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Cultural narratives of love and power: Marriage and gender in Javanese Folklore, Indonesia

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explore Javanese folklore based on the perspectives of marriage and gender, related to love and power in traditional society. This study employs a qualitative descriptive research method to produce written descriptive data. The data analysis approach is conducted interactively alongside data collection and classification, data simplification concerning love and power, condensed data synthesis, and drawing conclusions. The data used are nine Javanese folklores depicting marriage and emotional interactions. The research findings on traditional marriage are categorized into three types: marriages conducted for financial gain, marriages aimed at maintaining regional harmony, and marriages based on mutual affection. In conclusion, the main themes in the narratives include non-compliance with community standards, rejection of gender and social hegemony, and efforts to maintain stability within the kingdom. These folklores are valuable in the secondary school curriculum to foster critical thinking skills and increase awareness of social values. Analyzing power dynamics and gender roles in traditional stories offers insights into the structure of historical civilizations and their relevance to contemporary issues of gender and personal equality.

Keywords: Education, Folklore, Gender, Javanese culture, Language, Marriage.

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1. Introduction

Folklore, as a collection of traditional narratives passed from one generation to the next, is closely woven into the fabric of everyday life and cultural identity [1]. Oral heritage reflects history and cultural values and enriches emotional relationships and local wisdom that have been inherited from ancestors in everyday life. Folklore is not only a source of

entertainment but also a window that reveals local wisdom, norms, morals, and traditional knowledge that bind the Magetan community. Understanding and preserving folklore play an important role in maintaining cultural diversity and fostering a strong community identity.

Traditional values of Javanese society have a very rich system of values and ethics, including deep Javanese teachings. However, in the context of hegemony, these values often overlap or are integrated with more dominant norms, such as the strong Islamic values that often synergize with Javanese traditions. Religious norms can even dominate local cultural values. Strong social structures in Javanese culture, including family relationships and social hierarchies, also influence views on obligations, hierarchies, and shared values. The dimensions of cultural analysis focus on life experiences and interpersonal relationships, with an emphasis on meaning and emotion, while elements of systems and structures are considered secondary [2, 3].

Culture facilitates the understanding of human actions and behaviors among societal members. The rise in cultural diversity exhibits traits that may appear distinct yet conform to a shared hierarchy [4]. Discussion of hegemony in folklore is significant because it reflects various aspects of culture, history, and community life. Hegemony refers to the dominance or influence that one group or entity has over another in the political, economic, or social realm. When this concept is applied to folklore, several important insights emerge as forms of cultural and identity representation. Analyzing hegemony in folklore helps understand how certain groups attempt to influence or alter cultural representations in stories, revealing who holds power in society and how their influence is reflected in folklore.

The establishment of male and female genders influences identity formation and behavioral differences in society, hence inconsistently governing social interactions across various institutions.. Masculinity is a social construct that includes certain social roles, behaviors, and meanings associated with men in society [5, 6]. This power is employed to assert dominance in multiple facets of life, both personal and societal, by subjugating one individual or group while promoting others. Despite the dominance of powerful groups, society still has the capacity to respond, resist, and articulate their cultural identities. Social movements, activism, and cultural revitalization are some of the ways in which societies maintain their cultural diversity and resist hegemonic culture.

Marriage functions as a mechanism of influence in Javanese folklore, which is important for evaluating how people and organizations uphold or challenge existing power structures [7]. The social structure of a marriage can be observed through the gender roles and cultural values inherent in society, indicating that marriage is not only about two people bound by promises but also reflects the emotional bonds and underlying power dynamics [8-10]. The understanding of marriage in folklore can be seen broadly from the components that underlie the power structure, so that it can influence the social and cultural life of society [11, 12].

The discussion of power dynamics is certainly related to hegemony in culture. Javanese society has very strong customs and habits to be carried out as a form of culture. Indirectly, Javanese folklore can be used as a reference for power dynamics in Javanese households. A marriage carried out by two people who have different thoughts, so they try to have the same vision, can be symbolized as a reconciliation of the differences between two people. In fact, Javanese marriage does not only talk about the figures of men and women, but it is necessary to pay attention to the family background and even invisible creatures that need to be considered in Javanese socio-culture. Discussion of marriage in folklore can entertain and unravel cultural challenges related to community life [13-16].

2. Theoretical Review

The form of culture can be understood by discussing hegemony in Javanese folklore as a representation of identity and cultural elements. Hegemony shows that there are individuals and groups as entities of domination and subordination. The imagination of a literary work, especially folklore, provides a picture of the dynamics of power in reality in the real world [17-19].

