

DOI: [doi.org/10.21009/ISLLAE.01126](https://doi.org/10.21009/ISLLAE.01126)

Received: 5 June 2018  
Revised: 10 June 2018  
Accepted: 14 August 2018  
Published: 31 January 2019

## Arek Culture In Literary Works

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### Abstract

This study aims to describe Arek culture in literary works. Arek culture is one of the cultures in East Java which its ideological center is in Surabaya. The people are known for their egalitarian, open, democratic, and having high solidarity characters. Community knowledge about Arek culture is very limited and its values are increasingly eroded. One means to disseminate knowledge about Arek culture is through literary works written by authors from these cultural regions. The problem that arises is how Arek culture is described in literary works. Indonesian Novel *Mencari Sarang Angin* and *Ibu Kita Raminten*, an anthology of Javanese short stories *Trem*, Javanese novel *Sarunge Jagung*, an anthology of Javanese poetry *Donga Kembang Waru* and *Sastra Campur Sari* were selected by the writers through purposive sampling technique, because they depict Arek's culture life. Data collection was done by reading and note-taking techniques. From the study, it was found that there are four Arek's culture elements in literary works, namely language, social organizations, knowledge systems, and arts. The four elements are the same as the description of Arek culture in real life which is revealed through scientific studies. Therefore, these works can be used as reading material to increase knowledge about Arek culture and its values.

**Keywords:** Arek Culture, Village Community, Basa Suroboyoan, ludruk

### Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan budaya Arek dalam karya sastra. Budaya Arek adalah salah satu budaya di Jawa Timur yang pusat ideologisnya ada di Surabaya. Rakyat dikenal memiliki sifat egaliter, terbuka, demokratis, dan memiliki karakter solidaritas yang tinggi. Pengetahuan masyarakat tentang budaya Arek sangat terbatas dan nilainya semakin terkikis. Salah satu cara untuk menyebarluaskan pengetahuan tentang budaya Arek adalah melalui karya sastra yang ditulis oleh penulis dari wilayah budaya ini. Masalah yang muncul adalah bagaimana budaya Arek digambarkan dalam karya sastra. Novel Indonesia *Mencari Sarang Angin* dan *Ibu Kita Raminten*, sebuah antologi *Trem* cerita pendek Jawa, novel Jawa *Sarunge Jagung*, sebuah antologi puisi Jawa *Donga Kembang Waru* dan *Sastra Campur Sari* dipilih oleh penulis melalui teknik purposive sampling, karena menggambarkan budaya Arek kehidupan. Pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan teknik membaca dan mencatat. Dari penelitian tersebut, ditemukan bahwa ada empat elemen budaya Arek dalam karya

sastra, yaitu bahasa, organisasi sosial, sistem pengetahuan, dan seni. Keempat elemen itu sama dengan deskripsi budaya Arek dalam kehidupan nyata yang diungkapkan melalui studi ilmiah. Oleh karena itu, karya-karya ini dapat digunakan sebagai bahan bacaan untuk menambah pengetahuan tentang budaya Arek dan nilai-nilainya.

**Kata Kunci:** Budaya Arek, Masyarakat Desa, Basa Suroboyoan, ludruk

## INTRODUCTION

East Java is a province that rich in local culture, there are at least ten regional-based cultures, namely the Javanese culture of Mataraman, Madura, Arek, Using, Samin, Tengger, Pandalungan, Pesisir, Bawean, and Kangean. Arek Culture that is known for its East Java characteristics lives in Surabaya, Sidoarjo, Mojokerto, Malang, Gresik, a small part of Jombang and Pasuruan. (Abdillah, 2007; Hoogervorst, 2006; Jauhari (2016); Sriyanto and Fauzie, 2017; Winiasih, 2010), have studied Arek culture from its history and language aspects. According to Abdillah (2007), Arek culture was born from the village community and the community has an egalitarian, open, democratic character, as well as high solidarity. *Arek's* words come from the Old Javanese language *Ari-ika* 'younger brother/child' that changed his pronunciation to *Arek*. Winiasih (2010) suggests that the language used in Arek culture is *basa Suroboyo* with swear words as its characteristic, such as *jancuk*, *cuk*, *hancik*, *jancik*, *jangkrik*, and *diamput*. swear words use a model that refers to various things and do not always express anger, but also regret, sadness, disappointment, admiration, humiliation, surprise, intimacy or humor, etc.

