

Research Article

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The Power Regulation System in Budi Darma's Short Story *Presiden Jebule*

Zietha Arlamanda Asri^a, Dini Sri Istiningdias^a

^aEnglish Department, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Diponegoro, Semarang, 50275, Indonesia

zietha@lecturer.undip.ac.id

Abstract

The concept of power remains an eternal topic of discussion, as it permeates every aspect of human existence. Likewise, in literary works, the theme of power is a central topic for several writers. One of the Indonesian writers, Seno Gumira Ajidarma, argues that in literary works, the authors are free to write reality and voice criticism, hopes, and concerns of the people against the authorities. In his work “*Presiden Jebule*”, Aji Darma tries to show how power is regulated and imprisoning society through rules and punishment. The method used in this research is post-structuralism by Michel Foucault. The research finding focuses the story based on the relationship between power and punishment. The research results showed that in President *Jebule*'s short story, there was a production of power where the people were afraid and obeyed all the rules created by *Jebule*. The regulations that require people to have hairstyles that match *Jebule*'s have become the panoptic system that regulates them. The crucial idea is that anyone who does not comply with the rules made by *Jebule* will be subject to sanctions such as torture and capital punishment.

Keywords: Power regulation; *Presiden Jebule*; Budi Darma; Michel Foucault

1. Introduction

The topic of power will never be outdated to be discussed. A power has a system in it, whether it is a destructive or constructive system. In Indonesia, various power systems took turns overseeing this country, starting from the old order and, moving to the new order and continuing until the reformation. However, one of the most highlighted is the new order. This happened because the new order regime was thick with Indonesia's more advanced economy but was accompanied by oppression for the continuity of power. During the leadership of this order, all forms of opinions contained in an article or news on all situations and events were the government's right. All works, news, and opinions that do not conform to the wishes of the ruling elite will automatically be banned and opposed, even considered an activity that offends and has the potential to destroy the government. Afterwards, they will be labelled as rebels until there are kidnappings and disappearances of people who oppose the rulers at that time.

The oppression that occurs may not only be physical but as previously described in journalism, it is also controlled by the authorities. Journalists are cautious when making news articles about the government; they even carefully use recording devices because they are afraid of misquoting the

words of the rulers. This happens because there are several instances where the rulers often contradict themselves, and to cover it up; they will blame the journalists by misquoting their statements.

When the press is difficult to express, writers of literary works emerge with their satirical works as a form of protest against the government. One of the Indonesian writers, Seno Gumira Ajidarma, argues that in literary works, the authors are free to write reality and voice criticism, hopes, and concerns of the people against the authorities. Thus, literature indirectly became a weapon in fighting for the voice of the people at that time. Faruk argues that literature is a tool of struggle to voice the aspirations and fate of the suffering and oppressed. Like a short story by a writer named Budi Darma, a short story entitled *President Jebule* was published in *Kompas Daily* on June 5, 2016. This short story was only published last year, but the images presented in the short story strongly evoke the image of the New Order government. It is widespread because Budi Darma is almost 80 years old, so it is not surprising that he knows how to be a writer who lives amid the new order regime.

Therefore, the short story entitled *President Jebule* is thick with irony and satire about the new order leadership implicitly. This short story does not explicitly narrate that the government in the short story is the new order regime, but when viewed from several aspects regarding the description of the character of *President Jebule* and the way he governs, this has a common thread with how power was regulated during the new order regime. *President Jebule's* role is very central, like a control tower for all the actions of his people; even appearance is required to imitate the president's style. This reminds us of Michel Foucault's panopticon system in terms of the discourse of power and control carried out like a panopticon tower.

Thus, the author will examine this short story using an analysis of Michel Foucault's theory of power discourse and how the concept of the panopticon in the short story *Presiden Jebule* by Budi Darma. Nietzsche heavily influences Foucault's concept of power. He sees similarities between Nietzsche's thoughts on genealogy and archaeology, but there are elements in Nietzsche's genealogy that are not yet visible, namely power. However, he is not entirely a follower of Nietzsche because, for him, the Nietzsche he follows is someone original, so he must be original with his personal views. The following will present some of Foucault's views on power based on some of his works. In his work *The Order of Things*, *Archeology of Human Sciences*, Foucault points out that two significant changes occurred in the general shape of his thought and theory. The first occurred in the mid-seventeenth century, and the second in the early nineteenth century. After analyzing seventeenth- and eighteenth-century scientific discourse around natural history, theories of money and value, and grammar, Foucault concludes that the centre of science at this time was the table. People wanted to represent reality in tables. The table is a system of signs, a generalized and systematic autonomy of things. By concentrating on tables, knowledge at this time became historical.

