

Religiosity in *Burung-Burung Manyar* by Mangun Wijaya

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Abstract - This study aims to find religiosity aspects in *Burung-Burung Manyar*—a novel by YB Mangun Wijaya. Data were taken directly from the novel, especially what the two main characters say and do. Methods used in this research are Close Reading in which a detailed and careful analysis of the text, focusing on its language, structure and meaning, and Historical Contextualization by understanding the historical context in which a text was written so it can provide insights into its themes, characters, and setting. The results were religiosity aspects are found in how they responds and interpret experiences and events in their life so as there is a deeper meaning beyond the real facts. Religiosity is related to their relationship with God but it happens in daily life as told through literary work.

Keywords: context, literary work, religiosity

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1. INTRODUCTION

Burung-Burung Manyar (BBM) is a novel by YB Mangunwijaya which was first published in 1981 and received the Southeast Asian Ramon Magsaysay literary award in 1996. Mangunwijaya, who is more familiarly called Romo Mangun, was born in Ambarawa, Central Java on May 5 1929. He was a clergyman (Catholic Church Pastor), writer, humanist, architect, educator and humanitarian activist.

This article aims to find aspects of religiosity in this novel though it is not a religious novel genre rather as secular one. As Mangun Wijaya said, “substantially literary work is religious at first”, it is interesting to analyze his work whether it contains some religiosities because this novel is a romance, namely a story about love between man and

woman. The writer's background is a religious person (pastor) so it is predicted to influence his secularly work.

2. THEORETICAL GROUNDS

Religiosity includes some dimensions such as belief, practice, experience, knowledge and community, referring to the intensity, strength, and consistency of individual's belief. Therefore, religiosity does not operate in cognitive understandings but rather in real experience, living with self-totality at advance to analysis and conceptualization. In literary works, religiosity is sometimes expressed with descriptions of abstract events, far from logic realism tied to real time and place. Religiosity in literary works is also expressed through various means such as themes, characters, symbols, narrative structures and language.

3. METHOD

The methods applied in this study are combined, namely *Close Reading* in which a detailed and careful analysis of the text, focusing on its language, structure and meaning, and *Historical Contextualization* by understanding the historical context in which a text was written can provide insights into its themes, characters, and setting. Besides, *Intertextuality Method* is used to examine the relationships between texts and how they reference and echo each other.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Synopsis

The main characters in *BBM* are Setadewa, nicknamed Teto, and Larasati, nicknamed Atik. The two of them have known each other since childhood because their parents were friends. Childhood meetings have fostered emotional closeness even though they are not expressed openly. When they entered adulthood, the war increasingly distanced their relationship, not only physically, but also because of their choice of opposing sides. Teto sided with the Dutch by becoming a KNIL soldier and Atik on the side of the independence struggle movement, by becoming secretary to Syahrir, Prime Minister of the Republic of Indonesia at the beginning of independence.

Teto is the son of a KNIL lieutenant who is still a descendant of Solo nobles and his mother is a Dutch woman, named Merice. He grew up in a military housing environment, called *anak kolong*, famous for being naughty and free. Her hatred for the Japanese army arose because during the Japanese occupation, her father was arrested and detained so that her family was devastated, her mother was even forced, for her father's safety, to become the mistress of a Japanese officer. His father did not know the jungle, after Japan lost, and **the War of Independence broke out** while his mother was treated in a mental hospital due to severe trauma and lost all memory, and finally died. His hatred

of Japan influenced his assessment of the Independence Movement because he saw the movement figures more closely and followed Japan's wishes, so he hated the Independence Movement.

Actually, Teto was a smart kid, he graduated from medical school, but he chose to enter the KNIL to take revenge against Japan. When the Allies surrendered and Independence was proclaimed, Teto chose to become a Dutch citizen and received a scholarship to study at Harvard and earned a Doctorate in Mathematics and Computers. He successfully worked as a manager for a multi-national oil company.

Atik was an activist in the movement, while on her way with his father to a conference in Yogyakarta, her car was shot at by the Dutch air force, his father was shot dead. Since then, Atik and her mother have devoted themselves to the village by opening a public kitchen for the benefit of the guerrillas. After the war ended, Atik chose to work on a plantation following in his father's footsteps. Atik is married to a geology lecturer, even though her heart still cannot be separated from Teto, whose whereabouts, she has lost contact with since the war broke out.