2.1. Local Wisdom in Folklore

Folklore contains local wisdom values that are passed down from generation to generation to provide direction and guidance for children and grandchildren as a form of preservation, ensuring they do not become extinct [20]. Ancestors provide moral standards in living life that are embedded in timeless folklore [21, 22]. This cultural value guide can be used as a principle for individuals and groups in relationships between humans, humans with nature, humans with society, and humans with God. The principles that have been given by ancestors over time have begun to fade and be abandoned by society. This is a current challenge in maintaining and preserving local wisdom and cultural values.

Understanding folklore, which contains local wisdom values, allows today's society to align with the progress of the times. Cultural dynamics always change with the times, so that cultural values can be modified and rejuvenated. Dynamic culture helps people live their lives with contemporary principles and challenges. Folklore can be used as a reference for society as a depiction of the adaptive evolution of life in the era of technological advancement and the entry of foreign cultures [23, 24]. Javanese folklore serves as a container for the connection between the past and the present, functioning as a means of preserving local wisdom in a continuously developing life.

The values of local wisdom that develop in society are not always static and rigid, but rather are dynamic and evolve according to the times. The discussion of local wisdom also explores whether these values remain relevant to life in the era of globalization. Preservation of folklore serves as a means of maintaining identity and its capacity to confront the dynamics of global culture [25].

Folklore is a cultural phenomenon that continues to develop, where the elements that form it, such as beliefs, customs, and social norms, are always updated and adjusted to existing social and cultural conditions. Folklore is not just a story that

is inherited but is a living process that continues to be maintained through the active participation of the community in preserving and adapting the story to the context of the changing times. Understanding folklore must involve acknowledging the deep social process, where the stories not only reveal the past but also provide guidance and meaning for society in facing the challenges of the future [26, 27].

Folklore can be divided into three main categories, namely oral, semi-oral, and non-oral [28]. Oral folklore is the most traditional category, where the story is delivered directly through conversation or oral performance between individuals. In this category, narrative elements often vary and change, depending on who is telling the story and to whom the story is being told. Semi-oral refers to a more modern form of folklore, which still relies on verbal delivery but already uses technology such as sound recordings or films as a medium of distribution. Meanwhile, the non-oral category includes folklore that is delivered in the form of symbols, images, or other visual media, such as in paintings, statues, or cultural rituals that depict traditional stories without using words. This category shows that folklore can adapt to the development of the times and technology and is able to survive and develop in different forms throughout history.

2.2. Cultural Hegemony

The study of literature within the framework of hegemony theory is part of post-structuralist theory that supports the understanding of contemporary literary sociology. Meanwhile, in the context of cultural studies, hegemony is a theory that uses literary texts as sources for analyzing cultural issues that develop in society. Cultural hegemony can be observed through the dominance of local wisdom values and ideologies, which exert control. The influence of the dominance of certain individuals or groups can shape the ideas and behaviors of subordinate communities. The effects of actions taken by the dominant group are regarded as norms accepted by society as a whole. Views endorsed by the entire community can serve as lessons in cultural values and norms. The dominance of specific individuals or groups influences the presentation, acceptance, and interpretation of folklore [29, 30].

Folklore originates from societies that adhere to traditional practices by continuing to transmit oral traditions through literary works. Folklore serves as a powerful tool for maintaining, transforming, or challenging cultural hegemony by expressing alternative perspectives and diverse points of view. The depiction of real-world realities occurring in society is reflected in folklore as a cultural response. Cultural hegemony can influence or manipulate the self-perception and worldview of subordinate groups [31].

Previous research has focused on the importance of cultural hegemony for traditional and customary cultures [32, 33]. Previous research has shown that folklore can influence or support local myths that develop in society. Research that focuses on cultural dominance over tradition shows that dominant cultural discourse can contain local narratives. Local folklore upholds traditional wisdom and community values, and can be influenced by popular narratives that dominate the wider community. This highlights the importance of preserving, supporting, and protecting traditional cultural heritage [34-36].

Dominant patterns such as power, authority, and influence are important elements in the broader distribution of responsibilities among human roles. For example, the primary roles and responsibilities in the family, especially those related to welfare, are influenced by the various social role systems prevailing in society as a whole. These role systems include not only social positions and their stratification systems but also political and religious systems. The relevance or irrelevance of an adult male in the family is closely related to the extent to which the social system places gender as an important criterion in the selection of such roles. Literature plays a crucial role in understanding cultural hegemony because it is able to reveal the complexities and conflicts that exist within it, even though the views of society that are conveyed may not always be in line with dominant norms [37, 38].

