

WOMAN'S MYTH INFLUENCE IN TOURISM OBJECTS NAME IN PULAU BANGKA: AN ECOFEMINISM STUDY

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Abstract

Since there were many stories told by the society related to the name of the tourism places, the researchers were interested to find out the story behind the name of the tourism places in Belinyu, Central Bangka called, Pulau Putri. This research mainly focused on finding what kind of myth existed in Pulau Putri and discovered how the myth protected the environment. The study employed two major theories namely Myth by Levi Strauss and ecofeminism by Jamie Thompson to shape the understanding of this research. The methodology employed in this research was the qualitative method. From the data collected through interviews with locals, the results showed that there was a myth told by the ancestors living around the area about a woman spirit. Furthermore, the existence of the spirit hence became the protection for preserving nature and also the environment. Moreover, not only did myth name the tourism places, but it also helped or became the symbol of protection of the environment.

Keywords: Myth, Ecofeminism, Environment

1. INTRODUCTION

The difference between male and female in society is defined by culture, history and geography (Beynon, 2010: 1). Over the centuries, society constructs the power of patriarchy which leads women into the less-powerful being. This diversity of power then led men in charge of decision making while women sat in the domestic area. Society is the place where all the information circulates.

They have their own tradition and culture that they inherit which form norms and rules in their social environment. The rules and norms construct and regulate their way of life. It is also taught from fables or folklore which exist in the society. Moreover, the story mainly tells about the rules which have to be obeyed and the consequences that might appear when the rules are broken. The myth then

engages in the story in which they believe.

In this patriarchal era, women face oppression not only in real life but also in the fable or folklore. Many folklores describe how powerless women are and make men the hero of the story. Moreover, The story has been retold and reproduced across generations. The information of powerless women then became common knowledge and even put woman status in a lower class. Meanwhile, men as the main actors engage with the decision making, conscious or not, have been the main pressure for both woman and nature. The decision that men made was led to the destruction of nature and also women.

The story behind the naming of Pulau Putri is one example of how the patriarchal oppression of women is being represented. The story tells how a powerless woman facing the patriarchal society led the character called Putri to run and isolated herself. The story then became a folklore of the island which engaged with the myth of guardian spirits. The interesting things happen when the existence of guardian spirits called Putri has the main role in protecting not only the nature but also the culture of the Belinyu residents, where the Pulau Putri is located.

In relation to the myth, the researchers contextually considered that the myth is valued in a form of folklore that is embedded in the local wisdom values. Arianto and Suryani, (2020) asserted that Local wisdom is a reference for the community in living in various social life. Thus, ecological wisdom refers to forms of belief, knowledge, or customs that guide humans in their life related to ecological systems.

The myth which circulated in the Belinyu society is related to the woman

as guardian spirits, leading to the unveiling the fact that despite the class, women have a major role in some points. The myth in Pulau Putri is then being retold across the generations and being obeyed by the society. Some points that the story tells, mainly revolve in nature maintenance. People living in that area and also near the island believe that the guardian spirits who lived in the island protected the island and also the society who lived close to the island.

In terms of finding the role being played by the guardian spirits in Pulau Putri, Ecofeminism is being used as the main tool. From the Ecofeminism perspective, women played a big role in protecting the nature (Thompson, 2017). Besides restoring and protecting the earth, women strive to preserve nature as they believe that human beings rely on nature and cannot live without it.

Since the study involves myths that appear in society, there are three basics to be considered in analysing Myth. First, if myth is considered as something meaningful, then this meaning is not found in its independent elements, which are separate from one another, but in the way these elements are combined. Second, although myth is included in the category of language, myth is not just a language. This means that only certain features of the myth meet the characteristics of language. Third, these characteristics can be found not at the language level itself but above it. These characteristics are more complex, more complicated than the characteristics of other linguistic forms. Based on these three foundations, there are two steps in analyzing myths: finding myths or stories, and arranging myths syntagmatically and paradigmatically.

Therefore, with the background of the problem stated earlier, this research intended to describe what kind of myth that exist in Pulau Putri and how the myth protected the environment.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Myth

Levi Strauss develops myth analysis by utilizing linguistic models. According to him, there are similarities between myth and language, namely, first, language is a means of communication to convey messages from one individual to another, or from one group to another. Myths themselves are also conveyed through language and through the storytelling process, the messages contained in them can be conveyed. Second, like language, myth contains aspects of langue and parole, synchronic and diachronic, syntagmatic and paradigmatic. It is this aspect of langue that allows symbolic communication between humans to take place because langue is shared.

