

Features of Javanese Woman in Hamka's *Merantau ke Deli*

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Abstract

This study aims to find the features of Javanese woman through the novel *Merantau Ke Deli* by Hamka, with three points of discussion: hard-work, patience, and modesty. Hamka, through the novel tells about the cultural clash experienced by the protagonist, Leman. Staying for a living in Deli, North Sumatra, he marries Poniem, a strong, patient, modest, and hardworking Javanese woman. It is a prohibition in Minangkabau custom to marry a woman outside the clan. He should be back to Minangkabau one day and subject to the local custom and marries a woman from his clan to keep his status. As Leman's first wife, she accepts his husband's decision to marry Mariatun, as a second wife. This study is concerned with the features of Javanese woman having distinctive qualities of attitude and supported by Balance Theory of Attitude (Heider, 1958). The theory is basically concerned with the consistency in the judgment of people and or issues that are linked by some form of relationship. The sub-concepts of attitude are hard-work, meaning to give someone more time on particular work to get more practice and experience; patience, one of the exemplary characteristics of a religious man, along with sincerity, swiftness in understanding and tenderness and modesty, denoting a moderate self-view, seeing oneself as intermediate, rather than as very positive or very negative, on key personal attributes such as personality traits, abilities and skills, physical appearance, and social behaviour. The results show that the features are found in the novel.

Keywords: hard-work, patience, modesty, attitude.

Introduction

This novel is one of the classic novels written by Buya Hamka in 1939 and published in the 1940. The story is eye-catching as it contains the social phenomena, one of which is marriage among the same ethnic groups. Marriage outside the ethnic group is considered a violation of custom and will adversely affect one's social status. Oppressed by the marriage system, the protagonist of this novel ultimately gives up and marries a girl of his own tribe, leaving his first wife of Javanese tribe abandoned.

Hamka through his writing wishes to convey a message that exogamy is not a mistake let alone viewed from a religious perspective. Indirectly he wants to emphasize that the attitude of a person to be a role model cannot be predicted much

less guaranteed and this is reflected from the features of Poniem originating from Java, and has the quality of a decent attitude to emulate.

The husband is a man of Minangkabau and his wife is a Javanese. They start living with simplicity, equally filled with hardship. With the transition of time and great tie of love they are getting better and deserve the title of 'The Rich'. Loyalty between them is then tested. The greatest is the husband is urged to choose between his faithful wife and the custom to marry a Minangkabau girl. This is the most difficult time for both of them. The wife does not want to be put apart from her husband, who has taken her out of darkness. But as the time goes by, it is seen that the customary law is stronger than their love. During all the difficult times, the wife has proved herself to be a real Javanese woman with all the unmatched attitudes.

Literature Review

The core points of discussion are related to attitude. Allport (1935, p. 44) in Pickens (2005) defines an attitude as a mental or neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence on the individual's response to all objects and situations to which it is related. A simpler definition of attitude is a mind-set or a tendency to act in a particular way due to both an individual's experience and temperament. Attitudes are a complex combination of things we tend to call personality, beliefs, values, behaviours, and motivations.

Then the research is also supported by Balance Theory of Attitude proposed by Heider (1958). Heider provides the basic model of balance theory which used as the grand theory of this research. The theory is basically concerned with the consistency in the judgment of people and or issues that are linked by some form of relationship. According to this theory there are three elements in attitude formation:

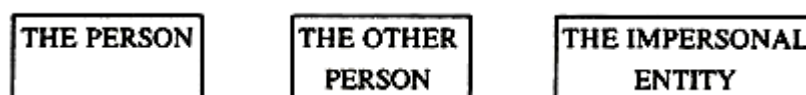


Figure 1. Elements in attitude formation.

Between these three elements two generic types of relationships are considered to exist: Sentiment relations and unit relations. The sentiment or linking relations include all form of sentiments or effect and the unit relations express the fact that two elements are perceived as belonging together. Both sentiment relations and the unit relations can be positive and negative.

