Women and Javanese Local Psychology: Evidence Through Literature with Indigenous Studies Context

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Abstract. The current study aims to explore women and treatment in Indonesian literature through the perspective of indigenous studies. This research focuses on two Indonesian novels, namely *Olenka* by Budi Darma and *Para Priyayi* by Umar Kayam. The theory used refers to the psychology of literature associated with the context of gender-based indigenous studies in the perspective of language literature, psychology, and socio-culture. The qualitative-interpretive method was used in this study to corroborate verbal data. Four stages were used in data collection techniques: observation, interviews, recording, and photo shooting. The study results showed that local Javanese women in Indonesian literature appear in the form of Javanese women's psychology, which is seen in the depth of soul, tough soul, and simplicity. The local psychology of Javanese women is part of the Javanese indigenous people. In addition, universally, the local psychology of Javanese women in literature has similarities with local psychology in certain societies as a form of the literary archetype.

Keywords: Literature · Indigenous studies · Literary psychology · Local women · Javanese

1 Introduction

Prior to the 1990s, studies on indigenous knowledge were not widely known by the public. However, after the 1990s, studies on indigenous knowledge became "fertile ground for research" [1]. Three main factors cause this phenomenon. First, indigenous knowledge is a relatively new study that allows for more varied research. Second, the study of indigenous knowledge is an interdisciplinary study that attracts many researchers across scientific fields [2–4]. Third, currently, there is a trend of studies on matters related to indigenous, which are carried out in order to raise elements related to local/indigenous/typical in a particular society.

Historically, indigenous knowledge is a dichotomy of western knowledge, which seems superior, and western knowledge which seems inferior. In this context, indigenous knowledge cannot be separated from a society that is primitive, illiterate, and upholds

ancestral heritage related to philosophy, psychology, and a unique/typical culture [5]. In connection with this phenomenon, this study discusses matters relating to the local psychology of Javanese women in Indonesian literature.

The study of indigenous knowledge has historically been inseparable from the influence of Geertz, who popularized the term local knowledge in interpretive-anthropological studies. Indigenous knowledge studies are synonyms with traditional ecological knowledge studies [6, 7], and indigenous studies. The key theme of indigenous knowledge is related to local knowledge that is unique in certain communities [8].

In its development, indigenous knowledge is included in various scientific disciplines, especially psychology, anthropology, and sociology [9, 10]. Studies on indigenous knowledge are related to local community knowledge about plants [11], natural disaster mitigation [12], environmental justice [13], socio-cultural [14], politics, religion [15, 16], education [17], and psychology [18]. All of them, if the keyword is taken from indigenous knowledge, then it is related to cognitive knowledge, knowledge of behavior, and knowledge of unique artifacts/products/creations in a particular society. Regarding the study of varied indigenous knowledge, this study is categorized as an interdisciplinary study.

2 Methods

The method used in this study was qualitative since it referred to non-statistical exposures [19–21]. This research focused on two Indonesian novels, namely *Olenka* by Budi Darma and *Para Priyayi* by Umar Kayam. For data collection, this study used ethnographic methods [22]. Data collection techniques were carried out through the stages of observation, interview, recording, and photo shooting. There were criteria for the category of female informants, namely having an adult age, understanding the surrounding environment, being a native, and not having political interests related to research. The data analysis technique was carried out through the stages of data identification, data reduction, data analysis, data exposure, and data verification. The data analysis technique was carried out with a flow model referring to Miles and Huberman [23]. For research data to be scientifically justified, triangulation of data, theories, and results was also carried out.

The stages of this research referred to the fishbone with the concept of cause and effect. This research was carried out by exploring the problem first and finding its effects of the problem. Starting from the fishbone, exploration related to the transformation and protection of indigenous knowledge of East Javanese women based on gender in the perspective of language literature, psychology, and socio-culture was also carried out.

3 Results and Discussion

3.1 Depth of Soul

When someone preaches about a particular religion and/or belief, we must respect it since being a religious person is a human instinct. In everyday life, humans have their

own behavior. Religious humans will be different from ordinary humans. It means that religious people have religious thoughts and behaviors as well. However, a person's religiosity is sometimes not seen from the speech or behavior in society but from the depths of the soul, which is essential. Humans with a high value of religiosity will be able to show the depth of their soul to themselves, not spit it out on others.

Related to the depth of the human soul, this is included in spiritual psychology or religious psychology. However, the depths of the soul are also discussed in general terms within a general context. Thus, the problem of the depth of the soul can be included in spiritual psychology or other psychology that brings mental problems personally or collectively. In this context, humans who are in their souls are humans who have ethical and philosophical personalities.

Being a religious human is not easy since the challenges are heavy. It is like a tree; the taller the tree, the greater the wind blows it. Likewise, the more religious people, the more challenges will arise again and again. This matter tests the ability and depth of religiosity in the human being. For this reason, humans with a higher level of religiosity are not more arrogant with their knowledge but more humble with their knowledge. However, sometimes the opposite happens in the fact of life. We, as human beings, are not religious but justify others as non-religious. We are indeed great critics at seeing the faults of others but are unwilling and unable to see and judge ourselves.

