



Keris and Discourse of Javanese Identity

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Abstract— As an Indonesian cultural heritage, keris plays an important role, especially in Javanese society, and more dynamics in the keris society, which continues to preserve the keris to this day. On the one hand, the preservation of the keris is carried out by continuing to care for the keris as an object, but on the other hand, it is also caring for and developing discourse on the keris. Among the many discourses surrounding the keris, the biggest and perhaps the center of the discourse on keris today is the strengthening of one's identity as a Javanese. This discourse is emerged both as a logical consequence of the presence of the keris in Javanese society since centuries ago and the development of discourse in the present. This article will discuss the identity discourse that appears in the keris. Through the framework of Foucault's discourse analysis, this article finds that the identity discourse that dominates or even covers the Javanese keris exists as a dynamic discourse and always responds to changes in Javanese society in general.

Keywords— *keris, identity, discourse, java*

I. INTRODUCTION

Keris is an original weapon from Java and an Indonesian national cultural heritage. Even so, the actual spread of the keris reached all over and beyond the archipelago. The scope of its distribution is from Nusa Tenggara and Ternate in the East to the Malay Peninsula and parts of Southeast Asia in the West (Harsrinuksmo, 2004, p. 10).

The keris was confirmed as a world intangible cultural heritage by UNESCO on 25 November 2005. If this acknowledgment is not understood carefully it will certainly cause confusion because a keris is an object but is confirmed as an intangible heritage. This is because even though a keris is an object, in reality it is not only understood as an object by the Indonesian people in general and the Javanese in particular. Apart from the material discourse which is complex and revolves around the discussion of the keris as an object of cultural heritage and the meaning of its form, structure and shape, there is another discourse that "covers" the keris. This other discourse is closely related to the intangible sides of the keris in the form of philosophy, history, mysticism, charm, supernatural powers, identity and so on.

The discourse that is present cannot be separated from the long history of the keris. For traditional Javanese society and its mystical world, the keris occupies a special position. In Javanese philosophy there is a suggestion for men to have their own keris so that they are considered to have become real men. This philosophy, the *Lima Perkara Kanggo Jaka Merdeka* or five things that a man needs to have are: *wisma* (house), *garwa* (woman

or wife), *turangga* (horse), *kukila* (birds as entertainment), and *curiga* (weapon in the form of keris) (Moebirman, 1980: 34). Even though this philosophical tradition is no longer widely applicable in today's Javanese society, the discourse that appears about the keris is always associated with a similar understanding in which the keris is a sign of one's Javanese identity.

This article will discuss how the development of the discourse regarding identity surrounding the keris as an object. Through studying the discourses that emerged among the keris society, this article would like to look at the developments and changes in concepts and understandings that occur in keris among Javanese people.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous research on kerises includes: First, a dissertation by Soesgoro " Keris Jawa Tradisional di Daerah Yogyakarta dan Surakarta Kontinuitas dan Perubahannya" (Traditional Javanese Keris in Yogyakarta and Surakarta Regions Continuity and Changes) at Gadjah Mada University. This dissertation basically attempts to examine the changes in the meaning and continuity of the traditional keris in Javanese society. One of the interesting things discussed in this dissertation is identifying the system of meaning for the keris which is considered to consist of several interrelated subsystems. The subsystems are the technology subsystem, the sociology subsystem and the ideological subsystem.

Second, " Kajian Fetisisme pada Keris Jawa" (Fetishism Study on Javanese Keris) written by Yunita Fitra Andriana in *Jurnal Rupa* Vol. 1, No. 1, January-June 2016. This article tries to examine the keris from the perspective of anthropological fetishism. This research observes that there is a phenomenon in modern society where keris is transformed as a "fetish object" or an object of worship. Both for those who collect keris for aesthetic needs and mystical needs, they both "worship" keris in various contexts and worship bases. Culture gives birth to a belief system and then belief gives birth to a suggestion of the power of an object. This power, both aesthetic and mystical, is worshiped by the owner of the keris.

