

## **Media and the Representation of Madurese People:**

Local Wisdom of Madurese People in Emha Ainun Nadjib's *Folklore Madura*

**Netty Dyah Kurniasari, S.Sos, M.Med.Kom**

### ***Abstract***

This study looks at how the notions of local culture have been articulated in the media (novel) by an Indonesia writer. The object of this research is Nadjib's novel entitled 'Folklore Madura'. The aim of this research is to analyze how media, c.q. novel, represents the value of Madurese local culture. I use sociological perspective and semiotic analysis to unpack the meaning lies behind the creation of the novel in terms of Madurese local culture. This research is descriptive qualitative. The result shows that Emha Ainun Nadjib's novel *Folklore Madura* contains the philosophical values of Madurese people. The novel does not only describe the nature and the human characteristics of the Madurese, but also advise how humans are supposed to be. There are some values of local culture and philosophy in this novel. Firstly, Madurese people are free to determine the will of a strong and principled; Secondly, they do not like pretending. Thirdly, they have kind enough thought to the fate of God. Moreover, they have the capability to suffer and the strength to overcome all the torments. They also have loyalty to the Madurese community leaders who fit in their hearts.

**Key words:** media, local culture, folklore Madura

### **Introduction**

Novel is a form of thoughts, feelings, and expectations of its authors are closely related to their natural life experiences. Novel is a medium for the author to respond to its environment. Content of novel are talk about thoughts, values, philosophies, traditions in society. That's why talking about the novel it means also discussed in terms of cultural and philosophical values of society.

As a member of society, a writer always take advantage of the surrounding life as material for his work, both in the form of realistic, symbolic, or something else.

---

<sup>1</sup> Research Grant 'DosenMuda' funded by Directorate of Higher Education.

<sup>2</sup> Contact : NettyDyahKurniasari, Communication Department, Faculty of Social and Culture Science, Trunojoyo University , Jalan Raya Telang Po BOX 2 Kamal, Madura, 69162. Telp: 031 3011146. E-mail :maretdyah@gmail.com

According to Andre Harjana (1981:71) the imagination of the author is influenced directly or indirectly by its environment. Thus, something that is expressed by the author could be an attempt to respond to the realities around them, communicate with reality, and re-create the reality in his work (Kuntowijoyo, 1981:18). We could find the philosophical values of Madura literature in folklore, folk poems, folk songs, parodies, anecdotes, humorous stories, etc.

Madura, according SetyaSudikanYuwana as a source of inspiration for his poems. Madura is always interesting for the author and creator of literature. The values of Madurese philosophy inspired many writers. One of author who is often write about philosophical values of Madurese is EmhaAinunNajib. He is known as the author of the 'all-rounder', because he is writing not only in regards to literature, but also political issues, economic, social and cultural rights. EmhaAinunNajib is one authors who is quite productive and creative. Unfortunately, research about the values of Madurese philosophy is very limited and rarely researched. Based on the fact, I am interested in researching his works, especially novel . One of his works entitled 'Folklore Madura' is a collection of parodies, anecdotes, humour stories and everyday stories Madurese is chosen as object of my research.

According to Emha, humorous stories and daily activity Maduresepeople are reflect their personality. Maduresepeople are straightforward people. honest and assertive. (Najib, 2005:v). Maduresepeople have the ability to represent reality with

simple that comes from everyday life. So the parody is also revealed to describe the philosophy of Madurese people. By imaging Madura values in Emha's novel, it means that there is correlation between Emha's novel and Madura society. Madura society can affect the creation of the Emha's novel, while on the other hand the presence of the novel is a means to convey some of the problems in the Madura society.

Through the Emha's novel, Madura philosophy values can be communicated to the public (inside and outside Madura), as well as through the background Madurese culture that surrounded. Emha Ainun Najib can get a lot of inspiration in creating his works. Thus, it means that the Madurese culture can influence the creation of Emha's novel, while the novel may indirectly affect Madurese culture.

## **Research problems**

We will see the interrelationships between this novel and Madura philosophical values if this novel is analyzed. This study therefore aimed to describe and explore the philosophical values Madurese culture in the novel "Folklore Madura" by Ainun Najib Emha. Sample this study is 'Folklore Madura'. This novel is chosen because it contains philosophical values of Madura people. The study on this issue is very important because some reasons, Firstly, the result of the study is useful for the readers to understand the purpose of the author and to know easily about values of Madura culture. Secondly, this study are expected to enrich the study of literature, especially folklore, anecdotes and humor. Furthermore, the study use semiotic theory. As consequence, this study is one alternative to use of those theory. In addition, the results of this study will show the relationship between the humanities science with other disciplines.

