

Research Article

Theme, Characterisation, Background, Plot, and Social Class in the Novels *Gadis Pantai* and *Para Priyayi*: An Intertextual Review

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Abstract. This study aimed to describe the intertextual relationship between the novel *Gadis Pantai* by Pramoedya Ananta Toer and the novel *Para Priyayi* by Umar Kayam through the analysis of theme, characterization, setting, plot, and social class. This was qualitative descriptive research. Based on the data analysis, it was found that there are differences in the intrinsic elements of both novels, namely: (a) the theme of the *Gadis Pantai* novel is humanity, while the theme of the *Para Priyayi* novel is the struggle for a better life; (b) the main characters in *Gadis Pantai* are *Gadis Pantai* and *Bendoro*, while the main characters in *Para Priyayi* are *Sastrodarsono* and *Lantip*; (c) *Gadis Pantai* uses a nineteenth-century setting (in Rembang Regency and the Javanese social background), while *Para Priyayi* uses a setting of 1910 (in Wanagalih, Wanalawas, Yogyakarta, Solo, and Jakarta, with a Javanese social background); and (d) *Gadis Pantai* uses a chronological plot, while *Para Priyayi* uses a mixed plot. Also, the social class of the characters in the two novels consist of the *priyayi* and the *wong cilik* class, but differences exist in the ways presented to obtain social status. We can conclude that the novel *Gadis Pantai* is a hypogram whereas the novel *Para Priyayi* is a transformation.

Keywords: *Gadis Pantai* novel, *Para Priyayi* novel, social class, intertextual studies, Javanese culture

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1. INTRODUCTION

Literary works come from reality, usually flavored to the imagination of the author. Reality and imagination are combined in such a way by the author so it can't be seen the boundary between both elements. In fact, sometimes readers perceive the reality in literary works as imagination, on the other hand, imagination is sometimes considered as reality.

In addition to being based on reality and imagination, the creation of a literary work also comes from previous literature. Literary works that were published earlier are used as models or sources of inspiration for later literary works. However, the authors with their creativity do not always agree with something that has been in the previous work,

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so that sometimes they deviate from it. In addition to the creativity factor, the ideological differences and the socio-cultural background of each author also cause differences between authors in addressing the same or similar problems. Similarities and differences in several literary works can be analyzed through intertextual studies.

Intertextual research assumes that the work is written based on other works that become the hypogram. Writers cannot be separated from the work of others, regardless of the percentage. By comparing a work with other works that become the hypogram, efforts to understand the meaning of these works can be carried out in full [1]

The novel *Gadis Pantai* by Pramoedya Ananta Toer [2] (hereinafter abbreviated as GP) and the novel *Para Priyayi* by Umar Kayam [3] (hereinafter abbreviated as PP) are examples of literary works that have similarities and differences because they depart from the same source, namely Javanese society life. Pramoedya Ananta Toer firstly raised the issue of Javanese priyayi life through GP in 1987. The issue of the priyayi class was raised again by Umar Kayam through PP (1992). Several studies on the two novels separately, in relation to each other, as well as related to other novels are researches conducted by Yeon's [4]; Setiadi, Aksa, & Adji [5]; Santosa [6]; Wijaya [7], Purwantini [8]; Wibisono, Waluyo, and Subiyantoro [9]; Azwar, Andriani, and Ramadhan [10] Puspitasari, Suyitno, and Mulyono [11]. In contrast to previous studies, this study examines the problem of social class in the two novels which includes the types, methods of obtaining, and the behavior of characters with different social classes. This thematic study is preceded by a structural study of the non-structure of the novel which is believed to influence the depiction of social class, namely the plot, characterizations, and setting. This is based upon the premise that structural studies are the first stage in the study of literary works with different approaches, including intertextual studies.

Based on this description, this study focuses on the problem of social class in Javanese culture as revealed in the GP and PP, which includes the sovereign (*priyayi*) and the proletariat (*wong cilik*). More specifically, the researcher wants to reveal ways to obtain social status in the two novels through intertextual studies. In addition, the intertextual relationship between the two novels can be seen from the intrinsic elements related to the depiction of social class, namely the theme, characterizations, setting, and plot.

