

**DANCING WITH AUSTRALIAN FEMINISM: HELEN
GARNER'S *POSTCARDS FROM SURFERS* VIEWED
FROM A BUGINESE PERSPECTIVE WITH A PARTIAL
TRANSLATION INTO INDONESIAN**

By

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To my beloved parents and husband

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Abstract

This study is a literary analysis on five stories from Helen Garner's *Postcards from Surfers*. This study also translates these five stories from English into Indonesian and discusses some challenges that occurred in the process of translation.

The aim of the study is to investigate Garner's feminist ideas as reflected in the stories from *Postcards from Surfers* viewed from a Buginese perspective. The five stories are "Postcard from Surfers", "La Chance Existe", "The Art of Life", "All Young Bloody Catholics", and "Civilization and Discontents". Through these stories, how Garner expresses her feminist ideas are juxtaposed with Buginese culture.

By using Edward Said's work on contrapuntal reading, Mohanty's feminist-as-explorer model, and Lazar's Critical Discourse Analysis, I move back and forth between Buginese culture and Australian culture to consider how Australian women and men are represented and how mainstream Australian society engages with, or challenges discourses of patriarchy and power. This movement back and forth I have theorised as "dancing".

My study examines the potential dialogue between Australian culture and Buginese culture in terms of feminism and its resulting cultural hybridity where some Australian feminist thoughts are applicable to Buginese culture but some are not. From this dialogue, it is found that both Australian women and Buginese women have their own sets of issues stemming from male domination. The way they empower themselves to resist are also different. Therefore, my study centres a Buginese standpoint while dialoguing with Australian feminisms.

Introduction

buranê mallémpa', makkunrai ma'jujung

(men carry on their shoulders, women carry on their heads)

Buginese saying

In the first part of this Introduction, I present the rationale for choosing short stories as the objects of analysis and for taking gender relation and inequality as feminist issues to be analysed. I also present the scope and limits, the outline, and the significance of the study. Following these, I equip the reader with some historical background of individuals and movements in Indonesia that struggled for women's equality and rights. I also provide cultural information about Buginese and cultural attitudes toward women. I end by presenting my personal connection to Australian feminism starting from experiences living in patriarchal society and the relation between the Australian Culture and Literature course in the English Department at my home institution, Hasanuddin University, with my study on Helen Garner's *Postcards from Surfers*.

This study as a whole consists of two parts. The first presents a literary analysis on Helen Garner's *Postcards from Surfers* viewed from a Buginese perspective. The second presents some challenges in translating *Postcards from Surfers* into Indonesian. The Indonesian translation of this work is a significant part of the project. It does contribute to the literary analysis of the work. The whole translation of the five stories including "Kartu Pos Dari Surfer" ("KPDS"), "La Chance Existe" ("LCE"), "Kehidupan Seni" ("KS"), "Anak-Anak Muda Katolik Itu" ("AAMKI"), and "Peradaban dan Kekecewaan" ("PDK") can be read in Appendix.

I have chosen five short stories from Helen Garner's *Postcards from Surfers* (*PFS*) to be the objects of this study and to be translated into Indonesian. The five stories include "Postcards from Surfers" ("PFS"), "La Chance Existe" ("LCE"), "The Life of Art" ("TLOA"), "All Those Bloody Young Catholics" ("ATBYC"), and "Civilization and Its Discontents" ("CAID").

Rationale

Endang writes that short stories are becoming more popular in the industrial era in Indonesia and they have become vehicles for writers to articulate the realities of social life such as poverty, marginalization, and unfairness (141-144). In addition, Noor states that the short story has become a new literary form particularly effective for assisting writers in their goal to help the marginalized because its shortness can function as a weapon to directly "scoop up" the targeted issues and "knock them out at a blow" (Endang 144-145). Indeed, Helen Garner uses short stories in a way similar to that described by Endang: as a defiant act towards the government and current circumstances (145). My study of Helen Garner's short stories explores the way she her stories engage with and resist gender relations and inequality between men and women in Australian society through four themes prevalent in the narratives: the kitchen, landscape, language, and sexuality.

