
Research Article**Historical Memory of Ainu through Material Culture
in Japanese Literary Text: An Analysis of Tsushima Yuko's Work****Wawat Rahwati¹, Budi Mulyadi^{2*}, Andres Suhendrawan³**^{1,3}Universitas Nasional, Indonesia, ²Universitas Diponegoro*Email: budi.mulyadi09@gmail.com*Received: March 26st, 2021; Revised: May 2th, 2021; Accepted: May 2th, 2021**Available online: May 3th, 2021; Published regularly: June 2021***Abstract**

This research discusses the elements of material culture in the literary text of *Jakka Dofuni Umi no Kioku no Monogatari* by Tsushima Yuko in presenting historical memories of the Ainu as one of the indigenous people in Japan. Material culture is a study carried out through objects (artefacts) to see social markers, historical traces, social knowledge, and the identity of a particular nation or society. This research aims to reveal the history and identity of the Ainu as shown through material cultural objects and how the characters in the text interpret these objects. Qualitative approaches and narrative structures as research methods are used to analyze this literary text. Besides, memory theory is also used to reveal collective memories related to Ainu history and identity. The results show that the *Jakka Dofuni* museum with various artefacts presents historical memory and Ainu identity through the narrator's discussion and figures in narratives text. The spirit consolation monument (*ireihi*), which was built in the area of the *Jakka Dofuni* museum, is an object of memory of remembrance for local people from the Ainu and *Uilta* tribes who were victims of war during the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1945). The collection of cultural artefacts and the life history of *Gendanu* as the owner of the museum with the identity problems he experienced can be interpreted as a form of markers that confirm Ainu's identity.

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Literary text plays an important role in entertaining information media and building the construction of various discourses, such as history, culture, and the identity of a particular community. Thus, literary work as a form of narrative text becomes a space in presenting collective memories of past events related to national and cultural identities. It is in line with Bukh's (2008) view, which states that literary texts play a vital role as a medium in forming an identity discourse that cannot be separated from the nation's historical memory.

In literary texts, historical memories of a nation regarding events in the past are often presented through elements of material culture, such as historical buildings, monuments, and museums which can be interpreted as collective social markers. One of the Japanese literary texts featuring material culture is Tsushima Yuko's *Jakka Dofuni Umi no Kioku no Monogatari* (2016). Tsushima Yuko (1947-2016) is the daughter of Dazai Osamu (1909-1948), a famous Japanese author in the 20th century. In modern Japanese literature, Tsushima Yuko is known as a

female author who is active in writing and has received many prestigious awards, including the Kawabata Prize (Kosaka, 2018).

Jakka Dofuni Umi no Kioku no Monogatari (2016) by Tsushima Yuko is a literary text that narrates the history and identity of the Ainu tribe through a cultural material object, namely the Jakka Dofuni museum, which is also used as the title of this text. This historical genre literary text highlights several historical events during the Edo period (1603-1868) and several events during the Meiji period (1868-1911). One of them was banning Christian (Kirishitan) by the Bakufu government during the Edo period, which became a historical frame in narrating the Ainu, Uilta, and Nivkh tribes as local minority tribes who occupied the Abashiri region in Hokkaido.

Jakka Dofuni is a museum located in Abashiri, Hokkaido, in the Northern part of Japan, as an object of cultural material that appears in this text. In the language of Uilta, one of the minority tribes who occupied that area, *Jakka Dofuni (Jakka Doxuni)*, means "*Taisetsuna mono wo osameru ie*" or "A house that stores important things" (Miyagi, 2018). Wood (1989) notes that this museum was founded by Gendan and opened to the public in August 1978. Gendan is a former war veteran from the Uilta minority tribe who sided with Japan when Japan was involved in a war with Russia. Besides the museum building, a stone monument built in front of the yard to commemorate all the local minority tribes who died caused by the war was inaugurated on May 3, 1982. In this museum, various cultural artifacts of the Uilta, Nivkh, and Ainu tribes are exhibited as minority ethnic groups with cultural similarities.

