

RASASIH AS THE BASIC GUIDE FOR HUMAN RELATIONS IN KAWRUH PAMOMONG MANUSCRIPT

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Abstract

Kawruh Pamomong manuscript by Ki Mardisiswaya (1932) emphasizes the importance of *rasasih* (loving-kindness) in the human relation to avoid dispute. This paper aims at describing the function and meaning of *rasasih* in *Kawruh Pamomong* manuscript. This study combines qualitative ontology approach and reception theory. Analysis results showed that *rasasih* functions as a guide for a human being to think, behave, and act decently and properly. Decent and proper behavior will establish and secure harmony in the human relationship with their family members, surrounding society, and the universe. Therefore, *rasasih* implies deep and relevance meaning to the modern world. Based on that fact, parents are responsible to teach their children properly to develop *rasasih* among them.

Keywords: *rasasih*, qualitative ontology, human action, *Kawruh Pamomong*.

1. Introduction

The duality of decent and proper vs. indecent and improper behavior is frequently taught in an educational setting, both at home and formal institutions. It has become an important element in education and is believed to be undisputedly correct. But can we guarantee that decent behavior is always proper? Meanwhile, the duality has formed segregation in society with the classification of 'good' and 'bad' people. The classification is based on cultural norms and values. The best example is the use of the word *diancuk/jiancuk/jancuk* among the East Javanese people. The particular term had transformed from a slang word of sexual intercourse to profanity and currently used as a greeting (*cuk*) in an intimate relationship. Meanwhile, the term is considered improper among Central Javanese people as it represents a taboo behavior.

The use of the term formed the classification of decent and proper vs. indecent and improper in communication ethic that strongly depends on the cultural values. Likewise, human actions, in general, are influenced by the ethics of decency and propriety believed by a specific ethnic group. Both communication and behavior ethics are widely observed in order to avoid misunderstanding, quarrel, dispute, and feeling of being the most righteous

one. It corresponds with Franz Magnis-Suseno (1984) argument that ethics is a set of knowledge-oriented as a guide and basis of human action. Ethic in Javanese sense according to Magnis-Suseno is the effort to maintain politeness and harmony in a domestic partnership and general human relationship. In other words, politeness and harmony are learned as the guide of human actions.

Several Javanese literary works and manuscripts discuss the guide of human actions, including *Kawruh Pamomong* or 'knowledge for educators' by Ki Mardisiswaya. It is published by Panitia Windukencana in 1932. The manuscript is written in Javanese script and language and currently stored at the Library of Dewantara Kirti Griya Museum in Taman Siswa, Yogyakarta, and collection number 8b.1.029. The copy of the manuscript is stored at the University of Indonesia Library, collection number BKL.0902-PW 146.

The title page of the manuscript mentions that *Kawruh Pamomong (KP)* is teaching (*wejangan*) by Ki Ageng Suryamataraman (KAS). In addition, the introductory notes of the manuscript informed that a) the teachings written in *KP* is the representation of *Wejangan Suryamataram*; b) *KP* discusses the core teachings written in *Serat Pangawikan Pribadi (Kawruh Begja)* by KAS; and c) in order to understand the content of *KP*, it is recommended to read *Wejangan Suryamataram* beforehand (Mardisiswaya, 1932, p. 3).

Referring to the second point in the introductory notes, KAS recommended human beings to fully understand their own individual self. The teaching is based on KAS' observation on himself as a way to understand human being (Grangsang, 1989). In other words, KAS conducted empirical research to learn human psychology as a basic guide of their actions. His observation was based on the understanding that human beings have the ability to feel, think, and want something that indicates the life movement in their minds (Grangsang, 1989). KAS' analysis formed the concept of "human image" which does not depend on the identity of a human being. Instead, "human image" closely relates to world life and explains what it is to be a human (Grangsang, 1993). Therefore, KAS described his teachings on the basis of human behavior during their lives with the purpose to establish the harmony between human beings and their surrounding world. KAS' teaching in *KP* is analyzed objectively in this study as an autonomy research object. Therefore, the data used in this research is entirely based on the studied text.

The teaching described in *KP* is intended for maids or parents as the first and main educator for children. By learning the teachings in *KP*, parents are expected to teach *rasa sih* to their children and encourage them to maintain it during the following life stages. Based on that consideration, *rasa sih* is an important Javanese teaching to be discussed in order to reveal its relevance with the current modern life. This paper describes the function and meaning of *rasa sih* to investigate its relevance.

