

Sexuality of Colonized Subjects, a Postcolonial Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This study explores @coolestkev's disruptive strategy of sexualizing Dutch colonization on TikTok through feminist rhetorical criticism and postcolonial analysis. The goal is to understand how this approach reinforces or challenges traditional gender norms and reflects postcolonial power structures. The results show that @coolestkev strengthens traditional gender norms and romanticizes the colonial past, while response videos from other creators present strong counter-narratives through nationalism and collectivism. This analysis reveals the complexities of identity in colonized societies, including internalized heterosexism and social pressures surrounding masculinity.

Keywords: Racialized Sexuality, Rhetorical Criticism, Postcolonial

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi strategi disruptif @coolestkev dalam seksualisasi kolonisasi Belanda di TikTok melalui kritik retorika feminis dan analisis pascakolonial. Tujuannya adalah untuk memahami bagaimana pendekatan ini memperkuat atau menantang norma-norma gender tradisional dan mencerminkan struktur kekuasaan pascakolonial. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa @coolestkev menguatkan norma-norma gender tradisional dan meromantisasi masa lalu kolonial, sementara video-video tanggapan dari kreator lain menampilkan narasi tandingan yang kuat melalui nasionalisme dan kolektivisme. Analisis ini mengungkap kompleksitas identitas dalam masyarakat yang terjajah, termasuk heteroseksisme internal dan tekanan sosial terhadap maskulinitas.

Kata Kunci: Seksualitas Rasialisasi, Retorika kritis, Pascakolonial

DISCUSSION

To further understand the rhetor's disruptive strategy/rhetorical elements, we first have to understand one of the main pillars of his identity, which is; non-heterosexuality. Within the domain of human sexuality, encompasses a diverse array

of sexual orientations, behaviors, and identities that deviate from conventional heteronormative paradigms (Ela & Budnick, 2017). This spectrum of non-heterosexual identities includes, but is not limited to, individuals who identify as lesbian,

gay, bisexual, queer, and those who embrace other non-heterosexual orientations. Such identities manifest in various forms, reflecting the complexity and diversity of human sexual expression.

Central to non-heterosexuality is the deviation from the societal expectation of exclusive attraction and romantic interest between individuals of different sexes. Non-heterosexual individuals may experience romantic and sexual attraction towards individuals of the same sex, both sexes, or neither sex, thereby challenging the traditional binary understanding of sexual orientation. Furthermore, within the realm of gender identity, some non-heterosexual individuals may identify as gender non-conforming or genderqueer, signaling a departure from conventional gender norms and expectations.

Scholarly inquiry into the experiences of non-heterosexual individuals reveals a multitude of challenges and phenomena unique to this demographic. Studies consistently demonstrate higher rates of mental health issues, including depression, anxiety, and substance abuse, among non-heterosexual populations compared to their heterosexual counterparts (Ela & Budnick, 2017). Moreover, non-heterosexual individuals often encounter pervasive discrimination and social stigma, stemming from entrenched societal attitudes and prejudices towards sexual minorities. These experiences of marginalization can have profound implications for various aspects of well-being, including psychological, emotional, and social functioning.

Additionally, non-heterosexual individuals may exhibit distinct sexual behaviors and practices reflective of their sexual orientation. Such behaviors may include engagement in same-sex relationships (Albeit, Kevin Leonardo's sexual orientation), participation in LGBTQ+ communities and social networks, and exploration of sexual fluidity a concept denoting variability in sexual attraction and desire over time. From this, it is clear that participating in the discourse of sexualising Dutch men is one of the rhetor's sexual behaviours. Understanding the nuances of non-heterosexual sexual practices is

essential for advancing knowledge in the field of human sexuality and informing interventions aimed at promoting sexual health and well-being among diverse populations.

Non heterosexuality predates colonialism in Indonesia. Non-heterosexuality existed pre-colonialism. One of the examples is that of Warok and gemblak. Ponorogo (East Java) has a custom known as Warok and Gemblak. Gemblak among the people of East Java means a "boy lover", a young boy who is kept by an older man either during a period of sexual abstinence or even during heterosexual marriage. Boellstorff (2005) questions the validity of Western developmentalists' assumption that these traditions are the genesis of LGBTQ persons in Indonesia.

