



***Donyane Pelanyah* in Modern Javanese Poetry (*Guritan*) an Analysis with Semiotic Approach**

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Abstract. Abstack. This study aims to reveal the urgency and reality of the life of *donyane pelanyah* (the world of prostitution) who are expressed and appear in modern Javanese poetry texts (*guritan*) as a form of literary work and a product of society's culture. The poems that will be discussed are poems entitled "*Balada Juwariyah Kembang Pelanyah*" by Poer Adhie Prawoto and "*Wayah Pensiun*" by Rini Tri Pusphardini. Both are Javanese poets and writers across generations who are well known in the world of modern Javanese literature. Methodologically, this research used a descriptive qualitative approach which was analyzed using the critical paradigm of cultural studies. Theoretically, this research uses a semiotic approach. Based on the results of an analysis of the *geguritan* text entitled "*Wayah Pensiun*" and "*Balada Juwariyah*", it is revealed that sexuality in the world of prostitution is one of the economic commodities. That is the reality in society. The prostitute in the text becomes a symbol of other women (sex workers) who are forced and forced to work as prostitutes or commercial sex workers. More precisely forced by circumstances, especially economic issues.

Keywords: Prostitute (*Pelanyah*), Modern Javanese Poetry (*Guritan*) text, Semiotics

1 Introduction

In social culture, both Indonesian society and global society, there is an opinion that being a commercial sex worker (CSW) is considered a form of sexual slavery. Society views women who work as sex workers or prostitutes as having no ethics, no values, and their actions are considered to violate the norms that apply in society. For men who use the sexual services of prostitutes, they are considered men who have no loyalty and only pursue lust.

According to historical records, the world of prostitutes or what is known as prostitution in the archipelago began to grow and develop in the 19th century, especially after 1870 until the 20th century, when the early colonial economy opened and began to expand in various fields. The impact of liberal politics and the arrival of capitalism in the archipelago, especially Java at the beginning of the 20th century, turned out to be unable to improve the welfare of all levels of society, especially the lower levels of society. Prosperity that cannot be enjoyed by certain groups causes turmoil due to social inequality. Including economic aspects.

In the end, many native people were forced to do whatever it took to survive. There are those who become thieves, robbers, and even prostitute themselves. Many native families were also forced to "sell" their daughters to the Dutch to become "gundhik" or Nyai, namely mistresses. This condition is also one of the causes of the growth and development of prostitution in the archipelago.

Historian who is also a lecturer at Sanata Dharma University Yogyakarta, Heri Priyatmoko (2019), in his article entitled 'The History of Prostitution in Solo & How the Colonial Government Regulated It' said that prostitution is a child of the times which is considered haram but is always needed by humanity. In Indonesia, recently another online prostitution case emerged involving artists. The police have obtained data on the names of dozens of artists who are members of the sex business network. Apart from that, the police also said that their average age was still under 30. The results of a digital forensic examination of the cellphones of the suspected pimps found another surprising fact: there were a number of names who turned out to be as young as 19.

It is not only the government of the Republic of Indonesia that is busy eradicating prostitution and closing down local areas. In the past, traditional rulers together with the Dutch East Indies government were confused by the rampant practices of love mongers (<https://tirto.id/sejarah-prostitusi-di-solo-cara-pemerintah-kolonial-mengaturnya-dgCx> diakses 13/05/2023 Pkl 15.44)

In Javanese (modern) literature, stories about the world of prostitutes can be found in several literary texts, both short stories and novels. In this article, we will examine poetry-type literary works which are thought to contain symbols and narratives about the world of prostitutes in their texts. The poems that will be discussed are the poem entitled "Balada Juwariyah Kembang Pelanyah" by Poer Adhie Prawoto and "Wayah Pensiyun" by Rini Tri Pusphardini. Both of them are poets and writers across generations who are famous in the world of Javanese literature.

