

## Solipsism: Understanding Japanese Culture Through the Novel "Namaku Hiroko" by N.H. DINI (A Critical Students Discussion Perspective)

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### ABSTRACT

*The aim of this research is to reveal the concept of solipsism in understanding Japanese culture in the novel Namaku Hiroko by N.H. Dini. This research raises three main problems, namely; Japanese culture, the author's perspective, and the manifestation of solipsism in literary works. The aim of this research was formulated to find out; 1) the author's perspective on solipsism in Japanese culture, and 2) the form of solipsism itself in literary works. Of course the literary work referred to here is the novel Namaku Hiroko by N.H. Dini. The theory of solipsism is used to understand the experience of the novel writer Namaku Hiroko in understanding culture, including the concepts and perspectives of Japanese culture as depicted in the work of N.H. Dini. Qualitative research methods with a phenomenological approach are used in this research to describe everything related to Japanese culture based on a critical student discussion. This study found that the principle of solipsism exists in Japanese culture as outlined by NH. Dini in Namaku Hiroko.*

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Culture, My name is Hiroko, Solipsism, World view.

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### 1. Introduction

Solipsism is a term in philosophy (Audi, 1996) which literally means "one-self-ism" (Fay, 1996). The term solipsism is used by Brian Fay as a theory to understand a phenomenon that a person cannot be aware of anything except his own experiences, circumstances and actions (Kaelan, 2004). More broadly, Fay (1996) further put forward a thesis which states that if the concept of "a person" is defined narrowly as a single individual then the thesis which states that "You have to be that person to know that person" will be a claim that only You can recognize yourself. However, if the concept of "someone" is understood more broadly, the thesis "You have to be someone to know someone" will turn into a statement that only people who come from a certain group can understand members of that group (Folley, 2007).

Referring to the broad concept proposed by Brian Fay, the principles of solipsism theory can be converted to study understanding of other cultures, for example Japanese beliefs and culture. This statement implies that "only people who come from a certain group can understand the members of that group."

Research on solipsism using literary works as a data source is still very limited. This research is an attempt to answer these limitations. For this purpose, the objectives of this research were formulated to 1) find out; the author's perspective on solipsism in Japanese culture, and 2) the form of solipsism itself in literary works, in this case highlighting the novel entitled Namaku Hiroko by N.H. Dini.

As previously explained, this study aims to understand in depth the cultural phenomena of Japanese society in the understanding of N.H. Dini as depicted in the novel Namaku Hiroko.

#### 1.1. Solipsisme dan Egoisme

Solipsism was first discovered by a pre-Socratic philosophical sophist from Ancient Greece named Gorgias (483–375 BC) who was quoted by a skeptical philosopher from Ancient Rome named Sextus Empiricus as it has been theorized so far that solipsism is closely related to egoism.

This research examines aspects of solipsism and world view in Japanese society through the literary work entitled Namaku Hiroko by N.H. Dini. N.H. Dini is an Indonesian writer who is famous for her works that raise social, humanitarian and feminist issues. Namaku Hiroko raises the issue of the cultural essence and world view of Japanese society.

Some of N.H. Dini's works which are very popular include; *Peaceful Heart* (1961), *Di Atas Kapal* (1973), *La Barka* (1975), *Namaku Hiroko* (1977), *Orang Trans* (1985), *Pertemuan Dua Hati* (1986), and *Gunung Ungaran* (2018). The works of N.H. Dini received an extraordinary response from various critics, domestic and foreign. One of the critics who gave high appreciation to the works of N.H. Dini is A. Teeuw. According to Teeuw (1983) N.H. Dini is one of the few Indonesian female writers who is able to translate feminist ideas into literary works very well, and these feminist ideas actually strengthen her literary position.

This research then chose one of the works of N.H. Dini entitled *Namaku Hiroko* (1977) to trace aspects of solipsism and world view in Japanese culture. The novel *Namaku Horoko* has many unique features. This uniqueness can be categorized into three things. First, the novel entitled *Namaku Hiroko* is a novel that tells the life of Japanese people written by Indonesian author N.H. Dini and in the process of his authorial activity N.H. Dini certainly wrote stories about Japanese life and culture from the perspective of an Indonesian writer.

## 1.2. Theoretical Concept

According to Appadurai (1996), culture in the global dimension as it occurs today at least displays its characteristics in five dimensions, namely, (a) ethnoscapas, (b) mediascapas, (c) technoscapas, (d) financescapas, (e) ideoscapas. The suffix *scape* refers to the fluid and irregular landscape forms that characterize today's international society. Appadurai (1996) further explains that the term culture is no longer just a concept but something that develops into an understanding or view. For Suma, et al., (2023) culture is a set of knowledge and actions that humans have in living their lives. Therefore, the concept of culture, which in English is called culture, has now developed its meaning and given rise to a new concept, namely culturalism. Nowadays, the concept of culturalism often has prefixes such as bi, multi and inter (Appadurai, 1996). In the current fluid and irregular global cultural context, it seems reminiscent of Benedict's (1983) statement that newspapers, novels and other print media are intermediaries for the spread of global culture (Kaelan, 1998). The media for disseminating literary works in cyber form was made easier after the birth of the internet (Rahman, 2017; 2019; Junaid et al., 2023)

Referring to the idea put forward by Benedict (1983) that a literary work such as a novel falls into the category of global cultural intermediary media. Novels as global cultural intermediaries can be used as material for learning to understand the culture and world view of other nations (Rahman, 2018). Thus the novel *Namaku Hiroko* by N.H. Dini meets these criteria. The criteria in question, through this research, researchers can explore how N.H.'s point of view. Early on Japanese culture in the novel *Namaku Hiroko*?

