

MASCULINITY IN JAVANESE PEOPLE: HOW DOES ARJUNA MASCULINITY DESCRIBE IN JAVANESE VERSION OF MAHABHARATA

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Abstract: Masculinity is a form of maleness construction toward man. Man is not just born with his masculinity naturally, instead it is formed by culture. In a puppetry figure, Arjuna figure is a description of man for Javanese people. Arjuna has a Javanese knight figure. This research, therefore, aims to find out and describe the masculinity of Arjuna's character in Javanese Mahabharata story by Nano Riantiaro. Data used in the research is lingual units, which are sentences in discourses. The research data source uses a book entitled "Mahabarata Jawa (*Javanese Mahabharata*)" by Nano Riantiaro. The analysis technique is document analysis with interactive model as its data analysis technique. The research result indicates that there is a figure of Arjuna in the Javanese Mahabharata story that has masculinity characters. There are three masculinity characters of Arjuna, namely: Be a Big Wheel, Be a Sturdy, Give em Hell.

Keywords: masculinity, Arjuna, puppet show, Mahabharata

Every nation has its own culture. Culture reflects a nation's identity to other nation (Ratanatada et al., 2011). Indonesia, stretching from Sabang to Merauke, has various cultures and arts. A variety of art genres occur in Indonesia as a cultural product of the ancestors. One of its prominent cultures is puppet cultural art. Puppet (*wayang*) is one of Indonesian cultural pride. This culture preservation, therefore, should be maintained. A nation's culture must be preserved. Young generation is the most effective person to carry on the cultural heritages in a long term (Kolay, 2016). Way of life, social relations, and cultural religiosity are forces to maintain cultural

urbanization pressure (Supriyadi, Sudarwanto, & Werdiningsih, 2012).

Wayang is a culture with the most prominent existence among other cultural works in Indonesia. It contains a high quality art and craft (Ramli & Lugiman, 2012). It has a high quality since it contains acting, sound, music, speech, literary, sculpture and symbolic arts. A variety of arts are performed in the puppetry. *Wayang* in Java is not merely a show but also a guide (Widijanto & Waluyo, 2018). In addition, *Wayang kulit* (leather puppets) is also a media to spread Javanese values to the public.

Wayang stories are part of Indonesian local content as is batik and temples

(Saptodewo, 2015). Stories in Indonesian puppetry are told in shows, books, and oral stories. *Wayang* art has characteristics of teaching moral values (Pembayun, Perdana, & Mega, 2015). *Wayang* is one of Indonesian cultural arts that has values in the community life. It is a merciful art with an existence that transcends the ages and continents. *Wayang*, *batik* and *keris* are Indonesian specific features recognized by the UNESCO in October 2009 (Ismail, Wiyantoro, Meutia, & Muchlish, 2012). This art has been recognized by the UNESCO as an amazing cultural work in narrative story and a beautiful as well as priceless heritage. It is a priceless world masterpiece heritage in spoken art.

One of eminent puppetry stories is Mahabharata. It tells heroism of the protagonist characters in encountering and destroying the antagonist characters (Nurgiantoro, 2019). It is one of puppet stories that tells a conflict story between five Pandava brothers with their cousins, the Kauravas. The Kauravas consists of one hundred people. Both parties have issue regarding the ownership of the Kurus kingdom with Hastinapura as the government center. The conflict reaches the peak with Bharatayudha battle at Kurukshetra that lasts for eighteen days.

One of famous figures in the Mahabharata story is the Five Pandavas. The Five Pandavas comprises Yudhishtira, Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula, and Sahadeva. Of the five figures, Arjuna is a prominent figure among societies. Arjuna puppet is a protagonist figure in Mahabharata story. Arjuna is a mediator in the Pandavas. He is a perfect figure. He has a beautiful face and is smart and clever, quiet, wise, polite, brave and protects the weak. He is known as one of the most charming of the Pandavas and he has a gentle mind. This handsomeness is an ideal depiction of Javanese culture of a knight image. The handsomeness is not merely physically but also spiritually. He is a prototype of ideal Javanese knight. He represents a cultural expert, a romantic person, handsome, a war expert, a master archer as well as a person with high spirituality.

Despite having a kind hard Arjuna figure is known as a masculine figure. It is proven by Arjuna as one of the Pandavas figures that is used as a role model or as a

real male figure for Javanese people. He is a manifestation of a perfect male for old Javanese people generation. It indicates that Arjuna is a masculine figure (Rina, Piliang, & Adriati, 2018).

