

## **Social Change and Demythologization: (A Reading of Kuntowijoyo's Novels)**

**Chairil Effendy**

Study Program of Indonesian Language  
Faculty of Teacher Training and Education  
Universitas Tanjungpura, Pontianak, Indonesia

**Muhammad Asrori**

Study Program of Guidance and Counselling  
Faculty of Teacher Training and Education  
Universitas Tanjungpura, Pontianak, Indonesia

### **ABSTRACT**

This study attempts to read Kuntowijoyo's thoughts in five of his novels, namely *Kereta Api yang Berangkat Pagi Hari* (KAYBPH, 1966), *Pasar* (1972), *Khotbah di Atas Bukit* (KdAB, 1976), *Mantra Pejinak Ular* (MPU, 2000), and *Wasripin dan Satinah* (WS, 2003). Through heuristic and hermeneutic readings and analysis using a socio-historical approach, the following results were obtained. First, the five novels contain a common thread of relatively similar issues, namely social change. The first novel emphasizes social change in the village community in the post-war Sala region. It illustrates that the village community is still in the value system of "guyub rukun", although it has been infiltrated by the values of individualism. The second novel emphasizes social change with the setting of a market in Java. It depicts a society that is entering an era of madness (manners are violated, capital owners act exploitatively, government officials work at will); only those who are eling (remembering) and vigilant and understand the role of taste will survive life. The third novel emphasizes the social changes caused by development that is too physical, neglecting spiritual development, so that people lose their grip on life. The fourth novel emphasizes the social changes in the sub-district around Sala under the New Order regime. There is resistance from community members to the party's power, but it is subtle. Furthermore, in the last novel, social changes in the fishing community on the North Coast of Java under the New Order regime are also emphasized. The heavy pressure of socio-economic life gave birth to the myth of Ratu Adil. The treatment of the authoritarian regime was met with strong resistance: the community attacked and killed the security forces who engineered injustice. Secondly, socio-historically, the five novels show the development of problems in Indonesian society. Thirdly, all five novels show the details of the physical location of villages in Java, as well as the socio-cultural values of the people. Fourth, the novels show the author's response to the social life of Indonesian society from the beginning of independence to under the New Order regime.

**Keywords:** Social change, Ratu Adil myth, Javanese society

## INTRODUCTION

Kuntowijoyo has passed away. The man, who was born on September 18, 1943, passed away on February 22, 2005. During his lifetime, he worked as a historian, cultural scientist, and writer. He left behind a number of works in all three fields. As a historian, he produced *Dynamics of Indonesian Muslim History* (1985), *Radicalization of Peasants* (1994); *Introduction to History* (1995); *King, Priyayi, and Kawula: Surakarta 1900-1915* (2004); *The Role of the Bourgeoisie in the European Transformation* (2005); and, *Explanation of History* (2008). As a culturalist he produced *Culture and Society* (1987); *Islamic Paradigm, Interpretation for Action* (1991); *Democracy and Bureaucratic Culture* (1994); *Political Identity of Muslims* (1977); *Muslims Without Mosques: Essays on Religion, Culture, and Politics in the Frame of Transcendental Structuralism* (2001); *Goodbye Myth, Welcome Reality: Cultural and Political Essays* (2002); and, *Islam as Science* (2004). Then, as a writer he produced the poetry collection *Isyarat*; *Suluk Awang-Uwung*; and, *Daun Makrifat Makrifat Daun*. He wrote plays, namely *Grasses of Lake Bento* (1968); *Wooden Mask* (1973); and, *No Time for Mrs. Fatma, Barda, and Cartas* (1972). He also wrote a number of novels, including *The Train that Departs in the Morning* (1964), *Pasar* (1972), *Khotbah di Atas Bukit* (1976), *American Dream* (1997), *Mantra Penjinak Ular* (2000), *Wasripin and Satinah* (2003).

As a writer as well as a historian and cultural scientist, it is interesting to observe Kuntowijoyo's literary works. This is because literary works are not born in a vacuum. The raw material for literary works can be about anything, from trivial, simple issues to complex social, political, economic and cultural issues. Kuntowijoyo's intense engagement with issues of Muslim history in Indonesia, peasant radicalism, the king-priyayi-kawula relationship in Solo in the early 20th century, and the role of the bourgeoisie in the transformation of Europe are likely to be woven into the fabric of his stories.

The same can happen in relation to his wide-ranging interests in politics, democracy, mythology, bureaucratic culture, and so on. The intertwining of various issues in the above-mentioned domains can crystallize into an interesting story. In this context, it could be that Kuntowijoyo is not merely telling a story or delivering a story as a work of art (*le art pour le art*). Instead, he may be using literature, in this case a novel, to disseminate his intellectual ideas in various fields as mentioned above (*le art pour tendenz*). In this way, his ideas in the fields of history, politics, bureaucracy, culture, etc. are fully conveyed to the wider public. Wasn't this method also used by philosophers such as Jean Paul Sartre with *Les Mots* (novel) and *Huis Clos* (play); Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche with *Also Sprach Zarathustra*; or Muhammad Iqbal, the Pakistani philosopher, who conveyed his philosophical messages through his poems in *Asrar-e-Khudi*, *Rumuz-i-Bekhudi*, *Payam-i-Mashriq*, and others. If this is the case, it is interesting to study whether there is a common thread of issues that Kuntowijoyo conveys in his novels? What are the main issues that color the thread of his literary works that span the historical period from the 1960s to the 2000s?

