

The Migration of Javanese Poetry Writers from Print into Digital Media

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Abstract - Literature is an important part of a nation's civilization. Local literature also contributes to the transmission of local values from one generation to the next. So far, written literature has been printed and disseminated through print media and also in sections in print media such as magazines and newspapers. Including the publication of Javanese poetry in local media. However, as of now, the disruptive era has forced some print media publications to close, while others have migrated online. Javanese poetry writers must also find new ways to create their work online. The research method used was descriptive qualitative by conducting interviews with Javanese poetry artists who are members of the Paguyuban Panotocoro Yogyakarta. Media adaptation involves a system's ability to adjust to users' behaviors or environmental changes. The challenge that traditional Javanese artists face when migrating to the internet era is their lack of understanding of technology. Additionally, a significant issue confronting Javanese poets as they transition to the digital age lies in the shift required by the internet's audio-visual technology. This shift demands that the traditional written format be transformed into audio or video formats. The research findings reveal that the digitization of Javanese poetry has, in a way, returned it to its original form, where it was traditionally performed as *tembang* or songs. *Tembang*, as a form of oral communication, served as the primary means through which Javanese people conveyed messages before they adopted writing systems and lettered scripts. This mode of delivering messages in a peaceful and fluid setting allows the moral messages within the poetry to be easily absorbed and internalized in people's lives.

Keywords: Digital Migration; Literature; Javanese Poetry; *Tembang*; Media Adaptation

Introduction

Literature plays an important role in building a nation's civilization. Literary works not only provide inspiration for building the nation, but also function as a forum for passing on local wisdom values to future generations. Local wisdom is very important for the identity of the nation. A nation's literary works can also be used to assess its level of civilization (Arial, 2022).

Because literature integrates culture, morality, and social issues, it serves as a means of character development. Literature combines social and moral language in addition to cultural language. Literature demonstrates social reality and teaches ethics to readers (Alawi, 2018). A country's character is shaped through psychological education through literature. This makes sense because literature explores society (sociology), the universe (romantic), divinity (religion), and the individual (psychology) (Septiningsih, 2022). As a medium of artistic expression, literature is crucial to the formation of national identity. This is due to the fact that literature can depict significant events that took place in particular

eras and locales and can reflect social and cultural life. Literature can therefore aid society in realizing and preserving its sense of national identity. Literature has the power to convey a nation's cultural distinctiveness, depth, and diversity. A nation's noble values, such as its traditional values, beliefs, and customs, can also be upheld and advanced through literature (Jatmikanurhadi, 2023).

Local literature is important to society as well. Local literature provides us with an educational resource about society and its culture. There are several ideas regarding local literature. These include the belief that it originated in earlier societies or predates modern Indonesian literature, that it is an important aspect of Indonesian culture that should be studied more to improve national culture, that it provides a window into the nation's soul, spirituality, beliefs, and customs, that it is used to instill noble values in the next generation, and that it facilitates the development of human resources by providing a framework and a strategic tool for enhancing Indonesia's diversity (Didipu, 2011).

The fields of journalism and literature have expanded concurrently since the 1940s. Their own style is followed in the develop for literacy. One method is to have literary rubrics placed on the pages of print media literary works by the media. This in and of itself is a moral obligation. Print media should make room for literature since they have a direct relationship with language and literature. For those who require more than just news, in particular (Gultom, 2016). Although there are some media that do not feature literature, media that offer a home for literary works undoubtedly aid writers in creating their works (Rafa, 2018).

Print media, particularly magazines and newspapers, play a critical role in the advancement of Indonesian literature. Print media, whether in the form of literary essays, drama or play scripts, poetry, short stories, or essays, informs readers about the existence of Indonesian literature. The 1950s and 1960s were considered the "golden ages" of magazine literature because of the explosive growth of different publications publishing literary works during those years (Santosa & Djamari, 2013). But lately, modern life has become more digitalized, which is upending every aspect of it. When real-world activities move into the virtual realm, the digitalization era is known as a disruptive one (Mutiarra & Priyonggo, 2019).