This study attempts to interpret the meaning of the poetic text above which allegedly describes the life of a prostitute as one of the jobs commonly carried out by women in commercial sex activities. Interpretation in literary works often gives rise to multiple interpretations which of course will give rise to different interpretations from one reader to another. It can even be separated from the intention of the writer/author. Regarding this, semiotics expert, Roland Barthes (1968) in his book "The Death of the Author" stated that after writing and giving birth to a work, when the author (author) writes his work, in fact he (the author) himself has 'died' and was separated. from the text of his work. Next, the area of readers who have the power to read and interpret the work.

Discussing modern Javanese poetry (*Guritan*) certainly cannot be separated from the history of the birth of that work. Robert van Niel (1984) stated that modern literary cases in Indonesia, including modern Javanese literature, began to emerge with the birth

of modern society in Indonesia which began to grow since the arrival of the Portuguese, British and Dutch in the sixteenth century. They came and settled in city centers which became centers of commerce and government with a European style. Most of them do not live in the production sector like the native population but are engaged in the service sector. This urban society, which is increasingly expanding along with the expansion of Dutch colonial political influence, is the "new" or modern society in Indonesia.

The term modern Javanese poetry in this study is intended to provide a frame and boundary problem for Javanese literary works which are used as research objects, namely Javanese poetry or known as *guritan*, *guritan* began to emerge and develop since the 1930s before independence.

Guritan itself is a term for poetry in Javanese. Initially, the word *guritan* was a term to refer to a type of traditional Javanese poetry. The term *guritan* has now changed its meaning. This term now means free poetry. Thus the term *guritan*, or *guritan* in traditional poetry has a different meaning from modern Javanese literature.

The formulation of the problem in this research is 1) How is the reality of the world of prostitutes reflected and narrated in the text of modern Javanese poetry (*guritan*) entitled "*Balada Juwariyah Kembang Pelanyah*" by Poer Adhie Prawoto and *guritan* entitled "*Wayah Pensiyun*" by Rini Tri Puspohardini? and 2) What is the urgency of understanding and awareness of society in viewing women who work as prostitutes?

The objectives of this research are: 1) Revealing the reality of the world of prostitutes which is reflected and narrated in the text of modern Javanese poetry (*guritan*) entitled "*Balada Juwariyah Kembang Pelanyah*" by Poer Adhie Prawoto and *guritan* entitled "*Wayah Pensiyun*" by Rini Tri Puspohardini. 2) Explain the urgency of understanding and awareness of society in viewing women who work as prostitutes?

2 Research Methods

Methodologically, the approach used in this research is descriptive qualitative. Theoretically, the semiotic approach is used as a tool or scalpel for analysis in this research. Semiotics is an approach that attempts to reveal how humanity makes sense of things. In this context, interpreting (to signify) certainly cannot be confused with communicating (to communicate). Meaning means that objects not only carry information, in terms of which they want to communicate, but also constitute a structured system of signs (Barthes, 1988: 179).

Referring to the concept put forward by Barthes, semiotics includes two signs, namely: 1. Signifier, 2. Signified. In it there are denotative signs (Denotative Signs) and connotative signifiers (Connotative Markers). This connotative meaning will give rise to other meanings that are correlated with myth. These two signs will later be linked to the textual and contextual meaning of the texts studied.

The data in this research is in the form of a text entitled "*Balada Juwariyah Kembang Pelanyah*" by Poer Adhie Prawoto (1981) and "*Wayah Pensiyun*" by Rini Tri Puspohardini (2012). Both of them are poets and writers across generations who are famous in the world of Javanese literature. Sources of data for this research 1) Primary data source: library in the form of the book "*Guritan; Anthology of Modern Javanese*

Poetry (1940-1980) compiled by Suripan Sadi Hutomo, published by Balai Pustaka, Jakarta, in 1985 which includes an excerpt entitled "Balada Juwariyah Kembang Pelanyah" by Poer Adhie Prawoto. Then the geguritan anthology book "Sundel Bolong Njero Senthong", published by the Surakarta Literature Forum, in 2012, which includes a guritan entitled "Wayah Pensiyun" by Rini Tri Puspohardini.