## **Sociological Theory of Literature**

This study used the theory of sociology literature and semiotic theory to analyse signs and language. Sociological theory is intended to explain the social reality (Mulder, 1973:3). Sociology of literature does not solely explain the social reality or the interrelationships between the various social phenomena. Sociological theory of literature was also used to analyze the relationship between the author with his novel in the cultural sphere.

Sociological theory that is used in this study refers to the two theories proposed by Wellek and Warren, and Ian Watt. Sociological approach to literature classification proposed by Wellek and Warren (1989:111) are: (1) sociological writers, are concerned about social status, ideology authors, and others related to the author, (2) sociology literature, which questioned the work literature itself and the things implied in it, and (3) sociological literature, argue for a reciprocal relationship between literature and its readers.

## **Semiotics**

This theories is regarding to the cultural symbol and sign by Roland Barthes (Barthes, 1974, and Hawkes, 1977:116-118). Barthes said that there are five language code which can help the reader understand the meaning of a literary work, namely (1) hermeneutik code, (2) semantic code, (3) symbolic code, (4) proairetic code, and (5) cultural code. The purpose of this study is to understand the meaning in the text. There are two process of semiotics theory, heuristics (readings based on language conventions) and hermeneutic (readings by literary convention)

## **The Values of Madurese Culture**

The values of Madura culture is including lifestyle, language, ways of thinking, thinking about the world, verbal forms of communication and social interaction, the rules and norms of behavior, moral values and ideals, science, etc. Talking about Madura culture there is always talking about (1) the concept of Madurese culture, (2) cultural elements of Madura, and (3) cultural form Madura (Sinal, 1993:80).

## **Methods**

This research used descriptive qualitative method. The researcher defines and develops continuously a specific focus, namely values of Madurese culture in "The Folklore Madura". I chose qualitative methods because it has the characteristics of the study participant observation, It means that the researcher observed the object of research and understand continuously about the objects is examined.

There are some steps used in this study. The first step is to determine the object of study, namely 'Folklore Madura'; the second one is select and sort of signs (the code) that contains values of the Madura local culture; The next step is to classify the values of Madurese culture; the last step is to analyze the research object using sociological theory and the theory of literary semiotics.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **1. Madurese people are free to determine the will of strong and principles**

The characteristic of Madura people is free to determine the will. Some time they didn't obey the rule. In some cases they have a strong principle if those principle is right in their

opinion. It could be seen clearly in the figure of Saridin the man who prefer study in Sunan Kudus rather than in formal institution.

"Saridin became SunanKudus's student because his willingness. No body can persuade him. He is a subject related to knowledge and life experience that will he face after becoming student. ("Demokrasi Tolol Versi Saridin in Folklore Madura, 2005:5)

By studying in SunanKudus rather than in formal institution, it means that Saridin design the curriculum by himself. As we know that there is different situation between formal school. and become student of Sunan Kudus. In formal school the students did not free to determine curriculum. They must applied the curriculum that has been provided, meanwhile Saridin free to determine the curriculum because he did not chose formal school.

## **2. Madurese do not like pretense, they like honest**

In the present context, when the students go to college, it means that they have mental intellectual, spiritual and moral standards towards *cosmopolitan*. But the fact the students did not learn the whole things, they learn just partial one (*juz`iyyah*). University is the place pretending that seems create universal human. But the university is actually just a place to produce human facultative even majors. It can be seen from the bellow sentences:

"Saridin, he proved that the people (teenagers) in education institution (university) is *ndagel* (people who like honour). They pretend make universities in order to create *manusia universal* (universal people). But, the quality and competence of students from universities is not more than *manusia fakultatif* (people who only study one science, or department). It means that the students only learn *juz`iyyah* (it means that

learn something partially only the subject that related to department or faculty (*fakultatif*), they do not learn many things. ("Demokrasi Tololversi Saridin" dalam Folklore Madura, 2005:2)

### 3. Whatever they are (Be their selves)

One of the most important characteristics of modern people existence is a 'tie' and 'shoes'. While typical Madurese are plain, not adventurous and prestige (whatever they are). Ties (according Madura people) is a thing that can not really understand what it uses, except to get ready when users want to commit suicide by hanging himself or his neck (Madura Folklore, 2005:3)

