



Metaphor and Women's Struggle in Tegal Ethnic Story

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Abstract. The dominating patriarchal culture that domesticates women faces challenge when clashed with the reality that women in struggle require to step out from the domestic domain to fight for their own independence. Aiming to elaborate the particular phenomenon, the study intended to describe and analyze the metaphor and women's struggle in Tegal ethnic stories entitled "Mata" and "Oreg Tegal". The research relied on normative, referential identity, and introspective reflexivity methods to analyze the data. The result revealed that women's struggle in the stories is shown in the form of struggle for oneself, family, and nation with various motives. Despite living in a culture of patriarchy, their struggle in the stories was appreciated, either verbally or nonverbally.

Keywords: Metaphor · Women's struggle · Appreciation · Tegal ethnic story

1 Introduction

Men and women possess unique traits and values that are socially constructed in societal life. The social construction gives birth to the concept of gender, which is often categorized into two, i.e. feminine and masculine [1]. As frequently associated with their femininity, women are considered weaker or inferior than men. The gender imbalance is the aftermath of patriarch, as stated by Sylvia Walby (in Omara, 2004), patriarchy comes in two forms: private and public patriarchy. Private patriarchy contends that domestic job is an uncompromised stereotype that is imposed for women; this conduct is regarded as the oppression against women. Public patriarchy, on the other hand, is apparent in the social structure. Walby also mentions six points regarding this matter, including 1) domestic patriarchal relation; 2) patriarchal relation in work; 3) patriarchal relation in social life; 4) violence committed by men; 5) relation in sexuality context; and 6) emphasis of men's control and dominance over women.

The notion of patriarchy associates men with jobs in public sector; as the 'household head and leader', men are obliged to act as the main breadwinner outside the house. In the meantime, women are constructed as the manager of domestic works, e.g., taking care of the husband and children, preparing meals, and other daily household chores. In reality, not every man is capable of performing such roles to support the household needs, causing internal conflicts within individuals or family members that often leads

to the lack of financial security. Moreover, when the household consists of only the mother as the single parent, she is responsible not only for her own self, but also for her children. Taking into account the situations as mentioned previously, women's role in public sector is required to be mainstreamed. Despite their lacks, women are considered capable of fighting for their own fate as well as to serve their nation.

The notion of women's struggle in the highly collective Indonesian society, regardless of the intention, is central to their effort to achieve peace. As regarded by most, the concept of peace derives from one's perception on the cycle of feelings (happy or sad) and the sense of solidarity with other people [3]. In line with that, Argyle (2001) argues that happiness is one of the most important parts of life everyone wants to achieve [4]. A person conducts efforts in their life to achieve happiness, one of which includes the fulfillment of one's needs. Despite this, Lopez (2019) contends that happiness is exactly related to one's own subjective experience that will lead to subjective wellbeing. Regarding the discourse, one of the ways to fulfill the subjective wellbeing is to appreciate women and their struggles either verbally or by an action. Metaphor is an example of verbal appreciation. Lakoff & Johnson (2003: 3) describe that metaphor reflects human experiences, feelings, and thoughts in the reality. In its correlation with culture, metaphor acts as the reflection of the culture's paradigm, behavior, and social setting [6]. Echoing the notion, literary works are the form of cultural expressions that accentuate local wisdom in depicting the reality. In particular, the Tegalana ethnic stories entitled "Mata" [7] and "Oreg Tegal" [8] also illustrate women's struggle and metaphor as the form of appreciation. Therefore, this study aims to elaborate and analyze the metaphor and women's struggle in the Tegalana ethnic stories mentioned earlier.

2 Research Method

This narrative study focused on the speech quotes in the stories as the research data. It relied on normative, referential identity, and introspective reflexivity methods to analyze the data [9]. The data were further presented by formal and informal methods. The formal method aimed to display semantic and pragmatic interpretations on words, phrases, and clauses that illustrate women's struggle in the stories. Meanwhile, the informal method was employed to describe the metaphorical expressions [9].