In Indonesia, discourse surrounding non-heterosexuality remains largely taboo, with both civil society and governmental institutions exhibiting reluctance to openly discuss or depict human sexuality in any form. This inhibition is compounded by traditional religious norms that generally disapprove of non-heterosexual relationships and gender nonconformity. Given Indonesia's predominantly Muslim population, where religion holds significant sway over societal norms, non-heterosexuality is not explicitly criminalized by national law; however, it faces widespread condemnation from various religious leaders, not limited to the Islamic community. (Adihartono, 2015)

The legal landscape regarding non-heterosexual relationships is characterized by a complex interplay of national laws and regional regulations, often influenced by religious and cultural factors. At the national level, the penal code does not explicitly prohibit private, consensual homosexual relations among adults aged eighteen or older. However, the absence of legal recognition for gay marriage, civil unions, or domestic partnership benefits reflects a broader societal reluctance to acknowledge or accommodate non-heterosexual relationships within legal frameworks. Consequently, same-sex couples are precluded from eligibility for child adoption, as Indonesian law only permits adoption by married couples comprising a

husband and wife.(Tjipto et al, 2019)

Notably, the province of Aceh, situated in Indonesia's northwest and governed by Sharia law, implements a strict anti-homosexuality law derived from Islamic jurisprudence. This legislation imposes severe penalties, including corporal punishment in the form of 100 lashes, for individuals convicted of engaging in homosexual acts (Tjipto et al, 2019). Such legal provisions underscore the diverse legal landscape within Indonesia, where regional autonomy allows for the enforcement of religious laws alongside national statutes.

Beyond the realm of formal legislation, societal attitudes towards non-heterosexual individuals and relationships also shape the lived experiences of LGBT communities in Indonesia. While overt acts of violence against gay or transgender individuals perpetrated by civilians are relatively rare nationwide, reports have emerged concerning instances of police harassment under vaguely worded public indecency laws. This highlights the vulnerability of LGBT individuals to discrimination and mistreatment within both legal and social contexts.

Despite increasing media visibility and awareness campaigns, the broader public discourse surrounding non-heterosexuality remains contentious and polarized. While exposure to gay and transgender individuals through media representation may foster greater understanding and acceptance, it has not necessarily translated into tangible gains in societal tolerance. In fact, recent years have witnessed a troubling resurgence of hostility and intolerance towards LGBT communities in Indonesia.

Instances of homophobia, hate speech, and targeted attacks against LGBT individuals and activists have garnered significant attention, both domestically and internationally. Moreover, reports of governmental authorities engaging in or condoning acts of discrimination and persecution against LGBT individuals underscore the challenges faced by these communities in asserting their rights and dignity within Indonesian society. While Indonesia's legal framework regarding non-heterosexuality may

appear relatively permissive at the national level, the lived experiences of LGBT individuals are profoundly shaped by a complex interplay of legal, cultural, and religious factors (Rodríguez et al, 2022). Efforts to promote greater inclusivity and respect for LGBT rights face significant obstacles, including entrenched societal attitudes, regional variations in legal norms, and resistance from institutional actors.

According to a recent survey conducted by the Indonesian Survey Circle (LSI) in 2012, a significant majority of the sampled population, totaling 80.6 percent, expressed objections to the idea of having gay or lesbian neighbors (Adihartono, 2015). This figure marked a notable increase from 64.7 percent recorded in 2005, indicating a growing trend of intolerance towards minority groups, particularly directed at the gay and lesbian community. Despite some isolated instances of familial understanding and acceptance towards LGBT individuals, the act of coming out to family and friends remains infrequent among LGBT persons in Indonesia, largely due to fears of rejection and social repercussions.

Thus, in Indonesia, homosexuality is widely regarded as a taboo subject, with traditional religious norms commonly disapproving of such relationships. While no national laws specifically criminalize homosexuality, certain regional regulations do impose legal penalties for engaging in homosexual activities. Despite increased media visibility and awareness initiatives, societal tolerance towards the LGBT community has not shown significant improvement. On the contrary, there is a discernible trend of growing hostility and intolerance towards LGBT individuals in Indonesian society, compounded by the limited legal protections available to them.

