

Sexuality in Poems by Shinta Febrianty: A Discourse Analysis Study

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ABSTRACT

This research delves into the feminist discourse on sexuality in Shinta Febrianty's poetry, specifically focusing on her collection, "Aku Bukan Masa Depan (2003)." Drawing on Michel Foucault's theory of Discourse and Power Relations, the study employs a qualitative approach that integrates content and discourse analysis. Through meticulous examination of Febrianty's poems, the research unpacks the intricate dynamics of power that suppress female sexuality within Indonesian literary traditions. Thematic analysis illuminates the multifaceted interplay of identity, resistance, and societal expectations embedded within Febrianty's verses. The study concludes by reflecting on the evolving landscape of Indonesian literature, particularly in light of the increasing prevalence of sexuality discourses in female-authored works. It critically questions the motives and sustainability of this trend, emphasizing the need for discerning steps to navigate the shifting cultural dynamics influenced by both local and global forces.

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1. Introduction

Fueled by my personal literary journey and the captivating tensions within Indonesian literary communities, particularly the Utan Kayu vs. Boemipetra debate surrounding 'pornographic' literature, this research delves into the complex terrain of female writers navigating gender, expression, and societal expectations. Through their bold explorations of sexuality, these women's works challenge established notions of maturity within Indonesian literature, sparking crucial dialogues about artistic freedom and the evolving boundaries of literary expression.

Feminist literature, a powerful tool for advocating gender equality, has been instrumental in challenging patriarchal norms and giving voice to women's experiences. It has been a platform for women to reclaim their bodies from objectification and exploitation, a pervasive issue even in today's society. One such voice in this literary movement is Shinta Febrianty. In her poetry collection, "Aku bukan masa depan" (Febrianty, 2003), Febrianty boldly addresses these themes. Out of 61 poems, at least 21 contain transparent, direct, and unambiguous references to women's organs. This approach seems to underscore her intent to dismantle patriarchal norms that objectify women's bodies. Febrianty's work emphasizes that women have a deeper understanding of, and more rights to narrate, their bodily experiences (Young, 2015). Her poetry serves as a stark reminder of the ongoing struggle against gender inequality in all spheres of life.

The female body from a feminist perspective is considered a very complicated, sensitive and complex field in its application to literary works. Talking about women's bodies in literature is directly related to issues of violence, libido, sub-ordination, submission and resistance that are intermingled (Dimen, 2013 ; Maseno & Mligo, 2019; Aziz et al., 2022; Abbas et al., 2022). Virginia Woolf is perhaps one of the few women writers who pioneered 'resistance' to patriarchy through her writings. Michele Barret, a literary critic-observer, once made an argument about Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*. She states that Woolf's main concern is with women's limited access to the means of literary production. However, according to Barret, Woolf is also concerned with issues of representation and reception, with the structure and texture of writing, the psychological aspects of the creative process, issues of consciousness and identity. For Barret, Woolf is identified as wanting to discuss not only literary production, but also the ways in which the social context of reception affects the writing itself.

Woolf's writing also reveals the contradictions inherent in her attempt to write theoretically as a woman. It exposes these contradictions in a much more self-conscious way. Woolf's writing is also interesting because it plays

along the surface of language and with forms of discourse to write about women and as women while simultaneously rejecting identities that are overly determined by gender. For Woolf, a woman writer must 'kill' the censorship inherent in her, if she is to be able to write. With the destruction of this idealized image of femininity, the woman writer must now simply be 'herself'.

Resistance to patriarchy, through various means and intensities, can also be observed in modern Indonesian literature. A series of names that came later, such as Dorothea Rosa Herliany, Abidah EL Khaliqie, Ayu Utami, Djenar Mahesa Ayu, Clara Ng and Dewi Lestari, are female writers who resist the confines of patriarchy while not forbidding the exploration of the complexity of the female body. Male writers, however, would find it difficult to explore women's bodies deeply and empathetically, because they do not directly experience the complexity.

In light of this background, the author embarks on an exploration of several key issues. The first area of inquiry centers on the manifestation of sexuality discourse in Shinta Febrianty's poems. This involves a close reading of her work to discern how she navigates and presents themes of sexuality. The second question that the author seeks to address pertains to the role of unequal power relations in silencing the sexual imagery of female writers in Indonesia. This requires an examination of the societal and cultural dynamics that may contribute to the marginalization of these voices.

