

BUILDING EARLY CHARACTER THROUGH LITERATURE CREATIVITY IN “WAYANG”

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ABSTRACT

While character education is still a hot topic for the government and remains a frequently discussed topic, its implementation remains suboptimal, particularly in terms of supporting media. Character itself is a very essential element in a person's environment, even in the life of a nation and state. However, there is still a medium for understanding and implementing the values contained in character education that is under-explored: Wayang, a part of literature, namely oral literature. Wayang can be used as a medium for understanding various life values, one of which is the value of character education. In practice, it can be used in schools and the surrounding environment. One example is in Bali, which still maintains the Wayang tradition. Wayang in Bali is one of the sacred means in life, which is marked by the Tumpek Wayang Feast Day (Rahinan). It has been a hereditary and ingrained tradition for Hindus to carry out various mandatory activities during Rahinan Tumpek Wayang. One of these is the Sapuh Leger Wayang Performance. Because it is obligatory, Wayang performances in Bali are familiar to children from an early age. Therefore, Wayang can become a literary medium from an early age, especially oral literature with the function of educating and implementing all kinds of values, including the values contained in character education.

Keywords: *character education, literature, wayang*

1. INTRODUCTION

When the Indonesian people agreed to proclaim Indonesian independence on August 17, 1945, the founding fathers of the nation realized that there were at least three major challenges to be faced. The first was establishing a united and sovereign state, the second was building the nation, and the third was building character. These three things are clearly visible in the concept of the nation state and national character building. In its implementation, efforts to establish a state are relatively faster when compared to efforts to build a nation and build character (Samani. 2011:1). Today, character education has become a hot topic among education practitioners. In Indonesia, the implementation of character education is indeed felt to be urgent. The situation of society and even the world of education in Indonesia is the main motivation for mainstreaming implementation of character education in Indonesia.

Character education in Indonesia is felt to be in dire need of development considering the increasing number of brawls between students, as well as other forms of juvenile delinquency, especially in big cities, extortion/violence (bullying), the tendency for seniors to dominate juniors, and so on. Even more worrying, the desire to build honesty in children through Honesty Canteens in a number of schools, many have failed. Many Honesty Canteen businesses have gone bankrupt because honesty has not yet been fostered in children. And what is quite astonishing is the revelation of Tempo Interaktif Magazine (27/8/2009) in Samami (2011: 2) that according to the National Narcotics Agency, almost 10% of drug users are still minors. Therefore, this character education emerged due to

dissatisfaction with the implementation of education, especially regarding the quality of character output schools. Current education is considered to have failed to create individuals with character because it focuses too much on increasing knowledge and overemphasizes intellectual intelligence. However, it is weak in intellectual and spiritual intelligence, preventing the development of a virtuous nation. This is what has led to increasing moral decay, even though education is now accessible to all.

Therefore, the loss of character will lead to the loss of future generations. For example, this loss of moral and social character can be seen in rampant corruption, drug use, anarchism, and so on. Character also serves as a driving force and strength, preventing this nation from drifting. Furthermore, character doesn't emerge spontaneously; it must be developed and molded to shape individuals and a nation into a dignified nation. This character must be concretely realized through specific stages.

One of the steps that can be taken is building character through education, which is considered the most effective medium in developing the potential to strengthen character, both in the form of skills and insight. Therefore, education is continuously built and developed so that the implementation process produces the desired generation. Character education is a term that is still not accurately interpreted by parents, teachers, and the general public. For example, it is interpreted as a subject of citizenship, character education, a new subject due to the new curriculum, or even only interpreting this character education as the task of teachers in schools alone.

2. RESEARCH METODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative-descriptive approach with a humanistic and constructivist paradigm. This approach was chosen because the purpose of the study is not to measure quantitative variables, but rather to understand the meaning of character education built through creative literary expression in the *wayang* medium. In other words, this study interprets *wayang* as a literary and cultural medium that instills moral, social, and spiritual values through a creative process—both in performances, story creation, and students' reception of the characters and stories. This type of research is descriptive-analytical qualitative research in the context of education and children's literature. It is called descriptive because this study describes the facts, practices, and creative processes that occur in *wayang* based literary activities and is called analytical because the researcher does not stop at descriptions, but analyzes the character values (morality, responsibility, honesty, empathy, and discipline) that emerge in these activities. The qualitative method was chosen because character and moral values cannot be measured numerically, but are understood through meaning, narrative, and action. This approach allows researchers to capture the process of character formation contextually, not just the end result. *Wayang* as a medium of literacy is symbolic and semiotic, so it requires cultural interpretation, not just observation of behavior.