Notably, Kevin Leonardo, the rhetor, has always mentioned that he is a homosexual

Portrayal of Sexuality in Indonesian Media

The notion of sexuality in Indonesia is something fairly new to Indonesian society, according to Claire Harding in the journal "Gender and Sexuality in Asia and Pacific" the adoption of new sexual practices by Indonesian youth is

widely regarded as the new evolution of “Western” sexual norms. Easy access to fragmented and explicit content on sex and sexuality via the Internet and international mass media has enabled the construction of seks bebas for young Indonesians (Harding, 2008).

The globalization of media and the spread of Western cultural influences have played a significant role in shaping perceptions of sexuality among Indonesian youth. Western media depictions of sexual liberation, individual autonomy, and diversity in sexual expression have resonated with segments of the Indonesian population, particularly urban youth exposed to cosmopolitan lifestyles and values.

However, it is essential to recognize that the adoption of new sexual practices and attitudes in Indonesia is not solely a result of external influences. Indigenous factors, including social and economic changes, urbanization, and generational shifts, have also contributed to the transformation of sexual norms and behaviors within Indonesian society (Harding, 2008). The emergence of a more liberal and progressive discourse on sexuality, fueled by activism and advocacy efforts, has further facilitated the exploration and acceptance of diverse sexual identities and practices.

Expression

Particularly, Gen Z has taken inspiration from western media and made their own twist in Indonesian social media, and the current trend in Indonesia is expressing sexuality freely in social media and using it as a clickbait. In Foucault's History of Sexuality, he described a phenomenon called “Great Sexual Sermon” that phenomenon, according to Foucault, is when sexuality is free of repression, it will give a sense of freedom as to how religion is expressed in society. This phenomenon can be linked to present Indonesian modern society. Indonesia in the early 90s was heavily repressed due to censorship in the reformation era, thus the post-reformation era has sparked a “Great Sexual Sermon” causing a moral panic in certain groups in Indonesian society (Paramaditha, 2011). This freedom of expressing the topic of sexuality has catered to Indonesia's gen Z and because of our repressed past, this type of content attracts a lot of viewers because this type of content is relatively new to Indonesian

media, especially to newer generations.

Behavior

Sexual behavior encompasses any behaviors inspired by sexual impulses, both with the opposing and same sex, ranging from touching, kissing, and holding specific areas of the body to oral sex or penetration activities carried out outside of the marriage partnership. In this context, casual sexual conduct refers to numerous sexual actions performed by individuals before to an official commitment such as marriage, ranging from the lightest to the stage of sexual penetration.

The exposure of sexuality on social media has made the rise of sexual behavior in young adolescents become prominent because of the influence in the content regarding sex. The content given by various content creator in Indonesia is glorifying premarital sex, showcasing a the “fun” and “wild” notion of premarital sex. One of the causes of premarital sex in adolescent is the exposure to information from mass media (Astri et al, 2024). Social media has become accessible to anyone who has the right facility to accommodate it, Research conducted by (Puspita et al. 2020) on the correlation between social media usage and peer influence on risky sexual behavior among students at a vocational school in Surakarta City revealed that 15% of the respondents encountered sexual content through friends' posts and engaged in discussions about sexuality with peers on social media. This notable proportion indicates that a significant number of respondents are utilizing social media in a manner that may facilitate risky sexual behavior.

Orientation and Identity

In Indonesia, the media's portrayal of sexual orientation and identity paints a complex picture. On one hand, LGBTQ+ characters, especially transgender women (waria) and gay men, are frequently shown in a negative light (Michalik & Coppens, 2009; Murtagh, 2011). This reinforces heteronormativity, the idea that heterosexuality is the only acceptable norm (Coppens, 2009). This media landscape significantly shapes public perception, and for many Indonesians, it's their main source of information about LGBTQ+ identities.