## 2. Methodology

This research was carried out over a period of six months in 2023. It is a library research through a qualitative research. To strengthen the analysis, researchers conducted an FGD (focused group discussion) with a number of students from the Japanese Department, Universitas National Jakarta. The FGD is intended to gather students' critical views based on their knowledge of the content of solipsism in the novel. Solipsism is understood as the view that one's personal experience is the only fact that can be trusted. Solipsism is the philosophical idea that only one's mind is certain to exist. As an epistemological position, solipsism holds that knowledge of anything outside one's own mind is elemental; the external world and other minds cannot be known and might not exist outside the mind (Wood, 1962).

This is a qualitative research. Qualitative research is research that investigates the social aspects of life by using various theoretical perspectives and using various methods to focus on the meaning and interpretation of social phenomena and social processes along with the context and place where they occur (Jupp, 2006). Of course, this research cannot be separated from observation techniques, text analysis, interviews and transcription (Silverman, 1993). Collecting the opinions of Department of Japanese students is one of the data collection methods and analysis techniques applied.

## 3. Result and Discussion

### 3.1. Findings

#### a. Research Data

This research has found (in descriptive form) at least five important data. For discussion purposes, the data in question is presented as follows;

### Data 1

*Namaku Hiroko. Kata 'hiro' bermacam-macam artinya, sesuai dengan huruf Kanji yang dipergunakan. Di desaku ada empat orang yang senama, tetapi dengan tulisan yang berlainan. Namun, biasanya suku kata terakhir 'ko' ditulis dengan huruf yang sama, karena searti, yaitu 'kecil' atau 'anak'....*

*Aku anak sulung Yamasaki Ueno, seorang petani biasa yang bekerja keras melawan musim di daerah kami, pulau besar yang terletak paling selatan negeri kami. Dari koperasi desa, bersama beberapa tetangga, ayahku menerima sepetak tanah yang dapat dikerjakan guna penanaman hasil bumi utama. Tergantung kepada musim, kadang-kadang sayur-mayur, kadang-kadang dua tiga macam jamur. Desa kami tidak jauh dari kota, tertembus jalan raya yang menghubungkan Nobeoka dengan Miyasaki. Desa kami memiliki listrik dan telpon umum, tersebar di setiap warung atau toko kecil di pinggir jalan.*

*Empat tahun setelah aku lahir, ibuku meninggal. Ayahku kawin lagi setelah waktu berkabung habis. Dari istri yang kedua ini, ayahku mendapatkan idamannya atas lahirnya dua orang anak laki-laki, berantaraan setahun.... (Dini, 1990, p., 12).*

My name is Hiroko. The word 'hiro' has various meanings, according to the Kanji characters used. In my village, there are four people with the same name, but written differently. However, usually the last syllable 'ko' is written with the same letter, because it means 'small' or 'child'...

I am the eldest child of Yamasaki Ueno, a common farmer who works hard against the seasons in our area, a large island located in the southernmost part of our country. From the village cooperative, along with some neighbors, my father received a plot of land that could be cultivated for planting main crops. Depending on the season, sometimes it's vegetables, sometimes two or three types of mushrooms. Our village is not far from the city, accessible via the highway connecting Nobeoka to Miyasaki. Our village has electricity and public telephones, scattered in every small shop or store along the roadside.

Four years after I was born, my mother passed away. My father remarried after the mourning period was over. From this second wife, my father achieved his dream of having two sons, born a year apart... (Dini, 1990, p. 12).

Furthermore, data 2 is as follows:

### Data 2

*Pada suatu malam dia menelpon ke rumah. Suaranya tergesa dan khawatir. Baru kali ini aku menerima nada kegugupan yang datang darinya. Dia tidak bisa datang seperti yang telah dijanjikan. Natsuko ada di rumah sakit. Ada di antara hidup dan mati. Temanku itu telah mencoba membunuh diri dengan mengiris urat nadi pada kedua pergelangannya. Kabar itu memukul hatiku. Menurut Yoshida tidak ada sebab-sebab yang dapat dikira mendorong perbuatan wanita muda itu. Ketika kutanya, apakah tidak karena mendengar hubungannya denganku, Yoshida berdiam sebentar lalu jawaban yang kuterima hanya: tidak tahu. Dengan suara lemah, putus asa. Dan dia tidak datang pada hari-hari berikutnya. Kutelpon sekali ke kantor, tetapi dia tidak ada (Dini, 1990, p., 226).*

One night he called the house. His voice was hurried and worried. It was the first time I sensed the tone of anxiety coming from him. He couldn't come as promised. Natsuko was in the hospital. She was between life and death. My friend had attempted suicide by slashing her wrists at both wrists. The news hit me hard. According to Yoshida, there were no foreseeable reasons driving the young woman's actions. When I asked if it was because of her relationship with me, Yoshida fell silent for a moment and the only response I received was: I don't know. With a weak, desperate voice. And he didn't come in the following days. I called his office once, but he wasn't there (Dini, 1990, p. 226).

Data 3 is presented as in the following quotation;

### Data 3

*Aku bersedia-sedia mengucapkan selamat siang, lalu berpisah. Tetapi Sanao berkata, dia juga harus pergi ke daerah yang sama denganku. Sebaiknya kami beriringan ke sana. Tetapi dia akan singgah ke ryokan, hotel pribumi, karena ada kertas-kertas berisi pidato yang harus diambil. Seperti seorang murid yang patuh aku mengikutinya. Dan yang kemudian, tidak dapat kumengerti (Dini, 1990, p., 230)*

I was ready to say goodbye and leave. But Sanao said he also had to go to the same area as me. It would be better if we went together. But he would stop by a ryokan, a traditional Japanese inn, because there were papers containing speeches that needed to be picked up. Like a obedient student, I followed him. And what happened next, I couldn't understand (Dini, 1990, p. 230).

To strengthen the discussion in this research, several case examples will be presented in the form of a summary of the results of discussions with Japanese Department students as shown below.