All these elements and relations are illustrated with the help of the following figure:

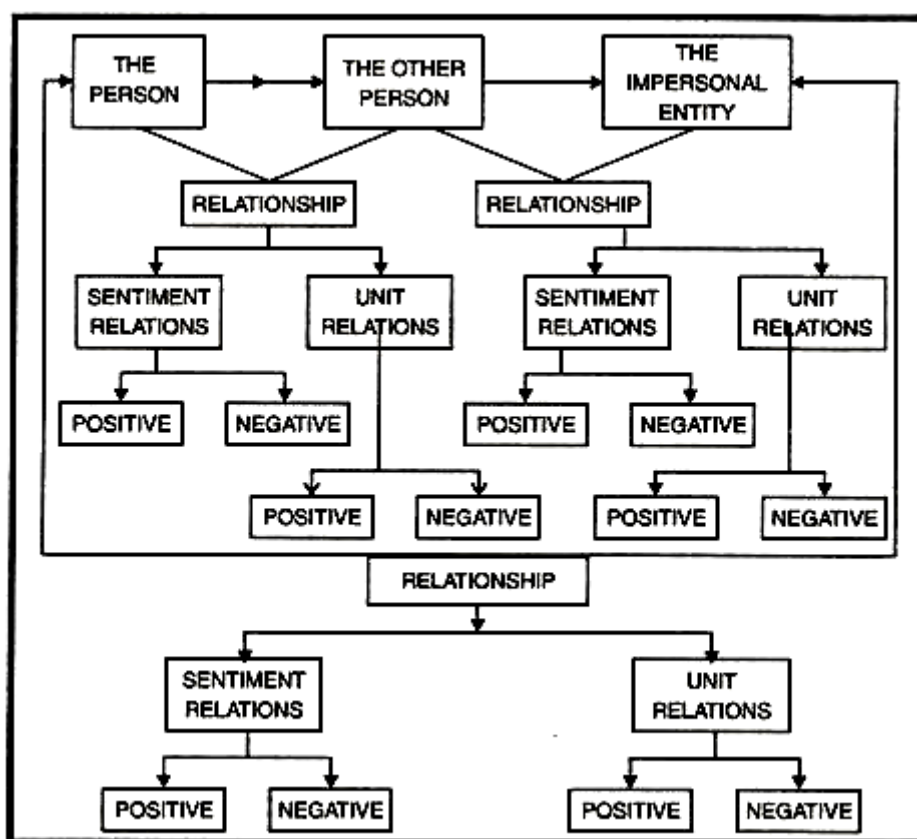


Figure 2. Elements in attitude formation and relation.

In this three elements system balance exists if all three relations are positive or two relations are negative and one positive. There will be imbalance if all three relations are negative or if two relations are positive and one are negative. People tend to perceive others and objects linked to them so that the system is balanced. This theory assumes that balanced states are stable and imbalanced states are unstable. When imbalanced state occurs, the psychological tension which is created motivates the person to restore the balance cognitively by changing the relations. Thus a person's attitude towards an object depends on his attitudes towards a source that is linked with the object (Sinha, 2016).

Research Method

The research method used is qualitative research method with descriptive approach initiated by Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 45). This is related to the discussion contained in the research pertaining social phenomenon related to the attitudes of a person in society. The qualitative data can be obtained through interviews, document analysis, focused discussion and observation either through the data from the novel or found in the field research. However, the data analysis techniques used for this research are document analysis, focused discussion and observation through the novel as the primary source and books related to the discussion as the secondary one. The novel is analysed to find the data concerned with the research at first. The next step is the data reduction in accordance with the needs of the study, followed by the presentation of data and terminated by the withdrawal of conclusions or verification.

Result

The research is focused on the female main characters in the novel on which the whole course of the story is centred having three points of discussion: hard-work,

patience and modesty picturing the features of Javanese woman. Wiryamartana (1988) in Indraswari Pikatan (2012) states that Javanese women have three very prominent characters that are often used as the subject of discussion and references for the discussion of a woman deserved to be a wife, those are: (1) Toughness and willingness to work hard. (2) Thrifty and ready to live in hardship. (3) Faithfulness, submissiveness and gentleness.

This is in line with the nature and attitude of Poniem, as the female main character in the novel. She works hard and never gives up; she is also patient with the storms of life hitting her all the time however she is gentle in her attitude from which her modesty is reflected.

Hard Work

Every person would surely wish to succeed. This is a theoretical concept. One has to undergo a real hard work to get success. Then success should also be supported by patience and perseverance. This is in line with the concept of hard work proposed by Sethi (2013) stating that from hard work one can learn about smart work. Hard work means to give more time on particular work to get more practice and experience. People work hard in jobs to excel at work. They work hard to maintain relationships and achieve the best results in life.

However, in the life time period in the novel, as a Javanese woman, Poniem is portrayed as a strong woman seen from how she works hard. She wakes up in the morning to prepare sticky rice and mixed rice, and then she goes to sell it at noon until before night. She never complains for doing those all.

