

# An introvert female in Indonesian literature: Jungian psychology perspectives

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**Abstract:** The present study aims to explore an introverted female depicted in Indonesian literature. The data source was a novel entitled *Amba* by Laksmi Pamuntjak. The study was focused on the introversion of a female character named Amba. The data collection technique was a literature review. Data analysis technique referred to literary psychology that consisted of identification, classification, reduction, synthesis, interpretation, and verification of data which were related to the mind and behaviors of the introvert female character. The results showed that Amba was an introverted female proven from the characteristics of (1) introversion female and shy behaviour, (2) introversion female and indifferent behaviour, (3) introversion female and loyalty, (4) introversion female and jealousy, and (5) introversion female and inner world. The results showed that Indonesian females tended to be introverted because they are Eastern females.

Keywords: *females, introvert, literature, Jungian psychology*



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## INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, studies have discussed that introvert personality types become popular because of a point of view that the introvert type has the same academic and non-academic skills and abilities as does an extrovert one. Research about introversion is interesting to be studied not only by researchers of psychology studies but also by researchers of education studies (Davidson *et al.*, 2015; Green, 2018), music (Jamshidzad *et al.*, 2020; Kou *et al.*, 2018), religion, (Francis *et al.*, 2010), and industry (Herrera-Green, 2014; Itani *et al.*). Research about introversion is included in psychology studies which are known as the Jungian psychology.

An introvert is a type of personality that refers to the “inner world” (Case, 2015; Helgoe, 2015) that relies on thoughts, less talking, and loves solitude. The daily life of introverted people is more about calm. Therefore, they prefer private places. Introvert studies which are studies of psychology draw the interests of literary researchers. According to Moghaddam (2004), literature is categorized as psychology data. Hence, some researchers relate introversion with the context of literature. As far as the search had been done by the researcher, some researchers that relate introversion and literature are Neagu (2010) who studied the introversion of Kazuo Ishiguro in relation with his literary works and Boe (1981) who studied the character’s introversion in Shakespeare’s works, Hamlet and Jaques in *As You Like It* and *Prospero in The Tempest*. The results showed that Shakespeare is an introverted man

and it is represented in the characters created by him. Studies that relate literature with introversion are rarely to be studied. Meanwhile, studies that relate literature with introversion contexts can give new colours in literary studies that are related to psychology, especially either the introversion of the authors or the introversion of the characters in the literary works.

Jungian psychology is a study related to Jung's essential views regarding archetype, shadow, introvert/introvert, and anima/animus (Cambray & Carter, 2004; Dyer, 1991; Daking, 1934; Hall & Nordby, 1973; Hannah, 2000; Arraj & Arraj, 1987; Mattoon, 1985; Spiegelman, 1993; Jaffe, 1990; Le, 2016; Spiegelman *et al.*, 2018; Sharp, 1998; Knox, 2014; Stein, 1981; Segal 1997; Vaughan-Lee, 1998) which are universal. Jung's followers, for example Franz (1983, 1990, 1999, 2017) who is more concerned with literature/folklore and Shamdasani (2019, 2013, 2012, 2003a, 2003b, 1998, 1990) continue and strengthen Jung's thinking in multidisciplinary psychological research.

Jungian psychology, according to Jung's views (1934, 1964, 1976, 1989), focuses more on the psychology of the collective unconscious. This is based on archetypes that appear repeatedly in human life, from ancient to modern times, for example symbolism that appears in religion (Heydt, 1984, Palmer, 2003), art (Mayo, 1995), and literature (Hall & Linzey, 1957; Ahmadi, 2015). This archetypal symbol will guide humans to become better and more positive figures.

In connection with Jungian Psychology studies in the field of literature, for example Chachere (2003), Dib (2020), Knapp (1984), Jones (1979), Edinger (1990), El-Meligi (2013), Kimball (1997), Rowland (1999), Sugg (1992), Tucker (2003), Meurs (1991), and Walker (2012) show that Jungian psychology can be used to examine literary works, either through the perspective of the author or literary texts that are considered psychological documents. Literature as a creative work can convey truths in psychology implicitly or explicitly. For this reason, Jung (1961, 1965, 1966, 1984, 2012), as a psychologist, showed that literature can be used as a mental therapy. This is based on research he conducted that literature is psychological data that psychologists can use.