### Data 4

*Ayahku orang menentukan dalam kehidupan kami. Dan aku yang dibesarkan dalam lingkungan adat kepala tunduk untuk mengiyakan semua perintah orang tua, tidak melihat alasan apa pun buat membantahnya (Dini, 1990, p., 15).*

My father was a decisive figure in our lives. And I, brought up in a traditional environment where obedience to parental commands was paramount, saw no reason to disobey (Dini, 1990, p. 15).

The final data for this research is accompanied by a quote from the novel, see the data below

### Data 5

*Aku masih mengetahui kesopanan dan adat yang diajarkan orang tua. Besok pagi aku harus minta maaf kepada nyonya (Dini, 1990, p., 37).*

I still know the manners and customs taught by my parents. Tomorrow morning, I must apologize to the lady (Dini, 1990, p. 37).

To strengthen the description of the data presentation, the five data mentioned above will be discussed one by one in the discussion section.

## b. Students' Reader-Responses

In this research, there are four reader-responses which are summarized below based on student statements given through the discussion process. The responses are as follows;

*[response 1] Sebagai mahasiswa Sastra Jepang, kami ingin menyatakan bahwa dalam proses belajar budaya Jepang, salah satu sumber referensi adalah novel berjudul "Namaku Hiroko". Novel ini memberikan wawasan mendalam tentang berbagai aspek kehidupan masyarakat Jepang. Salah satu pelajaran dari novel ini adalah tentang nilai kerja keras dalam masyarakat Jepang. Dalam cerita, karakter Ayah Hiroko digambarkan sebagai individu yang memiliki semangat dan dedikasi yang tinggi terhadap pekerjaan dan tanggung jawabnya. Hal ini mencerminkan salah satu aspek penting dalam budaya Jepang, di mana masyarakatnya umumnya diakui sebagai pekerja keras, mengutamakan disiplin, dan berkomitmen untuk mencapai tujuan mereka. Sebagai seorang mahasiswa yang tertarik pada Sastra Jepang, novel "Namaku Hiroko" membuka pandangan baru tentang bagaimana budaya dan nilai-nilai masyarakat Jepang tercermin dalam karya sastra mereka. Kami berharap dengan lebih memahami nilai-nilai seperti kerja keras ini.*

[Response 1] As Japanese Literature students, we would like to express that in the process of learning Japanese culture, one of the reference sources is a novel titled "Namaku Hiroko." This novel provides deep insights into various aspects of Japanese society. One of the lessons from this novel is about the value of hard work in Japanese society. In the story, Hiroko's father is depicted as an individual who possesses a high spirit and dedication to his work and responsibilities. This reflects one of the important aspects of Japanese culture, where its

people are generally recognized as hard workers, prioritizing discipline, and being committed to achieving their goals. As students interested in Japanese Literature, the novel "Namaku Hiroko" opens up new perspectives on how the culture and values of Japanese society are reflected in their literary works. We hope to gain a better understanding of values such as hard work through this.

From this response, it can be seen that students learned lessons from the novel entitled Namaku Hiroko. This novel provides insight into various aspects of Japanese life. One of them is about the value of hard work.

*[response 2] Berdasarkan hasil membaca, kami ingin menyatakan bahwa novel "Namaku Hiroko" telah memberikan wawasan berharga tentang budaya Jepang, khususnya mengenai nilai-nilai sopan santun dalam masyarakat Jepang. Kami memahami bahwa dalam budaya Jepang, sopan santun menjadi landasan dalam membangun hubungan yang harmonis antarindividu dan kelompok. Nilai-nilai sopan santun ini mencerminkan penghargaan terhadap kesetaraan, rasa tanggung jawab, dan perhatian terhadap perasaan orang lain. Hal ini juga tercermin dalam bahasa Jepang yang memiliki berbagai tingkatan kehormatan dalam berbicara kepada orang lain. Dengan memahami pentingnya sopan santun dalam masyarakat Jepang melalui novel "Namaku Hiroko," dan berharap dapat membawa dampak positif dalam interaksi sosial di mnsa pun. Selain itu, pemahaman ini juga membantu menghargai dan menghormati perbedaan budaya ketika berhubungan dengan masyarakat Jepang, baik dalam lingkungan akademik maupun saat berinteraksi secara pribadi.*

[Response 2] Based on our reading, we would like to state that the novel "Namaku Hiroko" has provided valuable insights into Japanese culture, particularly regarding the values of politeness in Japanese society. We understand that in Japanese culture, politeness serves as the foundation for building harmonious relationships among individuals and groups. These values of politeness reflect appreciation for equality, a sense of responsibility, and consideration for others' feelings. This is also reflected in the Japanese language, which has various levels of honorifics when speaking to others. By understanding the importance of politeness in Japanese society through the novel "Namaku Hiroko," we hope to bring positive impacts in social interactions wherever we may be. Furthermore, this understanding also helps to appreciate and respect cultural differences when interacting with Japanese people, both in academic settings and in personal interactions.

Apart from these polite values, other lessons learned are respect for equality, a sense of responsibility, and concern for other people's feelings. Linguistically, this is the reason Japanese has various levels of respect in interacting with other people.

