

# Dialectical Hermeneutics of Love, Destiny, Origin and Purpose: Spiritual Realities in the Puppet Stories of Sinta Obong & Sita Sihir of Java, Indonesia

Mulyono, Agus Nuryatin, Teguh Supriyanto, & Nas Haryati Setyaningsih

Universitas Negeri Semarang, Kampus Sekaran, FBS, Department of Indonesian Language,  
Semarang 50229, Indonesia

e-mail: sendang\_bagus@mail.unnes.ac.id

## Abstract

Love, destiny, origin, and purpose in Javanese mysticism or Javanese spiritual conceptions has become an important discourse. In fact, this has been so in the puppet world. Pakem Ramayana, particularly the story of *Sinta Obong* has inspired many Indonesian writers to be creative. By now, the study of work inspired by *Sinta Obong* have been interpreted using deconstruction, and feminism studies have examined even the character values of heroic characters. However, no one has used a comparative literary approach that digs into the spiritual reality and the main point of spirituality in the text.

This study uses a comparative literary approach with the help of the Gadamer's dialectic Hermeneutics theory to reveal the spiritual reality of the text of "*Sinta Obong*" by Ki Slamet Soetarsa and the Poem "*Sita Sihir*" by Sapardi Djoko Damono (SDD). In this study, a careful reading and content analysis was carried out on the two works to uncover the meaning of the dialectical spirituality of love, destiny, origin, and purpose.

It concludes that "*Sinta Obong*" by Ki Slamett Soetarsa, and his spiritual reality is the enforcement of self-esteem supported by consciousness as a political leader of power and social leadership. The "*Sita Sihir*" by SDD, establishes individual leadership to free himself from the world, and from the shackles of four passions: *alamah*, *sufiyah*, *amarah*, and *muthmainah*. It is believed that spirit of self is what initiates liberation. Self which reaches the top of surrender, is sincerity and self-plenary is what serves *Sangkan Paraning Dumadi*. These findings provide enlightenment that the reflective dimension of understanding is very important so that it does not appear as a distortion to the content and spirit of the text.

**Keywords:** comparative literature, dialectical hermeneutics, destiny, origin and purpose, love

## Introduction

Love has always been an interesting and eternal conversation of all times. The discourse on love is certainly not just libidinal sentimentalism, but also the struggle for belief and human existence. The popular expression "marriage is in God's hands" shows that love is related to destiny. Furthermore, discussions about love can lead to the most complicated area of human philosophy: where humans come from and where they want to go after death, which in Javanese spirituality is called *sangkan paran* (origin and purpose).

The Javanese cultural community has a view of life that prioritizes spiritual cultivation. Niels Mulder (1996) calls Javanism as spiritual. Javanism is the identity, as well as the intellectual product of the Javanese. An understanding of the spiritual becomes very important. Spirituality refers to the path of achieving fundamental values in life, a lifestyle, a practice to understand God, self, and the life of the world which is seen as an effort to transform oneself.

The world of stories (literature) is never deserted from the world of love. The world of puppet, both the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* share these problems, and become a source of inspiration in the creative writings of Indonesian literature. The love story of Rama-Sinta in the *Ramayana*, for example, has inspired many writers. They certainly don't just restore the story, but make the story as a source of inspiration in the creative struggle. The intellectual struggle of the author in his work needs to be observed seriously. Literary work is the embodiment of experience, reading, ideas (intellectuality), feelings (emotionality), hopes, and spirituality that come from the author. No one suddenly becomes a writer. Literary works are not created from emptiness. Literature is something taught (Eagleton, 1988; Teeuw, 1983).

Nugroho (2020) notes that many important names in Indonesian literature took inspiration from the puppet. Legendary comic artist, R.A. Kosasih wrote the *Ramayana* puppet comic volume 10 "*Rahwana Angkara Murka*" (1975). In the form of poem, Subagio Sastrowardoyo wrote a poem entitled "Asmaradana" (1975; 1994). Sapardi Djoko Damono wrote the poem entitled "*Benih*" (1981) as well as "*Namaku Sita*" and "*Sita Sihir*" (1990; 2017). Goenawan Mohamad wrote the poem entitled "*Menjelang Pembakaran Sita*" (1994; 2001). Dorothea Rosa Herliany wrote the poem entitled "*Elegi Sinta*" (2002; 2005). Soni Farid Maulana wrote the poem entitled "*Sepucuk Surat Sita Sebelum Labuh Pati*" (1998; 2000) and "*Sita Obong*" (2004). Arief Bagus Prasetyo is with the poem entitled "*Api Sinta*" (1996; 2009), and Triyanto Triwikromo is with the poem entitled "*Tersina Burning Sinta*" (2009). In the prose genre, Esthi Utami DP wrote a short story entitled "*Api Penyucian*" (2002) and Ardian Kresna wrote the novel *Sinta Obong* (2012).

In fact, when writers take inspiration from puppet stories, they are no different from the *dalang*. The same story when played by different puppeteers will produce a different story structure (*sanggit*) and appearance. Of course, writers also produce different works according to the chosen literary genre, as well as their intellectual, emotional, and spiritual backgrounds. In Damono's view (2017), at first, the Rama-Sinta story was an oral story. Then it was written by Valmiki. However, the story was told again by *dalang*, and also resulted in more written texts. The story of Sita's birth and death attracts more attention.

The name Sapardi Djoko Damono, further abbreviated as SDD, has attracted the attention of researchers because of his popular and phenomenal existence. As an intellectual (professor of literature) as well as an author, his imaginative works have caused a spiritual struggle to understand the nature of divinity and diversity which could not be separated from Javanese spiritual thought. However, so far, what is well known in the public is the romance of his poems, which are often quoted for wedding invitations.

Moreover, poetry studies based on puppet stories, including the poem entitled "*Sita Sihir*" by SDD is mostly about the problem of transformation and deconstruction. The deepest meaning of the text or spiritual reality is neglected. In fact, Aveling (2003) thinks that SDD presented religious ambiguity, advised on the work of religious fairy tales that could give meaning to life, and relied on the strength of its rhymes with detailed and systematic contrastive image patterns. There has been no study that has followed up on Aveling's assessment so that the spiritual reality of the text in "*Sita Sihir*" is truly revealed comprehensively.

This study is a comparative study. It compares the chapter of "*Sinta Obong*" in Ki Slamet Soetarsa Pakem *Ramayana*'s book (1964) and the poem entitled "*Sita Sihir*" by SDD. The *Ramayana* standard by Slamet Soetarsa was chosen because it was this book that SDD examined according to the confession in the final notes of the book entitled *Namaku Sita* (Damono, 2017). The focus of this study is on understanding the spiritual main point of the text, revealing the spiritual reality of the text. Thus, it is necessary to use dialectical hermeneutics theory. The reflective dimension of understanding is often forgotten in such a way that it often causes distortion of the content and spirit of the text (Hadi, 2014).

