dynamics behind the cultural politics of unity or diversity and the consequences these have on different groups in society.

**Reframing and Demonizing: Moral Politics of the Powerless**

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The practice of othering indicates the occurrence of power relations between different actors. There is a tendency that such practice is performed only by state actors to their citizens, not the other way around. Learning from the victims of Lapindo mudflow in Porong, Java, the paper addresses how these seemingly powerless actors are indeed very powerful in utilizing moral politics through the practice of reframing and demonizing. Generally speaking, disaster victims are frequently perceived as powerless due to physical and mental sufferings they experience following environmental hazards. These people not only already had to lose their time, energy and materials, but they also must recover and pursue all the backwardness. Calling from Foucauldian discourse theory and analysis, the paper aims to describe how Lapindo mudflow’s victims are actually very creative and, therefore, powerful in inventing own agency to compete in the battle of social construction of the disaster through ongoing, yet unequal power relations with other actors in power, the government and the company. Recalling and challenging some Javanese traditions, narratives, and conception of power, these victims came to a position that it is the time for them to become the subject of power in defining the historiography of the event/process by utilizing the momentum of disaster anniversaries as discursive field to reframe the event as industrial accident as well as demonize actors in power.

*Keywords: power, powerless, moral politics, demonizing*

**BACKGROUND**

The morning of May 29, 2013, hundreds of Lapindo mudflow victims gathered in the Porong Square. They were preparing a march along the Porong highway from the square to the western embankment as a series of the seventh-year commemoration of the mud eruption. One interesting, attractive, eye-catching object of that march was a-five-meter-high effigy, ogoh-ogoh, of a male figure wearing a yellow suit, carrying a briefcase full of money, and sitting on a mud-volcano. The procession ended with a finale of victims escorting that ogoh-ogoh to the edge of the embankment and throwing it into the mud lake as if after it drowned their problems would end too. One victim yelled to the crowd: “This [throwing the effigy into the mud lake] is a sign of throwing our misfortunes, made by [Aburizal] Bakrie. We dispose misfortunes”.23

**OBJECTIVE**

This paper aims to trace cultural contexts which enable the procession on that day possible, the contexts which provide values and practices for people to reframe the “official” discourse of the mudflow. Implying Michel Foucault’s conceptual framework (Foucault 1972, 1978, 1980), I examine moral politics of the seemingly powerless actors through a critical analysis into commemorative practices. As to Foucault power is not a thing that can be possessed, transmitted,

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23 My own translation.
or dispossessed by certain actors (cf. Downing 2008: 90), I examine those practices as if they are statements of the seemingly powerless resisting statements of those in power. Following Foucauldian analysis, I do not examine trueness which statements are true or false but rather to critically show how certain actors impose certain claims and/or exclude other claims from the consideration to be true (cf. Mills 1997: 16).

FINDINGS

According to my interviews, the ogoh-ogoh was inspired by Balinese ritual a few days ahead of Nyepi (the first day of the Balinese New Year). The ritual is aiming to cleanse the community of evil spirits when they enter a new year. The ritual ends with burning down the effigy as a symbol of cleansing their village of evil spirits and bad lucks. Nowadays, in addition to make effigies of mythological creatures (ogres or demons) the Balinese also creatively create some figures of real life who are deemed to be giving bad influences for community’s social and cultural harmony.

From Lapindo mudflow victims’ point of view, the mudflow occurred because the misbehaved of Aburizal Bakrie. The effigy they made was meant to be a representation of Aburizal Bakrie (a leading figure of the Bakrie family, Lapindo’s holding company). Yellow color was a sign of Partai Golkar in which Aburizal was acting as the chairperson. With this position, president Yudhoyono appointed him as one key minister of his cabinet. As such, mudflow victims framed him not only as the “bad guy” but even more as the “evil spirit”. It is then very obvious that Aburizal become the main target of mudflow victims’ anger in the course of various commemorative practices. To most victims I have interview with, Aburizal is not just an alien, evil spirit, but also a demon possessing both the government and society.