The question is relevant considering that, according to Kuntowijoyo, literature is not merely a cultural symbol, but also has a social function - spreading work ethics, eradicating *madat*, exposing the crime of forced marriage, eradicating loan sharks, and so on. However, today literature has lost this social function, refusing to be confined by reality, and even refusing to be an agent of civilization. Kuntowijoyo criticizes that many writers behave narcissistically in indulging their imagination, building their own reality apart from social reality. Still according

to Kuntowijoyo, Pujangga Baru used to define art as a "movement of the soul," a spiritual symptom: consciousness, belief, imagination, cognition, perception, feelings (happy, sad, love, resentment, hope, disappointment), all are "inner symptoms." [10]

"Inner symptoms" can also take the form of literature and myth. Both are told subjectively and can reconstruct the past, although neither is faithful to the past, as they have their own interests. However, unlike myth, literature has something in common with history in that it is based on experience, although its narration is not tied to experience. The subjectivity of the speaker is very apparent. It is possible that literature is *larger than reality*. [10] Literature, myth and history, which are required to be faithful to the past, seem to be three things that are intertwined in Kuntowijoyo's works.

### METHODOLOGY

Literary works can be analysed through four approaches namely the expressive approach, paradigmatic approach, mimetic approach, and objective approach [21]. The first approach sees literary works as the result of the author's expression. The second approach sees literary works as the result of readers' reading. The third approach sees literature as an imitation of nature (mimesis). The fourth approach sees literature as autonomous, independent of the author, reader, and reality; solely as a language game.

Reading novels produced between the 1960s and the 2000s is certainly a challenge in itself. [13] This is because it is well realized that each novel was born from a certain time and space and from a certain setting and context. During the creative process, many thoughts, ideas, ideals, hopes, obsessions, or desires-both those stored in the conscious world and the subconscious world-go back and forth, interact, intersect, and "fight", *heroic struggle*, for a "respectable position" in the creative discourse being built [4]. It can be likened to the selection of vocabulary in the mind (*langue*) which then comes out in the form of a series of speech sounds (*parole*) and is syntactically structured. The richer the vocabulary stored in the *langue*, the more varied the choice of vocabulary contained in the syntactic structure. Through this analogy, it can be understood that to see the possibility of a common thread of problems in his novels, a *close* reading of Kuntowijoyo's works is required.

Based on the heuristic reading method, it is understood that the novel *Kereta Api yang Berangkat Pagi Hari* (1966) puts forward raw materials about the struggle that took place in the Ngawonggo Village area. The victory obtained raises hopes for the community for a better life in the realm of independence. The novel *Pasar* concocts raw materials about the social changes reflected in life in a market. In the midst of social change, which is referred to as the crazy era, only people who understand their identity and always remember and be vigilant will survive. The novel *Khotbah di Atas Bukit* tells the story of the search for the true meaning of life. The novel *Mantra Penjinak Ular* carries the raw material of Javanese life, especially the government apparatus in Central Java, under the domination and hegemony of certain political parties. In addition, the novels *Wasripin dan Satinah* process the story of the sorrow of the life of a fishing village community in the coastal area during the New Order Era.

There are relatively similar physical and non-physical settings in the novels, namely rural Java, while the non-physical setting is the social life of the community with its various cultural values. However, the novels are set at different times: 1964, 1972, 1976, 2000 and 2003. It is in a long

historical sequence, about 60 years. For this reason, "*that literature must be understood in its historical context. This is because it views literary texts as cultural products that are rooted in their time and place, not works of individual genius that transcend them*"[16]. In considering the importance of place and time or physical and non-physical settings, literary studies in a socio-historical perspective must involve the intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of literature: the intrinsic are the textual elements, while the extrinsic are the socio-cultural phenomena that live in society [5].

With regard to the paragraph above, the following two approaches are explained. First, the sociological approach helps to see literary works as a reflection of society and their culture as well as a tool to understand, analyze, or even criticize the social problems that exist in society. This approach tries to understand how literary works reflect and influence the social structures, values, norms, and social dynamics that exist in a society. Some of the main aspects of the sociological approach in literary criticism include (a) social structure, (b) social conflict, (c) norms and values, (d) identity and identification, and (e) historical and social context.