Third, "Makna Simbolik Ornamen Gandhik dan Wadidang Keris Saidi di Desa Pakunden, Kecamatan Sukorejo, Kabupaten Blitar" (The Symbolic Meaning of Gandhik Ornaments and Wadidang Keris Saidi in Pakunden Village, Sukorejo District, Blitar Regency), a journal article written by Mentari Sonia Andawari, Sulbi Prabowo, and Indah Chrysanti Angge. Published in the *Journal of Jurnal Pendidikan Seni Rupa*, Volume 3 Number 1 of 2015. Surabaya State University. This research examines a keris maker named Saidi Tamingkusumo who comes from Aeng Tongtong Village, Sumenep Regency which is a famous keris producing village until now. Based on the data analyzed, the concept of creating Gandhik and Wadidang ornaments, Saidi's keris comes from stories about life around which aims to remind people about the existence of nature and life, then summarized in three formulations, namely fulfillment of intellectual expression, aesthetics and originality of ideas in a work. Next is research on the symbolic meaning of the Gandhik and Wadidang keris ornaments, which have a deep meaning. The symbolic meaning of the Gandhik and Wadidang keris Saidi ornaments contains the true meaning of human life, so that by being aware of their position humans do not violate the order, rules and ethics that apply in a living system that is still in harmony with nature.

Fourth, " Makna Desain Keris dalam Budaya Jawa" (The Meaning of Keris Designs in Javanese Culture). Journal article written by Wanto, published in the journal *Komunika*, Vol. 2, No. 1, 2008. The results of this research explain that in the world of keris there are three different groups of views, among which are 1) keris is the product of culture, *kagunan*, or art; 2) Then the second view that has long been developed among the people (Javanese), in general, is more convinced that the keris is an heirloom weapon because of its magical power or good luck; 3) According to a third view that developed among very limited circles, keris is an heirloom with various variations of its meaning, and is expressed in terms that are only recognized by these circles, especially its social, historical, philosophical, ethical, and religious-mystical meanings. Based on the three views above, it can be seen that the keris is a masterpiece that must be preserved. That's because when viewed from the design, a keris has a very specific uniqueness, as evidenced by the detailed naming of each curve in each part. If judging from the meaning contained in a keris, local wisdom is reflected, especially the Javanese people who make the keris a symbol of strength as well as representing the character that owns it. The design of the keris has its own power in shaping local wisdom, which in turn can become an indicator of culture in a place.

Fifth, " Metafisika Simbol Keris Jawa" (Metaphysics of Javanese Keris Symbols), a journal article written by Nurhadi Siswanto, published in the *Jurnal Filsafat* Volume 22 No. 1 of 2012. This research examines the creation of a keris which is a combination of desires, hopes, goals and the desired benefits of the customer. keris with the taste, intention, and creativity of the master which is embodied in the symbols and *luk*, *dhapur*, and prestige that apply in Javanese society. By using the metaphysical analysis of symbols, it can be seen that the symbolization of the Javanese keris among the common people (the general public) that the keris is more vertical-transcendental, for the special group (intellect) the symbolization of the Javanese keris has two dimensions, namely vertical-transcendental as well as horizontal-immanent, while in the new group (those who consider the keris to be an object of art) the symbolization of the Javanese keris has a horizontal-immanent dimension.

Based on various previous studies that are relevant to this research, there has been no research that examines the identity discourse centered on identity as a Javanese in the keris community. Therefore, this shows

the novelty of the research that will be carried out in this study and is very important to study and become a scientific record of keris culture.

III. METHOD

Discourse in Foucault's imagination is an explanation, definition, thinking about people, knowledge, abstract systems of human thought. Discourse is a formal and regular disclosure of thoughts. In this sense discourse can be formed by the thoughts of individuals who can become a unit. In Foucault's imagination, discourse is no longer related to or merely refers to language or social interaction but is an idea, a big idea that is continuously discussed (Foucault, 2012: 106).

Literally discourse or discourse enrichment means the process, or movement of a referred system. The discourse in question will experience development through human behavior, observation and awareness. Discourse is a discussion that aims to find a definition (rational structure) through reflection and interaction. In discourse, humans have the opportunity to search for meaning individually or in groups.

The subject of discourse for Foucault is an entity that always appears, or signs that can be read. Through the system and process of seeking understanding, humans understand and finally act on the knowledge they already have. As a system, discourse permeates applied sciences to form methods of analysis which can be referred to for example as semiotics and hermeneutics. The definition of terms depends on the linked dimensions, objects, and devices. Discourse emerges when ideas meet, as a major part of human search for knowledge. When humans try to understand a discourse, then at the same time they are walking to and against the discourse.