*[response 3] Dengan membaca karya ini kami dapat mengetahui istilah "ryokan" melalui membaca novel "Namaku Hiroko". Dalam novel ini, istilah "ryokan" muncul sebagai salah satu elemen budaya Jepang yang menarik perhatian kami. Ryokan merupakan penginapan tradisional gaya Jepang yang memiliki karakteristik khas, seperti arsitektur tradisional, tatami (lantai tikar jerami), dan pemandian air panas onsen. Karakter Hiroko mungkin saja tinggal di ryokan atau mengunjunginya dalam cerita, sehingga membuka wawasan tentang pentingnya ryokan dalam kehidupan sehari-hari masyarakat Jepang. Dengan membaca novel "Namaku Hiroko," kami menyaksikan bagaimana pengalaman menginap di ryokan mencerminkan nilai-nilai sopan santun, tradisi, dan keramahan yang khas dari budaya Jepang. Pengetahuan tentang istilah "ryokan" ini juga memberikan gambaran lebih lengkap tentang berbagai aspek budaya Jepang yang tercermin dalam karya sastra. Kami berharap, dengan pemahaman ini, kami dapat menghargai dan mengapresiasi lebih dalam tentang kekayaan budaya Jepang dan mengintegrasikan pengetahuan ini dalam studi dan pengalaman pribadi. Sebagai mahasiswa novel "Namaku Hiroko" menjadi salah satu sumber penting untuk memahami budaya Jepang secara luas dan lebih mendalam.*

[Response 3] By reading this work, we were able to learn about the term "ryokan" through the novel "Namaku Hiroko." In this novel, the term "ryokan" appears as one of the intriguing cultural elements of Japan that caught our attention. A ryokan is a traditional Japanese-style

inn with distinctive characteristics such as traditional architecture, tatami (straw mat flooring), and hot spring baths known as onsen. Hiroko's character may either stay at a ryokan or visit one in the story, thus providing insight into the importance of ryokan in the daily life of Japanese society. Through reading the novel "Namaku Hiroko," we witness how the experience of staying at a ryokan reflects the values of politeness, tradition, and unique hospitality of Japanese culture. Knowledge of the term "ryokan" also provides a more comprehensive understanding of various aspects of Japanese culture reflected in literary works. We hope that with this understanding, we can appreciate and deepen our appreciation for the richness of Japanese culture and integrate this knowledge into our studies and personal experiences. As students, the novel "Namaku Hiroko" serves as an important source for understanding Japanese culture broadly and more profoundly.

Through reading Namaku Hiroko, it is the way to recognize the term ryokan, it is as an element of Japanese culture. Ryokan is a traditional Japanese style inn that has distinctive characteristics (traditional architecture). By reading the novel Namaku Hiroko," it gains interesting experiences, especially the teachings of the values of courtesy, tradition and affection that are typical of Japanese culture.

*[response 4] Kami dapat mengetahui istilah "tatami" melalui membaca novel "Namaku Hiroko". Dalam novel ini, istilah "tatami" muncul sebagai salah satu elemen budaya Jepang yang menarik perhatian kami. Tatami merupakan lantai tradisional gaya Jepang yang terbuat dari tikar jerami, yang sering digunakan sebagai permukaan alas untuk duduk, tidur, dan beraktivitas dalam ruangan di Jepang. Karakter Hiroko mungkin saja berinteraksi dengan tatami dalam cerita, dan hal ini membuka wawasan tentang pentingnya tatami dalam kehidupan sehari-hari masyarakat Jepang. Dengan membaca novel "Namaku Hiroko," kami dapat menyaksikan bagaimana penggunaan tatami mencerminkan keunikan dan nilai-nilai budaya Jepang yang menghargai tradisi dan kenyamanan dalam ruang-ruang perumahan. Pengetahuan tentang istilah "tatami" ini memberikan gambaran lebih lengkap tentang bagaimana masyarakat Jepang merawat dan menjaga elemen-elemen tradisional yang khas.*

We were able to learn about the term "tatami" through reading the novel "Namaku Hiroko." In this novel, the term "tatami" appears as one of the intriguing cultural elements of Japan that caught our attention. Tatami is a traditional Japanese-style flooring made of straw mats, often used as a surface for sitting, sleeping, and activities within rooms in Japan. Hiroko's character may interact with tatami in the story, thus providing insight into the importance of tatami in the daily life of Japanese society. Through reading the novel "Namaku Hiroko," we can witness how the use of tatami reflects the uniqueness and values of Japanese culture that value tradition and comfort within residential spaces. Knowledge of the term "tatami" provides a more comprehensive understanding of how Japanese society maintains and preserves its distinctive traditional elements.

It turns out that the term "tatami" is an element of Japanese culture. It is a traditional Japanese style floor made from straw mats, which are often used as a surface for sitting, sleeping and indoor activities in Japan. By reading the novel Namaku Hiroko, it is a medium to witness how the use of tatami reflects Japanese cultural values. With tatami there is knowledge about how Japanese people care for and maintain their unique traditional elements in their life.

From the four responses above, it can be seen that the attitude of solipsism is growing in Japanese society. And strengthens the researcher's belief that literary works such as Namaku Hiroko can be a source of new knowledge for readers and at the same time prove that literary works are a medium for cultural learning.

### 3.3. Discussion

#### a. N.H Dini's Views on Japanese Culture in the Novel

Through his novel entitled Namaku Hiroko, N.H. Dini tells a story that has a Japanese main character set in a place and social background in Japan. The main character is a woman who comes from a poor family from a remote village named Hiroko. Hiroko tries to achieve all her desires to get out of a life of poverty in every way, one of which is by taking advantage of the beauty and elegance of her body. However, apart from the narrative about women and the narrative about poverty, there is another aspect of this novel that is quite dominant, namely the culture of Japanese

society which is reflected in the novel. Based on the facts contained in the novel, the culture of Japanese society can be revealed in the novel *Namaku Hiroko* from the perspective of the writer. Readers can first find the cultural values of Japanese society in the following quotation.

