

Glorification of the Image of Women in the Shadow Puppet Performance of the Lakon “Supraba Duta”

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ABSTRACT: *The Supraba Duta puppet show is the story of Dewi Supraba's success in saving Indraloka from the threat of a magical giant named Niwatakwaca. This study aims to educate the public regarding the importance of women's roles in life by analyzing the meaning of the glorification of women's images represented by the puppeteer in the Supraba Duta puppet show. The data source in this study was a video of the Supraba Duta puppet show documented by the PEPADI Culture Service of Gianyar Regency. The data collection phase used the observation method, document studies and interviews assisted by listening, recording and translation techniques. The data analysis phase used a descriptive analytical method assisted by interpretive techniques. The final stage of presenting the results of the data analysis used informal methods as well as deductive and inductive techniques. The results of this study are the signifiers of the dialogue between the characters Tualen and Merdah in the shadow puppet performance of Supraba Duta have signifies as 1) respect for women, 2) women as a source of happiness and 3) women as heroes. This is an effort to glorify the role of women by depicting women in Balinese shadow puppet performances.*

KEYWORDS - image, women, drama, puppet show, glorification

I. INTRODUCTION

Shadow puppet performances are a form of traditional cultural heritage that has artistic, spiritual, traditional, and social values that are relevant to people's lives, especially Indonesian people. Shadow puppet has long been known as a means of conveying moral messages and preaching that is quite effective (Wicaksandita et al., 2023:61). As a performing art, shadow puppet continues to survive and exist in this era of globalization because shadow puppet is an art that is rich in creativity and imagination of its artists (Handayani & Yudarta, 2020:09). One of the Balinese shadow puppet performances that is still closely related to the social context of people's lives is the shadow puppet Supraba Duta performance.

The Supraba Duta puppet show was chosen as the object of study because the story that was packaged and developed was very interesting concerning the issue of women's roles. Dewi Supraba is visualized as a female character who managed to save Indraloka from the threat of a magical giant named Niwatakwaca. The story of Dewi Supraba's struggle became one of the choices of plays at the 2018 Balinese Parwa Puppeteer Female Shadow Puppet Festival organized by the Indonesian Puppeteer Association (PEPADI) of Gianyar Regency, Bali Province. The most interesting thing about the Supraba Duta puppet show was that it was performed by a female puppeteer who won 2nd place named Ni Ketut Intan Handayani from Bangli Regency. Interestingly, this festival was held in a series of commemorations of Mother's Day on December 22, 2018 with the theme "*stri bawa bhuana*" which means 'women as the source of life'.

In the life of society, women's issues still invite many different interpretations, especially in the art of shadow puppet performances. According to Singarsa et al. (2024:119) an interesting thing in the discourse on the existence and sustainability of Balinese shadow puppet performance art, where there is the involvement of women who on the one hand experience their dilemma, while on the other hand move explicitly as actors and pioneers who open up space for sustainability in the dynamics of puppetry art in Bali. In line with the context of the festival organized by PEPADI Gianyar Regency as a public space for shadow puppet art, it presents female puppeteers as contestants while also providing space for women to show their abilities or skills in the field of puppetry, as evidence of the

improvement in the quality or position of women. This proves that currently the role of women has an impact on changing the image of women in society.

The image of women refers to the representation or perception of women in a society. This includes various aspects related to women such as social roles, stereotypes, cultural values and the glorification of women in community life. Glorification means a form of effort to respect and appreciate a woman. Thus, the formulation of the problem in this study is what is the meaning of the glorification of the image of women in the puppet show of the Supraba Duta play? Related to the formulation of the problem, namely identifying the meaning of the glorification of the image of women represented by the puppeteer in the puppet show Supraba Duta.

