

# TRADITION AND BELIEF: THE REFLECTION OF JAVANISM IN OKKY MADASARI'S *ENTROK*

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**Abstract:** Javanism is the belief among the Javanese which came long before Islam entered Indonesia. Javanism is the belief of the Javanese people which is not the religion stated by the government. Javanism still believes in the spirits of the ancestors or animism and dynamism. When Islam came to Indonesia, especially Java, this belief was gradually left by the people. In fact, it still can be found some people believe in Javanism. One of them is Sumarni, the main character in Okky Madasari's *Entrok*. Okky is one of the woman writers in Indonesia. She has won Khatulistiwa Literary Award, a prestigious award for writers in Indonesia. *Entrok* reveals the story about Sumarni's struggle in life. Sumarni is an obedient follower of Javanism among the Islamic surrounding. So, this study analyses how Javanism applies in her life, whether it is a tradition or a belief. This study used a qualitative method with descriptive and hermeneutics approach. Sociological literary concept is used to see the reflection of the community in literary works. The result shows that Sumarni still convinces Javanism as her belief. Despite of great influence of Islam around her, Sumarni is still faithful in Javanism.

**Keywords:** *Tradition, Belief, Javanism, Entrok*

*Entrok* reveals the story of a mother and daughter who live in very different realms of thought. *Sumarni*, the mother, is a Javanese woman, uneducated, and ancestor worshipper. On the other hand, her daughter, *Rahayu*, a modern young woman who went to the school, has logical thinking, and a Moslem. The difference makes them feel strangers to one another. *Sumarni* considers her daughter does not have a soul because of her daughter forgets about the ancestors. Whereas *Rahayu*, considers her as a sinner for worshipping ancestors.

This story is placed in the background of the Java community during 1950-1994. At that time, Islam has been spread all over the Java and many people are moslems. Among the moslems, Sumarni lives with her belief, Javanism. Sumarni is an obedient follower of Javanism. She still performs the rituals of Javanism in her daily life. Although Javanism is not stated as the legal religion in Indonesia, many javanese still believe in Javanism.

This study uses a sociological approach to literature. Sociology of literature is the reflective research branch of literature. This research is much in demand by researchers who wanted to see literature as a reflection of people's lives. Social life will lead to the birth of a literary work. Many sociological researches discuss the relationship between the author and his social life. Both aspects of the form and content of the work will be shaped by the atmosphere and the social power of a given period. In this case, the literary text is seen as a reflection of the times, as a witness of time. Aspects of imagination and manipulation remain in literature which is also the social aspect that can not be ignored.

Sociology of literature has grown rapidly since studies by utilizing the theory of structuralism considered stagnant. Analysis of structuralism is disregarding the public which is precisely the origin of the making of literature. The literary works must be enabled together with aspects of other cultures, then the only way is back into the middle of society. Understanding is as an integral part of the overall communication system.

Sociology of literature is the research focused on human problems. Because literature often expresses the struggle of mankind in determining its future, imagination, feeling, and intuition. From this view, it appears that the long struggle of human life will always color the Indonesian literary texts. Sociological analysis of literature gives great attention to the functions of literature and literature as a particular society. Consequently, as a reciprocal, literary works should provide input, the benefits, the social structures that produce it (Ratna, 2009: 11).

As social beings, writers are always influenced by sociological background in the form of social structure. The social structure is the overall link between the basic elements, namely

social norms, social institutions, social groups and social strata. Sukri (2001: 16) says the social process is a mutual influence between the economic, political, legal, religious, and so on. Understanding the literary work is to understand the indirect relationship between literature in the ideological world where the work seems appearing on the elements of literature.

This study used a qualitative method with descriptive and hermeneutics approach. Hermeneutics was chosen to interpret life and human civilization in the novel. In contrast, descriptive method was chosen as descriptive analytic and descriptive comparative. Descriptive analysis will be used to analyze the social reality in *Okky Madasari's Entrok*. Thus, actions and events in the novel and the source of research data depends not only on purely text, but also on the social context of this novel.

Javanism has long been left by the Javanese since the coming of Islam. Many Javanese don't believe in Javanism and move to Islam. But in some Javanese, the rituals of Javanism are still performed. They still perform 'kenduri', sending pray to the ancestors. They left the belief but still perform the ritual.

