



# The *Dukun* between Traditionality and Modernity: Element of Magical Realism in *Drama di Boven Digul* by Kwee Tek Hoay

\*Cahyaningrum Dewojati<sup>1</sup>  and Rina Zuliana<sup>2</sup> 

<sup>1,2</sup> Universitas Gadjah Mada, Bulaksumur, Yogyakarta 55281, Indonesia  
\*cahyaningrum@ugm.ac.id

**Abstract.** The study of magical realism has become a trend and popular in Indonesia since the 1990s. In its development, magical realism has been understood in various ways, from its position as a genre, narrative strategy, or theoretical framework. This article positions magical realism as a reading strategy to map magical elements in the reality of Chinese-Indonesian literary texts. Irrational cases are often found in the story segments of Chinese-Indonesian literature. This study focuses on the concept of a dukun, supernatural, and local beliefs of the Papuan in Kwee Tek Hoay's *Drama di Boven Digul*. The elements of magical realism in the novel have different levels. This novel is not explicitly a magical realism novel. However, the tendency of magical realism is unavoidable because the basis of the setting and production of Chinese-Indonesian literature is traditional Indonesian society. The findings of this study signify that the magical elements in the *Drama in Boven Digul* are based on the local beliefs of the Papuan, those are dukun, Karwar (related to the spirits of the dead and life after death), spirits, superstition, sacredness, and myths. Behind the historical reality of the 1926 PKI, the *Drama in Boven Digul* revealed local realities that still exist in the era of modernity.

**Keywords:** Dukun, Local Belief, Magical Realism, Chinese-Indonesian Literature.

## 1 Introduction

Magical realism has become a popular genre enough to define the complexity of most recent works of literature, art, or film. Bowers [1] states that explorations of magical realism have a very complex direction. Magical realism not only marks itself to explore new genres of a work of fiction but also offers a historical overview of the geography, culture, and political context within the genre it develops; to do with the issues of postcolonialism, cross-culturalism, and postmodernism.

*Drama in Boven Digoel* novel shows elements of magical realism, although not completely, especially the characters who believe in things that are considered sacred, surpranatural, and metaphysical. This article is not meant to say that Kwee Tek Hoay's novel is a work of magical realism but to show that there are magical parts blend-

ing into the characters daily life. Simpkins [2] argues that (text) magical realism is different from fantasy literature or psychological literature, likewise, with surrealist and hermeneutical literature.

Magical realism is different from superrealism which reveals dream motives, nor does it distort reality or create an imaginary world, often found in fantasy or psychological stories. Magical realism characterizes magical phenomena inherent in the everyday reality of human life. These phenomena seem strange and beyond human reason, but they feel natural to humans. The existence of magic does not deny reality but is part of that reality.

Faris [3] also says that the extraordinary (marvelous) grow organically within the ordinary and blur the distinction between them. Five things characterize Faris's magical realism, irreducible elements, phenomenal worlds, intermingling or merging narrative realms, unresolved doubts, and disruption of space, time, and identity. That means magical realism is at the intersection of two worlds, on the imaginary axis and the axis of reality, in which there are two sides of a mirror that depicts two directions. There are ghosts and texts; spirit and man; the world of life and death; the space between or the space of intersection where the magic feels real.

Kwee Tek Hoay is one of the writers of Malay-Chinese literature in the 1930s. He was born on July 31, 1886, in Buitenzorg (Bogor), West Java. Apart from being a writer and novelist, he is also a journalist and playwright. His other works are *Boenga Roos dari Tjikembang*, *Atsal Moelahnja Tiboel Pergerakan Tionghoa jang Modern di Indonesia*, and *Drama dari Krakatau*. Kwee Tek Hoay, in several writings, is mentioned as a nationalist Chinese-Peranakan writer [4][5]. *Drama di Boven Digul* is a magnum opus that represents his spirit of nationalism. *Drama di Boven Digul* is famous for his composition of a novel set in the 1926 PKI rebellion.

Through this novel, Kwee Tek Hoay is known as a writer—along with Abdul Moeis with his novel *Salah Asuhan*, set the story by touching on the intrinsic and contradictory issues of colonial society in the 1920s to inspire the spirit of Indonesian nationalism [6]. Tek-Hoay's rejection of the PKI movement is exciting and quite ambivalent about his background as a Chinese-Malay. The term 'Malay-Chinese' itself is more often used to mark the identity of Tek-Hoay's authorship than the use of term 'Chinese Peranakan'.

*Drama di Boven Digul* is a lengthy work initially published as a serial in the *Panorama magazine* (1928-1932). The original edition consisted of four volumes, the first and second volumes in 1938, then the third and fourth volumes in 1941. This novel tells of the complicated relationship between a family who defended the colonial order and a family that shook the establishment of that order until the PKI rebellion broke out on November 12, 1926 in Batavia. Tek-Hoay tended to criticize the PKI in all its might.

The case has become common knowledge from the *Drama di Boven Digul* novel. This article tries to move in another direction; from another point of view. This novel indicates the presence of magical narratives explicitly in the text. Magical narratives in the text are unavoidable because the production base of Chinese Peranakan literature is traditional Indonesian society. Although the author is of Malay-Chinese de-

scent, it does not require the possibility that magical beliefs and irrational things surround their lives.

The series of magics that include the text are the beliefs of the people formed by the belief system of animism and dynamism. In the modern world, people still practice worship of ancestral spirits and believe in particular objects with magical powers, so these objects are cult and sacred. This traditional perspective is still alive in the reality of our society. The question is whether the Chinese Malay community is also passing on the belief system of traditional Indonesian society.

