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## The Religiosity of Javanese Society in Modern Indonesian Literature

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### ABSTRACT

A good literary work can provide information about various kinds of community life, including life-related to religiosity. Literary works are closely related to religiosity, and because of that, various works appear showing the religiosity of society, one of which is the Javanese. Modern Indonesian literary works that illustrate this are the collection of short stories from Umi Kalsum by Djamil Suherman, the lyrical prose Pengakuan Pariyem by Linus Suryadi AG, and the novel Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk by Ahmad Tohari. Each of these works represents the diversity of Javanese society. The collection of short stories from Umi Kalsum shows the religious side of the community called the santri, who are so obedient in carrying out their worship. The lyrical prose of Pariyem's confession provides information on how a babu is so resigned to seeing life, but in her soul holds the wisdom of Kejawen. Meanwhile, Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk describes the Javanese people who worship the spirits of their ancestors. Even though they have different religions, they basically want harmony. Javanese people who live in santri enjoy harmony when they live with strong Islamic values. The Javanese people of the Gunung Kidul area live in harmony if they are always accept and see life as it is according to its Javanese nature. The Dukuh Paruk community attains harmony that originates from the worship of the spirit of Ki Secamengala

### 1. Introduction

Literature was created to be enjoyed, understood, and utilized by the community. A good literary work is able to reflect the conditions of a society. Literature doesn't just fall from the sky. It was created by writers who are members of a certain community group. Therefore, by reading literary works, we can even see and understand the cultural community.<sup>1</sup> The above series of statements clearly imply an assumption that literary works can be used as a source of the culture of a particular society. In addition, literature can be assumed as a means of understanding culture or society. In good literary works, we can find information that can broaden our horizons. Through time, place, social and cultural settings, as well as various events created by the characters, we can feel and penetrate the thoughts of the characters about various human problems. Apart from that, we get some information

and perhaps also a number of questions and pictures that may not have crossed our minds.

With literature, we can explore other worlds, other unexplored physical and psychological areas, and various other lives. In this sense, life includes between communities, between communities and individuals, and between events that occur within a person. After all, the events that occur inside a person are a reflection of one's relationship with other people or with society. If this view is expanded, what becomes literary material also concerns problems that arise as a result of one's relationship with other people or society with God as a manifestation of religiosity. This can be seen very clearly in primitive societies, where literature appears side by side with religious rite institutions so that in such a society, we will find it difficult to separate literature from religious ceremonies or also from the occult. This literature

review aims to describe the religiosity of Javanese society in modern literature.

### **Literature and religiosity**

Literature and religion have a close and inseparable relationship. Atmosuwito concluded that the holy book of the Qur'an, in addition to containing the holy writings of the Islamic religion, also contains literary writings. Likewise, the Bible scriptures also contain wisdom literature. Thus it can be concluded that literature is a part of religion.<sup>2</sup>

In the realm of Indonesian literature, both in the classical and modern periods, literary works related to religion and belief that are spiritual, mystical, and/or messages of spirituality and religiosity, as well as various matters that are the main issue of religion, always appear in various forms.<sup>3</sup> These literary works can be in the form of poetry, novels, short stories, and dramas, both in the form of scripts and performances. In the history of Indonesian literature, a number of great poets who have also conveyed religious messages without leaving literary aesthetics can be mentioned, a number of them Hamzah Fansuri, Raja Ali Haji, Yasadipura I. A row of modern writers, and Amir Hamzah is one of them. Recently, especially after entering the decade of the 1970s, the tendency to promote literature with a religious breath has become more vibrant. So it is not surprising that there have been attempts to formulate their works as religious literature, Sufism, or literature with a transcendental dimension.<sup>4</sup> In addition to the rise of literature with a religious breath, in the 1980s, modern Indonesian literature was marked by the dominance of literary works that raised local colors or Javanese sociocultural aspects. Some of the works that raise local Javanese colors not only raise the world of culture and the mindset that becomes an objective environment but also cover the typical attitudes and views of Javanese people in dealing with various symptoms and life situations.