Intrinsic elements are elements that develop literary works from within the work itself. The intrinsic elements of the novel consist of the theme, plot, characterizations, setting, point of view, language style, and message [12].

Intertextual study is a study of a number of texts that are thought to have certain forms of relationships. This study was carried out for various purposes, such as to find

the relationship of ideas, ideas, events, plots, characterizations, language styles, and others among the studied texts [12]. A literary work has a historical relationship with contemporaries, before, or after it. This historical relationship can be in the form of similarities or contradictions. Therefore, a literary work should be discussed in relation to other works, both contemporaries, before, and after.

In terms of historical relations between texts, it is necessary to pay attention to the principle of intertextuality. Riffaterre (in Pradopo[13]) states that a new literary work has full meaning if it is connected with other literary works, both similarities and contradictions. The literary work that becomes the background for the creation of literary works after that is called a hypogram.

According to Shadily in Abdulsyani [14], social class is a group that is formed because of differences in the highs and lows of positions in society that can be distinguished from one another because of the sense of belonging to each class. Usually, social class consists of a number of people who have social status, whether obtained by birth (ascribed status), struggles to obtain social status (achieved status), or because of gifts (assigned status).

The Javanese distinguish members of their society into two social groups, namely (1) the *wong cilik* consisting of mostly farmers and low-income people, and (2) the *priyayi* consisting of civil servants and intellectuals. Actually, there is still a third group that has a high enough prestige, namely the aristocrats (*ndara*), but their lifestyle and worldview are not that different from the *priyayi*. In addition to socio-economic strata, members of the Javanese community are still divided into two groups based on religion, namely the *abangan* group and the *santri* group. Both are adherents of the Islamic religion, but the awareness and way of life of the *abangan* group is more determined by pre-Islamic Javanese traditions, while self-awareness of the lifestyle of the *santri* group is cultivated in accordance with Islamic teachings.

2. METHODOLOGY

This research is a qualitative research with descriptive method. Moleong [16] says that in the descriptive method, the data collected are in the form of words, pictures, and not numbers, while qualitative research is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and their observable behavior. The author describes the elements of theme, characterization, plot, and setting as well as social class in GP and PP by using the conception of intertextual studies. The data sources in this study was the novel *Gadis Pantai* by Pramoedya Ananta Toer published

by Lentera Dipantara in 2003, which had previously been published by Hasta Mitra in 1987 and the novel *Para Priyayi* by Umar Kayam published by Grafiti in 1992.

Data collection techniques used are reading and note-taking techniques. After the data collecting, the data was analyzed using a flow model of analysis. According to Miles and Huberman [17] the flow analysis model includes three components namely: (1) data reduction, namely recording the data obtained in the form of a detailed description, (2) data presentation, namely grouping data into several parts according to the type of problem then describing and comparing one data with other data, (3) drawing conclusions, namely making conclusions from data that has been obtained since the beginning of the study. These three components are carried out together and continuously.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1. Results of the Data Analysis

3.1.1. The Theme, Characterization, Background, and Plot of the GP and PP

The themes raised in these two novels have similarities and differences. The similarity lies in the problems of Javanese people's life. However, the theme contained in the GP is the theme of humanity in the form of the arbitrariness of the rulers against the lower class society (*wong cilik*). This novel depicts the character of Bendoro, a ruler, married to a Gadis Pantai, a *wong cilik* who is only represented by a creese (*keris*), even after giving birth to a daughter, Bendoro divorces the Gadis Pantai and separates her from the baby. Meanwhile, PP tells about the struggle of life to build a generation of *priyayi*. This novel tells the story of Sastrodarsono's family who came from a farming family but with hard work was able to change his social class into a *priyayi*. Sastrodarsono's priyayianity was passed on to his children. He also educates his children to become successful and modern *priyayi*.

In terms of characterization, there is a contradiction between the two novels. Pramoedya Ananta Toer, in GP, describes the *priyayi* as rulers who have no conscience and manners which are described analytically and dramatically. Meanwhile, Umar Kayam, in PP, describes a *priyayi* figure who always thinks about the fate of the *wong cilik* and is responsible for the life of his extended family which is described analytically.