Some of the Chinese-Indonesian works show that the cultural closeness of the Indonesian people to the Chinese is a cultural thread for them. This paper aims to see this tendency in *Drama di Boven Digul* novel. Tek-Hoay raises narratives of belief in the lives of Indonesian people behind the disclosure of the 1926 PKI incident. Tek-Hoay implicitly discoursed to deconstruct the established colonial order. On the other hand, he tended to believe in that order.

The presence of magical things in the perspective of magical realism is an attempt to show resistance to colonialism, neocolonialism, and the like, especially in areas experiencing the destructive effects of colonialism. Magical realism brings together legends, myths, or fairy tales in realist narratives. Chanady [7] says that magical realism is present as a natural thing that cannot be separated from realist stories. Magical realism differs from fantasy stories because its presence is felt, agreed upon, or believed by many people as a convention. *Drama di Boven Digul* indicates the presence of supernatural things, supernatural influences, spirits, shamans, intelligent people, life after death, and the sacredness of the graves that our society has shared until today.

## 2 Method

This research methodology uses an approach commonly used in literary research, namely the data collection method and analysis of literary works. To obtain the data sources for this research, the data collection method used was a literature study with field visits to the National Library of the Republic of Indonesia in Jakarta to access exclusive books, newspapers, magazines, and microfilm collections about the Indonesian Chinese Peranakans. There are two crucial things that need to be considered in determining the method used in a study, namely the methods and techniques of data collection and data analysis methods [8]. As a method or technique, data collection methods and techniques function as collectors of empirical facts related to research problems, while the function of data analysis methods rests on their role in finding relationships between data, which relationships will not be stated automatically by the related data. This research is literary research using a research method approach in the form of the descriptive-analytical method.

Primary data sources used in this study In identifying magical realism in Chinese Peranakan literary works, this study draws data from the novel *Drama di Boven Digul* [9] by Kwee Tek Hoay. Secondary data sources are writings, essays, articles, and journals related to magical realism and narratives about women. Data collection is

done by collecting words, sentences, paragraphs, and other lingual units that show narratives in the concept of magical realism, then grouping and mapping them based on descriptions of irreducible elements, phenomenal world, unsettling doubt, merging realms, and disruption of time. Space, and identity to find the level of magical realism, along with the social, cultural, and ideological contexts that will be criticized in the text. The data analysis method is based on the workings of the magical realism theory by testing the lingual units from the primary source with data taken from supporting sources so that a relationship can be drawn between the elements of magical realism in Chinese-Indonesia works.

### 3 Finding And Discussion

*Drama di Boven Digul* contents the nuances of the Indonesia pre-independence history. Behind that, it is not realized that Tek-Hoay shows magical stories that are strengthened in the traditions of Indonesian society. *Belief in spirits* is part of the Indonesian people life, likewise with the presence of shamans (*dukun*) or *orang pintar* as people who are considered to have special knowledge or knowledge in playing supernatural influences. The magical power that people believe exists outside of themselves (which is natural) is the legacy of an animist belief system and dynamism rooted in our society's memory. Superstition has also been a tradition in Indonesian society. Some things are considered sacred (*sakti*), holy (*sakral*), and 'exist' outside of humans, things that are supernatural, visible, and irrational, which coexist with humans. A series of magical stories and beliefs are described in the following sections.

#### 3.1 Belief in spirit (*roh halus*)

The setting of the creation of magic in the novel is influenced by magical beliefs that develop in Papua. The Papuan people, especially the Biak tribe, have beliefs based on the concept of life and death. This belief is synonymous with the series of stories and magical beliefs in the *Drama di Boven Digul* novel. The Papuan people believe that humans have three elements in themselves called *baken saprop* (physical conditions), *nin* (shadow spirits), and *rur* (spirits). Spirits (*roh*) and *rur* unite when humans are alive and separate when they die. They believe the grave (*Yen Abui*) is a sacred place because it is the final resting place that separates the human body and spirit. In addition to the human world, the spirit world (*sup romawi*) in the sky (*nanggi*) is also their belief [10].

The spirit (*roh halus*) in this novel refers to the belief system of the Boven Digul community. In their belief system, spirits (*roh halus*) have a hierarchy based on the region they await. "*Manoin*" is a watchman in a dense forest area and high mountains. "*Narmoje*" is a spirit that is in the clouds or treetops. "*Narmoje*" in the Javanese belief system is similar to the *wewe gombel* figure because of his role as a bat demon that carries away or hides children. The third is "*Faknik*," a demon who watches over rocks at the edge of the sea, river, or swamp.

*Di antara bangsa Papua pun memang ada terdapat kapercayaan keras pada kakuasaan dari orang-orang alus yang biasa mengganggu manusia, hingga orang musti berdaya sabberapa bisa aken bikin senang hatinya. Itu orang-orang alus ada terbagi menjadi tiga golongan. Yang paling berkuasa dinamain "Manoin", yang tempat kadiamannya ada di utan lebet dan gunung-gunung yang tinggi; lantes "Narmoje", yang kadiamannya ada di awan atawa di puncak pepuhunan yang sifatnya semacem setan kalong, yaitu biasa bawa lari dan sembuniken anak-anak kecil; golongan katiga dinamaken "Faknik", yang kadiamannya ada di batu-batu karang pada tepi laut atawa sungei dan rawa, dan bisa timbulken ujan dan angin ribut. [p. 641-642]*

The above system can be found in almost all Indonesian people's beliefs. This belief is a collective belief of the community which is perceived differently. Each region constructs beliefs based on the conventions of its locality. Belief in spirits cannot be separated from the reality of Indonesian people's life. Alisjahbana [11] strengthens the belief that it is the collective authenticity of the Indonesian people. The original culture before Hinduism and Buddhism came, namely spirits and supernatural powers whose form or function is still unclear. These spirits can be spirits, ancestral spirits, or the spirits of people who have died.