Indonesia has achieved considerable progress in addressing the third Millennium Development Goal (MDG), the target of which is to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education (Edmunds 2). However, Edmunds adds, that despite the progress made towards gender equity, the core structure of gender beliefs has not changed due to the result of hegemonic cultural beliefs about gender (1). In addition, Edmunds confesses that Indonesia has a long record of legislation empowering women,

but the biggest hurdle that women face in the fight for rights is the cultural perception that women are not equal to men (3-4). Meanwhile, women in Indonesia are marginalized socially, culturally, economically, and politically, even though, demographically speaking, they constitute the majority (Seda 1). This is in line with what Parawansa has observed in the political arena: in 2002, women only held 9.2% of the positions in Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat (People's Consultative Assembly of the Republic of Indonesia) compared to men who held 90.8 % (45). The reason for this, states Parawansa, is that national and local development programs do not reflect principles of political equality and social justice, or the needs and interests of women (1). Therefore, strengthening women's political participation is a necessity. Nurland identifies three problems and obstacles faced by women. First, Indonesian national culture is both feudalistic and patriarchal. Second, society has adopted a very conservative understanding and interpretation of various religious teachings. Third, state hegemony is still too dominant and this is reflected by the state institutions which support the patriarchal culture at both national and local levels (Seda 2). Like Seda, Utomo also argues that in the face of rapid increase in women's labour force participation and educational attainment, gender disparities in other measures of labour force outcomes in Indonesia remain persistent due to a tendency to place women as secondary earners (1).

The realities that women are still marginalized and that gender inequality and disparities persist in Indonesian society become a motivation to carry out this study. The opportunity to study Australian culture and literature in the native country, allows me to increase my global and local complexity as an individual what Pieterse refers to as “a process of hybridization” and to become as Beck terms an “actor” and “manager” of my life, building social links and networks with a “polygamy of place” (Edmunds 1).

Gaining greater autonomy and reconceptualising both masculinity and femininity are also dominant themes in Garner's work. Edmunds writes that interactions across regions, countries and continents through globalization profoundly changes and influences everyday life and have the potential to impact gender relations within the family, community, and workplace (1). In addition, Connell argues that gender structures are always changing as humans create new situations (Edmunds 2). The knowledge that informs this study and will inform the teaching of Australian literature will therefore prove very useful for providing students with a sense of the cross-cultural and the global in order to strengthen the implementation of gender equality, especially in Buginese society. In other words, this study results in hybridized knowledge of Australian concepts of feminism and Buginese societies, that offers a reference for students to understand and engage with different feminist thought. By learning how feminism is understood differently by Australians and Buginese, they can decide what aspects of feminist ideas from a Western perspective can be applied to Buginese culture without transgressing Buginese customs and habits.

Voragen writes that literature is a useful tool for gaining insight into a foreign culture, and to do so, it is best to become familiar with another culture by reading its literary works through translation (38). Meanwhile, Bassnett states that translation involves intercultural transfer between the original and its destination (Da Sousa Correa and Owens 168). Therefore, this study also translates the five short stories of Helen Garner's *Postcards from Surfers* into Indonesian. This translation is essential because it facilitates tertiary students a way to learn more about Australian culture. Furthermore, it will also help the students to discuss more easily the stories and to translate feminist ideas from the Western context into the Buginese context.

There are few Australian literary works that have been translated into Indonesian. Those that have include Peter Carey's *True History of the Kelly Gang* and *My Life is a Fake*, James Vance Marshall's *Walkabout*, Emma Darcy's *The Billionaire Bridegroom*, Sally Morgan's *My Place*, and Colleen McCullough's *The Thorn Birds*. My translation of five short stories from *Postcards from Surfers* will complement these works and will enrich the diversity of Indonesian translations of world literary works, the bulk of which tends to come from the United Kingdom, America, the Middle East, and Japan.

