





Poems in Borobudur Writers: Cultural Reflections and Identity Conflicts

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Abstract

Poetry is a part of literary works that represent the sociocultural life experience of the author which is important to be studied from the perspective of literary anthropology. However, so far research on the literary anthropology of poetry is still very sparse. For this reason, the purpose of this study exists as an effort to explore poetry in the perspective of literary anthropology. The source of the research data is poems by Tjahjono Widijanto published in Borobudur Festival Writers. The research method uses hermeneutics. The results showed that Tjahjono Widijanto's poems are a mirror that reflects values, history, and internal conflicts in Javanese culture in the past. They not only revive cultural heritage, but also strengthen the rich cultural identity in contemporary society. Through the theme of identity and internal conflict, poems by Tjahjono Widijanto illustrate the complexity of the relationship between individuals and their society. For this, language and knowledge are used as tools of power to maintain the dominance of elite groups. This demonstrates the importance of understanding and caring for cultural heritage to build a strong identity sustainably. The implication of this analysis is the need for efforts to understand and respond to cultural dynamics, values, and internal conflicts in society through appreciation of literary works, such as poetry. This is expected to build awareness about the importance of respecting cultural diversity, tolerance, strengthening social relations in a multicultural society.

Keywords: Literature, Culture, Poetry, Poems, Literary Anthropology, Tjahjono Widijanto

Introduction

Poetry, as part of aesthetic expression, which displays a wealth of symbols and meanings, is not just a literary work, but a mirror of the *bidaya* aspects born by society (Devi, 2019; Primasari et al., 2016). For this reason, poetry is important to study in an anthropological perspective. Anthropological approaches in literature can provide a broader perspective on the complexity of interactions between texts and cultural symbols. For this reason, through an anthropological point of view, cultural representations in poetry can be revealed. In addition, literary studies in an anthropological perspective can also open a space for discussion about cultural representation through poetry (Endraswara, 2018; Primary, 2018). By paying attention to local cultural references and symbols contained in poetry, researchers can dig deeper into the values adopted and conflicts that occur in the daily life of the community. The importance of the literary anthropology approach lies in its ability to relate literary works to the social, political, and cultural realities that surround them. Therefore, we can understand that poetry becomes not only an entertaining work of art, but also a deep reflection on socioculture in the cultural context of society.

At my time, the Borobudur Writers Festival was a cultural and literary festival that involved many international participants. For this reason, literary works from various authors are important to be studied anthropologically, to see the influence of anthropology in literature in a certain cultural perspective. From several existing works, this study chose poems by Tjahjono Widijanto. The consideration is that the poems by Tjahjono Widijanto represent the Javanese culture of the past, which is important for contemporary knowledge. Through an anthropological approach, further exploration of the formation of collective identity, as well as the role of poetry in responding to sociocultural changes that occur over time. It makes a meaningful contribution in broadening our horizons on the role of poetry in human culture more broadly. Although there is poetry research from a conventional literary perspective, such as analysis of style, theme, and character, research on poetry from the point of view of literary anthropology is still rarely carried out. To that end, this analysis offers a new perspective on understanding the meaning of poetry, highlighting the role of culture, values, and social conflicts reflected in it.

For this, there is an urgent need that needs to be done to bridge the research gap, because poetry is believed to be a mirror of the culture of society in certain times (Pamungkas et al., 2024; Rahayu & Pamungkas, 2020). In addition, a lack of research on the relationship between literature and anthropology may hinder a deeper understanding of the influence of culture on literature. By interpreting poetry from an anthropological point of view, it is hoped that we can better understand the complexity of the relationship between literature, culture, and its author (Endraswara, 2018; Pamungkas et al., 2021). Based on that problem, the purpose of this study is to review poems by Tjahjono Widijanto in the Borobudur Writers Festival. For this, it is important to see the author's motives reflect

the culture, identity, and social dynamics of society through literature. This research is expected to have implications in the development of literature, culture, and anthropology broadly. By involving an anthropological approach, this research is expected to pave the way for the development of new analytical methods in literary studies in a broader context. This is expected to inspire interdisciplinary discussions involving literature, anthropologists, and culture by emphasizing the importance of literature to cultural exploration.

