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CUPAK GERANTANG TRADITIONAL THEATER: INTERPRETATION OF TEXT MEANING AS EFFORT TO STRENGTHEN CHARACTER

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Abstract:

The Cupak Gerantang Theater is a traditional art that is starting to be threatened with extinction (crisis-existence). This happens because the younger generation (Lombok) were more likely to be interested in and enjoy modern spectacles which are considered more interesting and entertaining. Whereas the traditional art of Cupak Gerantang does not only talk about entertainment, but there is a content of meaning about the value of local wisdom of the Sasak people which can be used as guidance or learning. This research is a descriptive qualitative type of library method. The purpose of this study is to describe the meaning of the local wisdom values of the Sasak people in the Cupak Gerantang drama script and how the traditional Cupak Gerantang theater supports efforts to strengthen character education. Analysis of the data using the semiotic theory of Aston and Savona. Aston and Savona's theory is used to interpret the meaning of the local wisdom values of the Sasak people in the text, that values are then relevant to character education. The data in this study are the dialogues of the characters in the script, the characters, and the storyline of the Cupak Gerantang script. The data sources of this research are the complete script and video of the Cupak Gerantang performance obtained from the documentation study. The results of the study found that there were meanings about the value of local wisdom of the Sasak people in the text, including moral teachings, independence, religiosity, mutual cooperation, love for the homeland, and personal integrity.



Introduction

Indonesia has a rich and unique culture as a multicultural and multi-ethnic country. Traditional theater in Indonesia, for example, is very diverse because Indonesia is an archipelagic country. Every region in Indonesia has artistic products that are certainly thick with local cultural influences. Thus, traditional art becomes a symbol of the community that owns it. The traditional theater is a theater that is mixed with the culture of the place where the theater emerged. Culture refers to all behaviors, habits, and moral values that are collectively established in a particular society (Anggraini, 2017: 23). The *Cupak Gerantang* traditional theater is one of the traditional theaters owned by the people of Lombok, Indonesia. Currently, *Cupak Gerantang* is hard to find and is threatened with extinction due to various factors, such as the younger generation not being interested in preserving it, the theater actors are getting old, even traditional theater is considered old-fashioned so it is not interesting to play or watch. The traditional *Cupak Gerantang* theater is not only about entertainment, but also contains meaning about the value of local wisdom of the *Sasak* people that can be used as guidance or learning. There are still people who care and want to continue to preserve *Cupak Gerantang* but theater is a collective art, in other words, theater should not be done alone but in groups. To do so requires good cooperation. Through theatrical performances, it will be easier for humans to understand the value of good and bad life.

Cupak Gerantang is a traditional Lombok theater performance that tells the story of *Panji*. Ahmad D.J. in (Wahyu, 2016:3) explains that this story emerged because of the influence of the Javanese and Balinese kingdoms. The story of *Cupak Gerantang* begins with the betrayal of a brother to his brother (*semeton pendait*). This is caused by greed and gluttony which is one of the bad qualities in humans. *Cupak* is a picture of the bad qualities of humans while *Gerentang* is a picture of the good qualities that exist in humans. Cupak is known for his very greedy nature, the peak of his greed when he wanted to have *Dewi Wirasaasih* or *Putri Dende Sekar Ayu Bulan*, a princess from the *Daha* kingdom who was kidnapped by an evil giant named *Limandaru* she was a resident of the *Jadid* forbidden forest. That desire darkened his eyes so that he killed his brother *Gerantang* so that his wish would be fulfilled. *Panji's* story always ends with the victory of goodness, as well as the traditional theater of *Cupak Gerantang* by Galih Mulyadi. The end of the story is the defeat of the *Cupak* character as a representation of evil and must bear all the consequences of his evil deeds. There are quite a lot of fairy tales in Lombok, such as Cupak Gerentang, Putri Nyale, Batu Goloq, Si Sekeq, Buffalo Skin Seats, Iwoq's Child, Cow and Tiger, Origin of the Village Name Montong Betok, Three Brothers, The Monkey and the Rat, and Datu Untal according to the data that has been inventoried. (Khaerati, 2009:14)

Cupak Gerantang traditional theater needs to be documented in any form as an effort to pass on the richness of culture and art to future generations as well as learning in line with the goals of Indonesian education, namely strengthening character education. One of the efforts to improve the quality of Indonesian human resources can be realized by taking action through

the quality of education. Carrying out the teaching and learning process in the concept of educating to shape character, educators should apply three components, namely, moral knowledge, moral feelings, and moral actions (Thomas. Lickona, 1992:51). The goals of Indonesian education have been described in the Law on the National Education System Number 20 of 2003 in chapter II article 3:

"The functions and objectives of National Education, namely: National education functions to develop capabilities and form significant national character and civilization in the context of the intellectual life of the nation, aims to develop the potential of students to become human beings who believe and fear God Almighty, have a noble character, healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent and become a democratic and responsible citizen."