Scope and limits

Helen Garner's *Postcards from Surfers* consists of eleven short stories. This analysis focuses on five of them, which are chosen based on the feminist issues they represent. My analysis has been grouped into four themes: the kitchen, language, landscape, and sexuality. These themes are analysed from a Buginese feminist perspective. The five short stories chosen for analysis are also the ones translated into Indonesian. Due to the time constraints involved in the completion for a doctoral thesis, I have not translated and analysed all eleven stories. Instead, I have chosen to forgo quantity for quality, and while I hope someday to complete the translation of all eleven stories from *Postcards from Surfers*, I feel that the five stories I analyse and translate here will be sufficient for the project.

Outline

In the Introduction, I provide the rationale, scope and limits, outline, and significance of the study. I also provide historical background about the Buginese, Indonesian women's efforts and movements, and my personal connection to Australian feminism.

In Chapter One, I provide a background of the theories and methodologies which underpin the analysis, including the notion of “dancing” as a postcolonial feminist praxis. For literary analysis, I take Edward Said’s work on contrapuntal reading and employ it as a signifier of movement between insider and outsider (of Australian feminism). I also take Mohanty’s feminist-explorer model to position Australian women as ‘foreign’ (Western), to make them the object and subject of engaging knowledge of feminism, and to juxtapose that knowledge with Buginese culture, especially with the concept of *siri*’ which is inherent in Buginese female identity. The application of Critical Discourse Analysis is also taken to integrate three guiding principles of inclusive feminist inquiry to build complex analyses, avoid erasure and specify location. For the translation part, I apply both foreignization and domestication strategies. These strategies are applied with some considerations of the skopos and register of the Indonesian translation. I also use additional adjustment techniques including addition, interpolation, and footnote.

In Chapter Two, I introduce Helen Garner and her works. This chapter consists of a biographical sketch, critical reception of Garner’s works, Garner’s controversial feminist approach and reception, and an overview of *Postcards from Surfers*.

In Chapter Three, I present a critical analysis of the five short stories of *Postcards from Surfers* viewed from a Buginese perspective with an awareness of potential issues presented by Western feminism. The sequence of analysis is centred on the issues of feminism through the themes of the Kitchen, Language, Landscape, and Sexuality. In these themes I personify my movement from engaging with Australian feminism and Buginese culture as “dancing”.

In Chapter Four, I present some challenges that occurred when translating *Postcards from Surfers* especially words and expressions related to the four themes of the Kitchen, Language, Landscape, and Sexuality.

Chapter Five concludes my thesis with my account of hybridized knowledge of the different concepts of feminism as understood by Australians and Buginese to open a space for continued dialogue between the two.

Significance

This study provides pioneering research that engages with Australian feminism from a Buginese perspective. This is because it provides a clear understanding of the different ways Australians and Buginese view the concept of feminism. Therefore, it will be used to engage students and readers with Australian feminism, literature and culture in order to form a comparative perspective with Buginese culture. The analysis of Garner's work and the translation of her five short stories will support the teaching of gender education through literary-based materials in Indonesia. Last but not least, this study will promote Australian culture and literature to Indonesians and will build a cross-cultural networking and understanding between Australian and Buginese societies.

In terms of translation, this study will enrich the Indonesian translation of Australian literary works and will contribute to the course of translation practice especially in translating words and expressions related to feminist issues.

Historical Background of Indonesian Women's Efforts and Movements

The idea of improving the quality of women's lives and experiences is not new to Indonesians. There are many women who campaigned for women's rights, as

recorded in the history of Indonesia. Before feminism was popular, Kartini, the daughter of an aristocratic Javanese family during the Dutch colonial period, had already fought to increase the status of women, which was subordinated to men. During this period, Indonesian women lived in the shackles of patriarchal society, which prevented them from pursuing further education, secluded them for marriage, and supported polygamous marriages. Kartini experienced this situation when at the age of 12 she was asked to quit school and seclude herself for marriage. Abiding the rules of nobility, she continued to educate herself through newspapers and European magazines sent by her Dutch pen friends. Through these writings, she learnt European concepts related to feminist thinking, which fostered her desire to improve the condition of native Indonesian women who had a very low social status at that time. She wanted Indonesian women to have equal opportunities with men in terms of education and social position. However, Kartini had little power to do much. Eventually she gave up her quest and accepted the role of fourth wife to the Regent of Rembang. Kartini died at the very young age of 25 in 1904 in childbirth. To reward her sacrifice, in 1964 the first president of Indonesia Soekarno declared Kartini's birth date, 21st April, "Kartini Day". Although Kartini passed away, her honourable ideas have motivated Indonesian women to improve their situation and to emancipate themselves in every sector of life.