This belief system has been maintained even though society has entered the modern world. "Karwar" in the belief system of the Boven Digoel or Papuan people is the result of materialization or the embodiment of the spirit. The "Karwar" statue is filled with the spirits of people who have died or their ancestors. Karwar is generally known as a statue of a spirit by the Biak tribe in Papua. The source of Noerani's belief also follows how the people of Boven Digul (*Uwai Aibo*) live their beliefs. Karwar is believed to be able to ward off the appearance of evil spirits from the three dimensions above: *Manoin*, *Narmoje*, and *Faknik*.

Karwar, in the magical world of the *Uwai Aibo* community, is considered a place for ancestral spirits or ancestors to reside. They believed the dead could be carried on their shoulders to give important clues. For example, it is practiced at harvest time or for healing diseases. The spirits of the dead have an essential role for those still alive. Karwar statues were placed in the villages as guards from demonic disturbances and to help repel enemies who were about to attack. The guardian spirit in Karwar is considered a blessing to the villagers. Noerani confessed in front of Maino that he could see these spirits. Noerani then pretended to pray in front of Karwar, who was located in a hut or idol house right near the gate of Maino village.

Noerani, in front of her friends, claimed to be able to see and communicate with Faknik. However, Noerani has not been able to meet "Manoin" and "Narmoje" whose residence is in a high place. Noerani can see that Maino's residence and the people of his village are full of evil demons and want to find victims by giving them an evil disease that can kill humans. Maino and the people of Uwai Aibo village immediately believed Noerani's words, even though Noerani made predictions based on the condition of the village, which became a mosquito breeding ground and smelled terrible.

The incident was motivated by the flight of Papuans from Maino village to Uwai Aibo. The area's condition is quite a slum and a breeding ground for malaria. Moestari, Soebaidah, and Noerani agreed not to stay long in Uwai Aibo because of the deplorable conditions in the area. One way to get people to believe that the area is

uninhabitable is to include mystical stories about their beliefs. This story is a way to show that Noerani is a powerful shaman and convince them to move to another, cleaner area. This view represents that the Papuan people closely hold traditional beliefs. Thus the 'magical' or 'traditional' often pivots on things considered primitive, backward, and irrational.

*Noeraini bisa bilang begitu lantaran meliat banyaknya nyamuk yang bersarang di itu rawa berbau bacin, dan Maino dan sekalian orang-orangnya ada percaya betul pada kesaktiannya itu dukun suci, kerna memang betul jumlahnya orang yang sakit dan mati ada sanget banyak, hingga penduduk dari Uwai Aibo jadi kurang jauh dibanding dengan beberapa taon yang lalu.[p. 642-643]*

The Papuan people's trust in the power of their ancestors is very high. Karwar is indeed very sacred and sacred by the people of Papua. Karwar contains magical powers that are believed to protect the Papuan people. Noerani as a European educated person, cannot reject this belief system. Unseen things like this are unavoidable in the life of Noerani, who has become a part of them. Even though he tried to scientific these occult ideas through the laws of nature, Noerani has not been able to penetrate the boundaries of the irrationality of the local community. Regardless of the issue of irrationality or the like, the Papuan people strengthen their local identity through these magical narratives.

The depiction of the human figure in areas relatively unaffected by foreigners generally continues the primitive style. Karwar symbolizes the image. Karwar is a rite that is sacred by the people of Papua. Today, the belief in Karwar is evident in the Biak Papuan community. The concept of the 'spirit' of the Papuan people coexists with those still alive. This concept is prevalent in the traditions of Indonesian society. This concept is prevalent in Indonesian traditions because there was animism and dynamism before the arrival of major religions.

*Di pertengahan taon 1926 kaadaan uwangnya Mas Boekarim jadi semingkin bagus lantaran ia punya anak prampuan, Noerani, yang sekarang sudah berusia 20 taon, telah tamat dari sekola calon dan bisa lantes dapet pakerjaan di Kartini School sabagi guru dengan gaji f 60 sabulan. Boekarim sayang sekalih pada ini anak yang cumah satu-satunya, .. [p. 21]*

Noerani is an ambivalent figure. Its existence represents two different cultural sides. On the one hand, he is a modern subject because he has received a European education and is a teacher at the Kartini School with a reasonably large salary at the age of 20. The other side shows the figure of Noerani, who cannot be separated from the perspective of traditional society. One of the efforts of magical realism is to bring together two cultural codes, the traditional and the modern, to merge into a postmodern reality. Noerani is a postmodern subject because he is based on local beliefs shaped by European education.

### 3.2 The *dukun*, *orang pintar*, and magical power

Papuans believe Karwar needed an intermediary to bridge the form of objects with the spirit that would enter them. That person, in the general view, is called a shaman (*dukun*). In Indonesia, the term *dukun* has various meanings. Some shamans work like healers or doctors who perform healing rituals on people. Usually, they help people who are sick or women who are about to give birth (indigenous medical practitioners). In some local communities, the *dukun* refers to a village's traditional elder or caretaker and is therefore referred to as a 'village shaman'.