The purpose of character education is the formation of a good human personality. Character education is to facilitate the strengthening and development of certain values so that they are manifested in children's behavior, both during the school process and after graduating from school (Dharma. Kesuma, 2012:9).

Literature Review

The presence of various technologies in the community causes the condition of traditional arts, especially in Lombok, to get very little attention. *Cupak Gerantang* is a folk theater originating from Lombok and Bali, however, because this research will examine *Cupak Gerantang* originating from Lombok, a literature review was conducted regarding *Cupak Gerantang* originating from Lombok. Several previous researchers have researched *Cupak Gerantang*, including Wahyu Kurnia (2016). Students of the Theater Department, Faculty of Performing Arts, Yogyakarta Indonesian Institute of the Arts conducted research entitled "Creating Cupak Characters in the Cupak Gerantang Manuscript by Lalu Gede Suparman". Wahyu Kurnia researched the *Cupak Gerantang* folk theater as an idea for his final project with Michael Kirby's acting theory. Wahyu's research uses the methodology of creation. The steps taken by Wahyu in his first creation methodology are played analysis, the analysis is used for actors in helping the process of finding the actor's character. The second step is to determine the concept of staging, by having the concept of the training process is more focused. The third step is the process of practicing and continuing with staging.

To be able to maintain local wisdom of a culture/tradition, cooperation from various parties is needed (Wahyu. Kurnia, 2016:1). As an actor from Lombok, in his research, Wahyu chose the *Cupak Gerantang* script because he saw the uniqueness of the *Cupak* character, as well as because he has a passion for singing, dancing, and acting. Another reason Wahyu chose the *Cupak Gerantang* script is to see the content (message) that the good *Cupak Gerantang* manuscript wants to convey as a lesson, namely "no matter how small an action; good or bad in the end will get what it deserves." This research is relevant to Wahyu Kurnia's research to document the traditional theater of the wealth of the archipelago. *Cupak Gerantang* must receive attention from various parties so that it does not disappear with time.

Luh Putu Puspawati, (2021) also researched *Cupak Gerantang* in Bali and Lombok. This research by a student from the Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Udayana University has been published in *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*, volume 540, with the title "The Play of Cupak Gerentang in Wayang Kulit and Traditional Dramas and

Values in Balinese and Sasak Society in Lombok". The research is qualitative, with the object of research being the *Cupak-Gerantang* story in Bali and Lombok. The stages of data collection were carried out by interviews and observations carried out in Bali and Lombok.

Luh Putu Puspawati's research found that the attractiveness of *Cupak Gerantang* Bali and Lombok, both in the form of fairy tales and the art of performance, is values that can be used as a way of life. One of the values implied in *Cupak Gerantang* is ethical values. Ethical values relate to moral values that form the basis of human action. Elsewhere, ethics as reflection is defined as moral thought or philosophy. In this connection, humans think or ponder about what to do and how humans behave in life. Humans are homo socius creatures who always need other humans to live and behave well. *Cupak Gerantang* provides a message about ethics as a basis for action. In his research, the theory used is the theory of structure and the theory of value.

The function of character education is to shape the character of students. In addition, it is also to develop the basic potential in a person so that he becomes a good human being. Several previous researchers have conducted studies related to character education. As research conducted by (Sofyan Salam, 2018) was conducted with the title "The Unique Potential of Art Education in Character Development". Sofyan Salam's research was presented at the 57th UNM Anniversary National Seminar, July 9, 2018. In Sofyan Salam's paper, it was shown that art education has a unique potential in developing certain characters that are under the uniqueness of art education. Two examples of learning strategies to develop character through education, especially art education, are learning strategies for creative character development and learning strategies for character identity development. This research also shows that character development is not something that is fast but it is a long, complicated and challenging process. Sofyan Salam's research also shows that the essence of art education is to provide an aesthetic experience, so art education that does not provide opportunities for students to experience aesthetic experiences in various media is not called art education in the true sense of the word. Art education is different from other education because art education provides an aesthetic experience.

