

Kudus in The Image Of Cultural Phenomena and Illustrated By The Novel *Kabar Buruk Dari Langit*

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Abstract. Literary works often take a portrait of an event that reflects cultural phenomena in a certain time and space. This portrait is born into an image of the world that may be different from the real, but at the same time offers a phenomenological understanding of an event that happened. This image reveals textual symbols that have a source of emission from the real visual landscape and can still be found as historical traces. These traces are also believed to be cultural productions that are expressed through language aesthetics. The novel *Kabar Buruk dari Langit* captures such an image by making Kudus City its central landscape. By looking at the real visual portrait of today, the novel reminds readers of a past event that has culturally shaped the soul of Kudus City. Through all of this, the comparison between the narrated image and the symbols in it with the cultural cross-section currently experienced by the community shows a relationship in the representation of truth that can continue to be contested.

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1 Introduction

Literary works in the form of novels often show a portrait of the world that intersects with reality. Reading a novel also means getting a transformation of each illustration of a world that was originally completely recognizable. It is called the beginning because the narrative in the novel is a fictional construction. However, the values derived from reality cannot be separated from the illustrative building in it. This is also illustrated in the novel *Kabar Buruk dari Langit* (hereafter KaBu daLa).

KaBu daLa reveals a slice of life that is still inspired today as a cultural pioneer of the people of Kudus City. This pioneering of course cannot be separated from the history of *Wali Songo*, especially Sunan Kudus, Sunan Muria, and Sunan Kalijaga, who in various perspectives of the establishment of Kudus City have an important role. The three Sunan also have a symbolic closeness to Sheikh Siti Jenar who is told as a figure with the teaching of *Manunggaling Kawula Gusti* 'the unity of the servant with God'.

The concept of *makrifat* taught by Sheikh Siti Jenar is considered a science that is too far to be understood by ordinary people who are new to Islamic. It is then re-presented by KaBu daLa in the narrative transition of a character who transforms himself under various names. Initially known as *Peng Ilmu Muda*, until in a life journey that leads to *makrifat* he also changes his name through a process of cultural imaging. The image made him *Gusti Patik Utusan Tuhan*, *Sang Nabi*, and the *Begawan*. It is revealed that KaBu daLa tells how a person's process in understanding and seeking justification for the religious teachings received so far, in this search the main character (*Peng Ilmu Muda*) experiences many unexpected and illogical events [1]. The illogicality triggers a name change that is also followed by stories that seem closely related to the cultural portrait of the people of Kudus City.

This hypothesis arises when looking at cultural symbols such as the Great Mosque (Al-Aqsa Tower) of Kudus, Sunan Kalijaga, Sunan Kiping, and a journey to Makrifat Hill by boat. These symbols intersect with oral stories that carry the image of magic and have built all the intricacies of the life of the people of Kudus City. Nonetheless, as an element of fundamentalism, the stories are still in accordance with the Islamic context (as in the tradition of the Sunan integrating religious teachings and cultural values) [2]. This raises the big question of how the cultural portrait of Kudus City in KaBu daLa captures the

phenomenological reality that has built Kudus City and the lives of the people in it.

Underlying a culture with historical value, Jan M. Vansina's theory of Oral Tradition as History becomes significant. At the same time, as the core of this research, the concept of image popularized by Yasraf Amir Piliang is used to prove the correlation of culture in the world that is considered real with the narrative in the novel. Both agree that every human work is a clue to something more than just aesthetics.

At first, the concept of the image refers to a world picture in relation to what is called a worldview [3]. The influence of Lucien Goldman concept of worldview participates in the elaboration. In the worldview, there is an imaginary[4] which refers to the existence of "ensembles of mental categories". This further emphasizes that worldview here means a (human) portrait of the world, not a (God) portrait of the world [5].

Literary work comes as a formula that is not unlike a painting if it is realized in fine art. Both have aesthetic elements with different paradigm references. Based on this, it can be said that world painting is a manifestation of transcendental ideas in the concrete physical world [6]. Literary works are present to show a condition of the world in the creator's memory. For example, a city defined concretely in a scientific geographical view may have ensembles of mental categories that vary depending on who is saying it. The presence of this kind of painting (image) of the world presents the effect of light refracted by a prism, one light source giving birth to various definitions depending on the spectrum of understanding of the recipient's point of view.

Humans, in this case, have superhuman status, capable of exploring and explaining the secrets of nature in the form of science and art through mathematical complexity, careful empirical observation, and complex aesthetic power[7]. This exploration shows a sociological stance that ultimately makes a story (image) describe a message that correlates with the social seat [8]. Referring to stories based on history, which in this case still has the power to build a culture, the social seat here shows how a story has different definitions depending on the social context of the storyteller and the recipient.