In addition to ruwatan, the demonization of Aburizal corresponds to Javanese folktale of Timun Mas (golden cucumber) fighting Buto Ijo (green ogre) which ends is the death of Buto Ijo. This folktale has been very famous among the mudflow victims by the fact that one version mentions Buto Ijo sinks into an artificial mud lake. The drowning of Aburizal’s effigy in 2013 is a visual representation of how notorious ogre (Aburizal Bakrie, a symbol of powerful political and economic actor) is eventually dead in the hand of oppressed peasant (mudflow victims, the powerless actors).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In Java, there is a typical view which interprets environmental hazards as cultural rather than mere natural phenomena. The idea is to view geohazards as the result of individual or collective misconducts (Lapian 1987). They are interpreted to be cultural in the sense that they are the result of some inappropriate manners of some humans to other humans/non-humans. Schlehe, for instance, discovered that Javanese interpreted volcanic eruptions of Mount Merapi in Central Java as the outcome of the power abuse of their rulers, either in local or national level (Schlehe 2009). Geohazard is needed to balance disharmonious relationship between human and nature and among humans.

To some extent, Javanese perceive misfortunes, including geohazards, as a result of evil spirits possessing the communities (Wessing 2010). This understanding relies on a principle that human bodies are understood as containers for spirits. “The problem,” Wessing (2010: 53) observed, “is that these containers are thought to be porous, allowing spirits and other influences to move in and out, and leaving the person involved open to a loss of personal spirit or to possession, the
invasion of the body by an alien spirit”. Within this logic, misfortunes (including, geohazards) could be prevented if someone or the society could keep original spirit from coming out of one’s body and therefore alien spirit(s) would not be able to come into and possess the body. In Javanese societies, if a misfortune had happened there are some rituals to cast out these alien spirits and restore the original spirits back to their bodies (cf. Geertz 1976). This ritual, ruwatan (exorcism), was manifested in the commemoration mentioned at the outset.

The Lapindo mudflow in Porong, East Java has become a landmark in the history of human-nature relationships in Java for this time the Javanese rabbles have an opportunity to be part of the production of knowledge concerning such relationships. Works on Javanese culture tend to argue a key role of a noble leader, a savior (ratu adil) to empower the Javanese rabbles. The production of knowledge about such relationships has been centering on the courts since the Javanese believe that power is centered in some figures, mainly the kings of the Javanese courts (cf. Anderson 2007). Mudflow victims experience an anomalous situation from this Javanese political narrative for those in power never stand on their side. Instead, they have been protecting the perpetrator by taking over all liabilities to deal with further damages resulted from the mudflow. As a result, to expect a political will from the government to solve their problems is nothing but a wasting of time. It is time for victims to appear as key actors to determine their own version of story by using certain cultural narratives to reframe the situation according to their point of view, although it means that they must demonize someone in power.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


Repression in literacy activism has still occurred in Indonesia even though the New Order’s authoritarian regime has been collapsed. The Reformation period still colored by a series of actions conducted by the state apparatus (military and police) along with mass organizations (ormas) to disperse discussions and raiding books. The most frequently targeted are groups and knowledge products that discuss the themes of Marxism, Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI), and the 1965 tragedies—themes which we classify as critical discourse. Repression is carried out arbitrarily and legitimized through a series of claims which sounds: "endangering the state", "disturbing public order", or "opening the wounds of the nation". These claims, we see, is a form of defining “others”, carried out by the state and its apparatus, on groups of people and their activities that try to explore and offer critical perspectives and new insights related to the part of history of the nation, which was forbidden to discuss by New Order regimes. In this paper we aim to elucidate the assumptions and forms of ideas behind those claims, by interpreting it based on the Indonesia historical experience regarding Marxism, PKI, and 1965 tragedies. The continuation of repression on critical literacy activities in post-New Order regimes shows that the legacy of New Order authoritarianism is still working in the State structure and strives to dominate the public discourse through the exclusion of activities and production of critical knowledge.

Keywords: critical literacy activism, authoritarianism, repression, politics of othering

TRAVELING WITH KEBAYA: READING WOMEN, READING INDONESIA**

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Today, there is kebaya as a choice of everyday clothes for women who come from kebaya community in Jakarta, it has difference style among the people who choose modern clothes. When it comes to kebaya as product of tradition, it still alive amidst the contestation between the political of unity and political of differences in Indonesia. Those women who wears kebaya have become to conduct the body politics as it associated with people. Base on experiences in their every single trip, wearing the kebaya is an autonomous right for them to choose their own clothes. Kebaya makes them learning to understand themselves, then find out that kebaya still loved by most of women in Indonesia, but at the same time, it is being abandoned. The research subjects in this paper are members of kebaya community who wearing kebaya as everyday clothes and often traveling frequently. I briefly analyze this topic with theory of power from Foucault by feminism

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