In short, with a brief reading of “*Sita Sihar*” by SDD and other works based on the Ramayana puppet, the tendency of the reviewers to focus on feminist studies, and the results are sometimes trapped as explications of justification for feminist theories. The passionate spirit of feminism makes the text only as a medium. The spiritual main point of the text is unreachable.

Thus, this article presents two essential substances, namely: (1) the meaning of love, struggle, loyalty, and leadership, and (2) the dialectics of existence, destiny, and sangkan paran. These findings serve as fundamental contributions to the theoretical understanding of the sangkan paran horizon in the study of Javanese and Indonesian literature.

### Literature Review and the Theoretical Basis

Dian Hartati has researched "Heuristic and Hermeneutic Reading of Modern Indonesian Poetry Themed Puppet" (2019). One of the poems studied is “*Sita Sihar*” by SDD. After being freed from Dasamuka's authority, Sita had to undergo a self-immolation ceremony to prove her holiness. The statement of Sita character in the text of the poem who wants to be free from Rama's influence is expressed very firmly. Sita character in the poem "*Sita Sihar*" contradicts with the puppet story. "Magic" which means supernatural powers becomes a symbol for Sita that she has been fascinated with, has been captivated, and will always follow Rama's wishes. One of these is to comply with Rama's wish to hold a self-immolation ceremony. Sita feels that Rama's trust as a husband has diminished and therefore Sita wants to be free from someone who doesn't trust her anymore.

The meaning found is too shallow or has not reached the spiritual reality of the text (Setyaningsih, et al, 2020). Hartati only focuses on Rama's power identified with supernatural powers so that Sita is helpless against him. He has not discussed the Javanese spiritual mysticism in the text. By using the dialectical hermeneutic theory, this study constructs the dialectic of love, destiny, origin, and purpose which is the spiritual reality of the text with a comparative approach to the puppet story "*Sinta Obong*" which is part of the *Pakem Ramayana* book by Slamet Soetarso.

Nugroho and Suyitno (2020) examine the Feminist Comparative Literary Approach to Agni Pariksha Sita's Variations Recomposed in Three Indonesian Poems. Nugroho and Suyitno (2020) explain that “*Sita Sihar*” displays the female character Sita as a contested trophy, a symbol of success among men, but on the other hand it also acts as a symbol of consolation or ransom from the sacrifices made by men.

Nugroho captures the meaning of Sita's release with the great passion of feminism discourse. It is explained that in the poem “*Sita Sihar*”, where Sita has agency, there is one irony of the situation that emerges from this text, namely that the male writer gives Sita's voice to mourn her fate in the patriarchal system. Every ironic situation faced by Sita can always produce the potential to achieve freedom. Sita is able to choose actions according to her way of interpreting the situation. Finally, Sita can reverse the magic spoken by Rama.

Rokhmansyah (2019) wrote the article “The Model of Transformation of the *Sinta Obong* Chapter in Indonesian Poetry”. He only wrote the full transformation occurred in the poem entitled *Sita Sihar* by SDD. The poem describes the character Sita who is finally free from Dasamuka. Sita is also described as going to carry out the burning procession. This paper has not presented a significant explanation of the transformation model and the carried meaning.

Some things to note in the poem "*Sita Sihar*" by SDD are as follows. This poem actually talks about Sita's upheaval before the *Pati Obong* procession. The near-death event in SDD's opinion is both dramatic and aesthetic. SDD is a man, the use of the lyrical “I” character that fuses with Sita has invalidated the personification of Sita as just a female being. Human existence is always faced with temptation after temptation. Some seem right (Garuda), some seem wrong (Dasamuka) all of which are essentially teasing. Magic of Rama is certainly not just a male figure of Rama with a patriarchal culture that surrounds him, but carries other values that go beyond men and ordinary people. It is also interesting to analyze the meaning of purifying the four elements of matter (earth, wind, fire, water) in that poem; it is dialectic. The pure human returns to the original substance: the four elements.

Thus, the Ramayana wayang story about Sinta Obong has been demythologized in the poem "Sita Sihir" by SDD. The myth that Sita is a passive woman has been demythologized into a proactive and energetic woman who makes influential decisions in her life. This literary horizon demonstrates the difference between myth and its demythologization strategies within the Javanese and Indonesian literary traditions.

### Gadamer's Dialectical Hermeneutics

In his major work, *Truth and Method* (2020), Gadamer reveals that the relationship between the reader and the text is similar to the dialogue between two people talking to each other. In this case, dialogue loses its scientific rigor dimension, and becomes a rational conversation to understand a problem. In addition, Gadamer also makes ethics the basis for hermeneutics.

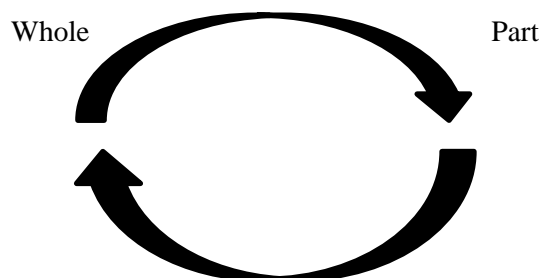
In Gadamer's hermeneutic theory, reading and understanding a text is basically also conducting a dialogue and building a synthesis between the world of the text, the world of the author and the world of the reader. These three things---the world of the text, the world of the author and the world of the reader---must be considered in every understanding, each of which has a context so that if one understands one without considering the other, the understanding of the text becomes dry and poor. To get the maximum understanding, Gadamer proposes several theories, including the following.

First is "Hermeneutic Prejudice". According to this, reading and understanding a text must be done carefully and critically. A text that is not critically researched and integrated has the possibility of colonizing cognitive consciousness. However, accurate data is needed regarding the origin of a text, and to accept the source of authority requires critical argumentation.

Second is the "The Hermeneutic Circle". This means that, to be able to understand a text critically, one needs to "understand" first. Understanding is a circular process. To achieve understanding, one must start from understanding. For example, to understand a text, one must have a pre-understanding of the text. If you don't have a pre-understanding, it's impossible for someone to get an understanding of the text. This process is called the hermeneutical circle. Therefore, the concept of the hermeneutical circle is like phenomenology. Every form of interpretation to gain understanding always involves another basic understanding. This means that to understand we also need understanding (Ohito, 2019).

The basis of Gadamer's hermeneutics is classical logic, that one can understand the whole by first understanding its parts. The same thing can be applied to understand a text. The main purpose of the whole text can be understood by focusing on the parts of the text, and conversely the parts of the text can be understood only by understanding the whole text. The goal is to understand the text within a more comprehensive frame of mind, and not just get stuck on what is written or said. The text must be placed in a wider context which of course involves other texts.