3 Result and Discussion

The stories "Mata" and "Oreg Tegal" are short story written by native Tegal writers, i.e. M. Hadi Utomo and Lanang Setiawan, respectively. "Mata" tells about a newly promoted person as the promotion manager of a mosquito repellent company. The person is on his first business trip to the S city and stays at a hotel named MS. His friends told him that the hotel hires a female masseuse who is blind, but attractive. The masseuse, Asih, can also give 'extra service' should the customer wishes. During his stay, the manager is eager to meet the masseuse. He eventually gets to meet the masseuse and hires her to be massaged, first time from a woman other than his wife. The story contains both text and context that illustrate appreciation in the form of behavior and verbal speech to Asih. She chooses the profession due to her responsibility to fulfill the children as a single

parent. Meanwhile, “Oreg Tegal” illustrates the story of a spy woman in the colonial era. Both stories focus on different time setting and the values being upheld. However, both are similar in their depiction of women’s struggle to contribute to things they value as important, i.e. fighting for decent life.

The notion of public patriarchy acts as the basis of discrimination against women whose job in public sector. In fields such as development, women are heavily undervalued. Almost every role in public is dominated by men; this serves as the cause to overlook women’s role in public [10]. This further sets the barrier for women that prevents them from acquiring the jobs they want as a means to survive. The previous notion is apparent in the “Mata” story that tells a woman with disability who works as masseuse.

“Mbak Asih kuwe’ pramupijet nang Hotel MS”, Pak Jenal nerangna karo setengahwisikan. “Senajan wonge’ ora prawasan atawa tunanetra, tapi....whuih. Kulite’ putih, bodine’mulus, terus mijete’ luar biasa [7]

The word *pramupijet* (lit. Masseuse) is similar to other euphemisms, such as *pramusaji* (waitress) and *pramuniaga* (salesperson). *Pramupijet* is used to add polite meaning into the expression *pijet plus-plus* (erotic massage). The word is a form of maxim of approbation to differentiate *pramupijet* from *pelacur* (lit. Sex worker). The euphemism appreciates the profession and the skillset of masseuse as a way to earn money. A *pramupijet* does not offer herself in the same way that a sex worker does. Her main job is as the massage practitioner, despite that the person does not refuse to give the ‘extra service’ if the customer asks to [11]. For this reason, the use of *pramupijet* does not refer Asih as a sex worker, prostitute, or other defaming attributes; instead, the writer appreciates the skillset in such a profession. The phrase *terus mijete luar biasa* is also an appreciation to Asih’s massage skill.

Another example of maxim of approbation in the story is Pak Karno’s attitude in responding to the reason why Asih pretends to be blind. After Pak Karno discovers that Asih’s blindness is a lie, he shows passive and active appreciation to Asih. In this context, passive is associated with Pak Karno’s silence after knowing the fact, rather than being angry or aggressive. While active appreciation refers to his empathy towards Asih shown in the form of material appreciation. The following quote illustrates Pak Karno’s empathy towards Asih.

*“SEbabe’ Apa Mbak Asih Ape’n-Ape’n Picek”, Aku Takon Karo Penasaran...
Mbak Asih manjing terus metu maning karo nggandhe’ng bocah wadon cilik.
Masya Allah... Aku kage’t luar biasa, nganti ora percaya apa sing tak deleng.
Bocah wadon cilik, umure’ sapantaran anakku Citra, matane’ loro-lorone’ picek!
“Niki Desi, anak kulo” Mbak Asih ngomong lirih. Aku ora bisa ngomong.”
Cangkemku kaya dikancing, ora bisa ngetokna omongan apa-apa [7]*

The phrase *cangkemku kaya dikancing* (lit. My mouth is locked shut) is a metaphor that illustrates Pak Karno’s reaction. In a normal context, lockable things comprise of door, window, or other daily stuffs. In the text, however, the locked thing refers to mouth. This illustrates that a locked mouth is like a person who is speechless and stuck in silence. The metaphor is Pak Karno’s reaction to Asih’s profession depicted as her struggle. As

explained later in the text, she lies because she has a daughter of her own responsibility. Asih has divorced with his husband, and thus, struggles to earn money for her daughter's surgery. She pretends to be blind in order to apply as a masseuse at the hotel, as the hotel requires that a masseuse needs to be blind. It is illustrated in the following quote:

"Kulo piyambakan Pak Karno. Kaliyan bapakipun lare' menika sampun pirakan. Kulo saweg ngempalaken arto kangge' biaya operasi mripatipun Desi. Pramilokulo nyuwun, Pak Karno mboten mbikak rahasia kulo meniko. Nyuwun tulung Pak.... Panjenengan sampun ngendiko sinten-sinten... Kulo ethok-ethok wuto... Supados saged mijet wonten hotel..."[7]

Pak Karno also gives money in hundreds of thousand rupiahs as material appreciation to Asih, knowing that she struggles to support her family by herself.

Karo rasa trenyuh sing ora kira-kira aku ngrogoh dompet, ngetokna diwit atusan e'wu, terus tak kepelna nang tangan mungil anake' Mbak Asih. Mbak Asih ndremimil ngucapna trimakasih karo mingseg-migseg. Aku cepet-cepet pamit [7]

Within the story, this study assumes that the title "Mata" (lit. Eye) contains connotative meaning, that *Mata* or eye is the metaphor that illustrates someone whose heart is moved or 'opened'. In this context, 'eye' is interpreted as 'eye of the heart' instead of a visual organ.

Another story "Oreg Tegal" also depicts women's struggle. This story, in particular, illustrates the journey of some women who contribute to seizing the nation's independence from the colony. These women contribute to fight for the nation to actualize their desire for freedom in life. This notion contains two meanings: escape from colonization and get to live freely, or risk own life to escape from colonization and goes to heaven as a reward. The story features two women named Catim and Niti. Catim's father passed away in his service to fight for the nation. Her father, Abah Kyai, taught Catim the idea that heaven will be rewarded for death with noble cause (*syahid*); this message resonated with Catim for the rest of her life. It is depicted in the following quote:

Ajakané Jènggèr ora dijawab Catim. Rasa kesel kalawan getuné ngglibed nang ati. Getun sing ora mupakat kayadèné waktu dèwèké trima kabar bapané mati dibrondong pèlor Walanda. Tapi waktu Abah Kiai nerangna adong bapané mati syahid lan bakal mlebu suwarga, atiné Catim bombong [8]

The clause *bapané mati syahid lan bakal mlebu suwarga, atiné Catim bombong* translates to "Knowing that her father passed away in *syahid* condition, she feels very happy and relieved." This particular clause is to underline the ideology that is instilled within Catim, that if one dies in his/her struggle for the nation, the death is considered noble and will be rewarded the heaven. Heaven is interpreted metaphorically as a beautiful place, in which people are free to rejoice whichever way they choose and be free from any pain or suffering. Therefore, despite realizing that one's struggle for the nation might lead to death, the heaven is deemed as the way of escaping from painful life. The phrase *mati syahid* ('noble death') is the author's approbation to Catim's father's service.

Besides Catim, the character Niti is also depicted as an orphan woman who holds grudge against the Dutch colonizer that killed his father. It is shown in the following quote:

Mung akibat bisané Abahé ora nana, Niti gurung bisa narima. Patiné Abah ora liya akibat kurugan barang-barang bangunan. Sedeng akibat kurugan, yakuwé lantaran amuk serangané tentara Walanda. Lan Niti bener-bener ngutuk saporètè maring Landa![8]

By the sentence “*Lan Niti bener-bener ngutuk saporètè maring Landa!*”, the author tries to underline Niti’s grudge against the Dutch. With such a motive, Niti joins force to fight for the nation’s independence to avenge her grudge against the colony. The similar fate facilitates their meeting to serve the country as spy in Tegal region. In the region, both of them meet Kartijah, a fellow female spy. The following quote illustrates the ideology that noble death will be rewarded heaven.