In terms of background, PP is more complex than GP. However, these two novels have similarities and differences. GP uses the setting of Rembang, Jepara, and Blora Regencies in Jawa Tengah, while PP uses the setting of Wanagalih, Wanalawas, Kedungsimo,

Ploso, Jogorogo, Wonogiri, Solo, Yogyakarta, and Jakarta. In the GP the time setting is not explained in detail, it is only mentioned in the nineteenth century into the twentieth century, while in the PP it is explained in detail, namely between 1910 and 1967. Both novels share the social background of Javanese society with various atmospheres.

The two novels have different plots. The GP consists of four parts using a forward plot. This can be seen from the series of events experienced by the Gadis Pantai. As a child, he lived as an underdog who lived in a fishing village. After marrying a *priyayi* from the city, he turned into a *priyayi*. However, after giving birth to a baby girl, she was expelled by Bendoro and decided to go to Blora. Meanwhile, PP consists of ten episodes using a mixed plot because each episode forms its own plot.

3.1.2. The Social Class in GP and PP

Both novels tell the story of the lives of the *wong cilik* and *priyayi* in Javanese society, but differ in how they gain social status. Social status in GP is only obtained based on descent or marriage. This can be seen from the character of the Gadis Pantai who changed from *wong cilik* to *priyayi* because she married Bendoro, who was an official in Rembang Regency. After several years of marriage, she gave birth to a daughter. The birth of her child is a matter of pride for the family and the people of the fishing village because the Gadis Pantai has given birth to a child of *priyayi* descent. In contrast to that, social status in PP is obtained in three ways, namely based on descent or marriage, intentional effort, and community gifts. The way of obtaining social status is described by the character Sastrodarsono who is able to change his social class from *wong cilik* to *priyayi* after successfully pocketing the assistance of an assistant teacher. Sastrodarsono's *priyayi*-anity increased after he married Siti Aisah, who was the only child from a family of opium *Mantri*. After a year of marrying Siti Aisah and living in Ploso, Sastrodarsono was appointed by Ngoro Seten Kedungsimo to become a permanent teacher in Karangdampol Village.

From the description of the fate of the characters in the story, it can be interpreted that Pramoedya Ananta Toer thinks that the *wong cilik* class as the lowest structure has always been the object of oppression by the *priyayi*. The acts of arrogance and oppression carried out by Bendoro's character can be seen when he marries a Gadis Pantai who is only represented by a kris and Bendoro's arbitrariness makes a Gadis Pantai his experimental wife before marrying a woman who is equal to him. Not only that, Bendoro divorced and expelled the Gadis Pantai after giving birth to a baby girl who was not in accordance with Bendoro's wishes. Finally, the beach girl social class

returned to its original state, namely the *wong cilik* class. On the other hand, from the description of the fate of the characters in the story, it can be interpreted that Umar Kayam thinks that social class is not something that binds, and does not even distinguish between *priyayi* and *wong cilik*. The *priyayi* figure, namely Sastrodarsono, is not only concerned with position but also thinks about the lives of the *wong cilik* responsibly and helps his entire extended family by providing proper education so that his entire family can become *priyayi*.

Based on an intertextual study of the structure and social class between GP and PP which shows the relationship between the two, it is concluded that GP is the work of a hypogram that underlies the creation of PP's work. On the other hand, PP is called a transformation work because it transforms the GP into its hypogram.