*Namaku Hiroko. Kata 'hiro' bermacam-macam artinya, sesuai dengan huruf Kanji yang dipergunakan. Di desaku ada empat orang yang senama, tetapi dengan tulisan yang berlainan. Namun, biasanya suku kata terakhir 'ko' ditulis dengan huruf yang sama, karena searti, yaitu 'kecil' atau 'anak'...*

*Aku anak sulung Yamasaki Ueno, seorang petani biasa yang bekerja keras melawan musim di daerah kami, pulau besar yang terletak paling selatan negeri kami. Dari koperasi desa, bersama beberapa tetangga, ayahku menerima sepetak tanah yang dapat dikerjakan guna penanaman hasil bumi utama. Tergantung kepada musim, kadang-kadang sayur-mayur, kadang-kadang dua tiga macam jamur. Desa kami tidak jauh dari kota, tertembus jalan raya yang menghubungkan Nobeoka dengan Miyasaki. Desa kami memiliki listrik dan telpon umum, tersebar di setiap warung atau toko kecil di pinggir jalan.*

*Empat tahun setelah aku lahir, ibuku meninggal. Ayahku kawin lagi setelah waktu berkabung habis. Dari istri yang kedua ini, ayahku mendapatkan idamannya atas lahirnya dua oran anak laki-laki, berantaraan setahun....(Dini, 1990, p., 12).*

My name is Hiroko. The word 'hiro' has various meanings, according to the Kanji characters used. In my village, there are four people with the same name, but written differently. However, usually the last syllable 'ko' is written with the same letter, because it means 'small' or 'child'...

I am the eldest child of Yamasaki Ueno, a common farmer who works hard against the seasons in our area, a large island located in the southernmost part of our country. From the village cooperative, along with some neighbors, my father received a plot of land that could be cultivated for planting main crops. Depending on the season, sometimes it's vegetables, sometimes two or three types of mushrooms. Our village is not far from the city, accessible via the highway connecting Nobeoka to Miyasaki. Our village has electricity and public telephones, scattered in every small shop or store along the roadside.

Four years after I was born, my mother passed away. My father remarried after the mourning period was over. From this second wife, my father achieved his dream of having two sons, born a year apart... (Dini, 1990, p. 12).

This paragraph does not explicitly describe the culture of Japanese society, but the elements contained in this paragraph describe the cultural values of Japanese society implicitly. The first value is respect for Name and Identity: In this paragraph, the author explains the importance of a person's name and identity. Although there are four people with the same name in the village, the author notes that the final syllable "ko" is usually written with the same letter, indicating recognition of the meaning of "little" or "child" in Japanese culture.

The next value is family value. The paragraph highlights the importance of family in Japanese culture. Although the main character's mother died when he was young, his father remarried and had two sons, which was considered a blessing and happiness for the family. Hard work and perseverance are also contained in the paragraph quote above. Hiroko explains that her father was a farmer who worked hard against the seasons. The value of hard work and perseverance in facing the challenges of the season is a value that is valued in Japanese culture. The final value is community solidarity. Hiroko also mentioned that her father received a plot of land from a village cooperative and worked together with neighbors to grow crops. This reflects strong solidarity and cooperation within the community, which is a cherished cultural value in Japan. The author's view of Japanese society can also be found in the following paragraph.

*Pada suatu malam dia menelpon ke rumah. Suaranya tergesa dan khawatir. Baru kali ini aku menerka nada kegugupan yang datang darinya. Dia tidak bisa datang seperti yang telah dijanjikan. Natsuko ada di rumah sakit. Ada di antara hidup dan mati. Temanku itu telah mencoba membunuh diri dengan mengiris urat nadi pada kedua pergelangannya. Kabar itu memukul hatiku. Menurut Yoshida tidak ada sebab-sebab yang dapat dikirakan mendorong perbuatan wanita muda itu. Ketika kutanya, apakah tidak karena mendengar hubungannya*

*denganku, Yoshida berdiam sebentar lalu jawaban yang kuterima hanya: tidak tahu. Dengan suara lemah, putus asa. Dan dia tidak datang pada hari-hari berikutnya. Kutelpon sekali ke kantor, tetapi dia tidak ada (Dini, 1990, p., 226).*

One night he called home. His voice was rushed and worried. It was the first time I sensed the tone of anxiety coming from him. He couldn't come as promised. Natsuko was in the hospital. She's between life and death. My friend had attempted suicide by slashing her wrists at both wrists. The news struck me hard. According to Yoshida, there were no foreseeable reasons prompting the young woman's actions. When I asked if it was because of her relationship with me, Yoshida fell silent for a moment and the only response I received was: I don't know. With a weak, desperate voice. And he didn't come in the following days. I called his office once, but he wasn't there (Dini, 1990, p. 226).

The paragraph above describes a situation involving a suicide attempt by one of the characters in the novel. Even though it does not directly mention the Japanese cultural context, it should be noted that the issue of suicide is a complex issue and can occur in various countries, including Japan. In the Japanese context, the issue of suicide has been a serious concern for decades. High social pressure, the stigma of failure, and a lack of adequate social support are some of the factors that have been linked to Japan's high suicide rate.

In the paragraph, there are signs that the author's friend is experiencing significant stress and hopelessness. Natsuko felt rushed and worried when she called, and the author sensed the nervousness in her voice. Natsuko's action of trying to commit suicide by slicing her veins shows her despair and inability to overcome the pressure she feels.

At the end of the paragraph, the narrator and main character in the novel tries to find reasons for the friend's actions and asks whether their relationship had an influence on his decision. However, the author did not get a clear answer. The paragraph does not provide further explanation about the factors that may have influenced the author's friend's decision to attempt suicide. Therefore, it cannot be concluded with certainty that this event fully reflects Japanese cultural values. In this case, issues related to suicide are not assumed to be part of Japanese cultural values but rather as a reflection of this event in the novel, which was included by the novelist in this work.

N.H. Dini also neatly inserts other cultural values in the novel, as can be seen in the following paragraph quotation.

*Aku bersedia mengucapkan selamat siang, lalu berpisah. Tetapi Sanao berkata, dia juga harus pergi ke daerah yang sama denganku. Sebaiknya kami beriringan ke sana. Tetapi dia akan singgah ke ryokan, hotel pribumi, karena ada kertas-kertas berisi pidato yang harus diambil. Seperti seorang murid yang patuh aku mengikutinya. Dan yang kemudian, tidak dapat kumengerti (Dini, 1990, p.,230).*

I was ready to say good afternoon and leave. But Sanao said he also had to go to the same area as me. It would be better if we went together. But he would stop by a ryokan, a traditional Japanese inn, because there were papers containing speeches that needed to be picked up. Like an obedient student, I followed him. And what happened next, I couldn't understand (Dini, 1990, p. 230).