Some call shamans those who have more ability to see magical things outside of themselves, namely intelligent people. Smart people (*orang pintar*) in this context also have similarities with traditional healers because of their overlapping roles. If the traditional healer can heal people and cannot predict, intelligent people have both abilities simultaneously, even though they are dominant in their role as fortune tellers. Two characteristics distinguish intelligent people in English: seer as a term for intelligent people who can see the past, present, and future without the help of spirits, usually the character of indigo people, and shaman as a wise person who needs the intermediary of spirits. Intelligent people of the second type are called witch doctors when their role is to harm others.

In the *Drama di Boven Digoel* novel, the Papuan people's trust in shamans is very high. In this case, the shaman (*mon*) refers to the definition of a shaman. Intelligent people who have the ability and can communicate with spirits are considered shamans. The shaman still has a fairly broad meaning, not yet associated with his role from the dark side. People trust shamans to give instructions because they have extraordinary and unique abilities. However, today the term *dukun* has expanded. Some shamans can handle various problems, from treating the sick to moving towards witchcraft (*santet*).

*Noerani yang dipandang sabagi marika punya dukun suci, lantes pura-pura bersembahyang di hadep itu patung-patung yang ditaro dalem satu gubuk yang digunaken sabagi tempel atawa rumah berhala dan pernanya di deket pintu dari pager desa. Komudian Noerani beri tau pada Sarim dan Maion sekarang ia baru cumah bisa dapet perhubungan dengan "Faknik", yang jadi penunggu.... [p. 642]*

Noerani is considered to have abilities like a shaman or an intelligent person. What the shaman says will be truly believed by those who follow him. Geertz [12] mentions that the spiritual power of the shaman (Javanese) is a crucial element. He said it was a shaman's superior spiritual power. Noerani had to transform into a sacred person to convince the Papuans. The position and power of the shaman are very influential on the Papuan people.

Shamans, in general, have mastered *ajian* (*jimat*) and *jampe* (*mantra*). These two things become the source of the shaman's power to summon supernatural spirits. Wessing [13] distinguishes *dukun* through five categories, 1) *paraji papaes* (*dukun beranak*, midwife), 2) *paraji sunat* (*dukun sunat*, circumcisor), 3) *dukun jampe* (specialist in romance magic, healer or specialist in love magic), 4) *dukun gaib* (dealer with spirits), and 5) *dukun manis pahing* (shaman who predicts fortune, fortune

teller). Anthropologically, these shamans are distinguished based on their roles. Although most are believed to see spirits directly, some are more focused on practical professions to help people, such as circumcision shamans, shamans who treat toothaches, and others. Their function tends to be as practical as that of a doctor in a traditional context.

What a magical realist is shaped by the intermingling of the realist and the magical. The realist is the reality of the daily life of the Papuan people. In addition, Noerani, as a modern subject, is represented by realism. What is considered magical is their belief in shamans and intelligent people who can communicate with spirits. These magical things cannot be reduced or separated from their everyday knowledge. Karwar is cult as a sacred rite because of its existence as a medium for supernatural things, connecting the dead and the living. Likewise, the existence of Noerani, who is considered to have a *dukun* by the Papuans, Noerani has the power that exists in him as a liaison or intermediary for Manoin, Narmoje, and Farnak, regardless of Noerani's actions to trick them into moving to a more appropriate place. Magical realism is the inextricable intermingling of the two.

Papuan knowledge is knowledge commonly owned by local people who uphold traditional values. With magical stories, it means that they believe in things that their ancestors have passed down. *Kiai*, a person who has been considered a religious figure, is also believed to be innovative. The figure of *Kiai* is often found in villages. There are *Kiai* who have this dual role. He is believed to be able to communicate with spirits, provide healing to the sick, and can even predict a person's future.

Noerani believes that *Kiai*'s role can help her find enlightenment when she is desperate. Noerani came to smart people after her father was arrested. An unavoidable and unconscious element is that the collective knowledge of some Indonesians makes them believe that there are great people they can turn to for help. They have abilities and supernatural powers that are rarely found in other people. This collective knowledge is inherited from previous ancestors. Collective knowledge aims to preserve what has been traditionalized by their ancestors.

*"Kalu neng mau tahu, itu resia begini: Juragan Camat ada jadi muridnya Kiyai Achmad Bhakti, yang tinggal di Gircahya, di Gunung Salak, dekat Cicurug. Orang bilang ia ada jadi anak angkat dari itu Kiyai yang termahsyur sakti, usianya sudah lebih dari 150 taon, ilmunya tinggi, hingga bisa tau segala perkara yang sudah dan bakal kajadian, dan jampenya ada begitu manjur hingga dari keliling tempat ada dateng orang-orang minta obat atawa coba dapetken pertolongannya dalem berbagi-bagi perkara yang sering sekalih kunjungin itu Kiyai, dan bayak perkara kajahatan yang gelap telah bisa ia terangken dan penjahatnya ditangkep, lantaran dapet tulungan dari itu Kiyai yang sakti. [p. 249-250]*

The description of *Kiai Achmad Bhakti* has a dual role, namely being a *Kiai* and a shaman. He is called a smart person because he is believed to be able to overcome many problems, such as treatment, asking for help to solve problems, uncovering dark cases, and uncovering crimes. His ability goes beyond the shaman categorization expressed by Wessing [13], so his existence is considered sacred. In the reality of our lives, *kiai* such as *Kiai Achmad Bhakti*, describe how the realist and the magical work

through a person's role based on supernatural powers. Elements of magical realism are also emphasized from Noerani's attitude as a modern scholar but ultimately has to believe in the supernatural to ask for salvation for his father.