Second, the historical approach is a method of literary analysis that focuses on the historical context, time, and place where a literary work was created. This approach tries to understand how the social, political, cultural, and philosophical conditions were at the time the literary work was produced. Some of the main aspects commonly used in the historical approach in literary criticism involve (a) historical context, (b) author biography, (c) ideology and values, (d) literary style, and (e) reading context.

The problem is why should the study of Kuntowijoyo's novels use a socio-historical approach? There are several reasons that can be proposed, first, basically all research on literary works requires a historical approach as stated by Parvini above, especially for works that are within the span of 60 years. Secondly, historical analysis can display other implications such as hegemony, domination, local cultural values, or primordialism as extrinsic elements. Third, historical analysis pays attention to the details of depicting a story object. Fourth, the historical approach is an eclectic combination of various disciplines to get comprehensive results [16]. This approach is also relevant given Kuntowijoyo's statement that "literature is required to be faithful to reality." [10]. This means that all the raw materials of the novel have traces of reality.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

Kuntowijoyo's five novels tell stories of social change in rural Javanese society. The "raw material of the story" (Richter, 2018) is taken from social reality so that the reading public feels close to the story [16]. It can be seen that Kuntowijoyo is committed to his stance that literature has a social function. Through it, he wants to educate, remind, rebuke, criticize, demythologize certain myths, and so on. The social changes and other themes are as follows.

### **Social Change due to War**

Revolutions, wherever they occur, always take their toll: physical and mental [22]. Casualties are inevitable. However, the total change that is often envisioned may not necessarily be realized in accordance with expectations [19]. Negative impacts are often more prevalent when the war is over. The break in the continuity of social order is one of the grim sides that can emerge in the post-revolutionary period [22].

For rural communities, with agriculture as the backbone of their socio-economic life, the results of the revolution brought its own problems. The traditions of mutual aid, cooperation, deliberation, and other norms, which are characteristic of village society were corrected or reassessed [22]. In this context, a number of questions arise: should the norms that have sustained village communities over the years be maintained or changed? What is the position of the individual within the village community? And, where does the happiness of social life lie?

In the novel *Kereta Api yang Berangkat Pagi Hari*, Lieutenant Harun's entry into the Ngawonggo Village community was initially accepted by the community in a reasonable manner. His might when leading the war made the community respect him. Likewise, his marriage to the daughter of Mr. Asad, the village figure, was initially accepted naturally as well. However, this normal attitude changed when Rahman, the son of Abdul Gafar's grandfather, returned to the village. The community gossiped about Lieutenant Harun as the cause of Abdul Gafar's grandfather's death.

Indeed, the point of hatred towards Lieutenant Harun had already emerged when the war was raging. However, this hatred was suppressed because it was impossible to open hostilities with Lieutenant Harun at that time. After the war ended, and Rahman returned to the village, the community gossiped about him. Rahman himself was not affected by the gossip. Lieutenant Harun, on the other hand, regarded Rahman as the cause of the gossip. Lieutenant Harun then challenged Rahman. For the villagers, Lieutenant Harun's challenge is considered a challenge to them as well.

Rural society is a community that has its own characteristics. Farmers and agriculture influence the village atmosphere. A farmer's worldview is a village community's worldview. Villagers have a strong attachment to their native land, to the village, and to their local community [18]. This attachment is evident in village customs, which are translated into mutual aid, *gotong royong*, deliberation, and so on. By helping each other, the village community gains peace of mind [22].

The other side of the farmer's worldview is that they must always maintain harmony with nature. For this reason, they must live in harmony, full of acts of help, *mutual* cooperation, and always realize that each individual's life depends on relationships with others. Villagers are always reminded to *conform*, always remembering that individual lives should not exceed or try to exceed other members of the community. If not, then harmony will be broken. Broken harmony will lead to conflict. And, conflicts that occur in rural communities usually revolve around position and prestige, agricultural land, marriage, differences between the old and the young [22].

The conflict between Lt. Harun and Rahman also revolves around issues of prestige, position and marriage. As a military man, a new elite born after the revolution, Lieutenant Harun felt powerful. He was also always busy in the office so he didn't have time to mingle with the community: "And the wife soon found out. She was born in that village. And knew what needed to be done if one wanted to be called a good person in the village. He should at least get along with the people around him. And all this time her husband was always busy with his work." (KAYBPH, pp. 95-96)

Social change in this novel is still on a small scale, namely the change in the attitude of community members who were relatively closed to being open. They begin to dare to tell Rahman about Lieutenant Harun's weaknesses openly. This change in attitude causes friction, even leading to open conflict: between Lieutenant Harun on one side and Rahman and the people of Ngawonggo Village on the other. However, the still-dominant *guyub* value system moved village leaders to quell the conflict. Each party also realized their mistake and forgave each other.

### **Social Change due to Capitalism**

The novel *Pasar* shows a portrait of social change in Javanese society. The setting is the market. The market itself can be seen as the center of trade and economy; a place of exchange and interaction between people from different social strata; a place where capitalism operates with its freedoms; an arena for socio-cultural activities; a place where the supply of goods and services and competition occur; a place that opens up various opportunities for profit; the availability of consumption and materials; as well as heterogeneity in its various aspects. In short, the market is a place where human beings can show the virtues of piety-helpfulness or the vices of cowardice-ignorance.