Masculinity is a feeling, attitude, and behavior given by a society regarding the biological aspect of male (Berke, Reidy, & Zeichner, 2018). It is a construction of maleness towards men. Men are not born naturally with masculinity. Masculinity naturally owned by a man since childhood will develop according to the culture where he grows. Whether or not the male masculinity develops well is in accordance with his culture. In male teenager, there are two influences of identity formation, namely: it is a teenager's effort to maintain balance and certain originality between self-expression that is consistent with a suitable code for their own gender, while at the same time, it allows them to express feeling, fear and weakness (Mbizvo, Bennett, Simpson, Susan, & Chin, 2019).

Masculinity as a form of gender practice, which is a social construct, refers to male body both directly or symbolically and is not determined by male biology (Connell, 2000). Society labelling towards male attitude includes he acts as a leader and he is aggressive, ambitious, assertive, competitive, dominant, strong, good in sport, noisy, easy to make a decision, masculine, not easy to moved, and confident (Synnott, 2003). There are 4 (four) masculinity characters as stated by David and Brannon namely (1) *No Sissy Stuff*, a masculine man will not use female stuffs. (2) *Be a Big Wheel*, masculinity is measured from success, power, and admiration from others. A successful and powerful person has masculine status. (3) *Be a Sturdy*, a man must be strong, has a power, persistence, not easily moved and independent. (4) *Give em Hell*, one's maleness could also indicate by his braveness and he is dominant, aggressive, and ambitious (Wilkinson & Wilkinson, 2019).

The study of masculinity has been carried out by Widyawati & Andalas (2020) which discusses the Dynamics of Masculinity and Nationalism of the Javanese Society in the Majapahit Era. The study showed that the paradigm of masculinity of Javanese society towards men is described through the events of war as a masculine construction in culture.

The position of the male crow is more dominating in terms of maintaining the integrity of the country. The research of Frederick et al. (2017) states that masculine traits can be interpreted by being manly, both physically and mentally expressed physically. Men are trapped masculine when they have a muscular body. Many men maintain their shape and vigorously exercise in order to have a muscular body. The representation of masculinity shown with muscular men is shown by having a body of containing, busty fields, and six packs abs. This physical appearance, both from the way of dressing and having a stocky and muscular body. Based on the research of Rina et al. (2018) masculine characteristics are in the figure of Arjuna. Arjuna is known as the most handsome figure both physically and spiritually. Judging from the view of Javanese society, Arjuna is the figure of Lelanang Jagad, Jagoning Dewa (the most manly man in the entire universe - a tough man who is revered by the gods). This nickname implies that the character of Arjuna is a superior knight to Javanese society and a symbol of the qualities and toughness of a man that is a feature of masculinity.

This research is important to do because the Mahabharata Jawa book is a new material object that is analyzed regarding masculinity. In addition, this study describes the masculinity of Arjuna's figure based on the views of Javanese society. The research aims to learn and describe the masculinity of Arjuna figure in the Javanese Mahabharata story by Nano Riantiarno.

METHOD

This research is included in qualitative research. Qualitative research is research that describes the phenomena experienced by the subject. Qualitative research is a study that aims to understand and describe in words and language about the phenomena experienced by the subject (Moleong, 2014). This research examines a literary discourse, namely the Mahabharata story which is studied in terms of the masculinity of arjuna figures.

The data in this study are lingual units in the form of words, phrases, clauses, sentences that are relevant to the masculinity of Arjuna's figure in literary discourse with the title "Javanese Mahabharata" by N.

Riantiarno, while the source of the data is the entire content of the book "Mahabharata Jawa" by N. Riantiarno. The design of this study consists of 4 steps, (1) reading the book "Mahabharata Jawa" by N. Riantiarno in depth, (2) identifying words, phrases, clauses, sentences related to masculinity, (3) analyzing data continued by classifying data based on problem formulations, (4) describing the data that has been obtained.

The data collection technique used is document analysis, namely by reading books intensively and actively recording so that they are able to fully understand the content of the story. Record the data contained in the book "Mahabharata Jawa" by N. Riantiarno. related and relevant to this study such as the traits of masculinity proposed by David and Brannon there are 4 namely (1) No Sissy Stuff, (2) Be a Big Wheel, (3) Be a Sturdy Oak, (4) Give em Hell (Wilkinson & Wilkinson, 2019).