In line with this, this study aims to educate the public regarding the importance of women's roles in life, which have so far been influenced by patriarchal culture and gender stereotypes. Likewise, related to women becoming puppeteers, this is the formation of women's identity as a reflection of broader social change. Based on the theme that is packaged by highlighting the glorification of women's images, the analysis carried out leads to semiotic analysis, namely about signs and meanings, where the scope is not only limited to puppet shows alone, but also leads to the momentum when the performance is carried out. Given the limitations of the study, the scope of this study will analyze the meaning of the glorification of women's images in the puppet show Supraba Duta by dissecting the formulation of the problem using the application of semiotic theory developed by Ferdinand de Saussure regarding the signifier and signified as an expression of the meaning of the glorification of women's images in the puppet show Supraba Duta.

Studies related to women in shadow puppet performances have been previously conducted. Ratnawati (2021) article entitled "The Picture of the World of Women in the Shadow Puppet Stage by Aam Amilia". The results of this study are in the form of a picture of the world of women who play a role in the domestic, public, and both worlds without leaving their nature as women. Female characters are more dominated by the domestic aspect, namely the image of women as mothers, the image of women as wives, the image of women as mothers or wives who play a direct role outside the home to obtain equality without leaving their nature, the image of women as loyal and intelligent wives, and the image of women who are negatively depicted as second women.

Ramonita et al. (2023) article entitled "Women's Empowerment in Shadow Puppet Performances: Gender Equality Efforts by Female Puppeteers". The results of this study provide a clearer picture of the situation in the Indonesian puppet industry, with implications for gender equality and women's empowerment. Singarsa et al. (2024) article entitled "Women in Balinese Puppetry: A Case Study of the Participation of *"Dalang Luh"* in Increasing Motivation and Interest in Puppetry" examines the existence of puppetry in Bali, which cannot be separated from the role of women. Afifah et al. (2023) article entitled "The Image of Female Characters in the Play *"Sinta Boyong"* as a Representation of Contemporary Javanese Women (*Wayang Orang Sriwedari Surakarta*)". The results of this study include two things, namely the image of female puppet characters and the representation of female puppet characters with contemporary Javanese women.

This study certainly has differences with previous studies because in terms of the object of the study this study uses the Supraba Duta puppet show and focuses on the analysis of the meaning that are conveyed using the semiotic theory. The position of this study is to analyze the meaning of the glorification of women's images in the Supraba Duta puppet show. The existence of this article is expected to contribute to the understanding of the advancement of traditional art culture, namely the Balinese shadow puppet show, especially the Supraba Duta puppet show which functions as a means of strengthening the glorification of women's images in people's lives.

II. RESEARCH METHOD

This research is a type of qualitative research with data sources in the form of a video of the puppet show of Supraba Duta by a female puppeteer named Ni Ketut Intan Handayani which was documented by the PEPADI Community Culture Service of Gianyar Regency, namely at the 2018 Balinese Parwa Puppeteer Female Shadow Puppet Festival. The video recording lasts 1 hour 40 minutes 53 seconds. Methodologically, this research is divided into three stages, namely the data collection stage, data analysis and the stage of presenting the results of the data analysis.

The first stage of data collection uses observation methods, document study and interviews assisted by listening, note-taking and translation techniques. Obtaining data by watching and listening to video recordings, then directly collected through the transcription process from oral to written. The stage is continued by translating the research object from the source language into the target language, namely Indonesian. The instruments used are several supporting tools such as a cell phone to record during interviews with puppeteers and to document interview photos. A notebook is used for the data recording process so that the data obtained is recorded and noted properly. A laptop to show videos of Supraba Duta puppet shows and is used for data processing by typing the data and results that have been analysed. The second stage is the data analysis stage, using the descriptive analytical method assisted by interpretative techniques. Data is processed and explained descriptively and interpreted against the problems that are the main focus of the research object systematically. After the data is analysed, it is continued

with the third stage, namely the presentation of the results of the data analysis. In this stage it uses the informal method as well as deductive and inductive techniques.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Supraba Duta Puppet Performance

