

The Origin of Humans Based on Javanese Literary Studies

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Abstract---Though the origin of humans has been widely discussed by numbers of scholars, its matters still remain mystery and contradiction. Different people in communities have various sources and truth criteria. This study aimed at unearthing the origin of humans based on Javanese written and oral literatures. Results showed that there were two meaningful but different versions regarding how humans were originated based on both written and oral literatures. The two versions were initiated and supported by different religion backgrounds. The first version was born from older Javanese literatures that showed the significant influence of Hindu in which humans were portrayed through Gods pedigree. Meanwhile, the second version was born from literatures affected by Islam, either puritanical or Javanese Islam, which made Islam number one so that Gods in Hindu were under Prophet Adam in Islam. However, such Javanese people's views regarding the beliefs of the origin of humans should not be debated with other truths. Since the truths in Javanese literatures were only believed and carried out by those supporting communities, truths were then actually relative.

Keywords--- *written literatures, oral literatures, Hindu, Islam*

I. INTRODUCTION

The origin of humans remains mysterious and debatable even up to the following eras after Darwin's theory had been invented regarding human evolution. However, efforts to find the origin of humans done by several experts is continuously conducted through contemplations which are dissimilar to day-dreaming and accidental thoughts. The contemplation mean is rather onto those conducted by intellectual reasoning, carefulness, and systematic.

The happened contradiction in relation to the origin of humans is actually based on different perspectives. Tattersall stated that the first cosmopolitan homo species, *Homo Heidelbergensis*, first time found in Africa in 600 Ca [1]. Mulla Sadra theory mention that the universe is always changing [2]. The beginning of a form is a continuation of the end of another form, an object change into a plant, a plant change into an animal, and an animal change into a man. Those opinions have its own uniqueness. For instance,

Darwin's theory regarding human evolution which begins from ape must be gotten numerous protests from either religious communities or artists. Such responds confirm different communities use various sources and truth criteria. As supported by Ouspensky in Dharsono that there are four aspects to find truth namely philosophy, religion, science, and art [3].

This study serves a perspective from art in connection with how Javanese people view the origin of humans. The way to look at the particular Javanese perspective is in a form of a real documented source. As Corlett stated that the performing action of a human being is closely related with the history of man's attitudes, preferences, etc. Further, this relation may have contributed to the morality and values of a person [4]. Such Javanese's way especially in literary arts is then applied in a real life. For example, there is a tradition to read a six-line Javanese verse form in the northern Java which have been exist since around 1980. Afterwards, along with the development of technology and the decrease of Javanese illiterates, the tradition has gone. Similar phenomena also happen in other communities such as Mancanegari Barat and Negari Gung Jawa Tengah. In the northern coastal areas, the aforementioned tradition becomes a venue to accommodate literary appreciation of Javanese people toward the literature products containing religious contents. One of the most familiar works that is used to do literary appreciation in the tradition is *Layang Anbiya'*, an ancient script written in Arabic and Javanese [5]. The messages conveyed in the book is not only being appreciated to reveal its attractiveness, but also being exposed its religious lessons which are then carried out into daily activities.

Javanese people as part of Indonesian citizens have strong cultures that are reflected from their social orders or ethics. Magnis-Suseno describes two important life principles that affect Javanese people's behaviors and ways of thinking,

namely respect and harmony principles [6]. Both principles can create harmony in life. With a respect principle, there will be neither confrontations nor fights of the undeserved authority because every single person respect each other and perform their own responsibilities. In addition, with a harmony principle, Javanese people can live in a society without hurting or cheating between one another. The perceived two vital principles can make them control themselves and avoid any form of confrontations so that such conducive situation externalizes a harmonious society.

Besides reflected from the two life principles, Javanese culture is also manifested in a complex and systematic language. *Undha-usuk* or grammatical structure of Javanese demands the speakers to adapt the use of the language with conversation settings, or *empan papan*. In other words, the users of the language must know where and how to behave and talk. Those who cannot behave and talk relevantly to the rules are then considered as persons with bad attitude, or *ora Jawa*.

Literary products become one of the manifestations of various and strong Javanese cultures. Some ancient Javanese literatures have been successfully researched, documented and discussed by many domestic and international experts. Zoetmulder succeeded to publish her study concerning ancient Javanese literatures with satisfied language use [7]. In coping with socio anthropology aspect, Koentjaraningrat stated that Javanese culture has been already a focus of research interest for Dutch anthropologists, especially when Indonesia was colonized by Dutch. Even, numbers of ancient Javanese literatures are moved and saved in the Netherlands [8].