Methods

This research is a critical effort to explain the poems by Tjahjono Widijanto. The research approach is literary anthropology. Research data in the form of poetry texts by Tjahjono Widijanto representing aspects of anthropology. The research data source is a collection of poetry texts by Tjahjono Widijanto in *Borobudur Writers* (Widijanto, 2021). Because the characteristic of this research is interpretation, the hermeneutic research method is considered appropriate to be applied in research. Because, hermeneutics is a method of text research that emphasizes the interpretation of researchers (Porter & Robinson, 2011; Ricoeur, 2016).

The stages of this study are 1) reading poems in *Borobudur Writers*; 2) choose poems by Tjahjono Widijanto; 3) choose the type of poetry by Tjahjono Widijanto that is relevant to anthropology; 4) analyze poetry based on the representation of literary anthropology, as well as its relevance to various aspects; 5) conduct overall verification; 6) determine the conclusions of the study.

Results

Poems by Tjahjono Widijanto represent Javanese culture of the past. The themes built are about keris (traditional weapons), classical figures, Javanese letter history, and puppet figures. This is illustrated in the following data findings.

GANDRING

*Kupahat kutuk di bilah karatan ini
mantram-mantram yang ditanam
dalam pamor walang sinuduk
dengan genggam hulu kayu cangkring
kutuk yang dihanyutkan air kali
menjelajahi waktu demi waktu
Kupahat serapah di lancip besi
bersama mantram aji-aji
serupa rajah di lancip besi
aku menitipkan masa depan
mengabadi dalam jejak
dapat dibaca sembari minum kopi
betapa para pemburu dilahirkan di tanah ini
syajarah selalu roboh oleh kapak para penebang
yang mengendap-endap di balik bayang-bayang
Kupahat kutuk di lancip dingin ini
disediakan bagi para petualang
yang tak pernah mau layu
dalam genggam waktu
membiarkan ruh-ruh bergemuruh
menyambut siapa saja yang pergi
mengabadi dalam kutuk yang beku*

Ngawi, 2019

I carved curses on these rusty
bladesmantrams planted
in locust prestige pierced
with a wooden cangkring grip
cursed fish washed away by water
kalitravel time after time
I carved an oath on an iron taper
with a magical-like
mantram on an iron taper
I entrusted the future to
immortalize in the footsteps
You can read over coffee
how hunters born in this land
are always knocked down by the axes
of loggers who sneak in the shadows
I carve a curse in this cold taper
reserved for adventurers
who never want to wither
in the grasp of time let
the spirits thunder to welcome
anyone who goes
to immortalize in the frozen curse

Ngawi, 2019

The poem "Gandring" reflects the local culture, with representations of symbols and references to local mythology known by the Javanese people. As is known that Gandring was a very powerful kris during the Majapahit kingdom, which killed the descendants of Javanese kings up to seven generations. In the text depicted that this poem describes man's relationship with nature, such as water streams, traces, and shadows, which hints at the existence of awareness of the environment and nature as an integral part of human life. It can also reflect beliefs or philosophies of life that associate humans with nature. The phrases "traveling time by time" and "immemorializing in trace" also highlight the importance of history and cultural heritage in the identity of a community. The use of words such as "curse", "expletive", and "axe of loggers" describes a spirit of resistance or determination in the face of a challenge or threat. It can describe the values of courage, justice, or freedom that are upheld in the local culture. Thus, this poem from the perspective of literary anthropology, can be understood more deeply about the way it reflects and shapes the culture, values, and identity of a society.

