women 's congress , Tono

decides to stay at Yah 's house for a week .

While at Yah 's , Tono and Yah discuss their pasts . Tono reveals that after he graduated from elementary school in Bandung , where he studied with Yah , he attended medical school in Surabaya and married Tini for her beauty . Meanwhile , Yah was forced to marry an older man and move to Palembang . After deciding that life as a wife was not for her , she moved to Batavia and became a prostitute , before serving as a Dutchman 's mistress for three years . Tono falls further in love with Yah , as he feels that she is more likely to be a proper wife for him ; Yah , however , does not consider herself ready for marriage .

Tono , a fan of traditional kroncong music , is asked to judge a singing competition at Gambir Market . While there , he discovers that Yah is also his favourite singer , who sings under the pseudonym Siti Hayati . At Gambir , he also meets with his old friend Hartono , a political activist with the political party Partindo , who enquires about Tini . On a later date , Hartono visits Tono 's home and meets Tini . It is revealed that Tini was romantically involved with Hartono while the two of them were in university , where Tini surrendered her virginity to him ; this action , unacceptable in traditional culture , made her disgusted with herself and unable to love . Hartono had made the situation worse by breaking off their relationship through a letter . When Hartono asks her to take him back , Tini refuses .

Tini discovers that Tono has been having an affair , and is furious . She then goes to meet Yah . However , after a long talk she decides that Yah is better for Tono and tells the former prostitute to marry him ; Tini then moves back to Surabaya , leaving Tono in Batavia . However , Yah feels that she would only ruin Tono 's respected status as a doctor because of her history . She decides to move to New Caledonia , leaving a note for Tono as well as a record with a song recorded especially for him as a way of saying goodbye . On the way to New Caledonia , Yah pines for Tono and hears his voice calling from afar , giving a speech on the radio . Tono , now alone , dedicates himself to his work in an attempt to fill the void left in his heart .

= = Characters = =

Sukartono

Sukartono (abbreviated as Tono) is a doctor , Tini 's husband and Yah 's lover . He treats poor patients for free and thus is well @-@ liked by the general populace . He is also a big fan of traditional kroncong music : in medical school he preferred to sing rather than study , and as a doctor he keeps a radio in his treatment room . Suffering from loneliness in his loveless marriage with the modern @-@ minded Tini , he becomes involved with Yah , whom he perceives as being more willing to play the traditional wife . However , when Tini and Yah leave him , he is left alone .

The Australian scholar of Indonesian literature A. Johns writes that Tono 's inner turmoil is caused by his inability to understand Tini , Yah , or the bacteria which he must kill to cure his patients .

Sumartini

Sumartini (abbreviated as Tini) is Tono 's ultra @-@ modern wife . While in university , she was very popular and enjoyed partying . During this time she lost her virginity to Hartono , an act which is viewed as unacceptable in traditional Indonesian culture ; when Hartono left her , Tini became increasingly aloof and distant from men . After marrying Tono , she felt increasingly lonely and became involved in social work as an effort to give her life meaning . After learning of Tono 's infidelity and seeing that Yah could take better care of him , Tini leaves her husband and moves to Surabaya .

Yoseph Yapi Taum , a lecturer at Sanata Dharma University in Yogyakarta , views Tini 's aloof nature as a major force driving Tono to Yah ; her lifestyle , of which Tono is not a part , alienates him and drives him to find a more traditional woman . Tham Seong Chee , a political scientist from Singapore , views her as a weak @-@ willed character , unwilling to act before meeting Hartono again and even then unable to solve her marital difficulties with Tono . He also sees her as being fettered by her own values , which are incompatible with those held by the general Indonesian populace . The Indonesian writer and literary critic Goenawan Mohamad views her as driven in part by the stress placed on her by her husband 's expectations .

Rohayah

Rohayah (also known by the pseudonyms Nyonya Eni and Siti Hayati ; abbreviated Yah) is Tono 's childhood friend and later lover , as well as a popular kroncong singer . After Tono , who is three years her elder , graduated from elementary school , Yah was forcibly married to a man twenty years her senior and brought from Bandung to Palembang . After escaping him and returning to Bandung , where she found that her parents had died , she moved to Batavia and became a prostitute ; she also became a popular kroncong singer under the pseudonym Siti Hayati . When she discovers that Tono has become a doctor in Batavia , she pretends to be a patient and seduces him . Although the two fall deeply in love , Yah decides to leave Tono and move to New Caledonia because she feels that society would view the doctor poorly if he married a former prostitute .