2. Literature Review

Until the current research, there are three previous studies on *Kawruh Pamomong* manuscript. First, Dian Eko Wicaksono and Al Thuba Septa Priynggasari presented their analysis under the title *Kawruh Pamomong KAS (Ki Ageng Suryamentaram) Nilai-nilai Moral untuk Optimalisasi Bonus Demografi*. By implementing psychology approach, the study is aimed at encouraging the new generation to maintain morality that represents the nation's identity based on the local genius (KAS' concept) for the optimization of demographic advantage. Understanding the teachings in *Kawruh Pamomong* and implementing it as a teaching model by the parents would encourage the children to develop unconditional loving-kindness and wise thinking. The specific teaching model would result in exemplary human being with

faith towards God, humanity, and willingness to participate in the development of the nations to optimize the demography advantages.

In addition, research by Turita Indah Setyani (2016) with the title "Rasa Sih Means of Fundamental Education for Character Establishment in Nationhood and Statehood" argued that *rasa sih* in *Kawruh Pamomong* represents the basic human awareness to understand things in the right way. It concluded that *Rasa sih* enforced human character building both in physical and spiritual aspects in manifesting the nationhood and statehood.

The third research is conducted by Alimul Muniroh (2018), entitled *Kawruh Pamomong Ki Ageng Suryomentaram: Prinsip-prinsip Moral untuk Mengoptimalkan Pendidikan Empati pada Anak*. She argued that morality principle is an essential element in building empathy among children. Empathy should be encouraged to allow children to understand diversity in society and avoid social conflict. Therefore, Muniroh argued that the three morality principles in *Kawruh Pamomong*, namely teaching the children to *sumerep*, show loving-kindness towards others, and appreciate beauty; can be learned as a guide to teach empathy to children. The teaching of empathy is based on several expected behaviors and characters, including acceptance, attentive, listening, observant, looking at the bright side, affirmative approach, and enthusiastic. By those morality principles, children are expected to be able to optimize their empathy to their friends and avoid social conflict among the students.

The previous studies by Wicaksono and Priyanggasari, Setyani, and Muniroh provide an opportunity to conduct further research on *rasa sih* concept in *Kawruh Pamomong*. This research is aimed at describing the function and meaning of *rasa sih* to allow a deeper understanding of its relevance with modern life. In addition, the mentioned previous studies support this current research. Methods, approach, and theory implemented in this study to achieve the research objectives are explained in the following section.

3. Research Method

This study combines qualitative method and ontology approach to analyze the meaning of *rasa sih* in *KP*. According to Jalaluddin and Abdullah Idi (1998, p. 69), ontology is a natural science that investigates the material world and its condition. In addition, according to Suariasumantri (2004, p. 9), ontology is to study the self-based on empirical research. As mentioned above, *KP* describes the teachings of KAS which resulted from his personal experience. Thus, the ontology approach is considered appropriate to investigate the essence of *rasa sih* in *KP* which was written according to KAS' experience. By implementing the ontology approach, *rasa sih* concept can be understood as the essence of human life that includes universal reality.

On the other hand, the ontology approach allows analysis of the essence of reality in quantitative and qualitative perspectives. Quantitative ontology aims at deciding whether reality is singular or plural matter; while qualitative ontology seeks to answer "what is a reality?" (Kattasoff, 2004, p. 186). This study implements a qualitative ontology approach as it corresponds with the research method and objective, that is to reveal the reality of *rasa sih* based on the reception of *KP*.

In general, literary reception is the act of providing meaning to the reader's response to a specific text. According to Jauss (1982, p. 21), the readers' experiences manifest solid orchestration between their responses with the text involved in their reading activities. In this manner, literary history does not depend on the organization of facts but based on the literary experience of the readers. Therefore, the reader possesses total freedom to interpret the meaning of a text based on their knowledge and experience. Reception theory is applied in this study to investigate the readers' responses towards *KP*. Reception of *rasa sih* in *KP* will

reveal its function and meaning. The following diagram summarizes the research methods explained above.