The term "introvert", historically, was initiated and popularized by Jung in psychology (Chuhuran, 2020; Gruengard, 1998). Jung's views on introversion and extroversion are actually inseparable from Freud (Coan, 1994), who was a pioneer of psychoanalysis. As a psychologist of the psychoanalysis thoughts, Jung introduced extroversion and introversion types inside of each individual (Jung, 1923) which was then called impersonal characteristics. Extroverts and introverts have their own characteristics in each individual. Both introverts and extroverts refer to someone's type. However, in the viewpoint of society, the introverts are considered as "loners, unfriendly, cold, misfits, even depressed" (Edward, 2013, p. 12). This indicates that introverts have more negative sides (Spark *et al.*, 2018) in social life when compared to extroverts. In fact, in a more distant context, introverts

are closer to neurosis (Eysenck, 1957; 1967; Howard, 1986). In fact, not all of their viewpoints are true. These two personalities are equal, both of them are good and balanced (Gray, 1970) in terms of happiness (Hills & Argyle, 2001) and enjoyment of life.

Thought of characteristics, a human can easily understand their selves and make relationships with others (Liberty, 2002). The personality of humans cannot be separated from its individual because it is embedded inside of them. Human as a unique individual has its genetic characteristics. Introversion as a personality type is a “term general attitude type” (Jung, 1923, p. 2). It shows that introversion refers to a tendency of someone’s behaviour in having interpersonal relationships. In the context of art and psychotherapy, introverted individuals have creativity in their work so they tend to become experts in art and psychotherapy (Capobianco & Jung, 1988). An introvert tends to; think first before talking and acting; have a small circle of friends; love ideas and the inner world; be sensitive; be serious; feel exhausted when in crowds; have full of energy when in solitude (Briggs, 1988; Capobianco & Jung, 1988; Eysenck, 1967; Eysenck & Eysenk, 1975; Gelberg, 2008; Wier, 2016; Cain *et al.*, 2017; Leung, 2015; Kagan, 2019; Tierney, 2018); loves lonelines (Liu, & Csikszentmihalyi, 2020; Pavot *et al.*, (1990); has fewer friends (Asendorpf & Wilpers, 1998); likes quiet geographical environments (Oishi *et al.*, 2015), and has a high level of religiosity (Francis *et al.*, 1983). According to these viewpoints, it can be concluded that introverts tend to be interpersonal, love solitude, and love being quiet rather than talking. “When speaking they have soft voices” (Laney & Laney, 2007: 7). Walmsley (1982: 280-281) emphasizes that introversion can be seen from “activity; sociability, risk-taking, impulsiveness, expressiveness, reflectiveness, and responsibility”.

In addition, an introvert tends to love writing than talking in communicating. In the context of leadership, an extrovert aims their energy outwards, and an introvert aims their energy inwards (Odajnyk, 2012, p. 4). In society, Edward (2013, p. 12) stated that an introvert is “loners, unfriendly, cold, misfits, shy, even depressed”. In fact, on the other hand, an introvert is a personality that wants harmony, clarification, and reconciliation (Laney & Laney, 2007, p. 121). An introverted person tends to avoid conflicts because they like to pull their selves out from other people.

Based on the explanation above, the present study aims to explore an introverted female depicted in Indonesian literature. Data sources used were a novel entitled *Amba* (2015) by Laksmi Pamuntjak. The research problem of the study is how the description of female introversion named *Amba* in the novel entitled *Amba* by Laksmi Pamuntjak is. This study is important to be carried out because introversion studies in the literature that are related to females are rarely carried out. This study is included in literature psychology because it studies literature in the context of psychology (Mills, 2006) which is focussed on psychology in the literary text.

