



---

## JAVANESE IDENTITY THROUGH SYMBOLIZATION OF CANTING: A STUDY OF THE NOVEL CANTING BY ARSWENDO ATMOWILOTO

Wahyu Handayani Setyaningsih\*, Wury Dwiwardani  
Japanese Language Program, Vocational College, Universitas Gadjah Mada

---

### ARTICLE INFO

*Article history:*

Received: 26 Sept 2019

Accepted: 29 Oct 2019

Published: 20 Feb 2020

*Keyword:*

canting, Javanese  
identity, cultural  
semiotic

---

### ABSTRACT

This research takes novel Canting as the object of analysis. This research used cultural semiotics approach. The research aims to find the Javanese identity symbolized in canting. The results obtained as follows: (1) Javanese identity is represented by the attitude of "nrimo", which means "accept"; (2) canting is a symbol of high culture which is defeated; (3) high culture must negotiate with mass culture in order to survive.

---

### INTRODUCTION

Each literary work is a particular actualization or realization of a conventional system or a literary and cultural code (Teeuw, 1983). The literature describes the trends that occur in society. Literary works represent the behavior, values, and thoughts of a society. Characters in literary works are created by the author as a transmitter of information or thoughts of the author to the reader. In the novel, the author displays the characters as representations of certain cultures and society. In literature that takes the background of a particular culture or society, the question of identity becomes important to discuss because identity will bring the reader to understand the character and behavior of a society.

In Indonesia, especially in the Javanese culture, batik has a special meaning. In the Handbook of Commodity Profile issued by Ministry of Trade of the Republic of Indonesia, it is mentioned that *Indonesia has been known for its Batik since the 4th or 5th century, and it has been said that Indonesian batik dye techniques and designs are as*

---

\* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: [wahyuhs2015@gmail.com](mailto:wahyuhs2015@gmail.com) (Wahyu Handayani Setyaningsih), [wury\\_dw@yahoo.com](mailto:wury_dw@yahoo.com) (Wury Dwiwardani)

*numerous as its islands*. The designs and colors of batik is vary in accordance with the villages and ethnic groups that have spread out in different islands. Several Javanese villages have maintained their heritage of batik craftsmanship for hundreds of years. Batik has been both an art and craft for centuries and is part of an ancient tradition. The word “batik” is derived from the Javanese word ‘*amba*’, means ‘to write’, the suffix ‘*titik*’ means “little dot” or “to make dots”. In a manuscript on a lontar leaf originating from around 1520 AD which was found in Galuh, Southern Cirebon (west Java), it is written that batik also means ‘*seratan*’ which in Javanese means ‘writing’<sup>†</sup>. According to Pradhikta (2019), in delivering a batik pattern, symbols and marks become the key to express ideas and thoughts, thus the intended concept can be well understood by art connoisseurs.

Javanese culture as the setting of a story is often seen in the novel and other literary works. One of them is *Canting*, a novel by Arswendo Atmowiloto. *Canting* first published in 1986. The novel can be categorized as a product of literature which is reflecting Javanese culture and society using a language. In this case, a novel can be seen as a mean of the author to communicate or convey his ideas to the reader.

The main character in this novel is Ni, the youngest daughter of an aristocrat, Pak Bei (Mr. Bei). Pak Bei was the first person who is daring to act *aeng*—different to another—or act not like a Javanese. His first actions which are considered as *aeng* is marrying Tuginem (then called Bu Bei/Mrs. Bei), a batik laborer. This makes Pak Bei ostracized from his family. So is the case with Ni years later. Unlike her siblings who are successful (as a doctor or run a construction company), after college Ni just decided to continue the *batik* business of his parents. The *batik* business is about to collapse so Ni has to take more effort to make it up again. Ni’s decision shocked her mother because years ago, when Bu Bei pregnant, the baby (Ni) is suspected not Pak Bei’s child so that Pak Bei told that “if the child become a batik laborer or work with batik, then she is not my child—she’s not a *priyayi*”<sup>‡</sup>. Therefore, when Ni decided to run the batik business, she is considered as *aeng* and shocked Bu Bei.