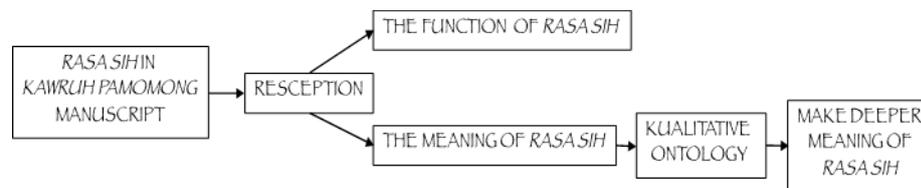


Figure 1. The research methods.

4. Results and Discussion

KP explains the teaching strategies for parents and life knowledge in seven chapters, namely the purpose of *Kawruh Pamomong*; luck; *rasa sih* or loving kindness; *congkrah* or dispute; causes of *congkrah*; strategies to actualize *rasa sih*; and guides for children education (Mardiswaya, 1932, p. 43).

Among the seven chapters included in *KP*, this study is focused to analyze *rasa sih*. According to Mardiswaya (1932, p. 4), *rasa sih* is an ability that allows an individual to feel the others' feelings and understand (*sumerep*) that everyone has the tendency to "feel like the right one". It is due to the fact that all occurrences in human life constitute causes based on their own actions (from "feeling right"). Therefore, it can be said that all events in human life are the consequences of their own actions or behaviors. Further discussion in the following sections will be based on the function and meaning of *rasa sih* as a teaching strategy for parents.

4.1 *Rasa Sih* Function

In general, the reception on teaching model described in *KP* is intended to encourage *rasa sih* among children as their basic guide in facing life phenomenon so that their lives will be constantly in luck (*begja*). On the other hand, false teaching would not only disassociate *begja* from their lives but might even develop egoistic trait. Later, this trait will rise problems in their social relations as it caused other people feel uncomfortable to interact with them. Egoistic people tend to think themselves as the most righteous one and perceive others as bad people. Further, it may trigger *congkrah* both in intrapersonal and interpersonal lives (Mardiswaya, 1932, p. 6). This explanation leads to the function of *rasa sih* as a strategy to achieve *begja*.

KP manuscript explains the recommended strategies to attain *begja* and contrasts it with the bad strategies in accordance with children's age. The recommended strategy is by explaining and showing them the right behaviors in an understandable language. Wrong teaching strategy might destruct children's mind and logic and develop anxiety, fear, and low self-esteem. As a solution, *KP* mentions three strategies to be followed, namely: provide the right examples, talk honestly, and explain clearly.

The first strategy is providing the right example in the right way. Parents or maids are expected to behave correctly so that the children are able to act in a similar way. The best example for this case is when children are reluctant to finish their meals. The typical response for this behavior is scaring the children away by telling them that "the chickens are going to die". As the alternative, it is better to communicate with the children to understand their conditions and find the solutions. They might have been full or suffered from stomach ache (Mardiswaya, 1932, p. 22).

The second strategy is telling the truth to children. For example, parents should not leave their children in secret or lie to them. The parents should tell the children the truth that they are leaving and also inform the children where they are going (Mardisiswaya, 1932, pp. 30-31). Another example of this case is when children tell their mothers that one of their friends was cheating in a game. The typical response for this case is asking the children to stop playing with the naughty friend. Meanwhile, *KP* recommended that the parents should respond wisely by asking the children how it happened and giving solutions according to the children's fault (Mardisiswaya, 1932, p. 32). This strategy will encourage children to think in positive manners and help them to behave properly later in their lives.

The third strategy is by explaining in the right way that everything in the world is good, beautiful, or delicious. Parents should train the children's senses in tasting sweet, salty, or sour tastes in the right way. By this way, the children will use their senses according to the functions and avoid the development of dislike towards specific things (Mardisiswaya, 1932, p. 41).

The implementation of the above strategies will make the children understand (*sumerep*) world phenomenon in the right way. In addition, parents should teach children in an understandable language. Wrong teaching strategy can destruct children's mind and logic which later may develop into *rasa congkrah* or 'dispute and uncomfortable feelings' both in intrapersonal and interpersonal settings. An individual with *congkrah* feeling will experience battles with himself in dealing with life events or problems. He tends to find solutions based on his perception as "the right one". It is one of the consequences of bad teaching strategy during childhood.

The three teaching strategies mentioned above are the recommended alternatives to develop right thinking, *rasa sih* towards other people and life events among children; so they will be able to accept life reality without much trouble.