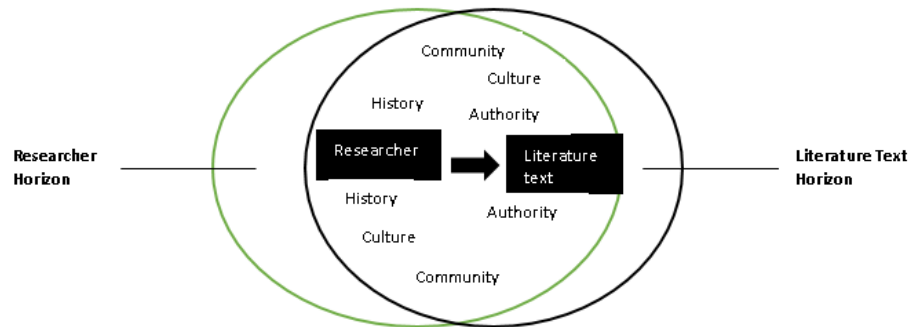
### Hermeneutic Circle



**Fig. 1:** Hermeneutic circle

Source: author

Third is that "I-You" becomes "We". A dialogue: namely our dialogue with the text will be seen as a productive dialogue if the subject-object formulation "I-you" has been lost and replaced with "we". Actually, understanding is not limited to that because the awareness of the subject from "I-you" to "we" still has the potential to prevent a maximum participation in obtaining a correct understanding before the subject "we" disappears or melts into the substance of the dialogue.



**Fig. 2: Dialectical hermeneutic**  
Source: author

Fourth is dialectical hermeneutics. Every understanding is a historical, dialectical, and linguistic event. Therefore, it is possible to create a wider hermeneutics. Hermeneutics is the ontology and phenomenology of understanding. The key to understand is participation and openness, not manipulation and control.

Literature as a cultural and historical reality does not stop in the text. Between two sentences (lines), there is a secret that needs to be revealed; there is a hidden meaning. It becomes a puzzle and a beautiful secret for the reader. Lotman (in Fokema, 1998) emphasizes the importance of paying attention to extra-textual reality, namely literary norms, traditions, and imagination.

In this regard, in dialectical hermeneutics, of course, inter-textuality is also needed. Inter-textuality is said by Kristeva (Junus, 1985) as the essence of a text which contains another text. It can be physically present. There are indicators that show the connection and separation between a text and an existing text. Therefore, reading the text needs assistance from other texts so that the interpretation of the text read is truly in-depth. Kristeva warns that there are two things that need to be observed, namely the function of the entry of foreign texts in the understanding and treatment of the author of the text in the structure of his work (Junus, 1985).

### Research Method

This study employs a qualitative, comparative literature approach. The theory used is Gadamer's dialectical hermeneutics to understand the inner reality of the texts being compared, namely Slamet Soetarsa's *Sinta Obong* and SDD's *Sita Sihar*. Data was collected by means of the reading-note technique, namely by collecting story sequences in the chapter "*Sinta Obong*" and the poem "*Sita Sihar*" which allegedly contained the dialectic of love, destiny, origin and purpose. Data that has been collected were analyzed by hermeneutic reading, including prejudice, hermeneutic circle, horizon fusion, and dialectics to obtain in-depth analysis results and are expected to achieve the research objectives, namely the dialectical hermeneutics of love, destiny, and sangkan paran in both works. After that, the results of the hermeneutic readings are compared. In the comparison process, dialectics is also needed. The results of the analysis are presented descriptively to provide a complete and detailed explanation.

### Limits of Comparative Literature

Literature is closely related to culture. Comparative literature is important to understand the dynamics of culture. Cultural changes occur because of the dynamics of human

thought (Drijarkara, 1985). Wellek (1989) defines three meanings of comparative literature. First, study on oral literature, especially the theme of folklore and its distribution. The term comparative literature is used for the study of oral literature: especially folk tales and their migrations, and how and when folklore entered into more artistic literary writing. Oral literature is basically an integral part of written literature (Qadha, 2015).

An investigation of the relationship between two or more literary works, which are the materials and objects of the investigation, including the question of reputation and penetration, influence and fame of a major work. In other words, the term comparative literature includes the study of the relationship between two or more writings. This approach was pioneered by French scientists, called *comparatistes*, initiated by Ferdinand Baldensperger, who reviewed Goethe's reputation, influence, and fame of Goethe in France and England. The aspects studied include (a) the image and concept of the author and at a certain time, (b) the translation factor, (c) the receiving factor, (d) the atmosphere and literary situation at a certain time.

Third, literature studies involve literature of the whole world: general literature and universal literature. The term comparative literature is equated with a thorough study of literature. The term 'world literature' implies that what is studied is literature on five continents, from New Zealand to Iceland. General literature studies relate to literary movements and schools that transcend national boundaries. The universal literary conception sees that literature still needs to be seen as a totality.

Basnett (1993) defines comparative literature as the study of cross-cultural texts, interdisciplinary in nature, and concerned with patterns of relationships in literature across space and time. In accordance with Basnett's opinion, comparative literary studies must have at least two literary objects to be compared. The two objects of literature are literary works with different cultural backgrounds. Differences in cultural backgrounds are different in space and time.

According to Damono (2005), comparative literature is an approach to literature that cannot produce its own theory. Any theory can be used in comparative literature research, according to the object and purpose of the research. In some writings, comparative literature is also referred to as 'a study'.

## Findings and Discussion

### The Meaning of Love, Struggle, Loyalty, and Leadership

The name Sinta or Dewi Sinta is used in the puppet world, in Indonesia. In the creative writing world of Indonesian literature, writers, including SDD, tend to use the name Sita. The use of the name Sita by writers seems to be more dialectical by paying attention to the origins of the Ramayana from India. In addition, there is also a mention of Ramawijaya for the standard version of Java and Rama for the new creative literature.

The book Pakem Ramayana (Soetarsa, 1964) consists of 17 chapters, with a note that the 17<sup>th</sup> chapter is an additional chapter entitled "*Sinta Obong (Wibisana dados Ratu)*". In the chapter, it is told, after successfully ravaging Alengka, Ramawijaya meet Dewi Sinta. Ramawijaya does not immediately take pity on him to let go of the longings of ordinary people. He can control himself. There are crucial things related to self-esteem that need to be taken into account, namely proving the sanctity of Dewi Sinta. Therefore, he asked Dewi Sinta to burn herself as a means of proving her purity. The request for Sinta to burn herself was not conveyed directly, but Rama did by telling the story of the ali-ali (ring) which was stolen by the dragon king. Sinta was able to guess the direction of the story and Rama's wishes, so she asked Rama to stop the story. He was ready to burn himself.