In the novel excerpt, the term "ryokan" refers to a "native hotel" mentioned in the context of a trip to the same area between the narrator (me) and Sanao. Ryokan is a traditional Japanese inn that offers a distinctive staying experience with facilities such as bedrooms with tatami (straw or woven floors), low tables, and hot springs (onsen) which are often available in or around the ryokan.

Ryokan as usual have a distinctive traditional architecture, with the use of natural materials such as wood and other organic materials. Typical Japanese meals, such as kaiseki (multi-course meals) and futons (thin mattresses used for sleeping on tatami floors), are also often served at Ryokan. In the quote, Sanao mentioned that he would stop at the ryokan to pick up the papers containing the speech he had to take. This shows that ryokans are also used as places to stay for business purposes or other activities.

In Japanese culture, staying in a ryokan is a cherished experience and is considered part of cultural tradition and heritage. Guests are expected to respect the rules and etiquette that apply at the ryokan, such as removing shoes before entering the room and following bathing procedures before using the hot springs. In the context of the novel, the narrator



follows Sanao to the ryokan like an obedient student, illustrating the narrator's involvement in the cultural experience offered by the ryokan.

N.H. Dini also did not fail to promote patriarchal cultural practices in Japanese society as seen in the following quotation.

*Ayahku orang menentukan dalam kehidupan kami. Dan aku yang dibesarkan dalam lingkungan adat kepala tunduk untuk mengiyakan semua perintah orang tua, tidak melihat alasan apa pun buat membantahnya (Dini, 1990, p., 15).*

My father is a decisive figure in our lives. And I, raised in a traditional environment where obedience to parental commands is paramount, see no reason to disobey (Dini, 1990, p. 15).

From the quotation above, it reflects the existence of patriarchal culture in Japanese society. In patriarchal culture, the role of the father or male figure in the family is considered very important and has strong authority in making decisions and directing family life (Fairuz, et al., 2022). In this quote, Hiroko explains that her father is the person who determines their life. This shows that the father has a dominant role in making important decisions and giving orders that must be followed by other family members.

Furthermore, Hiroko stated that she was raised in a traditional environment which required her as a child to submit to her parents' orders without questioning or rejecting them. This attitude indicates that there is a strong cultural pressure to obey the authority of the father and parents in general. The attachment to patriarchal culture in Japanese society can also be seen from the author's assertion that he does not see any reason to dispute parental orders. This illustrates how social expectations and cultural norms emphasize obedience and obedience to the father's authority as something that is considered natural and cannot be questioned.

In Japanese patriarchal culture, the father's role as a determining and authority figure in the family is often considered an important part of a strong family hierarchy. This can affect family dynamics and relationship patterns between family members, where decision making and orders from the father or male parents have a significant influence.

The cultural values of politeness are also recorded from the author's perspective, as seen in the following quotation

*Aku masih mengetahui kesopanan dan adat yang diajarkan orang tua. Besok pagi aku harus minta maaf kepada nyonya (Dini, 1990, p., 37).*

I still know the manners and customs taught by my parents. Tomorrow morning, I must apologize to the lady (Dini, 1990, p. 37).

From the statements above, it can be seen that the cultural values of politeness are reflected in Japanese society. Some cultural values of politeness that can be identified include respect for elders. The character I states that he still knows the politeness and customs taught by her parents. This reflects the importance of the value of politeness and respect for elders in Japanese culture. The apology to the madam mentioned by the author also reflects an attitude of respect and courtesy towards others.

Next, respect for traditions and customs. Hiroko refers to the politeness and customs taught by parents. This shows the importance of respecting and adhering to traditions and customs in Japanese society. Hiroko's planned apology demonstrated awareness of the etiquette expected in social interactions.

The last thing is to appreciate the value of courtesy. Hiroko's expression about recognizing politeness shows that it is important for individuals in Japanese society to understand and apply the values of politeness. This includes polite speech, respecting other people's personal boundaries, and maintaining etiquette in social interactions. Overall, the quote reflects the importance of politeness values in Japanese culture, including respect for elders, respect for traditions and customs, and appreciating the value of politeness in everyday social interactions.

#### b. Students's Perception on Japanese Culture based on The Novel Namaku Hiroko

Researchers have summarized the perceptions of Japanese Department Students of Universitas Nasional Jakarta based on reception techniques, namely students read a work entitled Namaku Hiroko and then provide

responses. There are at least four things that students can learn. The first is the culture of hard work that exists in Japanese society. The following are student statements regarding the spirit of hard work existed in this work

*Setelah membaca secara komprehensif, kami menyatakan bahwa dalam proses belajar budaya Jepang, salah satu sumber referensi yang kami gunakan adalah novel berjudul "Namaku Hiroko". Novel ini memberikan wawasan mendalam tentang berbagai aspek kehidupan masyarakat Jepang. Salah satu pelajaran dari novel ini adalah tentang nilai kerja keras dalam masyarakat Jepang. Dalam cerita, karakter Ayah Hiroko digambarkan sebagai individu yang memiliki semangat dan dedikasi yang tinggi terhadap pekerjaan dan tanggung jawabnya. Hal ini mencerminkan salah satu aspek penting dalam budaya Jepang, di mana masyarakatnya umumnya diakui sebagai pekerja keras, mengutamakan disiplin, dan berkomitmen untuk mencapai tujuan mereka. Sebagai seorang mahasiswa yang tertarik pada Sastra Jepang, novel "Namaku Hiroko" membuka pandangan baru bagi kami tentang bagaimana budaya dan nilai-nilai masyarakat Jepang tercermin dalam karya sastra mereka. Kami berharap dengan lebih memahami nilai-nilai seperti kerja keras ini, kami dapat mengapresiasi dan memahami latar belakang budaya Jepang secara lebih mendalam.*