To achieve an understanding of this kind of image, a search for the whole body of tradition is needed so that the emergence of cultural phenomena that are congruent with the structure of a given society is achieved [9]. Societies in the past created a tradition with meaning to

become a mental foundation and a narrative easily passed on from generation to generation. Later, they will consider it as “tradition in their own right” which in this case fuses with a message context (original message) to create an image in the condition of “it could have been” to “it was”. Until the story that carries a tradition will reach the position of “teacher of life” [10].

2 Methodology

This research uses the regression comparative analysis method which tries to compare a narrative in a novel with a phenomenological image captured in real terms by the people of Kudus City. In regression, an independent variable is associated with a dependent variable when the levels of the two variables correspond to one another [11]. According to that methodology, this research use interview datas from people around Masjid Al-Aqsa Menara Kudus as population and the samples for the datas are interview result from Lesbumi, Ponpes Mus-YQ, and Ponpes Damaran 78. They hold not just only cultural perspective, but also remembrance of historical events.

3 Result and Discussion

Image Comparison: Cultural Phenomena the People of Kudus City with KaBu daLa

Adult literary works in the realistic view can rarely be seen as a historical reference. However, referring to the stories of the past in the study popularized by Jan M. Vansina, in fact, literary works keep hints that make them in line with history. In terms of imagery, this history is also born from worldviews, because the past stories that are rooted in people's social lives do not fully correlate with existing historical evidence.

This lack of correlation includes the inability of society to show evidence of a miracle that comes with a concrete symbol. KaBu daLa, for example, repeatedly presents the Kudus Great Mosque (now Al-Aqsa Mosque of the Kudus Tower) as the center of the miracle, the *karomah*, presented by the *Wali Songo*. In this case, the much-discussed representative of the *Wali Songo* is Sunan Kalijaga and the contradictory, similarly powerful Sheikh Siti Jenar. These two figures are present in the narrative building that later influences much of *Pengelmu Muda* decision-making until he is better known as *Begawan*.

This then influences the imaginary construction between the image written in KaBu daLa and the traditional stories believed by the people of Kudus City. The journey of *Pengelmu Muda* until he is known as *Begawan* refers to the two cardinal directions, namely east and west. At first, *Pengelmu Muda* is introduced as a student who has just returned from the Arab lands after 10 years of study and how this makes him worthy of being called the husband of *Zora*, the daughter of the revered *Kyai Dzukhriyah*. All these processes make Al-Aqsa Mosque of the Kudus Tower the center of the story because all the settings revolve around that area (KaBu daLa: 1-68).

From the Al-Aqsa Mosque of the Kudus Tower, various journeys are illustrated. Through these illustrations, this research tries to compare them with the direction of the narrative journey that is already present in the memory of the people of Kudus City. This existence will show transcendental ideas in the reflection of fictional narratives and phenomenological images. More details are shown in the table below.

Table 1. Comparative Illustration Between Cultural Phenomenon and KaBu daLa

Cultural Portrait the People of Kudus City		Portrait in the KaBu daLa	
Community Memory	Center and Direction	Illustration of KaBu daLa	Center and Direction
PP Mus-YQ testimony about TBS and the tradition of Arabia.	Airport in Semarang, east of Kudus.	... <i>kepergianmu selama sepuluh tahun, menimba... di tanah haram....</i> [... you're leaving for ten years, studying... in the haram....] (p.40).	To the eastern docks of Kudus to Arabia.
PP Mus-YQ and Damaran 78 say this does not exist. Meanwhile, Lesbumi said, "There are 4 religious teaching centers, Walimat, Banat, TBS, and Qudsiyah".	4 major cardinal directions in Kudus.	<i>Dewan Sembilan</i> [Council of Nine] (p.40).	The Great Mosque of Kudus is the center .
Lesbumi is aware of this tradition	East of Kudus City.	<i>Gentong-gentong... yang melafal ayat</i>	The Great Mosque of Kudus is the