Langue is a collective phenomenon, namely systems, social facts or rules, unconscious norms. It is at the language level that the structure in a myth can be demonstrated. While the parole is an individual speech which is a reflection of one's freedom. Just as language is composed of elements such as phonemes, myths are also made up of smaller units which he calls myths. The meaning of a myth is obtained from the myths and at the same time reflects how the myths are arranged into a unified whole. Myth in Indonesian is a myth. Myth in the context of Levi Strauss' structuralism is nothing but a fairy tale.

Although only fantasy, myth is seen to find its freest expression in fairy tales. According to Ahimsa (2007), fairy tales are stories or stories born from the human imagination, from

human imagination, even though the elements of the fantasy come from what is in everyday life. Myth is the result of the creativity of the human psyche which unconsciously obeys certain laws (relations and oppositions in nature). Psyche is always determined by unconscious structures in all its mental activities. In his interpretation of various myths, he also shows that myth also consists of relations and oppositions.

Myths are the result of the creativity of the human psyche which is completely free. If it can be proven that even in this field the human psyche remains obedient to certain laws, then the conclusion is that the psyche is always determined by unconscious structures in all its work. And in his interpretation of mythology Levi Strauss does show that myth is also itself of relations and oppositions and that in this way wild thinking succeeds in creating order in its world.

According to Levi Strauss, myth should proceed like an analysis of language. The elements of myth, like the elements of language, are meaningless in themselves. That meaning only appears when the elements combine to form a structure. Myths contain some kind of coded message, and the job of the analyzer is to find and decode that code and reveal its message. Myth has a narrative charge. However, that is not the main meaning, because myth penetrates beyond (transcends) the narrative. What is meaningful is the fully formal mythical pattern, the logical relationships between the elements contained therein.

When viewed on a global scale, this apparent variation of the myth is seen as a logical transformation of a set of enduring structural relationships. The discovery of this fundamental core of structure is the main concern of Levi

Strauss in analyzing the myth. Levi Strauss developed his structural theory in myth analysis. It combines functions vertically and explains the overlapping paradigmatic using myth variants with non-linear structural models.

Levi Strauss draws the conclusion that the myths that exist throughout the world are essentially arbitrary or arbitrary. Levi Strauss draws a conclusion that the myths that exist throughout the world are essentially in the relationships or interrelationships between the elements in the myth by combining the elements. Myths can be categorized as in language. Myth is like a language which is composed of units similar to the lingual elements of language. However, myth cannot be fully equated with language when viewed from the time factor. Language can indeed be studied at a certain time factor or at the same time or which is termed synchronous and diachronic properties according to the concepts of langue and parole. Myth turns out to have a combination of reversible time and non-reversible time. This means that myths throughout history will always be the same even though from time to time their appearance is different.

There are three basics that need to be considered in conducting myth analysis. First, if myth is considered as something meaningful, then this meaning is not found in its independent elements, which are separate from one another, but in the way these elements are combined. Second, although myth is included in the category of language, myth is not just a language. This means that only certain features of the myth meet the characteristics of language. Third, these characteristics can be found not at the language level itself but above it. These characteristics are more complex, more complicated than the

characteristics in other linguistic forms. Based on these three foundations, there are two steps in analyzing myths: finding myths or stories, and arranging myths syntagmatically and paradigmatically.

2.2 Feminism

Feminism is a discourse that focuses on issues of women's lives in the struggle to achieve equal rights and power over men. The history of the development of feminist discourse has existed along with the development of ancient philosophy. Philosophy has an odd relationship with women because its views on women are often biased, sexist or completely ignored. As Aristotle said that women are like a slave who is a property that is used as a tool to achieve goals. Women's lives are functional. She is the wife of a man who is only used to have children, and like a slave, she takes part in providing for the necessities of life. All of this was done by women for the defense of a country where men had to concentrate on their intellectual and political life.

Based on this opinion, women seem inferior and only work with their emotions (feelings of affection, attention, serving, nurturing, and so on). Women and slaves differed only in their social status and income. A slave earns his income or rights in the form of a number of goods or a nominal value of a certain currency, but he does not have a proper social status. While women have a clear social status, especially the aristocratic group, but sometimes they only get income in the form of 'attention' and affection from the owner, namely the husband.

