

Coffee, Food, and the Crisis of Indonesian Family Relationship in the Poem of Khong Guan Banquette by Joko Pinurbo

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Abstract. The abundance of Indonesian gastronomic wealth, expressed in literary works, is challenging to discuss and study. The focus of this research is the use of gastronomical metaphors to describe the family relationship's critique in the collection of Joko Pinurbo's *Khong Guan Banquette*. Through the method of close reading and gastro-critical reading, it can be stated that coffee, tea, and food that correlate with Khong Guan cans (biscuits, wafers, and traditional snacks typical of Lebaran) are used as a metaphor for human life, which crosses life's problems and reflects on relationship crisis. family.

Keywords: *gastronomy, gastrocritics, khong guan banquette, family relation crisis*

INTRODUCTION

The study of food metaphors (also drinks) in literary works, allows food to explore a new world, which is no longer dominated by agricultural science. The relation of representational structures between literary works and the use of food metaphors has significantly attracted the interest of researchers across academic, transdisciplinary, national, and transnational disciplines [1], [2]. This significant interest places the study of food in literary works, explored widely since the early 1990s, such as food as a value of representation in literature and culture to food from the perspective of the literary production of a particular historical period [3]-[5]. Food has multidimensional resources, which paves the way for interpretation in narrative glasses [6]. Gastronomic studies in literary works are summarized in terms of gastro-criticism. Gastrocriticism is a multidisciplinary approach, which links gastronomy and literary criticism, which involves an extensive and in-depth study of food studies in all its facets [7]-[10].

Indonesia has a wealth of food that is told in old texts including *Serat Centhini* [11]. *Serat Centhini*

is a classic Javanese literary work, containing strands of stories and forms of song and a variety of knowledge about various names of foods and drinks, which were eaten by ancestors in the Nusantara era. *Serat Centhini*, written by Sunan Pakubuwono V, Kiai Ngabehi Ranggasastra, Kiai Ngabehi Yosodipuro II, and Kiai Ngabehi Sastradipura, in 1814-1823, numbered 12 volumes, with a number of pages 3112 [11]. The manuscript tells about the adventures of Jayengresmi, Jayengsari, and Niken Rancangkapti, exploring the Java region, as well as enjoying staple foods, snacks, and drinks that are different in each place visited. The concept of travel literature (travel writer) with the contents of the travel memoirs of the characters is summarized completely in *Serat Centhini*. One aspect discussed in *Serat Centhini* is the kind and multiplicity of food and drinks in the human travel cycle. Food is not merely seen as fulfilling biological needs (hunger and thirst), economic, sociological, but also the guardian of human health, along with symbolic functions, which connect humans with creators.

Gastronomic literary works or Indonesian literary works, which make gastronomy (the science of food and cultural connection) as the main problem, the center of narration, imagination, and metaphors that sharpen and advance the story and plot [12], [9], [10], burst and suck the reader's attention. *Para Priyayi* (1991) and *Jalan Menikung* (1999) by Umar Kayam, *Filosofi Kopi* (2006), and *Madre* (2011) by Dewi Lestari, *Aruna and Lidahnya* (2014) by Laksmi Pamuntjak, *Bir Pletok* (2019) by Zainal Mutaqien, and *Perjamuan Khong Guan (Khong Guan Banquette)* (2020) by Joko Pinurbo, are a series of novel titles, short stories and poetry sprinkled with gastronomical concoctions. These literary works are similar to Indonesian carnivals or food parades and their niches [12].

Criticisms of human entities as the most voracious food-consuming creatures, who celebrate their compulsive worship at the supermarket

'Temple', as in Ginsberg's poem *A Supermarket in California* [13], show that criticism of human consumption patterns in poetry is criticism of poetry with gastronomic studies explorative ones. Gastrocriticism in literature enables researchers to penetrate deeply into the symbolic and social significance of food, reveal human eating activities, which make them exist and present as living creatures, while also demonstrating the dominance of western food flavors over Indonesian local food [5], [14]-[16].

Although previous research has sought to uncover how humans use food to show their existence in literary works, gastro-critical studies in poetry by Indonesian poets, which reveal the crisis of family relations, are still rarely done. Specifically, the central thesis carried out in this study is how the coffee and food metaphor is used to explain the crisis of Indonesian family relations.

Khong Guan Banquette is a collection of poems by the Indonesian poet, Joko Pinurbo, which was published in January 2020. Pinurbo is a poet who has been productive since 1999, with at least 19 collections of poetry. The characteristics of Pinurbo's poetry are narrative, with diction and simple themes, which do not play many rhymes (poetry) [17], [18]. Pinurbo poetry is a coherent mix between narration, irony, and humor, which refers to everyday objects and events. In the collection of *Khong Guan Banquette* poems, with a cover image of Khong Guan's biscuit cans, Pinurbo presents psychological and social conflicts and questions family relations, which limp when communication becomes more technological through smartphones.