*Maski Noerani ada satu anak prampuan terpelajar modern yang tida gampang mau percaya ilmu-ilmu gaib, tapi ini sekali, lantaran putus akal, ia ada taro harepan juga kalu-kalu betul itu kiyai bisa tulung unjuk dimana adanya itu dua makhluk yang tercinta. Begitulah itu pikiran aken bunuh diri telah tersingkir oleh munculnya ini harepan baru. [p. 259]*

Even if the narratives that express elements of magical realism are minor, they are still unavoidable. Noerani has high hopes that Kiai Achmad Bhakti can help to find her father. He got a new hope that canceled his desire to commit suicide. The existence of the Kiai as an intelligent person is considered to have significant meaning for Noerani. Noerani is known as an educated person and does not readily believe in occult sciences. Finally, he believes that intelligent people can help him. This belief shows that tradition is still alive in the subconscious mind of the Indonesian people. In this context, intelligent people (kyai) show a form of resistance to European power through science.

Noerani's belief in magical things began to strengthen him. Noerani represents the reality of Indonesian society, rooted in their tradition of believing in myths. Traces of human belief in the past have taken root in today's society and are not easily erased even though Europe tries to enter through science that puts forward rationality. The *DdBD* novel shows the same thing. Even though the author is a Chinese-Malay, culturally, he has a closeness with the natives. The presence of magical things from myths, superstitions, shamans, supernatural influences, and other beliefs shows that the strengthening of these traditions is to fight the centrist Europe that has begun to enter the traditions of Indonesian society. The success of the resistance can be seen in the Noerani character, who begins to believe that jin, dewa (gods), and spirits outside of human life are real.

*Oh, orang alus yang berkuasa di sini!" kata Noerani dengan pengrasaan terharu; "biar siapa juga kau ada: bidadari, malaekat, dewa, atawa jin yang jadi penunggu dari ini tempat atawa dari gunung Salak yang agung, aku minta unjuklah kamurahanmu pada diriku ini. Tulunglah bantu sampeken aku punya dowo dan permuhunan kepada Tuhan Yang Maha Murah dan Maha Berkuasa sendiri, supaya aku bisa terbebas dari ini kasusahan yang sakean lama aku telah menanggung, hal mana cumah bisa terjadi jikalau kau bisa dapetkan kembali itu orang-orang yang aku cinta. [p. 280-281]*

Noerani's desperation led him to hope through spirits so that he could get help. The spirits are believed to be intermediaries between themselves and God. Noerani decided to believe in supernatural powers because reasonable efforts could not help him. The problems in this novel are getting more and more complex. Magical elements, even though only in certain parts of the text, turns out to give rise to a complex discourse. The magical elemental power finds its wholeness in those parts. The minority of story rooms provide the magical still developing. The complexity of the supernatu-

ral elements does question not only the shaman but also the expansion of intelligent people and Kiai. In addition, it does mention not only supernatural things but also the belief in supernatural things, which has both good and bad sides, as in the following quote:

*Ini kabar dari Raden Achmad sudah diterima oleh Tat Mo dan anak pramuannya dengan berduka. Ia orang meliat nyata di saputernya itu lelakon percintaan antara Moestari dan Noerani ada terdapat pengaruh-pengaruh jahat yang memisah dan menghalangin, hingga Moestari dan Sorbaidah selalu ambil tindakan salah, dan segala percobaan aken memberulkaen menjadi gagal atawa kasep. [p. 504-505]*

The influence of occult things is not only represented through good images but also through occult things that are bad. The bad occult influence can be seen in the efforts of Moestari's parents to thwart their child's relationship with Noerani. In this case, magical influences work from the dark side. Understanding the occult, magic, or magic in Indonesian society must be seen from two sides. The first side is occult, magic, or magical things that come from good things for positive purposes, such as compassion, treatment, spells to calm the mind, and others. The lousy side usually uses magic (spells) to injure, harm, or harm others, as is typical is witchcraft.

Thus, events related to shamans, intelligent people, and supernatural things show two sides. Both do not just refer to bad things. The other side of the magical elements in the life of the Indonesian people also has a good meaning. Shamans are a collective construction and culture of Indonesian society. People who believe in the power of shamans are not only Javanese but every region in Indonesia has beliefs depending on the terms and local characteristics. The summoning ceremony entering Karwar is a typical Papuan tradition that must also have a local term in other areas.

The world of shamans, intelligent people, or Kiai has magical elements that cannot be separated from the reality of life. People prefer to believe in shamans does not mean denying medicine. However, they have a way of traditionalizing, archipelagic, or an Indonesian way of being cultured. The world of shamans is also constructed to fight the western-oriented world of rationality. Nusantara people have a way of rationalizing their own lives. Marvelous things are part of their life by believing in the existence of a universe or universe outside their universe. This belief is their way of interpreting themselves as human beings.

### 3.3 Myth, life after death, and sacradness

DdBD refers to beings outside of human life with arwah (spirits of people who have died), lelembut (spirits), and demons. Life after death is a collective belief of society. Death is the process of releasing the body from the spirit. People believe that the spirits of people die side by side with humans. They are just different realms separated by the physical realm and the reach of the senses. Then a ghost or spirit wanders, collectively constructed from the people's minds and symbolized or represented by a specific form. The form is agreed upon by the community and is perceived based on the symbols of death. People perceive the ghost of the pocong to explain the human spir-

its who wander because the pocong rope was forgotten to be released at the time of burial. The shape of the pocong by using a white cloth wrapped and tied from the head, body, to the feet is a collective agreement of the community in perceiving symbols of death that are common in Indonesian society.