Dewi Sinta established herself as a Javanese woman who made her man a *pepudden*, *jimat*, *aji*, who was respected, upheld, and glorified, not only in this world but into the hereafter. In Javanese culture, there is a phrase *garwa: sigaraning nyawa*. An ideal expression of love, mate, with a symbiotic spirit of mutualism. However, there is also an expression attached to women, namely *swarga nunut neraka katut*. Because of his excessive respect, even if he wanted to interrupt the conversation, he needed to apologize and was ready to be rebuked. As a woman, Sinta could only believe that her man's will was a wisdom.

*Dhuh Sinuwun Prabu jimat pepundhen kula ing jagat dumugining delahan. Keparenga nyadhong deduka ingkang kathah-kathah dene kula kumawantun munggel dhawuh pangandikan paduka.... Kula pitados bilih paduka lair tumusing batos sarambut pinara sasra temtu boten kagungan raos sujana kirang pitados dhumateng kula.... Nanging gandheng kula wanita pramila kula namung pitados dhateng kawicaksanan Paduka (Soetarso, 1964).*

Wahai, Paduka Maharaja, pujaan hamba di dunia dan akhirat sana. Hamba siap sedia bila Paduka murka sebab hamba berani memotong pembicaraan Paduka.... Hamba percaya bahwa Paduka lahir-batin laksana rambut dibelah seribu, tak curiga pada hamba.... Akan tetapi, karena hamba perempuan maka hamba hanya percaya pada kebijaksanaan Paduka. (Soetarso, 1964)

This made Sugriwa and Ramawujaya's troops shocked. They considered the struggle futile, because it had to lead to the tragedy of the burning of Sinta. Sugriwa even protested the cruel treatment. Then, Rama explained that what he did needed to be seen with wisdom, creativity, and taste. If this was not done, the universe would always ask whether Dewi Sinta was still pure.

*Kakang Sugriwa, sanadyan lelampahan punika menawi kawawas sagebyaran pancen kathah ingkang mastani mleset saking entering panduga, nanging menawi kawawas kanthi weninging sir, budi, cipta, rasa, temtu boten badhe kagungan pandumuk ingkang sisip (Soetarso, 1964).*

Kanda Sugriwa, meski peristiwa itu bila dipandang sekilas memang banyak orang mengatakan di luar dugaan. Akan tetapi, bila dipandang dengan kejernihan hati, budi, cipta, rasa, tentu tak akan punya tuduhan yang salah (Soetarso, 1964).

People might denounce Rama only with an alibi in the name of the universe in testing the purity and loyalty of Sita. However, considering the existence of Rama as an incarnation of Lord Vishnu and the experience showed him willingly leaving Ayodya for the sake of his parents and the integrity of the nation, this argument was broken. In addition, as a leader, Rama needed to uphold his self-respect to get rid of rumors in the future. The assertiveness of leadership defeated petty artistic.

Next, Rama asked Sugriwa and his supporters to give a deeper meaning to the struggle. Struggle as a life task. The life task is to eradicate anyone who acts violently, invade the order of justice, and destroy the peace that must be exterminated. The events that happened to Sita were only because of destiny, the design of the God. Through that event, humans could understand and embody the meaning of love, loyalty, struggle, and leadership. This chapter of "Sinta Obong" is indeed more concerned with the philosophy of leadership than the issue of love. This can be seen from the following statement of Rama.

*"Kawawas sagebyaran paduka sabala punika ngrabaseng Ngalengka saperlu badhe ngrebat Yayi Dewi, nanging sejatosipun boten. Yayi Dewi punika naming kangge lantaran." (Soetarso, 1964).*

Dipandang sekilas, Paduka beserta bala tantara menerjang Alengka untuk merebut Adinda Dewi. Akan tetapi, sejatinya tidak demikian. Adinda Dewi ini hanya untuk alasan. (Soetarso, 1964).

The Goddess entered the fire. Batara Agni helped her. The churning fire felt like a shady and comfortable garden. The Goddess did not die. Subsequently, Wibisana was appointed King of Alengka (Soetarsa 1964).

The problem of leadership at the end of the story is also summarized by Hastha Brata's teachings as Rama's advice to Wibisana: Dasamuka's younger brother who defected to Rama's side. The leader must be like the sun (*srengenge*), hot, but the heat that gives life to the universe; the moon, a leader who was able to provide light for those afflicted by darkness; star (*kartika*), the leader must be able to provide comfort and peace, able to be a place to complain in all problems; mega. The leader must be able to protect; wind, the leader must be able to provide common prosperity; fire, leaders must be able to do justice in law enforcement; earth, the leader must be peaceful and holy, rewarding anyone who was devoted and works; and the ocean, the leader must be able to accommodate everything

It can be understood that Ramawijaya's desire to test Sinta's holiness was driven more by his motivation and enthusiasm as a leader, not as an individual. He was worried that the people would criticize, spread slander, and the universe would insult him forever if Sinta was not pure and loyal anymore. In other words, as the leader of Ramawijaya, he upheld dogmatic truth.

Overall, the differences between Rama-Sita (Soetarsa, 1964) and SDD (2017) are presented in the Table 1 as follows.

**Table 1:** The Differences Between Rama-Sita (Soetarsa, 1964) and SDD (2017)

Source: Authors

<b>Rama-Sita (Soetarso, 1964)</b>	<b>Rama-Sita (SDD, 2017)</b>
Rama asks Sita to prove her purity by setting herself on fire.	It is unclear whether Rama asks Sita to self-immolate or not.
Rama indirectly asks Sita to do so by narrating the story of the stolen ring by the serpent.	Rama experiences intense inner turmoil precisely when Sita remains silent, captivately.
Sita is willing to self-immolate without resistance.	Sita perceives the impending self-immolation as a means of liberation, including freedom from the shackles of men, such as Rama, Dasamuka, and even Garuda.
Sita regards her husband as a revered figure, to be respected and obedient to his commands in this world and the hereafter.	Sita perceives and discovers divine love from the Almighty.
She is prepared to face punishment because men are the source of wisdom.	She is ready to enlighten men and those suspicious of her with the philosophy of fire, water, air, and earth.

### **Dialectic of Existence, Destiny, Origin, and Purpose**

Dramatic impression appeared when reading the poem “*Sita Sihar*” by SDD. It is as if the reader is invited to the big stage of the theatre: Sita, a beautiful woman, calm, full of charm, gracefully facing death. That's the power of the SDD's image. Imagine anger, sadness, and awe mixed perfectly in the chests of those who saw the scene. The charm of Sita was able to make people assemble stories, feelings, knowledge, experiences, and appreciation of beliefs with their own imaginations. The following is a complete quote from *Sita Sihar*'s poem.