However, people's knowledge of Arek culture is still low and existing values, such as the value of togetherness or solidarity, are increasingly pushed and eroded by practical politic interests. Therefore, the dissemination of knowledge about Arek culture must be done openly and widely through educational institutions (Abdillah, 2015). One means to disseminate knowledge about Arek culture in the education world is through literary works, such as the novel of *Mencari Sarang Angin (MSA)* by Suparto Brata (2005), the novel of *Ibu Kita Raminten (IKR)* by Muhammad Ali (1982), an anthology of Javanese short stories *Trem (T)* by Suparto Brata (2002), Javanese novel *Sarunge Jagung (SJ)* by Trinil (2005), an anthology of Javanese poetry *Donga Kembang Waru (DKW)* by Trinil (2004), and *Sastra Campur Sari (SCS)* editing by Syaf Anton (2002). Some of the literary work, which are written by the author from the Arek culture area, is written entirely in *basa Suroboyoan* and some use *basa Suroboyoan* only in dialogue, while the narrative use Indonesian language. The common thread of the whole work is that both describe the Arek culture. However, despite taking material from real life, literary work is the result of abstraction and creativity of the author and the author has his own views and goals in his creative process so that the culture described in his work can be different from the reality. Research on Arek culture has been carried out by Sungkowati (2009, 2014), but is still limited to the works of Suparto Brata. Research with a sample of more literary works and wider aspects needs to be done.

Based on this background, the problem that is the focus of this study is how Arek culture is depicted in literary works, is it the same as the picture of Arek culture in

real life. The purpose of this study is to reveal and explain the elements of Arek culture in literary works. The results of this study are expected to provide input on what literary works can be used as a means to disseminate knowledge about Arek culture and the values contained in it.

To discuss cultural aspects in literary works, researchers use the concept of culture, "the whole system of ideas, actions, and works of human beings in the framework of people's lives that are made by human beings through learning" (Koentjaraningrat, 1990:180). By referring to Talcott Parson and AL Kroeber, Koentjaraningrat (1990: 186) distinguished the form of culture into three, namely (1) as a complex of ideas, concepts, values, norms, regulations, etc.; (2) as a complex of activities and patterned actions of people living in, and (3) as artifacts or physical culture. Although it is distinguished, in reality, people's life is an inseparable unity. Culture can be seen through its elements, namely language, knowledge systems, social organizations, living equipment and technology systems, livelihood systems, religious systems, and arts (Koentjaraningrat, 1990: 334, 2005: 4).

### RESEARCH METHOD

Study with qualitative approach uses the Indonesian novel *Mencari Sarang Angin (MSA)* by Suparto Brata (2005) and *Ibu Kita Raminten (IKR)* by Muhammad Ali (1982), an anthology of Javanese short stories *Trem (T)* by Suparto Brata (2002), Javanese novel *Sarunge Jagung (SJ)* by Trinil (2005), an anthology of Javanese poetry *Donga Kembang Waru (DKW)* by Trinil (2004), and *Sastra Campur Sari (SCS)* editing by Syaf Anton (2002). As the material objects of. The works were selected by purposive sampling technique, which is based on considerations relating to formal objects. Data collection was carried out by using documentation methods supported by reading and note-taking techniques. Data analysis was carried out in two directions by comparing the Arek culture data in the literary text comparing the results of scientific research and reference books on Arek culture.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study found four elements of Arek culture, namely language, knowledge system, social organization and art. These elements are more clearly identified in literary works in the form of prose (novels and short stories), whereas in the poetry genre the most visible aspects is language. The discussion of the five elements is as follows. (a) Language. Language is a very important element in a culture because it is a communication tool that enables interpersonal social interactions to be established. Communities in the Arek culture area communicate using the Javanese Surabaya dialect or better known as the *basa Suroboyoan* in their daily life. The typical *basa Suroboyoan* marker is a form of greeting, such as *ebes* 'father', *emes* 'mother', *pena* 'you', *arek* 'kid', *koen* 'you', *sampean* or *pean* 'you', *cak* (greeting for men), *ning* (greeting for women)" and swear words, like "*jancuk, cuk, jancik, hancik, jangkrik, diamput, penthol ...*". Because of have many swear words, *basa Suroboyoan* is often considered as rude especially when faced with standard Javanese language Yogya-Solo/Mataraman (Winiasih, 2010).

*Basa Suroboyoan* as in Winiasih's research was identified in *SJ* novels, anthology poem of *DKW*, and three short stories ("*Trem*", "*Oh, Jumirah*", and

"*Diamput Sepatuku Ilang Nduk Mejid*") in an anthology of Javanese short stories *T*. If usually in Javanese (standard) literary works and Indonesian literary works *basa Suroboyoan* is only used in dialogue to strengthen the cultural setting, the *basa Suroboyoan* in SJ novels, anthology poems of *DKW*, some poems in *SCS*, and also in short stories "*Trem*", "*Oh, Jumirah*", and "*Diamput Sepatuku Ilang Nduk Mejid*" are used in the dialogue and narrative as a whole. In the novels of *MSA* and *IKR*, *basa Suroboyoan* has appeared in many dialogues between characters. The writing of literary works in *basa Suroboyoan* spearheaded by Suparto Brata since the 1960s is considered as a form of the author's concern for Arek culture and as a form of resistance to standard Javanese hegemony (Sudikan, 2001).