3 Results and Discussion

In this analysis process, the researcher positions the work as independent and independent of its author. Roland Barthes (1968) in his book "The Death of the Author" states that after writing and producing a work, namely when the author (author) writes his work, he (the author) himself has actually 'died' and is separated from the text of his work. Next, the area of readers who have the power to create and interpret the work.

The first poem is "Balada Juwariyah Kembang Pelanyah" by Poer Adhie Prawoto. This quote was written by the author in 1981 and when it was published in the *Mekarsari Daily*, No. 18. Edition XXV 15 November 1981. Below is the full text of the poem.

Balada Juwariyah Kembang Pelanyah

Juwariyah kembang pelanyah

Telung ketiga atine growah digawa lumayu mangsa bedhindhing

Saka paran padesan kang tintrim

Sadalan-dalan uripe ing bengi ginanthang

Ngetung watu lan lintang rembulan

Juwariyah lawas ninggal bale omah

Panggah tatu-ati njarem mbrongkah

Guru laki kang tinggal glanggang

Jati-jatining lanang

Jebul kidung kadurakan gandhang ngumandhang

Juwariyah saiki ing dalan

Pategaran papan panguripan

Kekitrag madyaning palagan

Tempuking andon katresnan

Kanggo mburu dina sesuk dimen ana sega sepuluk

Juwariyah mung pawitan wedhak pupur

Kambi si lintrik burik nunggu ngisor cagak listrik

Saben-saben wong lanang liwat, clathune:

"Mangga mase, kula rak dereng kangge

Mang gawa teng pundi kula dherekake!"

Juwariyah, oh, juwariyah

*Kaya urip tansaya peteng lumaku tanpa arah
 Pandoming urip musna mangsa-mangsa sesulak kang bakal teka
 Apa ora kok papah kanthi tumenga
 Kencana selaning mega
 Uripmu mung ngrengga ati lanang
 Kang kagiwang hardaning kamurkan
 Ajining dhiri kaya boneka murahan
 Kang bisa dilela-lela dianggo dolanan
 Yen wis bosen dibuwang kaya larahan
 Juwariyah yen grimis tumiba
 Ndhepipis ing pojok emper cina
 Kadhangkala mekrok ing warung sepa
 Amor pajaring cahya abang lentera
 Manjer umbul-umbul lan gendera*

*Juwariyah lumayu saka jatining katresnan
 Lajering bebrayan kang gumebyar pindha mutyara barleyan
 Nanging dinane wis tansaya lungse
 Ing grumbul padesan kaya wis entek pangarep-arepe
 Semboyane urip iki rak mung mampir ngombe*

*Juwariyah kembang pelanyah kang lencir kuning
 Raine pucet, kamangka jagade isih akeh banyu bening
 Srengenge kang sumunar jembar
 Samar-samar keprungu
 Jeriting atimu sawijining guritan jaman kang tansah bae dumeling*

Solo, Agustus 1981

The poem "*Balada Juwariyah Kembang Pelanyah*" tells the life of a woman named Juwariyah, her daily work as a sex worker or prostitute. She is a flower (idol) in the world of prostitution. In the 4th stanza, the 4th line reads:

*"Mangga mase, kula rak dereng kangge
 Mang gawa teng pundi kula dherekake!"*

The sentences in these lines provide a narrative when a woman named Juwariyah handed over her body to a man who was passing by. The word "dereng kangge" in the array denotatively (straightforward meaning) means not yet used/not used/not yet used.

In a literal sense, everything that is "used" is generally an object or tool, not a body. However, in the context of this guritan, the connotation of the word "dereng kangge" is closely related to sexual activity between men and women.

For women who work as prostitutes/commercial sex workers (PSK), sexual activity is a conscious activity and is commercial in nature, meaning it has economic value. For economic reasons, this aims to fulfill their daily lives. Not only for herself (the prostitute), but also to meet the needs of her family, children, parents, even her husband.