In *Canting*, Arswendo shows the character of Javanese women. Javanese women shown by Bu Bei is a perfect women (Ismawati, 2013). She is not only being a good wife, but also the one who works for the family. As a good wife—perfect women—in Javanese culture, was in line with the characteristic in Javanese culture. In Javanese culture, there are several characteristics of a Javanese. They are religious, no doctrine, tolerant, accommodating, and optimistic (Sujamto, 1993). Religious means that the Javanese usually put forward their religious side in harmony of life, but in the religious practice they are not so obedient (no doctrine). They also tolerant, can adapt to the new situation, and also optimistic. However, these characteristics cannot be seen one by one.

Through the previous study about the novel, the problem about Javanese still remains. This problem is about the characters which builds their identity as Javanese. The objectives of this research are to investigate what kind of attitude which is called Javanese attitude. Why are the different attitudes shown by Pak Bei and Ni is considered as *aeng*? What does the author wish to convey through the symbolization of *canting* in this novel? To answer these questions, a semiotic analysis of the cultural symbols of the

---

<sup>†</sup> The Handbook of Commodity Profile “Indonesian Batik: A Cultural Beauty”, issued by The Ministry of Trade of the Republic of Indonesia. Balitbangdag/PK/001/IX/2008, p. 1.

<sup>‡</sup> The term “*priyayi*” used to call someone or his family who came from upper class in Javanese society.

novel, which suggests a Javanese identity is used. The concept used is the cultural semiotics of Jurij Lotman.

## METHODS

As a language, literature has a major function as one of means of communication. Lotman (1977) shows that in literary works implied: (1) a message, which is transmitting his ideas to the reader; (2) a language, as the abstract system, which is common to both sender and receiver, and build a communication. Furthermore, Lotman (1990) argues that *a text and its readership are in a relationship of mutual activation: a text strives to make its readers conform to itself, to force on them its own system of codes, and the readers respond in the same way. The text as it contains the images of its 'own' text.*

Lotman (Gumilar, 2009) state that cultural semiotics have to find a series of objects of thought, comparing, and deducting the invariant content of intelligence in literary works. Therefore, the signs that string the structures are suspected not only as language references, but must also be viewed in a wider and more complex sense of meaning.

Lotman (1977) sees art (literature) as a secondary modeling system and it is built on the language model. He states that “secondary modeling system, like all semiotic systems, is constructed on the model of language”. For Lotman, literature is a separate language like a language of chemistry, physics, or mathematics. But because it uses the language used daily in some location, then it became a model of life at the level of its semiotic activity. Literature makes natural language as a new language. This new language occupies a secondary position. Literary works are a reflection of society and can be a “mirror” of reality where the work was born. This statement proves that a literary works are not born from a cultural emptiness. Literary works were born as a response to social and cultural conditions (Teeuw, 1980).

Culture is a very broad text, and the text can be understood as a series of signs. Therefore, a semiotic mechanism which is covering the whole text is needed. The mechanism in the semiotic Lotman is called *semiosphere*. Lotman says:

*“semiosphere; the unit of semiosis, the smallest functioning mechanism, is not the separated language but the whole semiotic space of the culture in question. This is the space we term the semiosphere. The semiosphere is the result and the condition for the development of culture; we justify our term by analogy with the biosphere, as Vernadsky<sup>5</sup> defined it, namely the totality and the organic whole of living matter and also the condition for the continuation of life” (Lotman 1990).*

Semiosphere is the result and condition of cultural development. The semiosphere is the architect of Lotman’s cultural semiotics. Among all these systems and models, language is the primary modeling system and we understand the world through a model that offers language. Myth, cultural rules, religion, the language of art and science, exists in the secondary modeling system. If the text is a world model, a series of texts is a secondary modeling system. When cultures are analyzed as codes or systems,

---

<sup>5</sup> All life-cluster are intimately bound to each other. One cannot exist without the other. This connection between different living films and clusters, and their invariancy, is an age-old feature of the mechanism of the earth’s crust, which has existed all through geological time (Lotman, 1990).

the process of use will be richer and less predictable, so it needs a semiotic model that will explain them (Lotman, 1990).

## RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Research Findings

As a message, the novel, *Canting*, conveys author messages through the attitudes of the characters, thoughts, and dialogues within. *Canting* is a copper carat used for making batik. A hand-drawn batik, or batik made with *canting* has a high selling point, so it is usually only worn at certain moments, or only worn by an aristocrat or his family. Hand-drawn batik has special motive and soft texture which is different from another so it is more expensive.