## METHOD

The study used the qualitative research method which utilized narrative text exposures and referred to text interpretation by the researcher (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013; Kusch, 2016; Creswell & Creswell, 2020). The approach used in this study was the literary psychology which focuses on studying the behaviour of characters in literature (Ahmadi, 2023, 2020; Ahmadi, *et al.* 2019). In this study, the researcher is the key instrument because he is the one who is analyzing, interpreting, and constructing the results of the study. The data source was a novel entitled *Amba* by Laksmi Pamuntjak and published by Gramedia, Jakarta, Indonesia, in 2015. The data were literary texts which had relevance with female introversion in a female by the name of *Amba*.

The data collection technique referred to the framework of Wellek & Warren (2019) that was a literary study which had relevancy with an introverted female. The data analysis technique referred to the view of Neuman (2014) which consisted of some steps, namely (1) open coding, (2) axial coding, and (3) selective coding. After conducting these data analysis steps, the researcher analyzed the main data based on selective coding. The researcher conducted theory, methods, and analysis triangulation for validating the data. It was conducted using an inter-subjectivity technique, which was a discussion with colleagues and authorities. Therefore, it is expected that the results of the study will be able to be accounted for comprehensively.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Introversion Female and Shy Behaviour

A mother has an ability to understand the psychology of her children. This is because a mother is the one who takes care of her children since they are babies. Hence, the psychological and physical bonding of a mother is tighter than that of a father. Related this notion, *Amba's* mother recognized and understood *Amba's* behaviour which was different from her sisters. As a female figure, *Amba* was a shy person compared to her younger siblings. Shyness is indeed a normal thing for everyone and everybody who has a shy characteristic. However, the introvert has a higher preference for shyness compared to the extrovert. *Amba's* image as a shy person was revealed by *Amba's* mother to their family. It was shown in the following quote.

“But, actually she was a shy person.” (Pamuntjak, 2015, p.161).

Based on the quote above, it is understood that *Amba* was a shy person. It appeared since she was a child. *Amba* was not a person who confidently presented herself in front of many people or was proud of her appearance, unlike her younger sister who was always confident in front of many people. It was because her younger sister had a prettier face compared to

Amba. Psychologically, beauty is a thing in women. Likewise with Amba, when she found out that her sister was prettier than she was, she felt more insecure and shy because she felt inferior in the matter of beauty.

As an introverted female, Amba understood that. She felt that she was a shy and quiet person. She felt that she was a woman who had great power within herself. The strength was an introvert power within her. In a psychological context, a person sometimes does not recognize themselves whether they are an introvert or not. It is caused by the workings of the mind which sometimes works subconsciously. The picture that Amba was a shy type and that it was admitted by herself is shown in the following quote.

She liked the name, “Amba.” There was a tacit power within it (Pamuntjak, 2015, p.107).

The quote above shows that Amba was a shy child. Being shy was what caused her to be a quiet child. She felt more comfortable in silence than in the hustle and bustle of the crowd. This characteristic is an attitude of an introverted female, i.e. shy and shyness caused her to be a quiet woman compared to her siblings. In the view of the introverts, shyness makes them feel more secure and comfortable because it withdraws them from other people and social interactions.

### **Introversion Female, Solitude, and Indifference**

Introverts who prefer solitude (Hills & Argyle, 2001) have an impact on how they view others. Those who like to be alone will be less caring and indifferent to others because they feel that they are for themselves. Amba liked to be alone and did not care about what around her was. She did not try to understand other people’s world deeply because she tried to understand the world within herself. Amba, as a female figure, had an indifferent attitude to other people outside her. It was shown in the following quote.

Amba stood up and walked no matter what other people thought, maybe because her brain was busy asking questions (Pamuntjak, 2015, p.113).

Based on the quote above, it is shown that, as an introvert, Amba did not care about others. It was because, as an introverted female, she liked solitude. She became uncomfortable if she cared about others. The notion of “an introvert is always afraid of the external world” (Jung, 1978:303)” makes them prefer to live in their own minds and prefer to be alone. As with introverts in general, they will run out of energy if they use it to understand the attitudes and views of others. Introverts are more comfortable with their own selves and do not want to think about how other people think of them.