Data analysis was conducted interactively and cyclically, following the Miles & Huberman (1994) model, namely data reduction by selecting relevant data (children's narratives, teacher statements, quotes from *wayang* texts) and compiling character value categories. Data presentation by presenting data in the form of tables, value maps, or narrative quotes to show the relationship between literary creativity and character formation. Conclusion Drawing and Verification, namely interpreting the meaning of the findings, for example how the characters of Arjuna, Srikandi, or Semar function as moral and intellectual role models for children. This analysis is interpretative-hermeneutic, because it views literary works (*wayang*) as meaningful texts that are read in a cultural and educational context.

3. RELATED RESEARCH/LITERATUR REVIEW

Character itself is a very essential element in a person's environment, even in the life of a nation and state. Essentially, character has been defined by many experts from different perspectives. Etymologically, character originates from the Greek character "karasso" which means the essential "fingerprint" owned by every human being (Maksudin, 2013: 1). From here it is understood that every human being has a different fingerprint which automatically shows that every human being has a different character. According to the Big Indonesian Dictionary (Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI)), character is the psychological traits, morals or manners that distinguish one person from another. Character is also a way of thinking and behaving that is unique to each individual to live and work together both within the family, society, nation, and state (Samami 2011: 42). The meaning of character is also often associated with the meaning of character, noble morals, morals, and even with multiple intelligences (Maksudin. 2013: 3). A little understanding is aimed at the meaning of character, morals, and morals are the same and clearly interrelated.

Quoted from the book by Dharma Kesuma (2012), character education according to Ratna Megawangi is an effort to educate children to be able to make wise decisions and practice them in everyday life, so that they can make a positive contribution to their environment. There is also Fakry Gaffar interpreting character education as a process of transforming life values to be developed in a person's personality so that they become one with that person's life behavior. From the explanation above, it can be concluded that character education is a form of activity to educate a person/individual in which there is an action intended for the next generation with the hope of becoming a better generation in various aspects and has the function and purpose of character education to remind, strengthen, to form self-improvement and train the ability to live better in the future. The characters that are expected to strengthen a person through this character education start from the characters of honesty, discipline, caring, politeness, responsibility, cooperation, religiousness, independence, dignity, integrity, and nationalism.

Character education is being promoted everywhere, both in schools and in the general community. However, a problem arises: the lack of character education media. Media are tools used by teachers to teach character to students. These media are essential because they help students understand and implement the character traits taught by teachers. The solution to this lack of learning media is actually right before our eyes: Wayang. Wayang is a cultural heritage of our ancestors that contains valuable moral messages for life. Wayang stories contain character values full of kindness and heroism, which are excellent examples for character education for the nation's future generations.

So why must be Wayang? Because Wayang included in one type of literature, namely oral literature and Wayang is also included in one of the histories in Indonesia. This is in accordance with Marianna Richardson in Maksudin (2013: 68) there are several ways that can be used to convey character education, namely through literature, history, Natural Sciences (IPA), Mathematics. The phenomenon of oral literary traditions includes many genres of oral activities such as oral literary performances, speeches or traditional narratives, oral stories, spells, and children's play songs (Amir, 2013: 142). The concept of character education that is native to Indonesia can be explored from various customs and cultures in Indonesia, the teachings of various religions in Indonesia and leadership practices that have long been implemented in Indonesia (Samani. 2013: 59). The educational tradition in Indonesia seems not yet mature enough to embrace character education as a cultural and religious performance in community life (Maksudin. 2013: 65). It is stated that culture also clearly plays a role in educating a person's character. This is because culture has an impact on how people think and can also impact

behavior. However, unlike human genetic traits, it is inherited socially, not biologically (Coleman, 2005: 6).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the background in the introduction, we know that character education whose main goal is to form a character that is tough, competitive, noble, moral, tolerant, cooperative, patriotic, dynamically developing, science and technology oriented, all of which are inspired by faith and piety to God Almighty based on Pancasila (Muslich, 2011:67). So the conclusion of character education itself has the main goal of developing a person's basic potential, both in thinking and behaving in society, besides that character education functions as an enhancer of competitive national civilization in world relations.

Every moment, society is faced with the reality of the spread of moral decadence that affects teenagers, students, society in general, and even government officials. The most obvious signs of moral decadence in society include the spread of acts of violence, mass brawls, murder, rape, behavior that leads to pornography, etc. Thus, it is understandable that the demand for character education is increasingly being discussed with the aim of making the future generation become human beings with character, who are able to behave positively in all things.