1.1. Discourse

Discourse is one of the concepts introduced by Foucault in addition to power, knowledge, gender (sexuality), subjectivity, and madness. Mills (2003), quoting Foucault's statement in defining discourse "He says in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* that he has used 'discourse' to refer to 'the general domain of all statements, sometimes as an individualizable group of statements, and sometimes as a regulated practice that accounts for a number of statements'". This statement is the basic concept of discourse, which refers to the general domain of all statements, sometimes as an individualizable group of statements, and sometimes as a regulated practice that accounts for a number of statements.

Furthermore, Mills also explains that discourse as a general domain of statements can be used to refer to all statements made that have influence. As a form of regulated statement that refers to certain rules and structures, Mills emphasizes that these rules are not written or standardized as guidelines in creating discourse. Which according to Foucault in these rules form a discourse that must be understood as a way for humans to represent reality.

Discourse does not stand, appear, and is born just like that, but discourse is born because there is a role in controlling or even controlling it in a form of discursive practice operation (Ainsworth & Hardy 2004). This then results in discourse often being associated with power relations that tend to be unequal. Discourse has the ability to oppress and resist (Davis, 2018). Therefore, discourse cannot simply be interpreted as language based on observations of the relationship between discourse and reality. However, discourse includes a system that shapes the way of seeing reality; because words or sentences do not associate with what is known (certain knowledge), but rather what limits what we perceive. "A practice that imposes on them; it is in this practice that the events of discourse find the principle of their regularity... Thus, the regularities we perceive in realities should be seen as the result of anonymous regularities of discourse we impose on reality".

The regularity Foucault refers to here is in the form of a prohibition. As Foucault once mentioned, the procedure of discourse production is by exclusion, which is in the form of prohibition. The procedure includes three kinds of external exclusion, namely: "taboo, the difference between mad and sane, and the distinction between true and false"; or also referred to as objective prohibition, subjective prohibition, and contextual prohibition.

From the three types of external exclusion, it can be noted how the discourse process exists in society. Taboo things indirectly become a guardrail for people to know what they should know (Nye, 2022). Then, the subjective prohibition results in that not everyone can convey or talk about a certain matter. In discursive practice, it is required that a person has special criteria (enunion capital) or Foucault mentions where the power sees "experts" to determine right and wrong; truth is something that is materially supported by various practices and institutions. Furthermore, the third is about contextual prohibitions, which are about prohibitions that usually exist in rituals, conventions in society. For example, a person's statement will be considered true if it fits in with other legitimate statements in a society.

In addition to the external exclusion, discourse is also produced through internal exclusion procedures, which according to Foucault are four things: commentary; the author; disciplines; and the rarefaction of the speaking subject. This explains that the internal exclusion procedure also has the same function of controlling and limiting discourse. Faruk (2012) explains that internal exclusion procedures are needed because the discourses themselves exercise their own

control. The first internal exclusion procedure regarding commentary, a discourse can be considered successful in practice when many people find a statement or text interesting and then commented on and discussed and more appreciated than other statements. The role of commentary is to say what is in the statement or text, modified, retold, and repeated. Then a new discourse emerges that is connected to a more recent time, transformed and infinitely retold. Therefore, this commentary keeps the discourse in circulation so that it is in the same function and the principle of differentiation continues.

Then the second principle is author, but what is meant by author is not the individual who speaks, who writes the text, but the grouping of discourse. What is meant by discourse grouping is the relationship between one discourse and another discourse that has the same object with various concepts either as a form of reaction or reflection on the previous discourse.

The next internal exclusion principle is disciplines. This restriction is placed on the subject matter, or the thing being discussed. A discipline must allow the formulation of new statements; holding what is said to be true or false, the limits of the discipline's own rules-this is the principle of restriction (Faruk, 2012). In this case, it explains how the formation of a discourse must be structured, massive, and systematic so that the purpose of discourse formation can be achieved. The last internal exclusion principle is the rarefaction of the speaking subject, this relates to the study of a person's expertise in issuing statements which can then become discourse.

From the procedures of discourse production both externally and internally, it can be understood that not all discourses are open to everyone, restrictions in the form of certain prohibitions or rules determine between wrong and right; and all these existing procedures keep the discourse in circulation, that is, retold, passed down, modified, and distributed in a particular society. Both speech rituals, discourse communities, doctrines, and social appropriation are interconnected and form a large type of education that ensures the distribution of speaking subjects into different types of discourse (Faruk, 2012).