In the concept coined by Foucault it is said that discourse is an activity of forming meaning which is the essence of human relations in which it produces two major concepts, namely knowledge and power (Foucault, 1987: 164). According to Foucault, discourse can appear everywhere in every form of social interaction. It does not appear as a rule or law but to trigger truth. In this case it is a knowledge. Knowledge is always political because it supports something that will eventually give power to itself.

The notion of discourse in Foucault's ideas is the authority to describe something, which is propagated by an institution and serves to separate the world in a certain way (Sanusi, 2010: 991). For example, the word "clock" agreed to define a timepiece is a term determined by a discourse. This agreement can be regarded as a discourse that forces clocks to be referred to as clock. The object referred to as a clock never declared itself a clock. It is the discourse that is made together that has violated the essence of the object known as "clock".

The description applied to an object, apart from exaggerating (biased), regulates the object and reflects the power relations. So it can be concluded that discourse is a power that binds objects with knowledge of objects that are known together. Discourse can also be concluded as something that is no longer objective.

The relation between object, knowledge, power and discourse is analyzed by Foucault trying to get out of the trap of this problem and says three models of subject objectification, first, dividing practices, second, scientific classification, and third, subjectivization. The first operational model is; the process of distinguishing subjects individually from within and from outside, with a combination of scientific media (science/pseudo science) and the practice of exclusion, the models for the two processes are; investigation of a subject that places itself in the status of science, by unraveling its structure in history, because according to Foucault, the subject logically processes searching for itself in history, and the models of the three tasks; concentrates on the process of transforming human beings into subjects through the operations of their body, soul, mind and behavior which lead to a process of self-understanding, which according to Foucault this process makes the examiner entangled in the authority of an external figure (Foucault, 1984: 8). In short, Foucault's objectification moves through distinction and classification. The next question is whether objectification has quelled the thirst for objectivity and can release knowledge from the power and discourse cages?

At each of the above levels, a different analysis is required. In the description, the analysis is general by labeling the form of the text in the category of descriptive framework. The 'object' of description, namely text, is more often captured at the surface level, as a result the interpretation of spoken text, for example, is limited to the influence of how one records it. When stepping on the level of interpretation and explanation, analysis cannot be seen as merely tinkering with 'objects', but includes cognitive processes concerning the relationship between several related social events. In this case, the analyzer is faced with the choice to interpret complex relationships even though they are not visible.

Foucault launched discourse analysis with several stages of the process. The process, firstly, is skeptical about the unified standard structure, such as books and manuscripts whose unified essence does not occur immediately and permanently, by studying its internal formation and stopping for a moment at the invisible contradictions, until the elements that make up the unity are seen. Second, this process continues to review the characteristics of discourse events, by questioning the reasons for the discourse's choice of a statement. Third, from the two processes of deconstruction a system of thought is formed by reconstructing the totality of discourse, while dismantling the unconscious activities behind statements, rediscovering what is not said (silent murmuring), and searching for the true meaning behind majazi meanings. Finally, reviewing the characteristics of

the relationship between statements and the access formed from these relationships, also reviewing the characteristics of statements in the discourse (Bradley, 1999: 22–31).

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

a. Traditional Discourse

Many traditional Javanese people consider certain objects to have magical powers and carry myths. One of the objects most widely considered to have magical powers are objects made of iron, even the Javanese people have the term *Tosan Aji* for objects made of iron which are considered to have magical powers. Linguistically, *Tosan* means iron, while *Aji* means magic spells or magic, it can also mean holy and magical formulas or formulas. In general, *Tosan Aji* can be more or less defined as iron that has supernatural powers or magical powers.

There are several reasons that could explain why iron-based objects have this meaning, but the most important historical and factual reason seems to be a matter of resources. In Java, there is not a bit of iron ore that can be mined (Lombard, 2005a: 132) and this causes scarcity. The shortage of iron ore in Java has generally been met by imports from outside the island, mainly from China (Lombard, 2005b: 266) or, since the 17th century, from Europe (Reid, 1992: 122, 128). This means that Java has a dependency on regions outside it as suppliers of iron ore.