The Supraba Duta puppet show performed by Dalang Ni Ketut Intan Handayani on December 18, 2018 at Wantilan Pura Khayangan Tiga Br. Bangunliman, Buruan Village, Blahbatuh District, Gianyar Regency, is a shadow puppet show that still uses the rules (*pakem*) of Balinese shadow puppet traditions. Considering that the show is held in a competition or festival, the performance packaging is also adjusted to the assessment qualifications that prioritize the thickness of the style or style of the traditional puppetry of local wisdom from each region, so in this case the Bangli puppet show style is used (Handayani, interview, December 4, 2024). The Supraba Duta puppet show with a duration of 1 hour 40 minutes 53 seconds is like a traditional puppet performance that is built on several puppet scenes applied in a two-act play structure. Traditional Balinese shadow puppet performances usually take stories around the Mahabharata and Ramayana (Sugita & Pastika, 2022:36). However, not only sourced from these stories, there are several other tales used as sources of stories in Balinese shadow puppet performances.

Sutana & Palguna (2020:73) argue that usually in Bali the source of the two plays is found in *kakawin-kakawin* and *parwa* in Old Javanese, considering that many literatures from Java were saved on the island of Bali. So that the *kakawin-kakawin* and *parwa* are used as sources of plays in Balinese shadow puppet performances. In line with this statement, the play performed by Dalang Intan Handayani is sourced from *Kakawin Arjuna Wiwaha*. However, in the shadow puppet performance of the Supraba Duta puppet show, the role of Dewi Supraba is repackaged to highlight the depiction or image of intelligent and brave women and the glorification of women is emphasized more. The form of the shadow puppet performance packaging gives an impression that is relevant to today's society.

Synopsis of the Supraba Duta Shadow Puppet Show

The Supraba Duta puppet show tells the story of Dewi Supraba's journey as a "*duta*" meaning 'messenger' from Bhatar Indra to help Arjuna face the savagery of the giant Niwatakswa who wants to destroy Indraloka. Niwatakswa wants Dewi Supraba as his wife, but Bhatar Indra as Dewi Supraba's father opposes this, as does Dewi Supraba who also refuses to marry Niwatakswa despite the various threats that Niwatakswa will send if she refuses Niwatakswa's request. In relation to this, Bhatar Indra sends Arjuna to face Niwatakswa who wants to destroy Indraloka.

Given Niwatakswa's unmatched supernatural powers and his body that is not easily penetrated by weapons, he is only killed if the weapon hits his *kepatian*, a secret weak point in his body. For the safety of Indraloka, Bhatar Indra sent Dewi Supraba to help Arjuna face Niwatakswa with a strategy to find Niwatakswa's weak point. Dewi Supraba in this case is the only woman who has high potential to reveal the secret of *kepatian* (death) and Niwatakswa's weak point. Thanks to Dewi Supraba's courage and ingenuity, the secret of the death of the giant Niwatakswa was revealed, which lies on the tip of Niwatakswa's tongue. When Niwatakswa's weak point was heard by Arjuna, Arjuna skillfully released his weapon right at the tip of Niwatakswa's tongue when he laughed. So Niwatakswa was defeated. In relation to this, the characterization of Dewi Supraba becomes the center of the revelation of Niwatakswa's great secret which leads him to death because his weak point is successfully revealed by Dewi Supraba.

Respect for Women

The Supraba Duta puppet show performed by puppeteer Intan Handayani has a dramatic plot structure that at the exposition stage or story introduction gives the impression of glorifying the existence of women in community life. One of these glorifications is expressing respect for women. The term respect for women means an act of appreciation, recognition of the role and contribution of women in community life. This is evident in the role of women as mothers who are able to conceive, love and maintain the development of children during childhood. Zahrok & Suarmini (2018:61) state that the role of mothers is very large in realizing the happiness and integrity of the family. A mother is a woman who gives birth, cares for, breastfeeds, provides protection for her children and plays a dual role as an educator. All the sacrifices she has made, so that every child should respect, obey and be devoted to their mother. In the Supraba Duta puppet show, we can find dialogue quotes that contain moral messages about respecting women as mothers. The dialogue quotes are in the *kanda* scene (dialogue) of the *punakawan* characters Tualen and Merdah as follows:

(3-1)

- Tualen : *kaden ade madan "surga di telapak kaki ibu" toh nawang kenken artine to?*
Merdah : *kenken to nang?*
Tualen : *karna wanita di dunia ini, yen sing ade wanita kosong bumine, jeg hampa.*

Translation

- Tualen : because there is a saying "heaven is under the soles of mother's feet" well... do you know what that means?
Merdah : what is that, father?
Tualen : because there are women in this world, if there are no women this earth is empty, hollow.

Based on the data quote (3-1) the dialogue between the characters Merdah and Tualen as a signifier is in the dialogue sentence "*kaden ade madan surga di telapak kaki ibu*" if translated 'because there is a saying heaven in the soles of the mother's feet'. The signifier (signified) of the sentence is an expression of glorification of women as a mother who is able to carry a child for 9 months, and give birth to care for and educate children with full love and struggle. The struggle of women as a mother is commemorated on December 22nd as Mother's Day to remember the struggle and pay respect to all mothers in the world. This gives meaning to an expression of gratitude for the love, affection, effort, and dedication that has been given to the child throughout his life. So in the text of the Supraba Duta puppet show in the dialogue between the *punakawan* Tualen and Merdah, it gives a moral message to the audience that heaven lies in the soles of the mother's feet which has a deep meaning that in reality a child's heaven is at the very bottom of a mother's journey, namely the soles of her feet. So that through this expression, it provides spiritual nourishment for a child, the importance of respecting and glorifying the existence of a mother who has struggled throughout her life for the growth and happiness of her child.

The second marker, namely the word "heaven" symbolizes a sign of eternal happiness, blessings and the purpose of human life in carrying out its *karma*. In the Hindu religious belief system, this can refer to a quote in the Vedic scriptures which reads "*moksartham jagadhita ya ca iti dharma*" which means '*dharma* or religion is to achieve *moksa* (*jagadhita*)'. *Moksa* which is also called *mukti* means achieving freedom of the soul or lasting spiritual happiness. *Jagadhita* is also called *bhukti*, which means for the prosperity of the life of society and the country (Kantiani, 2021: 114). So the marker of the word heaven has the meaning of a sign as a form of happiness in achieving the goal of life, namely *moksa*.

The third marker "mother's feet" in the dialogue expression gives the meaning of a sign that the soles of the feet are the lowest part of the human body that has a role in every step of a person in carrying out activities and their life journey. In this case, the soles of the mother's feet are how the point of the journey and the steps that have been passed by a mother in her life struggle from conceiving, giving birth, caring for and paying attention to the development of her child with full love and balanced with her role as a housewife. This struggle is what is important to be appreciated, respected by a child, because heaven or the point of happiness for a child is in every step and struggle of a mother who has dedicated her life, so that if a child can be devoted, respect the services and glorify his mother, happiness will always accompany him. Furthermore, it can mean that the figure of the mother is the main door to happiness and safety for the child in living life.

The next marker is in the dialogue quote "*karena ada wanita di dunia ini, jika tidak ada wanita kosong bumi ini, jeg hampa*" if translated 'because there are women in this world, if there are no women this earth is empty, it feels empty'. The marker of the dialogue sentence indicates that women are one of the fillers of life and sources of survival of mankind. Women have a role in the process of birth and new life and human growth, so if there are no women then it is certain that there will be no life process. The marker of the *punakawan* dialogue expression of the Tualen figure that the world will feel empty and hollow if there is no presence of women, because in addition to giving birth, women also have a role in caring for, giving love, affection and attention given by women can provide full color in a human life.

Women also have a role in family harmony, and contribute greatly to the development and social balance of society. The importance of women's presence in the world is not only related to the reproductive process, but how the social and cultural roles played by women in maintaining values, traditions, and norms that are important for

the survival of society. Women are the main key in shaping the growth of the future of humanity through caring for children, education, and other active roles in social life. So the sign in this quote as a whole concerns that women are the source of life in the world.