Social change in this novel covers a wide spectrum. The introduction of capitalist values causes society to undergo major changes. Respect for the Javanese value system such as manners or *unggah-ungguh* is violated. Women traders laugh freely without being burdened by shame when serving male buyers (*Pasar*, p. 6), young people are disrespectful to their elders (*Pasar*, p. 124), most people no longer know how to write *hanacaraka* and speak in Javanese subtle or manners (*Pasar*, p. 12), sub-district employees take the time to watch cockfighting during working hours (*Pasar*, pp. 61-64), people start to deify money. "This is what is called the *crazy age*. People act violently. Small people don't know their smallness. Big people act arbitrarily. They have no responsibility. Sellers don't want to pay tickets. Killing pigeons! What more! Their wickedness is complete! True is the *Kalathida* of the poet!" (*Pasar*, p. 52)

The power of money makes many people forget themselves. Kasan Ngali, a rich gaplek trader, is one example. He is portrayed as a man who likes to marry and divorce. He opened a private market in his yard to compete with the government market; also, he opened his own market bank to compete with the official market bank led by Siti Zaitun. To look rich, he bought a used car that often broke down. Kasan Ngali openly criticized the feudalistic values held by the market master. According to Kasan Ngali: "We are competing to serve the community. That's the science of commerce. Employees don't have that knowledge. You think the merchants in the market should serve you, and not the other way around. If you want to be feudal, don't work like this. The people don't need that spirit anymore." (*Pasar*, pp. 113-114).

As written by Ronggowarsito in *Serat Kalatidha* that in the crazy era "participating in the crazy cannot stand it//if you don't participate in doing it, you don't get a share finally suffer from hunger // it is the will of the Lord God // however happy people forget // happier those who are aware and alert"[1] Thus Kasan Ngali appears as "the one who forgets." He squandered his money to win the heart of Siti Zaitun, but the girl he coveted did not serve his wishes. Without realizing it, his spending on seducing and acquiring women depleted his wealth and thus threatened to bankrupt him.

In painful social change, only those who are 'mindful and alert' (*eling lan waspada*) are unshakable. Pak Mantri is that 'mindful and vigilant' person. He is resilient and unshaken by the changes in social norms that are happening around him. He is able to survive because he is well aware of his Javanese heritage. For him, Javanese means "understanding", those who do not understand should not claim to be Javanese (*Pasar*, p. 12). He understands the meaning of life and how to live it. According to him, the point is in taste: "The important thing is taste. The feeling is here. The center of your breathing. The center of your blood circulation. If you are afraid you tremble, that's where it is. If you're happy it's pounding, because that's the feeling. Happiness is that feeling. Not the mind. (...) If you sleep, your mind disappears. But even if you sleep, your mind is still aware. For it is never caught off guard. You can be afraid in your dreams; you can be happy in your sleep. That is taste. But try. Can you count the market ticket revenue in your sleep? Of course not. Taste is always awake. It is our eternal possession. We will even take it with us after we die." (*Pasar*, pp. 161-162).

### **Social Change due to Materialistic Development**

Development is a process or effort to improve towards a better direction, in this case all aspects that cover human life, society, or nation, including social, economic, education, health, politics, culture, security, infrastructure, and so on. In order for development results to be successful, development needs to be carried out in a directed and planned manner [22]. Of course, development must be sustainable and balanced. Sustainable means utilizing and preserving natural resources for the present and future; balanced means equal physical and non-physical (mental-spiritual) development. Development that is not sustainable will not last, while development that is not balanced physically and non-physically will only give birth to chaos, dryness of spirit, and even loss of life guidance.

Barman is a modern man who is smart and has everything. All his worldly needs were met. However, he lives with an empty soul. He fills his empty time with wild women, especially when his wife is gone. He did this even with the knowledge of his son, Bobi. When he retired, he tried playing with his grandchildren and went into the printing business, but he quickly grew bored and referred to the printing machines as "dull dumb creatures" (*KdAB*, p. 18). Then he went for a walk in his town in the hope of getting something new out of it and making himself happy. However, he quickly becomes bored. He told the mayor that "Your city is dead. A three-dimensional, soulless thing!" (*KdAB*, p. 19).

What happened to Barman also happened to Popi. She was a beautiful, intelligent young woman who had studied philosophy, but did not believe in the existence of religious norms. Popi did not believe in sin. She also doesn't believe in the concept of evil that humans do. For her, what she wants to do, she just does without thinking about it. Thinking only makes humans suffer. With such thoughts, Popi accepts men to have sex with her in a brothel (*KdAB*, p. 86). That, to Popi, is not a crime. For Popi, evil is anything that brings people closer to suffering, pain, or death. When she finally left the practice of prostitution in a brothel, her decision was not based on moral reasons, but health reasons (*KdAB*, p. 91).