The need for iron ore was also recorded historically, which made the great Javanese kingdoms like Majapahit received tribute in the form of iron ore from their vassal countries. In *Nagarakrtagama* it is stated that Majapahit controlled two vassal kingdoms that paid taxes in Sulawesi, Banggai and Luwu (Prapanca in Pigeaud, 1960: 17), while in Suma Oriental Tome Pires notes that there was a metal trading center in these two kingdoms in the 16th century (Pires, 1944: 215-216). Reid estimates that Banggai and Luwu obtained iron ore from iron mining in their area and Majapahit demanded or received tribute in the form of iron ore which at that time had become an important commodity (Reid, 1992: 125). For example, the rarity of iron ore that can be processed in Java is marked by the limited development of iron-based tools, technology and objects (Abdulbari, 2019: 26, 30).

This scarcity makes iron ore or iron-based objects highly valued by the traditional Javanese community. Therefore, it is understandable why the Javanese people have their own respect for objects or devices and tools made of iron, especially through the concept of *Tosan Aji* which materially includes many types, from spears, swords, cannons, to ornaments and armor. However, the *Tosan Aji* which is generally considered to be very famous and has the most magical powers as well as being a masterpiece of the *empu* is keris.

The keris was originally used as a weapon, but over time, the meaning of the keris has changed. In its development, this weapon was not widely used to kill even though it was categorized as a dagger, it was only really used to kill at certain ceremonial or special moments. Instead of being a weapon that functions as it should, the keris actually develops into an art object full of symbols which, from the process of creation to its form and use, has its own symbols (Harsrinuksmo, 2004: 10-11).

Records from various sources clarify this point. Duarte Barbosa, for example, a 16th-century Portuguese explorer and writer who also served as a Portuguese colonial administrator in India, left long record of his travels. Barbosa said that Java, along with the weapons (keris) made there, were already very famous for the prowess of their "magicians", the *empu*. In Barbosa's records it is said that they made weapons only at certain times and moments, and sometimes it took up to 12 years to make a weapon. Barbosa still adds that weapons from Java are also very famous because of stories of their mystical powers, for example, whoever carries the weapon cannot be defeated, or can kill with just a small scratch (Barbosa, 1921: 173-174).

From Barbosa's notes it can be identified that the meaning of the keris had developed or shifted in the 16th century, the keris was no longer understood as just a weapon, but developed further than that. In the perception or culture of the Javanese people, the keris then transforms into an heirloom, it is not an ordinary weapon but an *Ageman* or a tool that has a specific and unique meaning. In the notes of Tome Pires in the 16th century it was said that all men in Java, whether rich or poor, had to own and wear their own keris every time they left the house, from the age of 12 (Pires, 1944: 179). Keris become heirlooms that are passed down in Javanese families to their children and grandchildren.

The Javanese people's perception of the keris was also developed in line with developments in Javanese history. Sultan Agung, for example, often gave gifts of a keris to soldiers who excelled, so every soldier tried hard to get a keris from the king. A keris that is given directly by the king or sultan is considered to bring charisma, a special blessing that elevates the degree of the keris bearer. In this case the keris is also considered to have religious content. Even for the Javanese themselves, the keris is considered a symbol of the union of God or the king with his servant. The Javanese interpret it as a close relationship to achieve harmony in life in the world. The philosophy of *Manunggaling Kawula Gusti* (fusing the dagger with the scabbard) can also mean the uniting of the king and his people. It can also be interpreted as the union of man with God. When such conditions are achieved, life is always safe, peaceful, serene, happy and prosperous (Bayuadhy, 2015: 124).

Among ordinary people, a keris is not just a weapon, but rather a confirmation of identity as an adult man and a member of society so that every man should have a keris. Previously, it was also mentioned that in the

conception of Javanese society there are five elements that must be owned, namely, *wisma* (house or residence), *garwa* (woman or wife), *turangga* (mounts or horses), *kukila* (birds as entertainment) and *curiga* (weapon in the form of dagger). If the five elements have been fulfilled, then a man can be said to have an established life. Therefore it is obligatory for a traditional Javanese man to have a keris, so that he can be said to be a man who deserves to live in a household because he is established (Moebirman, 1980: 34). Ma Huan's notes in the 15th century also clarified this, he said that all men in Java must wear a kind of straight or curved dagger, which of course means a keris (Ma Huan in Endrawati, 2015: 141-142).

In addition, kingdom in Java generally used the keris as a tool to legitimize their power. The keris, which was considered sacred, was then appointed as a royal heirloom that was sacred and full of meaning.