Richard (2003), concludes discourse as a system of statements that are organized, rational, and careful, supported by recognized validation procedures, bound in formation by a community of experts. With Peet's conclusion, it can be assembled a form of statement that is considered as a discourse, namely statements that are generated in a structured manner, with a rational approach and recognized by a group of experts. A structured discourse shows a regularity that identifies a formation that exists in a discourse known as "discursive formation". Mantra (2011), explained that the practice of discursive formation has rules that determine "what has been said, and about what". The formation can also indirectly be traced to its main elements and the relationships that make up the statement.

1.2. Power Relation

Foucault's view of power differs from the Marxist analysis of power, which always sees the operation of power negatively. Foucault, through his research on the problematization of clinical narratives, tends to observe the production and operation of power positively. A negative explanation of power in Foucault's eyes is considered inadequate to capture the broad spectrum of power relations (Foucault, 2002).

The application of power that has a negative tendency, according to Foucault as he said "if power was never anything but repressive, if it never did anything but say no, do you really believe that we should manage to obey it?" (Foucault, 2002). It can be interpreted Foucault's view of power that tends to prioritize repressive actions will indirectly build a form of feeling not to obey it. For Foucault, the fact that power is intensifying and becoming more established cannot simply be explained using old categories such as [repressive] coercion.

Foucault defines power strategies as inherent in the will to know. Through discourse, the will to know is formalized in knowledge. Language becomes a tool to articulate power at a time when power must take the form of knowledge because sciences are formulated in the form of statements. The power of knowledge is concentrated in the truth of scientific statements. In his view, Foucault said: power and knowledge are intricately connected and what we need to analyze is the workings of power in the production of knowledge (Mills, 2003).

Several things must be underlined regarding the concept of power referred to by Foucault, namely that Power must be understood first, as a kind of power relationship that applies and is a relationship between the ruler and the ruled. Secondly, power is not received individually but you have power in the area where power is formed and the area where power is resisted.

How does power operate? Foucault explains the character of how power operates including: 1) Power is not something that is acquired, seized or shared. 2) Power relations are not external to other types of relations (economic processes, relationships between acquaintances and sexual relations) but are immanent in them. 3) Power comes from below, meaning that there is no matrix relationship of a binary opposition between the dominating and the dominated, the duality recurs from top to bottom and plays out in the apparatus of production as in the family. 4) Power relations are at once intentional and non-subjective. There is no power without a set of goals. The rationality of power is an explicit tactic to a limited degree. 5) Where there is power, there is likely to be resistance. This resistance does not come from a position outside the power relationship. Resistance becomes part of power itself. Power gives birth to anti-power.

Furthermore, how to shift in line with the strategy developed by the discourse. In this perspective, power as a discourse regime is considered capable of reaching, penetrating and controlling individuals to the most intimate pleasures. Haryatmoko (2016) explains in one of his discussions on how to use methods through discourses formulated in the form of rejection and prohibition, but also stimulation, seduction and intensification, namely techniques of power that have many forms.

At this point, it is appropriate that Foucault conceptualizes the discourse of space as "the operation of power largely outside the realm of institutions; for this reason, the body is one of the sites of struggle and discursive conflict upon which he focuses". Thus, the nature of the body, both conscious and unconscious as well as the emotional life of the subject is also discursively formed which then shapes perspectives, meanings and knowledge based on the formation of the discourse of 'space' as well as disciplining the individual body in it. Thus, both theoretical conceptions will be used to answer the research questions.

2. Methodology

This research aims to investigate the discourse of sexuality in Shinta Febrianty's poems published 2003, "Aku Bukan Masa Depan", and to analyze the role of unequal power relations in silencing sexual images of female writers in Indonesia. The approach used in this research is derived from Foucault's theory, specifically Discourse and Power Relations. The qualitative research method was chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of the discourse of sexuality in Shinta Febrianty's poems and the impact of unequal power relations on women writers. This research involves content analysis of 20 selected poems by Shinta Febrianty to identify sexual motifs and elements that appear, such as metaphors, symbols, imagery, and language. Furthermore, a discourse analysis based on Foucault's theory was conducted to understand the construction of sexuality discourse in the poems and how it relates to the social and cultural context of Indonesia. Data analysis will be done thematically, integrating the findings from the content, discourse, and literature analysis

3. Result and Discussion

To examine the discourse of female writers' sexuality in the Indonesian literary repertoire will certainly rely on the texts that appear. The texts in this research will further describe how the sexual imagery of women writers actively plays a textual role in various forms of literary works, especially for poetry and novels. For the sake of research, at the stage of text description, the author has identified a number of female writers and their works, which are identified as "presenting sex scenes" in their literary works. This phenomenon then constructs the readers [audience] in interpreting sexuality no longer as something that is considered taboo.