After comprehensive reading, we declare that in the process of learning about Japanese culture, one of the reference sources we use is a novel entitled "Namaku Hiroko." This novel provides deep insights into various aspects of Japanese society. One lesson from this novel is about the value of hard work in Japanese society. In the story, Hiroko's father is depicted as an individual with high spirit and dedication towards his work and responsibilities. This reflects an important aspect of Japanese culture, where its people are generally recognized as hard workers, prioritizing discipline, and being committed to achieving their goals. As students interested in Japanese Literature, the novel "Namaku Hiroko" provides us with a new perspective on how the culture and values of Japanese society are reflected in their literary works. We hope that by understanding values such as hard work more deeply, we can appreciate and understand the cultural background of Japan more profoundly.

Through reading this novel, students can gain a deeper understanding of the way of life, traditions and mental attitudes of Japanese society. The new views gained from reading *Namaku Hiroko* regarding how interesting the culture and values of Japanese society are reflected in literary works. As students of Japanese Department, understanding the relationship between literature and culture will help see how the daily lives of Japanese people are represented in their literary works, as well as provide insight into the history and social development of Japanese culture.

This statement shows the dedication and commitment of Japanese Literature Study Program students in learning about Japanese culture through literature. This approach provides important benefits, including understanding the value of hard work in Japanese society, as well as opening new insights into the relationship between literature and culture. It is hoped that his enthusiasm and interest can inspire and produce deeper studies of Japanese culture and other literary works.

Apart from the culture of hard work, students also said that they found that Japanese society was steeped in a culture of politeness. The following are student statements regarding the value of politeness as reflected in the novel *Namaku Hiroko*

*Sebagai mahasiswa Prodi Sastra Jepang, kami ingin menyatakan bahwa novel "Namaku Hiroko" telah memberikan wawasan berharga tentang budaya Jepang, khususnya mengenai nilai-nilai sopan santun dalam masyarakat Jepang. Kami memahami bahwa dalam budaya Jepang, sopan santun menjadi landasan dalam membangun hubungan yang harmonis antarindividu dan kelompok. Nilai-nilai sopan santun ini mencerminkan penghargaan terhadap kesetaraan, rasa tanggung jawab, dan perhatian terhadap perasaan orang lain. Hal ini juga tercermin dalam bahasa Jepang yang memiliki berbagai tingkatan kehormatan dalam berbicara kepada orang lain. Dengan memahami pentingnya sopan santun dalam masyarakat Jepang melalui novel "Namaku Hiroko," kami berharap dapat membawa dampak positif dalam interaksi sosial kami di masa depan. Selain itu, pemahaman ini juga membantu kami menghargai dan menghormati perbedaan budaya ketika berhubungan dengan masyarakat Jepang, baik dalam lingkungan akademik maupun saat berinteraksi secara pribadi.*

As students of the Japanese Literature Program, we would like to state that the novel "Namaku Hiroko" has provided valuable insights into Japanese culture, especially regarding the values of politeness in Japanese society. We understand that in Japanese culture, politeness serves as the foundation for building harmonious relationships among individuals and groups. These values of politeness reflect appreciation for equality, a sense of responsibility, and consideration for others' feelings. This is also reflected in the Japanese language, which has various levels of honorifics when speaking to others. By understanding the importance of politeness in Japanese society through the novel "Namaku Hiroko," we hope to bring positive impacts in our future social interactions. Furthermore, this understanding also helps us to appreciate and respect cultural differences when interacting with Japanese people, both in academic settings and in personal interactions.

Students' statements regarding the novel "Namaku Hiroko" as a valuable source of insight into Japanese culture and polite values reflect their dedication and awareness of the importance of understanding and appreciating cultural aspects in social interactions. The student demonstrated a commitment to learning and understanding Japanese culture through the novel "Namaku Hiroko." This understanding provides deeper insight into the culture, way of life, and traditions of Japanese society. It is important to be a good mediator in dealing with Japanese society and to respect cultural differences.

This also reflects the understanding that politeness is an important value in Japanese society. Manners are considered the basis for building harmonious relationships between individuals and groups. Awareness of the importance of politeness can help students become more sensitive to ethics in their social interactions. The student described that politeness reflects values such as respect for equality, a sense of responsibility, and concern for other people's feelings.

This shows a good understanding of how these values are reflected in Japanese culture and daily life. The student highlighted the importance of different levels of honorifics in the Japanese language. The use of this level of honor is a real form of politeness in communicating with other people. Understanding these differences can help students communicate appropriately and respect Japanese cultural norms. Overall, this statement shows a passion for learning and a desire to become a skilled student who is sensitive to Japanese culture. Awareness of the values of good manners in Japanese society is an important step to achieving a deeper understanding of the culture and creating respectful and harmonious social interactions.