The construction of the masculine gender, which distinguishes it from the feminine gender, impacts dominant and subordinate positions in society [39, 40]. The masculine gender is a group that is perceived as stronger and possessing more abilities compared to the feminine gender. The characteristics inherent in men serve as indicators in society to position men as more dominant than women. The biological differences between women and men are interpreted to regulate social concerns about the appropriateness of behavior based on biological sex, and consequently, rights, resources, and power. The differences between masculine and feminine genders also serve as guidelines in society to determine the roles that will be played by a particular gender, which has undergone a process of socialization from one generation to the next.

Cultural construction perceives the dominant masculine position as developing and being practiced within social systems and institutions. The system of social practices creates and sustains gender differences and regulates unequal relationships based on distinct masculine and feminine characteristics. Gender injustice and the dominance of gender ideology are evident in the practices of social institutions, which are based on the construction of masculine and feminine cultures [41, 42]. Gender construction is not only related to the characteristics that are produced; there are biased practices among individuals. The construction of masculine and feminine gender also impacts production systems at all levels of the social structure.

3. Research Methods

3.1. Design

The form of qualitative research involves data in the form of descriptions. Qualitative research broadly refers to producing descriptive data in written form [43]. This study focuses on the analysis and interpretation of the cultural text of Magetan folklore using the tools of literary anthropology research. The research investigates and explores the meanings and patterns contained in folklore through content analysis in Magetan Regency. The analysis includes community views, behaviors, and beliefs related to hegemony in folklore.

3.2. Material

The research data consists of words, phrases, and sentences in folklore that explore the themes of love and power. The data source used is the folklore book "Mutiarra Lereng Lawu". The selection of the folklore book "Mutiarra Lereng Lawu" by Susanti et al [44] was published by the Community and Village Empowerment Service of Magetan Regency, East Java, ensuring its credibility and verifiability. Nine folklore stories in Javanese culture feature narratives and depictions of love and authority within traditional marriage. The dynamics of power, social structures, and societal values illustrate that dominant individuals and groups exert influence over subordinate groups.

3.3. Procedure

The data analysis approach is carried out interactively by collecting and categorizing data, directing data in terms of love and power, synthesizing summarized data, and drawing conclusions [45]. The first stage of this study is to collect data on the primacy of love and power. Second, after data collection, data reduction is carried out to identify key elements, highlight important aspects, and distinguish themes and patterns. Third, data presentation involves organizing data into appropriate categories to facilitate reader understanding. Data presentation aims to enhance understanding of current events and support future planning based on hegemonic power categories. Fourth, the validity of conclusions, problem formulations, and research findings whether proven or not is assessed based on data obtained during the study.

3.4. Analysis

Emotional hegemony refers to the authority or supremacy of expressing emotions within a group or community. The term denotes the influence of cultural, societal, or political norms on individuals' emotional experiences, expressions, and responses. Gender norms influence the expectations surrounding emotional expressions in men and women, resulting in discrepancies within the context of emotional hegemony. This concept underscores the possibility of opposition to such domination. The findings of this study are as follows.

Table 1.
The caste system influences marital customs and social.

Source text	Direct translation
"Den Sumini adalah putri dari kerabat kraton, sedangkan Den Soleman adalah laki-laki dari kalangan rakyat biasa. Mereka saling mencintai, tetapi tidak disetujui karena berbeda kasta" Susanti et al [44]	Den Sumini is of noble descent, whilst Den Soleman is a commoner. They have affection for one other, but face disapproval due to their distinct social castes.

Hegemony is demonstrated through the caste dominance system present in the social structure of Javanese society. The caste system is evident in marriage traditions and social stratification, which influence the acceptance of the loving relationship between Den Sumini and Den Soleman. The caste differences between the royal family and commoners are unacceptable to the kingdom. The rejection of their relationship highlights the existence of social strata that must be adhered to by all. Den Sumini's resistance to the caste system is exemplified by her decision to leave the palace and pursue her love with Den Soleman.

Marriage in the Kingdom plays an important role in determining the limits of what is allowed and not allowed; differences in position and social strata become obstacles to someone's marriage. Den Sumini's resistance to the dominant understanding of caste levels is considered a challenge to the authority of existing norms. Den Sumini uses the concept of "*rasa*" (feeling), which describes feelings of the heart that are not limited by social boundaries and predetermined power, so Den Sumini is determined to establish a relationship with Den Soleman. The "*ngerti*" (awareness), which means a deep understanding of social regulations and social conditions in Javanese philosophy, is also implemented by Den Sumini by accepting the consequences when she married Den Soleman.

The power structure in conducting a marriage is regulated by customary traditions that are passed down from generation to generation. The understanding of "*wong cilik*" (common people) and "*wong gedhe*" (nobles) cannot be united in marriage because it can diminish the dignity of a particular kingdom. Additionally, Javanese philosophy, which embodies the principle of "*memayu hayuning bawana*," emphasizes the importance of maintaining the goodness of the world through actions that prioritize compassion and sacrifice, often extending beyond existing social norms. Den Sumini and Den Soleman's decision to challenge this convention can be viewed as an act of rebellion that values justice and true love, unimpeded by caste boundaries. This action aligns with the principles of Javanese philosophy, which advocates patience, perseverance, and wisdom in making decisions that serve both personal and community interests.