This means that the Javanese people's understanding of keris has developed into a complex one long ago, a keris can have multiple meanings, it is a weapon but at the same time it is an heirloom that can have certain stories, myths and supernatural powers. On the other hand, the keris also carries a philosophical discourse that is inherent in Javanese society to this day.

b. Javanese Society in Changing Times

The world is entering a new era with the advancement of science and technology in the last two centuries. Empiricism and rationalism replaced the mystical experience of modern humans. Science is changing views about how the world works and is formed, various scientific theories are replacing traditional cosmological traditions and mystical explanations of everything. Technological developments completely revolutionized human understanding of distance, time and space, making everything connected in a gigantic interconnectedness that has never existed before in thousands of years of human history.

In Indonesia, or Java in particular, this profound change was brought about initially by the 19th-century "enlightened" colonial powers who felt that their moral duty to the native population was to extricate it from the slumber and darkness of the world of myth and bring about a modern world guided by science and technology. technology into the niches of traditional society. With that mission, the Dutch East Indies colonial state provided everything needed to increase indigenous people's knowledge of the modern world. Thus the world of traditional Javanese cosmology lost its footing and legitimacy, being replaced by a more established European scientific discourse (Sears, 1996: 75-120).

In this way the Javanese themselves began to believe more in science and the modern world's model of education and progress. Most aristocratic and royal families began to prefer to send their children to modern Dutch-language schools (Fakih, 2009: 12). So the *pesantren* and *kejawen* education models began to be abandoned, especially by the upper class. Although at first it only happened to a small part of the upper class of Javanese society, this proved to be very influential.

It is the Javanese upper class who are the pioneers in understanding the modern world through education and the use of modern technology. Of course, most of the upper class came from the palace. The focus of the royal family shifted towards modernism and then totally followed this development, including replacing discourses of political legitimacy with new claims. For example, they are clearly among the most educated in the modern world through European schools which they can access more easily than most other Javanese people. So the claim to power is no longer based on revelation but shifts little by little towards status, education, and experience. The palace is slowly losing its mystical legitimacy.

In this way, traditional Javanese cosmology and myths were abandoned. This is deeply reflected in the fate of traditional court Javanese poets and scholars, the last is Ranggawarsita. He wrote *Serat Kalatida* before his death in 1873, predicting the entry of the "crazy era" whose contents depict Java unable to understand the power of modernity precisely because Java has lost the strength of its traditions, this depiction also marks an era of crisis of Javanese culture and power (Anderson: 373-375). Ranggawarsita himself died almost forgotten, as the last poet he became isolated in the midst of Javanese culture and society which was changing dynamically towards modernism.

So modern Javanese people no longer believe in stories of their supernatural powers, myths, legends, and gods. all of this was replaced with an empirical and rational way of thinking that totally changed the cosmology and the meaning and perception of the Javanese people towards the world around them, including natural phenomena that were not immediately associated with myths or beliefs. This means that the Javanese people's explanations for phenomena they cannot explain are no longer linked to stories in traditional Javanese cosmology, but instead first look for rational causes that can produce a similar situation.

But modern society produces its own problems. Although superstition and myth were defeated by empiricism and rationalism, it should be noted that the modern world produces its own myths. Lots of irrational things result from the niches of rational thinking. For example, all kinds of scientific theories and conjectures still cannot answer the origin of the world and where it will end. As a result, rational humans actually lose their footing in the meaning and morality of life because of the loss of their spiritual basis. Life no longer has meaning when there is nothing after death, there is no purpose for the creation of humans other than to reproduce and then die. The modern world has failed to answer this. In fact, humans need definite answers about the beginning and the

end and the metaphysical-theological meaning of life. So the end of the myths and various theological schools that were predicted to be destroyed along with the development of modernism did not happen.

An ambivalence emerges in modern society when an all-rational society seeks answers or explanations from irrational mystical and theological concepts. A very interesting example was put forward by Karlina Supelli who captured the cross meaning between cosmology as a science and theological theories that are often related and appear as explanations. That is, even modern humans who are very scientific always have an "ancient longing" for theological explanations of everything (Supelli, 2016: 82-117). The earliest forms of ambiguity and paradox of rational thinking can be traced in Javanese society itself since the early 20th century with the proliferation of the *kebatinan* movement and theosophical teachings whose members are precisely those who received modern education, a new movement that can be considered as the rise of neo-mysticism (Fakih, 2009: 37-44). So it's not surprising that in modern times, more and more are falling into mystical or theological fanaticism, because they are looking for definite truth amidst the currents of uncertainty that the modern world has to offer.