Research Method

This research is descriptive qualitative research that aims to interpret the meaning of the local wisdom values of the *Sasak* people in the *Cupak Gerantang* script, these values are then relevant to character education. To be able to describe these values in traditional drama plays, data analysis using the theater semiotics method is used. Analysis of the data using the semiotic theory of Aston and Savona. The data in this study are in the form of dialogues, characters, and plot construction in the *Cupak Gerantang* script. The data sources of this research are the complete script and video of the *Cupak Gerantang* performance which were obtained from the study documentation.

Creswell (2010:4) explains that qualitative methods are methods to explore and understand the meaning that some individuals or groups of people ascribe to social or humanitarian problems. The definition of qualitative research is also explained by Creswell that qualitative research is a multi-perspective study in understanding the meaning of human life, social, cultural, and the world. With the central phenomenon, qualitative research is likely to make another exploratory research (Creswell, 2018).

The method used is the semiotics of Aston & Savona theater with a semiotic framework in the structure of drama texts. The structure of the drama text Aston & Savona refers to three main pillars, namely: plot construction, characters, and dialogue. These three main pillars crystallized into several pieces. For example, plot construction crystallized into, Present Time, chronological time, plot time, and performance time. While the character is crystallized into character functions and character semiotics. The dialogue itself crystallizes into a classical drama dialogue function, a realist drama dialogue function, a modern drama dialogue function, and the conditions for meaningful dialogue. The explanation of the semiotics of the theater which refers to the three main pillars will be used to find the study of semiotics contained in the traditional *Cupak Gerantang* theater.

Findings and Discussion

The traditional *Cupak Gerantang* theater in Lombok society is dominated by singing and the movements of the actors are dominated by dance. However, in the script written by Galih Mulyadi, the dialogue is mostly in Indonesian, although he still inserts the Lombok regional language. The script written by Galih Mulyadi is a form of transforming *Cupak Gerantang* from folklore to drama scripts so that this art is not lost. Previously, Lalu Gede Supratman also wrote the *Cupak Gerantang* script with more or less the same goal. In Galih Mulyadi's script, the only characters presented are *Cupak*, *Gerantang*, *Putri*, and the Giant *Limandaru* while in the original story there are several other characters such as *Raja Daha*, *Amak Bangkol*, and *Inaq Bangkol*. The story in the script written by Galih Mulyadi begins when *Cupak* persuades his younger brother *Gerantang* to go to the *Raja Daha* contest to save *Putri* who was kidnapped by the evil giant *Limandaru*. Although *Gerantang* initially refused then they went to save *Putri Dende Sekar Ayu Bulan*. On the way, *Cupak* is always hungry so that their supplies are eaten by *Cupak*. When he found a settlement, the people of *Cupak* tried to ask for food rudely way but failed, instead, he wanted to be slashed with a machete by the owner of the house. *Gerantang* relented to go politely ask for food way, after getting food with *Cupak's* cunning tactics again finished the food but *Gerantang* always patiently faced *Cupak's* bad nature. After they arrived at a cave where the giant *Limandaru* was hiding, it was *Gerantang* who entered the cave and managed to save *Putri*. After *Gerantang* succeeded in defeating the *Limandaru* Giant, *Cupak* then took *Putri* out of the cave using a rope, and after that *Cupak* would also save *Gerantang* using the same rope. When pulling *Gerantang* out of the cave, *Cupak* suddenly broke the rope with the aim that *Gerantang* would die and then he would marry *Putri*. But it turns out that *Gerantang* is still alive and *Cupak* is very surprised when *Gerantang* is present at the royal party. At the party a *presean* match was held, anyone who could beat *Cupak* in that match then he was entitled to accompany the Princess and get half the kingdom. In the end, *Gerantang* won the *presean*, *Gerantang* had the right to marry *Putri*. *Cupak* admits his mistake but he is expelled from the kingdom and *Gerantang* lives happily with *Putri* (Mulyadi, 2020:80-100).

Interpretation Of Text Meaning

Studying theater semiotics aims to see how meaning is determined through the elements involved in drama texts and how meaning is created in a performance context (Sahid, 2016: 18). In the semiotic perspective of theater as an object of study, two parts can be studied, namely the semiotic approach to drama texts and the semiotic approach to the performance itself. Aston and Savona (1991) explain that Semiotics of drama texts bases their analysis on three elements, namely plot construction, characters (characters), and dialogue.