3.2. Discussion

From the results of the study, it can be seen that literary works are not born from a cultural vacuum (Teeuw in Pradopo [13]), including the literary situation. Literary works are created based on (continued) existing literary conventions. However, because it is a creative work, literary works that arise later have deviations (renewals) of existing aesthetic characteristics and concepts. That is, there is tension between convention and renewal (Teeuw in Pradopo [13])

The socio-cultural background of the author greatly influences the content of his work. Pramoedya was born in Blora in 1925 to a father who worked as a teacher and a mother who worked as a rice seller. His real name is Pramoedya Ananta Mastoer. Pramoedya received his formal education at the Sekolah Kejuruan (Vocational School) Radio in Surabaya. During the Japanese occupation of Indonesia, he worked as a typist for a Japanese newspaper in Jakarta. At the time of independence, he joined the military group in Java. In the 1950s, he lived in the Netherlands as a participant in a cultural exchange program. Upon his return to Indonesia, he became a member of Lekra. During his life, Pramudia was detained three times, namely for three years during the colonial period, one year during the Old Order, and fourteen years as a political prisoner without trial during the New Order. Within fourteen years, he had been assigned to Nusakambangan Island and Buru Island.[18]

Before being published as novel in 1987, Pramoedya Ananta Toer had published the story of *Gadis Pantai* as a serial story from 1962-1965. GP has been translated into various languages, namely Russian (1970), Malaysian (1988), Dutch (1989), English (1991), German (1995), Spanish (2002), and Greek (2003). This shows that Pramoedya Ananta

Toer wants to tell the world how cruel the feudal system in Indonesia, especially in Java, made a class distinction between the *priyayi* and the *wong cilik* class during the Dutch colonial period. This is in line with the results of research by Azwar, Andriani, and Ramadhan which stated that the female character of the novel PG experienced various types of violence, both physical, psychological, and sexual [10]. From this point of view, Pramudia's tendency to fight for the lower classes is at the same time contrasting the upper class (the oppressors) with the lower class (the oppressed). Pramudia's life experiences and activities in Lekra are reflected in the novel GP. According to Puspitasari, Suyitno, and Mulyono, Pramoedya's works are also influenced by the social and family conditions that surround him, even the writing of the novel GP was inspired by the story of Pramoedya Ananta Toer's grandmother who married young to a Javanese nobleman he did not know[11].

However, this does not mean that the novel GP merely criticizes the *priyayi* for misbehaving, but also conveys moral messages. Wibisono, Waluyo, and Subiyantoro see that this novel has eight character values, namely: hard work, religion, social care, honest, caring for the environment, curiosity, independent, and responsible [9].

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that GP and PP are novels set in Javanese culture, but have similarities and differences, both in terms of intrinsic and extrinsic elements. The theme of the GP is the life of a Javanese *priyayi* family that has no human values and conscience, while the PP is themed about the struggle of a Javanese family in achieving their dreams. In terms of characterization, both novels use analytic and dramatic techniques. The setting of the GP period is the Dutch colonial period still in power in Indonesia, while the PP time setting is the Dutch colonial period, the Japanese occupation, and after independence. The setting of the GP novel consists of Rembang and Blora districts with Javanese social backgrounds, while the PP novel setting includes Wanagalih and its surroundings (Kedungsimo, Jogorogo, Ploso, Karangdampol, and Wanalawas), Wonogiri, Solo, Yogyakarta, and Jakarta with Javanese social community backgrounds. Based on the chronological order, the GP novel uses a chronological plot while the PP novel uses a mixed plot.

Social class consists of several aspects, namely how to obtain the social status. In GP, the social status is only obtained based on marriage or descent. The *priyayi* class was occupied by a ruler or aristocrat, who always ruled the small people arbitrarily, made the small people the lowest structure and became the object of oppression by

the rulers or nobles. Meanwhile, in PP, how to obtain social status is obtained based on effort or struggle, marriage or descent, and community gifts. Social class in the novel is not a binding thing because the *wong cilik* can turn into *priyayi* with education and hard work. The *priyayi* are also depicted as sincere in helping the poor.

The intertextual relationship between GP and PP is evident from the problems of Javanese *priyayi* family life raised by the authors. The problem of Javanese *priyayi* family life was first raised by Pramoedya Ananta Toer in PP (1987) and then raised in a different way and point of view by Umar Kayam in PP (1992). Thus it is clear that GP is the work of a hypogram and PP is a work of transformation.

Since this study is limited to two novels by two different authors, it is recommended that other researchers continue an intertextual study of all literary works written by the two authors, or review these two novels from other aspects such as stylistic and literary psychology studies.

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