Ainu, which means "human" in the Ainu language, is an indigenous (local) Japanese tribe who live in Hokkaido island and in several areas such as Shakalin, Kamchatka, and the Kuril Islands, which are

included in Russian territory (Rahwati, 2019). According to Onishi (2014), the Ainu tribe in Hokkaido has existed since the Jomon era, which lasted around the 3rd century BC. Their livelihoods, in general, are hunting, fishing, and gathering food sources in the forest, as well as buying and selling through the barter system. The historical traces that shape the social knowledge and identity of the Ainu tribe, according to Hudson, Lewallen, and Watson (2014) cannot be separated from various Japanese policies that carried out the practice of internal colonialization in Hokkaido, which is considered as Ainu land. For example, the arrival of the Matsumae clan in Hokkaido to establish trade cooperation with the Ainu in the 17th century marked the beginning of the Japanese invasion of Hokkaido. In the Meiji era (1868-1912), colonialization continued with various Japanese policies increasingly enforced on the Ainu. Some policies, including the development of Hokkaido land (Kaitaku) and cultural assimilation (Lewallen, 2016: 2), have become historical events that always remember by Ainu people until now. The historical traces that have become the collective memory of the Ainu tribe still can be traced through the objects that mark them. For example, the Jakka Dofuni museum presented in the *Jakka Dofuni Umi no Kioku no Monogatari* text through the narrations of figures in it.

A museum is one of the material cultural objects that can show a society's historical memory because it contains many historical artifacts. McAleer (2014) states that the relationship between museums and their collection of objects can help us understand imperialism, anti-colonialism, postcolonialism, and other historical events. It is similar to monuments and historical site buildings. The collection of objects like historical and cultural artifacts is stored and displayed can become a symbolic space to introduce the history, identity, and cultural heritage of a particular community ethnicity such as the Ainu tribe.

Related to the theme in the literary text by Tsushima Yuko, which narrates a material cultural object of the Ainu tribe, Kojinkaratani (2016) expressed his opinion regarding the author's word view of Tsushima Yuko through his writing entitled "Love and empathy for the Oppressed: Remembering Tsushima Yuko." According to him, Tsushima Yuko is an author who narrates marginalized people and gives sympathy to those who are arrested through his works, as seen in the *Jakka Dofuni Umi no Kioku no Monogatari* text. However, according to Kojinkaratani, this text is the work of Tsushima Yuko, published in series in *Subaru* magazine, and has no connection with the history of the world of literature.

Furthermore, Hoshino (2016) states that the *Jakka Dofuni* used as the title of the novel by Tsushima Yuko is the name of a genuine folk museum built in Abashiri. The museum was built in the latter half of the 20th century by Gendanu, a Wilta ethnic minority similar to Ainu. There is a story part in the novel in which the narrator reminiscent of Tsushima's trip to Hokkaido and the memory of Tsushima's son, who died at the age of eight. The time spent in Hokkaido with her son and met with Gendanu while visiting the *Jakka Dofuni* museum was a happy and irreplaceable moment of personal awareness of the existence of ethnicity. However, although Hoshino mentions *Jakka Dofuni Museum* in his discussion, he does not reach the discussion about the museum as a material cultural object that can show the historical memory of the Ainu tribe. Thus, research on museums as the object of material culture and their relevance to the historical memory of a particular nation or ethnicity in literary works becomes an important topic to be analyzed.

Based on these arguments, in this article, we discuss the museum as an object that appears in *Jakka Dofuni Umi no Monogatari* written by Tsushima Yuko and how this object presents Ainu historical memories by using material culture studies.

In material culture research, objects become important studies as social markers that can show historical traces about struggles, social knowledge, and the identity of a particular nation or society. Objects can be anything, such as photos, artifacts, monuments, building sites, and museums. Tolia (2016: 896) said that through the race and culture perspective, the museum as an object of material culture is informed by a spatially and temporally situated account of how racialized cultures are encountered, circulate, and refigured in the everyday.

By using a study of material culture, this research reveals how the history and identity of the Ainu tribe are presented through material culture and how the Ainu interprets that objects through the narrator and figures (characters) that appear in the literary text of Tsushima Yuko. According to Gerritsen & Giorgio (2014), the concept of material culture can be defined in various ways depending on the context of the disciplines used. However, historians often use the concept of material culture by referring to objects that have meaning for the people who produce and own them, either by buying or as gifts, used or consumed. In other words, material culture refers to the object, but instead to what meaning it has for the person who owns it. The relation of material objects emphasizes affective, social, cultural, and economic relations, which become the framework of our lives. Furthermore, objects can be a way to understand and appreciate events in the past, such as the *Jakka Dofuni* museum, which is a symbolic space for building historical memory regarding important events in the past.

2. Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach (Walliman, 2011:120) as a method based on the data disclosed in the form of descriptions through collecting, analyzing data and investigations conducted by researchers. The data source used in this study is a literary text entitled

Jakka Dofuni Umi no Kioku no Monogatari (2016) by Tsushima Yuko. A literary text refers to the view of Bal (2017:5) are consists of narrative text, story, and fabula. A text narrative is a text in which an agent tells a story in a medium such as language, imagery, and buildings. The story is the content of the text uttered by the agent, and fabula is a series of logically and chronologically related events caused and experienced by actors. In the three layers distinction, there are narrator, focalizer, and agent. The narrator is an agent who narrates a story, the focalizer is an agent who makes an observation, and the actors act. In this study of narrative text, we focus on analyzes the narrator and actors (figures) who appeared in the text.