A good drama plot must contain elements of suspense and surprise. The traditional theatrical script of *Cupak Gerantang* written by Galih Mulyadi is a three-act drama. Since the beginning of the story, the suspense has been presented since they entered the forest, then filled with surprises such as when they saw giant dung, smelled giant breaths, and passed through the lake formed by the giant urine of *Limandaru*. The events in this script have a very dynamic suspense and surprise. Approaching the end of the story also presents a very strong tension starting when *Gerantang* faces a giant until finally *Gerantang* succeeds in defeating a giant but he is finally killed by *Cupak*. Until the end of the story *Cupak* and *Gerantang* fight in *presean*. The understanding of the plot is inseparable from the division of acts and scenes in the drama as a whole, which is referred to as the plot arrangement (Sahid, 2019:25).



Figures 1 and 2. The Scene of Cupak and Gerentang Saves Putri (Doc. Kampoeng Baca Pelangi & Bale Langgaq, 2021)

The characterizations in the script are very contrasting, the character's character is analyzed through dialogues between the characters, *Cupak* has a greedy, greedy, timid, and ugly nature. Meanwhile, *Gerantang* is handsome, polite, honest, and brave. *Putri Dende Sekar Ayu Bulan* has a beautiful and soft face. Judging from the characterization of the traditional theater, *Cupak Gerantang* is indeed a folk tale. Vladimir Propp found that the function of characters in folklore has seven strengths, namely criminals, benefactors, servants, daughters and fathers, messengers, heroes, and fake heroes (Propp in Sahid: 2019: 33).

The dialogues in the *Cupak Gerantang* script describe the setting, plot, and character of each character. Aston and Savona (in Sahid, 2019:38) claim that one of the main objectives of dialogue semiotics is to understand and identify the main characteristics of drama discourse. This manuscript makes it easier for the reader and to understand the events. Can be used as a reference in determining the character of each character, this script also makes it easier to determine the stage set and the message to be conveyed.

This traditional theater originated from folklore written in the "*lontar*" book which was later developed into a traditional theatre. The characteristics of traditional theater do not have scripts so that this phenomenon makes the writer's awareness of transforming the form of the *Cupak Gerantang* folklore into a conventional theater script by maintaining the traditional form. Besides Galih Mulyadi, the script for *Cupak Gerantang* was also written by Lalu Gede Suparman, these two writers wrote in the form of a free adaptation. Before them, some wrote using the ancient *Sasak* language, but it was more difficult to understand. However, in this study, the choice fell on the script written by Galih Mulyadi because apart from its more modern form it is also an easy-to-understand language. Judging from the plot, the *Cupak*

Gerantang script presents very complex events. These events convey criticism, moral and social messages. The plot is a series of events that are woven based on cause-and-effect relationships. The events presented in the *Cupak Gerantang* story have very dynamic elements of suspense and surprise, such as traveling in the forest, facing an evil giant, and *Cupak* killing his brother. An understanding of the plot is inseparable from the division of acts and scenes in the drama as a whole, which is referred to as the plot arrangement (Sahid, 2019).

Meaning Of Text As Effort For Strengthening Character Education

The *Cupak Gerantang* traditional theater is one of the folk tales that contains the local wisdom of the *Sasak* people. This story is one of the folk tales that is quite popular among the *Sasak* people (Nayan, 2017:20). Local wisdom is the original wisdom and knowledge of a society that comes from the noble values of cultural traditions to regulate the order of people's lives (Sibarani, 2014: 180). Living in harmony and peace is the culture of the *Sasak* people when viewed from the values of local wisdom of the *Sasak* people. The values of local wisdom in the *Sasak* community such as moral teachings, independence, religiosity, mutual cooperation, love for the homeland, and personal integrity.

Moral teachings can be found in the *Sasak* community, known as *krama* which is the life guide for the *Sasak* community in social life. *Krama* is explained as a rule of social interaction by Harfin Zuhdi (2018: 68) which consists of several parts, namely: a) *Titi Krama*, which is a custom that is regulated by *awig-awig* as a result of customary agreement from all indigenous peoples. If it is violated, it will be subject to social sanctions or moral sanctions such as *bejiran* custom (neighborhood), *nyangkok* custom (stay at girlfriend's house). b) *Krama* language, is a character, manners, or customary rules regulated in customary *awig-awig* which must be carried out with polite and orderly spoken language and body language, carried out in full manners. In the language of manners, there are several rules and grammar contained in the local wisdom of the *Sasak* people, including grammar, indit language, rangin language, proverbs. c) *Aji Krama*, is the customary price of the community or also the price of a person's social status or the value of the dignity of one's kinship, which is related to customary rights in the community, both within the family environment and in the environment of indigenous peoples in general. This *Aji Krama* reflects the recognition of social status in society.