At present, the print media industry faces a significant threat from the swift advancement of digital technology. The rise of social media and the internet are examples of factors that may act as catalysts for the demise of print media (Wu, 2018). New difficulties arise with the transition from print to digital immigration. Digitalization is causing book formats and print traditions to gradually disappear. Written materials need to be digitally formatted (Widarmanto, 2020). The output of print media collapsed as a result. One significant effect of the reduction in print media publications' quantity has been felt in the print media literature as well.

Including local literature written by Javanese authors who are beginning to find it harder and harder to publish their writing in print media. A number of newspapers that had published articles about Javanese literature have also trimmed back or eliminated their coverage. Only three Javanese weekly magazines are still published at this time: *Jaya Baya* (Surabaya), *Panyebar Selamat* (Surabaya), and *Djaka Lodang* (Jogja) (Nugroho, 2022).

Writers were also affected by the disruptive era, including poets or writers of Javanese poetry. Literary works can be broadly classified into three categories: poetry, drama, and prose. Literary authors consequently started to lose access to media for expressing their works. As per Saxby, a picture of life can be comprehended as a tangible depiction of a real-life model, making it effortless to visualize while reading (Nurdiyantoro, 2018). Because literary works are products of human creativity, they can be thought of as human objects, human facts, or cultural facts. Because of the author's imagination, literary works emerge in society and mirror social phenomena that occur in their immediate surroundings (Faruk, 2012).

The role of digital media technologies in reshaping our understanding of migration and globalization dynamics from multidisciplinary perspectives. The experience of displacement is reinterpreted and transformed through digital technologies, such as datafication, visualization, biometric technologies, platformization securitization, and extended reality (Ponzanesi, 2019).

Every shift that takes place will have an effect on every other change, allowing the emerging technology trends to resonance with each other and gain strength, influence, and reciprocal benefits. In addition, technology that is thought to be able to adjust to changes over time may be vanished or corrected, which would have a disruptive effect. One concept of the migration from analog to digital, describes the transition of traditional media into digital platforms, including websites and applications.

This shift highlights the growing centrality of digital technology in disseminating and consuming information (Negroponte, 1998).

Examining how Javanese literary poets are coping with the disruption caused by media technology is an intriguing subject. How do poetry writers or poets of Javanese literature continue to play a role in digital society. The purpose of this study is to ascertain the strategies employed by Javanese literary poets to sustain their innovative approaches while upholding traditional values in the face of print media disruption.

Theoretical Framework

Media Migration

In *Being Digital*, Nicholas Negroponte (1998) outlines fundamental concepts related to New Media. The first concept, *the migration from analog to digital*, describes the transition of traditional media—such as newspapers and magazines—into digital platforms, including websites and applications. This shift highlights the growing centrality of digital technology in disseminating and consuming information. The second concept, *personalization and adaptation*, underscores the capacity of digital systems to customize content based on individual user preferences.

Personalization refers to the tailored presentation of content, while adaptation involves a system's ability to adjust to users' behaviors or environmental changes. These processes are driven by algorithms that dynamically respond to user interactions. Lastly, *the impact of smartphones on everyday life* is profound. Smartphones have revolutionized access to information and social connectivity through continuous internet availability and applications, reshaping how individuals communicate, engage with information, and interact with their surroundings in a digital context.

Local literature

Poetry is the oldest literary work ever written by humans. Aside from that, poetry is a kind of literature that emphasizes the richness and beauty of language in its presentation (Waluyo, 2002). contends that a literary work's birth and existence are determined by three internal actors: a) the literary work's creators, or poets and writers b) The society that the literary work was produced for; c) The literary activities and structure of the existing literature. Poets are the main agents who produce literary works. Through the power of the poet's imagination in processing literature using the medium of language, poetry begins to emerge to the surface (Widodo, 2024).

Local literature is oriented toward a unity or actual reality, with contextual elements of space and time. The cultural contexts that exist and are applicable in the area where the literary work is produced are thus reflected or depicted in local literary works, which may differ from culture in other areas (Budiman, 2005).

Material and Methodology

Qualitative descriptive research is the kind in which the data is presented verbally and visually rather than numerically. According to Bogdan and Taylor (Moleong, 2022), qualitative research is a technique that involves gathering descriptive information from participants via spoken or written words as well as through behavior observation.