#### ***Sita Sihar***

I'm finally free—  
either from the claws of Garuda  
or Dasamuka arm  
Alone,  
in the high tower,  
see above:  
sky



which does not fade its cold blue;  
 and below:  
 fire  
 ignited by Rama-  
 -burning like eternal longing  
 "Jump, Sita," You snapped,  
 "So that air, water, fire and earth,  
 pure again."

But I also want to be free  
 of Rama's magic.

There is the upheaval of a human child before death arrives. Sita invited dialectics about the existence of humans living in the world, why and for what humans are born, what powers surround them, and where they will go after death. Those are the sparks of the conception of philosophical thought about existence, destiny, origin, and purpose. Thoughts that are closely related to Javanism, and Javanese mysticism. In other languages, this means what is the relationship between the little universe (microcosm) and the big universe (macrocosm). Wayang cosmology is a map of one's consciousness, not only for historical descriptions of myths or theories of the universe (Stange, 1998).

Existence is closely related to freedom and liberation. Thus, it is natural for feminism studies of the poem to swell. First line: I'm finally free— / makes an expression of relief. Relieved to be free from oppression, free from Dasamuka's arms. What is interesting to note is why Sita also feels oppressed from Garuda's claws? In fact, it isn't Garuda's presence on a mission to help free him from Dasamuka's holds?

Sita sees that the parties who are trying to free themselves have their own interests. Existence as an object is certainly not pleasant. Sita wants to be a subject in life and living. "*Sita Sihar*" shows the female character Sita as a contested trophy, a symbol of success among men, but on the other hand, also as a symbol of consolation or ransom from the sacrifices made by men (Nugraha, 2020).

Why was Garuda used by SDD? not Jatayu, This is of course metaphorical. If you think divergently, the use of "Garuda" is certainly more communicative than "Jatayu" for the community. Besides, it is also to poke fun at the nation itself (the Garuda is the symbol of the state). Sometimes it also acts as a colonizer for its citizens. The excuses used are usually in the name of development, morality, ideology, national interests, and others. A very subtle expression of criticism of the state.

Dasamuka's existence is not expressed much in Sita Magic. However, from the use of the word Dasamuka's arm and Rama's magic, it can be explained more deeply that Rama's existence is greater. Arms to show physical strength, while magic is an invisible power. The magic in this poem is not synonymous with evil power.

In responding to the Ramayana story, SDD did not appear to be in a hurry to take sides. He did not ? easy to make good-bad judgments, right-wrong in the love triangle among Rama, Sinta and Dasamuka. By the rule, as written by Ki Slamet Soetarsa, whom SDD recognized as a source of inspiration, Rama was exalted as a hero, even the incarnation of Vishnu, who is certainly extraordinary in everything, and that is magic in the name of SDD. Dasamuka as a criminal, a symbol of anger, destroying a beautiful fence, snatching people's wives in Ki Soetarsa's perspective, SDD did not refuse, but also did not clearly agree.

Dasamuka's careful characterization, both in "*Benih*" and "*Sita Sihar*", seems to justify Aveling calling it ambiguity, which can be understood by looking at Dasamuka's background existence. In the grip, Ravana was the King of Alengkadireja, he was known as the giant ruler of darkness. His other names were Dasamuka, Dasagriva and Dasakanta because he had ten faces, ten necks, and ten throats. He also had twenty hands which showed his arrogance and boundless will. All bad things were always associated with him. SDD did not call Dasamuka as a giant. Dasamuka was seen as a normal human being.

Even from a standard perspective, historically, Dasamuka is actually more worthy of a symbol of loyalty. During his life, he only loved one woman, named Dewi Widowati. When the Goddess died, Dasamuka was shaken violently. The figure of Dewi Widowati also incarnated on Dewi Sinta. Unfortunately, when the time brought Dasamuka to Sinta, the political reality showed that Sinta was already married to Rama, the King of Ayodya. At that time, Rama married Shinta because he had won an archery competition in the Mantili Kingdom. Verily, the sky created Sita for Ravana and Ravana for Sita. But the reality in the world, it was not that simple.

When he found out his true love had become someone else's wife, Ravana was furious. He only had two choices. Give up or risk everything to snatch Sita from Rama. He decided to choose the second option. He kidnapped Sinta and brought her to Alengka.

In Alengka, Ravana placed Sinta in the Argasoka Park. This park was said to be a replica of the beauty of heaven. Sinta whose status as a prisoner was treated very well. Sita was so glorified, not touched at all let alone hurt. Every day, for years Ravana came to express his love for Sita politely and lovingly. Every day, he also felt heartbroken when he heard Sita's rejection.

For Ravana, life is waiting. He kept waiting until his idol could love him with all her heart. Even though he got rejected many times, his attitude never changed. He loved Sita with all his heart. Feeling Ravana's sincerity, Sinta's heart began to waver. Although Sita refused many times Ravana's requests, she also began to admire him secretly.

If only Ravana took part in the competition at that time, it was certainly that with the supernatural powers he had, he would win it and be able to marry Sita. But the rice had turned into porridge. Ravana should accept the fact that he lost faster than Rama. The facts that support that Sinta was created for Ravana were instantly refuted by the status that has bound Sinta. There was nothing wrong with Ravana fighting for his rights, but kidnapping someone's wife was a clear violation of the criminal law.

Towards the end of the story, Shinta really faltered. Perhaps it was because of Ravana's sincere love that continued to erode his determination and his disappointment in Rama, who had not come to save him for years. When Shinta hoped for Rama's presence, Rama was reluctant to set foot in Alengka. He even sent Anoman to pick up Shinta. Shinta could have left at that time, but Shinta didn't want to go home if it wasn't Rama who picked her up.

In the end, fate had to speak, Dasamuka had to surrender to Rama in a battle that was colored with the help of the Anoman monkey army and the betrayal of Dasamuka's younger brother, Gunawan Wibisana. However, there was outward happiness. There was also inner happiness. Rama-Sinta meeting outwardly was certainly seen as happy. However, inwardly, it was not easy to measure it.

The existence of Rama carried dogmatic truth. Dasamuka believed in individual truth. Kumbakarna followed normative truth. Wibisana adhered to universal truth.

The journey of liberation, the purification of Sita, was the journey to *manunggaling kawula lan Gusti*. Humans need to have an understanding of *sangkan paraning dumadi*, the origin and purpose of life or where life is going. The ontological understanding of *sangkan paran* or existence, namely from nothing and then being born, grows, gets old, dies, doesn't exist (Mulyono, 1989).