Tham sees Yah as being a good match for Tono in personality , as she shows a willingness to serve as the traditional wife . The American scholar of Indonesian literature Harry Aveling writes that Yah 's employment as a prostitute was likely a capitulation by Pane to cultural constraints ; Indonesian readers at the time would not have accepted Tono having an affair with someone of the same socio @-@ economic status . Mohamad describes her as being fatalistic and notes that she downplays her past by saying that any of a thousand girls in Tanjung Priok could tell the same story ; he found her touching without being melodramatic , and notes that Yah was the first prostitute featured portrayed sympathetically in an Indonesian work .

Hartono

Hartono is Tini 's lover from university ; he was also Tono 's friend . After hearing that Tini enjoys partying , he approaches her and they begin dating . After they have sex , he breaks off their relationship through a letter . He then drops out of university and becomes involved with the nascent nationalist movement , following future @-@ president Sukarno ; these acts cause his family to disown him . He later comes to Batavia to search for Tono and is surprised to find that Tini has married the doctor . Hartono asks her to run away with him , but she refuses . He then goes to Surabaya .

Clive Christie , a lecturer on Southeast Asian Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London , describes Hartono as the only overtly political character in the novel .

Women 's group

The various members of Tini 's women 's group , including Mrs. Sutatmo , Mrs. Padma , Mrs. Rusdio , and Aminah , aid her in planning different social events . Mrs. Rusdio is Tini 's friend from university . Aminah was one of Tini 's competitors for Tono and enjoys interfering in the couple 's lives . The other two disapprove of Tini 's modernness and her lack of attention to Tono .

Servants

Tono and Tini are served by two men , Karno and Abdul . Karno , Tono 's loyal manservant , dislikes Tini and considers her overly emotional . Abdul is their driver , who usually drives Tono to meet his patients .

= = Influences = =

Bakri Siregar , an Indonesian literary critic associated with the socialist literary organisation Lekra , notes that Pane was influenced in part by Sigmund Freud 's theories on psychoanalysis ; he writes that it is most evident in the dialogue , especially that of Tini . Taum , while noting psychoanalysis ' influence , notes that the novel follows the individual characters stream of consciousness , which gives the reader a greater understanding of the characters and their conflicts . The novel was written in the middle of the writer 's career , and two of Pane 's earlier short stories , " Barang Tiada Berharga " (" Worthless Thing " ; 1935) and " Lupa " (" Forget " ; 1936) , contained plot points used in *Belenggu* . " *Barang Tiada Berharga* " also dealt with a doctor and his wife , named Pardi and Haereni , who were characterised in a similar manner as Sukartono and Sumartini , while " *Lupa* " introduced the main character Sukartono . As the reigning Dutch colonial government forbade the involvement of politics in literature , Pane minimised the explicit effects of colonialism in the novel . Taum writes that *Belenggu* 's theme of contrasting modernity and traditionalism may have been influenced by , or even written as a response to , Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana 's 1936 novel

Layar Terkembang (With Sails Unfurled) , which dealt with a similar theme but fully supported modernisation .

= = Style = =

Belenggu uses ellipses and internal monologues heavily to represent the main characters ' turmoil ; the Dutch scholar of Indonesian literature A. Teeuw calls it a " three @-@ pronged interior monologue " , noting that the novel has minimal use of descriptive passages and dialogue . Unlike works published by Balai Pustaka , Belenggu does not provide full exposition ; instead , it only explicitly states key points and leaves the rest for the reader to interpret , thus inviting more active participation . Siregar notes that the characters are introduced one at a time , almost as if the novel were a film ; he writes that , as a result , at times the transition between characters is unclear .

Unlike authors of earlier works published by Balai Pustaka , Pane does not use old Malay proverbs ; he instead uses similes . Another way in which he writes differently from earlier writers is by limiting his use of the Dutch language ; earlier writers such as Abdul Muis and Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana had used Dutch words ? representative of the dominant colonial power ? to illustrate the intellectualism of the main characters . Instead , in Belenggu Pane relies on the Indonesianised loanwords , with a glossary of difficult or uncommon words provided with early editions of the novel . Siregar wrote that Pane 's language reflected the actual use of Indonesian well .