Sugihastuti revealed that feminism is a theory about equality between men and women in the political, economic, and social fields, or organized activities that fight for the rights and interests of the

women. Feminism is a form of critical theory, which uses the perspectives and experiences of women and the oppression they experience, as the starting point as well as the focus of their analysis (2000:37). Meanwhile, Aquarini revealed that this basic understanding of feminism is important to see more clearly that feminism is not solely owned by women but also belongs to men or women who are aware of structural imbalances. Feminism belongs to men and women, so patriarchal attitudes also belong to men and women. Feminist thought was born from the socio-cultural context that surrounds women who live in society (2006:23-24). Feminism is a women's movement to reject everything that is marginalized, subordinated, and demeaned by the dominant culture, both in the political and economic fields as well as social life in general. The goal of feminism is the existence of gender balance and interrelation.

Aquarini further reveals that having a feminist perspective makes us aware of the problem of imbalance that must be overcome and that problem must be seen as part of an interrelated problem (2006:47). The problem can be in the form of domestic violence. Violence is an attack or invasion (assault) against the physical and mental integrity of a person's psychology (Fakih through Sofia 2009:42). While Murniati said, violence is behavior or actions that occur in human relations, both individuals and groups, which are perceived by one party as a situation that is burdensome, makes it difficult, unpleasant, not free. The situation caused by this act of violence makes the other party sick, both physically and psychologically as well as spiritually. This sick individual or group is difficult to be free and independent. They are shackled and shackled (2004:222).

The opinion expressed earlier confirms the position of women in social construction. Gender, in practice, is a product of social construction. The inequality experienced by women is the background for the emergence of the feminist movement which tries to fight for women's rights as human beings as a whole. Constructions that have emerged in society so far have placed women in a powerless position and only accept what is given to them. Not a few women who become objects when men occupy positions as subjects. These things trigger the emergence of violence that begins with psychological violence which then leads to physical violence. This inequality is reproduced and maintained to this day. Traces of gender inequality can be traced through the oldest literary works, namely oral literature. Women, in various legends, folklore, and myths circulating in society place women as helpless objects while men are described as independent and whole subjects.

This research aimed to find the power of woman in society that can be seen by the power of protecting the nature which is concluded also as the power to protect the culture in society. In addition, Ecofeminism is used to portray the case since ecofeminism is believed by many people as the protests led by women starting in the 1980's in relation to the ecological degradation since women believed that one of the main discussion aspects of Ecofeminism is the recognition of life's interconnectedness. From the ecofeminist perspective, women are known as the protector of the earth. Lorentzen dan Eaton (2002:2) stated "The fact that women are most adverse affected by environmental problems makes them better qualified as experts on such conditions and therefore places them in a position of epistemological privilege;

that is, women have more knowledge about earth systems than me ”. It could be stated that way because women are in charge of managing the household stuff and women are highly engaged with the environment and the restoration of the environment itself. Moreover, women are always close to the products which may lead to environmental deterioration such as household wastes, make-up, medicine wastes, both organic and also chemical. With that said, women have the capacity to play a central and strategic role in environmental restoration. Besides restoring and protecting the earth, women strive to preserve nature as they believe that human beings rely on the nature and cannot live without it.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

This study applied a qualitative method in elaborating the data. Qualitative method was used since the aim of this study is to describe the myth that exists in Pulau Putri. The primary data of this study is gained through in-depth interviews with traditional elders, tourist attraction managers, and people related to the field. In total, there were three interviewees being interviewed when gathering the data. The reasons why those interviewees were selected were because they knew about the topic related to this research. In obtaining the primary data, the interview was conducted based on interview guidelines to find the narration related to the subject. During the interview, the researchers also asked some relevant questions to deepen our findings. While the secondary data obtained from the library research by collecting the information from the books, journals, articles, and etc. After gaining all the data, the data were then classified based on the importance of the data related to the subject. The next step, the researchers should interpret the data and

find its meaning towards the subject. Hereupon, the analyzing step. This step, the researchers analyze the primary data by using secondary data as tools. For the last step, it could be the concluding step when the researchers find and answer the research question.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The research was conducted in a village named Belinyu with various tourist attractions. Belinyu is one of the districts in Bangka Regency, Bangka Belitung province. This district has a lot of recreational places which are famous such as the beaches, the culinary places, and many others. Belinyu is particularly famous with its beautiful beaches and other tourism places such as Penyusuk Beach, Romodong Beach, and Pulau Putri.