The indifferent attitude towards people around and the environment sometimes makes introverts experience blind emotion. In psychology, there



is alexithymia, a dysfunction of personal awareness related to an emotional problem in oneself, interpersonal relationship, relationship, and social interaction. People with alexithymia fail to establish a warm relationship with other people and society because of their inability to understand the interpersonal relationship and social interaction. It is because they are indifferent and cold in the case of interpersonal relationships. People with alexithymia are emotionally blind because they do not try to find out what other people think of them. Basically, they do not care about what other people say about them.

### **Introversion Female, Love, and Faith**

The love life of the introvert type has a deep character, loyal, and sometimes possessive. It is because introverts are deep in their feelings. Because of this, introverts are 70% more loyal than extroverts. This is due to the ability to maintain high fidelity in introverted people. They prefer consistency in life when they are already committed to their partner. Not only that; if they like someone, even though the person they like do not like them back, they will still try to keep their love for that person. In Amba's novel, Amba was an introverted female in love issues. Because of that, she tried to take care of and maintain her fidelity to the people she loved. It was shown in the following quote.

She couldn't discuss it with Bhisma because she would not talk about a severe experience with someone who had made the experience happened (Pamuntjak, 2015, p.293).

The quote shows that Amba had another man before Bhisma. However, this man, Salwa, was not the man she chose. The man was her parents' choice. Besides, Amba did not love Salwa. Amba told Bhisma because she felt that Bhisma was the man she loved the most. There was no other man in her heart except Bhisma. Because of that, she told all of her life secrets to Bhisma. To show her fidelity to Bhisma, Amba sent a letter to Salwa and told him that she already had a man she really loved, he was Bhisma. It was shown in the following quote.

I found nothing that linked us, apart from being attached to things outside ourselves. Goodbye, Mas Salwa: I was saying goodbye with all of my heart (Pamuntjak, 2015, p.357).

Based on the quote above, Amba already had a fiancée named Salwa. He was a future husband chosen by her parents. However, in her heart, Amba did not like him because love was about what was within the heart. It was impossible to be forced. She also asked permission from Salwa that she had another man who was her own choice of love, not a man chosen by her parents. She honestly said that to Salwa. To her parents, Amba also bluntly

said that she already had a man she loved and the man was not the choice of her parents. However, on the other hand, Amba also apologized to her parents because she had disappointed her parents in matchmaking. It was shown in the following quote.

Father, I was being presumptuous again, but a child was born from love, which I knew very well about the forms and movement from the book that I had been reading since I was a child (because you also read it): love is a combination of ... and spiritual (Pamuntjak, 2015, p.360).

Amba was an introverted female figure in the matter of love. Therefore, when she did not love someone, in this case, Salwa, Amba found it difficult to love him because love was a matter of the heart. Although she reluctantly disappointed her parents, Amba still chose the man of her own choice, Bhisma. Her love story with Bhisma even gave birth to a daughter who was named Srikandi. In this condition, it turned out that Bhisma, the male figure that she loved, disappeared. The disappearance of Bhisma was caused by the chaos of the rebellion that occurred in 1965. At that time, Bhisma was arrested and imprisoned on Buru Island. The fidelity in introverts is very strong. This is confirmed by Loehken (2014) who showed that introverts are more loyal to their partner compared to extroverts.

In the erratic condition –she was left by Bhisma when she was pregnant and gave birth to a daughter they named Srikandi–, Amba was helped by a man named Adhalhard. He was a man of German descent. Then, Adhalhard married Amba. Her life was getting better. In a time like this, Amba still missed her boyfriend whose conditions she had no clue about. Amba still loved Bhisma, even though she already had a man who loved her so much. It was shown in the following quote.

But I had to do what I would do soon –to find Bhisma, live or die, accept the past that held me hostage for years for the sake of my daughter’s future so that she could escape from her father and mother’s world, the fake world (Pamuntjak, 2015, p.475).

In the quote above, Amba, as a woman, felt that she was not able to keep her secret love. She wanted to show her daughter that the real father was not Adhalhard, but Bhisma. As a mother, she did not want to hide the fact from her daughter. Because of that, she did not want to be haunted by the past and also the future of her daughter. This was the form of Amba’s extroversion about her love life. On the one hand, she was married, but, on the other, she still loved Bhisma. She was still loyal to that man even though there was no certainty about where he was.