= = Symbolism = =

According to Taum , the title Belenggu reflects the inner conflicts the main characters face that limit their actions . Taum points to the climax of the novel ? in which Rohayah refuses to marry Sukartono because if she were to marry him he would lose face because of her past ? as a prime example of these limitations . Siregar notes that such a reading is supported by dialogue between Hartono and Sukartono , in which they note that humans are inherently held back by their reminiscences of the past .

Uncommonly for Indonesian literature during this time period , Belenggu 's chapters were labelled with only a number ? other works , such as Abdul Muis ' 1928 novel Salah Asuhan (Wrong Upbringing) , gave both a number and subtitle to the chapters . According to Taum , this change in style represents a stream of consciousness , as opposed to the earlier style which kept chapters separate .

= = Themes = =

= = = General = = =

Teeuw notes that , unlike most Indonesian novels at the time , Belenggu did not feature a good and pure protagonist in a struggle against an evil antagonist , or present conflict and differences between generations . It also eliminated the common themes of forced marriage and the youth 's nonacceptance of adat (traditional culture) . Instead , it showed a love triangle ? common in Western literature but then unheard of in Indonesian literature ? without an indication of whether any characters were good , evil , right , or wrong . Teeuw writes that the novel portrayed the interior struggle of a " new kind of human " , one who is the result of a mixture of Eastern and Western cultures . According to Christie , earlier themes in Indonesian literature such as feudalism and forced marriage are not intrinsically significant to the character 's lives in Belenggu .

= = = Living in the past = = =

A main theme found in Belenggu , reflected in the title , is if one is " shackled " to the past , then one cannot flourish ; Taum notes that this is reflected in Hartono 's dialogue to Tini , as follows :

" Mengapa tidak ? Mengapa bergantung kepada zaman dahulu ? ... Jangan dibesar @-@ besarkan , jangan persusah perkara mudah , nanti pikiran sebagai dibelenggu Lupakanlah , matikanlah angan @-@ angan . Lepaskanlah belenggu ini . Buat apa tergantung pada zaman dulu ? "

" Why not ? Why be hung up on the past ? ... Don 't blow it out of proportion , don 't complicate simple things , your thoughts will be as if they are shackled Forget it , kill those reveries . Release these shackles . Why be hung up on the past ?

Several further instances have been expounded by critics . Taum notes that Yah 's guilt over her past as a prostitute leads her to the (unfounded) fear that Tono would leave her if their relationship were known ; her guilt ultimately causes their separation , while Tono feels nostalgic for the past , in which he felt happier . Balfas notes that a factor driving Tono from Tini is the latter 's former relationship with Hartono ; due to her guilt over the affair , she is unable to express her love for the doctor . Siregar writes that such a theme is reflected in dialogue between Tono and Hartono , from which he suggests the novel derives its title . Balfas writes that there is no solution to the human problems presented in the novel .

= = = Modernity and traditionalism = = =

Taum indicates that Belenggu presents modernity and traditionalism as a binary system , contrasting the new with the old . For example , Sukartono , a doctor (a position considered a symbol of modernity) , is obsessed with the past , including his schoolmate Rohayah , and prefers traditional kroncong music over modern genres . Through the contrast of Sukartono and his ultra @-@ modern , emancipatory wife Sumartini , Pane emphasises that modernity does not necessarily bring happiness . Aveling agrees , writing that the conflict arises over Tini 's refusal to " mother " her husband as expected from a traditional wife . According to Taum , Tono wishes for Tini to perform traditional duties , such as removing his shoes . However , Tini , refuses to do so and instead keeps herself busy with social activities . This need for a wife who behaves as he wishes ultimately becomes a factor in his falling for Yah , who does everything expected from a traditional wife . However , in the end neither modern nor traditional values alone are enough to guarantee happiness .