Table 2.
Control the perception and reputation.

Source text	Direct translation
"Bener-bener nyalawadi wanita elok ing warna kuwi." Kata pemuda itu dalam hati. Sejak saat itu berita tentang wanita cantik di sendang pun tersebar di seluruh pemukiman di sekeliling sendang itu" Susanti et al [44]	That woman looks stunning in that color. The young man muttered to himself. Subsequently, word of the attractive woman at the spring circulated around the surrounding neighbors.

Hegemony occurs when the youth group seeks to exert control over the perception and reputation of the aesthetically pleasing woman referred to as "*elok ing warna*" (beautiful in colour). This action entails the circulation of news or rumours about women's beauty throughout the spring season. The youth who first encountered the woman fabricated a tale that extolled her beauty. The information was rapidly disseminated across the vicinity of the spring, establishing a distinct perception of the woman's influence among the youth and the local populace. They then partnered to create a plan to trap the women.

The influence of perception as a form of dominance in describing beautiful women by considering their skin color. The youth behavior group attempts to dominate the public's view of the standard of beautiful women, which can be observed from the attractiveness of the eyes. Indirectly, this view is accepted by the local community, leading them to agree with the behavior exhibited by the youth group. Essentially, beautiful women are not only judged by their appearance but also by inner qualities that can serve as additional considerations.

Reviewed from the perspective of Javanese philosophy regarding the dominance of perception, the image of beautiful women can be understood as "*ngatur*" (regulating), interpreted as making rules that must be obeyed by everyone, and "*narima*" (accepting), which involves obtaining perceptions set by the dominant group. The behavior of "*ngatur*" reflects society's portrayal, especially among youth, as an effort to control and direct perceptions to benefit the dominant group. The power of the dominant group can shape society's views and perceptions of beautiful Javanese women.

The Javanese people's strong belief in customs that balance with the concept of "*jati diri*" (identity) emphasizes the importance of understanding one's identity as a form of self-control to prevent engaging in potentially harmful behaviors. Integrity is cultivated to avoid social behaviors that could have long-term negative effects between individuals. Javanese philosophy includes the concepts of "*wejangan*" (direction) and "*ngajeni*" (respect) for all Javanese people. Affirming individual dignity is essential for shaping societal views and preventing social structures that could be detrimental to women. Javanese culture underscores that everyone has the freedom to develop their identity without being burdened by external interests.

Table 3.

Bravery and resistance to traditional standards of marriage.

Source text	Direct translation
"Putri Sekar Tanjung sendiri merupakan keturunan dari Putri Tunjung Madiun yang melarikan diri karena mau di jodohkan dan menolak lamaran." Susanti et al [44]	(Putri Sekar Tanjung herself is a descendent of Putri Tunjung Madiun who went away because she wanted to be matched and declined a proposal)

The influence of power in marriage appears in the folk tale "Putri Sekar Tanjung" as a form of marriage that has been planned by the extended family of the kingdom. The dominant influence of norms and values that live in society shapes and dictates a person's views on marriage. Putri Tanjung's resistance to the standards that have been determined by running away from an arranged marriage is a form of defiance against the conventions of marriage norms. Putri Tanjung's behavior aims to break the marriage norms of the kingdom's nobility. This decision is a form of rejection of the marriage habits that are expected to occur. Putri Tanjung's view is based on the principle of "social responsibility," as the expectations of her family, society, and ancestors cannot always be justified and followed. The control of societal dominance does not apply to Putri Tanjung, as she leaves the kingdom because she does not want to be matched.

The Javanese philosophical concept of "*urip manunggal*" (united life) emphasizes harmony among human beings. Marriage is regarded as a united life between men and women of equal social status. The norms established within Javanese culture should be upheld alongside customary practices. Resistance to hegemony in Putri Tanjung's marriage is demonstrated by fleeing from an unwanted proposal.

Javanese cultural tradition contains the concepts of "*sabar*" (patience) and "*tanggap*" (enlightenment or understanding) in dealing with problems. Putri Tanjung chooses "*tanggap*" to challenge the norms that have been in effect for generations. She opts to oppose the norms and win the conscience's heart by not following her family's directives. Women who symbolize resistance to the dominance of extended family influence by living their personal lives with awareness.