Shinta Febrianty, for example, is one of the female writers who presents the discourse of sexuality in her literary works. One of Shinta's poetry excerpts below reflects this::

poem: "*mata saya membaca*" (my eyes read).

saya belum usai menulis puisi

(I haven't finished writing a poem)

tentang kematian tragis seorang kekasih

(about the tragic death of a lover)

saat meningitis mengisi peredaran darah

(when meningitis fills the bloodstream)

seperti menstruasi yang membawa ombak

(like menstruation that brings waves)

sebagai prolog pertemuan di perut saya

(as a prologue to the meeting in my stomach_

Poem: ***ibu, aku benci meragu*** (mother, I hate to doubt)

Then in another part, still in the same collection of poems, Shinta said:

Aku mendengarkan tangisanmu dengan tubuh yang kaku

(I listen to your cries with a stiff body)

Apa yang menggerakkan tangisanmu itu?

(What moves that cry?)

Apa yang mendiamkan tubuh itu?

(What silences that body?)

Aku tak bisa mendiamkan ombak yang meledak ditubuhku

(I cannot silence the waves that explode in my body)

Membuat porak poranda seluruh isi di dalamnya

(Destroying everything inside_

Shinta seems very passionate about her female body, but also harbors anxiety, as is clearly illustrated when she cries out:

poem: ***"malka sansi"*** (Malka Sansi)

Saya menemukan tulisan

(I found writing)

dalam tubuh perempuan saya

(in my female body)

Penuh tanda seru.

(Full of exclamation marks.)

Or when she writes:

Perempuan-perempuan itu menuduhku dari kasta perampok

(The women accused me of being of the robber caste)

Karena aku meninggalkan harum keringat tubuh lelaki mereka?

(Because I left the fragrance of their men's body sweat?)

Lelaki mereka kehausan dan datang padaku

(Their men were thirsty and came to me)

Lalu harum keringatku menjelma opium

(Then the fragrance of my sweat became opium)

Aku menyembunyikan batu di kemaluanku?

(I hid a stone in my private parts?)

Apakah mereka tahu?

(Do they know?)

3.1. Principle of External Exclusion

a. Between Mad and Sane (Subjective Prohibition)

Shinta's poems above make it clear that she is in a position of pain, is marginalized, experiences sadness, and always feels lacking. In her poem "my eyes are reading" she tells of the death of her lover and the meningitis she suffered. Then in the poem "mother, I hate to doubt" Shinta again describes herself in tears, more impressed to surrender to the turmoil in her body. In her poem "malkan sansi, she tries to explain the difference in her position with other women, showing her ability to seize the women's men.

From the excerpt of Shinta's poem, we can see how Shinta with her marginalized position (mad) tries to challenge the existing dominant discourse (sane). Shinta tries to separate herself from others, making boundaries with her body image or condition as well as with the psychological and social aspects experienced in her poetry. So that the discourse on sexuality is formed from subjects who have the right to express their discourse.

b. Taboo (Objective Prohibition)

The current discourse on sexuality, especially in Indonesia, is undeniably something that is reluctant to be discussed. The eastern cultural background and patriarchal tendencies unconsciously build a big wall of boundaries or prohibitions trapped in the space of "appropriateness" to be expressed. However, despite all that, the boundaries of the objects discussed are then formulated, distributed, and even contested. When sexuality is in a taboo position, not all conversations can be related to it, and when the boundaries become clearer, the discourse becomes stronger.

When the object of discussion is sexuality, it is then linked to women and Indonesian literature, which in its fairness creates ripples of opposition (McRobbie, 2008). In this case, it can be seen how sexuality becomes a limitation for Indonesian literature, a taboo to be exposed, but at the same time contradicting it with fairness. Sexuality is something that cannot be discussed carelessly in Indonesian literature, so the discourse on sexuality limits it and then makes it real.

c. True and False (Contextual Prohibition)

Contextual prohibitions relate to cultural conventions in society. A discourse can be justified if it is supported by a set of other discourses that show conformity with the cultural norms of the society (Johannisson & Sundin, 2007). It also creates marginalized prohibitions and boundaries that then harbor various kinds of questionable contradictions.