Following the efforts of Kartini was Dewi Sartika. Sartika, born in 1884, belonged to an aristocratic Sundanese family. Unlike Kartini, Sartika's parents insisted she go to the Netherlands to study. As a result, when she came back to Indonesia, she built a school for women behind her house and taught them reading, writing, sewing, knitting, and embroidery. The establishment of another new school for women around Sundanese Regency followed her efforts.

Prior to Kartini and Dewi Sartika, in other parts of Indonesia there were heroines who struggled to fight with the colonialists to obtain independence. They include Nyi Ageng Serang from Central Java, Martha Christina Tiahahu from Maluku, and Cut Nyak Dhien and Cut Meutia from Aceh. Although they battled for Indonesian independence, they also paved the way for Indonesian women to fight for the sake of the state, nation, and homeland. Kartini followed their efforts by focusing on the struggle for Indonesian women's rights, especially for the right for women to get the same education opportunities as men. Kartini's effort through the motto "emansipasi perempuan" (women's emancipation) to improve women's condition and position has become the foundation of Indonesian feminism. After Kartini and Dewi Sartika, a women's organization called Poetri Mardika was formed.

The formation of the women's organization Poetri Mardika in 1912 was the third major push for gender equity, fighting for equality between men and women especially concerning the law. This organization published their own magazine entitled *Poetri Mardika*. This organization was followed by other women's organisations. The Women's Congress I (1928), II (1930), and III (1938) advocated for equality with agendas that demanded education for children, reformation on Islamic law on marriage, trafficking, and women's right to vote, and participation in politics. The Congress III succeeded and proclaimed the date of 22nd December as Mother's Day nationwide.

Following the above efforts and movements, Indonesia declared its independence from the Dutch in 1945, which the Dutch officially recognized in 1949. Under the reign of Soekarno, the first president, women were allowed to participate in politics and the government officially issued Law No. 80/1958 on gender equity in terms of salary and wage. However, issues relating to polygamy emerged because the

president had two wives. As a result, a women's organization called PERWANI (Indonesian Women Movement) was formed and they advocated against polygamy, asking the government to make laws on marriage.

It was during the reign of the second president, Soeharto, that the laws on marriage were approved in 1974, stating that a civil servant was allowed to have only one wife. During Soeharto's reign, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and the Role of Women was created. Marching writes that "although the practice of polygamy was restricted during the New Order, other forms of gender oppression towards women were emphasised" (Marching, *The Discrepancy Between the Public and the Private Selves of Indonesian Women: A Comparison of Published and Unpublished Autobiographies and Diaries* 28).

The Ministry of Youth Affairs and the Role of Women currently in presidential reign under Bambang Soesilo Soedarman is called the State Ministry for Women's Empowerment. The Indonesian government through the State Ministry for Women's Empowerment, the Women's Studies Centre at universities, and women activists have made efforts to improve women's lives and social positions and to achieve gender equality between men and women.

Schroter writes that women's organizations in Indonesia are now actively trying to increase women's political participation and representation by making efforts to change the position of women in decision-making institutions (1). Unfortunately, Schroter adds, ideas of "women's empowerment" and "gender mainstreaming" have been challenged because many religious leaders have perceived them as transgression of Islamic rules and values and argue for a return conservative gender models (1). In addition, Hellwig states that "Hindu-Javanese values, as expressed in the wayang

(shadow puppet theatre), and Islam justify polygamy Christian creeds deny women full autonomy over their bodies (contraceptives, abortion)” (Hellwig, 1994, 14) (Marching, *The Discrepancy Between the Public and the Private Selves of Indonesian Women: A Comparison of Published and Unpublished Autobiographies and Diaries* 32). It is clear here that religious apparatuses play a dominant role in sustaining patriarchy in Indonesia.