From the late 18th century (after the French Revolution) to the mid-20th century (World War II), scientific discourse concentrated on history and human beings as its subjects. Man was liberated from all alienation and free from the determination of all things. Man became the object of knowledge and thus the subject of his freedom and existence. Man becomes the centre of thought. This can be seen in the development of social sciences and psychology. Foucault's object of research in this work is the primary conditions that cause the birth of a discourse. Here, Foucault shows the relationship between scientific discourse and power. The discourse of science that wants to find the true and the false is driven by the will to power. Science is carried out to establish what is true and eliminate what is considered false. Here, it becomes clear that the will to truth expresses the will to power. Knowledge cannot be neutral and pure. There is always a correlation: knowledge contains power just as power contains knowledge. One scientific explanation seeks to dominate by excluding another. In addition, science manifested in technology is easily used to impose something on society. Since even in the age of high technology, there is still coercion; we cannot talk about the progress of civilization. There is only a shift in the instruments used for coercion.

In the 17th and 18th centuries, discipline was a means to educate the body. The practice of discipline was expected to produce obedient bodies. This was the case in prisons, education, the workplace, and the military. Society further developed according to military discipline. Foucault assumes that in the monarchical era, any process of criminal punishment was only taken seriously if it involved an element of bodily torture in its execution. The exercise of discipline is closely related to the power that controls. Foucault outlines that bodily discipline is always controlled by two instruments of discipline applied to military discipline in society, first, through hierarchical observation or the ability of the apparatus to supervise all those under it with a single criterion. The panopticon revealed in the tower as the center of the prison is the physical form of this instrument. The panopticon gives the warden enormous power because the prisoners try to keep to themselves. They are not afraid of being monitored. The very presence of the structure is an extraordinary mechanism of power and discipline.

The second instrument is to normalize moral judgments and punish moral transgressors. In this case, flaws are equated with crimes. In addition to imprisonment, deviants were put on display. The intent is to show society how close humans are to animals and that other humans will be treated similarly if they step outside the boundaries of what society considers sane. In the overall treatment of deviants, psychiatrists or authorities do not act as scientists but as adjudicating powers. Foucault envisioned the watchtower in panopticism as being operated by officers and by many individuals with various interests. It can be where a philosopher thirsting for knowledge of human beings becomes a human museum. It can even be a place for those who are classified as having a slight sexual deviation to get pleasure from peeping at people. In this panopticism, Foucault shows the covert power in various institutions and agencies.

2. Methods

The research methods used in this study include two methods. The first is the data collection method, and the second is the data analysis. The approach used in this research is also post-structuralism. In the post-structuralism paradigm, the text is seen as a discourse (Faruk, 2012, p. 68). Literary works are seen as a dialogical discourse. This research uses data from the short story *Presiden Jebule* by Budi Darma. The data is in the form of words, phrases, and sentences from the short story. Kompas Daily published this short story on the Kompas website on June 5, 2016. Although this short story is short, it presents political and humanitarian issues and how discourse is produced. This short story reminds us of the new order leadership period. The data in this study are dialogues and narratives in the short story *President Jebule*, which are representations of the relations of knowledge and power possessed by the characters or parties in the short story so that they can produce discourses that aim to implement a panoptic system for the sake of the perpetuation of power. The dialogues and narratives are in the form of words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs.

The data that has been collected is then analyzed through several stages. First, identification of each narrative on how discourse is produced in the short story *Presiden Jebule* by Budi Darma. Identification is done by looking for the suitability of events and narratives in phrases, sentences, and paragraphs regarding how power is regulated, which theoretically represents a discourse based on the concept and typology of ideology. Furthermore, it looks at how various discourses are produced to produce a panopticon system in the short story.

3. Results

Discourse does not stand autonomously; it cannot stand alone; more than that, discourse is always an inseparable part of the power system. Power itself can be defined as the desire of a particular group or individual to dominate or control all actions of a group or someone with a lower hierarchy. Foucault (2002: 50) explains that the power system tends to emphasize the capillary form of its

existence, namely the base of the problem of where power reaches the deepest part of individuals, touches their bodies, and penetrates actions, behaviour, and discourse that operate in everyday life. You cannot discuss discourse without discussing power and knowledge; there is power over knowledge and knowledge over power.