Lotman (1990) argues that artwork must deal with a replica of reality, and the replica is hidden in a semiotic situation as a possibility. In relation to aesthetic production, Lotman states *the point has often been made in aesthetics that the art has to do with the replication of reality. In the elementary fact of making a replica, however, the semiotic situation is hidden a pure possibility.* The novel can be regarded as a portrait of Javanese society. The terms for Javanese priyayi: Raden Ngabehi, Raden Ayu, Raden Rara, Raden Mas are still used today. In this novel, the positioning of *priyayis*, merchants, and servants (maids in the palace) is an evident. The boundaries of each position are immediately visible through the attitude, the use of language, and behavior, which is called the “mirror” of reality.

Narrative analysis is done by dividing the novel into three parts: artistic space, plot, and persona. The artistic space is formed by the binary oppositions in *Canting*. Conventional terms like plot, background, and character are rebuild coherently in one basic concept: paired opposition. This redefinition (Lotman, 1990) is done because literature is a cultural modeling system, while the culture is full of binary structures. The concept of binary opposition is not a coincidence, since binary opposition is the comprehensive language of the fundamental spatial relations for a reality. The following table presents the binary opposition in *Canting*.

Table 1. Binary Opposition in *Canting*

<b>Binary Opposition in <i>Canting</i></b>	
Laki-laki (Men)	Perempuan (Women)
Baik (Good)	Buruk (Bad)
Priyayi (Upper class in society, aristocrat)	Buruh (Laborer, lower class)
Jawa (Javanese)	Tidak Jawa (Not Javanese)
<i>Njawani</i> (Act as a/ like a Javanese)	<i>Aeng</i> (different to another Javanese, weird, or not act like Javanese)
<i>Ndalem</i> (House)	Pasar (Market)
<i>Njero</i> (Inside)	<i>Njobo</i> (Outside)
<i>Nrimo</i> (Accept)	Berontak (Refuse)
Mandiri (Independent)	Bergantung (Dependent)
Budaya tinggi (High culture)	Budaya rendah/massa (Mass culture)
Batik tulis/ batik halus (Hand-drawn batik)	Batik cap (Stamped batik)

From the opposition above can be seen that the story has been built by the characters with each characteristics. Each characteristic has been opposing. First, Pak

Bei, an aristocrat man, a *priyayi*, was opposing to Tuginem, a women laborer from a lower-class family. Javanese culture also distinguishes the concept of inside-outside, and high culture and mass culture. This distinction is symbolized in batik, which has the kind of hand-drawn batik (high culture) and stamped batik (mass culture).

Plot is a series of events that are interconnected with each other in the framework of a breakthrough effort against the semantic fields that build the structure of the artistic space. In this novel, the term "aeng" becomes an important part that continues to exist and form a plot. Starting from the attitude of Pak Bei who married Tuginem, and the attitude of Ni, the youngest daughter of Pak Bei which was also considered as *aeng*. The plot runs from the development of batik Cap Canting (because of Pak Bei's *aeng* by marrying Tuginem) to the defeat of batik Cap Canting (because of Ni's *aeng* by selling her business to the company with mass production of stamped batik).

Tuginem is a batik laborer, so she is used to work hard. As a *priyayi*, Pak Bei is not used to work hard. A *priyayi* used to live comfortably by the work of laborers. By asking to the laborer and giving them instruction, a *priyayi* will get all he wants. That is why Pak Bei marrying Tuginem. He seems to know that a *priyayi* who just continuing that way will get defeated so he is marrying a woman who can work hard to run the business. Nevertheless, he is still respected as a *priyayi*. And Tuginem, a batik laborer is the best choice. She works hard in the batik business, serving and giving all the money she got to her husband—because of her respect to her husband as a *priyayi*—and also being a very good wife for Pak Bei.

Tuginem—or Bu Bei—is the key who makes the batik Cap Canting be the best batik in Solo, and also make the Sestrokusuma family become a respectable family. Years later, printed batik seizes the market. Ni, the youngest decided to take her parent's business. Bu Bei has a heart attack and died when she heard Ni's decision. Batik Cap Canting lost into suffer. The plot of the story runs into anticlimax when batik Cap Canting collapse. Ni sells her Canting brand to another company which has mass production of stamped batik. *Aeng*, being different, weird. This negotiation was the answer and also strategy to survive.

