

CLIFFORT GEERTZ AS A SOCIO-CULTURAL RESEARCHER

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Abstract

In the last decade, postcolonialism has played a special role like post-structuralism, psychoanalysis and feminism as a critical discourse in human sciences. Clifford Geertz is a social science researcher who comes from the west but is able to position himself as a researcher, in his writing and research, Geertz strives to be honest, integrity and also objective when conducting research in Java. This paper tries to explain in depth the position and role of Clifford Geertz as a researcher from several social science studies, namely religion, culture, history, anthropology, and sociology. The research method that the author used is a literature study approach. Geertz is a researcher who covers several sciences from the social sciences, namely anthropology researcher, sociological researcher, cultural researcher, and history researcher.

Keywords: Clifford Geertz, Socio-Cultural, Researcher

INTRODUCTION

In the last decade, postcolonialism has played a special role like post-structuralism, psychoanalysis and feminism as a critical discourse in human sciences (Gandhi, 2014). He also mentioned that postcolonial studies is a study that combines postmodernism in an effort to analyze and examine the control of the colonizer to their colonies. Amrozi (2021) discusses the difference of views between Clifford Geertz and Mark R. Woodward regarding the understanding of the religious diversity of Javanese society, especially in the context of Islam. These views have become an important reference for academics who study religion in Javanese society. In his research, Geertz categorized religious groups in Javanese society, such as Abangan, Santri, and Priyayi, based on his studies conducted in Mojokuto.

Clifford Geertz is a social science researcher who comes from the west but is able to position himself as a researcher, in his writing and research, Geertz strives to be honest, integrity and also objective when conducting research in Java. Geertz's book is quite phenomenal entitled *Agama Jawa*, which discusses in detail and in-depth the various religious, social, cultural,

and historical rituals of the three groups of people in Mojokuto, namely abangan, santri, and priyayi. This paper tries to explain in depth the position and role of Clifford Geertz as a researcher from several social science studies, namely religion, culture, history, anthropology, and sociology.

2. Method

In discussing this paper, the research method that the author used is a literature study approach. The author uses a book and several article. A book written by Clifford Geertz entitled *Agama Jawa* in 2014 and several articles, namely first Shoni Rahmatullah Amrozi's article entitled *Javanese Diversity in the Views of Clifford Geertz and Mark R. Woodward* in 2021. Second, Fatia Inast Tsuroya article entitled *Criticism of Ethos, World View, and Sacral Symbols of Clifford Geertz Views*.

3. Results and Discussions

Clifford Geertz was born in 1926 in San Francisco, California, and died on October 31, 2006 at the age of 80 years. After graduating from high school, he studied philosophy and earned a B.A. from Antioch College in Ohio in 1950. Then he continued his studies in anthropology at Harvard University, and he gained a lot of field experience at Harvard University. For two years he received an academic assignment by conducting research on multi-religious communities in Indonesia (especially in the Java region). Thanks to this research, he was able to earn a doctorate from Harvard's Department of Social Relations in 1956. His success in his first research in Java was the second opportunity to carry out research in Indonesia (Bali). In 1958 he successfully completed it, then was appointed to the faculty of the University of California at Berkeley. He then moved to Chicago for 10 years (1960-1970). Geertz devoted himself as a professor of anthropology at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton from 1970 until his death on October 31, 2006 (Tsuroya, 2020).

Clifford Geertz was one of the most influential sociocultural anthropologists and researchers of the 20th century. Geertz is widely known for his in-depth approach to the study of culture and religion. One of his monumental works is *Javanese Religion: Abangan, Santri, Priyayi in Javanese Culture* published in 1960. In this work, Geertz offers a very detailed analysis of the

religion and culture of the Javanese people, in particular regarding how religion influences social and cultural life in Java (Geertz, 1960).