The symbol is certainly different when we talk about the context of Karwar. Arwar Papuans who died were manifested in the form of Karwar, although Karwar's process differed from *pocong*. They did not construct their (local) ghost with *pocong*. *Karwar* is a human statue sitting or standing with a large head, sharp nose, and wide mouth [10]. Of course, this realization cannot be separated from the reality surrounding the Papuan people. *Karwar* sanctification is a form of respect for those who have contributed during his life [14]. Symbols, such as *Karwar*, become a belief system and a belief rite for the Papuan people to reflect on their mortal life as humans. Likewise, with the presence of Noerani's spirit after death. Tat Mo saw for himself that Noerani's spirit was still around them.

*“Aku sendiri sudah ketemu padanya beberapa kalih, baik dalam impian, baekpun di waktu lagi bikin meditatie. Beberapa kalih dalem kaadaan sadar aku liat parasnya dan denger suaranya yang bilang apa-apa padaku dengan berbisik, maka aku sudah lama dapet tau yang ia sudah jadi penduduk dari alam alus. Tentang itu bayangan yang ia liat, pun aku tau pasti ada petaan sabenernya tentang apa yang bakal terjadi di Negri Kabebasan pada hari komudian. Malah di itu saat Noerani telah kamasukan satu roh besar, kalu aku tida keliru itu ada Dewa Penunggu dari Nieuw Guinea, atawa satu anggota dari Persaudaraan Putih yang pimpin evolutive dari bangsa-bangsa, yang suda atur jau kamajuaannya dari sasuwatu daerah menurut gilirannya. Pikirlah, bagaimanakah satu anak prampuan lemah ampir meninggal dengan dapet demem keras serta bicaranya sering melantur dang mengaco, bisa inget di taon kapan Colombus....”* [p. 735-736]

Tat Mo told his son Dolores that he knew Noerani had died in that part. He gains knowledge from the spirits who whisper to him. Tat Mo is the only person who can see Noerani's spirit, so he does not demand that Dolores has to believe his story. Noerani's death leaves grief for the people of the Land of Freedom and all Papuans, young or old. The sadness is because Noerani's services are so excellent for them. Papuans can live happily in Sentosa because Noerani struggles for them. When Noerani was alive, he was deified by the Papuans. Even at the time of death, Noerani's grave was sacred, cult, or sacred by them.

The cult of Noerani's grave as a holy place is a form of respect for their services. They have a way of honoring the queen who has fought for their lives. This sacredness is their strategy to legitimize Noerani as a hero for their lives. Magical realism in this section is used to produce effects in characterizing a culture's worldview. This view usually happens when a text wants to show allegiance to a particular set of cultural modalities—that is, when the author wants to place his faith in cultural truths that are excluded from the western perspective—to assert a particular cultural identity. The way to see the world becomes the basis for affirming how that part of the world explains or confirms that cultural identity [15].

*“Dan ini kaangkatan dibarengin dengan kariyaan kita punya pernikahan official menurut adat dari bangsa Papua, dan pada penutupnya itu pesta, aku dan Moestari kunjungin kuburannya Noerani yang masih terus dijaga sian-malem oleh beberapa orang Papua bersenjata dengan bergantian, buat mana marika ada bikin pondok-pondok di dekat itu kuburan, yang dipandang sabagi tempat suci dan angker, dan setiap hari banyak yang dateng sajiken barang makanan dan kembang-kembang menurut adat-kabiasaan dari itu bangsa. [pp. 745-746]*

The myth system was built through offerings to mark the sacredness of Noerani's grave as a sacred place. In addition, one of the ways to maintain the sacredness of Noerani's grave is to make her grave scary (haunted). This culture is related to the cultural construction commonly owned by the Indonesian people. Magical realism tries to capture reality by describing many dimensions of life; as Copper [15] states, the captured reality includes things that are seen and unseen, rational and mysterious. Graves have a physical form that the human senses can see. On the other hand, the cemetery has a mystical aura that certain people can feel, and is believed by many people believe a cemetery is scary. Those who do not believe in magic will say that this is superstitious.

Superstition is related to magical things, which means believing in things considered unreal, intangible, and imaginary. The life of traditional people in Indonesia is not on a pile of superstitions. There is a system of myths that underlies their beliefs. The mythical system is traditionalized as their way of being cultured and caring for their culture. Our culture has traditions passed down from generation to generation to prevent misfortune, bring good, eliminate disease, and reject reinforcements. Superstition has a significant social function in life, namely, maintaining the values prevailing in society.

Superstition sometimes describes something taboo by blurring the prohibitions through language systems, which are called myths, taboos, or things that are *pamali*. This paper does not use the term superstition, which is more dominant because magical elements are not entirely the same as superstition. If superstition is the more dominant term to describe something that is just a fantasy, the magical elements in this paper tend to be myths that have become a people's belief system.

Magical realism in *DdBD* is a perspective to characterize a particular cultural identity. Behind the dominant story on historical issues, the element of magical realism in it characterizes local traditions that are still deeply rooted in Papuan society. The magical things in this novel dissolve because tradition is lived as part of the daily reality of their lives. The myth is here to explain and counterbalance that there is a power more significant than a human tragedy, namely the power of tradition that maintains kinship ties and mutual respect.