The third term in this analysis is persona. The persona is a representation of abstract functions, both agent functions that break through the semantic fields, as well as the barriers that try to defend it (Lotman 1977; Faruk, 2002). There are two functions of persona, active and passive, which form the map as a model in the text. The terms that appear in this novel represent the things that are part of Javanese cultural types. These terms include the *laku ndhodhok*<sup>\*\*</sup>, *sungkem*<sup>††</sup>, *nrimo*, etc. These attitudes provide clear boundaries on the life of Javanese *priyayis*. In addition, there are objects which are considered to have broken through the functions of persona, such as canting. Canting is a symbol of Javanese culture that is noble, dignified, as well as life for the workers of batik.

---

<sup>\*\*</sup> Walking in a squat. Usually done by the *abdi dalem* (a maid in Javanese upper class family or aristocrats) will face his/her master.

<sup>††</sup> Kneel down in front of parents.

## Discussion

### *Canting*: Secondary Modeling System and A Semiosphere

In this novel, *canting* becomes both title and also determinant of the storyline. *Canting* is a tool used for making batik. Hand-drawn batik using *canting* takes months and so it is expensive. Therefore, *canting* can be considered a high cultural symbol. Nobility class. From the side of batik workers, *canting* can be considered as a symbol of life. With the *canting*, the fine batik they make will continue to be appreciated. This means they keep working. *Canting* is considered a Javanese identity because batik which made with *canting* is a delicate, typical Javanese batik, in harmony with a noble culture. From the production side, the batik workers often have to fast before making the motive of batik so batik which is produced with *canting* more valuable because it is soulful.

Javanese identity can be seen through the symbol of *canting* as a batik tool. At the end of the story, batik Cap Canting defeat. Mass production of batik by big companies make batik Cap Canting lost in the market. As a cultural symbol, *canting* represents a high culture which then has to negotiate in order to survive. This reality is shown in the novel. At the end of the novel, Ni, the main character, decided to sell her batik business to a larger company which has mass production of stamped batik. Ni's batik defeated by the mass production of stamped batik.

"Ni menerima kenyataan bahwa usahanya kini sekadar menjadi pabrik *sanggan*, pabrik yang menerima pekerjaan dari perusahaan batik milik perusahaan lain. Ia akan menyuruh buruh-buruh membatik apa yang diminta perusahaan-perusahaan yang lebih besar.

Cara bertahan dan bisa melejit bukan dengan menjerit. Bukan dengan memuji keagungan masa lampau, bukan dengan memusuhi. Tapi dengan jalan melebur diri. Ketika ia melepaskan Cap Canting, ketika itulah usaha batiknya jalan. Ketika ia melepaskan nama besar Sestrokusuman, ketika itulah ia melihat harapan." (403)

"Ni accepts the fact that her business is now merely a *sanggan* factory, a factory that only receives the work from another company. She will have the workers make batik when the larger companies ask.

The way to survive is not by screaming. Not by praising the greatness of the past, not with enmity. But by merging themselves. When she released the Cap Canting brand, that's when her batik business running. When she unleashes the big name of Sestrokusuman, that's when she sees hope." (403)

In the excerpts above, we can see the negotiation. High culture, *priyayi*, and Java, symbolized through *canting*, defeated by stamped batik, the mass production of large companies. Therefore, the strategy to survive is to become a *sanggan* for other companies. By eliminating the Canting brand (and also eliminating the *priyayi*'s name: Sestrokusuman), Ni and his workers can continue to live. In the *priyayi*'s life, this means being *aeng*, or act not like a Javanese. Lotman says that text represents models to the world. *Canting* gives the reader a model, a culture model, namely Java, through the characters, dialogues, and depictions of the situation and the setting within. In this novel this is explained by the description about Javanese culture, Solo, Ngabean, economic life in Pasar Klewer<sup>††</sup>, facts of *priyayi*'s life, and Javanese thought. *Canting* represents a model in the Javanese culture.

---

<sup>††</sup> A traditional market in Solo, Central Java.

"Saya ini seperti *canting*, seperti *cecek* dalam batik. Ada dan dihargai karena dianggap semestinya dihargai. Tetapi tetap tak ada artinya kalau tak ada yang menggunakan." (378)

"I am like a *canting*, like *cecek*<sup>§§</sup> in batik. It's there and appreciated as it should be appreciated. But it remains meaningless if nobody uses." (378)

The excerpt shows that Mr. Bei realized his position. Mr. Bei likened himself to a *canting*, a part of a culture that is appreciated for being supposedly rewarded. Javanese culture, and the rules in it are appreciated because it should be so. Being different means *aeng*, not like Javanese. If someone are willing to be appreciated by another, he has to negotiate. However, the two characters in this novel—Mr. Bei and Ni—dare to be different in order to survive. This is can be seen below.