Sumarni, as the main character in the novel, is a very loyal follower of Javanism. She applies the values of Javanism in her life. She even doesn't change her belief to Islam. She performs the rituals of Javanism in her daily life. Among the Islam surrounding, Sumarni still convinces with her Javanism.

### **The Ritual of Javanism**

The word "*Javanism*" comes from the Javanese word, a noun which is related to the customs and beliefs of Java (Javaneseness). Javanism is the belief and their way of life that emphasizes on Java inner peace, harmony and balance. In the general context, Javanism is part of the local religion in Indonesia. Javanism in public opinion contains about art, culture, traditions, rituals, attitudes, as well as the philosophy of the people of Java. Javanism also means spirituality of the Javanese people.

Javanism philosophy does not usually consider teaching as a religion in the sense as the monotheistic religions, such as Islam, Hindu, or Christian, but more as a set of perspectives and values which are accompanied by a number of behavior. Javanism Doctrines usually do not glued to the strict rules, and emphasizes the concept of balance. In view of this, Javanism has similarities with Confucianism or Taoism (MH.Yana, 2012: 110).

Javanism Doctrines vary and adopt the teachings of immigrants, whether Hindu, Buddhist, and Christian. It is estimated that these elements come from the Hindu-Buddhist period in the history of Java, which blend into a philosophy, namely the special system of the basis for the conduct of life. Systems thinking Javanism are complete in him, which contains kosmoslogi, mythology, a set of conceptions on hakikatnay mystical and so forth which is typical of Java, which is, suatau system of ideas about human nature and society, which in turn explains ethics, traditions and styles of Java.

Javanism gives a general idea of nature as a thorough body of knowledge, which is used to interpret life as it is apparently. So, Javanism is not a religious category, but showed an ethic and lifestyle inspired by the Javanese values. Most of the Javanese community is Javanism and Moslem. But they do not undergo the duties of Islam as a whole, for example, do not pray five times a day, do not go to the mosque and some do not fast during *Ramadhan* (fasting month).

The basis of their worldview is the notion that the natural order and the public have been determined in all respects. They assume that the subject's life and status have been set. The fate is predetermined, so they have to bear the problems patiently. They are closely related to their belief in the supernatural guidance and assistance from ancestral spirits who are considered as God. It caused religious feelings and a sense of security.

Javanism can be expressed well by those who know the secret of Javanese culture. Javanism has often been represented well by the old elite gentry and their descendants who confirm that awareness of their own culture is a phenomenon that is widespread among the Javanese.

This cultural awareness is often a source of pride and cultural identity. To protect from bad things in life, Javanese make worshipping such as providing food for the ancestors spirits. The worshipping usually consists of rice and a variety of other foods, leaves, flowers and fruits.

The examples of religious activities in the Java community, especially Javanism is fasting. The Javanese have habit of fasting on certain days, eg Monday-Thursday, or on the day of birth. By doing this, people can become more diligent and will soon get a reward.

Another activity of the Javanism is meditation. Meditation is usually done together with asceticism and be done in the places that are considered sacred, for example in the mountains, tombs, sacred space, and so on. In general, people do meditation to close or unite themselves with God.

The main ceremony in Javanism is *slametan*. Slametan is inviting people to come to our house to give blessings and pray for our life. This ceremony is held to celebrate something like a baby birth, graduation celebration, entering new house, getting promotion, and others. It is like a small feast because we provide food for the guests. Usually the guests also bring home food in a basket (*besek*). This is the most common ceremony among the Javanese community. This ceremony has been mixed with Islamic lessons.

The worshipping of spirits of the dead, especially the ancestors or what is called the forerunner, founder of the former village, plays an important role in Javanism. The ceremony is called *Ziarah* (going to a sacred graves and pray). This ceremony was done by Sumarni by visiting graves on the mountain.

Many graves of saints in Java are considered sacred. Thousands of people from all corners of the island of Java come to the graves to be blessed by the spirits of the saints. A tribute to the dead is expressed by cleaning the graves

### **Sumarni's Belief in Javanism**

Woman struggle in defending her belief can be seen through the characters in the novel, *Marni* and *Simbok*. *Simbok* lived in the past (traditional communities). *Marni* lives in the present era (people are familiar with Islam). *Marni* faces a lot of obstacles and opposition from others, even from her own daughter in keeping this belief. *Marni* has always receives insults from *Mr. Wiji*, a Moslem teacher in the village. He considered *Marni* doing *pesugihan* (sacrificing someone's life for the succesful). The death of *Teja*, her husband, and *Bejo*, her driver, was regarded as the sacrifice. *Rahayu*, her only daughter also doesn't support her.