As an introvert, Amba did not like women who easily seduced and liked men. Amba showed that she was an introvert in the matter of love because she, as a woman, did not want to be easily affected by men. As a woman,

she had to have fidelity and self-respect so that she would not easily fall in love with men. It was shown in the following quote.

she also could not stand women who were too easily seduced or too quickly flattered by what men said (Pamuntjak, 2015, p.95).

The quote above tells that Amba, as an introverted female, really did not like women who were too easily seduced by men. This was Amba's introverted personality who only loved one man throughout her life, Bhisma. She would not fall for another men's flattery although they were good men. This was due to the fidelity that was embedded in introverts.

### **Introversion Female and Jealousy**

Introverts are possessive. They have a high level of jealousy, either to their partner or their siblings. In this case, the character of Amba had two sisters named Ambalika and Ambika. Both were beautiful women and many men were fascinated by them. As an introverted female, Amba felt jealous of her beautiful sisters while she was an ordinary woman. In Amba's mind, she was not content that her beautiful sisters had no problem at all. Of course, it would be unfair if her beautiful sisters did not suffer in their lives, while an ordinary woman suffered in her life. This is shown in the following quote.

I didn't care, ah, let them suffer a little, Amba thought. Beautiful women should not expect so many privileges (Pamuntjak, 2015, p.130).

In the quote above, it is shown that Amba, as an introverted character, was jealous of her two sisters, Ambalika and Ambika. It was because her two sisters were beautiful women, so they had to be struggling too. Thus, this would be fair to Amba who felt physically ordinary but suffered more in life than her sisters. Amba's views and thoughts show her self-introversion associated with excessive jealousy in physical issues.

### **Introversion Female and the Inner World**

An introverted female is more concerned about the inner world. They mostly think in silence and this is what makes them rarely speak or show their thoughts to the public. Introverts prefer the inner world because it makes them feel more secure and comfortable in their zone. Because of that, they tend to keep their feelings to themselves. In daily life, their thoughts are full of unspoken ideas. It is shown in the following quote.

She didn't believe in the mirror because she never knew which image she would show every time she stood in front of the mirror (Pamuntjak, 2015, p.87).



The quote shows that Amba, as a woman, thinks that the mirror does not necessarily represent the real self. In the extroverts' view, on the contrary, mirrors are the media to present their true selves and this is what makes them feel more confident. However, in Amba's view, mirrors would make someone shy and afraid because they felt that they were not as sweet as the expectations.

Amba's character, whose life was concerned more with the inner world, caused more of the thoughts in her mind. She tended to be silent and had dialogues with herself in her mind. Even when she knew about something, she did not necessarily tell that to others. Her ability to understand the inner world made her able to read someone's thoughts and feelings deeply. It is shown in the following quote.

Amba secretly knew, even in the early teenage years, her sisters liked men (Pamuntjak, 2015, p.93).

Based on the quote, it is seen that Amba knew about her sisters' behaviours. Amba, with the thoughts of her inner world, understood and felt that her sisters liked men. It was seen from the gestures of her sisters when they met men. As an introvert, a person sometimes has deeper thinking about what other people think. In fact, it is still uncertain. The ability to understand the inner world is the strength of introverts. This is in line with Loehken's view (2014) which stated that introverts like deep things and like to think about things deeply.

### **Introvert Female in Learning Context**

In terms of learning, Amba was a studious child and had been seen as a bookworm. The view that Amba was a bookworm was the attitude of introverts. As an introverted child, she preferred a silent and quiet world. Therefore, she chose to make friends with books. It also made her smarter because she used to read a lot of books. Being a person who likes to read books and be a bookworm is an option for an introverted child to choose. It is shown in the following quote.

Amba chose to make friends with books (Pamuntjak, 2015, p.87).

As an elementary school girl, Amba had chosen to be friends with books. In Loehken's view (2014), it was emphasized that introverts like solitude, one of the concrete ways of being alone is through reading books. When introverts read books, they will feel more comfortable and happy in the solitude accompanied by books. This cannot be separated from the energy that the introverts need to be alone with books. Because of that, she was very diligent in reading books so that her grades were also great.