The rational world in many ways presents uncertainty both practically and theoretically-conceptually. So superstitions, myths and theological beliefs are always present as a ready-made answer that is certain. Myth never really disappears, its meaning may change and be different along with the development of the modern world. However, it still exists and is always present as a form of certainty when society needs an explanation in various aspects of its life. This is one of the signs that people all over the world, including Javanese people, are starting to become a postmodern society.

c. Identity Discourse in Keris society

Understanding of keris in the last two centuries has experienced its own dynamics along with the times as discussed above. As myths, traditions and superstitions gradually disappeared, Javanese people no longer used keris when leaving their homes, as recorded in the 16th century. They also no longer use the keris as a weapon or *ageman* in their daily activities. Keris then turned into a cultural object whose existence in society is accepted to a certain extent. In 2005 the keris was declared a world cultural heritage by UNESCO, and it seems that the word "inheritance" is very real to most people because keris is no longer present clearly in Javanese society. In general it can be said that nowadays it is understood as a remnant from the glorious past which must be cared for and preserved.

However, this did not happen totally or completely. As previously discussed, there are also groups that have not left myths, traditions and superstitions completely out of their lives. In the case of kerises, there are keris people who, apart from preserving the keris, also maintain various mystical narratives behind a keris. This society survives through a limited number of forms of association. A new space where the meaning of the keris not only survives but also continues to grow.

In a general sense, *Paguyuban* or *gemeinschaft* is a social group whose members have a pure, natural, and eternal inner bond. Therefore, the association is a part of the keris society. The characteristics of the *paguyuban* group are: There is a strong inner bond between members and the relationship between members is informal. Associations in the keris society usually consist of members from many backgrounds, expertise, knowledge, and interests. Its members consist of: collectors, academics, curators, interpreters, *mranggi*, and others. The keris association itself is widely spread in various cities. At this time, the Indonesian keris national secretariat or SNKI has been established which is the umbrella for the keris associations in Indonesia. In the community, there are usually many discussions and discourses regarding keris. Members who have different backgrounds add to the wealth of discourse and information generated.

The keris association or community was born as a new space for discourse and the development of discourse on keris outside the palace environment. However, this community developed in a different direction from the tradition of palace-style discourse. First of all, this group clearly has no political power and thus does not have a hegemony as strong as the palace in terms of dominating the narrative. Second, the discourse on keris in the keris society never has a single interpretation like the discourse on the palace because those who are members of the keris society do not come from the same background, so there is never a single discourse. This means that any discourse on the keris no longer has wide acceptance on the one hand, but on the other hand it produce more ideas and debate. These two things are the main characteristics attached to the discourse on keris today.

The designation of the keris as a cultural heritage object itself was an effort by the keris society, who in 2004-2005 compiled filings for submissions to UNESCO. As an integral part of the responsibility to protect keris as a cultural heritage, the Indonesian Keris National Secretariat (SNKI) was declared in 2006 at Fort Vredenburg Yogyakarta (Gaura Mancacarita interview, 25 February 2023). Although SNKI is generally formed by well-known and prominent figures from the keris society, it seems that it is necessary to differentiate the definition between SNKI and the keris society in general. SNKI in this case can be considered as a forum that represents the keris society, but the dynamics of the keris society in general cannot be fully reflected from SNKI's activities and discourse.

So first of all to understand the growing discourse, it is important to understand why the keris was confirmed by UNESCO as an intangible cultural heritage even though it has a physical form or an object (tangible). This is because behind a keris there is a philosophical and symbolic understanding that represents something that

is broader in nature than just a keris as an object (Fadli Zon interview, 24 February 2023). This position of recognition is obviously very interesting because it means that as a cultural heritage object, things related to the keris as an object are intermingled with what it represents. This understanding of representation is contested in serious discourses within the keris society.

There are several forms of discourse that can be identified from the discourse on keris in the keris society. First of all, it is clear that there are significant differences between traditional discourse and those in the keris society, but it should be understood that these differences do not mean that they are not rooted in traditional mystification discourse. However, the discourse on the mystification of the keris as an heirloom greatly influences and is still the main thing that underlies the understanding of the keris. The understanding that a keris can contain supernatural powers or uses and has a certain influence on its owner is still believed by the majority of the keris society, which can be identified from the interests of each individual in owning a keris.