Descriptive research aims to produce a methodical, factual, and accurate record of the specifics and features of a given activity. In qualitative research, the primary data sources are words and actions. Supplementary data, such as documents, make up the remaining data. The main source of information for this study is interviews with chosen informants, who are poets or poetry writer who write in Javanese literature.

The resources in this research are members of the *Paguyuban Panatacara Yogyakarta (PPY)*, which is an association of Javanese poets and artists, namely Panca Waluya, Jack Haryanto, Budi Sutowiyoso and literary writer Sriyono, contributor for several Javanese language magazine. In this case, the researcher uses a structured interview, where an interviewer determines the problem and questions to be asked to find answers to questions prepared based on the focus of the research.

Result and Discussion

The Demise of Print Media

The development of digital technology which has resulted in reducing the publication of Javanese language print media has also been felt by Javanese poets. Those who previously often sent their manuscripts to magazines such as *Panjebar Spirit*, *Jaya Baya* and others felt they had lost a place to publish their work. "I wrote *gurit* (Javanese poetry) several times published in magazines. But that's no longer the case," explained Sriyono, a Javanese poet who was once selected as the best *macapat* writer by *Panjebar Selamat* Magazine.

Javanese poet Jack Haryanto, who is currently involved in *the Paguyuban Panatacara* Yogyakarta (PPY), agreed with this. "I believe its time has come to an end. It becomes less and less as time passes. Whether you like it or not, friends who continue to write now only in the studio," he said. He understands that there is no stopping the advancement of media technology. Panca Waluya, another poet member of PPY, agreed with Jack when he said, "Actually, this is all because of changing times. Because we are now living in the age of online media and social media, what was once in the form of magazines is becoming more and more out of date."

People's reading behavior changes in response to technological advancements. "People no longer desire to read magazines. The magazines I write for are gone, just as newspapers are," Sriyono clarified. Nowadays, people favor social media or online media. "These days, they utilize YouTube. The times have evolved. Even performances by *wayang kulit* (puppets performance) are already cut shorter," said Sriyono.

The interviewee's explanation above is consistent with recent research findings, which indicate that a significant decline in print media circulation due to reader and customer attrition resulted from consumers' reading habits shifting from traditional media to internet-based digital media platforms (Choliq et al., 2023). While the popularity of reading has not gone down, it has changed. Instead of relying solely on traditional media like books, magazines, and newspapers, people are now using digital media, which is thought to be quicker and easier to locate the information one is looking for.

People's reading habits on digital media have changed due to the ease of access, particularly among students in generation Z (Milavandia & Hariyanto, 2024). Numerous studies also demonstrate that the rise of digital media, or the internet, has resulted in a decline in interest in reading print media, a trend that is observed in many nations worldwide, including Indonesia. In addition, people's reading habits have changed from intensive to extensive reading as a result of the introduction of digital media (Pramesti & Irwansyah, 2021).

Migration to Internet

Javanese poets also have to made the migration to the internet platform, whether like it or not. This is a two-sided development. When it comes to writing on the internet, Sriyono claims that people have become arbitrary. "Unfortunately, it crosses ethical lines, pushes limits, and goes too far. But in other way, people's ability to openly express their emotions is a good thing," he stated. The similar sentiment was expressed by Javanese poet and *dalang* (puppeteer) Budi Sutowiyoso or Suto. The publication of Javanese poets' works was previously restricted to specific media only, but it is now more easily accessible, he claims. "An account of social media can now be owned by anybody. Your work is ready for uploading as soon as it is created. Numerous people will watch it if the quality proves to be good," he stated.

Suto is not too worried that freedom in the internet era will become too much in the world of Javanese art literature. "Everyone can upload anything. It can't be stopped. We can't prohibit it. But later it will also be filtered by itself. The public will also be able to choose. If a work is not good, it doesn't necessarily mean that there will be a lot of viewers," explained Suto. According to him, this will be seen from the number of viewers who view it and how many subscriber. Audiences will look for good literature artwork, if it doesn't suit them they will easily leave.