The exoticism of magical magic represents the power of the Papuan people. In addition, the magical narrative expands on Tek-Hoay's nationalism, which has only been understood as his resistance to the PKI tragedy. The presence of magical narratives strengthens Tek-Hoay's identity as a Malay-Chinese based on the Indies' land. He agrees with the existence of traditions, and mystical beliefs lived by the community as a marker of their cultural identity. Shamans, Smart People, Kyai, spirits, supernatural

things, sacred places, and others are elements that surround the lives of Indonesian people as realities and cultural phenomena that cannot be avoided in their lives.

### 3.4 Behind the Tragedy of 1926: Papua and its Magical

The Drama di Bouven Digul is set in the history of human tragedy, namely the PKI rebellion on November 12, 1926. The 759-page novel is mainly the love story of Moestari and Noerani wrapped in the historical narrative of the PKI rebellion. Tek-Hoay's opposition to communism is not only articulated through the character Tat Mo but also by the voice of the narrator, which is clear from the start. The narrator's voice can be seen in how he characterizes Noerani's father, Boekarim. Boekarim was forced to retire early as a teacher because he was against the government and school inspectors. Starting from these difficulties, Boekarim finally met with PKI officials, who helped him get a job teaching at the Sarekat Rakjat school. The job required him to become a member and follower of the PKI, which was the beginning of his exile in Boven Digul.

Subsequent paragraphs, however, are indented. Although Tek-Hoay is of Malay-Chinese descent, he fully supports nationalism and discredits communism. Liji [6] favored this work from the novel *Salah Asuhan* by Abdul Moeis. Liji also called *DdBD* a brilliant work of Kwee Tek Hoay. Even Jacob Soemarjo called it a masterpiece, and Thomas Rieger praised it as a monumental Chinese-Malay literature work. Tek-Hoay's name is always mentioned when talking about the Chinese-Malay literary world. Tek-Hoay shows the spirit of nationalism in totality in each of his works. Tek-Hoay's idea of nationality is shown in several characters in the novel, such as Noerani and Dolores. Dolores, Tat Mo's adopted son, accepts Noerani as a brother.

*“Noerani aken diterima Dolores seperti saudara. Biarpun kita punya kabang-sa’an ada berlaenan, dalam penghidupan yang lalu brangkalih kita sudah pernah bersanak rapet, hingga waktu pertama kalih aku mengawasin selagi kau membaca itu syairan sambil bercucur aer mata, hatiku sanget merasa tertarik dan lantes taro sympathie keras padamu. Begitu banyak orang prampuan yang sedeng teruruk oleh kadukaan telah buka rasia hatinya padaku salama aku di-am disini dalem ini beberapa minggu, antara mana ada banyak sasama bang-saku, tapi belon ada satu yang bikin aku merasa ketarik dan ingin menulungin seperti pada kau.” [p. 331]*

The quote above shows Noerani's idea of nationality, which upholds the values of nationalism and erases any differences between herself and Dolores. However, ambivalence arises because Noerani negates Radeko on his part. Noerani's action against Radeko makes Noerani's idea of nationality ambiguous despite her rejection of Radeko. Noerani has excluded that Radeko is part of him as Javanese even though Radeko is Indonesian, as stated in the following quote.

*“Aduh, aku ebih suka mati dari pada jadi istrinya! Kulitnya item sabagi orang Afrikaan, rambutnya rintik, romannya bengis, matanya liar, suaranya kasar,*

*maski juga ia pande sekalih bicara dan bikin pidato. Rupanya ia bukan orang Jawa, hanya turunan bangsa Ambon atawa Timor.” [p. 12]*

Noerani's view of Radeko shows that Noerani hates Radeko. Noerani's attitude was ambivalent even though Radeko was a communist sympathizer. Noerani's spirit of nationalism became a totality when he fought for the rights and lives of the Uwai Aibo people. Besides Noerani, the idea of nationalism (nationalism) is also seen in Dolores. The idea of Dolores' nationality is interesting because she is the adopted son of a non-native Tat Moe. Dolores is a Chinese girl, a friend of Noerani, who introduced her to Kyai Achmad Bhakti in Giricahya, who has a sacred place on a mountain.

*“Ketika pertama kalih aku berhubungan padanya, pengatauanaku begitu cupet, brangkalih lebih cupet dari kau, kerna aku tida dapet laen pelajaran daripada di sekola rendah. Sasudah katerjang itu kaduka'an hebat, yang membikin aku ambil putusan aken cari perlindungan padanya, barulah pangatauanaku bisa terbuka luas atas ia punya pimpinan dan didikan. Sekarang aku gunakan antero penghidupanku buat bantu padanya [Tat Mo] aken terbitken buku-buku cerita, syairan, cerita toneel, dan laen-laen yang nanti banjirin Indonesia dengan pri kabeneran.” [pp. 329-330]*

Dolores then takes Noerani to her father. There, Noerani's spirit began to recover, and Tat Mo taught Noerani not to like and hate communists too much. He instilled a spirit of liberation from colonialism but worked for the struggle for Papua. Both Dolores and Noerani show the same spirit of upholding Indonesian nationalism. Noerani remains at odds in terms with the idea of the state. Liji also said that *DdBD* was a form of Tek-Hoay's courage to raise important issues and the central contradictions of the colonized society in the 1920s, as well as showing Tek-Hoay's spirit of nationalism.