During president Suharto's rule, films focused on economic development and steered clear of controversial topics. Although censorship existed, foreign movies with explicit content influenced Indonesian productions. This led to a rise in "sex-and-crime" movies, prompting a revision of censorship policies (including a pornography censor). Indonesian filmmakers have a tradition of using "sindiran," a form of veiled criticism, to address social issues, including LGBTQ+ topics. However, images and mentions of non-normative gender and sexuality often carry a negative stigma.

A particularly damaging example was the media frenzy surrounding a gay serial killer in 2008. This case fueled negative stereotypes of homosexuals as violent and deviant (ABC News, 2009). Religious leaders and government officials even suggested that heterosexuality and marriage were the answer, further marginalizing the LGBTQ+ community (Coppens, 2009). Another example of a crazed gay serial killer is Reynard Sinaga, a gay serial sex offender that assaulted many victims in Manchester, England. In Indonesian Media he is portrayed as a crazed homosexual nymphomaniac, further influencing Indonesia's perspective towards non heterosexuals.

Postcolonialism in Indonesian Media

Postcolonialism has seeped through many corners of Indonesian media, from movies, books, advertisements, newspapers, magazines, television, and online platforms, have played a significant role in shaping public perception and discourse about postcolonialism. The media have been instrumental in highlighting the ongoing legacies of colonialism, such as the exploitation of natural resources, cultural suppression, and economic inequality.

One notable example of postcolonialism in Indonesian media is the coverage of the Freeport-McMoRan mining controversy in Papua. The controversy has been extensively reported in Indonesian media, highlighting the environmental and social impacts of the mining operations on local communities (Kasiyan 2019). This coverage has contributed to a growing awareness of the ongoing struggles of Papuan people and the need for greater transparency and

accountability in the management of natural resources. Another apparent example of postcolonialism in Indonesia is the many advertisements that show the inferiority complex that our society has for their true culture, The overall portrayal of this aesthetic representation system reflects a preoccupation with the West's superiority, as well as the inferiority of Indonesian identity. This phenomenon is not limited to advertising culture; it affects nearly all Indonesian cultural systems and organizations. Western culture appears to have become a phenomenon of a "curse" of historical preoccupation that outweighs all want and desire in the process of cultural performance in this country (Kasiyan, 2012)

Pond's Indonesia Advertisement

Another significant aspect of postcolonialism in Indonesian media is the representation of indigenous cultures and identities. Indonesian media have been criticized for their limited representation of indigenous cultures, often perpetuating stereotypes and reinforcing dominant narratives. However, there are also efforts to promote greater diversity and inclusivity in media representation, such as the inclusion of indigenous perspectives and the use of local languages in programming.

The presence of postcolonialism in Indonesian media is also reflected in the country's film industry. Indonesian films have been exploring themes related to colonialism, such as the struggles of indigenous peoples and the impact of colonialism on national identity. These films have contributed to a growing awareness of the ongoing legacies of colonialism and the need for greater recognition and respect for indigenous cultures.

Colonialism in Sexuality

Michel Foucault (1926-1984) challenged the notion of sexuality as a universal, biological essence. In his work, particularly *The History of Sexuality* (Foucault, 1978), he argued that the modern Western concept of sexuality emerged through a historical interplay of discourse and power. From the 19th century onwards, a new discursive regime in Western Europe constructed "sexuality" as a distinct domain of knowledge, focusing primarily on the genital realm. This

discursive shift, Foucault suggests, served the disciplinary and regulatory aims of the modern state. By naming and classifying sexual types (e.g., homosexual, hermaphrodite), this discourse enabled new forms of control over bodies and populations. Furthermore, Foucault argued that European colonialism in the 19th century provided a rich field for this newly formed discourse on sexuality. The "discovery" of diverse sexual practices in colonized territories served as a source of "knowledge" for Western scientists and moralists. This knowledge, in turn,

fueled the characterization of non-European sexualities as deviant or inferior, justifying colonial interventions aimed at "reform." Sexuality plays a part in defining a nation, while not transparently, it lingers subliminally in a nation. With that being said, Sexuality also plays a part in defining social class. One of the notorious ways that sexuality has defined it in a nation, is when Dutch colonized Indonesia, the "colonized" is classed in the bottom of the social hierarchy in Dutch terms, the Dutch would deem Indonesians as a being below the Dutch race.

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