3.1. Production of Power Discourse in Presiden Jebule's Short Story

In line with the concept of discourse and knowledge initiated by Michel Foucault, knowledge is disseminated through various means into the minds of each individual. This aims to make people's perceptions the same as the perspective of the discourse owner. More simply, Foucault's form of relation is the basis of thinking of society in a particular era. So, society at a particular time is controlled and dominated by the power in power, so people's thoughts must follow the power maker. This is also illustrated in the short story *Presiden Jebule* by Budi Darma. Production of Power Discourse in that Short Story.

This short story tells how a character named Jebule dreams of becoming a ruler when he grows up. He was just a child from a low-income family. There was nothing unusual about him except that he was born with a sloping neck due to his mother's narrow hips. Being skinny due to malnutrition, he always lost fights and was bullied by his peers. However, God was fair despite living in deprivation; he was an intelligent child. He devoured all kinds of books, especially knowledge about politics and power. This is where he became a subject in Foucault's concept, where he became someone who produced discourse through his knowledge.

Tapi, jangan khawatir. Otak Jebule ternyata cerdas. Kalau ada tukang sulap datang, dia memandang tukang sulap dengan cermat, dan meskipun dia tidak berkata apa-apa, dia tahu kebohongan tukang sulap. Dia tahu sulap sebetulnya tidak pernah ada, yang ada hanyalah kecepatan mempermainkan tangan, dan mengumbar kata-kata untuk membohongi penontonnya. (Darma, 2016)

(However, do not worry. Jebule's brain is smart. When a magician comes, he looks at the magician carefully, and even though he does not say anything, he knows the magician's lies. He knows there is no such thing as magic, only the speed of playing with hands and spouting words to deceive the audience.)

The quote above indicates Jebule's initial capital to become a ruler. Here, the discourse product begins to be presented through the application condition procedure, namely ritual. Rituals here are not like procuring ceremonies but rather determining the classification that must be owned by a person or individual to speak. He is innovative and careful; this is his initial capital in creating a discourse he will produce later when he becomes a ruler. Perhaps at this time, his existence is not yet meaningful. However, as in the formation of discourse with the process of division and rejection, Jebule can be equated with people who are considered crazy and meaningless, but in Jebule's case, he has not become someone who counts. However, on the other hand, through his intelligence and discernment, we are reminded not to underestimate the opinion of someone considered incompetent. Foucault explains (2002) that even the words of a madman that are considered meaningless and trivial may contain essential meanings, and we must look for the meaning behind them.

On the other hand, when Jebule became a young man of responsibility, he became increasingly absorbed in what was happening around him. Thinking that he would never be able to advance in his village, he eventually left his village without anyone knowing. Moving to the capital city, he faced a norm whose values seemed to be blurred where stealing and begging seemed legitimate to make ends meet, so that was what was taught by one of the friends he met on his journey.

Pada suatu hari, ketika rombongan kuda lumping tertidur karena terlalu lelah, Jebule mencuri sisa makanan serta cemeti mereka. Sejak saat itulah dia tidak pernah kembali ke desanya. Dia berubah menjadi pengemis, pencopet, dan pencuri, tergantung pada keadaan yang dia hadapi. Dalam berpetualang dia selalu memperhatikan satu hal: membaca. Membaca huruf, membaca perilaku manusia, binatang, dan juga, gejala-gejala alam. Bagaikan binatang, dia bisa merasakan kapan akan hujan, kapan akan banjir, dan kapan musim panas akan tiba dan berapa keras matahari akan melampiaskan panasnya di permukaan bumi.

Karena pandai mencuri, tubuh Jebule sekarang berisi. Dan dia tahu tubuh harus terus dilatih. Untuk menakar kekuatan tubuhnya, kadang-kadang dia pukuli tiang listrik dengan tangan kosong, dan dia bentur-benturkan kepalanya. (Darma, 2016)

(One day, when the troupe of lumping horses fell asleep from exhaustion, Jebule stole their leftover food and whipped. From then on, he never returned to his village. Depending on his circumstances, he turned into a beggar, pickpocket, and thief. In his adventures, he always paid attention to one thing: reading. He was reading letters, human behaviour, animals, and natural phenomena. Like an animal, he could sense when it would rain, flood, when summer would arrive, and how hard the sun would beat down on the earth's surface.

Because he is good at stealing, Jebule's body is now well-built. Moreover, he knows the body must be constantly trained. To measure his strength, he sometimes hits electric poles with his bare hands and bumps his head.)