Bobi initiated Barman's meeting with Popi. He told his father to find pleasure by staying at their villa on a hill. Barman and Popi's agreement opened up new problems for both of them. In his new place, Barman quickly felt bored, especially since Popi always set a strict schedule for his life: eating, sleeping, bathing, and so on. Barman tried to break out of Popi's confinement. When

he accidentally met Humam, Barman felt terrorized. Humam's statements that sounded new and unfamiliar made Barman think hard. Humam's words such as "everything present in our lives is a coincidence" (*KdAB*, p. 59), "my state is my absence" (*KdAB*, p. 60), or "forget everything, even yourself" (*KdAB*, p. 61), "death is the least scary" and "it doesn't hurt", made Barman uneasy.

However, Barman's anxiety over "thinking" was challenged by Popi. For Popi, Barman should not think. "What else are you thinking, Pap. Life is over. There is no more! Nothing! Even if the food runs out, just pick up the phone and Bobi will send it. Forget it, except that we are alive." (*KdAB*, p. 52). This crossing of life philosophies makes Barman even more depressed and frustrated. When Humam suddenly died, Barman lost his grip. He left Popi. Then, with his white horse, he went down the hill, to the market, and whispered to the people sleeping on the market platform. "Are you happy?"

The same question was asked and heard faintly by those sleeping in the market. Without Barman's consent, 23 market people followed him wherever he went and adopted him as their spiritual teacher. They expected to receive teachings on happiness. That expectation was not fulfilled. Instead, in desperation, Barman declared that "This is my sermon", "life is not worth continuing", "kill yourself." Then, with his white horse, Barman committed suicide by throwing himself into a ravine. Barman, who was expected to be a spiritual teacher, a savior, and perhaps even a messiah, turned out to be just another human being. He died a horrible death.

### **Social Change due to Political Regimes**

*Mantra Pejina Ular* and *Wasripin and Satinah* portray the social, economic, political and cultural conditions under the New Order regime in detail. In the first novel, the ruling political party arbitrarily decides who will become the village head, regional secretary, regent, and so on. Government officials such as Abu Kasan Sapari who were deemed disloyal to the party organ could be transferred from one place of work to another. They also, with threats, prohibit Abu Kasan Sapari from puppeteering for certain village head candidates because these candidates are considered to be at odds with the "ideology" of the ruling party. He refused to be given money. When he was told that "*wani ngalah dhuwur wekasane*", he replied with a straightforward "*wekasane* is when, sir. Maybe tomorrow morning is the end of the world." (*MPU*, pp. 135-136)

Through the character of Abu Kasan Sapari, Kuntowijoyo fights back subtly. He says "Happen what will happen. We little people can only surrender to God, complain to Him. *Becik ketitik, ala ketara*. (Good is known, evil is seen)" (*MPU*, pp. 146-147). As an educated person and well acquainted with Javanese philosophy learned since childhood, as well as a puppeteer who tells many stories containing the philosophy of life, Abu Kasan Sapari is not easily tempted to do despicable things. In this world there are people like Rahwana and Sengkuni, who live by indulging in lust, but there are also figures like Abiyasa who are wise.

"He knows that he cannot expect everyone to be wise like Abiyasa, wise like Krishna, straight like Bima, generous like Darmakusuma. The world is full of Rahwana's greed, Sengkuni's cunning, has a *candala* (low) character like the Kurawa. Both are the ornament of life. Life with only Abiyasa is lonely. Life with only Sengkuni is full of claws. So, Ravana is fine. Kurawa is okay.

As long as you know the limits, the rules, the corruption is okay, just not too much." (MPU, p. 106).

However, unlike in *Mantra Penjinak Ular*, in *Wasripiin and Satinah*, Kuntowijoyo fights back hard. The fisherfolk, who are fed up with living under the oppression of the New Order regime, defend their characters who are *bullied*, executed, and even executed. There were two figures they defended. First, Mr. Modin, a surau priest, who was accused of being a communist stooge (PKI). Second, Wasripin because he was seen as a "magic man" or Queen of Justice by the fishing community. The community's respect for Wasripin was considered very dangerous for the ruling regime with its entire security apparatus.

Resistance is carried out in various ways: carrying out verbal resistance in dialogue scenes such as "People who have served are not appreciated!" or "The leader of corruption becomes a hero." (WS, p. 188), went on a fishing strike so that the price of fish soared (WS, p. 237), put up flags at half mast to honor citizens who were killed by the army (WS, p. 240), defied orders from the security forces (WS, p. 241), attacked and injured soldiers as can be seen from the quote below: "Several officers with guns in their hands entered. The person immediately swung the machete and managed to injure two people. The female soldier who worked as a secretary sounded the alarm siren, wailing. An officer managed to shoot the man in the chest. the man fell covered in blood; the machete flew out of his hand. "Why did you kill Wasripin?" then exhaled his last breath." (WS, p. 235).