According to Jack, the presence of the internet has become more advantageous because poets' works are more easily disseminated to the wider community. "Actually, this development is something that is beneficial for making an artwork better known. It is easier for the wider community or many people to enjoy it. With the requirement that you have to be able to follow the technology," explained Jack. Understanding technology in the digital era is also Suto's note for Javanese poets. "Incidentally, I has a technological basis. So I can still keep up with technology. Meanwhile, other artist friends have

difficulty creating their own channels. They're thought to be very expensive. So it's hard to think about. In fact, if you know the technology, it's actually cheap and easy," explained Suto.

Suto mentioned, the problem with traditional artists migration to the internet era, especially Javanese artists, is their lack of understanding of technology. For this reason, Suto stepped in to help other artists express their work in digital form. "My colleagues have very good material, I understand technology, and we work together. So the mutualism symbiosis is to be displayed," he explained.

Literary works published on the internet and disseminated online are often called digital literature or cyberliterature. The term digital literature describes the growth of literary works that are produced, shared, and read online. Digital literary works can be freely shared on a range of social media and media platforms sometimes seen as a negative aspect. The quantity of literature that can be published has no restrictions anymore.

The rules and regulations governing the quality of the work are ignored when publishing cyberliterature on the internet. The caliber of literary writing on the internet suffers when there is no curation system in place. Literary works of today don't adhere to grammar and writing conventions. Digital literature loses quality due to poorly written sentences, misspellings, and diction (Pala, 2021).

However, this dissemination represents a novel form of democratization within the literary community. Literary works in many forms, such as prose, poetry, essays, short stories, drama, etc., are now available for readers to access, share, and enjoy in digital format. Digital poetry, interactive stories, literary blogs, e-books, and unique websites are just a few of the formats in which digital literary works can be found. Digital literary works can incorporate multimedia components like images, audio, and video to enhance reader appreciation (Admin Teknokrat, 2023).

Audio-visualized Poetry

From here, another issue facing Javanese poets making the migration to the digital age is the internet's audio-visual technology embedded. "Like it or not, the written format has to be changed to audio or video format," Suto stated. On YouTube, he occasionally finds poets from Java who read *gurit* or Javanese poetry, but he claims that internet users would rather hear Javanese poetry performed as songs or *tembang*. "So it would be better to develop it so that the audio and video are more interesting," he said.

Nowadays, Javanese poets have to be able to sing in Javanese way or *tembang*, and the same goes for artists connected to Javanese literature. Jack, who also serves as a *panatacara* or host for Javanese cultural events, added, "Moreover, with print media no longer available, like it or not, I have to apply poetry made in song form." He said that in order to write Javanese poetry, a *panatacara* needs to be able to apply his or her strong grasp of Javanese literature. In addition to writing the appropriate poetry or lyrics, it would be great if he could also sing them. "For a *panatacara* or host, that would be a plus," Jack continued.

Jack stated, the absence of print media has forced him to directly apply Javanese poetry which was written in the form of songs that were sung during Javanese cultural events. "Like it or not, I have to learn *tembang* (Javanese sing). In order to sing well, I also have to be able to write lyrics or *cakepan*," he explained. The event activities were recorded and then uploaded to his social media to be disseminated later.

Presently, Jack is associated with *Paguyuban Panatacara Yogyakarta*, or PPY, a group of Yogyakarta-based Javanese event guides or master of ceremony. Members of this community practice understanding Javanese cultural practices with one another. Including learning to sing and speaking flawless Javanese. "Now there are many similar organizations besides PPY, such as *Permadani* in Central Java, which also teach Javanese literature to be more applicable and increasingly interesting to share on social media," Jack stated. For instance, the artist writes a poem called *cakepan* that is applied to the event when the *panatacara* leads the *nyondro* or poem procession during a wedding.

"*Cakepan* is nothing more than a *guritan* or Javanese poetry that I made up myself," Jack explained. Every *panatacara* has a unique style of poetry that they create. Javanese poets are required to be proficient in singing the song, which is performed in some traditional event processions in the form of a *cakepan* sung. Every Javanese poet is able to immediately apply his artwork through songs in this way.