= = = Intellectuals in society = = =

Christie notes that Belenggu contains a strong sense of alienation . He writes that the characters seem to be part of a " society suspended in a vacuum " , without an explicit connection to colonialism but also unable to come to terms with traditional mores . Christie describes Sukartono 's relationship with Rohayah as symbolic of attempts by intellectual to engage with the masses through a shared popular culture , but ultimately failing ; Taum notes such an thing occurring in a scene where Tini plays a sonata by Ludwig van Beethoven on her violin in front of a group of regular citizens who prefer local music . Teeuw agrees , writing that the novel shows a psychological burden borne by native intellectuals who found themselves physically fit for a modern existence , but mentally unprepared for the transition from a traditional lifestyle to a more modern one . He notes that the sceptical , modern intellectual , a category in which he includes Tono and Tini , was uncommon in local literature at the time . Tham sees the underlying message of Yah 's refusal to marry Tono as that " morals and ethical standards are frequently beyond the ken of intellect , reason , or rationality " , indicating that intellectuals may not be able to collaborate effectively with the masses . Johns notes that , although the Tono and Tini are thought to be decisive persons by society , they are actually confused and unsure .

= = Release = =

Belenggu was submitted to Balai Pustaka for publication in 1938 , but was accepted because of its perceived dissonance with public morality , particularly its portrayal of adultery and prostitution ? key components of the plot ? as acceptable . Eventually Belenggu was picked up by Poedjangga Baroe

and published in a serial format in three editions between April and June 1940 . Belenggu was the only novel published by the magazine and the first Indonesian psychological novel . In 1969 , Belenggu received the first annual Literary Prize from the government of Indonesia , along with Marah Rusli 's Sitti Nurbaya (1922) , Salah Asuhan , and Achdiat Karta Mihardja 's Atheis (Atheist ; 1949) .

Belenggu has been translated into multiple languages : in 1962 , Mandarin as ?? (Zhìgù) ; in 1964 , Russian as Okovy ; in 1965 , Malay under the original title ; in 1989 , English as Shackles ; and in 1993 , German as In Fesseln . The Russian translation was done by A Pavlenko . The English translation , published by the Lontar Foundation , was done by John H. McGlynn . The German translation was done by Renate Lödel . As of 2008 the Indonesian @-@ language edition has seen twenty @-@ one printings .

== Reception ==

Belenggu received a mixed reception upon its release . Proponents of the novel stated that it was daring , as it dealt with themes based on societal realities . For example , journalist S. K. Trimurti wrote that the novel clearly reflected issues faced by highly educated Indonesians in dealing with traditional culture . However , opponents of the novel dismissed it as " pornographic " , emphasising traditionally taboo acts like prostitution and adultery . The December 1940 issue of Poedjangga Baroe included comments from several other writers and literary critics , including Alisjahbana , HB Jassin , Karim Halim , and S. Djojopoespito . Alisjahbana wrote that the novel was fatalistic and defeatist , as he felt it did not portray the freedom of spirit necessary for people to choose their own destiny ; he decried the plot as lacking causality . Jassin found the characters to resemble caricatures , as their emotions were overly melodramatic , but considered the novel representative of works yet to come . Halim wrote that Belenggu represented a new school in Indonesian literature , with new language and new stories . Djojopoespito decried the book 's language , which he did not consider smooth , and plotlines , which he found uninteresting . According to Teeuw , the initial mixed reception was due in part to Indonesian readers ? accustomed to idealised literature ? being shocked by the realistic portrayals in Belenggu .

Later reviews have generally been more positive . In 1955 Johns wrote that Belenggu was a " great advance on any previous work " , with which the Indonesian novel came to maturity ; he praises the structure , plot , and presentation . Siregar , writing in 1964 , praised the novel 's diction , noting that Pane handled technical discussions especially well . Jassin wrote in 1967 that , although he found the characters still came across as caricatures , the novel was capable of making readers stop and think about modern conditions . In 1969 , Indonesian writer and literary critic Ajip Rosidi wrote that the novel was more interesting than earlier works because of its multi @-@ interpretable ending . The Indonesian writer and literary critic Muhammad Balfas wrote in 1976 that Belenggu was " in every respect the best novel of pre @-@ war Indonesian literature " . In his 1980 book on Indonesian literature , Teeuw wrote that despite several flaws in the psychological portrayal of the main characters , Belenggu was the only novel from before the Indonesian National Revolution in which a Western reader would feel truly involved ; he also called the novel Pane 's greatest contribution to Indonesia literature . Tham , writing in 1981 , described the novel as the best reflection of the then @-@ growing consciousness that Western values , such as individualism and intellectualism , contradicted traditional values .