To understand the religiosity of the Javanese people, we can get some information by reading various literary works that are thick with "Javanese

Jagat". What is called the Javanese universe is not only the world of culture and the mind that becomes the objective environment but also includes the attitudes and views of the Javanese people in dealing with various symptoms and life situations. Among these works are a collection of short stories from Umi Kalsum by Djamil Suherman, lyrical prose Pengakuan Pariyem by Linus Suryadi AG, and the novel Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk by Ahmad Tohari.

There are two definitions of religion. First, religion is a religion based on God's revelation. Therefore, religion cannot be reached by human thinking, especially in searching for the truth. The second meaning is religion in a broader sense. Religion is defined as covering various variations, namely worship, spirituality, and a number of life practices mixed with culture.<sup>4</sup> The term religiosity comes from the Latin religare, which means binding, religio means bonding and binding oneself to God, or more precisely, humans accept God's bonds as a source of peace and happiness. Mangunwijaya further stated that religiosity is a religious concept that causes people to be religious. Religiosity is part of the culture and system of one religion, and another has a different religious system. Religion is a form of someone to believe and believe in God so that the emotional state experiences calm and peace. The human connection to God is a source of peace and happiness by taking action in accordance with religious teachings. The relationship between religion and society is evidenced by religious knowledge in rational arguments about the meaning and nature of life, the greatness of God in the absolute sense, and the greatness of humans in the relative sense as creatures.<sup>5</sup>

A study stated that every human being has an instinct for religiosity — an instinct for belief. This instinct appears together with the desire to gain clarity about life and the universe to become the environment itself. Because every human being must have a realization of what is considered "the meaning of life". The real meaning of life exists. Religion as a belief system provides a concept about the nature of the meaning of life - but it does not exist in the formal

aspects or outward forms of religion. He is behind it. Accordingly, formality must be "penetrated", and outer boundaries must be "crossed". The ability to go beyond these aspects (undoubtedly) will have an impact on the growth of religious attitudes — both individuals and society — which are more in line with the meaning and essential intent of religious teachings.

### **Sociology of literature**

The method used in the sociology of literature is text analysis to determine its structure, which is then used to understand more deeply social phenomena outside of literature. In practice, the two approaches, although different in emphasis, can be used together. This paper tries to review the religiosity of Javanese people in various layers of society that appears in the collection of short stories from Umi Kalsum by Djamil Suherman, the lyrical prose Pengakuan Pariyem by Linus Suryadi AG, and the novel Ronggeng Dukung Paruk by Ahmad Tohari. Javanese society is generally Muslim. However, not all people worship according to the Islamic religion. Based on the criteria of adherents of their religion. There are so-called santri and Islam Kejawen. Apart from that, in Javanese villages, there are also Christians and other religions. The santri are followers of the Islamic religion who obey and regularly carry out the teachings of their religion.

In a collection of short stories from Umi Kalsum, Djamil Suherman describes the daily habits of the Javanese santri people. That is, when the prayers and recitation are finished, we return together to our homes while enjoying the rhythm of our imitation in the dark. Religious activities increase when the month of Ramadan arrives. Djamil described the atmosphere of the fasting month in the santri village. Usually, the sound of the long drum is played by people at the beginning of the fasting month to indicate that the holy month has arrived. Or it is done in the middle of the night as a sign of awakening those who want to do prayers and suhoor. Or people also do the tarwih prayer with its own rhythm, when we, the students, with clean sarongs and clothes and straight skulls, submit especially to stay overnight at the surau.<sup>6</sup>

These students are basically simple people. Therefore, religious cultivation must be simple too. For example, through the form of song and poetry. The various types of poetry they are familiar with. There is a poem, "Doomsday" which tells about the destruction of the universe and the behavior of the creatures in this world on that "Kubra" day. The poem "Kelabang Kures", is about the behavior of unbelievers who have experienced torment. The poem "Sorga" tells of all the pleasures of the believers in heaven with their angels and their milk. Other verses are the verse "Fatimah" and "Laki-rabi". The music that is often played is lute music. The song that is often sung together about the greatness of the Prophet Muhammad reads as follows:

*Marhaban ya nuru 'aini Marhaban jaddal husaini  
Marhabam ya khairu da'i.*

Not all Javanese people worship according to Islam, and some are called Islam Kejawen. Even though Javanese Islam does not pray, fast, or go on hajj and other worship, they believe in the teachings of the Islamic faith. God, they call Gusti Allah and Prophet Muhammad is Kanjeng Nabi. Apart from that, there are also people who adhere to Christianity or major religions in Javanese villages.<sup>7</sup> Linus Suryadi AG explained the description of Javanese adhering to Kejawen in the prose confession of Pariyem.