The discussion of fate or destiny in Javanese spirituality is contained in the symbolism of puppet. Rama was in control in the Ramayana epic, as is Krishna as the controller in the Mahabharata War. Before humans are born or exist, when they were still in the clouds, their fate and actions had been determined by the Almighty. In Serat Centhini, this understanding was found in verses 20 and 21. *Duk lagya wijiling wiji critane wis rampung* (by the time the seeds were released, the story was finished) (Mulyono, 1989).

In the book *Manunggaling Kawula Gusti* (Hartoko, 1987), it is explained that what is owned as reality is the reality of God; all his efforts are through the level of emanation and ascending back to God and achieving oneness between you and Gusti. Pay attention to the following excerpt.

*Alone,  
in the high tower,  
see above:  
sky  
which does not fade its cold blue;*

In Javanese spirituality, there is the term *bead*, incarnation in another form, but the spirit is the same, the soul is the same. In the Mahabharata Krishna, in the Ramayana Rama. Vishnu who incarnated on Krishna or Rama. They did not meet each other like two different characters because they were the same and one essence (Hartoko 1987: 133).

SDD's "confession" in *Namaku Sita* is interesting to observe. He related it to the poem "Benih" written in 1981.

"My love for you, Babe," said Rama, "is the sea that has separated us for years, is the sky that always protects us, is the herd of monkeys in Kiskenda Cave. But..." Sita who is pregnant has remained silent, "you have lived in the cage of the king of hostages for many years, you have slept in his bed, you are no longer a secret to him."

Sita who is pregnant has remained silent: charm. "But that giant was your father, the seed that made you, did he also seed you, did..." Sita who is pregnant has remained silent, trying to interpret the will of the gods.

In Javanese puppet, historically, Dewi Sinta is actually the biological child of Rahwana, another name for Dasamuka. It is said that Rahwana fell in love with a priest named Widawati. However, Widawati rejected his love and chose suicide. Rahwana was determined to find and marry the reincarnation of Widawati. Based on the instructions of his teacher, Resi Maruta, Rahwana learnt that Widawati would incarnate as his own daughter. When his wife named Dewi Kanung gave birth, Rahwana went to expand the empire. Finally, the baby girl who was born by Kanung was taken by Wibisana, and dumped in the river in a coffin. Wibisana then created a baby boy from the mega in the sky. The baby was then given the name Megananda or well-known by the name Indrajit. The baby girl who was dumped by Wibisana was carried away by the river and reached the territory of the Mantili kingdom. The baby was later found and adopted by Janaka, the king of the Mantili kingdom, and named Sinta. Sinta married Rama, prince of the Ayodhya kingdom.

SDD admitted that it was not the birth problem that "worried" him, but the Rama-Sinta relationship after the great war. He didn't explain further. However, it can be presumed that his concern is certainly related to the "benih". Humans are created, then exist, then die. The problem of birth, for example, humans can never ask and choose who is born from the womb. Even if Sita was pregnant with Dasamuka, what was wrong with the baby in the womb?

It should also be underlined that Rama as the bead of Vishnu certainly knows very well the things surrounding Sita's destiny. Logically, Sita will die in the fire. However, fiction has its own logic. The following line is actually very interesting which shows the dialectic. Sita doesn't want to just follow fate. He wants to maintain existence. Life will be meaningful if you have the freedom to determine your destiny. The problem is, of course, that it is very difficult to break away from the person who really understands destiny, namely Rama.

*But I also want to be free  
of Rama's magic.*

To what extent do humans have the authority to determine their own destiny? In addition to Javanese mysticism, there is also the term *Kejawen Islam*, which Geert says that Islam with a Hindu pattern, but Woodward rejected in his book *Islam Jawa* (Woodward, 1999). However, the phenomenon of religiosity and divinity has become an inspiration for writers as intellectuals. In an article reminiscing about Motinggo Busye, Melani Budianta put forward a rhetorical statement that perhaps a study of the syncretic intellectual tendencies in our literature

is needed. This statement came after he examined Motinggo Busye's work that there is an intellectual odyssey that is eclectic and syncretic. Science is explored from just a few elements and then combined with other ideas that are not necessarily in line, or even contradictory. The rational search (philosophical theories, science, logic) is mixed with emotional, spiritual, and supernatural things (Horison 1999).

SDD is close to the syncretic intellectual term proposed by Melani Budianta. She is Muslim, but close to devotee or spiritual, and agile in international intellectual association. Javanese, Islamic, and cosmopolitan mysticism certainly color his works. In Islamic theology, there is a *jabariyah* understanding. The flow in the science of *kalam* is the view that everything that exists in the universe, including humans, is bound to the *Qadha* and *Qadar* of God (KBBI). In the Islamic Encyclopedia (Dasuki 1994), it is explained that *jabariah* comes from the word *jabara* which means forced (*majbur*). That is, human actions are essentially God's actions. Humans do not have the power and independence in determining their will and actions (Barbieri, 2015; Talukdar, 2015; Khan, 2017)

Syahrastani in his book *Al Milal* (in Dasuki 1994:) classifies *jabariyah* into two, namely extreme *jabariyah* and moderate *jabariyah*. The extreme *Jabariyah* believes that humans are seen as having no will and the right to choose. Humans are forced and subject to the will and the power of God. Moderate *Jabariyah* believes that humans are not like inanimate objects, but have an active role in their actions. An action is realized by two actors, namely God and the humans. Humans are not forced in their actions, but still have a share and the right to choose to do their actions (Schlottmann, 2018; Widjayanti, 2019).

Pay attention to the line in the poem "*Benih*": Sita who is pregnant has remained silent, trying to interpret the will of the Gods. This line acts as a fulcrum to lead to the poem "*Sita Sihir*". Sita lives her destiny.

*Qadha* and *Qadar* have no other meaning, except the establishment of a general causal system on the basis of Divine knowledge and will. Between the acceptance of the causal theory of consequences and the necessity of the occurrence of effects in the presence of causes, and the authenticity of the relationship between the two, namely, *the fate of every being is related to the causes that preceded it*.

Mutahhari (in Bagir, 1995) says that Allah has guided the embodiment of everything through special causes or phenomena. *Qadha* and *Qadar* have no other meaning, except the establishment of a general causal system on the basis of Divine knowledge and will. Between the acceptance of the causal theory of consequences and the necessity of the occurrence of effects in the presence of causes, and the authenticity of the relationship between the two, namely, the fate of every being is related to the causes that preceded it (Byrne, 2017).

The series of events experienced by Rama and Sita became a dialectical material about how difficult it is to understand destiny, how surreal one's existence is, and how steep it is to reach the pinnacle of sincerity as freedom.

Nasution (Rasjidi, 1983) says that one of the main teachings in Islam is that human beings are composed of body and spirit, originating from God and will return to God. God is holy and the spirit that comes from God is also holy, and will return to its original place with God if it remains pure. If he becomes dirty because he enters the material human body, he will not be able to return to his original place (Fokkelman, 2018).