In his book, Geertz explains a lot about the symbol systems in the three classifications of Islam in Mojokuto that he created, namely santri, priyayi, and abangan. He explained about the beliefs, tridisi, culture, population, and the role of the elite there (Geertz, 1983). So that from his writings he contributed a lot about the knowledge of Islam in Java, where the Javanese in Indonesia themselves have not been able to make detailed writings in a language that is easy to understand by lay readers who do not understand Javanese religion, culture, and traditions in depth.

Geertz is a researcher who covers several sciences from the social sciences, namely anthropology researcher, sociological researcher, cultural researcher, and history researcher. The first is anthropology researcher, namely Geertz sees religion as a cultural fact as in Javanese culture, not just an expression of social or economic needs. Through symbols, ideas and customs, Geertz found the influence of religion in every crevice and corner of Javanese life. Geertz explained the meaning of culture as a pattern of meanings or ideas contained in symbols in society, where people live their knowledge of life and express their consciousness through the symbols they present in daily life (Sharifah and Mushthoza, 2016).

Second, as a sociological researcher, Geertz tries to understand all forms of values, norms, society, traditions, religious and cultural rituals in Java. In addition, Geertz also sees all social actions and interprets all these social actions. What was behind the action was also explained by Geertz in depth. Social phenomena in Mojokuto were observed and studied in depth by Geertz for 2 years.

Third, as a cultural researcher, Geertz Geertz studies the cultures that exist in Javanese society. From the results of ideas, knowledge, experiences, knowledge that comes from stories by ancestors and elders in the region. Fourth, as a historical researcher such as the concept of tuyul, lelembut (a spirit creature that causes trance), memedi (a subtle creature that scares), demit (a spirit creature that inhabits a place), danyang (a protective spirit creature), and other histories in Java. Fifth is a religious researcher Concepts related to the religious values of

society are explained in detail by Geertz, both sacral values and profane values. The religious rituals performed by the people in Mojokuto, such as the pattern and meaning of selametan, circumcision (circumcision), marriage, the modern abangan sect, and other concepts are very well explained. The five sciences are intertwined and interrelated, because they are all included in the study of social sciences.

Table 1

CLIFFORT GEERTZ AS A SOCIO-CULTURAL RESEARCHER

Science	Output
Antropology	Geertz sees religion as a cultural fact as in Javanese culture, not just an expression of social or economic needs.
Sociology	Geertz tries to understand all forms of values, norms, society, traditions, religious and cultural rituals that exist in Java. Geertz also sees all social actions and interprets all these social actions. What is behind the action is also explained by Geertz in depth
Cultural	Geertz studied the cultures that existed in Javanese society. From the results of ideas, knowledge, and experiences derived from stories by ancestors and elders in the region
History	Geertz explained in detail about concepts related to history such as the difference between several types of spirit creatures such as <i>tuyul</i> , <i>lelembut</i> , <i>memedi</i> , and others.
Religion	Concepts related to the religious values of society are explained in detail by Geertz, both sacral values and profane values

Source: Researchers (2024)

4. Conclusion

In his written entitled Javanese Religion, Clifford Geertz has succeeded in explaining the social phenomena that exist in Javanese society. The research he conducted was quite long and required quite in-depth observation and interviews. Geertz's writing, entitled Javanese

Religion, can be used as an example by other social science researchers when conducting in-depth research on the community. Geertz has succeeded in explaining the details of several sciences, namely anthropology Geertz sees religion as a cultural fact as in Javanese culture, not just an expression of social or economic needs.

From sociology, Geertz tries to understand all forms of values, norms, society, traditions, religious and cultural rituals that exist in Java, secara budaya, Geertz studied the cultures that existed in Javanese society. From the results of ideas, knowledge, and experiences derived from stories by ancestors and elders in the region. From history, Geertz explained in detail about concepts related to history such as the difference between several types of spirit creatures such as *tuyul*, *lelembut*, *memedi*, and others. And from religious science, religious rituals and religious-based social actions can already be explained in detail by Geertz.

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