However, *Marni* doesn't not give in, she still believes in the power of the Spirit ancestors. *Marni* also believes in the power of the spirit of a deceased person. Together with *Koh Cayadi* and other Chinese people, *Marni* went on a pilgrimage to the tomb of saints people at *Gunung Kawi* on Friday. *Marni* believes that the spirits in *Gunung Kawi* can provide prosperity for those who come on pilgrimage to it. *Marni* brought worshipping complete with grilled chicken, fruits, and cigars placed beside the grave. During the meditation, they were forbidden to eat and drink, also speak. They were also not allowed to think about bad things. they just did prayer to seek blessings.

On certain days, such as on the day of her birth, *Marni* makes the worshipping consists of some food placed on baskets. The basket is kept at *Marni*'s room, complete with grilled chicken and pastries and a burning candle. The basket is dedicated to the spirits of their ancestors. *Marni* also performs meditation to the spirit of ancestors under a tree in her backyard in the middle of the night, as in quoted from the novel:

*"Once upon a time, I also did what she did. Mother woke me, and we both sat under the tree. Said the mother, it's called prayer, penance. Mom taught me to meditate. She said there is Almighty who takes care our earth. It has the power to give us what we want. "just meditate so you will get good job" said Mother..."*

She always performs worshipping. Once a week, every day of her birth, she cooks roasted chicken, the porridge with red and white colour. Then she calls some old male neighbors to pray for her. She puts one basket full of food in her room like usual. The basket is given to the spirits of ancestors.

The existence of character *Rahayu* and *Sumarni* reflects values, norms, conventions, and rules governing both written and unwritten, the view of life in Javanese philosophy. They live in social and cultural environment of Java which is fulfilled with Javanese philosophy. Javanism is not a religion, but a way of life in the broadest sense, which includes views on God and

the universe and the position and the role of man in it. This includes also the view on all aspects of human life, including the view of human cultures and their religions.

The characters, *Sumarni* and *Rahayu* in *Entrok* described as women who live in a Javanese family. The Javanese still consider that women's position is under the men. The women should be patient, sincere, and *nrimo* (take everything as fate). It is as proposed by Ciptoprawiro (2004: 24) that the word "woman" is derived from the word *wani* (want) and *tata* (regulated). That is, a woman is a person who should be organized or regulated. Java community in practical life consider that the woman is a person who always strives for a state of organized until then he has to be a person who's willing to be regulated.

In another sense, the "woman", does not seem enough to describe the practical reality of everyday Javanese woman. The root word "*wanita*" is the master, which means teacher. This word expresses the reality which is more normative than practical everyday reality. In fact, the more we use often hear the word women use to express the less savory things like 'womanizing', and others.

Yana (2012: 15-16) says that, most Javanese are still not able to separate the myths from their lives. The meaning of the Javanese are people whose native language is Java language and in a native of central and eastern parts of the island of Java. Based on social groups, the Javanese are divided into:

1. *Wong cilik* (poor people), consisting of farmers and those with low incomes.
2. The gentry, composed of employees and intellectual people.
3. The nobles, the lifestyle is not far from the gentry.

In addition to differentiated social groups, the Javanese also differentiated on the basis of religion in two groups:

1. Javanism Java, which is often referred to as *Jawa Abangan* in consciousness and way of life is determined by the pre-Islamic Javanese traditions.
2. *Santri* (Students in Islamic school) who understands himself as a Muslim or a strong orientation toward the Muslim faith and seek to live according to the teachings of Islam.

Java community believe that God is the center of the universe and the center of all life, since long before the world created, God is the first time there. The definition of the center in this sense is to provide livelihood, balance, and stability, which can also give life and reconnection with the world above. The views of the Javanese about are usually called by *Ian Kawula Gusti*. That view assumes that the moral duty of man is to achieve harmony with God (*Gusti Allah*). The men should become the servant for *Gusti Allah* (Yana, 2012: 16).