An introverted female, like Amba, devotes her energy to reading books so that she gains new energy when she reads books in solitude. Similarly,

introverts, like Amba, do not like to talk to people and choose to devote the energy to reading books instead. Despite Amba herself who chose to be friends with books, her teachers at the school also felt the same. Amba was indeed a book-loving child and had become a bookworm. It is shown in the following quote.

For her school teachers, she was remembered as a bookworm, and hard to be convinced about anything that didn't come from her own mind (Pamuntjak, 2015, p.101).

The quote shows that Amba's father, Sudarminto, received the information from her school teacher who said that Amba was considered a bookworm student. The teachers' views were getting stronger to know that Amba was an introvert in the matter of learning. Because of her love for books, it affected her interpersonal relationship with her friends, being less well established. Likewise was the interpersonal relationship with her teachers. This was what caused Amba to be somewhat difficult to accept any advice from other people because she was defensive. This was a preference from the extroversion within her.

Introverts tend to like books because they think that their friends are books. As a friend, books will not hurt themselves. That is why she likes books. When reading a book, introverts will be drowned in their own world. She dives into the world of books she reads. In this case, whenever she reads books, she does it calmly, casually, and usually in a quiet place, as in the study room in the bedroom. They prefer books because, when they read books, they do not have to interact with people like in a noisy bar. Through books, she will drown and explore the world she does not get in the relationship with her school friends.

Amba's siblings, Ambalika and Ambika also saw that their sister was a studious figure. It made a difference in their academics. Amba was optimal in learning. It was shown in the following quote.

"But then my sister went to school first, was diligent in doing homework, and graduated with the highest scores (Pamuntjak, 2015, p.88).

Based on the quote, it is shown that Amba was indeed a serious person in terms of learning. It was shown by her achievements at school which were great. Introverted people have a character who is diligent in learning so that they often become the champion in class and school. Amba, an introverted figure, devoted more of her attention to books and study so that she had more energy in it. It was what caused her to be better in the academics compared to her sisters or friends. As a figure, Amba was the type who liked traditional and conservative things, believing and liking ancient books, like the *Mahabaratha*. She also lived in the stories in it.

## CONCLUSION

Literature is full of ideas concreted into written texts by the authors which cannot be separated from psychology contexts. Therefore, literature, including the novel, represents psychology elements, either explicitly or implicitly. Psychology study which is referred to as introverted female in the present study uses Jungian psychology related to introversion. It can be shown how an introverted female named Amba in the novel was represented in several forms.

First, the character Amba was an introverted female that showed shy behaviour. The most introverted person is a shy person because they tend to have their own world and feel uncomfortable having social interaction with others. The shy personality is shown in the segment when they are having relationships with others. They feel shy so they withdraw their selves from society. The shy personality in Amba was so strong concreted in her relation with family and social interaction. Therefore, she was considered as a shy person by her family and friends.

Second, the character Amba was an introverted female that loved solitude. It is shown in her relationship with others, especially with her family. She loved being alone and hated intervening in others' problems. It did not only make her become someone that loved solitude but also one who became indifferent to others. She was indifferent to others because she loved herself. However, in this case, being introverted does not mean being individual and egoistic. They love to take care of their selves rather than of others' business in which they do not understand the real problem.

Third, the character Amba was an introvert and loyal to her partner. She loved Bhisma. Amba still loved Bhisma although Bhisma left her. Even, when Amba had married another man, she still had a longing and expectation to live with Bhisma. It proved that the loyalty of introverted females was higher than that of extroverted females.

Fourth, Amba was an introverted female who had high jealousy. It is shown from her daily life, she felt that her sisters, Ambalika and Ambika, were more beautiful than her. She was jealous of the love of her parents to her was less than that to her sisters. In this case, the character Amba showed that she was possessive because she felt that the affection of her parents shifted to her sisters.

Fifth, the character Amba was an introvert that loved study. As an introvert type, the character Amba was a bookworm because she loved studying and her daily activities were reading books. She felt more alive and motivated when she was reading books because she was able to find a friend by reading books. A friend that made her happy. By reading books, she learned about the world without meeting many people. Introvert people, indeed, love books because they can feel comfortable and be in solitude without being disturbed by other people.

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