Cultural Portrait the People of Kudus City		Portrait in the KaBu daLa	
Community Memory	Center and Direction	Illustration of KaBu daLa	Center and Direction
and that it is common in the community, not necessarily among Santri.		[Barrels... that recite verses] (p.46).	center.
According to Lesbumi, Kudus used to be an island called the Muria Peninsula, but now the pier has become a forest.	From Kudus towards Demak (East direction).	<i>Hutan Pengging... anjing ganas</i> [Pengging Forest... a ferocious dog] (p.80).	Go east before the Pier.
According to Lesbumi, in the direction of Pati, Jepara, and Rembang ... before prayer, there is a dangdut that is common.	East of Kudus City.	<i>Islam pergumulan dewa-dewi di pesisir</i> [Islam the struggle of deities on the coast] (p.83).	East of Kudus City.
According to Lesbumi, he is Kyai Telingsing, the founder and teacher of the Sunan in Kudus City. Kudus City was originally named Tajuk.	From China in the same boat as Sam Poo Kong, living south of the Kudus Tower. [12]	<i>Sunan Kiping, Pendiri kota Kudus</i> [Sunan Kiping, Founder of the city of Kudus] (p.163).	All directions.
According to Lesbumi and the general public, <i>Rabu Wekasan</i> is overcome by drinking prayed-for water from a barrel.	All directions in Kudus City.	<i>24 Dzulhijah, bertepatan 14 Februari</i> [24 Dhul-Hijja, February 14] (p.539).	Menara Kudus Mosque as the center.
Lesbumi said, "There are 4 centers of religious teaching, Walimat, Banat, TBS, and	4 cardinal directions in Kudus City.	<i>Qadhi, penguasa Tahkim di Kudus</i> [Qadhi, the ruler of the Tahkim in Kudus] (p.214).	Menara Kudus Mosque as the center.

Cultural Portrait the People of Kudus City		Portrait in the KaBu daLa	
Community Memory	Center and Direction	Illustration of KaBu daLa	Center and Direction
Qudsiyah”.			
The tomb of Sunan Muria.	North of the Kudus Tower, slightly inclined to the east .	<i>Padepokan di atas Bukit Makrifat</i> [The hermitage on the Hill of Makrifat] (pp. 300-350).	West of Kudus City.
Lesbumi’s testimony is that Mbah Abdul Basyir was famous for being able to <i>nyuwuk</i> .	East of the Kudus Minaret Mosque.	<i>Sang Begawan Bukit Makrifat</i> [The Begawan of the Hill of Makrifat].	West of Kudus City.
According to Lesbumi’s testimony, Kyai Telingsing went to the <i>Padepokan</i> Sunan Muria by taking a boat up the hill.	North of the Kudus Tower, slightly inclined to the east .	<i>Terus mengarah ke timur ... hingga kalian bertemu dengan bibir laut... menuju Kota Cinta</i> [Keep heading east... until you meet the shoreline... towards the City of Love] (pp.354-356).	East of Kudus City.

Based on the table above, the first thing that can be noticed is the image in KaBu daLa that makes the Mosque of the Kudus Tower the center, while the journey to the east and west is the body of the tradition of religiosity, if not exaggerated, can be called spirituality. *Pengعلمu Muda* experiences a mental projection by starting the story from the Menara Kudus Mosque and then riding a cart to the eastern dock of Kudus City before finally heading to Arabia which is actually in the west, slightly to the north, of the archipelago.

Seeing this illustration, *Pengعلمu Muda* made the eastern direction of Kudus City as a formula to reach the situation of the western direction, which in fact is called the Qibla. Therefore, when *Pengعلمu Muda* began to be referred to as a prophet (at the east pier of Kudus) because of his conquest of the three dogs (*Lampa*, *Larta*, and *Larka*) [13] in Pengging Forest. Of course, he rejected it because, in his Islamic boarding school knowledge, he did not contain the physical representation of a prophet. However, the dock community believed him

to be a mental representation of the prophet because of the emotional association they felt when they saw him. Meanwhile, Arabia as an object in the West is the center of all knowledge about the prophet so when *Pengelmu Muda* was still in the East and had not yet explored the land of Arabia, he “did not deserve” to represent the prophet.

The phenomenological portrait is actually also reflected in the tradition of the Santri community in Kudus City to study in Arabia and return home with various views. Islamic boarding schools Mus-YQ and Damaran 78 explain this as a representative form of ritual streams in carrying out Islamic worship as Indonesia itself has a variety of streams that are accepted in state law and grace. It is not surprising that in KaBu daLa, Islam is described as a struggle between gods and goddesses, which is culturally seen to occur in Pati, Jepara, and several areas in Rembang. This is in line with the interviewee's testimony that the culture of enjoying dangdut in communities east of Kudus City is like a part of the ritual of welcoming the tradition of worship. Of course, this is different when looking at the tradition built around the Kudus Tower Mosque, especially around the eastern region, before reaching the border – which in the construction of a given (to) society by making a barrel filled with water recited Qur'anic verses as a celebration of worship, especially when celebrating a wedding.

In relation to the barrel, “*Rabu Wekasan*” is also known, which is accepted as a social seat in Kudus City as a reminder of the coming calamity. It is illustrated in the novel as bad news that comes on 24 Dhul Hijja which is aligned with February 14 – the year details are not explained – only that this event is narrated as the decadence of *makrifat* in Kudus City when *Pengelmu Muda*, better known as *Begawan*, must be cruelly tried. The people of Kudus City who were the informants in this research do not have certain memories about why *Rabu Wekasan* ever happened in Kudus City. However, they remember how on that day they prepared water in a barrel, recited prayers, and then drank it as an antidote to the calamity whose existence was symbolized (happened) as *Rabu Wekasan*. This indicates a correlation of phenomena, about how the people of Kudus City respond to something that already was as a teacher of life.