Thus, this regime is described as very good at engineering various activities related to politics such as "political pilgrimage, political tahlilan, political prayer, political istighotsah, political wayangan, political ruwat." (WS, p. 82) They are also quick to find "scapegoats" for the failure of their planned programs. Mr. Modin is accused of being "the culprit of abstention and communist stooge." (WS, p. 87) Wasripin who loved to help people was accused of being "the commander of DI/TII Pantura, anti-Pancasila, and wanted to establish an Islamic State by force of arms" and was therefore shot dead. (WS, p. 231)

The New Order regime, which was authoritarian, corrupt, repressive, unjust, violated human rights, restricted political freedoms, oppressed minorities, and so on, created social instability in every respect. People became massively frustrated. Thus, groups of people emerged who acted outside the norms of the law as seen in the following quote.

*"There is a new movement in the villages along the coast. They call themselves GPL, the Wild Youth Movement. It's made up of unemployed youths, school dropouts, and those who just like to play pranks. Their job is to kidnap girls. Housewives, and shopkeepers. Usually those who are alone in deserted places or at night. GPL also keeps those who, although married, are beautiful. For a few days the girls or mothers would be held captive and molested. They return their victims after getting bored, throwing them in any place like garbage. The girls and mothers they keep return in a dazed or crazy state. Only nightspots (for those villages nightspots always meant brothels) and their members were free to move around because the GPLs got freebies." (WS, pp. 199-120)*

The unhealthy social conditions of the community, as described above, are a common phenomenon in various regions. These social conditions are certainly not good for the course of the practices of society, nation and state. In various regions, there have been conflicts between ethnic groups and conflicts between religious believers. The violent conflicts that took place in Ambon and Sambas (West Kalimantan) in 1999, for example, lasted for a long time and left the warring parties with a terrible sadness to this day.

### **Demythologization**

Myth is a folklore narrative that is not based on fact. It tells a story about the past or about the universe (cosmogony), the existence of a city, the origin of the ancestors of a people, the origin of rice in human life, the magic of a royal sword, an exaggerated narrative about the strength of a regime, and so on. Given this, myths must be understood as sign systems (semiology) that refer to a particular value system rather than as a system of facts. Myths can also be read in terms of ideology, by connecting myths with history to explain how they represent the interests of a society [2].

Kuntowijoyo doesn't want to vulgarly state that myth is a cultural product that is not factual. He realizes that myths have their own function. However, in the context of solving the increasingly complex problems of life today, people must use common sense. It is time for myths to be abandoned. Myths must be dismantled, deconstructed, mythologized. In this regard, Kuntowijoyo does not want to make his literary works solely as works of art. He does not want to be narcissistic and merely indulge his imagination so that his imaginary reality is detached from social reality [10]. Instead, he wants his literary works to have a social function, a didactic function, which leads his readers to a process of purification of the soul so that they can act positively. He did not want literary works to lose their social function, including deconstructing myths. In relation to this social function, Kuntowijoyo states:

*"Now literature has lost that social function, refusing to be confined by reality, and even refusing to be an agent of civilization. The dynamics among the literati seem to have far exceeded what is expected by society so that the community rushes to follow the development of its own literature. The substance of literature no longer follows social reality, literature is getting further away from reality. That is one of the reasons for the lack of public attention to literature"[10].*

There are at least three forms of demythologization found in Kuntowijoyo's works. First, the demythologization of the savior or messiah; second, the demythologization of the New Order; and, third, the demythologization of the snake charmer. First, the myth of the messiah often appears in the midst of village communities or farmers who are experiencing the heavy pressures of life. The fair queen appears to save the people. In 1871, Achmad Ngisa, the leader of the messiah movement, predicted the arrival of Prince Erucaraka. In 1923, Bulkim referred to himself as Suropati Ngalogo. There was also Pak Jenlak who claimed to be a descendant of King Damarwulan who could save his people [15].

The concept of Ratu Adil refers to a leader who is fair, a leader who has empathy, a wise leader, a leader who nurtures or protects, a leader who can maintain a balance in society, a leader who can inspire his people for goodness [6][19]. Raden Jayabaya once predicted that there would be an "edan era" which later led to the concept of the messiah. Jayabaya's prophecy was then

studied by the poet Ronggowarsito at the Sala palace as found in Serat Kalatidha. According to him, there are three things that cause the coming of the era of madan, namely artati (money), nistana (squalor), and jutya (criminality) [20].

The myth of the messiah or savior can be read in the novel Khotbah di Atas Bukit. The characters are asleep and seem comfortable and happy in the storefronts, Barman asks in a slow voice "are you happy". Barman's voice is captured and understood by the people who then search for and find Barman. They agreed to appoint Barman as their spiritual teacher. They followed Barman wherever he went. They thought Barman was the one who could bring them happiness. However, the mythical figure was nothing but an ordinary man who could not help himself. Barman dies by suicide, having previously said "life is not worth continuing" and "kill yourself!" (KdAB, pp. 195-196).