The following data show how Poniem has got a distinctive quality in hard work. How as a Javanese woman she works hard a long day. She never felt sad for that.

In the early morning, Poniem sells sticky rice and mixed rice. At noon until before night fall, she has something to be sold. (Hamka, 1982, p. 123)

...Likewise Poniem, although her eyes were clad in smoke, although she has rode her bicycle to buy many vegetables in Central Market in early morning, all of that is nothing for her. (Hamka, 1982, p. 128)

Patience

Patience means reappearing to open the curtain of the real life, trying to clarify the vague views of life, understanding day by day all that has passed, then digging up the hidden mysteries, and expelling them in the form of fragments of science to be easily understood. Patience is mentioned as one of the exemplary characteristics of a religious man, along with sincerity, swiftness in understanding and tenderness (Dhammananda, 1989).

The novel, *Merantau ke Deli*, however, tells about the protagonist's patience in facing life without complaining. Poniem as the first wife of Leman is patient to face all of what his husband did. Like the other Javanese women she never shows her sadness of what his husband did. She never says no for her husband. She did everything patiently although her heart is difficult to accept what her husband did such as married another girl as his second wife and also prepared meals for all of them meanwhile Mariatun take over only to serve to their husband to get praise from her husband. Her patience is shown through the following data.

"I will not to be difficult for me and make me angry if you married another girl, to be life with another girl as your wife too in this house,

moreover the girl is from your hometown which I am not, come from different tribe... I will not interfere you to marry one other girl, moreover she comes from your hometown..." (Hamka, 1982, p. 70)

When she stayed close her husband she laughs, smiles, work hard, she help to sew the mosquito net, glue the paper on the wall. (Hamka, 1982, p. 75)

"No," says Poniem "Let them come home first, take a rest at our store first ... (Hamka, 1982, p. 77)

Meanwhile Poniem always did all the things for meals, grated the coconut, cut the wood, grind the chili ... it was always Poniem who cooks the meals, meanwhile the one who serves to their husband is Mariatun in smiling face. (Hamka, 1982, pp. 93-94)

Modesty

One of the challenges faced by the society today is to adhere to the increasingly disrespectful principles of decency. Modesty includes clothing, language, thoughts, and personal behaviour.

Modesty, then, denotes a moderate self-view —seeing oneself as intermediate, rather than as very positive or very negative, on key personal attributes such as personality traits, abilities and skills, physical appearance, and social behaviour (Sedikides, 2008).

Another concept of modesty is proposed by Flanagan in Allhoff (2010, p. 171)) stating that modesty runs into two significant problems. First, his accuracy account holds that modesty is constituted by self-knowledge, yet these two seem like different kinds of things. One is a virtue, which is a kind of disposition to act in a certain way, whereas the other is a specific set of beliefs

Poniem has got a paragon of modesty through the following:

Without any doubt, Poniem comes forward, shakes Mariatun hand and then hugs the young woman in smiling face "Save on the way, Sister" she said... People want to compare the two which one has higher kindness, modesty and character. (Hamka, 1982, p. 76-77)

"The only I want, My Husband, I do not ask for all of this to be shared, I do not ask for my parts, although I do have the right. I only want this one thing, please let me bring it" Then she go to the cupboard where the Batik for sale placed well. She takes one piece of long batik with a little rough motive. (Hamka, 1982, p. 110)

The Poniem's modesty shown when she pick Mariatun, the woman who will be her husband second wife up at the station. She came forward to welcome them although she felt broken in heart. When her husband divorced her, she did not ask for sharing the things that they get along their marriage. She only asked for a piece of Batik.

Conclusions

Poniem, the female main character in the novel shows three distinctive qualities in her attitude: hard work, patience and modesty. Said to be a hard work woman because she works since early in the morning in preparing the wares to be sold at noon until before night fall every day without complaining, to be patient woman for her patience in facing all his husband wants even to be the first wife and also as a

modest one for her willing to pick up Mariatun and also when her husband divorced her she only asked for a piece of Batik for her without asking to share the thing they get along the marriage.

Poniem starts everything from a scratch, and through hard work and unyielding view, little by little she is finally able to achieve a certain establishment in her life. But life does not run smoothly. She must endure various trials; but by having mental strength supported by her modesty patience, she can get out of all the problems existing. She is able to build great self-confidence. She has shown herself to be a virtuous Javanese woman with three unmatched attitudes: hard-work, patience and modesty.

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