The acceptance and overcoming of *Rabu Wekasan* intersects with Sunan Kiping who is considered the founder of Tajuk City (which is now known as Kudus City). After Kyai Telingsing (Sunan Kiping) handed

over the symbol of religiosity to Sunan Kudus, his existence received a special position so that in the process this helped construct the Islamic identity that (created) the sacredness (and name) of Kudus City today [15]. KaBu daLa presents Sunan Kiping as the teacher of the Sunan because of his charisma. The teacher here is not a teaching center, as Zaky from Lesbumi said, but a space for knowledge exchange between Sunan Kudus and Sunan Muria with Sunan Kiping. This happened because the people who lived in this area were famous for Sunan Muria religious characteristics [16]. The characterization that culturally sparked the exchange of knowledge, for example in the form that Sunan Kiping taught and transferred the calamity to objects such as barrels so as to overcome the mental (metaphysical) representation of *Rabu Wekasan*. Sunan Kiping then has a realistic representation of Kyai Telingsing because, in terms of functional roles, Kyai Telingsing has an ensemble of metals that the community believes in and is similar to the narrative in KaBu daLa.

The fusion of cultural imagery and KaBu daLa narrative is precisely present in the concept of Sunan Kiping (Kyai Telingsing) with the sailing journey made by *Begawan* to the east of Kudus City. Kyai Telingsing traveled north, slightly to the east, to climb a hill where the hermitage of Sunan Muria was located. This is parallel to the discovery of the City of Love made by *Begawan* after sailing the waters to the east of Kudus City. Love in the construction of *makrifat* is a form of sincere acceptance of God. This is equivalent to the belief of the people of Kudus City about Sunan Muria who taught sincerity in worship.

This portrait then shows the second image fusion in the form of Makrifat Hill. The people of Kudus City see the construction of Makrifat Hill as Sunan Muria hermitage, which has now become his tomb. However, KaBu daLa absorbed it as a narrative that gave birth to *Begawan*. The image of *Begawan* itself is similar to Kyai Abdul Basyir, who has the power to eliminate one's calamity. Javanese know him as *suwuk*, which often uses water as a medium filled with recitations of prayers (possibly from snippets of the Qur'an) to demonstrate the originality of the Qur'an as *Asy-Syifa* 'bearer of healing'.

Based on this, KaBu daLa points to the east as the image of Makrifat Hill. The people of Kudus City then targeted this eastern direction as Kyai Abdul Basyir Islamic Boarding School. However, the fusion that occurred created a merging of the image of the hills of Sunan Muria

Tomb with Kyai Abdul Basyir Islamic Boarding School. This is what then made the east direction after *Pengelmu Muda* return to Kudus City the birth of the image of the west direction. The young man who has become a *Begawan* has all kinds of knowledge that can show the image of the West (Arab land) to then become a new qibla (center of knowledge) in the East.

Unfortunately, the new birth was not accepted in the image of the cultural phenomenology of the people of Kudus City. As said by Islamic boarding schools Mus-YQ and Damaran 78 that new values that are not in accordance with the Islamic tradition of the people of Kudus City will gradually be socially marginalized. The return of Santri from Arab lands with new knowledge and not immersing themselves in deep-rooted traditions will end in destruction. This is mainly due to the image of the *tahkim* council (guardian of the law) which KaBu daLa shows as *Qodhi*, while in the cultural image, it can be seen from the existence of four Islamic boarding school traditions namely Walimat, Banat, TBS, and Qudsiyah. These four Islamic boarding traditions build a social stance in the traditions of the Kudus community so that those that do not conform will in fact gradually fade away. In KaBu daLa this fading is discussed with *Rabu Wekasan* to remind us of the bad news that needs to be mediated.

An illustration map have drawn to give more understanding about the analysis. The link <https://s.id/PetaKaBudaLa> provide the illustration detail on the map which include comparation to the datas from KaBu daLa and realistic views from some sources.

3 Conclusion

As explained above, this research focuses on the imagery of cultural phenomena believed by the people of Kudus City and looks at the imagery that has been narrated by KaBu daLa. It was found that the imagery in KaBu daLa mixes oral stories, a context, which builds the history and culture of the people of Kudus City today. This mixing becomes more apparent when the direction of the distribution of narrative phenomena in KaBu daLa is not always aligned with the concrete cardinal directions as the cultural image is believed by the community. Nevertheless, the novel KaBu daLa has created a new world portrait, which despite having the cultural values of the people of Kudus City, tries to present image criticism based on an understanding of

Sufism in a social stance called tradition that has been hereditary in Kudus City.

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