The power in determining the marriage of the norms of Javanese cultural life that has become the view of society can be broken by the courage of Putri Tanjung. Understanding Javanese culture is not allowed to submit to fate determined by others. The wisdom in taking steps based on Putri Tanjung's conscience shows the upholding of human dignity who are given reason to think.

Table 4.

The caste system influences marital customs and social.

Source text	Direct translation
"Karena kesal kecewa marah terhadap Wulansari, maka pemuda itu mengeluarkan kata-kata (Bahasa Jawanya prasabda, ipat-ipat) "Jangan sampai pemuda seberang timur Sungai Buntung menikah atau mempersunting gadis (anak perawan) diseborang barat Sungai Buntung" Susanti et al [44]	"Because he was annoyed, disappointed, and angry with Wulansari, the young man uttered the words (in Javanese, prasabda, ipat-ipat): 'Don't let the young man from the east side of the Buntung River marry or marry a girl (virgin) from the west side of the Buntung River.'"

Influence in marriage decision-making dominance can be observed in Wulansari's reaction. The young man forbids a marriage between a male from the eastern region of Sungai Buntung and a virgin from the western region of Sungai

Buntung. This statement suggests an attempt to exert influence or authority over the choices of marriage partners in society. The prevalence of marriage in this environment exemplifies the authority of cultural norms that regulate and constrain personal autonomy in choosing a life-mate.

Javanese cultural philosophy encompasses the concepts of *harmoni* (balance) and *tepa selira* (empathy towards others) in daily life, emphasizing that everyone should live in harmony without causing harm to others. Societal views are shaped by the perspectives of young people, who are often considered as *titah* (commandments), based on the understanding that following others' will results in one's own will being followed. The authority of young people in establishing marriage regulations is accepted by society as a guiding reference in selecting a life partner. These regulations, which are obeyed by society, are regarded as guardians of stability and harmony. The authority vested in young people to create such regulations indicates the presence of social control mechanisms used to regulate societal choices in partner selection. Consequently, these social regulations often sacrifice individual freedom in social life.

The concept of "*welas asih*" (compassion), which focuses on the common welfare, emphasizes that every decision must consider its impact not only on the individual but also on society. When the younger generation opposes a marriage, they are actually trying to maintain social harmony, in accordance with applicable norms and morals. However, in this context, their attitude can create a tragic irony reflected in Wulansari's fate. Wulansari's death after the gecko stagnation incident can be understood as a form of karmic retribution, a consequence of violating existing norms. In Javanese teachings, karma teaches that every action will bear fruit, both positive and negative, which will eventually return to the perpetrator. Therefore, Wulansari's death can be considered an inevitable consequence of violating norms, although sometimes these norms can feel vague. Javanese philosophy also instills the concept of "*compassion*" living life by prioritizing the common good. Folk tales oppose marriage to uphold social harmony, but in the story above, it actually creates territorial boundaries in choosing a life partner. Wulansari's death is regarded as a karmic consequence of behavior that hurts others. Javanese philosophy encompasses the concept of "*karma*," which posits that every action yields both positive and negative consequences that will revert to the actor. Consequently, Wulansari's death might be regarded as an unavoidable outcome of the transgression of standards despite the potential ambiguity of those rules.

Table 5.

Marriage concerning societal standards and power dynamics.

Source text	Direct translation
"Kisah seseorang janda yang memiliki gadis cantik dan dipersunting oleh seorang berdarah biru. Konon gadis cantik anak seorang janda ini memang sangat cantik sehingga banyak para pemuda ingin belajar kenal kepadanya." Susanti et al [44]	A widow with a beautiful daughter marries into nobility. This gorgeous lady, the daughter of a widow, is rumored to be so attractive that many young men are eager to get to know her.

Dominance in marriage regarding societal norms and power dynamics. The widow and her daughter captivate the attention and intrigue of young men who are intrigued by the girl. In this context, the prevalence of marriage indicates the existence of societal norms that influence perceptions of the durability of marriage. Historically, society has often ostracized women who have been previously married. In specific contexts, gender hegemony emphasizes regulations around chastity and marital status. The appealing woman's choice of a partner appears to be influenced by aristocratic pedigree or noble heritage.

The Randha Dhadhapan folklore narrates the dominance of marriage and the social norms that influence societal views on marriage. Historically, society has stigmatized women who are married. Gender hegemony, in some cases, emphasizes norms related to purity and marital status. The choice of a life partner by a beautiful girl also appears to be influenced by factors such as noble descent or blue blood. This indicates the presence of a power structure that shapes values and preferences regarding marriage. The story of Randha Dhadhapan reflects the dominance of marriage, manifested through social norms and power structures that influence marriage choices.

