

Ramayana and Mahabharata

Deconstruction Literature Studies in Indonesia

Kundharu Saddhono, Budhi Setiawan and Kartika Rahmat Sari Dewi
Graduate of Universitas Sebelas Maret, Surakarta, Indonesia
kundharu.uns@gmail.com

Keywords: Ramayana, Mahabharata, Deconstruction's perspective, puppet, Sociology of Deconstruction Literature.

Abstract: This study aims to describe Ramayana's and Mahabharata's Epos in deconstruction's perspective with sociology of literature studies. This research is a descriptive qualitative study with of sociology of literature approach. The data source is some novel about puppet stories of Pitoyo Amrih. It employed the qualitative research design. Based on the analysis, the conclusion of the research are; (1) Antagonist characters of those Epic, had some kind in themselves that can be best figure for the audience of the puppet's show, (2) There's lot of wisdom value as result of deconstruction's analysis of the Epic, and (3) The assessment results of this study showed different sources of conflict, namely the seizure of the woman and the seizure of the kingdom.

1 INTRODUCTION

The term of multicultural is an appropriate calling name for Indonesia because its tradition, ethnicity, language, art and other cultures diversity. The diversity of culture apparently adds the value of culture richness of Indonesia to worldwide. Art is one of the most famous cultural richness in Indonesia. In line with Aithal and Acharya research (2016: 187) and Das, Chowdhury, and Miju (2014) which examines the strategies used in Indian Epics. This is appropriate with Indonesia diversity which has potential to bring up in international level (Isnaini, 2013: 223).

On development, the arts in Indonesia serves as a means of ritual contains religious values. In Prehistoric times, in where people believed in the powers beyond the human's, this belief was embodied in the culture of animism and dynamism that until now can still be found in some inland tribes in Indonesia. Bala (2016: 38) also discusses about the power in a story. In animism - dynamism, the role of art firstly appeared as a form of people worshipping the ancestors in the past. For instance, puppetry art once used as medium to communicate with ancestors (Sutardjo, 2006: 12), Mantra, as the oldest literary works acted not only as a verbal aesthetics art, but in the past also became means to pray and meditate with the Creator. Beside puppetry, there are still many other arts that eventually became the beginning of ritual ceremony, as time goes by it adds up the

diversity of Indonesia culture. S. Majumdar (2005: 182) also provides a similar case, concerning priceless local wisdom legacy.

Javanese literary development is no longer confined to the classical texts of previous poets, but has been widely transformed into various forms of modern literary works which still carries of treasure stories, particularly Javanese. Dutt's study (2002: 46) regarding Ramayana and Mahabharata also discusses on the classic tale is transformed into a modern masterpiece. Supported by Evanss (1997) in his study on Ramayana, Mahabharata, and Bagavata gives whole different perception on narrative study.

Puppet story is a classic tale that has close links with Javanese. Wayang comes from term Ma Hyang (Sanskrit), means the Almighty, this connects the function of wayang in previous time and its function as medium of ritual in custom ceremony in past (Lisbijanto, 2013: 1). The definition provides the conclusion that the definition of a puppet is a performance art that uses puppets and brings story relates to Ramayana and Mahabharata. Thaker's study (2011: 378) also discusses the entity of Mahabharata puppetry as culture development. Relation to the literary aspect in Mahabharata puppetry is discussed in detail by Sharma (2015: 302) that there is a relationship between the puppet and literature as a form of development and creativity. The development of artist creativity in the country, especially in East Java and Central Java evokes various forms of puppet performing arts. The

development of the puppet art shows not only the physical aspects of the puppet itself, but also in the delivering story to the public, especially attracting the interest and attention of young generation to watch. One form of modernization in the delivering story is in novel form including more global media of puppetry (Sengupta, 2016: 7).

One of which is novel with puppetry story. Indonesian novel by Amrih Pitoyo is a form of renewal in the Indonesian literature that still retains puppet story. Through easier language works the purpose to bring young children closer to puppet story can be realized. Not only in the form of the novel, Singh (2009: 157) discussed the theater in form of puppetry. Young generations are not only expected to understand the story but critically judge especially in character which in turn can find local wisdom in the story. Concept about local wisdom is found in Singh's study (2015: 137).