Geguritan is Javanese poetry style included in modern poetry in Javanese *gagrag anyar* (new version) literature. *Geguritan* is easier to understand because it does not follow conventional rules such

as *guru gatra*, *guru lagu*, or *guru wilangan* (Purwadi, 2007). Meanwhile *Panatacara* is someone who has special skills in the Javanese language who is able to host events in the Javanese community.

A *panatacara* certainly has an important role in the procession of an event. *Panatacara* is often associated with traditional Javanese ceremonies, such as the bride and groom (*temanten*), death (*kesripahan*), meeting (*pepanggihan*), banquet (*pasamuhan*), recital (*pengaosan*), performances, and so on (Octa, 2022). An event guide is a person who is given the task of guiding an event or activity who usually shows the ability to bring the audience to liven up the atmosphere.

Nowadays there are unwritten rules for the *panatacara* profession which require that a presenter needs to have other supporting provisions, such as traditional fashion, make-up, Javanese *gendhing* and *tembang* (Javanese songs) (Admin, 2016). *Tembang* according to Martopangrawit is a song related to *karawitan* (Javanese music) such as: *sindhengan*, *Bawa*, *Gerong*, *Sulukan*, *Sekar Ageng*, *Sekar Tengahan*, and *Sekar Macapat*.

The definition of *tembang* can be interpreted as male or female vocals accompanying a piece or solo (singing alone without musical accompaniment) in a *karawitan* (musical performance). *Tembang Jawa* refers to a genre of traditional Javanese music that has its roots in the courts of Central Java and Yogyakarta. It is a form of vocal music usually accompanied by a gamelan orchestra. Javanese *tembang* is characterized by its slow, melodious songs and lyrics that often convey deep philosophical and spiritual messages. *Tembang* are an important part of Javanese culture and are often performed at Javanese ceremonies and traditional events. It is also recognized as a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (Nurwayan, 2016).

Returns to Square One

The audio-visual format of digital developments has compelled Javanese poets who had previously worked through writing to now work through song. Sriyono claims that this migration circumstance restores Javanese literary poetry to its original form. Poetry authors from Java need to be singers. Writing is impossible without the ability to sing. Because one must write a Javanese song's correct poetic lyrics while singing. "The outcomes have to be accurate," he declared.

Javanese poets must not only be proficient in a wide range of vocabulary from different levels, but also in singing. Sriyono asserts that the poem must be adjusted to the breath in order to identify its breaking point. Particularly when writing *macapat* poetry, a type of Javanese poetry with a set structure. "For published in *Panjebar Semangat* before, I used to write *macapat* with *rengeng-rengeng* (humming). It wouldn't fit without that," according to Sriyono.

This is not the same as poetry or *gurit*, which is more flexible and doesn't require an arrangement. For instance, the *dalang* (puppeteer) always uses *janturan*, or initial narration, which is essentially *gurit*, or exquisite poetry, to begin a *wayang* performance. However, Javanese poetry was traditionally always sung, according to Sriyono. For instance, singing can be used to soothe a baby to sleep. Similarly, poetry is always sung during the bridal proposal procession or during the guest welcoming.

It is therefore fitting that poets from Java should also be able to sing. Although Sriyono is a talented poet and singer, he did not take part in the creation of digital media to spread the poetry he wrote. "I only give it to people who ask. That's enjoyable to me. Go ahead and post it on social media later if they so choose," he said.

What brings him even more joy is that an increasing number of Javanese poets are taking up *tembang* (singing) in order to disseminate poetry on social media, which helps to revive Javanese literature's unique identity. "*Macapat* was traditionally read in public settings. The objective is amity. For amusement, as there was no radio or television at the time. People take turns singing *macapat* at gatherings," according to Sriyono.

Javanese poetry imparts moral lessons about character, life, flattery, and other topics. "The *guritan* is more liberated. But there are standards, or standards created by poets, particularly for *macapat*. There are four language levels that can be found in a single song: *ngoko*, *kromo madya*, *kromo inggil*, and *kawi*. Any topic can be covered in the content. It could be fight challenges, sarcasm, flattery, or criticism," said Sriyono.