Furthermore, anthropological representations can also be identified from the poem "Ajisaka". The poem "Ajisaka" is anthropologically literary representing the social structure and hierarchy of Javanese culture, as well as the use of language as a tool of power

and identity. The poem highlights the conflict between the elite (*satriya*) and ordinary (*kawula*) groups in the possession and use of script, which is a symbol of knowledge and culture.

AJISAKA

–tuan, mana kau pilih nyawa atau aksara?

maka selepas senja buram itu
langit tak henti berkabung
dua jagoan lenyap diserap halimun
meninggalkan rajah menua
bersama musim yang insomnia
berharap abadi dalam lipatan
nafas-nafas waktu memburu serupa hantu
membayang di tiap tikungan
siapa masih sudi mengeja alfabet ini
yang lahir dengan mahar nyawa
dipuja kaum satriya serupa mantram keramat
para jawara, sudra dan praira ditabalkan
jadi pahlawan yang ditumbalkan
tuan, apa benar aksara ini milik kita
atau cuma milik para satriya
pangeran lembut nan tampan
bersama putri-putri jelita
tanpa keringat dan air mata
darah kawula dan jawara
mengabadi dalam amis yang pilu
dan tuan tertawa pada sayap-sayap malam:
“bahasa ini milik satriya bukan kawula
mampus kau dirajam mimpi!”

Ngawi, 2019/202

–Sir, where do you choose life or word?

then after the twilight
of the opaque the sky is relentlessly mourning
two vanishing champions absorbed mount
leaving the ageing diagram
alongside the insomnia season
hope is eternal in the fold
the breath of hunting is like a ghost
looming around every bend
who is still willing to spell this alphabet
who was born with a dowry of life
adored the knights are like sacred mantrams
the champions, sudras and praira were em-
balmed
become a subverted hero
sir, what exactly is this character ours
or just the knights'
gentle and handsome prince
with beautiful daughters
without sweat and tears
blood of warriors and champions
immortalizing in a poignant fishy
and the master laughs at the wings of the
night:
“this language belongs to satriya not kawula-
mampus you stoned a dream!”

Ngawi, 2019/202

Ajisaka's poetry features a debate between "life" and "literacy", reflecting the opposition between physical life and intellectual or cultural existence. The choice between life and character refers to the choice between living within physical limitations or living within knowledge and wisdom. The poem describes the devastation and sadness that engulfs the sky after two heroes vanish, leaving society with doubts about its future. Hal ini menrepresentasikan dinamika social dalam masyarakat yang secara politik terpengaruh oleh kepergian pemimpinnya. Selain itu, dapat dikatakan bahwa bahasa bukan hanya sekadar alat komunikasi tetapi juga sebagai simbol tentang kekuasaan, dominasi, dan status sosial.

The conflict between *kawula* (lower class society) and satria [leaders] also

represents sacrifice and suffering. The lower classes are faced with the harsh reality of the suffering they endure to survive. Meanwhile, more leaders are experiencing the comfort of life. In turn, Ajisaka's poetry shows inequalities in knowledge, social, and cultural access. This explains the social injustice that underlies the hierarchy of social structure in Javanese society. Thus, the poem "Ajisaka" represents the complexity of politics, social conflicts, and culture in Javanese society. At the same time, language is a tool used as a mirror of identity and a tool of power.

In addition, cultural representation is also depicted in the poem "Dewata Cengkar". The poem "Dewata Cengkar" offers a perspective on the conflict between the individual and his identity, and society, as well as how it is reflected in cultural and social aspects. The poem Dewata Cengkar describes the conflict experienced by a character who feels unaccepted by the society in which he lives because of his different physical form. His identity as a giant became a source of discomfort and incomprehension for local people who preferred handsome figures and satriyas, as the text of the poem follows.