There are still many Indonesians who have an aversion to anything related to gender or feminism due mostly to the fear that Western perspectives and feminist ideas would harm Indonesian cultures. In addition, some are also confused because they believe that gender equality was already achieved a long time ago in the pre-independence period, thanks to figures like Kartini. Despite the achievements of individual women’s efforts and various movements, women continue to be subordinated in many areas of life. The underlying basis for this project is that there is still much to be done in order to implement gender equality and to make a thorough change. This study can establish a dialogue between Indonesians and Australians to encourage Indonesians especially Buginese to achieve equality between men and women.

The Buginese

The Buginese, also known as the Bugis, along with the Makassar, the Mandar, and the Toraja, are one of the four main ethnic groups of the province of South Sulawesi in Indonesia. According to Pelras, a French ethnologist who did some research on ethnic groups in South Sulawesi and wrote about the Buginese society in a book entitled *The Bugis*, the Bugis (over three million) occupy mainly the lowland and hilly areas to the south, with a few living in the Luwu plain, mostly near the coast around and to the south of Palopo, while the homeland of another ethnic group—the Makassar (about two

million)—is at the southern end of the peninsula, both along the coasts and in the mountains (12).

The population of the Buginese in South Sulawesi spreads into major states (Bone, Wajo, Soppeng, and Sidenreng) and some minor states (Pare-Pare, Suppa, and Sinjai). The Buginese have been well-known as eminent sailors for centuries. Therefore, the Buginese diaspora extends to Southeast Sulawesi, Central Sulawesi, Papua, Sumatra, and Malaysia. Tuwo and Tresnati add that even in the 1600s the Buginese and Makassarese voyaged throughout the entire archipelagic region of Southeast Asia, up to and including the waters of northern Australia with their traditional *pinisi*' (sail boat) to develop social, economic and cultural connections with the Aboriginal communities of the land they called *Marege*' (black skinned people) which in the past referred to the Aboriginals of Arnhem Land (1).

Like other ethnic groups living in other islands of Indonesia such as the Javanese, the Sundanese, the Minang, the Batak, the Balinese, and the Ambonese, the Buginese have their own culture and traditions. The Buginese, especially those who live in the villages, are still bounded strictly by *ade*' (custom) or *pangadereng* (customary law). This concept of *ade*' provides living guidelines for Buginese and consists of five components including *ade*', *bicara*, *rapang*, *wari*', and *sara*'. Pelras clarifies that *pangadereng* is 'adat-hood', a corpus of interlinked ruling principles which, besides *ade*' (custom), includes also *bicara* (jurisprudence), *rapang* (models of good behaviour which ensure the proper functioning of society), *wari*' (rules of descent and hierarchy) and *sara*' (Islamic law and institution, derived from the Arabic *shari'a*) (190). So, *pangadereng* is an overall norm which includes advice on how Buginese should behave towards fellow human beings and social institutions on a reciprocal basis. According to

Mattulada, these noble principles become guidelines for Buginese for their everyday life, both in the family and working place (58).

In addition, the Buginese together with Makassarese mind what is called *siri'* (honour and shame), that is the sense of honour and shame. Abdullah writes:

In the life of the Buginese-Makassar people, the most basic element is *siri'*. For them, no other value merits to be more detected and preserved. *Siri'* is their life, their self-respect and their dignity. This is why, in order to uphold and to defend it when it has been stained or they consider it has been stained by somebody, the Bugis-Makassar people are ready to sacrifice everything, including their most precious life, for the sake of its restoration. So goes the saying.... 'When one's honour is at stake, without any afterthought one fights.' (Pelras 206)