Barman, Popi, Bobi, and the villagers who live around the hill are victims of development that solely emphasizes material development. Bobi thinks his father would be happy living with a beautiful woman in the cool hills. Barman, who has no spiritual values throughout his life, becomes a restless man when he meets the spiritualistic and humanistic Humam. Similarly, the market traders and laborers, who merely work, do not have happiness. The novel, thus, demythologizes the myth of successful development during the New Order regime, which showed a tendency towards materialistic development.

In the novel Wasripin and Satinah, the character Wasripin wonders why he is hailed as a "savior". Some call him "a sakti person", "the grandson of Kumbakarna", "the one visited by the Prophet Khidir", "the leader", the one who can treat external illnesses (dumbness, deafness, broken bones) as well as internal illnesses (possession by spirits, talking to sea ghosts, removing witchcraft), and others. Wasripin's "magic" is actually a coincidence. He is a real person, honest, always wants to do good and help anyone, never boasts, and is sincere. When he went with fishermen to the sea, he got drunk like any other person who was not used to going to sea. That what he vomited prompted the fish to appear was a coincidence.

*"Morning TVRI and the newspapers reported that Wasripin had been shot dead by soldiers while trying to grab a gun. His body was buried in an undisclosed place because it could cause shirk. It was also said that he was the commander of DI/TII Pantura, anti-Pancasila, and wanted to establish an Islamic state by force of arms."*  
(WS, p. 231)

Wasripin's death shows that she is not a messiah, not a savior, but an ordinary human being whose body is not immune to the sharp bullets of soldiers. However, because people still live within the confines of the myth, Wasripin is still seen as a washilah (connector) for the fulfillment of people's requests or prayers to their God. "Mention Wasripin's name, God will grant your prayer." Except Mr. Modin, who remains concerned about the community's attitude. (WS, pp. 242-243).

Second, the myth of the New Order regime as strong and unshakeable is not factual. The text indicates through various events and actions that the New Order regime is powerful, can do anything, and those who do not heed their demands will get "bad luck." Some people believed and therefore submitted, (WS, pp. 242-243) but others did not, instead they fought back. Abu

Kasan Sapari dared to refuse the request of the Randu party organ people not to perform puppets for a certain village head candidate. Pressured and threatened many times, Abu Kasan Sapari stated, "we small people can only surrender to God, complain to Him. Becik ketitik, ala ketara. (Good is known, evil is seen)" (MPU, pp. 146-147).

People's hatred for the practices of the New Order regime was massive and had reached a fever pitch as seen in the following quote:

*"Kismo Kengser predicts that the current government will soon collapse, because injustice is everywhere. The rulers are no longer pamong, but real thieves, tie-dyed thieves, starry thieves, educated thieves. A conspiracy of rulers, businessmen, soldiers and Randu to blackmail the people." (MPU, pp. 191-192)*

Kismo Kengser's prophecy came true. The text subtly symbolizes the fall of the New Order regime with the collapse of the banyan tree near the terminal:

*"People around the terminal heard a sound, "Rag-rak-reketeg! Brrruk!" The sound was actually quite loud, but it was obscured by the crunching of the rain and the stormy wind. Lo and behold! In the morning, the rain and wind stopped. People came out to the terminal. The banyan fell." (MPU, p. 193).*

In the history of Indonesia, regimes that did not fulfill the people's mandate eventually collapsed. The Old Order regime led by Soekarno collapsed because his government provided protection to the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI). Then, the New Order regime led by Soeharto also collapsed due to socio-cultural instability aggravated by the world economic recession. President Abdurahman Wahid, who emerged in the Reformation Era, was also deposed because he was suspected of doing some inappropriate things. Here, literature can be used as a mirror to see things as well as a lamp or torch that warns of the future in order to carry out its social function as Kuntowijoyo expected.

Third, the demythologization of the snake charmer mantra. It is well known that Indonesians believe and believe in the existence of various mantras-whether snake mantras, crocodile mantras, or lion mantras). People who can hold and play with snakes, crocodiles or lions are believed to have the spells of these wild animals. However, it turns out that many of these handlers have had accidents (being pecked by snakes, bitten by crocodiles, or pounced on by lions).

The text tells us that Abu Kasan Sapari was accidentally met by someone who gave him a snake-tamer spell. The mantra giver said that "You should not die before teaching this knowledge to the right person" (MPU, p. 19). At first Abu Kasan Sapari believed him, especially when he managed to "talk" to the snake. (MPU, p. 26) However, when the presence of a pet snake in his own house was questioned by people, Abu Kasan Sapari decided to "throw away" the spell.