(b) Social Organization. Community life is organized by various types of unity in its environment. The closest social units are the nuclear family and other relatives. This social organization is also talked about marriage to regulate domestic life, the kinship system, about the social layers in society, the division of labor in society, mutual cooperation, and so on (Koentjaraningrat, 2005). In the novel of *MSA*, *IKR*, *SJ*, and "*Trem*" short story are portrayed the social organizations in the Arek culture. The core family consists of fathers, mothers, children with the division of duties of fathers working outside the home, wives as housewives or working in the informal sector. The kinship relationship is marked by the presence of kinship greetings "*emes*", "*ebes*", "*cak*", "*ning*", etc. Household life is regulated through marriage (Surabaya native bride customs). Society is divided into the lower, middle and upper social layers. The largest Arek cultural community occupies the lower and middle layers with the characteristics of living in urban or suburban villages, such as the Jayajais family who live in Kampung Plemahan in the city (*MSA*) and the Markeso family who live in the densely populated suburban villages (*IKR*). The upper layer is occupied by the *priyayi* class, is of Surakarta descent, and lives in the Ketandan area, an area for the *priyayi*. The relations of subordinates appear in the short stories "*Diamput, Sepatuku Ilang Ndhuk Mejid*" and novels *MSA*, social relations among the Arek cultural community or the lower classes appear in the "*Trem*" short story and *IKR* novel, while the description of *priyayi* relations or Surakarta descent with the lower community/Arek is clearly seen in the novel *MSA*. The solidarity of the Arek culture community is very high as illustrated in the novel *IKR* when the poor Markeso died.

(c) Art. Art is an expression of human desire for beauty. Broadly speaking, it is divided into fine arts and sound art which are summarized in drama, both traditional and modern drama (Koentjaraningrat, 2005). In Arek culture, the most prominent aspects of art are *parikan* and *ludruk*, both of which cannot be separated. *Parikan* is a kind of *pantun*, usually sung and in the *ludruk* stage, the *parikan* sung is known as the *JulaJuli*. Rokhayah in *MSA*'s novel is a description of a Surabaya girl who is characterized by her ability to make and sing *parikan* and use it in daily communication to quip or express joy. *Ludruk* is a very popular art. Many men who work as *ludruk* players, they dressed up and played female characters. In *IKR*, the main character works as *ludruk garingan* singer, *ludruk* which is played alone. The *basa Suroboyoan* poems by Budi Palopo and Trinil in *SCS* use *parikan* model as the basis for creation.

Knowledge System. Knowledge systems are knowledge about social courtesy, customs, system of norms, customary law, and so on (Koentjaraningrat, 2005). The

system of knowledge about marriage customs is important because marriage is the basis for the formation of social organizations in the smallest form that is family, as in MSA novels and short stories "Trem". In MSA it is described about the original marriage customs of Surabaya. The bridegroom is taken by *dokar* that has been decorated with young coconut leaves and colorful paper and it is given a large bamboo with *tuak* "palm wine". After being close to the bride's house, the bridegroom was taken down from the *dokar* and paraded around while being given *tuak* and sprinkled with powder to get drunk and have a bad face. They sang *parikan* and *kidungan* throughout the procession. The philosophy is that the bride is ready to see the worst condition of her future husband and the father-in-law is also ready to face the worst situation of his future son-in-law (Brata, 2005). It reflects the open, egalitarian and democratic character. In the short story of "Trem" it describes the habits of Surabaya people from the lower classes who like to chat, condor, fanatical to Persebaya football club and the women like to wear white hooded. The social life of the community is tied up in pigeons *andhokan* "pigeons flying contest", *cangkruk* "sit and chat" in stalls, and chatting in public facilities. Their knowledge systems can place themselves when they work, when to rest, and when to have fun (Adipitoyo, 2008:113).

"*Kalah cacak menang cacak*" and "*sogih dorung karuwan, didhesiknasombonge*" is the individual's view of life in Arek culture which is depicted in the novels MSA, IKR, and "Trem" short stories, and "Diamput, Sepatuku Ilang Nduk Mejid". "*Kalah cacak menang cacak*" describes the spirit of competition and contestation and high fighting spirit to reach the goal. Adipitoyo (2008: 112-113) said that the Arek culture community was always work hard because in their life people had to work and people had to work in order to survive. They often choose to change jobs to get a better job. They do not want "*urip-uripan, golekurip, kalung umplung turut dalam*" or become homeless, but get "*urip sing temen*" a life that is truly life". The expression of "*Kalah cacak menang cacak*" as an expression of fighting spirit is clearly illustrated in the MSA through Surabaya's heroic actions in the November 10 battle. The phrase *sogihdorungkaruwan, sombongedidhesikno* "rich is not necessarily, arrogantly put first" at first seemed negative, but the real meaning is determination to always be confident, tend to be desperate, and does not want to be demeaned or defeated. In MSA it is illustrated through the Rokhim character and Dulmawi figure in the "Trem" short story.

## CONCLUSION

The Arek culture depicted in literary works are not different from the Arek culture in the study of researchers. A prominent feature of literary work is that it shows a complete picture of daily life so it seems more real than scientific work. Thus, *MSA, SJ, IKR, T, DKW*, and *SCS* are literary works that can be used as a means of disseminating knowledge about Arek culture and the values contained in it because they describe Arek culture through the elements of language, social organization knowledge systems and art as well as elements of Arek culture in real life.

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