Furthermore Idrus states that *siri'* (honour and shame) is central to the Buginese world view, and is regarded as the soul and the spirit of each individual in society (44). La Side suggests a variety of meaning for *siri'* (honour and shame), namely *malu-malu* (shame), *segan/kerendahan-hati* (humility), *takut* (fear), *hina/aib* (disgrace), *irihati/dengki* (envy), *harga-diri* (self-respect), *kehormatan* (honour), and *kesusilaan* (morality) (Idrus 44). In short, *siri'* (honour and shame) deals with principles relating to honour and prestige that the Buginese preserve and the only way to restore when it is stained, is through fighting. Mattulada writes that it can be observed in social reality that *siri'* (honour and shame) has an impact on the cultural character of Buginese who have a reputation for being very sensitive, daring to use violence and taking revenge for the sake of their honour (66). Similarly, Errington points out that "a person who has *siri'* is sensitive to, hence vulnerable to, other people" (145). However *siri'* (honour and shame) cannot be viewed from only one perspective. Mattulada argues that the meaning of *siri'* (honour and shame) can be understood by looking at three kinds of *siri'* (honour and shame). They are as follows (67):

1. *Siri' emmi ri onroang ri lino* (people live only for *siri'*) means someone lives only for honour and prestige. Someone whose life does not have honour and prestige is nothing.
2. *Mate ri siri'na* (die for *siri'*) means it is honourable if someone dies defending his/her honour and prestige.
3. *Mate siri'* (die of *siri'*) means someone who loses his/her honour and prestige is like a living carcass. Therefore, it is better to *mate napatettaggi siri'na* (die by fighting) rather than lose honour and prestige.

In addition to discussing the three levels of *siri'*, Sikki et al. also note how people are meant to react. There is a violation of *siri'* which can still be tolerated, a more extreme violation, which is supposed to be followed by anger, and most extreme violation which has to be paid for with killing (Idrus 46-47).

From the explanation above, it does not mean that *siri'* related to killings are a common issue in everyday Buginese life. Mattulada admits that day to day defence of honour and prestige through violence is less common (66). Furthermore, Pelras argues that two of the most extreme violations of *siri'*—the kind which have to be paid for by killing— involve *silariang* (elopement) and *ipakasiri'*: that is when someone has been humiliated by words or actions he/she considers improper (206). In *silariang* (elopement), it is believed that the man has stained the honour and prestige of the woman's parents. Therefore, to restore it, the male relations of the woman will kill the culprit. Similar results may follow if someone is humiliated publicly with insulting words or treated with impudent behaviour. Regardless of the concern with *siri'*, the Buginese are also perceived as very *mabessa* (friendly), tough, respectful, and faithful.

With regards to the role of women in society, Buginese history records that there were some women who ruled the kingdoms in different Buginese areas in the nineteenth century. Even the Buginese literary epic *La Galigo*, which is longer than *Mahabharata*, features Buginese women in prominent and important roles. According to this manuscript, the ancestors of Buginese were *tomanurung* (people descended from heaven). It is written that We Nyiliq Timo, the wife of Batara Guru who was a *tomanurung*, played a very significant role in proposing good opinions about the foundation of Buginese culture. Another great Buginese woman was Colliq Pujie, an aristocratic woman, a writer, and a politician who compiled the manuscript of *La Galigo*. Other great Buginese women include Siti Aisyah We Tenti Olle (Queen of Tanete), We Tenri Rawe (Queen of Luwu) Adatuang We Abeng (Queen Sidenreng), Datu Pattiro We Tenrisoloreng (Queen of Bone), Soledatu We Ada (Queen of Soppeng), and Andi Ninong (Queen of Wajo).

Hamzah argues that in Buginese society “neither gender is considered intrinsically dominant over the other” (Pelras 160). To this Pelras also comments that “the Buginese take the principle of non-differentiation between genders” (160). What Hamzah and Pelras argue may apply to the Buginese who live in the villages and work as farmers. For this particular occupation, both men and women fundamentally help each other in their daily life. Men go to work in the rice field and women prepare the lunch for them. While waiting for the men to finish their work for the day, the women also do light work in the field. In other words, men and women play an equal role in this domain. A Buginese saying states that a man’s place reaches the borders of the sky while a woman’s place is around the house. This means that the man acts as the breadwinner whose activity is outside the house. Meanwhile the woman takes care of the children and prepares food for the family which is mainly done in the house or not

far from it. However, in reality there are also many women who work to support the family income, for instance, by weaving, embroidery, or making cakes or snacks for sale. Others who have educational qualifications work as civil servants. Helping each other like this is an overview of gender role division between Buginese men and women, especially who live in the villages.

