

A Discourse of Drupadi Character in Javanese Puppetry in “Feminism Perspective”

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Abstract: Javanese puppetry story is still dominated by masculine perspective, in which men have higher degree than women. It creates a social construction that the position of women is under that of men and women has not control over their body. From this representation of ideology, women’s feminism spirit grows to get equality and control or power over themselves. Drupadi character symbolizes a Javanese woman subjected to the man’s power. It contains internal interpretation on a strongly constructed awareness that the position of women is under that of men. The discourse was constructed through the life journey of Drupadi character who was always subjected to her husband’s command. Drupadi tried to do all of his husband’s command and decision toughly and indirectly Drupadi no longer has control over her body. The research method used was qualitative research and data analysis technique used was descriptive one with hermeneutic approach. This research will operate the conception and its relation to the text interpretation. Using this research analysis method, discourse and feminism theories will be used to study the character of Drupadi in Javanese puppetry. Meanwhile, data validation was carried out using triangular data through: firstly comparing the data of observation and data of interview; secondly, comparing information coming from one source with that coming from another; and thirdly, comparing interview with relevant document.

Keywords: Discourse, Feminism, Drupadi, Javanese Puppetry.

1. Introduction

A discourse is a way of producing knowledge along with social practice accompanying it, subjectivity resulting from it, power relation behind the knowledge and social practice, and interrelation between all aspects. It means that discourse is human category produced and reproduced through various rules, systems, and procedures making it separated from the normality (Foucault, in Pitana, 2014:17). Discourse on women and their position in social life always becomes an interesting topic. Women issue relating to gender equality is often associated with a social justice problem about feminism. Viewed from discourse, feminism is very interesting to talk about. Feminism is a paradigm or a conception of gender-based justice that can underlie a movement or a social policy.

In Javanese puppetry story, Drupadi is the daughter of *Raja Drupada* (King Drupada) from Panchala Kingdom. Drupadi was told as a woman with extraordinary beauty; to Javanese people, Drupadi is the symbol of faithful or loyal and tough women, despite many sorrows. Having gotten married with Puntadewa, Drupadi’s life journey was so hard, from living as a wanderer, Bale Sigala-gala moment, Amarta Kingdom

construction, to Pandawa's defeat in gambling with Kurawa making Drupadi stripped by Dursasana before Kurawa. After the incidence, Drupadi took an oath that she would never roll her hair before it was washed with Dursasana's blood.

Wayang (puppet) is the reflection and the ideology of Javanese people. From Drupadi story, it can be seen that the story in Javanese puppetry is still dominated by masculine perspective and mindset. In this case, men have full control over women. It indicates that women are minority that should be subjected to the men's power. In this story, Drupadi was not given a freedom to choose. Drupadi was made a bet regardless her right as a woman.

If this discourse of Drupadi character in Javanese puppetry is viewed from women's perspective, can the women still be the minority or otherwise? Where can the women decide their own rights in their equality with the men. The oppression of rights experienced by women culturally, socially, and politically triggers feminism movement. In a cultural study, a problem cannot be analyzed universally, but can be conceived and seen in detail per section to get comprehensive conception, objective, and ideology of the discourse.

This study is a critical study that will reveal the feminism discourse of Drupadi character in Javanese puppetry. Because of its critical characteristic, a cultural study has different disciplinary and methodological characteristics. Cultural study is multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and post-disciplinary in nature, and the main theories used are hegemony, social construction theories, and other critical theories. In a cultural study, theory is not merely a way of capturing the world accurately. The theory is conceived as a tool, an instrument or a logic to deal with world through mechanisms of description, definition, prediction, and control. Therefore, Barker argues that a cultural study serves as demystification to shows the character constructed in cultural texts and various myths and ideologies inculcated within it, through yielding the positions of subject or the actual subject that resist subordination (2005:44).

Considering this, as the focus of study, the problem statement can be formulated as follows: (1) how was discourse constructed in Drupadi character in Javanese puppetry? and (2) how can the discourse of Drupadi character in Javanese puppetry be viewed from women's perspective. This research, generally, aims to reveal the feminism discourse of Drupadi character in Javanese puppetry. particularly, this cultural study is intended to find the answers to the problem statements through: (1) finding out and understanding the cause of Drupadi character discourse in Javanese puppetry, and (2) finding out and understanding Drupadi character discourse in Javanese puppetry, viewed from women's perspective.

This study uses theories developing in postmodernism idea. This research will use Foucault's discourse theory or the grand theory or main theory to analyze the feminism discourse of Drupadi in Javanese puppetry. In addition, feminism theory is also used to help Foucault theory's mechanism to review the discourse of Drupadi character in Javanese puppetry viewed from women's perspective.

2. Method

This research used a qualitative research method with descriptive analysis technique using hermeneutical approach that will operate its conception and relation to the interpretation of text. This research tries to give a description on feminism discourse of Drupadi character in Javanese puppetry. The descriptive qualitative method was chosen because the author attempted to describe and to interpret all discourses of Drupadi character in Javanese puppetry.

The techniques of collecting data used in this research were observation and interview. Interview was conducted to support the data obtained from library study and observation, particularly to find out the Javanese people's perspective on Drupadi character. This interview was conducted with informant considered as knowledgeable in the field studied. Interview was conducted with Dwi Adi Nugroho as a cultural observer and puppeteer of leather puppet (*wayang kulit*) to explore the discourse of Drupadi character in Javanese puppetry.