Character education aims not only to develop moral, ethical, and ethical individuals, but also to develop intelligent and rational individuals who make sound decisions and utilize their potential intelligently. Intelligence in utilizing one's potential and acting rationally are the hallmarks of a person with character and personality. Character education is a values education designed to instill a spirit of hard work, discipline, creativity, and innovation in individuals, which is expected to become ingrained in their character and personality. Therefore, character education aims to shape individuals into innovative and hardworking individuals.

Efforts to ensure society utilizes intelligence and rationality in its actions involve instilling these personality values in future generations from an early age. Therefore, they must be equipped with character education now, so that Indonesia's future generation will no longer be irrational and characterless. Optimism and self-confidence are qualities that should be instilled in children from an early age. Implementing character education is a crucial step in shaping an individual into an optimistic and confident individual. It's not just about pursuing grades, but also about providing them with insight into how to behave within their environment, family, and society. One of the principles of character education is the development of a love of one's country. The most essential element of this attitude is the willingness to fight, make sacrifices, and be ready to provide assistance to those in need. This is where character education becomes crucial, ensuring that individuals truly understand that the knowledge they acquire must be utilized for the benefit of others.

Character education should be developed with a variety of implementation options, including approaches, strategies, methods, and techniques, integrated and comprehensive (Gunawan, 2012: 184). The effectiveness of character education does not always require the addition of a separate program, but can be achieved through cultural and life transformation both inside and outside the school environment. Through character education, all are committed to developing a generation into whole individuals who internalize virtue (know and want to), and are accustomed to embodying that virtue in their daily lives. The solution to this lack of learning media is actually right before our eyes: Wayang. Wayang is a cultural heritage of our ancestors that contains valuable moral messages for life. Wayang stories contain character values full of kindness and heroism, which are excellent examples for character education for the nation's future generations..



Figure 1: Childrens playing Wayang and traditional Balinese music

Potential Wayang as a communication medium for disseminating information is explained in detail in a book published by the Ministry of Communication and Information of the Republic of Indonesia. Starting from Wayang as a value reference, story Wayang which can be used as a teaching tool, conveying information, changing behavior and healing. Wayang is a national cultural heritage that should be preserved by the Indonesian people. Its use as a medium for character education is a supporting component in the formation of the nation's children's character while maintaining its existence as a literary culture. There are several advantages to this. Wayang as a medium for character education. First, Wayang nature acceptable. It means, wayang itself is part of the nation's cultural heritage and can be accepted by all groups. Second, Wayang nature timeless which means timeless. The story of Wayang is a story that has similarities from time to time. The existence of this characteristic makes Wayang as a character learning medium that can be used from generation to generation. Third, the media Wayang this does not require a lot of costs like other media and is practical and efficient.

The next discussion is Wayang. There are two opinions about the origin of Wayang. First, Wayang originated and was first born on the island of Java, specifically in East Java. This opinion is not only held and put forward by Indonesian researchers and experts, but also the result of research by Western scholars. Among the Western scholars in this group are Hazeau, Brandes, Kats, Rentse, and Kruyt. Their reasons are quite strong. Among them, art Wayang is still closely related to socio-cultural and religious conditions. Meanwhile, the second opinion says that Wayang originated from India, brought with Hinduism to Indonesia. They included Pischel, Hidding, Krom, Poensen, Goslings, and Rassers. Most of this second group were scholars from England, a European country that had colonized India (Soetarno: 7). However, since the 1950s, books of Pewayangan as if it had been agreed that Wayang it actually originates from Java Island, and is not imported from any other country. Wayang it is estimated that he was born in Indonesia at least during the reign of King Airlangga, King of Kahuripan, namely when the kingdom in East Java was at its most prosperous.

The value of character education in culture Wayang, encompassing values derived from ancient ethical systems, Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, faith/spirituality and others. Teaching Wayang greatly influences the way of thinking and behavior of its fans. An observer of Wayang in Yogyakarta, Tjipto Haribowo looks at the arts of Wayang can be used as a medium for learning about life starting from sensitivity, sensibility, ethics, democratization, or even learning how to live in an atmosphere of pluralism. Wayang also plays a significant role in Pancasila as the nation's philosophy of life and as the foundation of the state/state ideology is a consciousness, meaning that we believe in the values contained therein with full awareness. This also means the awareness that our existence as a very diverse nation and state is a potential, if managed well by implementing the values of Pancasila in various fields: arts, science, technology, education, law, history,

economics, industry and so on, it will undoubtedly make us a great nation and state (Soetarno: 19).