In fact, many studies have explicitly revealed the spirit of Tek-Hoay's nationalism through his works and the revelation of the tragedy of the 1926 communion behind this work. Another significant thing here is Tek-Hoay's implicit view of local communities. His depiction of Papua built explicitly through his mystical stories is a privilege. Behind the story is about Boekarim or Radeko, who carries communist ideology. The dispute between Moestari's father and Boekarim shows the conflict between the two groups. A significant thing that other researchers rarely see is the power of magical narratives in it. At that time, Tek-Hoay was able to explore his views on locality.

While civilizing the Indies through the knowledge provided by Western Education, Tek-Hoay discusses different things by showing the magical powers possessed by local people. That power finally brought Noerani to be respected by his fellow citizens. From there, the actual dedication and struggle can be seen by liberating the Uwai Aiba people from an unworthy life to being worthy. The fusion of magical narratives into stories about the historical realities of 1926 filled another force of Kwee Tek-Hoay's creative process.

The telling of magical things in this realist fiction provides a clear picture of Tek-Hoay's position as an author. So far, Tek-Hoay is famous for its high national spirit

toward Indonesia. Another side of Tek-Hoay is its attention to small stories in traditional society rarely raised in literary works, which then tended to be oriented to Balai Pustaka. This novel is still relevant to be discussed today because it is rich in the significant discussion even though it has been written since the 1930s. Belief in magical things in Papua has become a new force even though the narrative is not dominant.

This paper does not question whether this novel is part of magical realism or not. Magical realism in this context is used as a perspective to see the elements of magic hidden behind realist fiction, even though the level of magical realism is minimal in this novel. This perspective shows that Tek-Hoay appreciates the culture of the Indonesian people because, in this novel, that culture is placed as a noble culture. The culture that raised Noerani eventually died as a hero for the Uwai Aiba people. With that, the magical elements in the text do not appear optimally, but reading this novel from the perspective of magical realism shows another side of this novel.

The presence of myths has undermined the establishment of the colonial order. Tek-Hoay wants the security of this country without useless bloodshed. Chandra [5] also mentions that Tek-Hoay distinguishes communism as a revolution while nationalism is an evolutionary effort. Nationalism brings people to change and move forward, in contrast to communism. Many speculate that *Tat Mo* is the version of Tek-Hoay in the text. With that, the presence of myths and beliefs in Papuan society is the author's voice through the images in the text. Tek-Hoay's nationalism is not only a question of evolution that must be fought for in the national constellation but also in local movements, as exemplified by the Noerani figure. Papua is a cultural location that has exoticism through its magical magic.

Bowers [1] says that the feasibility of magical realism texts is not only related to the context of the author who determines the feasibility of the adoption. The reader's acceptance of the text must also be considered. Magical realism, in addition, by western critics to bracket and explain cultural production in the region concerned. This paper does not question Bowers' first statement to prove that *DdBD* is a work of magical realism. However, this paper tends to Bowers' second statement, which works with elements of magical realism to explain cultural production in certain areas.

The element of magical realism in the novel *DdBD* explains cultural production in Papuan society, especially in areas that believe in the Karwar myth. Discussions about locality and traditionality in a literary work will remain relevant as time changes. The roots or background of magical realism's story creation (elemental) are indeed widely produced in post-colonial countries. The novel Tek-Hoay manages to characterize this even though the magical elements are not fully explored. The magical elements in Tek-Hoay's realistic storytelling appear in relatively minor portions. However, this does not reduce the reader's knowledge of the Karwar tradition, as the beauty or privilege of Papua is hidden behind realist texts.

## 4 Conclusion

The level of magical realism in *DdBD*'s novel does not indicate this work as magical realism fiction in fashion or genre. Magical realism becomes a perspective and mode of reading to explore magical beliefs behind the historical reality that is quite dominant in the text. Behind the historical reality regarding the outbreak of the rebellion in the tragedy of the PKI on November 12, 1926, Kwee Tek-Hoay framed a small number of stories, especially those set in Papua, with magical elements. This novel's magical realism elements strengthen cultural production in the Papua region. As part of Indonesia, Papua has a solid mystical culture in the daily realities of its people's lives. Mystical beliefs such as shamans, intelligent people, supernatural influences, spirits, spirits of the dead, life after death, sacred and haunted places, and so on have inherently surrounded their lives.

The element of magical realism in Chinese Peranakan literature tends to reveal the cultural identity of a particular society. The novel *DdBD*, set in the 1920s to the 1930s, shows a period of transition or transition from traditional culture to the influence of modern culture. Modern culture began to develop through the sciences that Europe tried to provide in the Indies with a civilizing mission. Meanwhile, for the local community, the traditions they adhere to are their way of being cultured and caring for their culture. If we are relevant to our current problem, it is that many people today do not understand their culture because science is advancing. There is an effort to inculcate cultural values in civilized humans without leaving their culture.

This description makes the novel *DdBD* essential to read to consider issues that overlapped in the past. The reading of magical realism here as the latest mode to see traditional cultural production in realist fiction has existed since pre-independence, although it has not yet shown a dominant tendency. Something unavoidable because Indonesian society is based on a traditional society. The elements of magical realism in this novel mark the convergence of viewpoints or cultural codes as a product of modernity and traditionality. Modernity leads to the impact or influence of the development of science that is entirely certain and logical on the reality of human life. At the same time, traditionality tends to everything in the form of tradition, and when we say myth, it is in the assumption of the 'irrational'. Thus, the element of magic in the novel *DdBD* strengthens the Indonesian people's culture and traditions, which still exist amid the dynamics of modernity.

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