In Soetarso's puppet story, Sita did not experience significant upheaval when she was about to jump into a fire. She just followed her husband's will with the *swarga nunut*. In the poem "*Sita Sihir*" the upheaval is actually very great. There is the task of purifying the substances of air, water, fire, and earth.

"Jump, Sita," snapped God,  
"So that air, water, fire and earth, pure again."

Based on the meaning of the part of the poem, the comprehensive meaning of the poem can be obtained. The incident was indeed a sentimental tragedy for *Sita Obong*. However, the

main point of the text's spirituality is the near-death struggle. There is a dialectic of *sangkan paraning dumadi* to the peak of *manunggaling kawula gusti*.

Javanese culture recognizes the teachings of *Sedulur Papat Lima Pancer*. It means that there are four brothers. The four brothers are concentrated at one point: the fifth brother (*Pancer*). The main aspect of his teaching is the alignment between the small universe (human-microcosm) and the big universe (the macrocosm universe). In the big universe, the four brothers are associated with the East, South, West and North directions, while the *pancer* is the midpoint of the human being. In the small universe, four siblings are associated with things that accompany human birth, namely *kakang kawah* (amniotic fluid), *adi ari-ari* (placenta), *getih* (blood) and *puser* (placental cord). The *pancer* is the human.

From this original understanding, the story developed with the influence of Hinduism. *Sedulur papat* (four brothers) is then interpreted as not only as four *qibla* but also later interpreted as natural elements that form the human body. These four elements are earth, water, fire, and the wind. The *Pancer* is still the human. They are considered as '*pamomong*' or human guardians.

However, this understanding later developed again with the influence of Islam. It is believed that the creative saints gave new meanings, usually Sunan Kalijaga as the spiritual icon. The four brothers are associated with the four types of human lust, while the fifth *pancer* is conscience or '*alam rahsa/sir*'. The four elements of lust are meant by *aluamah*, *sufiyah*, *amarah* and *muthmainah* lust.

*Aluamah* Lust is related to the basic human instincts, namely the desire to eat, drink, dress, have sex, and so on. The emergence of the lust of *aluamah* due to the influence of the earth element which is the element that forms the human body.

*Sufiyah* lust is related to the worldly desire to be praised, to get degrees and ranks, to be greedy, and so on. This lust is matched with the nature of air which is the constituent element of the body. The nature of air is that it always wants to fill the space while it exists (empty space).

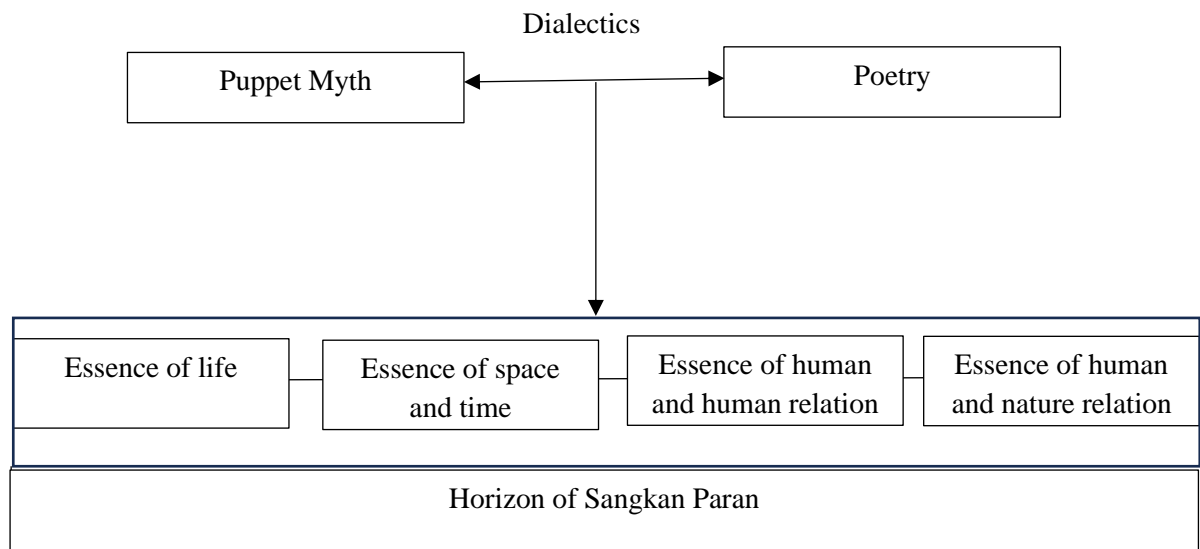
*Amarah* lust is related to the desire to maintain self-esteem, anger, emotions, and so on. This lust is influenced by the nature of the heat of fire which is part of the substance that forms the human body.

*Muthmainah* lust is a lust that invites towards goodness. This lust is influenced by the nature of water which is also part of the substance that forms the human body.

The fifth element, namely *pancer*, has a highly dialectical meaning. Various interpretations are raised, for example as Nur Muhammad, related to Islamic mysticism that Nur Muhammad was created before the universe was created. There are those who interpret it as 'True Guru', in the puppet, and the teachings are found in Dewa Ruci character. Bima plunged into the middle of the ocean, then gained enlightenment about the nature of life and identity. In Islamic theology, it is said that whoever knows himself will know his God, know the greatness of God by living his creation. It is also related to the *rasa jati, jatining rasa* (authenticity of taste).

Why should it be pure and what does it mean to be purified? The pinnacle of spirituality is sincerity, and surrender. In Javanese Kebatinan language, it is empty, *awung-uwung*. The perfect man worships God's absolute absoluteness, until finally he becomes one. Unity is not in terms of the melting of matter, but the manifestation of the attributes of divinity.

Thus the dialectic between Love, Struggle, Loyalty, and Leadership is the spiritual core of the text of Sinta Obong by Slamet Soetarso and Sita Magic, rich in SDD. The dialectic can be visualized through the following chart (Fig. 3).



**Fig. 3** Horizon Sangkan Paran

Source: author

### Conclusions

The meaning of love, struggle, loyalty, and leadership in the story of Rama Sita in Soetarsa's (1964) work is that despite her beauty and gentleness, Sita is seen as a woman who must remain obedient to male authority and superiority, with men portrayed as the source of wisdom. The world will be peaceful if women can be controlled. The meaning of love, struggle, loyalty, and leadership in SDD's (2017) work is that many people seem to uphold heroism but, in reality, they are actually shackling their victims. Women are the source of life.