Therefore, *rasa sih* functions as a guide for a human being to think, behave and act decently and properly. The function develops physical and spiritual freedoms in an individual's relationship with other people or groups of people, and harmony will follow later as the consequence. In addition, physical and spiritual freedom will develop into *begja*.

4.2 Meaning of *Rasa Sih*

According to *KP* manuscript, *rasa sih* is the ability to feel others' feelings, so an individual is capable to "see" (understand) that everyone has the tendency to "think as the right one". It is based on the right knowledge that is developed from "real understanding" instead of "know-it-all perception". Real understanding is knowledge obtained from personal experience.

"Know-it-all perception" is a knowledge which considered as true based on people's experiences and statements or books and literature. It is recommended to admit that "I know that I don't know" when an individual is inexperienced on a specific matter. In addition to that, it is also recommended to admit that the information is based on others' experiences or statements when needed (Mardisiswaya, 1932, p. 27).

The example of a knowledge that is based on others' experiences and statements is restaurant recommendation. In some opportunities, we invite friends to have lunch in a restaurant by believing others' opinions that the place serves delicious foods. The knowledge of delicious food is based on others' statement instead of personal experience. If the opinion is proven to be wrong, distrust will be triggered. Distrust can develop into dislike and be dangerous for human relationship.

Based on the analysis, *rasa sih* represents an individual's awareness to behave in a decent and proper manner. That behavior is based on the real condition of knowledge and leads an

individual to behave decently and properly. Decent and proper behavior is the result of decent and proper thinking. Therefore, *rasa sih* is a measurement for an individual to think, behave, and act decently and properly.

In this case, the standard of decent and proper is based on real understanding on *rasa sih* meaning, that is the ability to understand life condition and reality properly. It corresponds with ontological concept which remarks that decent and proper thinking, behavior, and action represent the real truth of a current fact. In KAS' term, '*saiki, neng kene, ngene, ya aku gelem*' or 'I'm ready now, here, in this condition'. It is analogous with an archer who successfully hit the target, or in other words, doing his job properly. Therefore, *rasa sih* is the true feeling that is based on reality.

According to the analysis, it can be concluded that *rasa sih* is a basic guide for human beings to conduct their daily activities decently and properly. The truth is based on the indisputable facts and reality that make an individual feel certain in doing their duties. Suseno (1991, pp. 138-159) explained that the decent and proper behavior is based on the right understanding that leads to proper acts in the proper place and time. The meaning corresponds with Javanese philosophy on the principle of physical and spiritual unity.

KP describes truth as something that "can be seen" with human senses and "can be felt" with the human mind. It leads to the implication that the right knowledge is developed from real truth based on an individual's experience (Mardiswaya, 1932, p. 27). It can only be done by implementing *rasa sih* (spiritual realm). Therefore, it can be concluded that the real knowledge is the truth of a fact that is anything that can be proven with human senses (physical) and felt with the human mind (spiritual).

5. Conclusions

According to the discussion, *rasa sih* generally functions as a strategy to attain *begja*. The teachings to obtain *begja* should be delivered in the right way, namely by guiding and showing the children the right and proper things in an understandable language. *KP* manuscript provides three solutions: giving the right example in the right way, telling children the truth, and explaining in the right way. By then, *rasa sih* functions as a guide for human beings to think, behave, and act decently and properly. The functions establish physical and spiritual freedom in intrapersonal relationship and a social life that might initiate true harmony in social life. The physical and spiritual freedom will establish *begja*. Meanwhile, *rasa sih* can be understood as a true feeling of reality. In *KP* manuscript, *rasa sih* is measured by the ability to understand others' feelings which based on the right knowledge on "knowing". The knowing feeling is the true knowledge gained from personal and real experience.

Understanding the meaning of *rasa sih* represents human knowledge awareness to understand the "right" thing. Knowledge on the right thing is the truth based on facts, that is the truth of something that is considered to be wrong and something that is considered to be true; the real truth. By understanding the real truth of reality, *rasasih* is the measurement of human's thinking, behavior and act will be manifested in the right way. Ontologically; thinking, behaving, acting decently and properly represent the real truth based on the fact that happened in the right time, that is the current moment. Therefore, *rasa sih* concept in *KP* manuscript is a teaching strategy for developing proper and decent behavior in human daily life. Proper and decent behavior will manifest and secure life harmony both in their relationship with other people in society, even with the universe. Thus, *rasa sih* implies deep and relevance meanings for current modern life as it will result in a peaceful and harmonious life.

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