The data analysis technique used is a content analysis technique using an interactive analysis model. There are four steps in the interactive analysis model. First, researchers collected data by reading the book "Mahabharata Jawa" by N. Riantiarno carefully and then recording words, phrases, clauses, sentences that were in accordance with the study. Second, the researcher reduces data by sorting out data that is in accordance with the formulation of the problem, namely data related to arjuna's masculinity. Third, researchers present the data that has been collected. Data is presented by describing the data according to the formulation of the problem. Fourth, researchers draw conclusions from the presentation of data (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014).

FINDINGS

The masculinity of Arjuna figure illustrates in the Javanese Mahabharata story. Arjuna has three of the four masculinity characters. It indicates that he is a masculine man. Following is the description of the three masculine characters of Arjuna.

Be a Big Wheel

One's masculinity could be indicated by success, power and admiration from others. If someone could show these

characters then he has masculinity. Arjuna thus illustrates as a figure who has success and power. He is a leader. He is a king of Kahyangan Kaindran with title of *Prabu Karitin*.

... Para dewa memetik kemenangan yang gemilang. Arjuna kembali ke kahyangan sebagai pahlawan. Batara Guru menyambutnya dengan gembira. Sebuah kahyangan telah disediakan bagi Arjuna. Juga seorang dewi jelita, yang boleh disuntingnya sebagai istri. Akhir yang bahagia (Gods had glorious victory. Arjuna came back to the Kahyangan as a hero. Batara Guru welcomed him joyfully. A Kahyangan had been provided for him. Along with a beautiful goddess who could be chosen by him as his wife. Happy ending) (Riantiarno, 2016)

A leader is a man character (Synnott, 2003). Leadership does not refer to leading a kingdom but it also refers to a leader of a family. Arjuna is also an admired figure. He is a handsome man so that many people love him. He also has amazing war ability. These characters are suggested in the following excerpt.

Seketika Niwatakawaca rubuh dan mati. Tentara dewa-dewa bersorak dan menyerbu bagai air bah. Mereka menghancurkan pasukan sekutu Imanimantaka, yang kini seperti anak ayam kehilangan induk. Para dewa memetik kemenangan yang gemilang. Arjuna kembali ke kahyangan sebagai pahlawan. Batara Guru menyambut dengan gembira (Niwatakawaca fell down and died immediately. The army of Gods cheered and stormed like a flood. They destroyed Imanimantaka allies' army who were becoming like a chick losing a mother. The Gods won and Arjuna came back to the Kahyangan as a hero. Batara Guru welcomed him blissfully) (Riantiarno, 2016).

The excerpt suggests that Arjuna is an admired figure in war. He is able to defeat his enemies; thus, he is considered as a hero. People are all happy with Arjuna's successful, even the *Batara Guru* welcomes him happily. Everyone is proud of Arjuna.

Be a Sturdy

A masculine man is described with strength, having power, persistence, not easily moved, and independent. Arjuna is

illustrated as a strong figure and a master of archer. When Arjuna holds the arrow it will scare his enemies. Arjuna's skill in archery has been acknowledged by many people. As illustrated in a quotation below.

Arjuna marah. Hari ini masa penyamaran sudah usai. Dia lalu maju membantu Bima. Panah Arjuna menghambat lajunya panah Karna. Para Kurawa banyak yang kena korban (Arjuna was angry. His disguise has ended today. He moved forward to help Bhima. His arrows hampered the Karna's arrows. Many victims fell from the Kuravas)...(Riantiarno, 2016)

This shows that Arjuna is a sturdy and strong figure. Arjuna in the Javanese Mahabharata story is also described as a figure who has constancy and is not easily moved. Determination is the ability to control oneself for a moment to abandon pseudo-desires in order to achieve long-term goals that are certainly greater. Having determination will have a lot of positive influence on self-character. Determination is even considered an important factor in the success of life in order to achieve a goal because with the presence of constancy, men will not be easy to get other influences beyond the goals that have been set. It appears in the following quote.

Di Indrakila, tapa Arjuna mendapat banyak godaan. Jin, setan, dan segala unsur jahat mencoba menakutinya. Tak mempan. Arjuna tetap khusyuk. Tujuh bidadari cantik jelita, antaranya Suprada, Wilutama, Lenglungdanu, Irimirim, Gagarmayang, Tunjungbiru, dan Warsiki menggodanya pula. Tak mempan. Arjuna tetap khusyuk (Arjuna got a lot of temptations during his meditation in Indrakila. Genies, devils, and all evil elements tried to scared him; however it did not work, he remained solemn. Seven beautiful angels, Wilutama, Lenglungdanu, Irimirim, Gagarmayang, Tunjungbiru, and Warsiki, were also unable to tempt him. He remained solemn) (Riantiarno, 2016).