Unfortunately, in practice Buginese women are still often treated differently. On the one hand they are respected as equals with men but on the other hand they are still placed subordinate to men in many instances; for example, making decisions. In such cases, men act as decision makers while women are expected to follow whatever the men decide. Education is another sphere where gender roles and expectations are differentiated. If one family has a son and a daughter, the family will let the son receive an education before the daughter. Most Buginese parents usually arrange an early marriage for the daughter. Furthermore, they believe that despite the level of education a Buginese woman achieves, she will finally end up in the kitchen. In many Buginese families, after getting married, even those educated at the undergraduate level spend their lives being housewives. My intention is not to trivialise or ignore the importance of this role, especially if a woman desires it; rather my concern is with their option to choose this role or not, that is, if they want to be *maju* (modern) and use their high education qualifications, they should be able to without social, cultural, economic or familial repercussions. From this evidence, it is not surprising that gender inequality still persists in Buginese society. My research is aimed at encouraging my students to empower themselves, to struggle against gender inequality, as well as at the same time inviting them to be together both men and women to *sipakatau* (to respect each other) and *sipakatokkong* (to support each other).

Personal Connection to Australian Feminism

I write this thesis in the first person because I do not stand as an outsider of the Buginese whom I am studying, but as an insider of the group, having experienced directly the institution of patriarchal society. Marching writes that in “self-representational life writing “I” can be a means of challenging or questioning the traditional male paradigm of the self” where there is a “will to be heard” (Marching, *The Discrepancy between the Public and the Private Selves of Indonesian Women: A Comparison of Published and Unpublished Autobiographies and Diaries* 1). Long adds that “female first person” is “a threat to control and order” (Marching, *The Discrepancy between the Public and the Private Selves of Indonesian Women: A Comparison of Published and Unpublished Autobiographies and Diaries* 1).

I have been dancing with Australian feminism for over four years. What I mean by the term “dancing” in this study will be theoretically defined more in Chapter One. My use of the word “dancing” signifies my challenge to articulate and engage with Australian culture, literature, and feminism by viewing it from a Buginese perspective as opposed to a “Non-Western” perspective. As a Buginese woman and scholar, I centre my specific cultural standpoints instead of accepting them generally and therefore dismiss the altering label of “Non-Western”. Juxtaposing Australian feminism with Buginese culture has not been easy. However, as my research progressed I saw interesting cultural differences between Australian and Buginese cultures that could result in a hybridized way of engaging feminist issues. Here, I found myself in an ideal position to “dance” out.

My background as a Buginese woman strongly informs the way I approach the research for this study. I grew up in a very strongly patriarchal Buginese society.

Furthermore, I experienced two main events in my life where I had to transgress my family's traditions and go against my parents' hopes. When I graduated from Junior High School, my parents asked me to get married to someone from our close relatives whom they had chosen. At that time in my life, this felt like a disaster to me. I could imagine that if I accepted my parents' wishes I would end up living my whole life being a typical traditional Buginese housewife, spending most of my time in the kitchen.

Furthermore, it would prevent my dream to continue my studying and get a job. I had to rebel. I argued with my parents telling them I wanted to be a *makkunrai macca* (clever woman) and *maju* (modern). At first they were worried I would be a *makkunrai lado*' (spinster) because there is a fear in Buginese families that the more education a daughter gets, the less likely it will be that a man will ask her to be his wife. If this happens, it causes shame for the family. They were also worried my higher education would make me *mabangka*' (arrogant) and would make me *pappada urane'e* (control like a man). Doing so would decrease the family status. I convinced them that finishing my studies at a higher institution would keep me *malebbi*' (modest), *pamase-mase* (humble), and would increase the family status. I also promised that I would get married after I got a job. Finally, they agreed. My success in finishing senior high school and my undergraduate degree, as well as getting a job as a *dosen* (lecturer) significantly affected my extended family. My younger cousins followed my example, pursuing education at higher institutions.

