

3. CONCLUSION

From the analysis, it can be concluded that both mothers in *Rectoverso* have their own ways of expressing love towards their children. Due to the fact that a mother always has two “people” living inside them (both as a free woman and a mother who needs to tend and care for her children’s well-being), they also have to face several choices in their lives. More often than not, these choices involve their own happiness and their children happiness, and each of the existing choice has its own consequences that affect both mothers’ livelihood. Mostly, the available choices at hand force the mothers to sacrifice something. They are unable to have both ways – in order to have one thing, they have to let go of another. In this case, the mothers in both short stories *Malaikat Juga Tahu* and *Tidur* choose to make their respective children happy and feel loved at the cost of their own happiness. Each of the mothers has their own way of showing love – both conventionally and unconventionally.

In *Malaikat Juga Tahu*, Bunda makes her choice by letting Adik go and keeping Abang under her protection. She also shows how she love both of her sons equally with different expressions and actions. For Abang, Bunda shows her love by protecting him from harm, no matter what the cost. Her action represents Fromm’s statement, that love is the active concern for the life and the growth of that which we love (Fromm, 1956:26). She lets Abang stay in the house for as long as he lives. The first reason is because Abang has experienced an incident in which he has to stay in the hospital, and the second reason is because Bunda does not want Abang to end up like his oldest sister – who passed away because of an incurable disease.

Second, Bunda exercises her love toward Abang by fulfilling his needs and wants. In this case, Bunda tries to convince Abang’s female friend to choose and date him instead of Adik, the second son. Although Bunda’s action seems egotistic in the eyes of others, Bunda only expresses her love and tries to make sure that Abang is always happy. It is a part of motherly conscience that says: “There is no misdeed, no crime which could deprive you of my love, of my wish

for your life and happiness.” (Fromm, 1956:44). Aside from that, Bunda exercises her love toward Abang by sacrificing herself (in terms of physical and mental health) in order to calm down Abang – who throws rampage because the girl he loves has left. Although she is already quite old and has to take care of Abang alone, Bunda is still willing to do it. Her action shows the aspect of motherly love, which states that “the relationship of mother and child is by its very nature one of inequality, where one needs all the help, and the other gives it.” (Fromm, 1956:50).

Towards Adik, she also displays her love in tough manners. The reason is because Adik, unlike Abang, is already an adult and does not need a pampering. Aside from that, Bunda shows tough love by forbidding Adik from dating the girl whom Abang loves. First, Bunda does not want to enforce selfishness into Adik – since he is normal and healthy, he should be able to find another girl and be considerate to his older brother. Second, Bunda indirectly wants to protect Adik from Abang’s anger. However, Bunda eventually shows her softer side toward Adik by letting him be with the girl that he loves. As a mother, she realizes that the girl is also a source of Adik’s happiness, thus Bunda – as a mother – has to let him be. She further shows her love by letting Adik go away from home, which further indicates that she wants Adik to live freely and happily without having to suffer from Abang’s anger. Bunda’s action also represents a characteristic of motherly love, in which “mother must not only tolerate, she must wish and support the child’s separation” (Fromm, 1956:51).

As a consequence, Bunda sacrifices her own needs as the result of the actions. Not only that, but she also subconsciously makes both of her sons unhappy in some ways. First, Bunda does not have enough time to take care of herself – especially on Saturday night – because she has to take care of Abang who runs amuck and destroys the share-house. Aside from that, Bunda loses Abang’s spirit. Even though Abang is with her physically, he will always be unhappy due to the girl’s disappearance. Last, she loses her tie with Adik, her second son.

In *Tidur*, Ibu expresses her love by keeping her family (especially children) in her mind. Because she is currently separated from her family and

unable to contact them (due to different time zones), Ibu can only exercise her love inwardly and keeps longing for them. This type of love is called “sentimental love”, which is experienced only in phantasy and not in the here-and-now relationship to another person who is real (Fromm, 1956:100).

Second, Ibu chooses to join “Working Mother Anonymous” – a meeting which includes all career women who are unable to stay by their children’s side – in order to express and share her own longing with other mothers. This is also part of sentimental love; it serves as an opiate which alleviates the pain of reality, the aloneness and separateness of the individual” (Fromm, 1956:101). At the same time, Ibu also joins the meeting as a reminder that she, apart from being a career woman, is also a mother. Next, Ibu shows how she yearns for her children by the fact that she keeps waiting for the day she finally goes back home. Ibu keeps mentioning how she waits for two years, meaning that she already misses her family from the day she goes abroad. It further indicates that although Ibu keeps longing to be with her children, she still bears the feeling until the proper time for her to go back home comes along. Finally, Ibu expresses her love toward her children by sacrificing her career, financial accomplishment, and freedom. Also, Ibu vows to always “stay awake”, meaning that she will no longer be oblivious toward her children’s conditions and needs, and that she is going to regain her responsibility as a proper mother. It shows that she has let go of her own need and satisfaction in order to become a real mother who is unselfish and has the ability to give everything up (Fromm, 1956:52).

Due to the decisions Ibu make from the day she goes abroad until the day she arrives back home, she gains and loses some things. For starts, by the time Ibu keeps her children on her mind and misses them, she feels guilty due to the fact that she is unable to be by their side. Because of this, Ibu even has to go to psychiatrist. Her feeling of guilt further increases because she knows that she can actually go home right there, but she does not do it due to her own fear of change. Even when she is already in Indonesia, Ibu’s guilt resurfaces because she knows that her children – who are still very young – need their mother’s guidance and protection.

Second, Ibu soon experiences relief and content when she finally sees her family for the first time in two years. It also correlates with one of Fromm's statements, which states that "giving is more joyous than receiving, not because it is a deprivation, but because in the act of giving lies the expression of my aliveness" (Fromm, 1956:23). In this case, Ibu feels that letting her job go is worth it, because she can see her family's happy and serene faces again.

As the consequence of coming home, however, Ibu has to lose her job forever, as well as her freedom as a career woman. Also, she loses her connections that she has with her boss and peers abroad. Instead, she alters her commitment and dedication towards her family. By becoming a mother, she is no longer responsible for herself, but also for the sake of her children.

To sum up, both mothers (Bunda and Ibu) in "Malaikat Juga Tahu" and "Tidur" tend to sacrifice themselves for the sake of their children. Second, they regard their children as their first priority out of anything else. Third, the mothers find that their own needs are fulfilled as long as their children's needs are fulfilled. As the result, these expressions of love can cause positive or negative effects toward both mothers' lives.