Pulau Putri as one of the tourist attractions has both natural and cultural wealth. Located on islands, Pulau Putri is a small island with a lot of Mentigi trees and blackish corals. Pulau Putri started its fame in 2016 because of its under-water attractions. Since then, the island has been known by many people locally, nationally, and internationally and every year there are many tourists visiting the island to enjoy the view or relax themselves with their family. As Pulau Putri is located separately from Penyusuk Beach, people will have to use a boat to get across the island in order to be there.

Despite the under-water attraction, the existence of this island inherits a mystery that has been spreaded around the society. Near the island, although there are also several small islands, Pulau Putri is the only one where the myth exists to preserve nature. This myth has been known and reproduced over generations of the residents then being a common knowledge in the society. There, they believe that tourists

should follow and respect the norms which exist in the island.

4.1 How Myth exists in *Pulau Putri*

Traditions are products of society which have been carried out over generations. The traditions consist of rules and norms which should be obeyed and preserved by the people. Living in the suburbs makes the people still believe and run the culture they once were told. The civilians of Belinyu were a Malay tribe who had various traditions. They believe that the norms are created to be obeyed and there will be some consequences when the norms are broken. As is a der, the believe that there's a protector of the isl and and the sea spirits who protect the sailors when they sail.

As an island, the residents tend to count their life at the sea. Most of them were sailors or anything related to the ocean life. Everyday, they fulfill their lives by becoming fishers near the beach and sell the fish they had. In addition, their lives significantly changed after Pantai Penyusuk gained recognition from the local government and started to be opened publicly.

Across the beach, there are islands which have various attractions. Pulau Lampu, as one of them is named after the light house which stands there, then there is Pulau Putri which is named by the myth that exists in the society.

After Pulau Putri gained its fame, the livelihood of the local residents has transformed into several forms such as tour guides, food seller / store owner, and or tourist attraction manager. Unconsciously, their lives depend on the existence of Pulau Putri itself and Penyusuk Beach. Thus, they believed that something protected

4.2 How do myth protect the earth (Protect the nature, protect the culture)

Folklore was one of the easiest ways to teach life value toward the generations. Thus, many folklore then forms norms that should be obeyed in the society. Mostly, folklore also contain myth. Audifax (2005: 8) explain that myths explain the essence of life and the world; or express the existence of cultural moral values in human life. Myth pays attention to the forces that control human life and the relationship between these forces and human existence.

As one of the small islands in Belinyu, one of Bangka districts, Pulau Putri possessed a myth that taught society how to value nature as one of the most important aspects of life. Being taught about the existence of guardian spirits which protect the environment, the residents tend to obey the rules which prevent them from destroying the nature.

In some myths, women will be in the powerless state that has been oppressed by the man. The finding tells that there is no difference in the Pulau Putri's history. In the story, women have no choice but obey the decisions made by men. There's a woman then called Putri who had to run away from the wedding arrangement which had been decided for her. She chose her freedom and left the society to start a new life on the isolated island across Penyusuk beach. She lived there and devoted her life to the island which is now known as Pulau Putri.

The myth that exists in Pulau Putri tells that Putri was the guardian of the island even when she is not there anymore. Putri is guarding the island and transforming into the guardian spirits which teach people to respect nature. This guardian spirit is believed to have great power in preserving the nature around the island. The existence of the spirit successfully maintains the

great nature. It can be seen by the famous coral which has been the main attraction of the island. Not only the corals, the vegetation of the island is also well maintained. The myth told that when nature is being destroyed, the guardian spirit will punish the person by possessing the doer.

By the existence of the woman as the guardian spirit, the woman was portrayed as the powerful creature. Women depicted as the one who can also give the punishment whether to men or even another woman. This existence as the protector of the nature can also be called as the agent of ecofeminism.

This could begin as a long story about how women become close with the nature. Being left in the domestic area, women realize that they have control in the household. It is also obvious there is a link between nature and women socially, and as a consequence, women start to acknowledge the reaction between women's and earth's oppression and thus lead to the existence of Ecofeminism.