*O, Allah. Gusti nyuwun ngaura Mbokiyaa, ngarsa  
yang ngarasa Tapinya sak madya wae gitu.*

Javanese people kejawen, although they adhere to Islam or other major religions, the belief is Javanese mystic. Linus describes the policy of Kejawen with an auxiliary figure from Wonosari, Yogyakarta, named Maria Magdalena Pariyem. Iyem, as he used to be called, so resignedly to look at this life, but in his soul was full of all the wisdom of life. Iyem talks about life,

*I guess. I think that life does not need to be felt.  
From the beginning to the end, Life flows like a Winanga  
river, like a Code river - in our midst - like a Gajahwong  
river. Our life also flows.*

Together with the views of the thoughts of participation, the Javanese believe in a powerful surpassing all powers anywhere that have ever been known, namely kesakten, then spirits or ancestral

spirits, subtle- beings such as, for example, memedi, supernatural creatures, tuyul, dedemit, and jinn and others who occupy the world around them. The condition of the Javanese people was described by Ahmad Tohari in *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk*. All the people of Dukuh Paruk know Ki Secamenggala, their ancestors were the enemies of people's lives. But they adore him. Ki Secamenggala's grave, which is located on a small ridge in the middle of Dukuh Paruk, is the mecca for their spiritual life. The clumps of incense ashes on Ki Secamenggala's grave prove the mystical patterns of the Dukuh Paruk people centered there. According to the beliefs of the people of Dukuh Paruk, Ki Secamenggala's spirit can bring success, happiness, peace, and safety to the people of Dukuh Paruk, but on the other hand, it can also cause mental disorders, health and death if they ignore the desires of their departed ancestors. Ki Secamenggala's wish was that there would be a ronggeng Dukuh Paruk. As a result of the absence of ronggeng, Dukuh Paruk had experienced the "tempe bongkrek" disaster which made many of Dukuh Paruk's children lose their father and mother, including Srintil, a central figure in the novel had much appreciation Indonesian literature.<sup>9</sup>

The novel tells how the character Rasmus gave the keris Juran Guyang to Ronggeng Srintil in the hope that he would become a famous ronggeng. The belief in kesakten is part of the Javanese belief system that is Javanese. Dukuh Paruk people think that life in the world has been regulated by the universe so that life cannot be separated from nature. The essence of their mind's natural view of the cosmos, both themselves, their life, and their mind, is contained in the totality of the universe over that cosmos. This Javanese belief system is also evident in preparing Srintil's ronggeng, previously preceded by a double giving and compassion ceremony, then a bathing ceremony, and finally, the bukak klambu ceremony. Bukak klambu is a ritual ceremony for a person before becoming ronggeng by celebrating his virginity. The winner of the competition is any man who can afford to pay more than other men.

This is the religious system that can be identified from the three literary works. Djamil Suherman, with a collection of short stories from Umi Kalsum, tries to introduce the world of pesantren by breathing the Javanese village atmosphere, which is still clean and intact in the romance of the village and its customs. Through *Pariyem* in his poetry, Linus not only describes the inner world of a type of Javanese woman but also describes the environment of Javanese society and its customs and procedures. While Ahmad Tohari, in the novel *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* (RDP), in addition to describing the natural atmosphere of the countryside with the environment of flora and fauna, which suggests environmental harmony, also provides a socio-cultural picture of Javanese "fringe" people during the 1940- the 1970s. Each of these works represents the diversity of Javanese society.<sup>8-10</sup>

## 2. Conclusion

Javanese philosophy recognizes and accepts positively the meaning and value of existence that fits the Javanese image, which is fundamental to the fusion of oppositions that rule all-natural events. In the constant flow of life in the circulation of the age, things have their proper place. Everyone plays his or her distinctive role. In this combination of oppositions, there is harmony, the balance that we as creatures must realize, that is, to realize and carry it out. What is required of a human being is not the ambition of being someone else, not the desire to have something that we do not have, but naivety, honesty, and loyalty in carrying out the tasks we face, in carrying out simple daily responsibilities.

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