Discussions about interpreting objects that appear in a literary text are carried out using a material culture approach as the topic of study, namely historical memory and its relevance to elements of material culture. Material culture refers to objects or belongings representing their cultures, such as buildings, museums, monuments, and anything that can see, feel, and touch (Material Culture in Sociology: Definition, Studies & Examples, 2015). According to Yoshitani et al. (2021), material culture study is conducted through objects related to beliefs, values, ideas, attitudes, and assumptions of a particular community or society at a specific time. The objects surrounding us enhance our material, personal, and spiritual welfare beyond their utilitarian functions. For instance, the function of objects can be a mirror that reflects both individual and social image. In other words, the study of material culture is useful to help us comprehend cultures and societies (Scarpaci, 2016).

In the material culture approach, the objects (Adlin, 2020) can be categorized into five forms: artifacts, machines, gizmos, products, and spimes. Artifacts in material culture are commonly using for an object made by a human being in the past.

Machines as devices using mechanical power and having several parts, with a definite function and together acting. Gizmos or gadgets are small devices with particular functions and terms of gizmos used for the first time in 1942. Products refer to objects, systems, or services made available for selling or consumption. Finally, Spime is a neologism created by Bruce Sterling for a future object, characteristic to the internet that can be tracked through space-time throughout the lifetime. The study of material culture emphasizes the importance of an object being used as a study to see social markers, historical events, class struggle, and the identity of a particular nation or society.

Furthermore, in this study, memory theory is also used to reveal historical memories by analyzing the narrator and figures related to cultural material objects in the text. According to Saaler and Schwentker (2008), the discussion of memory is not limited to the personal dimension but on aspects that significantly impact society. Halbwachs (in Christophe & Mucchielli, 2008) states that every event experienced by an individual, although personal, always correlates with the values constructed by the individual's society.

According to Bukh (2008), historical memory can be reconstructed and reinterpreted not only through objects in the form of monuments, historical sites, or museums. It can also be brought back through memoirs and literary works of historical genre such as *Jakka Dofuni Umi no Kioku no Monogatari*, which is used as this research data. The first step in this research is to read the literary text in-depth to find historical events by tracing cultural objects presented through the narrator and figures in the text. Furthermore, the second step is to reinterpret these cultural material objects by relating them to the narrations that present the historical events through the individual memories of the figure in the text, which is relevant to important events and impacts society. Thus it can reveal

historical memories and the identity of the Ainu tribe conveyed by the author in this literary text.

3. Result and Discussion

Jakka Dofuni Umi no Kioku no Monogatari is a literary text that describes the history and identity of the Ainu tribe through elements of material culture, namely the Jakka Dofuni museum, which is present as an object and interpreted by the figures in it. Historical events and Ainu identities in this text are presented through the personal memory of 'Watashi,' as an imaginary figure who has memories of Gendanu, an actual figure who appears in the text as the owner of the Jakka Dofuni museum. The figure of "Watashi" is a single mother from Tokyo who has visited the Jakka Dofuni museum with Daa, her son who died due to an accident. Her sadness by losing her son brought a flashback to 26 years ago when she and her son visited the Jakka Dofuni museum. The interaction created between Gendanu and Watashi and his son as museum visitors has emerged to emotional bonds. Thus, the Jakka Dofuni museum became an important place that was interpreted by Watashi figure.

Jakka Dofuni becomes an object that presents the personal memory of Watashi figure regarding her memories with Daa, her son before the accident took his life (Tsushima, 2016: 207). The visit of Watashi and Daa to the Jakka Dofuni museum is immortalized in a photo was taken by Gendanu. In that photo, they pose in front of the Jakka Dofuni museum. This photo with the background of Jakka Dofuni then becomes an essential object for Watashi as expressed by the narrator through the following second-person point of view.

納骨のとき、あなたは「ジャッカ、ドフニ」の写真を持っていた。それまで家の祭壇に置いていた写真をなんの考えもなく、そのまま運んだだ

けだった。納骨堂を探し歩く日々に、あなたは疲れ果て「ジャッカ、ドフニ」の写真、正確には「ジャッカ、ドフニ」の前庭につくられた「カウラ（夏の家）」での写真を納骨堂に置く意味など考えようしなかった。

During the storage of the burnt bones, you brought a photo of Jakka Dofuni. Without thinking about anything, you brought the photo, which has only been lying on the altar table. Then, on the days when you were looking for the Ossuary, you felt exhausted. So you put the photo taken at the *Kaura* (summer house) in front of Jakka Dofuni in the Daa ossuary without you thinking about what the photo meant (Tsushima, 2016: 210).