According to Lianah in her book *Pengantar Ekologi Unity of Sciences* argues that ecology is the study of the interrelationships between living creatures with others and inanimate objects around them, within the meaning of these living creatures, mankind as one kind of the living creatures. Ecology learns of the relationships between humans and environment; it is connecting between natural science and human science in interdisciplinary.

Ecological consciousness wants to see the reality of this world holistically and integrally that the world has a lot of diversity. But feminists and ecofeminism have differences. The difference is the basic assumption which ecofeminism

emphasizes on the relationship between nature between women and nature which the paradigm of the environment within a framework of feminism, as well as the environmental crisis and the way to resolve it from the side of femininity.

Ecofeminism does not merely incorporate nature ecologically, but it also focuses on managing all aspects including the people and the culture. With that said, nature gives the setting where culture, activity and systems are generated. To add, it is also believed that within the process of relating nature to culture, there are four elements included such as livelihoods and practices, beliefs and how society sees their world, the basic knowledge, and also norms and institutions.

In the Pulau Putri discussion, it could be stated that the spirit itself has the sense of belonging to the nature which she already protected since she decided to move to that isolated island and devoted herself to maintaining the ecosystem. Some rules that circulated in the society towards the island and the guardian spirits are; people are forbidden to destroy the nature or the ecosystem of the island, people should pay respect not only to the human but also to the other creatures in the island and realize that we're living in the same space, the last rule that should be obeyed is not to be conceited.

By the presence of the myth, the rules are being obeyed to avoid the consequences. The first rule that should be obeyed is to preserve the nature or ecosystem. Any kind of destruction will lead to an imbalanced ecosystem which will have a great impact on human life. The rules prevent the endangerment of the earth. By preserving the nature and also the ecosystem, human life could also be preserved. This has a close relation with the second rule which is to have respect toward any creatures. Respecting people is common knowledge nowadays. But sometimes, people forget how to respect other creatures. Respecting the

animal by letting them live in their environment or respecting plants by not bringing them back home is something we should know more about. Taking one or some animal away from their environment may result in an imbalance in the ecosystem. It is simply because something in the food chain is missing. It also applied for the plants. Unfortunately, in this pandemic era, plants gain their fame. Some plants are forcibly removed from their habitat. But, the existence of the myth in Pulau Putri prevented that thing from happening. People are taught to respect all the creatures, especially on the island. The residents keep the animal and also the plants safe on the island. They believe that the guardian spirits will also keep them safe by doing that. The result showed that the corals are grown beautifully, the trees keep the island from the abrasion, and all of them increase the tourist attraction value. Local, national, and also international tourists come to dive and camp on the island. This also increases the residents' economic well-being. The myth then told to the tourists who came there to prevent something bad happen. The residents told them about the rules and the consequences that may happen when the rules are broken.

The third rule that should be obeyed is being humble. The myth did not allow people to be conceited. This also has close relation with other rules before. Being humble means that you also pay respect to others. It also prevents you from belittling another creature. The residents said that there are some cases when the visitor is being conceited or disrespecting another creature simply by speaking in a high tone which could be said as screaming, or when they do not respect the other by disturbing the night with loud music. As a result, the visitors are being possessed and should go out from the island to get treatment. In some cases, the possessed person will try to harm her/himself or a person close to her/him.

By the existence of the myths which have been stated before, the ecosystem is well maintained. As a result, the economic sector also improved. This not only helps men to work in various fields, but also women can take part in this case. Women can open a store or small restaurant on the beach near the island to help their economic condition. Before Pulau Putri gained its fame, women were told to stay at home and take care of the children. Women have to stay at home and wait for the men from work. The women, although they have a hard day as men who work out there, still did not get recognition simply because the one who supports the economic sector is the men. But then, fate changed. Women nowadays gain recognition and have a chance to stand in the same position as a man because women also have some role in the economic sector. The Woman who worked on the island, fortunately didn't forget her nature to take care of the family.

The myth that linger in Pulau Putri can be called as the protector not only for the environment but also the culture. The tale which presents a woman figure also upbring the woman fortune who live near the island.

5. CONCLUSION

Hence, it can be concluded, Ecofeminism in a broader sense, is a way to give people the awareness and also understanding to protect and preserve the nature. Thus, by preserving the nature, it gives a chance for people and also culture to be preserved.

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