The culture of modern people is always explained in the context of a tie polite, middle-class personality, a symbol of prestige, and so on. It's all on sight Saridin completely abstract. How could the personality associated or especially determined by a piece of cloth tied around the neck. The quote can be seen in this bellow sentences:

"It is so funny. Saridin worries God can shake him head because this tie cuteness level is really low. Personality is a software issue, a matter of the mind, the quality of its spiritual value. How could this personality are determined by a tie. The joke modern people is not high quality. ("Demokrasi Tololversi Saridin" dalam Folklore Madura, 2003:4)

The folklore is also illustrated how smart Saridin criticize about modern people style who are wearing shoes. The function of wearing shoes is to protect the feet but the fact the shoes is threatens feet. Here's his quote:

"Put on your shoes," said Saridin imitating someone who he had heard of the 20th century, "in order to protect your feet from thorns or sharp gravel." However, in fact, the people who put on shoes are even more frequent wearers foot on the floor with thick and soft carpet. "Then someone went on-" But before wearing shoes, first wear socks to protect

your feet from the shoes. ("Demokrasi Tololversi Saridin" dalam Folklore Madura, 2003:4)

That phenomena is so funny according to Saridin. The people who are instructed to wear shoes and socks must be confused. Certainly true this shoe protects the foot or leg threatened, so the legs should be covered with socks? "

#### **4. Ability to suffer and having the strength to overcome all the torments**

It can be seen implicitly in folklore entitled "The Collapse of Scabies Pain Legend. 'It is no secret that there are at boarding school students are definitely affected by scurvy. The problem has become a regular sight in the neighborhood that someone scratched his arms, legs, chest, and even perhaps-sorry-crotch. If there are students who are exposed to scabies, then do not assume that the environment of the schools or students are unhealthy. The most important thing is the scabies could be one mental and spiritual lesson for the students. We can clearly seen this joke in bellow sentences :

"... .. We know that one of the mental lessons in Islamic boarding education is the ability to suffer. In that case the presence of scurvy can be utilized for effective mental test materials for the students. Imagine, can the students pray in his circumstances itching? Can they learn, study in that situations? ("Runtuhnya Legenda Sakit Kudis" dalam Folklore Madura, 2005:20)

Scabies can also be a tool or driving a congregation form a very good effect on the mentality and the spiritual of students. It can be seen from the sentences below:

"Germs scabies as if deliberately sown by the angels of God to be a facilitator of the necessities of students to meditate, uzlah, or solitude.

This is serious. Thinking about it; students surrounded a germ scabies all over his body. The stars are scattered throughout the skin. Joints so nails, fingers can not bend. Can imagine how he was bathing, sleeping, praying, or exercising? "..... So he becomes lonely. Excluded, even from himself. He had to sit, or bask in the sun in the morning. It could hardly do anything. He should be imprisoned in his lonely. He was forced to ponder. Thinking and feeling the silence and solitude”.

From the above quotation, the philosophical values is that a human should be able to control themselves, to shelter the ideas, and to sort out feelings. If humans can do that he will be humble and not arrogant know the meaning of life.

#### **5. They also have loyalty theMadurese community leaders who fit in their hearts**

The love and loyalty of Madura people to the leader who is appropriate in their hearts can not be changed. Love of the Madurese to their leader can be seen from the following quote:

"..... ..Mr Haji Noor Muhammad, the former Governor from East Java,(Majority of the people call him as the former Governor of East Java). For many people Madura, Moh Noor is not the former Governor. Nothing. .... So, for many people Madura, Governor of East Java is Mr Noor. If you try to argue, for example: " In fact the Governor of East Java have changed. There areMrSunandarPriyosudarmo, MrSularso, MrBasofi or Mr Imam. But, the Madura people said , all the men are not the real Governor. The real Governor is Mr Muhammad Noor” (“RT Spontanitas RW Alamiah” dalam Folklore Madura,2005:98)

## **6. They have kind enough thought to the fate of God.**

Madura is religious community. This is reflected in the attitude of understanding the fate of God. Whatever the fate of God they always think that that is the love of God to his servant. God may not torture people who are obedient to Him. God would not punish people who had no fault in him. The complete quote can be read in this following sentences:

"If God hold the fortune the people who obey him, it means that the postpone of fortune might be a certain method in order to that those people are having higher scored. In other case, if someone who is obey to the God but he was given poverty or suffering, of course what happens is one of the three possibilities ... reprimand, examination and punishment ("MbokNggakUsah Ada Neraka" dalam Folklore Madura,2005:11)

If God has not given fortune on the people who obey his order it means that there are three possibilities. First, it was a critics. Alhamdulillah (thanks God) that God would desire to criticize us. That means we have a chance to be better people. Secondly, it is a test. We must also said Thank God, because the only person who face the test that will pass examine. And third, it's punishment. Thank God . We need punishment because people are always in need of cleaning itself, requires a process of purification and rebirth.