When we start to pay attention and describe the performance of Wayang, we can also clearly see the connection between society and oral literature. First, oral literature exists before an audience, because without an audience, there is no performance. If there is a performance without an audience, it is called practice, playing, or joking. Second, the beliefs of the society that sustain oral literature. Therefore, we will find certain conditions provided for the smooth running of the performance. These conditions relate to the society's belief in the supernatural in the performance. Wayang grandly to avoid disturbing magical elements. Third, it relates to societal values. Fourth, the presence of an audience gives special meaning to the Wayang or wayang performer. All of these things are related to oral literature and society (Amir, 2013: 142).

Here, we can take the example of the island of Bali, especially for those who embrace Hinduism. It has become a deeply ingrained tradition with many customs, culture, and religious ceremonies considered as feast day (Rahinan). Balinese arts and culture are a very important part of religious life (Hinduism) in Bali. All religious ceremonies in Bali utilize elements of art such as percussion, dance, visual arts, decorative arts, and literary arts as sacred arts (Department of Education and Culture, 1978: 175). One of these religious ceremonies is Hari Raya Tumpek Wayang. Tumpek Wayang is a manifestation God Iswara which serves to illuminate the darkness, provide enlightenment to life in the world and is able to awaken the power of art and beauty and create Satyam/Aikyam (truth), I'm here (holiness/glory), Sundaram (beauty/harmony). Tumpek Wayang is a reflection of a world filled with darkness, humans filled with stupidity, arrogance, and anger. Therefore, Shiva sent SangHyang Samirana descends to the world to give power to humans who will later become mediators in carrying out their activities. The person who becomes this mediator is called a carrying or Samirana. SangHyang Iswara provide this power to be able to awaken artistic taste and attraction that can provide suggestions to other people, namely the audience.

This power is what is called taksu or body, because in the performance of Wayang, a person carrying or Samirana able to convey stories filled with philosophical humor, criticism, suggestions, and the realities of everyday life. Eventually, the audience can be captivated by their thoughts, and the power of suggestion emerges within each individual. Therefore, human life on earth is not merely about maintaining the physical, but requires a balance between the physical and the spiritual, which is often reflected in the implementation and celebration of the event. Tumpek Wayang for Hindus celebrated every six months.

There is also a story that says that if a child is born on the same day Wuku Wayang this is a day that is considered sacred, Balinese people believe that those born on this day should be given a ceremony. Melukat/Crucifixion (ruwatan) big which is called Sapuh Leger. For children whose birth is celebrated at that time, it is intended to protect them from disturbances (hunting). Time God according to Sapuh Leger Palm Leaf And Lord Kala, Batara Siwa give permission to Time God to prey on children/people born on Wuku Wayang (cf. Gedong Kirtya, Va. 645). Based on the content Palm leaf said, if any of his children were born on Wuku Wayang, for the safety of his son, semeton (friends-citizens) Bali tried to carry out the ceremony by first performing a performance Sapuh Leger Wayang the following apparatus is prepared much more (heavier) than the equipment offerings/banten type Wayang other.

Tumpek Wayang also means "Arts Day", because that day is ritually celebrated as the birth of various types of arts such as Wayang, Barong, Rangda, masks, and all kinds of gamelan. These ritual activities are a form of gratitude towards SangHyang Taksu which is often symbolized by artistic ceremonies Wayang, because it contains various elements of art or total theater. In this art, all the existence and essence of art are encompassed. Ceremony presented before SangHyang Iswara, worshipped in front of all art objects and arts for safety and good luck in performing, attracting and captivating the hearts of each audience. For

art lovers and practitioners, the thanksgiving ceremony consists of offerings restrained: sesayut tumpeng guru, prayascita, penyeyeng and fragrant incense smoke, while begging to receive serious attention in creating the advancement of art and literature (oral literature).

Tumpek Wayang is literary data in the Lontar manuscript. One of them Lontar Kala Purana reads:



Figure 2: Example of a Lontar containing Balinese letters and language

"... Muwah binuru sang Pancakumara; katekang ratri masa ning tengah wengi. Hana dalang angwayang, nemoning tumpek wayang, sang anama Mpu Leger. Sampun angrepakena wayang, saha juru redep genderne, wus pada tinabeh, merdu swarane, manis arum...."