In Javanese philosophy, a term is used to make them aware of what they do to themselves and others. This philosophy is known as '*jarkoni, iso ngajar gak iso ngelakoni*' (can teach but can't do). This philosophy shows that being a Javanese is not to be a human being who can easily teach something to others but cannot do what is taught. It is like, in addition to teaching the material, the teacher must also be able to do what is taught. It is a serious consequence since acting as said is difficult.

When it comes to seeing faults, most people prefer to judge rather than see their own faults. Thus, there is a saying, "the elephant in front of the eye is invisible, but the ant across the sea is visible". It shows that real humans are indeed full of badness but do not understand it. As for other people who have only a little badness, it will look very big. Without looking for human faults, mistakes will still be found in them since humans are indeed a place of wrong and sin. Moreover, if humans look for the faults of others, then more mistakes will be found. In terms of religiosity, Olenka's character in novel *Olenka* shows a deep critique of religiosity. It can be seen in the following excerpt.

> *Olenka considered the street priest to be pretentious. She, therefore, agreed with the actions of local authorities in the cities of Terre Haute, Elletsville, and Morganstown to forbid such clergy from preaching arbitrarily. She agreed that such people shouldn't be shouting just anywhere* [24].

The excerpt above shows criticism related to the context of religiosity. Being a religious human has many challenges, and this is also related to the depth of the human soul. Giving sermons to others must also pay attention to the context in which being a religious human does not necessarily justify that another human being is a person who is not religious or less religious. In fact, in the eyes of God, we absolutely do not know who is better. Olenka's character actually desires to show that someone religious must

also appear from the depths of the soul. For example, being more compassionate and wise to others, not even cursing and justifying other people as humans covered in sin.

In the context of the excerpt, Olenka's character tries to dismantle spiritual masks where there is a thick mask behind them. The mask must be removed since it is in it that humans can understand humans who are truly human. Olenka is indeed a human being in America, but she is a Javanese human figure found abroad. She showed that humans are real humans if there is truth in them. Humans are not what they appear on the outside, but humans from within are able to show themselves as good humans.

Humans do have masks, both thick masks and thin masks, which are used in their lives. In Jung's view, masks are necessary for everyday life since humans need masks to communicate with others. However, what became less good was the use of a thick mask so that many falsehoods were raised and communicated to the people around.

3.2   Tough Soul

A tough soul is essentially related to two things. The first is someone whose soul is not easily shaken when faced with life's trials, be it trials that arise from oneself, family, or others. The second is a tough soul, which is essentially related to a soul that survives in life when there are many problems. For example, when waves and storms hit a ship that sailed the ark continuously, the ship remained strong and continued its journey to the vast ocean. The ship will continue its journey even though it is far and many obstacles are in the way. It is because that is the challenge of the life journey in the sea; the wider the sea, the bigger the waves. In the context of psychology, a tough soul is needed so that humans do not easily fall into problems or trials. However, not all of them have a tough soul in this life. Thus, only humans with tough souls can survive life.

Humans must have a tough soul in life. In Javanese people, toughness is firmly instilled by parents in their children so they can become real human beings. Thus, soul toughness will take root in the child. When they grow up, children can stand on their own and face obstacles and challenges in life. The term tough, in this case, is associated with strength and the ability to deal with life's problems. In *Olenka*, Olenka's character is a woman (wife). When she found her husband less than optimal in terms of salary, she tried to find additional income. She didn't want to stand idly by when she saw her family's living conditions at that time.

As a woman with a Javanese character, Olenka tries to show herself as a strong woman. A Javanese woman should not stand idly by since she must be able to stand on her own. In fact, she may also have to be able to contribute her thoughts and energy to her family. Therefore, Javanese women must also be able to work to earn money. In that way, she would not be belittled by her husband either. The image of Olenka's resilience is shown when she worked to earn extra wages for her family. This depiction can be seen in the following excerpt.

> In the meantime, she would continue to work at the nightclub and was willing to cover the rent at the Tulip Tree apartment and Wayne and Steven's expenses [24].

Based on the depiction of the excerpt, it appears that the figure of Olenka is indeed a formidable wife. She is willing to work to assist the operational life of her family. She

even tried to bear almost half the burden of her family. In fact, in the context of family life, a husband has greater responsibilities than a wife. However, in this case, it seems less applicable to the life of Wayne and his family.

In some myths, a Javanese woman is known by the term 3 M, namely *macak* (primping), *masak* (cooking), *manak* (giving birth). It means that Javanese women as wives only have three obligations (primping, cooking, and giving birth). This myth turned out to be a reality when Javanese people for generations have perpetuated the view that women are 3 M. In fact, not all Javanese women are 3 M figures. It is shown by Olenka, who is not a woman – as a Javanese wife figure – who is dependent on her husband. She is a strong woman who can stand without having to depend on a man who is considered a strong and tough figure.