Before the Covid-19 pandemic took place, a family crisis caused by a shift in conventional ways and patterns of communication (face-to-face, physical meeting) to the virtual world with smart device intermediaries, gave rise to various problems and consequences for its users. Information and communication technology that is growing rapidly now, revolutionizing the way humans interact, changing social interaction patterns in the family and internet devices are used as social isolation tools to avoid face-to-face and escape from social [19]- [20].

METHOD

This descriptive study processed the data in the form of Joko Pinurbo's poem quotations in the collection of *Khong Guan Banquette* poems. The researcher uses close reading to describe the use of gastronomic metaphors, especially coffee, tea, and food, as a marker of the crisis of Indonesian family relations. Close reading identifies 33 gastronomic poems in the collection of *Khong Guan Banquette* poems.

The results of the identification of the close reading were analyzed through gastro-critical reading, which classifies gastronomic vocabulary with the field of meaning of drinks and food, which is played to represent, explain, and reinforce the crisis of Indonesian family relations in the poems of the of *Khong Guan Banquette*. The researcher compiled a data collection instrument table related to gastronomic vocabulary, which acts as the following metaphor.

Table 1. Gastronomic Metaphor of *Khong Guan*

Research Focus	Sub-research Focus	Indicators	Descriptors
Gastronomic Metaphor	1. Gastronomic Metaphor: Drinks	1A. Daily drinks	1A.1 Kopi 1A.2 Teh
	2. Gastronomic Metaphor: Snacks	2A. Lebaran snack dishes	2A.1 Biskuit Khong Guan 2A.2 Wafer Khong Guan 2A.3 Rengginang 2A.4 Kripik 2A.5 Ampiang 2A.6 Peyek

Banquette (Perjamuan Khong Guan)

RESULT & DISCUSSION

Khong Guan Banquette presents coffee and tea drinks. The drink is not presented as a quench of thirst, but a loyal friend to accompany the presence of the audience. In his poetry of *Saturday Night in Angkringan (Malam Minggu di Angkringan)* and *Business in the Morning (Kesibukan di Pagi Hari)*, Pinurbo shows traces of coffee as a daily drink that can be enjoyed anywhere.

Malam Minggu di Angkringan

*Telah kugelar/hatiku yang jembar/di tengah zaman/yang kian sangar/
Monggo lenggah/menikmati langit/yang kinclong/malam yang jingglang/lupakan politik/
Yang liar dan binger/Mau minum kopi/atau minum aku?/Atau bersandarlah/di punggungku/yang hangat dan liberal/sebelum punggungku/berubah menjadi punggung Negara/yang dingin perkara*

Kesibukan di Pagi Hari

1. *Mengucap syukur kepada tidur/yang telah melagukan dengkur/dengan empat suara/*
2. *mencium cermin/yang tak pernah malu/memamerkan wajah yang wagu/3. membuang dosa di kamar mandi/4.membantu hujan menyirami tanam-tanaman/5.menemani kucing/memamah habis cuilan mimpiku/6.menghangatkan optimisme yang hampir basi/7.menghirup kopi dan kamu/8.membantu Negara:jres, udut/9.belajar menjadi tua dan tetap gila*

Coffee contains caffeine. Caffeine is a psychoactive stimulant that conditions the body fresher and more energetic [21]. Fatigue experienced by humans, in interacting in the public sphere, related to political and state issues, can be neutralized by drinking coffee at Angkringan. Wherever we are, drinking coffee in the morning is a must before leaving for work. Furthermore, in the *Kopi Tubruk* poem, Pinurbo shows that the activity of drinking coffee should not be done while being sad. Tubruk coffee is a type of coffee that is enjoyed without the filtered pulp, so the bitter taste of coffee is stronger when drunk. Pinurbo compared the bitter coffee inhaled with the bitterness of the relationship between the "I" character in the poem with "you". *In this beautiful (coffee) cup / I'll kill and finish it/you. Sadness while I remember a word: / "Bitter a day is enough for a day."* Bitter coffee tubruk is a comparison that is equivalent to the bitterness of the character "me" in managing relations with the character "you". Coffee is a metaphor for life's failures, bitterness, and discomfort, as well as a powerful marker of refreshing life. [8], [10] It states that gastro-critics experts appreciate food in literature and food writing as a means of understanding social, cultural, and economic practices in consuming food (also drinks). The practice of consuming coffee at home and Angkringan at the *Khong Guan Banquette* gives a hint that coffee acts as a comparison of the bitter taste of the journey of humans managing relations with their environment. In the *Khong Guan Banquette*, tea appears in a poem entitled *Khong Guan's Grandmother* (Simbah Khong Guan).