3. Discussion

3.1. Discourse of Drupadi Character in Javanese Puppetry

Mahabharata story features several very interesting female characters, one of which is Drupadi. Drupadi character is the main female character in both Indian and Javanese versions of Mahabharata story. Drupadi character in Javanese puppetry-version Mahabharata is different from that in Indian-version Mahabharata. Actually Mahabharata in Javanese puppetry originated from Veyasa's work. The heart of Indian- and Javanese puppetry-version Mahabharata story is Hindu teachings. However, when Islam came into Java, the content and story of Mahabharata in Javanese puppetry changed without removing Javanese moral teachings.

In Indian version, Drupadi is the wife of the five Pandawas, while in Javanese puppetry version Drupadi is the wife of Yudistira (Puntadewa) only. The difference between Indian and Javanese versions is due to cultural adjustment, in which Javanese culture does not know polyandry system. In Javanese puppetry, there are two versions of Drupadi prize contest. The first version is the prize contest to spread the *gandewa* or *Pancala* heirloom bow out attended by Karna and Arjuna with Arjuna being the winner. In the second version, the participants of contest should defeat Patih Gandamana. Patih Gandamana could be defeated by Bima (Werkudara). From the two versions of Javanese puppetry, both Arjuna and Bima represented Yudistira to win Drupadi.

Drupadi character in Javanese puppetry is represented as a patient, wise wife who is obedient to her husband. Drupadi followed her husband anywhere he went, including when Pandawa was lost in gambling with Kurawa. This Drupadi's loyalty becomes a role model to some Javanese women in their social and household life.

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and reproduced through various rules, systems, and procedures making it separated from the normality (Foucault, in Pitana, 2014:17).

A perspective on an object, according to Foucault, will be created through boundaries specified by discursive structure. Discourse itself is characterized with the boundary field of object. Perception on object will be created through boundary of discursive practice, and bounded by a view defining that it is right and the other is wrong.

Drupadi character is the symbol of a Javanese woman subjected to the man's power. Within it there is an internal interpretation coming from the consciousness constructed so strongly that a woman is under a man. The discourse is constructed through the life journey of Drupadi who was always obedient to her husband's instruction, and thus indirectly Drupadi no longer has control over her body.

Foucault in Pitana confirms that when a discourse is uttered, it has actually been controlled, selected, organized, and redistributed according to the maker's will because the discourse is constructed based on certain episteme (rule order). Therefore, as suggested by Lubis in Ningsih, the power in fact relates closely to knowledge. Neither knowledge is without power nor is power without knowledge. In the implementation of power, according to Foucault, there will be no essential discourse in each of cultures and societies (2016:30).

3.2. *Drupadi and Feminism*

Considering Javanese puppetry story, its construction and content reveal many social hierarchies and forms of power in life. This hierarchy is led by a man with strong image. In its most basic form, the Javanese puppetry story is still dominated by man's perspective, in which man has higher degree than woman does.

This analysis on Drupadi character in Javanese puppetry is emphasized on radical feminism critique. This Drupadi character will be viewed from women's perspective, in which women accept oppression due to patriarchic system. Radical feminism is a thought resting on a view that oppression over women occurs due to patriarchic system. Women's body is the main object of oppression by men's power. Therefore, radical feminism argues about women's body and reproductive rights, sexuality, and sexism, power relation between women and men, and private-public dichotomy.

Drupadi character does not have control over her body since the beginning of Drupadi prize contest. Even in selecting a husband, Drupadi should obey her father's rule by holding a prize contest, in which Drupadi cannot decide herself who will be her husband. Then, when Pandawa was defeated in a gambling with Kurawa, Drupadi became a bet making her insulted by Dursasana. Dursasana stripped her before Kurawas, indicating that she did not have power or control over her body at all.

Husband's domination and power can be seen in this part because patriarchic culture in this Javanese puppetry creates a social construction that women are under men, women are the weak creature, and women are viewed as an object and can be a bet. As suggested by Fananle in Qurotul, Javanese culture is often called a very patriarchic culture. This has been elaborated in Javanese history that in 18th century the existence of Javanese women

in Javanese tradition and kingdom government was merely as *kanca wingking* (friend behind) (2002:34).

The representation of patriarchic ideology in Drupadi character in Javanese puppetry is the form of subordination over women. It is a view positioning women lower than men. This view indirectly grows a discourse that a woman is merely the companion of man, she does not have control over herself and thereby she should be subjected to the man's power. From this ideological representation, feminism spirit grows inside women to get equality and power or control over themselves. In the case of Drupadi stripped by Dursasana, she took an oath that she would never roll her hair before it was washed with Dursasana's blood.

4. Conclusion

The discourse of Drupadi character in Javanese puppetry contains social hierarchies and forms of power in life. These hierarchies are led by men with strong image. In its most basic form, the Javanese puppetry story is still dominated by man's perspective, in which man has higher degree than woman does. It creates a social construction that a woman is under a man and a woman does not have control or power over her body. From this ideological representation, feminism spirit grows inside a woman to get equality and power or control over herself. In this case, a woman should be aware that they are still in patriarchic system making her having no power or control over herself.

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