It cannot be denied, the fact is that until now work as a prostitute is still considered taboo because it involves sexual activity that violates the norms and order of life. For people in the archipelago, especially in Java, sexual activity is hidden, hidden, secret. It is natural and acceptable if done by a couple (man and woman) who have a legal marriage bond, not based on commercial transactions.

Apart from that, it is feared that the presence of prostitutes or sex workers in society will lead to the development of free sex which is socially dangerous. The consequences of the existence of commercial sex workers include the emergence of promiscuous sexual behavior. The worrying impacts of free sex include: 1) unplanned pregnancy, 2) a (woman) who is forced to have an abortion to cover her shame, 3) economic reasons, and so on.

Not infrequently it also causes psychological problems or trauma throughout life. In the *guritan* text "*Balada Juwariyah Kembang Pelanyah*" the narrative about the psychological trauma and suffering of the life of a prostitute can be described in the 5th stanza which reads:

*Uripmu mung ngrengga ati lanang
Kang kagiwang hardaning kamurkan
Ajining dhiri kaya boneka murahan
Kang bisa dilela-lela dianggo dolanan
Yen wis bosen dibuwang kaya larahan
Juwariyah yen grimis tumiba
Ndhepipis ing pojok emper cina
Kadhangkala mekrok ing warung sepa*

In the text, the life of a prostitute is likened to a cheap doll, only to be played with, only for entertainment. If the user of sexual services (male customer) is tired, the female prostitute will be thrown away like trash. As if he no longer had any self-respect.

As narrated in the verse above, in the end she could only cry in misery on the side of the road, which is ironic because in the past she was an idol, a flower (*kembang*) which meant the worship of men. However, now he is helpless and has no charm. Located in the corner of the shop terrace on the side of the road. No one thinks or cares about his fate. There was no one, no one even wanted to approach him.

If you look closely, the figure of 'Juwariyah' in the text above becomes a symbol of other women who are forced to work as prostitutes or commercial sex workers. More precisely forced by circumstances. Of course there is a reason why. The second stanza of the poem "*Balada Juwariyah Kembang Pelanyah*" seems to reveal the cause, the stanza reads as follows:

*Juwariyah lawas ninggal bale omah
Pangghat tatu-ati njarem mbrongkah
Guru laki kang tinggal glanggang
Jati-jatining lanang
Jebul kidung kadurakan gandhang ngumandhang*

From the verse above, it is illustrated that Juwariyah left home and ended up becoming a prostitute for some reason. Juwariyah was left by a man (possibly her husband) who was supposed to be responsible for Juwariyah's life. However, it turns out

that the man left him without any inside information and this caused a very difficult situation: *Panggih tatu-ati njarem mbrongkah, Guru laki kang tinggal glanggang .../*

In a situation like that, of course Juwariyah was forced to leave home to struggle to meet the family's living needs.

The second line "Wayah Pensiyun" was written by Rini Tri Pusphardini. Below is the full text of the quote "Wayah Pensiyun".

Gusti

*aku wis wayahe pensiyun
kaya dene wong-wong kae
aku uga duwe was sumelang
post power syndrome*

*awakku wis katon lemu
dakobrala ora bakal payu
mangka mung kuwi kang dakduweni
kejaba pengalaman liya
sing kangelan olehku crita*

*gusti
aku wis wayahe pensiyun
pegaweyan apa kang bisa daktindakake?
: melu dhemo ditutupe lokalisasi
ngedegake kursus cara saresmi
utawa dheleg-dheleg nggenteni mati?*

*gusti
aku wis wayahe pensiyun
pensiyun kang kinurmat
kinurmat ing donyaku
mesthi dudu ukuran sabenere
apa ana kang luwih kaje ing donyane lonthe
kejaba ngesuhi wedokan sing isih sore?*

*gusti,
aku wis wayahe pensiyun
aku mung kepengin nglintirake apa kang daknggenteni
nglairake apa sing dakpengini*