The keris society has individual members who each have their own perceptions and interests of the keris. However, in general, the main reason for the keris society to join and be active in it is to strengthen their identity, a strengthening of their identity as Javanese (Interview with Irwan Santoso, 3 January 2023). Although it cannot be denied that there are also those who own or collect kerises for the main reasons which tend to be practical in the form of a penchant for art and aesthetics, ownership of a keris is still an affirmation of one's Javanese identity (Ari Wuryanto interview, 7 December 2022; Dwi Prakoso, 11 December 2022).

This identity problem is included in one of the traditional discourses regarding the completeness of a Javanese man, that a man is incomplete if he does not have suspicions or weapons as a means of defense and vigilance. Having a keris is then a proof in itself that the owner is a "Javanese" in the real sense. The difference is, today a person can not only own a keris, but can collect dozens and even tens or hundreds (Interview with Irwan Santoso, 3 January 2023). The large number of collections in this case is an additional factor that influences one's identity as a Javanese. The more the number of kerises owned, the firmer the identity, legitimacy and expertise or understanding of a person in the keris society. Although not the only one, this issue of identity is a central discourse that underlies all discourse on keris today, starting from history, cultural factors, esoteric aspects, to the shape and structure of kerises, all of which lead to or are based on identity discourse.

The keris society is also a dynamic society where the development of keris discourse continues to occur. Exchange of information and serious discussions about kerises continues to be developed through various opportunities such as cultural events, festivals, virtual worlds and of course keris markets (Yanuar interview, 25 November 2022; Annisa Rengganis, 24 February 2023; Fadli Zon, 24 February 2023 ; Irwan Santoso, January 3, 2023). It is in these spaces that the discourse develops.

Individual understanding in the keris society certainly has various origins and perceptions. For example, there were those who joined because of their education, they were taught about the keris as a traditional weapon that is recognized by the world and then looked further through reading literature and joining the keris society, some because they had inherited a keris from their family (Annisa Rengganis interview, 24 February 2023; Intan Anggun Pangestu, 25 February 2023). Besides that, there are also people who are not ethnically Javanese, but have a strong interest in kerises so that they study and collect kerises and are directly involved in the discourse (Fadli Zon interview, 24 February 2023). There are those who meet a keris character and are then rewarded with a keris as a prize for their first encounter with that weapon (Gaura Mancacarita interview, 25 February 2023), and so on.

Members of the keris society generally believe that the symbols in the keris are intrinsic elements that cannot be separated from the keris as an object (interview Annisa Rengganis, 24 February 2023; Fadli Zon, 24 February 2023; Intan Anggun Pangestu, 25 February 2023; Gaura Mancacarita, 25 February 2023; Dwi Prakoso, 11 December 2022; Irwan Santoso, 3 January 2023). Even so, the actual symbol is not always associated with mysticism, most keris people associate the world of symbols in a keris with other things first. The symbolism in the keris certainly varies and can be understood as stylistic (regional) patterns, philosophical meanings, historical meanings, part of creation, and so on before entering into the framework of mysticism in the sense of supernatural things.

This of course raises differences in understanding of the keris which does not have a single criterion or definite standard. The philosophical basis of the keris which is full of meaning creates a contestation of the meaning of the symbols on a keris. Is the symbol interpreted mystically-theologically, or historically, or culturally, or has a very personal meaning, and one cannot even rule out the existence of a wide understanding of the keris which is considered an object filled with occult elements (Fadli Zon interview, 24 February 2023). All of these discourses cannot be separated from one another on the one hand, and on the other hand they enrich the discourse on keris. Members of the keris society generally respond to this difference by acknowledging other understandings (Fadli Zon interview, 24 February 2023; Annisa Rengganis, 24 February 2023; Gaura Mancacarita, 25 February 2023) although it is undeniable that there are also those who feel that their erroneous understanding of the keris needs to be "straightened" (Yanuar interview, 25 November 2022; Intan Anggun Pangestu, 25 February 2023). In this way, the discourse on the keris continues to grow.