DEWATA CENKAR

<p>apa salahku berwujud raksasa? aku lahir di tanah ini kalau boleh kuminta tentu akan kupilih rupa wajah halus tampan satriya bukan denawa dengan taring lancip mengapa pula kau sampai di negeriku musyafir yang disesatkan samodra tersangkut di karang karang lautku</p>	<p>What's wrong with me being a giant? I was born in this land if I may ask Of course I will choose the appearance of knight's handsome delicate face not a giant with pointed fangs Why did you arrive in my country anyway The traveler who was misled by the ocean stuck in the reef of my sea reef</p>
<p>apa yang salah dengan wajah raksasaku berabad di negeriku musim datang tanpa cedera tanpamu musyafir lata berwajah satriya bunga dan buah tumbuh silih berganti tunas tunas selalu setia menjelma batang tentu wajah tampan bukan alasan kau datang mengangkat pedang lalu menguburku jauh di kedalaman samo- dra tanpa sempat kau tanyakan berapa besar cintaku pada negeriku</p>	<p>what's wrong with my giant face Centuries in my country the season came un- scathed Without you deliberative talkative with a warrior face Flowers and fruits grow one after another Budding shoots always faithfully incarnate stems Of course, a handsome face is not an excuse You came to raise the sword then buried me deep in the depths of the ocean without you having time to ask How much do I love my country</p>
<p>apa yang salah dengan wujud raksasaku? apa kau cemburu melihat cintaku pada negeri ini seluas bentangan samodra sedang kau sekedar pelancong tanpa KTP cintamu pada negeri sendiri cuma sebatas selokan</p>	<p>What's wrong with my giant form? Are you jealous to see my love on this country the size of the ocean stretch While you're just a tourist without an ID card Your love for your own country is limited to a sewer</p>

karena itu kau tinggalkan negerimu menyendiri dalam ingatan sunyi yang pilu dan perlahan melupakan namamu	Therefore you left your country solitude in the sad silent memory and slowly forget your name
Ngawi, 2019/2020	Ngawi, 2019/2020

In addition, this poem also represents the history of colonialism in Indonesia. The portrayal of a figure as a giant who was 'misled by Samodra' can be interpreted as a metaphor for colonization by foreign nations who are considered 'deliberate'. The conflict involved indigenous peoples and colonizers who destroyed and robbed local identity and culture. Konflik yang terjadi melibatkan masyarakat adat dan penjajah yang menghancurkan dan merampas identitas dan budaya local.

The characters in the poem Dewata Cengkat represent a person's love and loyalty to his homeland, even though he received strong rejection by his own people. This represents that love and loyalty to the country often conflict with the political system and social structure of a particular society. Despite rejection, he remains proud of his identity as a giant being marginalized from social life. This highlights the complex dynamic between individual identity and local culture, where although individuals may feel marginalized, they still maintain their identity and culture with pride. Thus, the poem "Dewata Cengkar" expresses the deep conflict between individuals and their societies, as well as the complexity of the relationship between identity, culture, and social and political forces in the Indonesian context.

The same thing is also illustrated in the poem Dasamuka, which is a representation of heroes in puppetry. This shows about the complexity of culture involving various elements. As is known that Dasamuka is a puppet character sourced from Indian stories, which were then widely developed with various styles and versions of stories in Javanese cultural creations. Excerpts from the text of Dasamuka's poem are as follows.

DASAMUKA

on whom the roar of birahi's award is torn down?
then the powders of my love clung to the tops of the tower
and the end of heaven went into a sured, putting off the mortal body shivering
read his own biography before cursing the smoldering desert

who will later be reborn
marking weather proverbs, sobbing idols
tearing apart a dull destiny is powerless to store vocabulary
love stays sidelined by vain comberan water
rotten historical memories are always cursed by the oath of time

who can read my hunchback heart
demonstrating the fate of the sky that floats like vengeance
similar hardworking mamtram muttered after night
the angels let him get lost.
o, a sense of longing that incarnates magick on a sheet of fog
i'll trawl your sculpting on the reefs of time

“believe me my prayer will incarnate the flash that trembles all night..”