*apike kantor-kantor pamarentah
dicepaki wadon ayu, pinter pijet lan karaoke
supaya para pejabat sing gedhe nggragase
ora ngrayah secretaries
sawise kesel dhiskusi
banjur ana sing mijeti*

*nalika tengang-tengong ora bisa omong
 ana papan kanggo ngerong
 gusti, pepenginanku banget prasaja
 ora ngayawara
 nyepakake papan sing banget dibutuhake
 awit ya wong-wong ing kantor mau
 sing sregep nguleng-uleng aku
 tinimbang padha slinthutan nyolong wektu
 becik dijor apa karepe
 sakesele,
 nganti kebak sundukane*

*gusti
 aku wis wayahe pensiyun
 lilanana ngentekake sisa urip
 ing dalam kanisthan
 dalam kang saben dina dakliwati
 dalam kang mantep dakniyati
 (dadi germa kang langganane para punggawa)*

The *guritan* of "Wayah Pensiyun" is different from "Balada Juwariyah Kembang Pelanyah" even though the theme and ideas are the same about women. In the poem "Balada Juwariyah Kembang Pelanyah" the author weaves diction and narrative using a man's perspective. As for Rini Tri Puspohardini, when she wrote "Wayah Pensiyun" it was clear that her diction was composed from a woman's perspective. Of course, this creates a different atmosphere, even though they both narrate the profession and life of prostitutes.

If you look at the message, the quote "Wayah Pensiyun" describes the story of a woman who used to work as a prostitute, now she feels old, it's time to retire. His strength, body and energy are not the same as when he was young and still selling, he still has a lot of customers, including officials. The fall of retirement in the *guritan* is described by the diction in the following stanza:

*awakku wis katon lemu
 dakobrala ora bakal payu
 mangka mung kuwi kang dakduweni
 kejaba pengalaman liya
 sing kangelan olehku crita*

In the poem "Wayah Pensiyun" it can be interpreted that the author actually wants to provide social satire and criticism to society, especially to men who have used the "commercial sexual services" of prostitutes, criticism is also directed at the government. With the hope of thinking about the fate of women who are 'retired from work' so that they are not considered trash by society, because they have no skills/abilities other than selling themselves. The woman in the *guritan* "Wayah Pensiyun" is described as having goals and desires when retirement comes.

Criticism and emotional expression are depicted satirically in the following stanza:

*aku wis wayahe pensiyun
pegaweyan apa kang bisa daktindakake?
: melu dhemo ditutupe lokalisasi
ngedegake kursus cara saresmi
utawa dheleg-dheleg ngenteni mati?*

Then in the 6th stanza there is allusion or sarcasm, it sounds like this:

*gusti, pepenginanku banget prasaja
ora ngayawara
nyepakake papan sing banget dibutuhake
awit ya wong-wong ing kantor mau
sing sregep nguleng-uleng aku
tinimbang padha slinthutan nyolong wektu
becik dijor apa karepe
sakesele,
nganti kebak sundukane*

From the two verses above, the woman (who has retired as a prostitute) makes an insinuation by saying that she wants to continue serving men even though she has retired. Especially for officials or men who have used commercial sexual services but behaved in an abusive manner and acted as if they were saints.

Is it true that the former prostitute woman in the text chose to 'set up a sexual intercourse course? As in the following line quote:

*: melu dhemo ditutupe lokalisasi
ngedegake kursus cara saresmi*

Of course, this statement is symbolic and contains connotative meaning. What we really want to convey is that women who are former prostitutes need attention, support and a real role from the authorities to be facilitated by being given skills so that they are no longer forced to sell themselves to make ends meet.

From the poems "Wayah Pensiun" and "Balada Juwariyah", sexuality is described as a commodity for economic reasons. That is the reality that exists in society. Responding to this condition, of course it cannot be justified if we discuss it from the perspective of social norms, let alone from a religious perspective where the rules are clear.