*"At that time the Fajr call to prayer was heard. Abu heard a voice on the side. It was Lastri. He worked on his plan. He prayed and put the snake in the wooden box. It turned out that his spell was making things difficult for others and himself. He*

*intended to break the chain of the spell, not to teach it to anyone. If there are sanctions, he is willing to bear them."* (MPU, p. 242)

As it turned out, Abu Kasan Sapari's actions had no negative impact on him. It is clear that the snake-tamer mantra that Abu Kasan Sapari received is a myth. Thus, anyone can play with snakes, crocodiles or lions, of course with the risk of getting disaster if not done carefully.

### CONCLUSION

Kuntowijoyo's novels produced from the 1960s to the 2000s show distinctive characteristics. The five novels studied present the same main theme, which is social change. Social change is in accordance with the context of the time when the literature was produced, namely when the village community had just escaped from war, the entry of capitalism in the practice of sub-district community life, the development of an overly materialistic city, and when the community lived under the authoritarian regime of the New Order.

Kuntowijoyo's novels serve a social function. From the first novel to the last, they are full of this function. Readers are reminded of the importance of maintaining and carrying out the manners of life in the village, market; respect and preservation of noble cultural values (unggah-ungguh), respect for parents; not believing in superstition; also, not believing in myths that make people unable to solve their various life problems properly.

### References

- [1] Bahrudin Achmad, Fajar. 2019. "Lirik Syair Serat Kalatidha, Ramalan Zaman Edan Ronggowarsito." Dalam *Tribun Jateng*. Jumat, 5 April 2019.
- [2] Barthes, Roland. 1989. *Mythologies*. London: Paladin Grafton Books.
- [3] Benson, Paul. 1993. *Anthropology and Literature*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
- [4] Culler, Jonathan. 1977. *Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistic and the Study of Literature*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- [5] Fokkema, D.W. dan Elrud Kunne-Ibsch. 1977. *Theories of Literature in the Twentieth Century*. London: C. Hurst & Company.
- [6] Kartodirdjo, Sartono. 1990. *Ratu Adil*. Jakarta: Pustaka Sinar Harapan.
- [7] Kuntowijoyo. 2017a. *Khotbah di Atas Bukit*. Novel. Yogyakarta: Penerbit Mata Angin
- [8] Kuntowijoyo. 2017b. *Pasar*. Novel. Yogyakarta: Diva Press dan Mata Angin.
- [9] Kuntowijoyo. 2018. *Petani, Priayi, dan Mitos Politik*. Yogyakarta: Penerbit Basabasi.
- [10] Kuntowijoyo. 2019. *Selamat Tinggal Mitos, Selamat Datang Realitas. Esai-esai Politik dan Budaya*. Yogyakarta: Penerbit Matabangsa.
- [11] Kuntowijoyo. 2000. *Mantra Pejina Ular*. Novel. Jakarta: Penerbit Buku Kompas.
- [12] Kuntowijoyo. 2003. *Wasripin dan Satinah*. Novel. Jakarta: Penerbit Buku Kompas.

- [13] Miall, David S. 2018. "Reader-Response Theory." Dalam David H. Richter (Eds.), *A Companion to Literary Theory*. Oxford: Wiley Blackwell.
- [14] Mukarovsky, Jan. 1978. *Structure, Sign, and Function. Selected Essay by Jan Mukarovsky*. Diterjemahkan dan disunting oleh John Burbank dan Peter Steiner. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- [15] Oemar, Priyantono dan Daan Yahya. 2023. "Ratu Adil dari Masa ke Masa". *Republika Online*. 13 November 2022.
- [16] Parvini, Neema. 2018. "New Historicism and Cultural Materialism." Dalam David H. Richter (Eds.), *A Companion to Literary Theory*. Oxford: Wiley Blackwell.
- [17] Poyatos, Fernando. 1988. "Introduction: The Genesis of Literary Anthropology" dalam Fernando Poyatos (Ed.), *Literary Anthropology: A New Interdisciplinary Approach to People, Signs, and Literature*. Amsterdam: John Benyamin Publishing Company.
- [18] Riffaterre, Michael. 1979. *Semiotic of Poetry*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- [19] Setiawan, B. 1990. *Ensiklopedi Nasional Indonesia*. Jilid 14. Jakarta: Cipta Adi Pustaka.
- [20] Sri Yudari, A.A. Kade dan Ni Wayan Karmini, 2021. "Ratu Adil dan Satria Piningit dan Zaman Edan: (Wacana Futurolog dalam Serat Kalatidha). *Dharmasmrti: Jurnal Ilmu Agama dan Kebudayaan*. Volume 21, No. 1, h. 29-39.
- [21] Teeuw, A. 1984. *Sastra dan Ilmu Sastra. Pengantar Teori Sastra*. Jakarta: Pustaka Jaya.
- [22] Tjokromidjojo, Bintoro dan Mustopadidjaja. 1988. *Teori dan Strategi Pembangunan Nasional*. Jakarta: Haji Mas Agung.
- [23] Wellek, Rene dan Austin Warren. 1990. *Teori Kesusastraan*. Diterjemahkan oleh Melani Budianta. Jakarta: Gramedia.