Tugas penyusupané dadi mata-mata, diweruhi pasukan Landa. Akibaté, dèwèké mobat-mabit yagyagan, kedangsraikan ngindari pasukan Landa. Sajeroné pikir, adong kepaksané kecekel, dèwèké ora pan gela. Tègadé mantep, jiwa ragané dipasrahna nggo perjuwangan. Sung busung, jihad pati kanggo bangsané mantep nemen. Ora baèn-baèn [8]

The sentence *Sung busung, jihad pati kanggo bangsané mantep nemen* is an appreciation towards one’s struggle for the nation. *Jihad* or struggle is seen as praiseworthy conduct, that if one’s *jihad* leads to his/her death, s/he will die in nobility. When Kartijah passed away, one of the warriors pay homage to her:

Ndelèn, sapa maning sing bakal dadi digdayané Ibu Pertiwi? Sedeng kedigdaya sing ana nang jiwané Kartijah, saiki ilang gandra. Muluk maring awang-awang sing duwuré ora bisa dicawèl ganing sapa baé. Kartijah, salah sijiné wong wadon pejuwang, saiki wis balik maring asalé! [8]

The phrase *Ndelèn, sapa maning sing bakal dadi digdayané Ibu Pertiwi?* [translated: “Behold, now who else will support the Ibu Pertiwi (lit. Motherland)?”] is a metaphorical expression as a sign of respect and appreciation. Kartijah’s struggle to fight the colonizer is interpreted as the effort to strengthen the nation’s unity.

In her struggle against the Dutch, Niti burned one of the Dutch’s bases, while Catin rescued fellow warrior Bekel Subur from Dutch prison. Both efforts are illustrated in the following quote:

Saiki Pas Nemen Waktuné Nggo Molai Mbales Kesumat, Pikiré Niti. Wong Telu Trus Srag-Sreg Atur Siasat. Niti Nyiapna Lenga Tanah Nggo Ngobong Markas.

.....

Niti ora kalah gerakané, nang jaba dèwèké ngguyur bensin maring tèmbok-tèmbok markas.[8]

The text “*Saiki pas nemen waktuné nggo molai mbales kesumat, pikiré Niti*” [translated: “Now is the right time to avenge my grudge”] depicts Niti’s motive to avenge her

grudge. The motive instigates Niti's effort to free her from revenge as well as to free her country from colonization. The previous notions are seen as the effort to free oneself from both the shackles of grudge and colonization. On the contrary, Catim's contribution is by rescuing a fellow warrior imprisoned by the Dutch. It is illustrated in the following quote:

"SSsstttt....Aja Seru-Seru. Ngko Wong-Wong Pada Tangi" Omongé Catim Kambèn Ngudari Tali Sing Nggubed Awaké Bekel Subur.

"WIs Gagiyan Tim. Gelisan Metu Sing Kèné" Omongé Bekel Subur.

"BEner Tim. Waktuné Kesusu Entong. Tak Bantu Mapah Bekelé Ya?" Omongé Jènggèr.

"Ora susah Jèng, enyong mèsih sanggup nggèndong Bekelé"[8]

The clause "*omongé Catim kambèn ngudari tali sing nggubed awaké Bekel Subur*" [translated: "... Says Catim while untying the rope that wreathes Bekel Subur"] accentuates Catim's contribution to free Bekel Subur, the guerilla leader of Tegal.

4 Conclusion

The study elaborates women's struggles depicted in short stories; such struggles are initiated by various motives for oneself, for one's family, and for the country. In the stories, women are depicted to be capable of escaping from the 'prison' of domestic domain and acting as a partner for their male compatriot. Each story illustrates different motives. In "Mata", the motive instigates Asih to step out from the domestic domain to support her family as a single parent, also by the reason that her child urgently requires eye surgery. On the other hand, the "Oreg Tegal" story depicts the motive of acquiring peaceful and content life. In particular, the story highlights one's search for life that is free from grudge and suffering, as well as noble life in the afterlife. Overall, this study concludes that women are appreciated in the form of verbal and nonverbal approbation, despite living in a patriarchal culture.

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