

RATIONALISM IN PRASTARI'S *MISTERI DELMAN MERAH JAMBU*

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Abstract. This article explores rationalism in Prastari's *Misteri Delman Merah Jambu*. Rationalism covers the idea that human beings can arrive at truth by using reason, rather than relying on past authority, religious institutions, or on intuition. In Prastari's *Misteri Delman Merah Jambu*, rationalism is presented through the character Alva. In his reaction towards the prohibition for children under 15 to stay at home before 7 at the evening, Alva tries to discover the reason behind this prohibition. He does not believe in what other children believe that there is a supernatural power represented by *Delman Merah Jambu* (pink horse cart) rode by a beautiful lady in white clothes. The writer applied the qualitative confirmatory method in conducting the research.

Key words: *rationalism, supernatural power, reason*

BACKGORUND

The focus of the paper falls on a critical reading on Prastari's *Misteri Delman Merah Jambu* to highlight the idea of rationalism implied in the story. Rationalism is a philosophical doctrine stating that the truth should be determined through evidence, logic, and analysis based on facts, rather than through faith, dogma or religious teaching. The question to discuss is how rationalism is reflected in the story.

Prastari's *Misteri Delman Merah Jambu* is a story about a struggle of a chief of a village to protect his village from the coming of businessman who wants to open a coffee there. The chief tries to create a situation that seems to be not supporting for the present of any coffee by issuing a regulation for children under the age of ten to have been staying at home before 7.00 in the evening. The chief creates also a mystical atmosphere surround the village by asking another person to costume as a woman in white clothing and driving a horse chariot in order to frighten children. On one hand, the chief's to create a supernatural atmosphere is not 100% successful because of a child who takes for granted for what has happened in the

village. He does not believe that there is a supernatural creature. On the other hand the chief's plan is successful to prevent his village from the business man but later he is regretful with the way he achieves his goal.

METHOD

This research applied qualitative descriptive method. Qualitative descriptive study aimed at attempting to describe, record, analyze, and interpret the current state of a phenomenon. In general, qualitative research aimed at understanding world symbolized meaning in people's behavior from the perspective of the community itself. And qualitative research is one method to find the truth and classified as scientific research built on the theories that evolved from research and controlled on the basis of empirical. So in this qualitative study not only shows data as it is but also seeks to interpret a correlation as a factor that is applicable include viewpoints or ongoing processes.

Rationalism

Rationalism is a philosophical school which is very concerned with the ratio. It is in the ratio, ideas are contained and one can build a science regardless of

the reality beyond ratios. It means that there is an exclusive use of the power of reason to find out the truth. Rationalism says that the introduction of true comes from the ratio, so the introduction of the senses is a form of vague recognition (Fieser, 2008).

In addition, Hadiwijono (1980) states that it is Rene Descartes who put the basic of rationalism and for this he is well known as the founder of modern philosophy. In Descartes's opinion, the knowledge that one may attain through education and life experience is an unsystematic mixture of truths and falsehood, and it is impossible for one to easily distinguished between the two (Hadiwijono, 1980; Fieser, 2008). Furthermore, according to Descartes to gain the truth, one needs to clear away one's old and disordered schemes of knowledge. Descartes uses the doubt as a weapon by which he does not believe anything and even he does not believe in sky and the earth where he rests. These doubts method is used as a system to seek the truth, and instead he doubts completely. Even, Descartes comes to doubt math rules such as logic, algebra and geometry that have been defined by the truth of human knowledge. To recognize the existence of God, Descartes need to follow the path that has not been passed by others according to the way of thinking. One must first rid himself of his body and then look for the truth in a sea of self that has been separated from the body. This is not only to find out yourself, but also so as to know the real him (Yakub, 1992).

Then, one should follow four specific rules of inquiry that will enable him to methodically build a coherent system. Rules 1 is accepting the indubitable, clear and distinct ideas. Here, Descartes means that the base of one's knowledge should be only facts that he knows with certainty and which he can recognize as such because of

the clarity and distinctness that they display. Rules 2 is that, when trying to solve problems, one should break up each of the problem into as many as parts as it yield, and tackle this in turn. Rules 3, once the problem is broken down into smaller units, one should begin with the simplest objects, and work to the harder and more complex ones. Rules 4, is to review to make sure of covering the whole ground (Allen, 1957; Russell, 1986; Fieser 2008).

THE DISCUSSION

The idea of rationalism in *Prastari's Misteri Delman Merah Jambu* can be traced through the action of the character Alva contrasted to some other characters in the story. It will be agreed that Alva is described as a rationalist for what he does through the story.