Marriage in Javanese culture is carried out by the extended families of the two prospective brides and grooms, so family intervention is possible. The wedding procession must be sacred because it reflects "*manunggaling kawula gusti*" (the unification of the individual and the divine). The view of marriage is not only an interaction between humans and their surrounding society but also has a deep transcendental relationship.

The role of a man in marriage should be based on the principle of "*asah asih asuh*" (giving, loving, and caring for each other) as the head of the household to maintain family harmony. Men's views often place women below themselves. Although there is a stigma that divorced widows are looked down upon, this situation indicates that women are not only individuals but also a reflection of the prevailing social system's evolution. This view is refuted by Javanese philosophy, which emphasizes that women must be respected as individuals created by God. Randha Dhahapan aspires to have a noble grandson, reflecting the thought of "*adigang adigung adiguna*" (good leadership, strong influence, and wisdom). A girl who marries a man with high lineage and social status may increase her chances of gaining honor in society. High social status influences perceptions and decisions regarding marriage to achieve recognition and honor from society. The culture of social status in choosing a partner contradicts the principles of peace and wisdom in life.

Table 6.

Dominance in relationships between kingdoms.

Source text	Direct translation
"Karena kehendak orang tua Pangeran Panji akan dinikahkan dengan wanita lain, maka Dewi Sekar minggat (pergi tanpa pamit)." Susanti et al [44]	Due of Prince Panji's parents' desire for him to marry another woman, Dewi Sekar departed without bidding farewell.

Hegemony can be interpreted as the dominance or influence possessed by one party or group over another. Power is exemplified by the influence of Prince Panji's parents in determining their child's marriage. The influence of Prince Panji's parents can be considered a manifestation of social norms and power structures in society or the kingdom.

Harmony between kingdoms in maintaining peaceful relations involves determining marriage as a means of stabilizing relations. The choice to marry Prince Panji to a woman who has political ties or certain interests can be considered an effort to maintain stability and continuity of power. Dewi Sekar, who decided to leave or leave without saying goodbye, can be interpreted as an act of resistance to existing hegemony. This action reflects the courage of individuals to oppose norms that may be considered unfair or not in accordance with personal desires. The quote above reflects the dynamics of hegemony in the context of marriage and power between the Jenggala and Panjalu Kingdoms.

The idea of Javanese culture "*patraping ajaran*" (wise teachings) and "*paraning kawula gusti*" (obedience to higher authority) as a means of preserving existing traditions. Javanese society considers a leader to be someone who possesses wisdom and whose words and actions are worthy of imitation. Marriage to perpetuate political relations is regarded as a "*dharma*" (duty) that must be fulfilled as a form of social responsibility. The decision to marry between kingdoms as a political strategy is a form of "*seserepan*" (long-term ambition), which is viewed as a relationship between the interests of the state and society.

Table 7.

control or authority that one party exercises over another.

Source text	Direct translation
"Pemuda buruk rupa tersebut juga mengutuk puteri cantik itu tidak akan ada seorangpun yang mau menikahinya selama-lamanya. Jadi dari kata mbese asat itu bermula dan berlaku terus sampai sekarang." Susanti et al [44]	The unattractive young guy also placed a curse on the lovely princess, ensuring that she would never find a spouse. The term "mbese asat" initiated the practice and remains in effect to this day.

The unappealing young man exerts control in his relationship with the village's exquisite princess. Hegemony denotes the supremacy or authority exercised by one entity over the other. Despite his exterior lack of appeal, the young man possesses the power to grant him a unique influence in his interactions with the gorgeous princess. Despite feeling startled and belittled, the gorgeous princess did not wholly dismiss the proposal from an unattractive young guy. She imposed certain limits that appeared to create challenges for young men to meet. An unattractive young man uses his magical abilities to alter the circumstances and showcase his prowess.

The curse spoken by the unattractive young man towards the beautiful princess establishes a dominance in which she is tormented by the prophecy that no one will ever desire to marry her. Dominance in this situation is illustrated by the power of the enchanted teenager, who dictates the destiny and social status of the lovely princess. An ugly young man with magical abilities to create norms of life and predict the fate of a princess.

The influence of the words spoken by the unattractive young man, due to heartache, can be interpreted as "*laku prihatin*" (persistence in facing life's difficulties). The magical power of the young man's words symbolizes someone who is humiliated by a woman, swearing about the fate of a princess. The influence of dominance in affecting emotions and convincing the truth of his words represents a form of non-physical power. The curse cast by the unattractive young man is considered "*karma*" that the princess must live through. The causal relationship between the princess's actions toward the young man is repaid through the enactment of karma in her life. The curse, as a manifestation of non-physical power, can influence people's perceptions, leading them to speak and behave more carefully in life.

Table 8.

Dynamic of romantic dominance in the relationship.

