

INDONESIAN LITERATURE, JAVANESE PEOPLE, AND LOCAL PSYCHOLOGY: A PROMOTION OF LOCAL WISDOM THROUGH LITERATURE

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Abstract: This article is part of research related to Indonesian literature from an indigenous studies perspective. This study aims to explore and examine Indonesian literature through the perspective of Javanese local psychology. This study uses an indigenous studies approach employing the qualitative method that refers to the narrative-interpretive data exposure. The data source is Indonesian literature written by an author from East Java. The novel title is *Para Priyayi* written by Umar Kayam. The data were collected using the documentary technique. There are three stages in the data analysis technique: identification, classification, and reduction. The results showed that the local psychology of Javanese people that appeared in Indonesian literature was related to relational, small talk, servitude, and religiosity psychology.

Keywords: literature, indigenous studies, local psychology, Javanese people

INTRODUCTION

Current literary studies are more likely to lead to the context of locality (Ramone, 2020; Sumida, 2014; Griffin, 2018; Kamboureli & Verduyn, 2014). The local context of literature studies gives a new colour to the literature which so far refers to the critical paradigm of western literature. Through the study of local literature, it is hoped that new ideas will emerge and develop local literature or literature from countries that have not been included in the map of the world literature. So far, there have been more discussions about western literature, critics, and literary references. It is hoped that through the study of local literature, there will be new literary studies from eastern countries that have been dominated and hegemonized by western literature in the context of world literature. For this reason, several comparative literary studies between eastern and western literature are now also starting to be explored to show that east and west actually have the same power (see Galin, 1997) in the context of literary studies.

Starting from that phenomenon, there are currently many literary studies that explore local topics related to the geography of a country (Peake, 2017; Sharp, 2015; Hones, 2017), local languages (Pollock, 2006), local foods (Carrington & Harding, 2007, 2014), and tourism (Agarwal & Shaw, 2018). Current literature that explores the local world is a big effort to raise the existence of eastern literature so that it can be equivalent to western literature. Not only that, but the improvement of local literature studies is also an effort to explore locality values that are losing from modernism and the global world. The changing of life that makes everything instant and modern drives people to leave the locality elements, starting from the way of thinking to the local culture in society. This is because people nowadays think that local things are out of date. Local things are the things that need to be followed and developed.

In relation to the context of local literature, Indonesian literary works also represent many elements of the locality. There are previous studies on local literature in Indonesia that

have been conducted by Ahmadi & Yulianto (2019a, 2019b) who researched Indonesian literature in relation to the study of traditional knowledge. Hariyati et al (2018) examined children's literature in the context of ecological knowledge. Aji, Suganda, and Banita (2018) examined aspects of locality in popular Indonesian literature. The results of this research show that popular literature has locality values: communal work and migration. The exploration of Indonesian local literature is very interesting because Indonesia is indeed rich in locality values (see Geertz, 1976, 1980, 2020) that especially appear in Javanese culture.

The local culture of Javanese is not only interesting in the context of facts and realities that exist in society but also in Indonesian literature. The Javanese locality in literature needs to be studied and explored for the following reasons. First, the study of local literature of Javanese in Indonesian novels raises the locality elements in literature. It is expected to add the Javanese locality that is not documented in the official literature. Second, the exploration of Javanese locality in Indonesian literature is an effort to promote local wisdom in literature. In addition, the study of Javanese locality in Indonesian literature is to show to the world that Indonesia has strong literature of locality. An Indonesian writer who brings up Javanese locality in his work is Umar Kayam. As an author, Kayam (1992) can bring up a strong Javanese locality because he is a Javanese who understands Java. So, he puts Javanese elements in his literature. As an author, he describes in detail the locality of Javanese culture contained in his literary works. In this regard, this study aims to explore the Javanese locality in Indonesian literature through the perspective of local psychology that is associated with Javanese people.

Local psychology is part of indigenous psychology (Roopnarine & Chadee, 2016; Guimarães, 2020; Dueck, 2021) that is the distinctive psychology of a society in a particular country. Local psychology appears in order to raise local psychological elements in a society that has not been revealed or has not been strongly explored in psychological research. So far, psychology studies mostly use western research, researchers, and references. It causes the dominance of western psychology, while eastern psychology becomes recessive. For this reason, eastern researchers - in Kim & Yang's view (2011) - are currently trying to raise up in strengthening the local psychology of eastern society. It is done to make psychological studies relevant to the facts and realities that exist in eastern society. If the study of western psychology is applied to eastern society, there are several things that are not appropriate because the psychology of eastern and western societies have differences. It is because, in the context of human psychology, humans are unique creatures.