"Nak Himawan pernah kirim surat pada saya. Bertanya: Rama, apakah bagi Ni, *canting* itu suatu nilai yang luhur? Saya jawab: Kalau Ni merasa begitu, ia keliru. Seperti menganggap saya yang menentukan kebesaran Ngabean. Saya ini, walaupun berarti, hanya dari segi tertentu saja. Karena nilai-nilai yang saya terima dari lingkungan di mana saya dilahirkan. Celakanya, nilai-nilai ini lebih sebagai nilai-nilai hidup yang ora cetha, yang abstrak. Saya tak tahu bagaimana menjual kain. Bagaimana membikinya. Bagaimana sistem menjualnya. Karena *priyayi* itu bukan saudagar. Ada baiknya, tapi kalau saya yang memegang kendali usaha, ya hancur. (379)

"Himawan sent me a letter. He asked me: *Rama*<sup>\*\*\*</sup>, is *canting* has a noble value for Ni? I replied: If Ni feels so, she is wrong. It seems like considering that I determined the greatness of Ngabean. I am, if any, only in a certain sense. That was because of the values of life I received from the environment in which I was born. Unfortunately, these values are abstract ideas which is not clear. I don't know how to sell a cloth. I don't know how to make it, or how the system sells it. Because the *priyayi* is not a merchant. It's good, but if I'm in control of business, it's destroyed. (379)

In the excerpt above, again, Arswendo uses *canting* as a symbol. Himawan character questioned *canting's* meaning for Ni. Mr. Bei then explained that the greatness of a person or something is not measured by the existence of a person or something. Each person has a good side and a bad side, as well as a culture. Javanese culture is considered noble, but, often the rules in it are abstract and irrational. The rule that *priyayi* cannot doing something bad, and so on, is often seen as the difference of the strata in Javanese society. Here, *canting* used by the author to symbolized the nobility of Javanese culture, but also there is a negotiation in it.

### **Javanese Identity and Attitudes Considered as Javanese**

Identity has a diverse meaning, depending on the context. H.A.R. Tilaar explains that there are at least four concepts about identity: 1) identity means same with another, which leads to the existence of similarities between individuals with other individuals; 2) identity means to be yourself, being born as an individual having a soul of his own

---

<sup>§§</sup> A dot in a batik motive.

<sup>\*\*\*</sup> An appellation for "Daddy" in Javanese noble family.

connected to the process of liberation; 3) identity means being identical with an idea. Ideas that release individual power, and ideas in this context are transcendental; 4) identity means realistic individuals living with other individuals. Identity in this sense is more than just being the self that is inseparable from the cultural environment and the natural environment (Tilaar, 2007). These meaning conceptualizes the identity of its relationship with the identity of the individual as the basic characteristic of the identity of every human being, related to the identity of other individuals who form ethnic identity into the identity of the nation.

In *Canting*, Javanese is associated with a culture of dignity, courtesy, and a clear lineage. The Javanese identity in this novel is judged by the attitude of the characters. *Priyayi* figures are considered as *the most Javanese* because they have a high attitude and knowledge. Therefore, *priyayi* who behave or speak roughly considered *aeng*. In a Javanese marriage, there are some principles: *bibit*, *bebet*, and *bobot*<sup>+++</sup>. In choosing a mate, Pak Bei did not meet these criteria by marrying Tuginem. By his siblings this is called *ora njawani* (not act like a Javanese—because choosing a mate without considering these three principles of marriage is not a Javanese's character). This is what is first characterized as "Javanese" in this novel. A Javanese should be follow the rules or principles. This noble Javanese assumption is seen in the following excerpt.