Source text	Direct translation
"Pandangan yang dulunya sangat manis berubah menjadi sinis seketika melihat sang bunga desa berjalan dengan pria yang diidamkannya. Mulai dari ada yang berniat untuk merusak hubungan keduanya sampai mengancam akan membunuh pria tersebut jika ia nantinya tidak bisa meninggalkan sang bunga desa." Susanti et al [44]	Her lovely expression turned cynical upon seeing the local flower going with the man she desired. From individuals aiming to sabotage their connection to those who made death threats if the man didn't depart from the village.

This statement illustrates the dynamics of romantic supremacy in the relationship between a village girl named Sadikem and the man who secured her affection. Romantic hegemony refers to control or dominance within the domain of

romantic relationships or romance. Sadikem was once regarded as one of the most coveted women in the vicinity. Sadikem's allure and persona exert a significant influence on society, resulting in many men competing for her attention. Sadikem's choice to shut her heart to her admirers signifies her repudiation of prevailing dominance. There is discord and hostility against the individual who has garnered Sadikem's affection. Sadikem's love choices, which may not align with society's expectations, create power dynamics in romantic relationships as a form of privacy and personal interests.

Sadikem's decision to love the man he loves creates new tension in the form of threats. Another man threatens the man Sadikem loves to leave him. Death threats are also made to make Sadikem afraid. The decision that Sadikem has made creates social tension due to the unrealized love affair. Sadikem's beauty creates an attraction for competition to have her. Sadikem's reputation as a village flower makes many men compete to get her attention. When a man can marry a village girl, he indirectly gains a social position in the surrounding community. The idea of "*mulya*" (reputable) is used to show the reputation of someone with a high social position. Sadikem chooses a partner she loves by adhering to the principle of "*manunggal ing rasa*" (unity in feelings), prioritizing her feelings for someone even though there are threats and it does not match societal expectations.

Table 9.

Power based on strong family influence.

Source text	Direct translation
"Ki Demang Tawang mendengar kabar kalau adik perempuannya Roro Mambu yang diboyong sebagai garwa selir Sinuwun Raja, hidupnya tidak bahagia." Susanti et al [44]	Ki Demang Tawang learned that his younger sister Roro Mambu, who had been taken in as Sinuwun Raja's concubine, was unhappy.

The hegemony in the quote above begins with a marriage that is carried out to maintain stability between kingdoms and expand the kingdom's territory. Roro Mambu is used as a means of exchange to obtain desires by being made the concubine of the King's sinuwun. The acceptance of Roro Mambu into the kingdom has an effective impact on her extended family. Roro Mambu is made a concubine by Sinuwun. The King feels that her life is not happy. Ki Demang Tawang hears that his sister's life is miserable and tries to investigate further by visiting the kingdom. The behavior that wants to protect his sister is based on his father's message to always protect the family wherever they are. Family values arise from the influence of a father who is instilled in all his children to always maintain family relationships with siblings.

Ki Demang Tawang upholds the principle of protecting his family physically and mentally from threats that could harm his sister. Information indicating that Roro Mambu is unhappy prompts Ki Demang Tawang to challenge the influence of Sinuwun Raja's power to uncover the cause of his sister's loss of happiness. The principle held by Ki Demang Tawang "*laku*" refers to a person's actions or steps in fulfilling social obligations as Roro Mambu's sibling.

The behavior of "*tata krama*" (manners) is also demonstrated by Ki Demang Tawang, who asks his sister directly and the King's sinuwun. He does not immediately judge someone based on unproven information. The wisdom used in resolving conflicts is very important in maintaining relations between kingdoms. A family is a group of people bound by blood ties that prioritize caring for each other, respecting, and protecting. The power of the King's sinuwun over the woman he will marry reflects patriarchy, considering all decisions to be in the hands of men. Ki Demang Tawang's actions show resistance by defending his sister as a form of family protection.

4. Discussion

Hegemonic culture reflects how the influence and dominance of a stronger group are reflected not only in cultural norms but also in the formation of worldviews, perceptions, and values adopted by society. Groups that have control over economic resources, political institutions, and communication channels can manipulate the narratives and cultural representations that are disseminated to society. Ideology is not caused by the economic system alone but is deeply embedded in all community activities. The representation of marriage in traditional folklore as a tool of power provides a deep understanding of social structures, cultural norms, and power dynamics in culture [46, 47]. Javanese folklore describes marriage as a means to obtain rewards and praise, to maintain stability, based on mutual love, and through conditions. Folklore can be used as a means to understand gender inequality in marriage [48, 49].