Simbah Khong Guan

*Simbah muncul di kaleng Khong Guan/duduk
sendirian di meja makan/mencelupkan biskuit ke
dalam teh hangat/dan menyantapnya pelan-
pelan/Anak cucunya sibuk ngeluyur di jagat maya,
tak mau mengerti perasaan/orang tua yang tak
lama lagi akan/ mengucapkan selamat tinggal,
dunia/ Simbah mencelupkan jarinya/ke dalam teh
hangat/ Dan berkata, "Kesepian sosial bagi
simbah-simbah yang merana."*

Simbah's anxiety in the poem arises from the loneliness she felt. Grandmother's children and grandchildren are busier with their gadgets and surfing in cyberspace, rather than communicating with her. Simbah was eliminated from this unequal communication relationship because he did not understand how to use smart devices and access the internet. [19], [22] mentioned that families who have roles and responsibilities to their family members are disturbed by the use of devices and internet access without control, which results in impaired interaction in the family so that the perceptions and abilities of parents in managing

their relationships and children who actively communicate in cyberspace are important. The gap in conventional communication patterns (face to face) is the skill of parents (grandmothers). These skills are no longer in line with the skills of grandchildren (generation Z and Alfa) who adapt more at communicating virtually.

Grandmother (Simbah) chose to dip the biscuits and fingers into warm tea and ate the biscuits slowly to overcome his social loneliness. Tea became a marker and an escape for Simbah, which was alienated from communication from her extended family. Drinks consumed by someone inform how social and cultural settings are managed, forge, and shape the identity, social, and cultural profile of their consumption [2], [5], [23]. In Indonesia, older people usually drink tea. Tea can be called a more acceptable beverage for all ages, like water, which can be drunk anytime, anywhere, and with any food [24]. According to CNN records, Indonesians spend two billion liters of packaged tea every year [25].

The can of Khong Guan biscuits became the cover of the *Khong Guan Banquette* poetry collection book written by Joko Pinurbo. Khong Guan biscuits are an iconic brand, which is always present in the tradition of celebrating Religious Days in Indonesia, including the celebration of Lebaran. These biscuits are very popular in all levels of Indonesian society. The illustration of three people in the red Khong Guan biscuit can, to this day, is a joke that told from year to year. The three people in the can are the mother and her two children. What always becomes a joke is the question "When Mr. Khong Guan, go home?".

Literary criticism through the lens of gastronomy challenges the reader to understand more deeply in two fields, literature and gastronomy, and allows an introspective examination of the cultural traditions of a society, and facilitates understanding of other cultures [3], [15]. Khong Guan biscuits and snacks typical of Lebaran dishes, such as sticky rice crisp (rengginang), peanut and Javanese sugar cookies (ampiang), chips, and rice flour chips (peyek) have substitute ties, which show how modern and traditional food meet and can be interchangeable in Khong Guan cans. When there are no more biscuits in the can, the Indonesian people fill the can with the traditional snacks.

Bingkisan Khong Guan

*Mari kita buka/apa isi kaleng Khong Guan
ini:/biskuit/peyek/keripik/
Ampiang.atau
rengginang?/Simsalabim./Buka!/Isinya
ternyata/ponsel/
Kartu ATM/tiket/voucer/obat/jimat/dan kepingan-
kepingan rindu/ yang sudah membantu*

In *Khong Guan's Parcel (Bingkisan Khong Guan)* poem, Pinurbo writes about the gastronomic experience of Indonesian people who filled Khong Guan's cans with traditional Lebaran snacks, when the biscuits ran out. Khong Guan cans also function as a storage place for various objects, including the owner's memories. There is an anecdote in Indonesian society that Khong Guan cans always give a surprise because the contents are no longer biscuits, but rengginang, and a place to store all kinds of objects that are still needed and have shared memories for a family. However, Khong Guan cans are also a place for mothers to slip a prayer for their child who will sometime come home, as in the *Khong Guan Prayer (Doa Khong Guan)* poem: *the mother's prayer which is embroiled / in a Khong Guan can / is ripe, ready / served at the dinner table / for her child someday will go home*. Pinurbo stressed the crisis of relations between parents and children. Children who are expected to go home to celebrate Lebaran with their parents do not arrive.

At the Lebaran 2020 celebration, which took place during a pandemic, the *Khong Guan Banquette* found a significant connection. The Indonesian government conducts Large Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB) to reduce the number of people infected Covid-19 case. The hospitality that is usually carried out door-to-door must be stretched online. This condition triggered an additional crisis that occurred previously, due to the gap in conventional and virtual communication patterns and the frequency of interaction and face-to-face communication which was increasingly reduced.

CONCLUSION

Gastronomical metaphors represented by coffee, tea, biscuits, and traditional snacks typical of Lebaran in Pinurbo's *Khong Guan Banquette* poetry is a depiction of the disquiet of human figures in negotiating, shaping, and rearranging the relations of family members, both in dealing with shifting ways and patterns of communication conventional to virtual, as well as reduced frequency of direct and face-to-face interaction. *Khong Guan Banquette* released in January 2020, when the world was not yet confronted with the situation of the Covid-19 pandemic simultaneously.

Khong Guan Banquette offers negotiations to establish relationships that should be constantly updated between family members, through the gastronomic metaphor of coffee and food in Khong Guan cans. Gastrocritical reading at the *Khong Guan Banquette* opens up the possibility of continuing the study of how food and drink are narrated in poetry, to reveal unequal relations in the realm of the family, both in the main and extended

family.

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