This study has been shaped by a combination of this ongoing dedication to promote women's empowerment in the Buginese context and my role as an academic teaching English literature at the university level. I hope my study on Australian literature focusing on Helen Garner's ideas of feminism portrayed in *Postcards from*

Surfers will broaden the insight of my students who are mostly Buginese and of Buginese descent, about the concepts and intentions of feminism. Through this study, I will apply interpretive principles that will enable my students to see how the ideas of feminism conveyed through western literature can positively improve the quality of women's lives and be implemented in Buginese culture without compromising our identity as Indonesians and Buginese people. At the same time, it provides a cultural comparison with Australia that allows a space for further conversations to occur.

My study of Australian feminism in the work of Helen Garner's *Postcards from Surfers* aims to examine aspects of Western feminism to juxtapose them with ideas of feminism as understood by Buginese Indonesians. To do this I prioritise Buginese perspectives while at the same time accepting and/advocating certain changes. This is my goal: to encourage my students in my English Department at Hasanuddin University to understand more clearly aspects of feminism and invite them to be more gender sensitive. My position as a lecturer allows me to make strategic changes.

This study also aims to contribute to the study of Australian culture and literature at Hasanuddin University, where I am already employed as a lecturer. Hasanuddin University features a course on Australian Culture and Literature in the curriculum. This course is an optional course offered to students in the English Department. The first time the course was offered in 2005, there were 15 students registered. In 2009, the number increased to 24 students. In 2011, the number increased remarkably to 95 students (English Department data). An increase in student number and staff expertise can upgrade a course, making it compulsory. There is already precedent for this at Hasanuddin University, where an increase in student number and staff expertise has led to American Literature becoming a compulsory subject.

Therefore, to promote and upgrade a course on Australian Culture and Literature to compulsory status, it is necessary to recruit staff expertise in this subject. As part of that recruitment I have undertaken my doctoral thesis in Australia. This study of Australian literature is also a part of the aim to meet those requirements. Through teaching representations of gender and feminism through literary-based materials, students will have the opportunity to engage with the possibilities and the confinements of feminism and to explore for themselves feminist concepts that they can apply within the Buginese and Indonesian cultural contexts.

My work place in a field of formal education strategically allows me to change and advance the status and position of women through the students I teach. Therefore, in my analysis I view Australian feminism in Helen Garner's *Postcards from Surfers* from a Buginese perspective, and discuss which ideas are suitable for application in Buginese culture, in order to increase the status and the position of Buginese women in relation to men. In other words, I play the role of a mediator, transferring the knowledge of Western literary studies of feminism to Buginese individuals, especially to my students through a course of Australian Culture and Literature. In doing so, I envision myself as a Buginese woman living in Buginese culture who is working in a Western institution, dancing with Australian feminism. Rizvi and Lingard have argued that learning through teaching and the presence of students "is an important insight for all pedagogues, wherever their institutional location" (294).

Goldsworthy has already set a precedent for analysing feminist themes in Helen Garner's work. She states that she has three aims in investigating Garner's works. They are "1. to use ideas from feminist literary theory to explore aspects of Garner's writing that have not been much talked about before; 2. to locate her work in its cultural and

historical contexts; 3. to show her writing represents some of the life-dilemmas solved, and posed, for women by competing demands and claims of feminism” (Goldsworthy, *Australian Writers: Helen Garner* 7). Thus, Goldsworthy argues, “from the beginning of her writing career Garner was regarded as, and frequently called, a stylist, a realist, and a feminist” (Goldsworthy, *Australian Writers: Helen Garner* 1). Building on Goldsworthy’s observations, I further examine how Garner portrays the idea of feminism through five stories from *Postcards from Surfers*.

Critics have examined and discussed Garner’s works and the influence of feminism. Richardson explores Garner’s ideas of feminism in *Cosmo Cosmolino*, and Ashcroft examines it in *The Children’s Bach*, not to mention Willbanks who investigates it in *Monkey Grip*. However, there are few who have published about her feminist influence in *Postcards from Surfers*. Moreover, all critics view Garner’s ideas of feminism from a Western point of view. My research addresses this gap by viewing it from a Buginese perspective. By doing so, my research engages in cross-cultural dialogues and movements between Australian literature, Australian feminism, Buginese culture and Indonesian literary pedagogy.