In the *Sasak* community, it can be found in the *presean* tradition, which is a tradition that involves two people (*pepadu*) to compete using rattan and a shield made of buffalo skin. In *presean* the independence of the *Sasak* people is seen as a symbol in dealing with life or problems so that two people who play in *presean* must have independence and a personality that has the integrity to be able to face and respect the opponent.

Religiosity in the *Sasak* community can be found in the *roah* tradition, which is carried out at birth, marriage, and death ceremonies as well as activities for celebrating religious holidays. The *roah* tradition is carried out as a form of belief in God which is carried out by thinking and eating together.

Gotong royong in the *Sasak* community can be found in marriage and death ceremonies. In the wedding ceremony, the *Sasak* people help each other, known as *begawe* and *nyongkolan*, namely together preparing the wedding party and together parading the bride from the groom's

house to the bride's house. In the funeral ceremony, it is known as *belangar* and *betalet*, that is, together they go to the funeral home and prepare for the funeral.

Love for the homeland in the *Sasak* community can be found in smaller *Sasak* communities (customary tribes) such as the *Bayan* tribe who always protect the forest and its environment with *awiq-awiq* which regulates environmental sustainability. This is a manifestation of love for the homeland in the *Sasak* community.

The traditional *Cupak Gerantang* theater is presented to the stage not only as people's entertainment but through dialogues and characters, many educational values are used as a medium to provide education to the audience as well as to strengthen character education in schools. So that this traditional *Cupak Gerantang* theater can support the National education program, that character education functions to shape the character and civilization of the nation to achieve national ideals.

There are 18 values in character education according to the Ministry of National Education, namely, 1) religious, 2) honest, 3) tolerance, 4) discipline, 5) hard work, 6) creative, 7) independent, 8) democratic, 9) curiosity, 10) national spirit, 11) love for the homeland, 12) appreciate achievements, 13) friendly/communicative, 14) love peace, 15) love to read, 16) care for the environment, 17) care about social, and 18) responsibility. In the *Cupak Gerantang* script, there is an honest value reflected by the *Gerantang* character. In contrast to his brother *Gerantang* is an honest person, this honesty can be seen in all of his dialogues, which always tells the truth, which is very different from *Cupak* in his dialogues saying that he is very brave but he is always afraid of everything.

The value of discipline and hard work is also shown by *Gerantang*, when in the forest he is tireless walking so that night does not come when they are in the forest, in contrast to *Cupak* who is always tired and feels hungry, even though he has spent a lot of time and provisions. *Gerantang* also reflects the value of independence, he faces the Giant *Limandaru* alone while *Cupak* always depends on *Gerantang*. The value of responsibility was also shown by *Gerantang*, when he decided to help save *Putri* he guarded *Cupak* and never returned before he managed to save *Putri*, even though *Cupak* was scared before meeting the Giant *Limandaru*. The values shown by *Gerantang* can be imitated by students to strengthen character education. *Cupak* often denies in his dialogues, he says he will face the Giant *Limandaru* but that's just a hoax, *Gerantang* is the one who faces the Giant. Honesty in *Sasak* society is an important thing, so there is an expression if a *Sasak* person is greedy or lying is referred to as "*loq cupak*" which means he has a *cupak*-like character. *Gerantang* is a person who faithfully keeps his promise, he promises to save the Princess so that he doesn't give up before succeeding in saving her. This teaches that having bad morals like *Cupak* has a bad impact on his life, whereas if you have good morals like *Gerantang*, you will get good rewards too. *Gerantang* is always steadfast and independent in dealing with problems so that he can solve problems calmly. Unlike *Cupak*, who always depends on *Gerantang*, even when it comes to food, he can't solve it himself.

Conclusion

The results of this study found that the plot construction of the *Cupak Gerantang* drama contains good elements because it is dense in elements of suspense and surprise. From the beginning of the story to the end always presents tension and surprises. The characterizations

in this drama are also very contrasting, between the bad characters representing the bad qualities of humans and the good characters representing the good qualities that exist in humans which can then be used as lessons. The *Cupak Gerantang* manuscript makes it easy for readers to understand the events.

The results of the study also found that there were meanings about the value of local wisdom of the *Sasak* people in the text, including moral teachings, independence, religiosity, mutual cooperation, love for the homeland, and personal integrity. There are also character education values such as discipline, hard work, responsibility, honesty, and independence. Then these values can be implemented in education either in the family environment or in formal schools.

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