Students can also learn special terms that only exist in Japan, one of which is Ryokan. Students learn a lot about this, as can be seen from the following student responses;

*Sebagai mahasiswa, kami dengan senang hati mengetahui istilah "ryokan" melalui membaca novel "Namaku Hiroko". Dalam novel ini, istilah "ryokan" muncul sebagai salah satu elemen budaya Jepang yang menarik perhatian. Ryokan merupakan penginapan tradisional gaya Jepang yang memiliki karakteristik khas, seperti arsitektur tradisional, tatami (lantai tikar jerami), dan pemandian air panas onsen. Karakter Hiroko mungkin saja tinggal di ryokan atau mengunjunginya dalam cerita, sehingga membuka wawasan kami tentang pentingnya ryokan dalam kehidupan sehari-hari masyarakat Jepang. Dengan membaca novel "Namaku Hiroko," kami dapat menyaksikan bagaimana pengalaman menginap di ryokan mencerminkan nilai-nilai sopan santun, tradisi, dan keramahan yang khas dari budaya Jepang. Pengetahuan tentang istilah "ryokan" ini juga memberikan gambaran lebih lengkap tentang berbagai aspek budaya Jepang yang tercermin dalam karya sastra. Kami berharap, dengan pemahaman ini, kami dapat menghargai dan mengapresiasi lebih dalam tentang kekayaan budaya Jepang dan mengintegrasikan pengetahuan ini dalam studi dan pengalaman pribadi. Sebagai mahasiswa Prodi Sastra Jepang, novel "Namaku Hiroko" menjadi salah satu sumber penting yang membantu memahami budaya Jepang secara lebih luas dan mendalam.*

As students, we are pleased to learn about the term "ryokan" through reading the novel "Namaku Hiroko". In this novel, the term "ryokan" emerges as one of the intriguing cultural elements of Japan. A ryokan is a traditional Japanese-style inn with distinctive characteristics such as traditional architecture, tatami (straw mat flooring), and hot spring baths known as onsen. Hiroko's character may either stay at a ryokan or visit one in the story, thus expanding

our understanding of the importance of ryokan in the daily life of Japanese society. By reading the novel "Namaku Hiroko," we can witness how the experience of staying at a ryokan reflects the values of politeness, tradition, and unique hospitality of Japanese culture. Knowledge of the term "ryokan" also provides a more comprehensive understanding of various aspects of Japanese culture reflected in literary works. We hope that with this understanding, we can appreciate and deeply appreciate the richness of Japanese culture and integrate this knowledge into our studies and personal experiences. As students of the Japanese Literature Program, the novel "Namaku Hiroko" serves as an important source that helps us understand Japanese culture more broadly and deeply.

One medium for spreading culture is through literary works. Several cultural practice terms are found in Namaku Hiroko. Look at one of the summaries responses below;

*Selain Ryokan Mahasiswa juga belajar istilah lain dalam bahasa Jepang yaitu Tatami. Seperti dapat kita lihat dalam pernyataan berikut ini. Kami dapat mengetahui istilah "tatami" dengan membaca novel "Namaku Hiroko". Dalam novel ini, istilah "tatami" muncul sebagai salah satu elemen budaya Jepang yang menarik perhatian. Tatami merupakan lantai tradisional gaya Jepang yang terbuat dari tikar jerami, yang sering digunakan sebagai permukaan alas untuk duduk, tidur, dan beraktivitas dalam ruangan di Jepang. Karakter Hiroko mungkin saja berinteraksi dengan tatami dalam cerita, dan hal ini membuka wawasan tentang pentingnya tatami dalam kehidupan sehari-hari masyarakat Jepang. Dengan membaca novel "Namaku Hiroko," kami dapat menyaksikan bagaimana penggunaan tatami mencerminkan keunikan dan nilai-nilai budaya Jepang yang menghargai tradisi dan kenyamanan dalam ruang-ruang perumahan. Pengetahuan tentang istilah "tatami" ini memberikan gambaran lebih lengkap tentang bagaimana masyarakat Jepang merawat dan menjaga elemen-elemen tradisional yang khas.*

Besides Ryokan, students also learn another term in Japanese language, which is Tatami. As we can see in the following statement. We can learn the term "tatami" by reading the novel "Namaku Hiroko". In this novel, the term "tatami" emerges as one of the intriguing cultural elements of Japan. Tatami is a traditional Japanese-style flooring made of straw mats, often used as a surface for sitting, sleeping, and activities within rooms in Japan. Hiroko's character may interact with tatami in the story, opening up insight into the importance of tatami in the daily life of Japanese society. By reading the novel "Namaku Hiroko," we can witness how the use of tatami reflects the uniqueness and values of Japanese culture that appreciate tradition and comfort within residential spaces. Knowledge of the term "tatami" provides a more comprehensive understanding of how Japanese society maintains and preserves its distinctive traditional elements.

This statement shows how reading the novel Namaku Hiroko has provided significant benefits for a student in understanding the term tatami and gaining deeper insight into Japanese culture. Apart from that, this statement also shows the enthusiasm for learning and dedication in understanding Japanese culture through literature. The student succeeded in describing how the novel Namaku Hiroko has provided valuable insight into tatami and how tatami is an important element in daily life and traditions of Japanese society. This cannot of course be separated from the role of lecturers in Japanese Department.

#### 4. Conclusion

Based on the discussion in the previous chapter, several conclusions can be drawn. First, the novel Namaku Hiroko by N.H. Dini is a literary work that provides an overview of Japanese culture. In this novel, there are Japanese cultural values that are reflected explicitly or implicitly. Japanese cultural values that can be found in the novel Namaku Hiroko include respect for name and identity, family values, hard work and perseverance, community solidarity, polite values, and patriarchal culture.

Second, students of the Japanese Department at Universitas National can learn and understand the culture of Japanese society through the nove Namaku Hiroko. They recognize Japanese cultural values such as hard work, good manners, as well as special terms such as Ryokan and tatami through this novel.

Third, the role of Japanese Department lecturers (especially at the Universitas National Jakarta) has a strategic role in educating and teaching the culture of Japanese society through literary works. Lecturers as cultural liaisons through literary works help students understand the deeper meaning of literary works and the cultural values contained therein. Lecturer guidance and support helps students appreciate the richness of Japanese culture and increases adaptability in studying culture through literature.

The process of learning and getting to know Japanese culture through literary works also helps students increase cross-cultural awareness, where they can recognize and appreciate cultural differences and understand how culture influences literary works and people's outlook on life. Overall, the study of the novel *Namaku Hiroko* should make a positive contribution in opening the horizons to understand the culture of Japanese society which in turn will enrich students' knowledge of different cultures and increase cross-cultural understanding.

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