The visit of Watashi with her son to the Jakka Dofuni museum in Abashiri will be their last trip before Daa dies. This event is stored in a photo of them against the background of Jakka Dofuni, which marks Watashi's emotional attachment to Gendanu and his museum. The text portrayed that Watashi interprets Jakka Dofuni as cultural material for the Uilta and Ainu tribes as a bone protector from Daa's body, represented by a sheet of photos placed in the Ossuary.

「写真がダアの遺骨を守りをつづけてくれている、だから東京湾が見える丘のうえにあるその納骨堂もまた、「ジャッカ、ドフニ」と呼べるんじゃないか」

"Because this photo always protects Daa's bones, so I also call the Ossuary on the hill overlooking the Tokyo Bay, so I call that place by Jakka Dofuni (Tsushima, 2016: 21).

Memories of the museum made an impression on Watashi's memory, leading her to search the historical life of Gendanu

and the Jakka Dofuni museum. It has a meaning in the Uilta language as "A house that stores important things (Tsushima, 2016: 21). This museum serves as a "place of thing" for various historical and cultural artifacts of the Ainu and Uilta tribe, which both of them are considered having cultural similarities. The material culture objects of these two tribes, such as *Aundau* (winter house), *Kaura* (summer house), *Irori* (large fireplace), and wood carvings with a shape that represents *Kamuy* (God) (Tsushima, 2016: 22) are objects that become Ainu and Uilta's identity markers. Besides that, the Jakka Dofuni museum was also built to commemorate people from local minority tribes who died caused by war. It can be seen from a stone monument built in front of the Jakka Dofuni museum building.

In this literary text through the searching of the Jakka Dofuni museum, a narration is revealed about the historical events of the War between Japan and Russia (Russho-Japan 1904-1945), which involved people from ethnic minorities, as shown by the narrator that 「戦争の犠牲になったサハリンの少数民族のひとたちのために手を合わせた」 "Join hands for the minority tribes people in Sakhalin who were victims of the war" (Tsushima, 2016: 214). When Japan was involved in a war with Russia, people from minority tribes who settled in Shakalin were involved in the Japanese army, and many of them were victims. After the war ended, those who were still alive were only about 30 people, including Gendanu. In the text, it is written about the sad situation of the victims of the war. For this reason, to commemorate them, Gendanu also builds a monument for consoling spirits (慰霊碑; ireihi) of war victims (Tsushima, 2016: 215) located in the area of the Jakka Dofuni museum.

Gendanu's decision to build a museum and monument to entertain the spirits, of course, cannot be separated from his background. In this text, Gendanu was a former soldier whom Gorgolo adopted, a

Shaman (spirit medium) from the Uilta tribe in Karafuto (Tsushima, 2016: 219).

Regarding Gendanu's background, Wood (1989) also stated that Gendanu was once exiled as a war camp prisoner in Russia as a Japanese soldier. However, after being released, Gendanu migrated to Japan in 1955 and changed his name to a Japanese name, namely Kitagawa Gendanu. After the Russo-Japanese war was over, he applied for a pension as a former soldier who defended Japan. However, he was refused because he was considered a Japanese soldier who entered illegally. The historical background of Gendanu's life, as stated by Wood, is also described in the text by Tsushima Yuko through the narration of the figure of Watashi.

戦後、スパイ幫助の戦犯としてシベリアのラーゲリに計十年近くも収容された。ふるさとのサハリンには戻らず、日本への引き揚げ船に乗り、「日本人」の北川源太郎となって、アバシリに住んだ。日本政府に軍人恩給の請求をつづけたけど、正式の軍人ではなかったという理由で受け入れられなかった。

After the war, he was arrested as a war criminal because he was seen as helping Japan as a spy. Gendanu, who could not return to his hometown of Shakalin, sailed to Japan and changed his name with a Japanese name to Kitagawa Gendanu and lived in Abashiri. He applied for army support to the Japanese government, but his request was rejected because his identity as Uilta who not considered a legal army (Tsushima, 2016: 23).