"Tradisi kita telah komplet. Telah selesai. Mana ada kebudayaan seperti kita, yang sejak bangun tidur sampai tidur lagi punya aturan begitu sempurna? Bahkan cara tidur dengan istri pun banyak sekali aturannya. Kalau ngomong jorok, anaknya begini; kalau kentut, anaknya begitu. Kalau mau dihitung begini, seratus harinya dikurangi sekian hari. Semua ada rasionalisasinya—biar arwahnya lebih cepat ke surga. Rasionalisasi agar aman, bahagia, tidak *aeng* karenanya." (382)

"Our tradition has been completed. Has been completed. Is there a culture like our culture? A culture which has a perfect rule, since you are waking up until sleep again has so many rules. So perfect. Even the way to sleep with your wife also has lot of rules. If you speak dirty words, your child will be like this; if you fart, your child will be like that. If you want to be calculated like this, a hundred days reduced for several days. All of the rules has its own rationalization—let the soul be quicker to heaven. Rationalization to be safe, happy, not being *aeng*." (382)

"Kebudayaan kita juga begitu. Serba sempurna tanpa memberi peluang untuk hal-hal yang baru. Karena semua sudah dirumuskan yang terbaik." (390)

"Our culture is the same. It is perfect without giving opportunities for new things. Because everything has been formulated the best." (390)

In the excerpts above, Javanese is described having great detail in giving rules. Javanese rules are considered perfect. Therefore, disobeying Javanese rules is considered weird, strange. Because of its many detail rules, Javanese culture is said to be very orderly, smooth, and noble. This is reflected in the attitude of the noble characters in this novel. They are aware of their position so they act very obedient to the rules. The

---

<sup>+++</sup> *Bibit* is the origin/descent, *bebet* is a social status, *bobot* is the quality of oneself.

only difference is Pak Bei, who says that the rationalization of these rules is only to secure the position of the Javanese.

The keyword in this novel is *nrimo*, which can be interpreted as "accept". Through the characters, Bu Bei (Tuginem) and Pak Bei, Arswendo conveyed how the attitude of the Javanese surrender—or so-called *nrimo*—embodied. Bu Bei was able to positioning herself as a laborer, wife, mother, trader, and herself. When she found out that her husband remarried, she accepted (*nrimo*) that fact. Bu Bei remains a good wife. Similarly, Pak Bei, he also accepted his wife's pregnancy and the child, although he is doubt whether the child is his or not. The reason is simple, because Bu Bei is his wife, then the baby born from Bu Bei's womb is his baby. This is resigned that attitude of being *nrimo* through the character of Pak Bei and Bu Bei makes a person become stronger, and they called it the attitude of the Javanese.

This submissive attitude is in line with Javanese philosophy, *nrimo*, or often also said *nrimo ing pandum* (accepting any part of it) as a manifestation of the complete surrender of self to life. Through the philosophy of *nrimo*, then raises a silence. Javanese culture tends to avoid a conflict. A conflict which occur in a family will cause a split, and if it happens, then the honor and degree of the family will be at stake. Therefore, to maintain the *praja*<sup>\*\*\*</sup>, conflict is avoided. This is also seen in the ending of this novel when Ni released batik Cap Canting to a larger company. Ni accepted her defeat. This attitude of *nrimo* is shown in the following excerpt.

"Batik Cap Canting juga begitu. Ni memutuskan untuk tidak memasang cap. Ia menyuruh melepaskan semua. Dan menyerahkan kepada perusahaan-perusahaan besar. Memilih yang terbaik, perusahaan besar itu membeli, dan menjual kembali dengan cap perusahaan mereka.

Canting tak dikenal. Canting tak perlu mengangkat bendera tinggi-tinggi. Bahkan tak perlu berbendera. Akan menimbulkan masalah persaingan yang tajam, dan akan dikalahkan. Karena Canting sekarang ini bukan cap yang dulu adiluhung oleh sebagian besar pemakainya. Karena sebagian terbesar masyarakat tak lagi mengenal nilai-nilai yang ada pada Canting. Kepeloporan zaman silam telah diganti dengan produksi lain. Pada dasarnya, Canting Sestrokusuman adalah yang berbeda pada posisi yang kalah. Posisi sedang sakit." (402)

"So does Batik Cap Canting. Ni decides not to put a brand. She told to let go of all. And leave it to larger companies. Choosing the best, the larger company buys and resells with their company's brand.

Canting is unknown. No need to lift the flag up high. Not even need a flag. It will cause a problem of competition, and Canting will be defeated. Because Canting now is not a brand that used to be most valuable. Because most people no longer recognize the values that exist in Canting. The pioneering age of the past has been replaced with other productions. Basically, Canting Sestrokusuman is different in a losing position. Canting Sestrokusuman is sick." (402)

This form of acceptance is also seen from the depiction of the noble family of Sestrokusuman in the following excerpt.