## **7. Trust and believe of God's destiny (death is the fate of God not because of other factors)**

Whoever believes (who believe common sense) that dropped from the coconut tree can cause death, but Saridin (a character in folklore Madura) believes that it is not falling from the tree was the cause of death, but because the fate of God. Saridin belief in

*syahadat*(creeds) that have grown bravery. The complete quote can be seen in the sentences below:

"Reading *syahadat*(the creed) is managing and controlling the tongue to make a sound and the number of words. *Syahadat* is the courage to prove that he really believes what did he said. Saridin wants to prove his belief. He is dropping himself from the top of a coconut tree ..... He believes that die or life because the fate of God, not other caused. If God wants me dead, now I could die without reason, even though I was sleeping. ('Tarekat Terjun Bebas dan Jamu Air Gamping' dalam 'Folklore Madura, 2005:24)

### **8. Straightforward (not long-winded), effective and efficient**

The characteristic Madura people is effective, straightforward and efficient. It can be seen from the following quote:

"On another occasion, Emha has been invited to attend and speak at the event of kyai (Moslem leaders) in Madura. Commonly, Emha Ainun Nadjib felt bored with the ceremony. Because, usually the host arrange the schedule with bored formal and ritualism. For example 90% of ceremony commonly full of *acarasambutan* (formal welcome) and the rest (10%) is the real content. However, in Madura, Emha surprised. Because suddenly there is student on the podium, love greeting, then immediately read the holy Qur'an. Afterward, the host, who was not on the podium, saying: "Now we just invite the Cak Nun ..." ("Kelugasan Madura vs CV Politik Pribadi" dalam Folklore Madura, 2005:147-148)

### **9. Respect to the women**

Madurese culture aware that women should be protected and saved. The some elements of a woman was allowed to go public, but there are some elements that just only for her husband. No one (no men) can touched and looked

it. If the man did it, so it means brush! sickles! carok!. This is illustrated in the quote below:

"The flow of blood from the body does not mean anything compared to a form of cruelty and violence that eroded the value of human dignity. Man called humans because they can protect his wife from other men. The Madura man brave to do *carokif* that is happen. ("From Sumenep to singset Oriented "in Folklore Madura, 2005:128)

Based on the quote above, we can see how a man willing to *docarok*(duel)because of his wife.Thats way in Madura Island the rape case is very rare. It is because traditionally there is strict social control, and it's certainly better than a free sex that are prided by modern civilization.

## **Conclusions**

The novel 'Folklore Madura' by EmhaAinunNajib is riched with values of Madura culture . Folklore is not only describes how the real the nature and character of the people of Madura, but also advise how the man is supposed to be. The philosophical values in this novelare: free to determine the will of a strong and principled; does not like pretense (honest), the ability to suffer; trust and believe of fate from God; love and loyalty to the leader of the Madurese appropriate in their hearts; uphold the honor of women; straightforward (not long-winded), effective and efficient people. I suggest for other researchers to examine other novel. So we can know how the majority of imaging the ethnic Madura in other novel. Interviewing with the author also important to know about the principles and mission of authors.

## **DaftarPustaka**

Barthes, Roland. *S/Z*. New York: Hill and Wang. Basil Blackwell.

Hawkes, Terence. 1977. *Structuralism and Semiotics*. London: Methuen and Co.

Kuntowijoyo. 1981. "PeristiwaSejarah dan Sejarah Sastra". Jakarta: *Tifa Sastra* 42/IX, 1981.

Nadjib,Emha Ainun.2005.*Folklore Madura*.Yogyakarta:PROGRESS.

Sinal, Mohammad.1993. AnalisisPelambangandalamPuisi-Puis D. ZawawiImron yang MencerminkanBudaya Madura. Malang

Wellek, Rene dan Austin Warren. 1989. *TeoriKesusastraan*. TerjemahanMelaniBudianta. Jakarta: Gramedia.