DISCUSSION

Based on the findings of this research which have been described above, there are several important points that serve as benchmarks for the discourse on identity through keris today. Firstly, the keris must be seen historically as a cultural object that has deep cultural and philosophical meaning. Second, historically Javanese society also continues to experience changes, from traditional society, then to modern society, then ending in its form today which is very close to the characteristics of postmodern society. Third and last definitive point, In the issue of keris, this change in society is very decisive because it guarantees the existence of discourse on keris in the form of identity discourse, even if only in the limited scope of keris society.

As discussed above, along with the development and changing times, the perception of Javanese people towards the world around them has also changed. Modernism brought by Western civilization has left the world of traditional Javanese cosmology almost completely abandoned. The same goes for the legitimacy and mystification of the keris, which is rapidly losing its footing in the daily discourse of modern world society, which regards it as mere superstition and myth. Keris is then considered simply as "cultural relic" or "inheritance" from the glorious past which is no longer used as a functional object in Javanese society.

Modern society requires an empirical and rational explanation of everything. The problem is that this explanation cannot explain various things that are moralistic in nature and human meanings of the world around them. Modern humans face this problem by turning back to mysticism, to the world of metaphysics which they can no longer fully and deeply access because most of these traditions have been abandoned and in many cases completely forgotten. This attempt to return to mysticism can be referred to as neo-mysticism which takes a bit or part of the world of traditional cosmology and mysticism into the meaning of life in the modern world. Thus a postmodern society was born, even though their daily discourse has struggled with empiricism and rationalism, but they still believe, seek answers, or meaning from various things that are metaphysical, theological, or mystical in nature. In this case mystical meanings can also develop through the development of postmodern society discourse which of course has gone beyond the ways of traditional society to form a discourse. Postmodern society is a condition where such ambivalence can be found in all aspects of life, from social, cultural, to economic issues.

This society is not a society that is not aware of their ambivalent positions, behaviors and concepts. Most members of postmodern society are aware of this ambivalence, meaning that they think logically on the one hand and think irrationally on the other, and are aware of the ambiguity of such mindsets. They realize that much of their behavior is influenced by things that cannot be proven, such as myths or even pseudo-reality that are deliberately constructed to make them behave that way. But belief in it has other things besides practical uses, for example it can be in the form of prestige or lifestyle. Then comes a pseudo reality that occupies empty spaces of "feeling", "morality", "pride" and such in the midst of society so that it allows postmodern individuals to consume these things.

Most member of keris society felt that discussions about keris outside the keris society scope did not get a good response (interview with Irwan Santoso, 3 January 2023), or were responded with surprise because they were confused about the use of having a collection of kerises, or even tended to only be brought closer to mystical discourse (interview Dwi Prakoso, December 11, 2022). That is, they are fully aware that the ownership of a keris as a sign of identity is an illusion that is not accepted among Javanese society in general, which actually confirms that there is no clear correlation between identity as a Javanese and keris ownership. However, they still believe that having a keris will strengthen their identity as Javanese.

This apparent reality comes from what Foucault calls the process of discourse. The discourse produced by postmodern society is certainly different from the discourse present in traditional society, even though the basics of the way of thinking can come from tradition, even if it is not intact. In the case of the keris, the discourse then developed within the limited keris society. This discourse no longer has a power base and therefore has no political hegemony that can compel the wider public to adhere to the same discourse. The presence of the keris society as a minor community in Javanese society has become a new space to incarnate to maintain, preserve, and develop a discourse on keris. The discourse that is present in the keris society regarding kerises is basically centered on issues of identity, in this case the keris is a measure of one's Javanese identity.

It can be said that the current understanding of the Javanese people for their keris has several veils of discourse. The outermost first layer is a discourse layer originating from the niche of traditional Javanese culture. The second layer is a discourse originating from the introduction of modernism in the form of empiricism and rationalism, including the problem of ambivalence that has led to the emergence of a postmodern society. and the deepest layer is the core of all discussions about the keris, the issue of identity.

V. CONCLUSION

The discourse about the identity that covers the keris is actually unavoidable, it exists as a logical consequence of the development of postmodern society. That society experiences its own ambivalence as a result of not being able to rationalize the circumstances around it. On the other hand, it is necessary to remember the philosophical basis of the keris in the niche of the traditional world, which is already thick with mystical elements.

These two sides work like two sides of a coin, the one complementing the other, meaning that the keris discourse in the modern era can originate from historical, philosophical and cultural understandings in the niche of its traditional culture, then the discourse is developed further by incorporating elements of the people's way of thinking.

VI. REFERENCES

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