Deconstruction theory was firstly proposed by Jacques Derrida (1930-2004). Deconstruction literature in general is associated with the effort to change the order of literature has been built through approach structuralism, looking a phenomenon from such contrary angle to structuralism angle approach. Structuralism approach has also been used by Chakraborty (2015: 87) which was further elaborated by exploring to generalize studies. Deconstruction is often misunderstood, for example, as a form of destruction upon established things. The mistake because the reader does not understand the ethical dimension of deconstruction that seeks to open up on the "other" (Ungkang, 2013: 31). In brief analogy, in deconstruction view of evil character it is invalid if regarded as a criminal for so long, so is the protagonist, as well as all aspects that support the opinion. Kalra and Kalra (2016: 719) elaborate literature view as a form of development that is inseparable from perspective of a literary work. Supported by Mehra's work (2015) describes the comparative study on previous perspective and modern perspectives in analyzing literary work in Mahabharata puppet. It is very suitable to be applied on literature work that carries the puppetry. With the aim of finding the hidden local wisdom in old perspective of structuralism in Java classic work

2 METHODS

This study uses a literary deconstruction approach, which tries to see the other side of the existing characters in a literary work. Deconstruction approach has been widely applied in the study of

literature (Gohar, 2016: 21-37). The background of this study that the innermost character portrayed as an antagonist character in the puppet story still has a positive side and a background provokes the appearance of antagonists in these figures. Protagonist figure that has flaws and later motivates to pursue goal in every possible way. The Selection of puppet story is also based on previous research, Narayan's study (2000) and Oman's (2008) which both provide an overview Ramayana and Mahabharata explicitly and used by the activator of literature as an important reference. Sources of data in this study is Pitoyo Amrih's novels which concern about puppetry in his literature work. The story of puppet written in the novel Pitoyo Amrih delivered in a more modern language and easy to understand so it facilitates in making quotation.

In this study took four novels as samples, namely *Perjalanan Sunyi Bisma Dewabrata* (PSBD) (2012), *Wisanggeni Membakar Api* (WMA) (2013), *Cinta Mati Dasamuka* (CMD) (2016), and *Hanoman* (HNM) (2014), The fourth novel are an original work of Pitoyo Amrih which appoint the journey of puppetry, both on Epos Ramayana and Mahabharata. A novel entitled *Perjalanan Sunyi Bisma* and *Wisanggeni Membakar Api* represent the story of the Epos Mahabharata, while novel *Hanoman* and *Cinta Mati Dasamuka* represent the story from the Epos Ramayana.

Data collection techniques in this research is studying the document, which is derived from the articles, documents, and books that have relevance to the research focus. The focus of this research is literary deconstruction contained in the puppet story, in which it was quoted from puppet novel. The focus was chosen because suitability of deconstruction approach in examining the stories of puppetry, especially in the aspect of characters.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Deconstruction is one branch of literature studies that views literature from a different angle. According to Ratna, deconstruction is a follow up of the study of post-colonialism literature, deconstruction is trying to see the other side of the language and characterizations that are involved in a literature work (Ratna: 2014: 69).

Characterizations in a story can be shown explicitly or implicitly in an ordered plot (Gunther: 2016). Deconstruction study in Ramayana and Mahabharata especially can be viewed from figure and character in the story. This is in accordance with

Irawan's opinion (2015: 23) that deconstruction relates to seeing the players from uncommon angle. This indicates that everything backgrounds a figure is examined in deconstruction research.

3.1 Rahwana Figure

Rahwana character described as the man who is selfish, ambitious, intolerant, and misuse his authority as King of Alengka to fulfill his desire (Hariwidjono, 2011: 51). Rahwana was selfish that could make him ignore any advice from his brothers. The other negative side of Rahwana was his strong will to fight against Rama and ignore his brother telling him to return Dewi Sinta to her husband. However, in view of deconstruction, Rahwana had a good side. In the novel Rahwana's motivation to abduct Sinta Dewi inverses with public's perspective that Rahwana wanted Dewi Sinta to be his wife. Vaidya (2001) also describes the story Dasamuka at a clear and detailed perception, so that Rahwana is possibly compared in this novel. Rahwana kidnapped Dewi Sinta because his fatherhood feeling towards her after knowing that Dewi Sinta was his daughter. His brother Gunawan Wibisana exchanged Dewi Sinta before. But Rahwana's courage to touch Dewi Sinta is quite up there. This is shown by the attitude of Rahwana on maintaining distance with for Dewi Sinta still not opened his heart to Rahwana.