This shows that Arjuna is a person of determination. Although many are annoying when ascetic, but he is still able to carry out tapa solemnly. He didn't have the fear of the demon jinn. Nor did he want to be teased by seven angels. He was not easily tempted by the temptation that attacked him. He just wants to be able to finish his asceticism well.

Arjuna is also an independent person. Independence, in this case, means someone who could stand on his own feet. A person through independence would not depend on other people. A man in a community must be independent for he will lead his family so he could not depend on other. One of characters of masculine man is independence and Arjuna has it as stated in the following quote.

Pada suatu hari, Arjuna pamitan kepada saudara-saudaranya. Dia minta restu kepada Yudhistira, Bima, dan Drupadi. Kemudian dia memeluk Nakula dan Sadewa. Niatnya hendak pergi bertapa di Gunung Indrakila (Arjuna one day said good bye to his brothers. He asked for blessing from Yudhistira, Bhima and Draupadi. He then hugged Nakula and Sadeva. He wanted to meditate in Mount Indrakila)...(Riantiarno, 2016)

It implies that Arjuna is an independent person. He does not depend on his brothers. He says goodbye to go to Mount Indrakila without the company of his brother. It is a form of Arjuna's independence. He wants to meditate to ask for salvation, for himself as well as his brothers. It reveals that Arjuna is a caring person.

Give em Hell

One of masculine traits is give em hell means that man's maleness could be observed from his courage and he is dominant, aggressive and ambitious (Wilkinson & Wilkinson, 2019). Arjuna describes as a brave character as suggested in the following excerpt.

... Dan demi mencegah jatuhnya korban lebih banyak lagi, Arjuna menantang Raja Niwatakawaca untuk perang tanding (...and to prevent more victims, Arjuna challenged the King of Niwatakawaca to have a duel).(Riantiarno, 2016)

The excerpt indicates that Arjuna is brave that could be interpreted as a masculine person. It also shows that Arjuna dares to challenge the King of Niwatakawaca to prevent more victims. He is willing to have a duel with the King for the sake of others; thus, he is a brave knight.

Arjuna figure describes as an ambitious figure. It is also a character of maleness (Wilkinson & Wilkinson, 2019). If he wants something he will try hard to get it. It indicates in the following fragment.

...Hampir Arjuna putus asa, tapi kemudian dia menemukan akal. Dia meminta Supraba untuk jadi mata-mata, masuk ke istana dan mencari tahu titik kelemahan Niwatakawaca...(Arjuna was almost hopeless but then he had an idea. He asked Supraba to be a spy and entered the castle to find out the weakness points of Niwatakawaca...)(Riantiarno, 2016)

Based on the above excerpt, Arjuna could be seen as an ambitious person. Once he says that he will defeat Niwatakawaca, he will try hard to achieve it. He fights and thinks of strategies to defeat the enemy. He will not give up though he has to face many obstacles because Niwatakawaca is very powerful. He believes that he could complete his duty well. It implies that Arjuna is a responsible man.

Dia meminta Supraba untuk jadi mata-mata, masuk ke istana dan mencari tahu titik kelemahan Niwatakawaca. Supraba menyanggupi (He asked Supraba to be a spy, to enter the castle and find out the weakness points of Niwatakawaca) (Riantiarno, 2016)

The above quote shows that Arjuna also has a dominant nature. With a handsome face and a soft heart, he is able to dominate the situation. Arjuna is able to persuade Supraba to become a spy in search of Niwatakawaca's weakness.

Discussion

Based on the results of the above research, several things were found. First, the figure of Arjuna in the Javanese Mahabarata story has a masculine nature Of Be a Big Wheel which is described that the figure of Arjuna has success and power. Today's man is a man who is firm in leading and ready to work (Yuliyanti, Bajari, & Mulyana, 2017). Even a masculine man must be ready to work for his life and his obligations as a breadwinner. A leader does not mean to be rude by throwing harsh words at his employees. The firm side for the leader must be possessed, especially by men. This can be seen in Arjuna's characteristics. Arjuna is a good leader, firm, and not rude. He is the king in Kahyangan Kaindran entitled Prabu Karitin (Astuti, 2014). This shows that Arjuna is a successful figure and has power because of a leader (Rina, 2015).