In the perspective of literary anthropology, this poem reflects and interacts with aspects of culture, values, and norms in the society that created it. The storyline in the poem depicts confusion and anxiety about self-identity, as well as the search for meaning for the relationship between oneself and others. It can be seen as a reflection of individual uncertainty in a complex cultural context. The text "Reading one's own biography before condemning the smoldering desert" shows an attempt to understand and reflect on one's own life journey before taking certain actions. The smoldering desert can be interpreted as a metaphor for life's challenges and difficulties. "Who will be born again" invites reflection on the cycle of life and death in a particular culture. The concept of reincarnation or spiritual awakening may be an implied theme here. "Tearing apart a dull destiny is powerless to save vocabulary" Highlights an individual's struggle in finding and interpreting his or her life experiences, especially in the face of destiny or fate that seems predetermined. Through this understanding, we can see how the poem "Dasamuka" is not only a personal expression of its author, but also reflects the dynamics of culture, values, and internal conflicts that occur in the society in which this poem originated.

Discussion

The poems by Tjahjono Widijanto contained in the Borobudur Writers Festival represent the past Javanese culture with themes such as keris, classical figures, Javanese letter history, and puppet characters. The poem reflects man's relationship with the environment, society, and culture as an integral part of human life. The use of symbols illustrates the values of local culture. The text represents the social structure and hierarchy

of Javanese culture and the conflict between elite groups and ordinary groups in the possession and use of script as a symbol of knowledge and culture (Pamungkas et al., 2024; Suprpto et al., 2023). Thus, the poem shows the complexity of the relationship between identity, social, cultural, and political.

Various symbolic representations of giants derived from classic stories reflect cultural complexity and identity specifics (Phelan, 2009). The narrative in the poem describes the cycle of human life, with a blend of religious beliefs and traditions. The collection of poems by Tjahjono Widijanto is not only an expression and reflection of the author's life but also describes the sociocultural dynamics that affect the social structure of Javanese society. Widijanto's poems represent the interrelated relationship between classical culture and contemporary culture.

In turn, poetry, in this case, is a cultural reflection that reflects a particular cultural identity. Through poetry, readers can explore the history, culture, and various positive values found in past societies. In addition to imitation, poetry can also help us to better understand the political dynamics in the social system of society (Budiharso, 2016; Suprpto et al., 2023; Waston, 2018). Therefore, poetry can be considered as a medium that can be an important source of information about the structural system of society. In turn, poetry is a very important literary text to open insights from the cultural heritage of ancestors that can continue to develop.

Conclusion

Tjahjana Widijanto's *katya* poems are a representation of Javanese cultural roots. It contains values about Javanese culture, history, and cultural identity from ancestral heritage. Tjahjana Widijanto's poetry is not only a reminder of past stories but also a source of information that can strengthen the nation's identity, as well as being a source of value that is very valuable for modern society. Through cultural symbols, poems by Tjahjana Widijanto describe the relationships and conflicts that occur in society. Poems by Tjahjono Widijanto highlight the hiermeaning of social and political conflicts that occur in Javanese society. Therefore, the language used in poetry serves as a means of power control. It aims to build people's mindsets. This suggests that it is important to understand the meaning and symbols of culture in poetry in an effort to investigate cultural heritage, including political maps, social symbols, and the complexity of ancestral anthropology.

This research implies that there needs to be a strong effort to understand and respond to socio-cultural dynamics, values, and internal conflicts that occur in society through literary appreciation, such as poetry. In addition, efforts are also needed to ensure equal access to knowledge, as well as efforts to maintain cultural heritage to strengthen the local and national identity of certain cultures. In addition, efforts are also needed to promote cross-cultural dialogue to address differences and gaps and create more significant social inclusion. This, it is hoped, will help build awareness about the importance of

tolerance, and respect for cultural diversity, and prepare social bonds in a multicultural society.

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