3.3 Responsibility

To be a good human being is to be a person with high responsibility. That is the view of existentialists promoted by Sartre and his friends, such as Heidegger, Karl Jaspers, and Nietzsche. Likewise Javanese people, they are human figures with a high sense of responsibility. The higher the responsibility a person has for himself, the more human the person is, and vice versa. Humans' responsibility exists within each of them, so everything depends on the individual. The better one's ethics, the higher their responsibility toward oneself and the surrounding community.

In *Olenka*, Olenka's character, who has an affair with another man, is also responsible for what she does. As a human being who has freedom, Olenka's character shows that she is a human being who has her own way of determining whether the problem is good or bad, sin or not. This depiction can be seen in the following excerpt.

If his relationship with me is a sin, he will be responsible for it himself [24].

Based on the excerpt, it appears that the figure of Olenka is a human being who has responsibility for herself. Let her bear it herself for her faults, sins, and vices. She is ready to bear her own guilt without anyone else interfering in the matter of the sin committed by her. Indeed, the problem of sin is a personal matter for each person. Therefore, the character tries to show that she is responsible for herself. Humans, as existential beings, have a responsibility to themselves. Through this responsibility, they are actually also responsible to others. It can be concluded that a person with a high responsibility for himself will have a high responsibility for others, which means that he is a humanist figure.

3.4 Simplicity

Simplicity is a characteristic of Javanese people living in mediocrity; they don't want to be glamorous. In the view of Javanese people, there is a saying '*urip mung mampir ngombe*' which means to live only to stop for a drink. Therefore, humans in this life are only temporary. Essentially, simplicity is related to two main things as follows.

The first is the thought of wanting to be a simple human figure. Simple thoughts are difficult when humans have become rich people but still want to be simple figures. It is

a contradiction in life since rich people tend to have a desire to show their wealth. This matter is considered natural since it has become a human instinct. However, rich people who show modesty are very rare since it is difficult to do so. The thought of being a simple human has made the human being philosophically simple. Someone who thinks simply, his life is not shackled with selfishness and lust to become a rich person who is flattered by others.

The second is a simple human in action. Humans who are simple in action do not mean being stingy and unwilling to assist others regarding financial problems. However, in this context, simple behavior means normal and reasonable behavior in terms of dressing and using other equipment, such as vehicles or jewelry. Simple behavior is not behavior that is made simple, but it is a person's daily behavior of acting simply.

Javanese people are humans who uphold simplicity where they are unpretentious and ordinary figures. They don't want to be arrogant and are seen as humans who don't have gratitude in their daily lives. The psychology of their life is a simple life, not a life of luxury and glamor. What they long for is a simple but happy life. This representation can be seen in the following excerpt.

> *The most important thing is that as long as the income is able to rent an apartment, it is enough for Olenka. Everything else will be borne by Olenka* [24].

The excerpt above shows that Olenka's character is a simple woman. She tried to be a simple human in her life. In this context, the character Olenka represents Javanese people who live in America, so what she does there psychologically cannot be separated from Javanese people.

Simplicity is also seen in the novel *Para Priyayi* where the character Lantip lives simply with his mother. Indeed, he came from an ordinary family who lived on his mother's wages. Lantip (her name was Wage at that time) and his mother did not show a luxurious life or owe their neighbors to be considered rich. In social life, sometimes some people are reluctant and ashamed to be considered poor or simple people. Therefore, they end up in debt to someone else. An illustration of this simplicity can be seen in the following excerpt.

> *I know that even though you (mom) are generous, you are also very frugal and firm* [25].

The excerpt above shows that Lantip's mother is an ordinary person. When their lives are ordinary, they don't want to appear as if they have much money, so they buy necessities that are less important in daily life. Javanese people don't want luxury. They prefer simplicity where they can feel pleasure and gratitude in life, either with family or other people.

The simple lifestyle practiced by Lantip's mother represents a Javanese philosophy. When a person is in a mediocre life, thoughts and actions that show luxury will certainly self-destruct in life. The destruction is caused by a lifestyle that is not simple, causing the person concerned to be in debt. Over time, the debt is getting bigger and bigger. This condition causes them to be in debt and eventually sell the most valuable things they own, such as a house or land, which is actually the only wealth they have.

4   Conclusion

Based on the analysis results, it can be drawn into two conclusions. The first is that the psychology of Javanese women is seen in the depth of soul, tough soul, and simplicity. The local psychology of Javanese women is part of the Javanese indigenous people. The second is that universally, the local psychology of Javanese women in literature has similarities with local psychology in certain societies as a form of a literary archetype.

Authors' Contributions.   The research was conceived upon and planned by Anas Ahmadi and Bambang Yulianto. It was Hasan Subekti, Siti I. Savira, and Putri Aisyiyah who were in charge of conducting the study. Understanding how to evaluate the data was aided by Abdul M. Aziz and Ahmad Burhanuddin. No one contributed anything less than valuable to the discussion, and they all had a hand in the research and writing of the paper.

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