This study aims at discussing the origin of humans revealed from both oral and written Javanese literatures. Even only a half part of the literatures, the researcher believes that it has covered and represented Javanese literatures across eras, from the ancient ones to the most recent ones, from Hindu to Islam and Javanese-Islam civilizations.

II. THE ORIGIN OF HUMANS BASED ON JAVANESE PERSPECTIVES : ORAL AND WRITTEN LITERATURES

Literatures consist oral and written forms. Written Javanese literatures have made some divisions of history into periods by experts. Hutomo [9] made such four periods for written Javanese literatures namely ancient, middle, new, and modern Javanese literatures (also see Rass, [10] and Quinn, [11]). However, this study only uses the ancient, middle, and new Javanese literatures for being the basis of determining the origin of humans. Pairin conducts a similar study investigating the origin of humans based on mythology aspect [12]. This study, rather, tries to trace the origin of humans based on different sources namely Javanese literatures.

Oral Javanese literatures are also rich in the collection. Herusatoto [13] stated that oral Javanese literatures

consist of both full (original) and half oral literatures. The original oral literatures comprise folktales which are not supported with accompanying instruments. Meanwhile, the half oral literatures include folktales spoken by a story teller using accompanying instruments, of which this typical literatures are used by the present study as basis to discuss the origin of humans.

A. *The Origin of Humans Based on Written Literatures*

There were six scripts from three periods of Javanese literatures used to explain the origin of humans. The first title was *Tantu Panggelaran* originated from the middle period. There were two versions of the script from the middle period entitled *Layang Anbiya'*, written in Javanese, and *Sejarah Anbiya*, written in Sundanese. In addition, there were three more scripts entitled *Babad Tanah Jawi*, *Paramayoga*, and *Serat Kandha* which were all from the new period of Javanese literatures. The six scripts were then discussed one by one to get clearer portrayals about similarity and difference of views regarding the origin of humans.

1. *The Origin of Humans Based on Tantu Panggelaran*

Tantu Panggelaran was written in a form of prose using Middle Javanese language style, or firstly developed in Majapahit Kingdom. By looking at the names of Gods mentioned in the script, *Tantu Panggelaran* uses Hindu background.

Poerbatjaraka [14] stated that *Tantu Panggelaran* contained the origin of Javanese humans. The first Javanese human in Java was created by Bathara Guru. In that narratives, Bathara Guru created a couple of humans to live in Java Island. The couple then grew into wider community. At first, the couple was naked and did not have known how to survive. Thus, Gods were sent to them and taught about agricultures. In addition, God named Wisnu, also called as Kandiawan, was also sent to be the first king of Java Island.

Tantu Panggelaran also told how Java Island was firstly created. According to the story, Java Island was not settled, or still moved. Bathara Guru commanded Gods to cut Semeru Mountain that was located in India to be moved into Java Island. At the beginning, the part of the cut mountain was dropped in the western Java that made an imbalanced Java Island. To make it balanced, the cut part was moved to the eastern area. In the way to move it, the cut part fell onto the grounds and became some mountains named Lawu, Kawi, Kelud, Wilis, and Semeru.

2. *The Origin of Humans Based on Layang Anbiya'*

Layang Anbiya' was written in ancient Javanese using Arabic Pegon style in a form of *tembang macapat*, a six-line Javanese verse [5]. The script was written on a brown paper covered with fabrics with undetermined pages because of the some missing pages at the back part. The last page showed

number 572. Similar to other scripts, the author was not mentioned.

By looking at the writing tradition, *Layang Anbiya'* was from Islamic schools. Some experts named the script as the coastal literature products because it was originated from the northern Java. In accordance to the legend of nine *wali* (religious leaders), northern coastal area was the center of Islam in Java Island. Unfortunately, the script was found in Ponorogo (southern Java) from Mbah Sulaiman. In this study, the researchers did not discuss the origin of the script.

According to *Layang Anbiya'*, a human was created by Allah then was sent to the earth named Adam. Before the creation of Adam, Allah previously had created a round earth with seven layers of grounds, seven layers of sky completed with moon, star, and sun. Thus, earth and sky were similar in width.

Then, Allah created angels from light. The first angel created was Jibril, then followed with Mikail, Isrofil, Ngizroil, and others who are countless. Along with the creation of angels, Allah also created angels named Idajil from fire. Similar to angels, Idajil was also obedient to Allah. Another important thing was that Allah also created various creatures with different colors such as birds.

Before creating Adam, Allah also created Jan, another creature living in earth. Since Jan did destruction, Allah made him died. Then, Allah created another creature named Banujan who finally made destruction as well, and was destroyed by Allah when aged 800 years. Because Allah destroyed Jan and Banujan, they could not be called as human ancestors on earth.