The concept of local psychology of Javanese in Indonesia is related to the psychology of Javanese personality. Jatman (2000) explains that the local psychology of Javanese is related to the character of Javanese people, both good and bad characters. Jatman's view is strengthened by the view of Lubis (2008) that raises the character of the Indonesian people. In this context, Indonesian people also have good and bad characters. In relation to the local psychology of Javanese people, it is more focused on the originality of Javanese people's thoughts that are related to (1) philosophical life; (2) behaviour that refers to nature; and (3) nature-friendly behaviour. Philosophical life is essentially related to the relationships of Javanese people with God and with other people. Behaviour that refers to nature is related to the relationship between humans and nature around them. Friendly behaviour towards nature is how humans treat nature as a place to live.

This study uses an interpretive-qualitative method that refers to the views of Creswell, & Creswell, J. D. (2020), which interprets the data on the analyzed text. In this case, the researchers act as interpreters of literary texts (Ahmadi, 2019b). The approach used is literary psychology which refers to literary texts (Ahmadi, 2021, 2015) as evidence. The technique of data collection that is used by researchers is a documentary study. The data source in this study is an Indonesian novel that brings up Javanese locality, the novel is *Para Priyayi* by Umar Kayam

(1992). The technique of data analysis is done by executing in-depth identification, data classification, data reduction according to Javanese psychological locality, data exposure, and data verification. The stages in the data analysis technique are carried out simultaneously referring to the views of Miles, Huberman, & Saldana (2020) so that successive flow occurs. Through this successive flow, it is hoped that the analysis can be more comprehensive. In order to maintain the validity of the data, the researchers triangulate the data by simultaneously checking and conducting content validity with colleagues.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Local Psychology of Javanese People

The life of Javanese people is a life that is filled with life philosophy. Everything related to life, starting from life as a fetus in the womb, a baby, a child, a teenager, an adult, and an elder. Not only that, but life also still has a more detailed and smaller philosophy. This shows that Javanese people are indeed philosophical figures. In the context of life in the womb, the fetus will be treated religiously while in the womb. In Java, it is known as *tingkeban*, *mitoni*, or *babaran* period. During pregnancy, a mother (who is pregnant) must be diligent in praying, worshiping, and staying away from God's prohibition so that her baby will be avoided from bad things and can be born as expected. The husband also takes part in the situation. In this case, the husband must be able to perform good rituals and do what the elders suggested - the husband must not kill, slaughter, or hurt animals. Hence, there is a prohibition for a husband: he must not slaughter a chicken when his wife is pregnant. There is also another one: a husband must not feed the birds with crickets in any way. This can cause the baby to lose his body part. Of course, this can't be separated from the Javanese philosophy that humans must love God's creatures. It can be pictured in the following philosophy.

First, the relational characters of master and servant. In relation to Javanese life psychology, the novel of *Para Priyayi* strongly presents this thing. In the novel, it is told that *Ndoro* Guru had other family members living in his house. The respected Javanese people (*priyayi*) in the past had a philosophy of family life: the *priyayi* that was considered as the principal (*soko guru*) of the extended family had the obligation to accommodate the family members (or those who still had a kinship with the *priyayi*) into their houses. For the Javanese people, it is not appropriate to enjoy wealth and the throne by themselves while their families and relatives are living in misery and neglect. This philosophy is great for reminding people to give and care for each other. It can be seen by the following quote.

"In short, the *Ndoro* Guru household was a typical Javanese *priyayi* household, where the *priyayi* was also the principal of the extended family who was obliged to accommodate as many members of the family as possible into his household." (Kayam, 1992:17).

The illustration shows explicitly that *Ndoro* was a figure who had full power in family life. Therefore, whatever happens, a *Ndoro* was highly obliged and responsible to manage family life. Not only that, as *Ndoro* (masters), they also had to be responsible to their servants. They had to pay attention to the viability of the servants because the servants devoted all their hearts to the master. For this reason, in this case, a symbiotic mutualism between the master and the servant is necessary. In the context of Javanese philosophy, a master must give attention, be responsible, and give their servants rights. In the perspective of the servants who serve their masters, they must also be able to serve wholeheartedly.

Second, Javanese psychology is full of small talk. Javanese people are highly tolerable of anyone. They are considered human beings who easily feel bad for other people. In Javanese,

there is a term of *ewuh-pakewuh* that means awry. It can be seen in the context of social life. Javanese people tend to save other people's faces and please others. Because of that, Javanese people do small talk. Small talk is a Javanese philosophy of life that has been used and passed down from generation to generation. The philosophy of small talk in Javanese is for icebreaking and also showing respect and friendliness to others.

In this regard, there is a plot in the novel of *Para Priyayi* when the Sastrodarsono family went to the house of Uncle Mukaram (father-in-law to be) to propose to his daughter. The atmosphere was very pleasant. The small talk brought by Sastromarsono's parents intentionally made their son look ordinary, but with the purpose of boasting about their son. With the implied meaning, it shows that when the Javanese people have a certain intention, they often show it by using subtle terms and not straight to the point. Moreover, the novel also mentions another example of small talk when a farmer wanted to ask for a loan from a richer farmer or boasted about the beauty of someone's daughter who was ready to be married. Some of these examples do not imply the main purpose, but other people certainly get the point. It appears in the following quote.