The life of Gendanu as a minority ethnic group lived in Abashiri cannot be separated from identity problems. It is the

reason that why he decided to change his name from Kitagawa Gentarou to his Japanese name. For Japan, minority ethnic groups such as the Uilta and Ainu often receive negative labeling as inferior and barbaric. Moreover, various stereotype nicknames, such as *doujin* (primitive) and underdeveloped tribes, are labels directed to ethnic minorities, such as Ainu and Uilta tribes, to distinguish Japanese people as the majority. This condition was also felt by Gendanu, who tried to hide his identity as Uilta for not being called as a *dojin*.

戦後、アバシリに住むようになってから、ゲンダーヌさんは「土人」ということばになによりもおびえつづけたという。「土人」だと知られなくて身を縮めていた。「土人」だから結婚できない、と長いこと、悩んでいた。

After the war and he decided to stay in Abashiri, there was one word of "dojin," which made him always feel scared. His body was constricted because he did not want to be known as a 'doujin.' Moreover, he is worried because he will not marry either if he is known as a *doujin* (Tsushima, 2016: 32).

The term *doujin* or primitive is the designation attached by the Japanese to minority identities such as Ainu. However, based on the narration of Watashi, the terms of *dojin* were never attached to the Japanese people. If there any, she only knows about the term 'yamazaru' (mountain monkey), which refers to the Japanese people who lived in the mountains and spoke the local language. According to Watashi figure as a narrator, the nickname of *yamazaru* is not as bad as the *dojin*, which is intended for the Ainu and Uilta people. Therefore, it can be understood why ethnic minorities, such as Gendanu, choose to hide their identity and live as like the Japanese than as Uilta or Ainu (Tsushima, 2016: 217).

Gendanu was often overshadowed by the fear of being labeled as a *dojin* against him. However, he still loves his identity. For that reason, he built the Jakka Dofuni museum to commemorate minority people who were victims of war. This museum is a place to stores various essential artifacts related to the identity of the minority tribes in Abashiri. Artifacts of the Uilta dominate the collections in this museum; Sakhalin Ainu and Hokkaido Ainu tribes exhibited in the main room made from wood. In the Jakka Dofuni museum, he and several people in his community were inspired to organize various local cultural activities in the Hokkaido and Sakhalin regions. However, on July 8, 1984, as stated by the taxi driver to Watashi, "Six years after the Jakka Dofuni was completed in 1978, Gendanu died" (Tsushima, 2016: 37). The cause of Gendanu's death was a brain hemorrhage, and he died suddenly without ever receiving compensation money as a former soldier from the Japanese government. He died in the Jakka Dofuni museum room, which symbolically can be interpreted as a form of Gendanu's great love for the museum he built with all his collection of artifacts in it. Although Gendanu is a Uilta person, his name is well-known as a figure representing the minority community. Many minority groups, such as Uilta, Ainu, Korean, and Chinese, lived in Hokkaido, many attend his funeral. It implies that the figure of Gendanu and the Jakka Dofuni museum can be interpreted as a representation that confirms the identity of minority tribes, such as the Ainu and Uilta tribes who live in Hokkaido.

4. Conclusion

The literary text by Tsushima Yuko entitled *Jakka Dofuni Umi no Kioku no Monogatari* presents the history and identity of Ainu as a local ethnic minority through the Jakka Dofuni museum as a cultural material that appears in the story. Historical memory and Ainu identity are rebuilt through the personal memory of the

figure of 'Watashi' who narrates the flashbacks of twenty-six years ago regarding his visit to the Jakka Dofuni interacting with Gendanu, an actual figure who built the museum. Furthermore, Jakka Dofuni is interpreted as the protector of her late son, represented by a photo with Jakka Dofuni.

The exploration of the Jakka Dofuni museum and its collection of artifacts shows historical events that have shaped the identity of the Ainu and other local minority tribes. Memories of historical events are presented through the monument for consoling spirits (慰靈碑; *ireihi*) built in the area of the Jakka Dofuni museum. This monument was built as a memory of the war between Japan and Russia (1904-1905), which involved many people from local tribes who became victims. In addition, a collection of various artifacts, such as *aundau*, *kaura*, and *Irori*, are objects that mark the identity of the Ainu people.

Furthermore, the identity of the local Ainu and Uilta tribes was also presented through Gendanu, who built the Jakka Dofuni museum. As a person from an ethnic minority group, Gendanu, a former soldier defending Japan during the war with Russia, did not get compensation from the Japanese government because he was a former soldier from ethnic minorities, such as the Ainu Uilta, which considered illegal. Not only that, negative stereotypes, such as *dojin* (primitive), are often attached to the identity of local minorities, so he prefers to choose to change his name to Kitagawa Gentarou as his Japanese name. This stereotype labeling is aimed at local ethnic minority tribes, such as Ainu and Uilta, as a distinctive identity from the Japanese as the majority.

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