Reaction toward the Present of Supernatural Lady

In the beginning of the story of *Mistery Delman Merah Jambu*, it is introduced a rules given by the chief of the village stating that all children under the age of 15 must have been at home before 7.00 in the evening. It is due to the present of a supernatural power which is described as a lady in white riding a pink carriage. In addition, anyone who meets the pink carriage will get sick.

The reaction toward the issue can be divided into two groups. On one side, almost everyone believes in the issue and follows the rule without question, and on the other side Alva cannot accept it. He needs to prove it. Hearing the issue of the supernatural lady, Alva questions on it as he asks to his friends, Randu and Ilham whether one of their friends named Awan is creating untrue story or not (Prastari, 2014:16). Alva's friend's reaction show that they believe in the present of the supernatural power, but Alva does not

believe it and he wants to investigate it to discover the truth.

Alva's Investigation

The investigation is one of the points that can be pointed as a conduct of being a rationalist. Alva's conducts the investigation on the basis of reasons. It can be concluded from the following dialogue happening between Alva and his sister Sarah.

"Kalian yakin mau menyelidiki Delman Merah jambu itu?" Tanya Kak Sarah dengan nada khawatir. Alva mengangguk, sementara Dania diam saja.

"Bagaimana kalau ternyata delman itu memang dikendarai putri cantik dan mereka yang melihatnya bisa sakit?" Kak Sarah berandai-andai.

Dania mulai ketakutan mendengar ucapan Kak Sarah. Untung, Alva segera menepisnya.

"Aduh, Kak Sarah! Please, deh! Masa, di zaman internet yang serbacanggih, Kakak percaya, sih. Dania aja nggak percaya. Iya, kan, Dania?" Alva meminta persetujuan Dania (Prastari, 2014:55).

("Are you sure to investigate that *Delman Merah Jambu*?" Said Kak Sarah worriedly.

Alva nodded, while Dania said nothing.

"What if it is true that whoever witnessed the horse cart and the beautiful lady riding it will get in sick?" argued Kak Sarah.

There was a feeling of being frightened beginning to occupy Dania. Fortunately, Alva put down the idea.

"Please, Kak Sarah! What a nonsense story! No one would believe it, particularly, in this internet era, wouldn't it Dania?" asked Alva for an affirmation)

Alva stands his point to argue his sister belief on the supernatural power by saying that it is the era of web world "internet". Internet can be seen as a representation of the world of mind or reason. What he wants to say is that there must be an explanation about the phenomenon.

The Discovery

After some efforts, Alva is able to resolve the supernatural power. Alva can prove that there is not any such a kind of power. The lady in white riding a horse chariot is in fact no more than a creation of the chief village to create a mystical situation so that none will be brave enough to hang out at the evening. The lady is performed by a man, named Pak Darso. He is ordered to do so by the chief village. The chief village does this because he wants to protect his village from a business man who wants to open a coffee shop. The chief is afraid of the impact if the coffee shop is open there. It will ruin the calmness and comfortably in the village, and especially it will influence to the life of the young people and children. The chief uncovers the situation as follows

Lalu, Pak Karto memunculkan ide untuk menghadirkan delman berwarna merah jambu yang dikendarai seorang putri cantik. Delman itu akan keluar malam, dan jika ada anak-anak yang keluar malam melihatnya, anak itu bisa sakit (Prastari, 2014:127-128).

(So, Pak Karto proposed an idea to create story of a lady-like figure riding a pink horse cart. The horse cart will appear at night, and any child who meets the lady and her pink horse cart, the child would fall sick.)

Alva's question is answer and from the above quotation, one can read that impliedly, Alva can prove his opinion as

true. The chief village admits that there is no supernatural power at all.

Conclusion

To conclude it can be mentioned some points here. The idea of rationalism is impliedly shown by Alva's action and belief which are in contrast with other characters in the story. The story takes place in a village which is according to the chief village facing a supernatural power that will bring bad condition to the village. It is only a hocus pocus that the chief village makes to frighten children so as they will stay at home. It is done on the purpose of preventing a business to enlarge his enterprise in coffee shop in the village. The chief thinks that it will give bad impact toward the young people in the village.

However, the plan does not go well because of a child name Alva. Alva cannot just believe to what is happening. His action is in contrast from other children who take for granted accepting the spreading story about the supernatural power story. The story says that anyone who meets the supernatural power will fall into sickness. He is curious with his friend's story of the supernatural power emerging from the lady in white riding a horse chariot. Furthermore, he is questioning the connection between this supernatural

phenomenon and the chief village's regulation. Finally, Alva is able to uncover the truth through an investigation that he does.

Alva's reaction toward the issue of the present of supernatural power and his action to discover the truth through an investigation show the idea of rationalism.

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