3.2. Power Relations in Discourse Controversy

The poems above clearly show that although the grip of patriarchy has been going on for a very long time and is so systematic, some women have their own way of resisting the patriarchal value system. One form of resistance from the discourse built by Shinta against the dominant discourse of masculinity in Indonesian literature is evident in her poetry. Shinta creates a paradox by bringing up important moments, as illustrated in the sentence "their men are thirsty and come to me". The aim is to locate these important moments. In applying this method in the text of her poem, Shinta seems to be hiding something or perhaps deliberately covering it up. However, such a form of resistance never intends to confirm the truth and demonstrate women's ability to discourse their bodies. Rather, it seems to be an attempt to raise a theme of emancipation in Indonesian literature where this form of struggle will be carried out continuously.

The power of patriarchy actually stands on a fragile and hypocritical foundation. Isn't it also the aggressive and masculine values of patriarchy that have proven to trigger various damage and suffering for humanity? continuously, even extending the record of war, violence, famine and all activities that make the body of the mother earth even more miserable. Ironically, these patriarchal values have also penetrated into the construction of language and literature, for a long period of time. Exploration of women's bodies in literature and art is often hastily labeled as pornography without looking at the context as a whole. Sex and the female body are often tabooed. Then, when the taboo is challenged, what comes first and most often is the accusation of the exploration of women's bodies by male writers who do not empathize with the complexities of women's bodies. In this context, it is easy to slip into vulgarism and simplification.

Foucault, when explaining the operation of the character of power, said that where there is power, resistance is possible. Such resistance does not always come from a position outside the power relationship. However, resistance is often part of power itself. Power always gives birth to anti-power. In this view, Shinta has at least shown a form of resistance that is recorded in the stanzas of her poetry. The above arguments do not necessarily mean that all women writers are automatically able to explore the complexities of their bodies. It takes sensitivity, perseverance and discipline

to reach that empathic level. In various aspects, Shinta's efforts to explore women's bodies through her concrete experiences and through the experiences of other women are commendable. These experiences, among others, can be found in Shinta's poem, which shows women's adaptation to the morning:

"... breakfast, sayang.
("... breakfast, dear.)
banyak orang. kita mesti antri yah
(There's a lot of people. We'll have to queue.)
aku mandi junub dulu
(I'll take a shower first.)
pamali-pamali juga antri di kepalaku
(pamali-pamali are also queuing up in my head.)
aku mesti memberi judul untuk diriku setelah betul-betul bersih
(I must give myself a title after I'm completely clean.)
perempuan membuat janji pada dirinya sendiri
(women make promises to themselves)
tapi bintang-bintang tetap di luar kekuasaan... "
(but the stars remain out of power... ")

The experiences of a woman that are often unheard by the times will continue to try to find a channel through poetry, novels, short stories and so on. The trend of female writers exploiting sex is perhaps an epidemic at the moment. If you want to trace it, perhaps the instigators are Ayu Utami, Dewi Lestari, Djaenar Mahesa Ayu or perhaps their predecessors such as Oka Rusmini. What is clear is that these names have now become iconic icons that break down the 'myths' of our literature. At the extreme, all of their works seem to shout: "It's not only men who dare to talk about sex".

4. Conclusion

Whatever comments are made about the rise of female writers in our literary scene, it has become part of the culture itself. What is certain is that the presence of female writers who can speak out loudly, especially about sex and all things that were once considered taboo, needs to be scrutinized. Is this just a momentary trend, or is it a new strategy (either for authors or publishers) to pursue commercial value? If we agree with both assumptions, the problem will not end here.

The struggle over the "appropriateness" of sexuality discourses that are increasingly prevalent in Indonesian literature proves that literature is at a point of ambiguity. Indonesian literature seems to be trapped in the value of its fairness as a form of extraordinary social phenomena that occurs and in the mindset and behavior of its society. Therefore, whatever the future development of the Indonesian nation, it certainly cannot be separated from the influence of global world politics. Influences that not only affect the economy, politics, and culture but also literary works as an illustration of changes in the ideology of society. So, wise steps are needed to address the issue of national identity which is increasingly eroded by the influence of globalization.

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