The attitude of *nrimo* is reflected in character *Teja*. *Teja* never wants to try to change his fate. He's a porter in lifting goods in the market. *Mbah Noto*, his father also worked as porter. The job may seem like a job that is inherited from parents to children. After marrying *Teja* also works as a porter, only he lifted *Sumarni* merchandise, his wife. *Teja* never knows how much the profits earned by *Marni*. He also does not know the price of goods bought and sold. *Teja* only knows how lifting the merchandise. The most important for *Teja* is he can buy cigars every day. *Teja* never tries to find out more about how to trade. He accepts his fate as a porter lifting the goods which he considers as the fate that has been established by *Gusti Allah* for him.

*Sumarni* keeps the phylosophy of Javanism in her life like doing the ritual, praying to the ancestral spirits, patient, and *nrimo*. Related to the Java world view closely with psychotherapy, Niels Mulder (1999: 62-64) reveals that the vital core of Javanism is psychotherapy, namely the development of an inner life and one's deepest self. Innermost self actually makes up a microcosm of life that includes everything. In Javanism, movements themselves must flow from the outside to the inside, from the control that was born into the development of the mind, becoming truly aware of the social situation to be sensitive to the presence of "Life" and the embodiment of "Life" in the mind,

Natural Javanese mind formulates human life in two cosmos (nature) that macrocosm and microcosm. Macrocosm in the Javanese mind is the attitude and outlook on life to the universe that contains supernatural powers and filled with things that are mysterious. While the microcosm in the Javanese mind is the attitude and outlook on life to the real world. The main goal in life is to find and create harmony or balance between the macrocosm and microcosm of life.

In the realm of the macrocosm, the center of the universe is God. The universe has a level intended by their natural level Javanese life and their levels of more perfect world. The

universe consists of four main directions plus the center is God who unites and gives balance. Attitudes and views of the real world (microcosm) can be reflected in the lives of humans and the environment, the structure of human society, human life system everyday and everything that can be seen by the eye. In the face of life, good and right deed in this world depends on the strength of mind and soul.

God is the center of the macrocosm, while the king is the manifestation of God in the world so that in him there is a balance of the various forces of nature. So the king is the center of the world community as well as the king becomes a microcosm of God with the palace as a royal residence. *Kraton* (Palace) is a sacred center of the kingdom and where the king live because the king is a source of natural forces flow into the area and bring tranquility, justice and fertility.

Sugihastuti (2010) expressed the opinion that the patience is a game of emotion in an attempt to resolve the conflict. Patience is not innate or natural, but should be studied continuously throughout life. *Nrimo* attitude can be seen in *Sumarni*, when she faces *Teja* who does not want to change his life as porter lifting the goods. *Marni* takes *Teja*'s attitude although she has to work very hard to support her family. In addition, *Teja* is also married to another woman or with a singer. *Marni* is not angry with *Teja*'s decision. She considers that it is the nature of a man to have more than one wives.

Javanese philosophy sets out in the text of the realities that exist in the Java community. Even so, Javanese philosophy of the text is not the reality of Javanese philosophy of life, but only reflections, images, or pictures. As for the Javanese philosophy of the text starting from the distinction between the two fundamental aspects, namely in terms of birth and spiritual terms. As a creature of nature, humans are physical beings, it has a dimension of birth. We understand other people first through the birth dimension. But behind the birth of the dimensions the inner dimension covered (Franz Magnis-Suseno, 2001: 117-118).

## Conclusion

Javanism actually gives good philosophy in life. The teaching on the balancing of men, nature, and God sticks to the Javaness people. There are some rituals that must be performed to keep the balancing. The rituals are performed to give worshipping to the ancestor spirits. They believe that the ancestor spirits will keep their lives away from bad things and luck. Besides rituals, Javanism has some philosophy like being patient, sincere, and *nrimo*. All of these can be seen in *Sumarni* as the character in *Okky's Entrok*. Keeping the Javanism belief for her life is not easy among the Islamic surrounding. *Sumarni* gets many protests from the people around her. Even the protest comes from her only daughter. Although they have different point of view, *Sumarni* and *Rahayu* still love each other. *Sumarni* loves *Rahayu* as her daughter and *Rahayu* respects *Sumarni* as her mother. *Sumarni* is an obedient Javanism since she always performs the ceremonies. *Sumarni* never leaves this belief until the end of the story in spite of the familial and society objection. In *Sumarni*'s character, Javanism is a belief for her. Although there are many moslems still performs the rituals of Javanism, they do that as a tradition. *Sumarni* performs the ritual because it is her belief not tradition.

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