It is known that stealing is not a justified act. However, in Jebule's mind at the time, it was customary for someone to survive without a penny in his pocket. This discourse arises from the opposition of right and wrong in the exclusionary rule. Jebule's actions were like an exception for him because his circumstances drove him to do so. The will to truth is formed historically, which, in this case, when applied to the character Jebule, is the result of his experience while migrating. This gives a general form to Jebule's will to know that stealing is legitimate if pressed. However, in this case, the will and discourse about the truth do not rely on institutional support. However, Foucault explains that the discourse on truth can be produced when the subject looks at what is happening around him and then concludes with a truth he believes in. Ultimately, the opposition of right and wrong falls on the subject's thinking.

Tempat tidur Jebule selalu morat-marit, ditumpuki berbagai macam buku: ada buku Machiavelli *The Prince*, mengenai bagaimana cara mendapat kekuasaan dan mempertahankan kekuasaan, ada buku filsuf Thomas Hobbes *Leviathan*, mengenai keharusan seorang pemimpin untuk selamanya bertambah kuat, dan buku-buku mengenai kehidupan jenderal-jenderal besar. Tentu saja, buku-buku tentang kejatuhan para diktator juga ada.

Dengan kepandaiannya bermain kata, menipu, berbohong, dan menjerumuskan musuh-musuhnya, akhirnya dia menjadi presiden. Bukan hanya sekadar menyiksa, membunuh pun bagi Jebule, adalah halal. (Darma, 2016)

(Jebule's bed was always in disarray, piled high with all sorts of books: there was Machiavelli's *The Prince* on how to gain and maintain power, there was philosopher Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan*, on the need for a leader to forever grow more robust, and books on the lives of great generals. Of course, there are also books on the downfall of dictators.

With his clever wordplay, deceiving, lying, and entrapping his enemies, he eventually became president. Not just torturing, killing was also halal for Jebule.)

In the third quote above, the discourse is again created through the exclusionary rule of the false right opposition. It is even more significant that Jebule has become president, so his truth has more

discriminatory power. Once again, it is emphasized that in this case, torturing and killing are not the right things in the norms that live in society. However, in the quote above, it can be seen that it is halal for Jebule. This is reinforced because he now has a position and, of course, has institutional support. All his actions were considered correct at that time; no one dared to go against this because the community seemed to have been aware of the doctrine of the matter. This became a control for society; Jebule controlled all rules and actions; in this case, he was like a panopticon in this short story.

3.2. *The Panopticon System in the short story Presiden Jebule by Budi Darma*

Foucault takes the term panopticon from a prison design concept that allows a supervisor to watch (opticon) all prisoners (pan) without the prisoners knowing if they are being observed. It can be concluded that the panopticon is like the concept of omniscience that cannot be seen and invisible. Panopticon then becomes a term used by Foucault (in Sarup, 2008:122) as a metaphor for the centralization of power. The panopticon, borrowing Bentham's concept of prison, is a strategy of centralized surveillance control where the one who supervises is superior to the one being supervised. Modern society is geared towards creating a self-regulating, isolated and controlled subject through this mechanism. The subject (body) is ultimately disciplined through this centralized control mechanism. This method of disciplining the subject (body) that creates obedience (controlled through certain institutions) is what the panopticon means. Through this mechanism, the subjugation of the subject through a particular system can be achieved.

In this short story, the idea is that anyone who does not comply with the rules made by Jebule will be subject to sanctions such as torture and even death. As in the following quote, The punishments result in obedience, which becomes control and power over the people's bodies.

Jebule tahu, supaya semua orang tunduk, sebuah peraturan, yang tampaknya sederhana, harus dilaksanakan: potongan rambut dia harus ditiru oleh semua laki-laki, demikian juga cara berpakaian. Untuk menguji kesetiaan seluruh penduduk, dia pernah gundul, pernah cukur rambut pendek, pernah juga agak gondrong. Semua laki-laki mulai umur lima tahun sampai menjelang mati, harus ikut gaya rambutnya. Dan mereka yang botak harus pakai wig model mutakhir potongan rambut Jebule, termasuk mereka yang botak akibat kemo, dan yang pura-pura botak akan dihukum cambuk di depan khalayak. (Darma, 2016)

(Jebule knew that for everyone to submit, a seemingly simple rule had to be implemented: his haircut had to be copied by all the men and his way of dressing. To test the loyalty of the entire population, he was once bald, once shaved short, and once slightly long. All men, from age five until death, had to follow his hairstyle. Moreover, those who were bald had to wear the latest model of Jebule's haircut wig, including those who were bald due to chemo, and those who pretended to be bald would be punished by flogging in front of the public.)