"... Pusaka-pusaka, buku-buku yang ditulis Pak Bei atau kakek moyangnya yang tak terbaca lagi. Diperlukan usaha untuk menerjemahkan lagi. Dan itu bisa tetap

---

<sup>\*\*\*</sup> The honor and degree of the family

memakai apa yang dimiliki: pasrah, menyadari posisinya yang lemah. Pengakuan yang sulit diterima, karena seperti mengakui kedudukannya yang rendah." (403)

"... Heirlooms, the books written by Mr. Bei or his grandfather's books which are all unreadable. It will take an effort to translate them again. And we can still aware what we have: surrender, aware of the weak position. A surrender which is hard to accept, because it is like recognizing its low position." (403)

The excerpt described the defeat of batik Cap Canting, which is also can be called as the defeat of the *priyayis*, the valorous values symbolized in hand-drawn batik with *canting*. Inevitably they have to accept their defeat.

Form the analysis, Javanese identity shown in this novel reflected two form of identity. *First*, Javanese people in general (shown by the character Bu Bei and her children except Ni, Pak Bei's brother and friends, and the laborers) reflected the old Javanese rules—from Tilaar's definition, it accordance to the first and third definition (the characters and their attitudes are similar each other and also identic in ideas). It shown in the major character. *Second*, Pak Bei and his daughter, Ni, reflected modern Javanese, which shown in Tilaar's second and fourth definition. Pak Bei and Ni seems to have a thought that a human should "be him/herself, being born as an individual, having soul of his own, and being realistic".

## CONCLUSION

Based on the application of cultural semiotics approach, can be concluded that *canting* in this novel is a message, a model, and an aesthetic product. This novel shows that in literature there is a message in the form of information to be conveyed to the reader. *Canting* is a secondary modeling system and carries a certain meaning in it.

Through the analysis, the results obtained as follows: (1) Javanese identity is represented by the attitude of "nrimo" or "accept" for whatever it is gained or experienced. Not being *nrimo* can be called *aeng* (different or weird) or not *njawani* so as to make a person exiled from his family or environment; (2) *canting* is a symbol of high culture or *priyayi* in the strata of Javanese society, as well as cultural symbols defeated by the times; (3) in its development, high culture must negotiate with mass culture in order to survive. Javanese identity through batik has to negotiate in order to survive in the midst of the development of capitalism.

## REFERENCES

- Faruk. (1999). *Hilangnya Pesona Dunia*. Siti Nurbaya, Budaya Minang, Struktur Sosial Kolonial. Yogyakarta: Yayasan Untuk Indonesia.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2002). *Novel-Novel Indonesia Tradisi Balai Pustaka 1920-1942*. Gama Media.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2012). *Metode Penelitian Sastra: Sebuah Penjelajahan Awal*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.
- H.A.R. Tilaar. (2007). *Mengindonesia Etnisitas dan Identitas Bangsa Indonesia: Tinjauan Perspektif Ilmu Pendidikan*. Jakarta: Rineka Cipta.
- Ismawati, Esti. (2013). *Karakter Perempuan Jawa Dalam Novel Indonesia Berwarna Lokal Jawa: Kajian Perspektif Gender dan Transformasi Budaya*. *Journal Metasastra*, Vol. 6 No.1, Juni 2013: 10—21.
- Lotman, M. Jurij. (1977). *The Structure of The Artistic Text*. Translated into English by Ronald Vroon. Michigan: Ann Arbor.

- \_\_\_\_\_. (1990). *Universe of The Mind. A Semiotic Theory of Culture*. London, New York: LB. Tauris & Co. Ltd.
- Ministry of Trade of the Republic of Indonesia. (2008). *The Handbook of Commodity Profile "Indonesian Batik: A Cultural Beauty"*. Balitbangdag/PK/001/IX/2008, p. 1.
- Pradhikta, Dyanningrum, et.al. (2019). *Implementation of Kinara-Kinari Batik Pattern on Cloth*. ISLLAC: Journal of Intensive Studies on Language, Literature, Arts, and Culture Vol. 3 No. 1, 2019.
- Sujamto. (1993). *Wayang dan Budaya Jawa*. Semarang: Dahara Prize.
- Teeuw, A. (1984). *Sastra dan Ilmu Sastra*. Jakarta: Pustaka Jaya.