It means, *"... After being chased by the Pancakumara by the God Kala, until midnight, a man/wayangeer named Mpu Leger performed wayang during the Tumpek Wayang. After facing the screen, the gender player immediately played his gamelan, his voice melodious and clear...."*

That's a little knowledge about Rahinan Tumpek Landep in Bali, where it is introduced to children from childhood, along with dozens of religious ceremonies that have become traditions and must be carried out from generation to generation. In particular, the introduction to the Tumpek Wayang ceremony. From an early age, it plays a significant role in educating the next generation to love culture through literature, which includes character education values. In addition to being a means of character education, Wayang it can also be a means of obtaining religious education as well as classical entertainment with cultural arts played by Dalang and accompanying songs by sinden or singers of songs that accompany the stories in Wayang with a background of soothing, seductive gamelan music.

For example, in Hindu literature, namely Sloka Bhagavadgita the following is Sri Krishna's advice to Arjuna, which describes his character as follows:

"O Arjuna, be fearless, living a life of purity, wisdom, and unity with God. Be steadfast, strong, generous, honest, willing to make sacrifices while still obeying the prohibitions. Fully understand the Scriptures while maintaining control over your desires." (Bhagavadgita - Daivasura Sampad Yoga)

However, it is necessary to understand that the use of media Wayang. This isn't just for Hindus, especially those on the island of Bali. All religions, such as Muslims, can use it as a means of character education. On the island of Java, almost all Muslims regularly hold performances. Pewayangan every activity such as weddings, inaugurations, etc. However, on the island of Java there is no obligation for young people from an early age to maintain, continue and preserve Pewayangan this is like on the island of Bali. Therefore, there is nothing wrong if Pemawayangan can also be included in the world of school education through

extracurricular activities as a form of delivering character education in the school environment. In Bali, it is common for many children to play Wayang in various forms, and it is not uncommon for there to be competitions Wayang between schools. It is also clear that Wayang besides being a literary medium (oral literature), it also serves as a medium for character development from an early age. It also serves as a means of preserving literary culture, especially oral literature, which is on the verge of extinction

5. CONCLUSION

Character education should be developed with an integrated and comprehensive approach. Effective character education doesn't always require adding a separate program; it can be achieved through cultural and lifestyle transformation, both inside and outside the school environment. Through character education, everyone is committed to developing a generation into whole individuals who internalize virtue (know and want to) and habitually embody it in their daily lives.

Wayang is a national cultural heritage that should be preserved by the Indonesian people. Its use as a medium for character education is a supporting component in the formation of the nation's children's character while maintaining its existence as a culture in the context of oral literature. There are several advantages to oral literature. Wayang as a medium for character education. First, wayang is acceptable. This means that Wayang itself is part of the nation's cultural heritage and can be accepted by all groups. Second, wayang is timeless because the story of Pewayangan a story that has similarities from time to time. The existence of this characteristic makes Wayang as a character learning medium that can be used from generation to generation. Third, the media of Wayang this does not require a lot of costs like other media and is practical and efficient.

On the island of Bali, especially those who embrace Hinduism, they have known and always implemented traditions Rainan Tumpek Wayang Ceremony. Introduction and application the Tumpek Wayang resurrection since early childhood it has become a guideline for maintaining and cultivating traditions of Wayang and all its aspects, including oral literature itself. By promoting Wayang performances everywhere, it is hoped that this will have a positive impact, including:

1. Maintain religious faith in God Almighty
2. Respect and maintain Indonesian traditions/customs
3. Able to reflect on oneself to improve oneself to become an educated individual with good character and morals.
4. Preserving culture as a regional culture that supports the strength of national culture.
5. Can filter incoming foreign cultures, where good foreign cultures mean those that are in accordance with our culture, we accept and those that are not in accordance, we do not accept.
6. Protect the Indonesian generation from being contaminated by bad foreign culture.
7. Improve the behavior of the Indonesian people because Wayang performances always contain true life teachings in accordance with conscience.
8. The feeling of love and pride for the homeland and nation will increase in the minds of the Indonesian generation in particular and Indonesian society in general, so that it will have an impact on the smooth development of Indonesia into a better country.

Thus, Wayang can survive and thrive in its own country and truly become a dynamic character education medium. Although there may be some obstacles that may occur if children have to be changed to be simpler so as not to be scary, also taught starting with simple advice, to a large scale such as at the time of the

performance which is usually held all night long enough to make the audience bored and sleepy, the language that certainly uses the local language so that it causes confusion for the audience, and the audience reach with a radius of ± 500 meters is enough to make the audience have to be observant to see the various forms of the characters. However, there are still solutions that are initiated, including collaboration Pewayangan through print media, radio media, television media, film, and the internet (Ministry of Communication and Information of the Republic of Indonesia). These are the steps for preservation, although they seem modern, but in their implementation, it is hoped that every individual will truly understand what they are. Pewayangan along with all its aspects in real terms and all the hopes mentioned above can really be realized.

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