As a mathematician and computer expert, Teto discovered irregularities in complicated calculations regarding the distribution of profits between his company and the Indonesian government in relation with oil mining, causing losses of billions of dollars without being noticed. He also came to Indonesia for a holiday and pilgrimage and also wanted to convey his findings to the government. Coincidentally, he received information that Atik would be holding a Doctoral Promotion, so he secretly attended. From here it continues with Teto and Atik meeting with their family, husband, three children and mother. Atik's husband really understands his wife's background, including her love for Teto which cannot be lost. The acquaintance with Atik's husband, who knew many mining officials in Indonesia, was used to reveal oil company fraud. As a result, unfortunately Teto was fired, and so was Atik's husband, while Indonesian officials did not follow up on the findings.

Following his parents' orders and with Teto's help, Atik and her husband went on the Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca. Unfortunately, the plane by which they were traveling in crashed into a mountain and they died, leaving behind their three small children. Now Teto has adopted Atik's three children and lives with Atik's mother, who is also alone.

Religiosity in The Main Character

Here analysis is limited to find religiosity aspects of the main characters, Atik and Teto. In his book *Sastra dan Religiositas* (1988), RM explores various works of world literature and finds religious aspects in these works, even works written by atheist authors. In BBM,

religiosity is expressed precisely through everyday profane events done and uttered by the main characters as follows:

When small Atik saw an eagle snatching a chick, he sadly asked, "Why does Allah, the Most Gracious and who gives so much beauty to His creation, allow His creatures to kill each other?" (p. 18). Likewise, when he observed various kinds of wild birds in the garden, "Why do many male animals have more beautiful feathers and prefer to be decorated and preened than the females?" (p. 19). The reality is different from humans, women prefer to dress up and decorate themselves.

When he saw the bitter reality of Teto's father being imprisoned and his mother being forced to become a Japanese officer's concubine, religious protests arose, "Beauty and cruelty, why do these two often hold hands and get married?" (p. 39). Likewise, the intimate relationship between husband and wife is described spiritually, "Beautiful, because in the healing of one's soul one no longer feels Gusti (God) or Kawula (Human)" (p. 42). These perform the religiosity in her deep soul and expressed with words. Atik gave meaning for daily events with religiosity insights.

The religiosity is also shown in the examiner's questions at the Larasati Open Session with more philosophical nuance, "Why are the deer's antlers so fantastic, why are the fish and creatures of the Banda seas moving so beautifully and elegantly that people can only be amazed and remain silent when they see all the beauty that is present...is it in the animals? and the beauty of flowers...we only encounter a meaningless game of chance?" (p. 206). And Atik's answer, as *Promovenda*, also addresses the theme of the dissertation which discusses the lives of *Manyar* birds, "As long as biologists are only able to watch as spectators or as computer calculators who are completely involved in purely technical matters...then no one knows the identity of life and calling us as humans" (p. 207).

Another answer to the examiner's question, "Hopefully we learn to appreciate the dimensions of quality, because all of our *Innerlichkeit*, our identity, actually longs for meaning, meaning, why and for what sake we hold each other together" (p. 211).

Questioning on her father's death also shows her religiosity, "Does her father's death should be interpreted as catastrophe or the gate to a wider and noble happiness?"(p.136)

When Teto heard the bad news about Atik and her husband 's plane crashing the mountain, he said, "God who gives and God takes too. Praise His Holy name !"(p.260). This expression is of course a sign of deep religiosity-surrender.

At the end of the story, Teto asked himself, "I can honestly say, still often in the bland loneliness and dry silence of my widowhood I ask myself: why does my path have to go through unattainability? But if I see little Teto, Padmi especially and Kris, a little bit I can catch a butterfly that blooms and flies away only to die soon" (p. 261). How the bitter reality may be meaningful in his life because he can catch the beauty behind the real fact, namely religiosity aspect. From the story we do not know what Teto's religion is, even perhaps he is an atheist. However, from what he has done we can know he lives the truth and justice. He tried to inform the manipulation and injustice with any risk although he is not an Indonesian citizen.

5. CONCLUSION

It is clear through the two main character- Atik and Teto – the writer wants to express religiosity aspects. Events and experiences have transcendence meaning beyond the factual reality, even the bad things happened to the characters may be accepted as the way how God guides humans. Therefore, this novel which tell about romance (human love between man and woman) contains religiosity aspect that is the relationship between human being and God.

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