Actually, the angels were worried if there would be another creature created to live on earth. They were worried if the new created creatures would remain doing the same destructions. However, Allah knew more than everyone else that the new creature had excellences compared to that of angels.

There were sequential processes to create Adam portrayed in *Layang Anbiya'*. First, Allah sent Jibril to take soil but he could not because the earth against him, and so did Mikail and Isrofil. Izroil was the one who could take soil. He took various types of soil such as rough, soft, red, yellow, black and white (*Ambiya'*:13). Allah then created Adam from the various types of soil so that further humans living on earth had different characteristics. Moreover, the skin colors were also varied such as white, black, and brown.

Adam was created with a handsome look. He was about 60 ft. Then, Allah gave him a soul. Adam's look made Idaji angry. Allah also commanded angels and Idajil to honor Adam but Idajil refused the command.

Adam and Hawa lived happily in heaven. They then broke Allah's rules to do not eat *kuldi*, a restricted heaven fruit. The eaten *kuldi* was stopped in Adam's throat, so that became Adam's apple. Meanwhile, the eaten *kuldi* by Hawa was suddenly stopped a while in her chest and thus became breasts.

Before moving out from Hawa's body, the *kuldi* was stopped in a lower stomach, and became a womb. Because they broke Allah's rules, Adam and Hawa's servants were thrown away to Silan Mountain while Hawa was thrown to Ayem Mountain. After 100 years of doing introspections and learning their mistakes, they met in Makah and made their descendants.

3. *The Origin of Humans Based on Wawacan Sejarah Anbiya'*

Wawacan Sejarah Anbiya was written in Sundanese in a form of *tembang macapat*. This literature used in a discussion of the origin of humans was translated to Latin alphabet, however, the language was still in Sundanese in 1968. There were some differences about the creation of humans if compared to *Layang Anbiya'* in Javanese.

Before creating humans, Allah created angels, earth, and sky including animals. So, animals were created before humans [15]. In addition, Allah created angels after the creation of earth, sky, moon, star, and sun. Angels were mandated to save earth and sky. Humans were created by Allah after the earth and sky were created.

Allah created humans to be a King to take-over bid the earth. Allah asked the angels to love and care humans. Angels who previously wandered whether humans would make destruction on earth finally cared and loved humans, only evils who did not. Evils' heart was fulfilled by wicked feeling and always jealous to what Allah gave to humans. Allah also created woman for Adam because he felt lonely in heaven [15]. From that story, Hawa was created Allah while Adam did not know that. Adam was not too desirous to Hawa because his behavior and speech were soft and well-controlled.

4. *The Origin of Humans Based on Serat Kandha, Serat Paramayoga, and Babad Tanah Jawi*

The three literatures namely *Serat Kandha*, *Serat Paramayoga*, and *Babad Tanah Jawi* were discussed in this subsection because they have similarities. *Serat Kandha* and *Serat Paramayoga* were written by a similar author namely Ranggawarsita while *Babad Tanah Jawi* was written anonymously and had many versions [16]. Moreover, the three literatures were written and published in the same period namely new Javanese literatures, a period where Mataram Islam Kingdom arrived at the final Javanese classic literatures made by R. Ng. Ranggawarsita.

Those three literatures mentioned Prophet Adam as the first human living on earth. Poerbatjaraka mixed Javanese and Islam perspectives [14]. Javanese here meant the religion and beliefs of Javanese people before entering to Islam, of which was known as animism and dynamism, Hindu, and Buddha. The mixing product could be seen from some persons in Hindu such as Sang Yang Wenang, Sang Yang Tunggal, Manikmaya under Adam's perigee. According to *Babad Tanah Jawi*, Kings in Java Island were also form Adam's perigee,

namely Bathara Wisnu who was sent to earth because he fought with his father arrogating Princess Medang [15]. Such descendant perigee was occurred in *Adammakna* by Harya Tjakraningrat [17]. The three literatures had different details but this study does not focus to discuss the differences because they are extraneous to the present discussion.

Beside *Serat Paramayoga* stated that Adam was called as the first human, the literature also explained how humans were created in Java Island. The first human in Java was from India. He was the King who was attacked by enemies and run away to an empty Island, later called Java Island. The King's name was Ajisaka, whose name changed into Empu Sangkala after living in Java Island [14].

Ajisaka story in *Serat Paramayoga* seemed different from the version spoken by most people, or called folktale. In a folktale version, Javanese people believed that Ajisaka was a young man from India who saved Java from the greediness of giant king named Dewatacengkar. That is, he made Java become a safe place to live.

B. The Origin of Humans Based on Oral Literatures

As mentioned previously at the beginning of this study, the sources of oral literatures used to explain the origin of humans were puppet stories originated from India namely *Mahabarata* and *Ramayana*. However, there were differences among oral and written literatures.