Melissa Gira Grant in her book entitled "Bermain Pelacur" has different views and opinions about prostitutes or commercial sex workers (PSK). He said that society needs to change its mindset and assumptions towards sex workers. According to him, sex work is a profession, therefore sex workers must have basic rights, Human Rights (HAM) like other professions or jobs. In her writing, Melissa criticizes the behavior of government officials and the general public who insult and demean sex workers.

Rules and regulations relating to prostitution have actually been in place for a long time. Heri Priyatmoko (2019) in his article explains that in the mid-19th century the colonial government made regulations that approved the commercialization of sexual activities. One of the reasons for this regulation was the arrival of a group of colonial soldiers to the Dutch East Indies who did not bring their wives. Then, a brothel was

built. The brothels then gave rise to new problems, namely the spread of venereal and skin diseases. The bodies of customers and prostitutes were ravaged by syphilis or gonorrhea. The authorities at that time handled prostitution cases not because of moral or religious considerations, but rather health aspects. In the "Pranatan Pasundelan" archive dating from 1858 which is stored in the Mangkunegaran Reksopustaka Library, it is clear that there was a good collaboration between the three institutions. Residents of Surakarta, Pakubuwana VIII, and Mangkunegara V together to address the rise of diseases caused by association with sundel (<https://tirto.id/histori-prostitusi-di-solo-cara-govt-kolonial-mengaturnya-dgCx> accessed 13/05/ 2023 15.44)

Based on an analysis of the Javanese poetry texts "Wayah Pensiun" and "Balada Juwariyah", sexuality is described as a commodity for economic reasons. That is the reality that exists in society. Responding to this condition, of course it cannot be justified if we discuss it from the perspective of social norms, let alone from a religious perspective where the rules are clear. The prostitute in the guritan text becomes a symbol of other women (sex workers) who are forced and compelled to work as prostitutes or commercial sex workers. More precisely, forced by circumstances, especially economic problems.

In fact, until now work as a prostitute is still considered taboo because it involves sexual activities that violate norms and the order of life. For people in the archipelago, especially in Java, sexual activity is private, acceptable in the eyes of society if it is carried out by a couple (man and woman) who have a legal marriage bond, not based on commercial transactions. This is because the presence of prostitutes or sex workers in society is feared to cause the development of free sex which is socially dangerous.

In the end, to overcome and provide solutions to the problems of the pros and cons of the profession of sex workers/prostitutes and the world of prostitution cannot be done solely by considering religious and societal norms alone. There are things that are more humane, namely about health. By providing an understanding of how dangerous the impact of commercial sex and free sex is on health, it will be more logical and accepted by workers.

4 Conclusion

Based on the description and explanation in the discussion section, several things can be concluded as follows:

1. From the poetry texts "Wayah Pensiun" and "Balada Juwariyah", sexuality is described as a commodity for economic reasons. That is the reality that exists in society. Responding to this condition, of course it cannot be justified if we discuss it from the perspective of social norms, let alone from a religious perspective where the rules are clear. The prostitute in the guritan text becomes a symbol of other women (sex workers) who are forced and compelled to work as prostitutes or commercial sex workers. More precisely, forced by circumstances, especially economic problems.

2. The fact is that until now working as a prostitute is still considered taboo because it involves sexual activities that violate norms and order of life. For people in the archipelago, especially in Java, sexual activity is private, acceptable in the eyes of society if

it is carried out by a couple (man and woman) who have a legal marriage bond, not based on commercial transactions. This is because the presence of prostitutes or sex workers in society is feared to cause the development of free sex which is socially dangerous.

Based on the conclusions, the suggestions that can be recommended in this article are as follows:

1. For readers of literary works and the wider community, after understanding the meaning and symbolic messages in the guritan texts "Balada Juwariyah Kembang Pelanyah" and "Wayah Pensiyun" they should have awareness to increase the sense of solidarity between people, especially if it concerns the human rights of a job carried out by vulnerable groups, namely women.

2. It is hoped that the government and related agencies/departments can provide special attention to former female sex workers by facilitating training or various business fields that are possible for former female sex workers to undertake. In this way, these female sex workers will have skills and later have other income after they are no longer sex workers.

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