3.2 Rama Figure

Rama is the main protagonist of Ramayana story. He was the husband of Dewi Sinta. Described as noble man because an incarnation of the Dewa Wisnu. But as the main character in the Ramayana, Rama had flaws as good figure in puppetry. It is shown from Rama's attitude toward Dewi Sinta. He rejected Dewi Sinta after being saved from abduction. Rama was easily deceived by people's slander about Dewi Sinta. (Hariwidjono, 2011: 55). The purpose that caused Rama doubted his wife purity after being kidnapped by Rahwana's confinement for long time. This also caused Dewi Sinta burned herself down to prove that she had not been touched. This deconstruction finding indicates Rama, although prominent in puppetry as perfect man, shows flaws. The moral value is about giving and keeping trust to family so not easily provoked by irresponsible people. The perspective of the story is still relates to Hanoman and Ramayana story. Hanoman or Hanumat is the protagonist in the story of Ramayana and described as a white ape, son of Batara Bayu and Anjani. The figure of Rama is also clarified on Kang's study (2015) of the Mahabharata

and Ramayana. From various stories can be concluded that the character of Hanoman has strong will and loyalty to superiors. It must be supported with adequate capability that certainly does not come easily. Adequate capability is the key to success in carrying out any work. It also becomes Hanoman main principle on life (Wig, 2004: 25-28; Hildebeitel, 2001).

3.3 Dewi Sinta Figure

Dewi Sinta is the protagonist female character in the story of Ramayana. Illustrated as daughter of Dewi Widawati reincarnation so she had incredible beauty. This what made her abducted by Rahwana, the antagonist of the famous Ramayana series. Dewi Sinta also has been studied in the research by comparing with other women figures like Draupadi and Gandari (Das, 2014: 122-125). In Javanese puppetry, Dewi Sinta described has a noble attitude and character because she was the protagonist female. (Nanda, 2010; 78). However, in view of literature deconstruction, Dewi Sinta has flaws. It is shown when she maligned Lesmana for letting Rama died in the woods so he could marry her. This made Lesmana hurt and swore to not seeing any woman as proof that he had no desire towards Dewi Sinta. From this fact can be seen that human should behave in words and deed to avoid causing people any problems.

3.4 Kumbakarna Figure

This figure is the brother of Rahwana. Identical to his brother, Kumbakarna was also a giant. Described enjoyed eating and sleeping a lot. He could eat many foods and sleep for months. When Rahwana abducted Dewi Sinta, he continuously asked his brother to return Dewi Sinta to her husband but ignored by Rahwana. From the point of deconstruction, Kumbakarna deserves as good example, where he chose to fight against Rama not in order to defend and justify Rahwana's deed but to defend his land, Alengka from enemies. This is what made him then appointed as one of good example in serat Tripama.

3.5 Gunawan Wibisana Figure

Gunawan Wibisana is a prince and youngest brother of Rahwana. In contrast to the other brothers who intangible giant and has a commendable attitude, Gunawan Wibisana was handsome, good and virtuous. He was the first to oppose when Rahwana abducted Dewi Sinta to Alengka. He then was evicted from Alengka after repeatedly opposed Rahwana

deed. Although described as good deeds, which he attempted to give advice to Rahwana to return Dewi Sinta to Rama, but in the point of deconstruction, Gunawan Wibisana also had flaws as bad exemplary. This is reflected in his choice to join forces with Rama and reveal secret and weakness of Alengka. Gunawan Wibisana's actions obviously described the shape of the betrayal to the country, where it is not supposed to be done by a prince. This is not a good exemplary for society that no matter how big the conflict and crisis is, one should not be apostate for personal interest.