Women as a Source of Happiness

In the Supraba Duta puppet show, there are several quotes from the dialogues of the punakawan characters Tualen and Merdah which have the meaning of glorifying women as a source of happiness. The existence of women has a very large contribution to the happiness of a man. This is because men need a source of affection, inspiration, motivation, and peace from women. So that the role of women can have a more harmonious impact on life and create happiness in life. This can be found in the punakawan characters represented in the Supraba Duta puppet show. The quotes are as follows.

(3-2)

Tualen : pehh... kaden ade "laki-laki tanpa perempuan maka tidak akan sempurna. Laki-laki tidak dibarengi dengan perempuan, maka tidak akan menemukan titik terang".

Merdah : peh, men berarti yen laki-laki tanpa perempuan si tidak menemukan titik nang?

Tualen : badah... de nake di titik orange. Nak titik terang, titik kebahagiaan keto.

Terjemahan

Tualen : Well... there is "a man without a woman will not be perfect. A man without a woman will not find the bright point".

Merdah : Well... does that mean if a man is without a woman, then he won't find the point, father?

Tualen : ahh... don't say at the point. The bright point is the point of happiness.

The first marker is in the data dialogue (3-2) the sentence, "men without women will not be perfect". The marker here refers to the meaning that in life women and men have complementary roles, and both are needed to achieve balance or perfection in life. In the Hindu belief system there is the concept of "rwa bhineda" which means a concept of two different things created by Ida Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa or God Almighty to create harmony and balance in the universe.

So in the marker, namely the dialogue between the punakawan Tualen and Merdah above, it contains a sign that men are dependent on the role of women. How the presence of a woman in life also gives men confidence, either as a wife or life partner, mother, sister, or as a friend. A man has an interest in women, so men will fight for a woman to get reciprocity, namely a sense of love and attention from a woman. A woman's love and attention can also make men feel appreciated, loved, and respected. This can be interpreted that the presence of women can be the basis for men's happiness and complete the perfection of men's lives in their worldly journey.

The second sign, "A man without a woman will not find the bright point". This sign refers to the meaning of a woman's role in achieving a better life for men. Related to the dialogue, it gives the meaning that a man who is not accompanied by a woman will feel his life is darker or unclear in its direction. So with the presence of women in his life, he has the potential to be better, more focused and balanced, both in the context of family and love. This can be related to the life of a married couple, both men and women have different strengths but complement each other. The dialogue "not finding a bright spot, a point of happiness" has a sign or meaning that men in their success will not feel complete without a woman who provides encouragement and affection and rewards in every achievement and a bright spot as the peak of a man's source of happiness.

Women as Heroes

The role and actions of women in addition to being a source of happiness also have quite high potential in community life. One of them plays a role as intelligence, detectives, policewomen and other women who currently occupy many strategic positions in the public sphere such as company managers, state ministers (Wahyuni, 2016:230). Based on this, it can be proven that women not only have significant contributions but are also often

the key to success. In the puppet show *Supraba Duta*, the woman who is the central figure in the play is Dewi Supraba. The characterization of Dewi Supraba is described as a figure who is able to present solutions with the intelligence, determination and social sensitivity she has. Dewi Supraba is told in the puppet show to be the center of the success of revealing the great secret of the supernatural powers of a sick giant named Niwatakwaca with the revelation of *kepatian*, this was successfully revealed by Dewi Supraba with trickery so that it brought Niwatakwaca to death. The following is an excerpt from the dialogue data.

(3-3)

Tualen : Ida Dewi Supraba jani suba berhasil dadi duta, suba mati Niwatakwaca. Bah aman Indralokane jani dah...
Merdah : atuh nanang... yen sube keto jalan nang....
Tualen : jalan dah....