A person who is successful and has power can be said to be masculine, including a leader. Leaders who can lead well will give rise to stereotypical male characters (Drydakis, Sidiropoulou, Bozani, Selmanovic, & Patnaik, 2017). A man who has characteristics identical to the masculine stereotype is called a masculine male, if the exaggerated characteristics are called a super masculine male.

Second, Arjuna has the nature of Be a Sturdy, must be sturdy, have strength, determination, not be easily moved, and have independence. Arjuna is described as a sturdy and strong figure. He is a fighter without being on the battlefield (Astuti, 2014). Arjuna is a figure whose strength lies in his skill in archery. This skill he got from a young age. Arjuna's skill in archery is beyond doubt. This shows Arjuna has a masculine nature. Someone who has martial skill could be recognize as a masculine man (Hiramoto, 2012). Men' strength is positively correlated to face appearance, domination, masculinity, and attractiveness (Borras-Guevara, Batres, & Perrett, 2017). Physical ability and body shape perception, such as a muscular man, are regarded as a form of masculinity (Hunt, Gonsalkorale, & Murray, 2013). Strength and sturdiness, however, sometimes relate to violence. There are people in a society who have power and use it for violence acts. It is due to a feeling that a real man uses violence. There are people in a society that consider acts of violence by man as an honorable way to be a man (Grieve, March, & Van Doorn, 2019). A masculine character thus relates to a crime due to the acts of violence committed (Evans, 2019). Man is said as a real gentleman related to the interpretation of violence on masculinity hegemony (Bhana & Mayeza, 2016). There are other people, however, who think that a real gentleman would not use power for crime. A strong man who uses his power for a good cause will gain positive values from the society labelling. A real masculine man will use his power for a good cause as illustrated by the puppet figure, Arjuna. Arjuna uses his strength and power for a good cause.

Arjuna is also described as a steadfast figure. A masculine man must be able to take care of his emotions so that he can firmly stand. Masculinity is maintained through the use of rhetorical tools of emotional control,

rationality, responsibility. The context of these emotions is important to understand how masculinity is maintained; emotional expression can be allowed in private but not in public (Drydakis et al., 2017). With his determination that did not want to be tempted, Arjuna continued to carry out tapa with sincere intentions (Devianti & Amzy, 2019). In addition, Arjuna is also described as an independent figure. Independent is one of the masculine traits. Masculine is associated with independence, strength, and an orientation of action (Vescio, Schermerhorn, Gallegos, & Laubach, 2021). Independent an attitude of courage, able to take initiative, have responsibility for all actions, have self-confidence so that they are not dependent on others. An independent male can be said to be masculine.

Third, it was found that Arjuna has a masculine nature that is give em hell which means that a person's maleness can also be seen from his courage, dominant, aggressive and ambitious. Arjuna has a bold nature. Typical traits in a person who are considered masculine include avoiding feminine traits, limiting emotions, ambitious, independent, strong, courageous, and aggressive (MacIsaac, 2021). One of the important stereotypes of masculinity found in society is courage. A man is seen as a brave being. Courage is a force in a person. Courage arises from a person's thoughts and actions A man who has a brave nature is likened to a human being who is able to face the obstacles and obstacles he faces (Mshana et al., 2022). Arjuna also has an ambitious and dominant nature. One of the characteristics of masculinity is that it has an ambitious and dominant nature. dominant is a defining trait because of influence, power, and so on. Arjuna is said to be dominant because he is able to influence others to follow his will. Arjuna who has a handsome face and a dashing voice is able to influence the interlocutor. Male voices are dominant in shaping female behavior (Ismail, 2014). With arjuna's dominant nature, Supraba is willing to be a spy.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the analysis, it can be concluded that Arjuna is a Masculine figure. He has 3 masculine traits namely Be a

Big Wheel, Be a Sturdy, Give em Hell. Be a Big Wheel, demonstrated by Arjuna's success and power. He was king in Kahyangan Kaindran entitled Prabu Karitin. Be a Sturdy, demonstrated by his strength, determination, and independence. Give em hell shown by his courage, ambitious, and dominant. Arjuna is one of the wayang figures admired by the

Javanese people. Arjuna's traits shown by success, having strength, constancy of the day, the figure of an independent, brave, ambius, and dominant man make Arjuna an idol man. Arjuna is an ideal male figure in the imagination of the Javanese. This shows that society's view that men should have these traits.

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