3.6 Yudhistira Figure

Yudhistira is the eldest of five Pandhawa. This character had a nickname as pure white knight because he had a noble character and always in accordance good obligation. Almost all plays in the puppetry illustrate that Yudhistira is the central figure who deserves to be an example for everyone. But on the other hand, Yudhistira was not as perfect as depicted in the play puppetry. Some of the negativity contained in Yudhistira that is easily persuaded by the enticements of the world and reckless in deciding. This is illustrated by Pandhawa Dadu play, in time Yudhistira easily followed the desire and call of Kaurawa to play dice and gamble all Pandhawa's belonging, the worst thing put his wife, Dewi Drupadi as bet. (Amrih. 2010: 56). The positive thing is how human should be more patient to not easily tempted by bad deeds.

3.7 Bima Figure

Bima is second brother of Pandhawa. The character described as having firm, strong and strict character. Bima upheld the truth and hated lies. Nevertheless, Bima honored his teachers and parents. Out of five Pandhawa, Bima had the highest and biggest physical appearance than other siblings. In the puppetry, Bima is the only figure that feared by enemies in battlefield, with great strength Bima could easily beat every opponent. But in the study of deconstruction, Bima had some negative character. Bima upheld honesty, strictness and equality. This made these characters did not know Javanese manner well when talking to his interlocutor, this is also applied when character spoke to parents and teachers. On the other hand, Bima is known as the sadistic character in battle. Every enemies would lose pathetically. Bima was a merciless and inconsiderate figure when engaged with enemies (Amrih. 2010: 25).

3.8 Arjuna

Arjuna is a well-known figure in the puppetry. It is known that he had unmatched beauty. Arjuna has other names, some of which are Janaka, Permadi, Kombang Ali-ali and Mintaraga. Arjuna is described as diligent, knowledge-based, and steadfast toward calamity, practice-based and dutiful towards teacher's order. In puppetry this character is famous for his unusual ability in archery. But on the other hand, Arjuna had jealousy nature a noble should not have. It caused someone lost future (Amrih. 2010: 23). This is illustrated when a satriya named Bambang Ekalaya learned archery to Durna, who happened to be Arjuna's teacher too. Apparently Ekalya's ability was better than Arjuna. Then he asked Durna to order Ekalya cutting off his own thumb. It later made Bambang Ekalaya lost his ability in archery, as well as loss of dream as skilled archer. Such jealousy is not supposed to be owned by a nobleman, someone who has the nature of envy and jealousy in the end only bring harm to others.

3.9 Kresna Figure

Kresna is a well-known figure as an incarnation of Dewa Wisnu in Mahabharata story. As an incarnation of Dewa Wisnu, Kresna described as wise person in taking care of noblemen especially Pandhawa. But on the other hand, Kresna had a flaws that Dewa Wisnu should not inherited to. This can be seen during the final battle between Bima and Duryudana at the end of the Barathayudha war. Krishna sided Pandhawa and helped Bima that no one should get into except Bima and Duryudana (Amrih. 2010: 35). But at that moment Kresna helped Bima notifying the weak spots on the body of Duryudana, which caused Duryudana got killed easily by Bima. The moral message is not supposed to be feeling necessarily fanatical and unfairly sides on others.

4 CONCLUSIONS

Based on discussion can be concluded that the viewpoint of deconstruction, the stories in the puppetry has a variety of things that are not revealed as it is in community. This is consistent with the concept of literature deconstruction is a model of literature assessment methods to see literature from different viewpoints with general one. Story can be seen from the viewpoint of deconstruction in which the antagonist figures have a positive value that can be taken as exemplary. In the Ramayana epic, the

source conflict is a king whose wife has been kidnapped by another character, so woman is the figure evokes conflict. While in the Mahabharata epic conflict arises due to the seizure of power over an empire. It is in accordance with the description of conflict happens generally in society. This has emphasized that what is written in the story of the puppetry, is a reflection of society's social life.