Based on the quote above, the discourse is that men's hairstyles must be the same as his; if anyone does not comply, he will know about it. This gives the concept of Jebule as a supervisor who watches his prisoners, in this case, the community, without the community realizing they are being watched. In addition, Jebule created an unusual rule to subdue the community, namely by equating haircuts and ways of dressing with himself. This was solely to test the community's loyalty. The community felt intimidated by this, as flogging awaited them if they disobeyed. There are no exceptions either. Children, hairless people, or even bald due to cancer must comply with these regulations. This shows the panopticon system created by Jebule with his power as president; he supervises and controls every individual under his power. This reminds us of when the New Order was still in charge, where all children had to wear the same type of shoes. At that time, the government produced the shoes, and it

became an unwritten rule that school children had to use them. Behind the strange regulations with the panopticon system at work is an act of strengthening power.

Supaya kekuasaannya tidak luntur, semua perempuan, mulai umur lima tahun sampai menjelang kematiannya, harus mengikuti potongan rambut istrinya. Dan seperti Jebule, istri Jebule sering ganti potongan rambut. Tentu saja, rakyat tidak akan selamanya diam, dan begitu ada gejala mengancam, Jebule tahu cara memadamkannya. Tapi, rakyat adalah rakyat, dan penindasan adalah penindasan. (Darma, 2016)

(To keep his power intact, all women had to follow his wife's haircut from the age of five until his death. Moreover, like Jebule, his wife changed her haircut frequently. Of course, the people would not remain silent forever, and as soon as there was a threatening sign, Jebule knew how to quell it. However, people are people, and oppression is oppression.)

In this quote, we can see how the Panoptic System built by Jebule made the people furious. All the rules and punishments that the community received were carried out only for the sake of the integrity of power. As described at the beginning, Jebule did not hesitate to eliminate someone's life. When the people rebelled, and he finally agreed to abdicate, Jebule's cunning to maintain his position was not reduced.

Dengan mengutip berbagai kitab agama, undang-undang dasar, dan kata-kata para filsuf, Jebule terus membaca, dengan tempo yang makin lama makin lambat. Beberapa kali Jebule menekankan, dia harus membaca teks pidatonya sampai selesai. Wakil presiden berdiri tegap, lalu makin lama wajahnya makin pucat, tubuhnya bergoyang ke kanan dan ke kiri, ke depan dan ke belakang, tapi tetap berdiri.

"Ingat, saya akan menyerahkan kekuasaan kepada wakil presiden setelah saya selesai membaca teks pidato," kata Jebule berulang-ulang.

Tubuh wakil presiden makin bergoyang-goyang. Jantungnya, paru-parunya, hatinya, ginjalnya, pankreasnya, dan semua isi dada dan perutnya melepuh. Akhirnya roboh. (Darma, 2016)
(Quoting various religious texts, constitutions, and the words of philosophers, Jebule continued to read at an increasingly slow tempo. Jebule emphasized several times that he had to read the text of his speech until it was finished. The vice president stood straight, and then his face grew paler and paler, his body swaying right and left, back and forth, but still standing.)

"Remember, I will hand over power to the vice president after I finish reading the text of the speech," Jebule said repeatedly.

The vice president's body wobbled even more. His heart, lungs, liver, kidneys, pancreas, and everything in his chest and abdomen were blistered. Finally, he collapsed.)

In the quote above, to perpetuate his power, Jebule even takes the life of his vice president. Although Jebule does not explicitly do it, we can conclude that he is the one who did this, as evidenced by his lingering speech and emphasizing that the vice president is the one who will replace him. The incident then makes people even more horrified at him; this creates an absolute panopticon system for the people in this short story.

4. Conclusions

The following conclusions can be drawn based on analysing the short story *Presiden Jebule* by Budi Darma using Michel Foucault's critical discourse analysis perspective. The short story *President*

Jebule by Budi Darma provides a different perspective on discourse when connected to the complexity of power and knowledge relations. If so far history only talks about who has power over whom, Foucault's theory talks about how power operates and in what ways it is operated. Through the relationship between knowledge and power, the production of discourse in the short story *Presiden Jebule* by Budi Darmater describes how power is produced through exclusion procedures, internal rules and application conditions. They all summarize how power operates in line with knowledge to create a discourse by the ruler's wishes.

The form of discipline is represented through several cases, including government regulations in the short story, *Presiden Jebule*, regarding hairstyles and clothing styles that must be the same as the ruler. Do not forget the punishment for every society that does not obey the rules, starting from flogging to taking lives to maintain power. Power operates through discourse, and discourse itself is rooted in power. Power produces knowledge and vice versa.

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