The dialectic of love, destiny, origin and pupose is the main spiritual thrust of the *Sinta Obong* text by Slamet Soetarso and *Sita Sihir* by SDD. In comparison, in *Sinta Obong*, the story has a stereotypical impression. The romance of love that is inseparable, at critical, crucial moments, help comes to romantic happiness, because they are destined to be matched. In *Sita Sihir* poem, SDD focuses on the dramatic events of Sita's inner turmoil before entering the fire. Sita is not just a female symbol of feminism who longs for liberation from patriarchal culture, but more broadly as a human child who seeks the meaning of liberation from the world problems. There is a spiritual breakthrough for the residents of the deep underworld. In fact, to the figure of Rama, the perfect human, the god who is safe, who has everything, the fate of liberation cannot be surrendered. The problem of liberation is the problem of the individual experiencing the existence of himself and God.

### References

- Abdul Hadi W.M. (2014) *Hermeneutika Sastra Barat dan Timur*. Jakarta: Sadra.
- Aveling, Harry. (2003) *Rahasia Membutuhkan Kata*. Magelang: Indonesiaterra.
- Bagir, Haidar. (Ed. Murtadha Muthahhari). (1995). *Perspektif Alquran tentang Manusia dan Agama*. Bandung: Mizan.
- Barbieri, L. A., Hassan, C., Rosati, R., Romario, U. F., Correale, L. & Repici, A. (2015) Systematic review and meta-analysis: efficacy and safety of POEM for achalasia. *United European gastroenterology journal*, 3(4), pp. 325-334.
- Basnett, Susan. (1993) *Comparative: a Critical Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Byrne, G. (2017). Narrative inquiry and the problem of representation: 'giving voice', making meaning. *International Journal of Research & Method in Education*, 40(1), pp. 36-52.
- Damono, Sapardi Djoko. (2005) *Pegangan Penelitian Sastra Bandingan*. Jakarta: Pusat Bahasa.
- Damono, Sapardi Djoko. (2017) *Namaku Sita*. Jakarta. Gramedia Pustaka Utama.
- Drijarkara. (1985) *Filsafat Manusia*. Yogyakarta: Kanisius.

- Dasuki, Hafizh. (1994) *Ensiklopedi Islam*. Jakarta: Ikhtiar Baru Van Houve.
- Eagleton, Terry. (1988) *Teori Kesusastraan: Satu pengenalan* (Diterjemahkan Muhammad Hj. Salleh). Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia.
- Fokkelman, J. (2018) *Narrative Art and Poetry in the Books of Samuel: A full interpretation based on stylistic and structural analyses, Volume IV. Vow and desire (I. Sam. 1-12)*. Brill.
- Fokema, D.W. dan Elrud Kunne-Ibsch. (1998) *Teori Sastra Abad Kedua Puluh*. Jakarta: Gramedia.
- Gadamer, Hans-Georg. (2020) *Kebenaran dan Metode. Pengantar Filsafat Hermeneutika* (translated. Ahmad Sahidah). Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.
- Hartati, Dian. (2019) "Pembacaan Heuristik dan Hermeneutik Puisi Indonesia Modern Bertema Pewayangan" (*DEIKSIS Vol. 11 No. 01, Januari-April 2019*).
- Hartoko, Dick. (1987) *Manunggaling Kawula Gusti* (terjemahan dari P.J. Zoetmoelder). Jakarta: Gramedia.
- Horison, Majalah Sastra. (1999) No. 9 Tahun XXXIV September 1999.
- Junus, Umar. (1985) *Resepsi Sastra: Sebuah Pengantar*. Jakarta: Gramedia.
- Khan, M. A., Kumbhari, V., Ngamruengphong, S., Ismail, A., Chen, Y. I., Chavez, Y. H., ... & Khashab, M. A. (2017) Is POEM the answer for management of spastic esophageal disorders? A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Digestive diseases and sciences*, 62, 35-44.
- Mulder, Niels. (1996) *Pribadi dan Masyarakat di Jawa*. Jakarta: Pustaka Sinar Harapan.
- Mulyono, Sri. (1989) *Simbolisme dan Mistisisme Wayang*. Jakarta: Haji Mas Agung.
- Nugroho, Dipa dan Suyitno. (2020) "Pendekatan Sastra Bandingan Feminis atas Variasi Gubah Ulang Agni Pariksha Sita dalam Tiga Sajak Indonesia" (*Atavisme*, 23 (1) -74).
- Ohito, E. O., & Nyachae, T. M. (2019) Poetically poking at language and power: Using Black feminist poetry to conduct rigorous feminist critical discourse analysis. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 25(9-10), pp. 839-850.
- Qadha, A. M. H. (2015) How Pragmatics Leads to a Better Interpretation of Poetry: A Discourse Stylistic Study of DH Lawrence's Poem "Sorrow". *GSTF Journal on Education (JEd)*, 1(2).
- Rasjidi, H. M. (1983) *Islam Ditinjau dari Berbagai Aspeknya*. Jakarta: Metro Pos.
- Rokhmansyah, Alfian dan Bayu Aji Nugroho. (2019). "Model Transformasi Babak Sinta Obong dalam Puisi-Puisi Indonesia". (*Seminar Nasional Pascasarjana 2019: 54-59 ISSN 2686-6404*).
- Schlottmann, F., Luckett, D. J., Fine, J., Shaheen, N. J. & Patti, M. G. (2018) Laparoscopic Heller myotomy versus peroral endoscopic myotomy (POEM) for achalasia: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Annals of surgery*, 267(3), pp. 451-460.
- Setyaningsih, N. H., Febriani, M., & Sugiarto, E. (2020) Banyumas Folklore as Literature Material: From Social Mores to Educational Purposes. *International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change*, 12(9), pp. 422-435.
- Stange, Paul. (1998) *Politik Perhatian. Rasa dalam Kebudayaan Jawa*. Yogyakarta: LKiS.
- Soetarsa, Ki Slamet. (1964) (cet.ke-6) *Pakem Ramayana*. Sala: Toko Buku Keluarga Soebarno.
- Talukdar, R., Inoue, H. & Reddy, D. N. (2015) Efficacy of peroral endoscopic myotomy (POEM) in the treatment of achalasia: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Surgical endoscopy*, 29, pp. 3030-3046.
- Teeuw, A. (1983) *Membaca dan Menilai Sastra*. Jakarta: Gramedia.
- Wellek, Rene dan Austin Warren. (1989) *Teori Kesusastraan*. Translated by Melani Budianta. Jakarta: Gramedia.
- Widjayanti, E. P. (2019) Building Humanity Values Through Maya Angelou's poems. In *Journal International Seminar on Languages, Literature, Arts, and Education (ISLLAE)* (Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 143-148).
- Woodward, Mark R. (1989) *Islam Jawa. Kesalehan Normatif versus Kebatinan* (terj. Hairus Salim). Yogyakarta: LKiS.