REFERENCES

- Aithal, P. S., Acharya, R. K. 2016. Strategic Management Models and Indian Epics. *International Journal of Management Sciences and Business Research*, 5(4), 180-189.
- Amrih, P. 2010. *Kebaikan Kurawa. Mengungkap Kisah-kisah yang Tersembunyi*. Jakarta: Pinus.
- Bala, R. 2016. Women empowerment and Hindu literature. *Learning Community: An International Journal of Educational and Social Development*, 7(1), 35.
- Chakraborty, T. 2015. The Metempsychotic Birds: An Exploration of Samuel Beckett's Allusions to the Upanishands. *Rupkatha Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities* VII(2): 83-88
- Das, U., Chowdhury, S. B., Miju, M. R. 2014. Sita (Character from the Indian epic Ramayana), Draupadi and Gandhari (Characters from another Indian epic-Mahabharata)-A Comparative Study among Three Major Mythological Female Characters-Gandhari: An exception. *Education*, 4(5), 122-125.
- Dutt, R. C. 2002. *The Ramayana and the Mahabharata: Condensed Into English Verse*. New York: Dover Publications, Inc.
- Evans, K. 1997. *Epic Narratives in the Hoysala Temples: The Rāmāyana, Mahābhārata, and Bhāgavata Purāna in Halebīd, Belūr, and Amṛtapura* (Vol. 74). Brill.
- Gohar, S. 2016. Deconstructing/Reconstructing Stereotypes in American and Palestinian Fiction. *Rupkatha Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities*, VIII (1): 21-37
- Gunther, J. I. S. 2016. Shadow Theatre across South and Southeast Asia Depictions of the Ramayana and Mahabharata Epics within the Linden-Museum's Collections.
- Hariwidjoyo, A. 2011. *Wayang dan Karakter Manusia dalam Kehidupan Sehari-hari*. Yogyakarta: Absolute Jogja.
- Hiltebeitel, A. 2010. *Rethinking the Mahabharata: A Reader's Guide to the Education of the Dharma King*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press
- Irawan, S. 2015. *Dekonstruksi, Kajian Sastra dari Balik Layar*. Malang: Garudha Perkasa
- Kalra, S., Baruah, M. P., Kalra, B. 2016. Endocrinology in the Ramayana. *Indian Journal of Endocrinology and Metabolism*, 20(5), 716.
- Lisbijanto. H. 2013. *Wayang*. Yogyakarta: Graha Ilmu.
- Mehra, R. 2015. A Comparative Study Of Indian Mythological Management And The Modern Management. In *International Journal of Innovative Research and Creative Technology* (Vol. 1, No. 3 (October-2015)). IJIRCT.
- Nanda. M. H. 2010. *Wayang*. Yogyakarta: Bintang Cemerlang.
- Narayan, R. K., 2000. *The Indian Epics Retold: The Ramayana, the Mahabharata, Gods, Demons, and Others*. New Delhi: Penguin Books
- Oman, J. C. 2008. *The Stories of ten Ramayana and the Mahabharata*. New Delhi: Sundeeep Prakashan
- Ratna. Nyoman, K. 2010. *Teori Pengkajian Sastra*. Jakarta: Citra Pustaka.
- S. Majumdar. 2005. Preservation and conservation of literary heritage: A case study of India. *International Information and Library Review* 37(3): 179-187.
- Sengupta, R. 2016. Iconography of violence in televised Hinduism: the politics of images in the Mahabharata. *Continuum*, 1-12.
- Sharma, A. K. 2015. SR Ranganathan: Combining Library Science With Indian Values. *Library Herald*, 53(3), 301-303.
- Singh, A. 2009. Aesthetics of Indian Feminist Theatre. *Rupkatha Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities* I(2): 150-170
- Singh, S. P. 2015. Concept Of Rajdharm In Adi-Kavya: Ramayana And Mahabharata. *The Indian Journal Of Public Administration*, 132.
- Sutardjo, I. 2006. *Serpihan Mutiara Pertunjukkan Wayang*. UNS Press.
- Thaker, K. 2011. Management control insights from the Mahabharata. *International Journal of Indian Culture and Business Management* 4(4) 2011: 377-....
- Ungkang, M. 2013. "Dekonstruksi Jaques Derrida sebagai Strategi Pembacaan Sastra" dalam *jurnal HUMANIORA*. Vol 1, No 1. Universitas Gadjah Mada
- Vaidya, C. V. 2001. *Epic India, Or, India as Described in the Mahabharata and the Ramayana*. New Delhi: Asian Educational Service
- Wig, N.N. 2004. Hanuman Complex And its Resolution: An Illustration of Psychotherapy from Indian mythology. *Indian Journal of Psychiatry*. Jan-Mar; 46(1): 25-28.