According to Sriyono, the noble Javanese teachings were written by poets in the form of songs so that they were more immortal because they could be preserved. "Because if it is written in prose, people will quickly throw it away. So, to make it more memorable, use songs as *tembang*. Throughout

the ages it will be sung. It still resonates throughout time," he said. He welcomed the joy of seeing the current movements of Javanese poet artists who are returning to learning to sing Javanese style.

Yogyakarta Special Region elementary schools are beginning to incorporate literature lessons into their local content curriculum. "Elementary schools are currently being developed for the Sleman area. The number of *macapat* lessons has started to rise. It has been demonstrated that there is a district-level *macapat* competition with numerous participants from elementary and middle schools," said Panca, who was chosen to serve as judge and supervisor. "Furthermore, the younger generation is now beginning to become involved again because of *Dana Keistimewaan* (special funds). Literature and language are currently getting better," he continued.

Suto says he's very happy about this. "Because the Javanese language is now very minimally introduced by families who are actually Javanese," Suto stated. And also there are still relatively few Javanese language channels on YouTube, so he hopes that more poets from Java will continue to support this circumstance by participating in social media. "So it is necessary to promote Javanese literary works on the internet and YouTube audio-visually," he stated.

This view is consistent with the assertion made by Sriyono that the literary works of Javanese culture are primarily intended to be spoken or listened to rather than written down. "Sung. Not written. The text serves only as a guide," he explained. Javanese literature was written in the past because print media was the only available form of media at the time, making it simple to spread. Currently, Javanese literature seems to have rediscovered its identity, which is being sung melodiously.

In modern Javanese literature, modern Javanese poetry is called *geguritan*. *Geguritan* itself comes from the word *gurit* which means "inlay writing, ballads and songs". Meanwhile, *geguritan* means *tembang uran-uran* (song without music) which takes the form of *purwakanthi* (Supardjo, 2023). Based on this interpretation, it can be concluded that the *gurit* was meant to be sung from the beginning. In Javanese culture and society, *tembang*, or Javanese songs, have a variety of functions. Metaphors can be used in poetry, especially *tembang*, to convey expressiveness and efficacy in songs or poetry that are based on the poet's emotional and perceptual resemblance to the surrounding environment (Heriwati, 2010).

Apart from serving as a form of entertainment, *tembang macapat* is considered to possess intrinsic power, encapsulate a philosophy of life, and convey a variety of life's complexities. This quality renders *macapat* songs more accessible and widely recognized, particularly within rural communities. The extent to which these benefits are realized, however, depends largely on the depth of one's interpretation and experiential insight. Traditional literary works, especially *macapat* songs, encompass various aspects of Javanese culture presented in poetic form, enriched with *basa sinandi* (symbolic language) and *pasemon* (figurative language). These require careful and perceptive analysis to unravel the layered meanings embedded within them (Sutarjo, 2022).

Conclusions

The results of the research show that new digital habits explore user behaviour which cross social media platforms to new patterns of communication, information, and media technologies. The Computer Mediated Communication as a theoretical study has changed in the way people communicate with one another, and it can influence communication patterns and social networks (Okviana, 2019). Although, the digitization of poetry in Javanese has brought it back to the original form in which it was sung in its original form or *tembang*.

Javanese songs are an important part of Javanese cultural heritage, and many songs have been passed down from generation to generation. Singing and listening to Javanese songs is one way of preserving and celebrating the rich cultural traditions of the Javanese people. Overall, Javanese songs function as a means of artistic expression, cultural preservation, and social cohesion in Javanese society. Its existence is very important in the implementation of education (Putri et al., 2022).

Tembang as oral communication was the way Javanese people communicated before they learned to write and use letters. Verbal communication can sometimes take more forms than simple conversation. Sometimes oral tradition develops into a creative and artistic exchange. Consequently, many oral performances have transitioned from informal to enjoyable communication. Oral tradition serves as a vehicle for the collective expression of ideas and sociocultural norms (Endraswara, 2005). Oral traditions frequently hold a different position than written traditions in terms of form and meaning. Oral traditions convey moral messages that are not serious and full of indoctrination. Delivering the

message in a peaceful, fluid setting allows the moral message to be easily digested and internalized in people's lives (Danandjaja, 1986).

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