"Yes, that's life in Java. Without small talk and the aesthetic language how dry life would be." (Kayam, 1992:45).

It shows explicitly that the character uses small talk in order to break the ice. Besides, small talk can be done to cover arrogance. For example, when we become successful, sometimes we say that it is not a big deal. In addition, small talk is done so that the people we talk to can feel more comfortable. Therefore, small talk in Javanese society has become a philosophy of life. In this context, small talk is common and natural. However, some people from different ethnicities have very different understandings from Javanese people in terms of small talk. In certain ethnic views, small talk is considered something that is not good because it is considered not being serious in talking or discussing something.

Third, the psychology of servitude. In Javanese society, servitude is the highest devotion to the master. This character has been strengthened from generation to generation by Javanese people from their ancestors to their children and grandchildren. Servitude here psychologically shows that humans must be able to be good servants for their masters. Of course, in this case, servitude in a good way, not servitude in bad actions or deeds.

In the novel of *Para Priyayi*, the philosophy of servitude also appears. During the wedding party (*mengunduh*) of Sastrodarsono and Siti Aisah, *Ndoro Seten* contributed a performance of the play *Sumantri Ngenger* or Servitude of Sumantri which had a lot of good value for Sastrodarsono who had just become a *priyayi*. The play provides ethical values from two points of view: *wong cilik* and *priyagung*. From the perspective of small people (*wong cilik*), this play teaches humility, self-awareness, and gratitude. Meanwhile, from the perspective of big people (*priyagung*), it teaches that a king must know how to behave and be wise. It is shown in the following quote.

"This is a good reflection for all prospective *priyayi* who want to dedicate themselves to the state," said *Ndoro Seten* seriously. (Kayam, 1992:48).

It shows that the human being called *kawulo alit* must be able to occupy himself. Javanese people in this context must have a humble philosophy. They must be able to show a sense of devotion to their masters. That is a level of life philosophy in high servitude in the context of real-life Javanese people.

Fourth, historical psychology. Historical psychology is related to the psychology of one's origin in the Javanese context, known as peanuts (*kacang*) must not forget its shell (*lanjaran*). It is a Javanese philosophy of human life related to the fact that humans should not forget their origins. A Javanese man who was born from an ordinary family and in the future, he becomes a successful man, he must not forget his origins as an ordinary human being. For example, a village boy whose parents are farmers looks for work in a big city. When he works in the city, he starts from zero and then becomes a successful person. When he becomes a successful person, he does not forget his family in the village. This is what is meant by *kacang* that does not forget *lanjaran*.

In connection with the novel of *Para Priyayi*, this event occurred when Sastrodarsono and his wife had just moved. Their new home had a vast yard. They both made use of the vast yard around the house by planting some crops. His father also advised Sastrodarsono to not forget his origin as a farmer, even though he has become a *priyayi*, just like *kacang* and *lanjaran*. To be a *priyayi* is to be a well-respected person, not a rich person. Sastrodarsono's father advised his son not only to depend on his salary but also to use his expertise in farming to increase his income. This Javanese philosophy is one of the most famous philosophies. The meaning of the philosophy is whatever a person has become, do not forget the origins. The description appears in the following quote.

"How could peanuts forget about its shell." (Kayam, 1992: 53).

Based on the quote, it appears that the character shows explicitly that the peanut must not forget its shell. In this case, it is impossible for the peanut to be separated from the shell because the shell is what makes it a real peanut until it becomes a grown peanut. The peanut philosophy of life that does not forget its shell is a very strong character, because in most of modern human life, sometimes they forget the origin that they were once ordinary people and even poor people. Even worse, they forget their origins and parents who have raised them to become successful. A human who is like a peanut that forgets its shell is considered a person who does not have a good character in life because he has become a human who forgets his origin. In fact, he does not want to acknowledge his parents because he thinks that he does not have ordinary parents.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the explanation in the discussion, the following conclusions are obtained. First, Javanese psychology appears in the novel *Para Priyayi* through the way how the segmentation of relational psychology, psychology of servitude, psychology of language, historical psychology, and psychology of religiosity appear. Second, Javanese psychology is very strong in the novel *Para Priyayi*. This is because the author is a native Javanese. As a Javanese man, the author (Umar Kayam) strongly and intensely brings up locality elements in his works. The suggestion for further researchers is that this research has a small scale because it only studies one novel. For this reason, future researchers can conduct a broader study by using more data sources. Thus, it is hoped that the discussion results will become more comprehensive.

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