Hegemony demonstrates power by establishing conditions for marriage that are difficult for others to meet. A man from Kediri proposes to Wulansari as a case in point. Wulansari vehemently declines the proposal and departs. The young man bears resentment over Wulansari's rejection, leading to disillusionment. Conversely, a tale from Krajan Village recounts the experience of a beautiful princess who is surprised and humiliated by the proposal of an unremarkable young man; nonetheless, she refrains from outright rejection. The circumstances he describes seem to present a challenge to young men. Narrative analysis helps to understand the social and cultural realities about the power of stories as a means to interpret daily life and its social dynamics [50-52].

The belief that marriage maintains stability and upholds the Kingdom is also reflected in Magetan mythology, which emphasizes the importance of marriage alliances in fostering harmonious relations throughout the Kingdom. Tawanganom Village recounts the story of a dispute between Adipati Anom and Ki Demang Tawang over the fate of Adipati Anom's sister, Roro Mambu, which contrasts with the previous story. Adipati Anom insisted that Roro Mambu remain the concubine of Sinuwun Raja despite his unhappiness, while Ki Demang Tawang preferred to return Roro Mambu to her home. Cultural and social norms influence individual identity, both in the context of gender and culture [53, 54]. An analysis of the depictions of marriage and emotional interactions in nine Javanese folktales reveals that traditional marriages can be classified into three categories: those consummated for financial benefit, those established to maintain

regional harmony, and those based on mutual affection. The complexities of marriage and gender roles in traditional societies are evident in emotional partnerships. Significant themes presented in the narratives encompass the disobedience of societal standards, the repudiation of gender and social hegemony, and endeavors to maintain stability within the kingdom.

Folktales can be applied in the world of education which includes character development and promotion of cultural understanding with a gender-responsive pedagogical and learning approach [5, 55]. The philosophy of Javanese culture encompasses the concepts of *dharma* (charity/duty), *rasa* (feeling), *ngerti* (awareness), *memayu hayuning bawana* (nurturing and preserving the world's goodness), *ngatur* (regulating), *narima* (accepting), *jati diri* (identity), *wejangan* (direction), *ngajeni* (respect), *urip manunggal* (unified life), *sabar* (patience), *tanggap* (enlightenment or understanding), *tepa selira* (empathy for others), *welas asih* (compassion), *manunggaling kawula gusti* (the union of the individual and the divine), *asah asih asuh* (giving, loving, and caring for one another), *adigang adiguna adiguna* (excellent leadership, strong influence, and wisdom), *patraping ajaran* (wise teachings), *paraning kawula gusti* (obedience to higher authority), *laku prihatin* (endeavor and perseverance in confronting life's adversities), *manunggal ing rasa* (unity in feelings), *tata krama* (manners). Folklore not only mirrors the behaviors and philosophies that have evolved within a community over time but also plays a crucial role in shaping the cultural identity of the group [56].

Subsequent studies may investigate the interplay between folklore and its biological and social elements in influencing human behavior. Research can examine how folklore narratives illustrate the interaction between human biological characteristics, such as survival and gender roles, and prevailing social ideals within society. This research explores how folklore serves as a conduit between human biology and social dimensions, demonstrating how these narratives influence individual behavior and attitudes in confronting personal and societal challenges.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1. Conclusion

The depiction of marriage and emotional interactions in nine Javanese folktales reveals that customary marriages can be classified into three categories: marriages conducted for financial gain, marriages conducted to maintain harmony between regions, and marriages based on mutual affection. The complexity of marriage and gender roles in traditional society is evident in the emotional partnerships. Key themes presented in the narratives include non-compliance with societal standards, rejection of gender and social hegemony, and efforts to maintain stability within the kingdom.

The narratives also highlight how men's perceptions of women and societal standards of female attractiveness influence romantic relationships and marriage decisions, thus explaining the dynamics of gender hegemony. The narratives emphasize the formation and maintenance of gender roles in traditional societies. Folktales serve as valuable cultural artifacts and instruments for social construction research because they depict individuals' attempts to reject or comply with established norms.

These folktales are useful in high school curricula to foster critical thinking skills and raise awareness of social values. Students can analyze folktales to investigate how cultural narratives perpetuate established gender roles, power relationships, and societal expectations. This narrative can serve as a catalyst for educators to begin discussions about gender equality, personal freedom, and the impact of tradition on the dynamics of modern society. Students gain a deeper understanding of the historical and cultural influences that shape societal norms and enhance their critical judgment skills by examining the complex emotional and power dynamics of the marriage order.

5.2. Limitations

In this study, there are limitations that researchers identified which can affect the results, namely that folk tales delivered orally can lead to the loss of important details and introduce uncertainty in the storytelling process.

5.3. Suggestion

From the description of the limitations that already exist in the study, the researcher can provide suggestions that can later be used as references for further researchers, namely examining the impact of folklore on the younger generation and how to maintain folklore in a modern context.

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