Terjemahan

Tualen : Ida Dewi Supraba has now succeeded in becoming an ambassador or envoy, Niwatakwaca has died. Well, heaven is safe now....
Merdah : Oh my, father... if that's the case, let's go, father...
Tualen : Let's go....

The marker of the data dialogue (3-3) is "Ida Dewi Supraba jani suba berhasil dadi duta, suba mati Niwatakwaca. Bah aman Indralokane jani dah" if translated means "Ida Dewi Supraba has now succeeded in becoming an ambassador or envoy, Niwatakwaca has died. Well, heaven is safe now....". The marker of the dialogue quote is that Dewi Supraba has succeeded in becoming an ambassador or envoy of Bhatara Indra, so in this case as a female hero who succeeded in saving Indraloka from the threat of destruction by Niwatakwaca. The contribution of the character Dewi Supraba in this case received praise from the *punakawan* Tualen and Merdah. This is because in the Balinese shadow puppet show, the role of heroic or heroic characters is generally played by knightly characters, namely men such as Bima, Arjuna, Abimanyu, and so on. Different in the play *Supraba Duta*, the central character whose heroism is glorified is the contribution of the character Dewi Supraba as a female hero.

Based on this, it can also be interpreted that the figure of Dewi Supraba in the play shows the image of female heroism, namely the main key figure in the safety and welfare of Indraloka. The existence of the *Supraba Duta* puppet show will change the stigma and ideology about women, that women have the power to protect, guard and make important contributions to life as in the *Supraba Duta* puppet show whose story is currently increasingly occurring in the life of society. The heroic story played by a woman is not only written in literary works in this case, namely in the text of the *Supraba Duta* puppet show. In this study, how the text of the literary work can be packaged by the puppeteer Ni Ketut Intan Handayani into a performance that is able to reach the audience of the performance witnessed directly by the community. Through the expressions and delivery of dialogues played by the puppeteer in the *Supraba Duta* puppet show, it can indirectly attract community involvement to appreciate and understand a work that contains the glorification of the image of women. Starting from this, so that the community who enjoy the *Supraba Duta* puppet show not only get a spectacle, but how to present a spectacle that contains moral guidance has positive implications as well as being a reflection of the social life of society in glorifying the existence of women in life.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the above, it can be concluded that in the text of the *Supraba Duta* puppet show by the female puppeteer Ni Ketut Intan Handayani, it is studied to analyze the glorification of the image of women which is represented as a form of glorification of the image of women in life. The *Supraba Duta* puppet show is a puppet show that originates from the *Kakawin Arjuna Wiwaha*, it is made into a public performance that prioritizes dialogue or discourse on women's contributions in the text and context of the performance, namely the Balinese Female Puppeteer Festival by PEPADI Gianyar in 2018. Based on the results of the study, it can be summarized that the glorification of the image of women in the *Supraba Duta* puppet show, namely respect for women visualized in the dialogue between the *punakawan* Tualen and Merdah, provides spiritual guidance to the audience about the importance of respecting the existence of women's roles as mothers.

Further glorification of the image of women as a source of happiness thanks to the love and attention of a woman makes men feel appreciated, loved, and respected, so that it can be interpreted that the presence of women

can be the basis of male happiness. In addition, the glorification of the image of women that is most inherent in the Supraba Duta puppet show is the image of women as heroes. Dewi Supraba becomes a central figure who succeeds in saving Indraloka from the threat of the giant Niwatakwa by revealing the patian of the giant Niwatakwa that no one knows about.

Thanks to Dewi Supraba's intelligence and skill, she managed to devise a strategy through trickery to influence Niwatakwa to reveal the secret of her death. This can be a reflection in today's society, how women have an important role and contribution towards success. Through this study, it can be concluded that women are able to carry out tasks that are generally carried out by men, in this case Dewi Supraba as the messenger to save Indraloka, as well as female puppeteers in shadow puppet performances that are generally performed by male puppeteers. Starting from this study, it is hoped that it will be able to refute gender stereotypes and patriarchal culture that are still believed in by some Indonesian people, especially in the lives of Balinese people

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