According to *Pakem Pedhalangan* book written by Saiman [18], Humans were firstly from a giant egg owned by Sang Yang Tunggal. Before creating humans, Sang Yang Tunggal created Gods from big eggs that hatched three Gods. The white shell became Sang Yang Puguh, the albumin became Sang Punggung, and the yolk became Sang Yang Samba.

Sang Yang Tunggal wanted Sang Yang Samba or Bathara Guru to be the King of Suralaya, a Gods' place. Unfortunately, the wish was not agreed by two Manikmaya's brothers. The debate was then solved by fighting among them. As the result, Sang Yang Puguh could swallowed Kukusan Mountain. Unluckily, Sang Yang Puguh's mouth was torned, the teeth shed, and his face turned bad. Finally he was named Togog. Meanwhile, Sang Yang Punggung swallowed Ungkal Mountain that made him become bad and fat, of which he was further named Semar. Since then, Sang Yang Samba or Bathara Guru was given the throne of Suralaya and assigned to keep peace on earth. Togog accompanied by Bilung, who was created with parts of Kukusan Mountain, was mandated to keep a descendant of King Tanah Sabrang. Meanwhile, Semar accompanied with Bagong had to keep a good man, a descendant of King Keling.

To fill the spare earth, Sang Yang Tunggal gave the giant egg to Sang Yang Samba, Bathara Guru or Manikmaya, King of Suralaya, to be magically turned it to humans. A

couple was created by Sang Yang Manikmaya and the couple was sent to Java Island.

In cope with above story, it seems that the story was closed to some Javanese puppet stories. The perigee was from Prophet Adam and Siti Kawa. Sang Yang Tunggal was the fifth grandchildren of Adam with Siti Kawa. According to the perigee, Adam had twin sons who then had a son named Prophet Sis. Prophet Sis had an angel as wife and had two sons named Sayid Anwas and Sayid Anwar. Sayid Anwar had Prophet's descendants while Sayid Anwar had Gods' descendants, including Manikaya. Manikaya is the sixth descendant from Adam.

II. DISCUSSION

Based on the two versions above, there is a different influence portrayed by each version. There are two influences that affect classic Javanese literatures. First, the influence of India firstly came before the second one namely Islam. This study say influence since they are from outside of Javanese culture which are from India and Arab. However, both influences are mixed and made Javanese people's identity unique.

The origin of humans written in *Tantu Panggelaran* shows that there is a firm influence from Hindu. Humans are always connected with Gods, such as Bathara Guru and Bathara Wisnu. They are created by Gods, who also become King and send Kings for Java Island.

The origin of humans shown in *Layang Anbiya'* and *Sejarah Anbiya* conveys a story in connection with Islam [19]. The origin of humans is explained based on Al-Quran, and is not related to Gods and Javanese belief. The story of Prophet Adam never tells about Sang Yang Wening, Sang Yang Tunggal, and Bathara Guru in relation with Adam's perigee.

The third influence is from the mix between Hindu and Islam. *Serat Kandha* and *Paramayoga* mix Javanese belief with Islam including *Babad Tanah Jawi* [14]. However, those three literatures put Islam in the very first place. According to *Babad Tanah Jawi*, Sang Yang Wening is a God from the fifth descendant of Adam's perigee. Meanwhile, in God's perigee in Hindu, Sang Yang Wening is the God of Gods. Similarly to *Paramayoga*, Manikmaya or Sang Yang Wenang, who is wicked, is the descendant of Adam. On the contrary, Manikmaya or Bathara Guru is characterized as handsome and good King in Hindu.

III. CONCLUSION

Javanese literatures explaining the origin of humans show two versions which have unequivocal differences. Each version is supported by different religion backgrounds. The first version is from older Javanese literatures and shows that there is a strong influence from Hindu. The origin of humans

are explained based on Gods' perigee. Meanwhile, the second version, born by the influence of Islam, shows that Islam is put in the very first place. Gods in Hindu are under the majesty Prophet Adam.

The differences appeared above should not be investigated to reveal which one is true. All versions have different reference and belief, of which the truth is in connection with individual beliefs. Theory of the origin of humans based on literatures with different religion backgrounds is not only attractive and interesting, but also should be applied in daily life. For instance, there are so many communities in the northern Java Island using *macapatan* tradition. Macapatan is the biggest Javanese tradition that can be seen every corner of Java. In Central Java, macapatan is in a form of applying ancient kingdom's literatures which are in line with Javanese ancestor's values.

Finally, Javanese people's views about the origin of humans should not be debated because truth is relative. Truth in literary works is only applied by those who support and believe with the values, of which it is then called a truth in arts, one way to find truth.

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