

International Seminar On Recent Language, Literature, And Local Culture Studies (BASA 2018)

Character Building in Kethoprak Performing Arts

Favorita Kurwidaria

Javanese Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Educations Universitas Sebelas Maret, Surakarta, Indonesia favorita.kurwidaria282@gmail.com

Budi Waluyo

Javanese Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Educations Universitas Sebelas Maret, Surakarta, Indonesia mas bewe@yahoo.co.id

Abstract—Indonesia is a country that has diverse arts and cultures. One of the existing traditional performing arts is kethoprak. Kethoprak still exists despite the development of modern culture. This happens since the people conserve it. Kethoprak as a traditional performing art has a very essential role in building the character of both its casts and viewers. Kethoprak encompasses various story lines. It is does not always depend on particular story. The story involved in kethoprak can be improved based on the casts' will. Therefore, its story is always developed. In the field of education, kethoprak becomes one of traditional performing arts that offers numerous benefits. Through its story, kethoprak has a role in building people's good and virtuous character and personality.

Keyword: character building, kethoprak, Javanese performing art

I. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia should be proud since it has various ethnicities, traditions, cultures, and customs that spread in its diverse regions. Those various forms of cultures, in each region, have different features or characteristics. The cultures are ancestral heritage that should be developed and preserved since they encompass noble characters. Moreover, those various regional cultures are actually the essential element that supports national culture. The national culture itself performs the function of strengthening the nation's cultural identity.

It cannot be denied that globalization influences the cultural development. Because of globalization, it is believed that there is a shift not only on how the culture is identified but also how the value of the culture is understood. Fukuoka (2016: 54), a Japanese cultural researcher, states that "Indonesian traditional performing art forms, have been considered important elements in establishing a nation's cultural identity. However, it is also true that these performing art forms are being exposed to many different changes amid the recent and rapidly developing social context". This statement clarifies that there is a shift on the cultural forms development. The problem could be caused by the lack of society's interest, especially young generation, to understand the forms and the values of their culture. If the society is willing to think deeper; the custom, morality, social, religious, and educational values contained in the culture are aligned with nation's cultural identity. Only if this matter is considered and anticipated, cultural revitalization can be realized by the government.

Due to the spreading of cultural acculturation; the development of traditional culture, especially Javanese culture, faces ups and downs. However, the existence of Javanese culture is considered to be quiet well preserved. This happens since the society still enthusiastically to know, understand, and watch their cultural performing art. One of the cultural performing art is *ketoprak*. Agus Rinto (2007) asserts that ketoprak is one of Javanese traditional arts that is able to attract a lot of audiences from all over Java. This happens because ketoprak as a traditional theatre can illustrate the story that is rooted from the noble characters of Indonesian in the past. It also reflects Javanese daily life.

In Central Java, East Java, and DIY; ketoprak is still frequently performed. Various themes related to life such as struggle, patriotism, love, morality, religion, and others are embodied in this performing art. Many stories of ketoprak are adapted from stories on history, patriotism, kingdom establishment, *panji*, and others. In the development of ketoprak, there are also stories that are related to society's lives. It also has to do with popular stories (Lisbijanto, 2013:iv).

Ketoprak is written in the form of script that will be performed later. The story of ketoprak is created by author/director through series of creative process. It is the reflection of reality of life. The author thoroughly interprets the phenomenon and presents it on the script based on his/her imagination. In ketoprak script, the structure is the same with other plays. It roots on society conflict. As stated by Waluyo (2002: 4), conflict is built due to the tension between the protagonist and antagonist. The conflict faced by the characters represent diverse society's characters in their real life. Therefore, ketoprak as a performing art can be used as a character building media.



Nowadays, character building is aggressively promoted by the government. This is used to anticipate the globalization challenges that may degrade the morality of young generation. According to Ratna (2014: 73), character building aims to educate the characters and other psychological aspects of the society. One may get knowledge on character building anywhere from anyone e.g. from his/her family and surrounding. Moreover, it can be studied from countless aspects of life such as social, economic, political, aesthetic, and cultural aspect. Particularly in aesthetic and cultural aspect, characters can be built through performing art such as ketoprak.

As a form of acting, ketoprak is a product of a script. The incomplete script is performed in a stage in front. Thus, it can be said that ketoprak covers two aspects that are script and performance. The success of this performing art depends on the combination of those two aspects. Therefore, both the story and the performance contains remarkable character building values that should be explored and discussed further.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. The Structure and Elements of Ketoprak

Ketoprak first appeared in 1908. The performing art of ketroprak has been slowly growing. It has its own characteristics compared to other types of traditional arts, namely the accompaniment, make-up, lighting, costumes and the language used. The various elements are combined in the ketoprak by considering the duration, place of the performance, and the story. Not only that, some ketoprak performances also put in dances that are deliberately made to adjust the needs of the story and start using modern musical instruments such as guitar, bass, violin, flute, trumpet, and saxophone. Ketoprak can be classified as traditional theatre with certain characteristics; it1) is limited reach only to a supportive environment; 2) adapts the dynamics of traditional society; 3) has no particular specialization; and 4) is created anonymously along with the community collectivity who support it. Based on this, ketoprak has the same script structure as the theatre does. Regarding the division of the theatre structure, Satoto (2012: 9-15) distinguishes the four most important elements, namely 1) theme and message, 2) plot, 3) characterization, and 4) setting (background). These four elements are an important part as a whole and complementary entity.

Ketoprak is a complex performing art with various supporting elements in it. All elements in ketoprak cannot be separated one by one as it will damage the essence of the ketoprak performance. These elements are natural, which must exist and be implemented. In the performance of ketoprak, the role of the elements builds the unity and integrity of performance that are truly complex. Regarding the elements of the theatre or ketoprak performance, Satoto (2012: 2) stated that there are six elements that build the unity and integrity from the theatre or ketoprak performances, namely 1) script, 2) producer, 3) director, 4) casts, 5) workers/stage relatives, and 6) audience. Broadly speaking, these six elements must be there in the theatrical performance or ketoprak. Aside from being an integrated entity, it is also a good means of supporting for performances.

Unlike the statement, Hasanudin (2015: 171-172) said that the elements of drama or theatre in relation to the performance are divided into two parts, namely 1) the main elements, consisting of directors, casts, technicians (stage workers), and audience, and 2) supporting facilities, which consist from the stage and composition, costumes (clothing), make-up, lighting, and sound, and musical illustrations. It can be said that the ketoprak script is made with the aim to be staged. The attraction of the story of ketoprak is the harmonious blend of the story elements and the elements of the performance.

B. Character Building Values

The value of character building is found in ketoprak. In educational field, ketoprak has a very strong influence on the internalization of the character building. The values of honesty, independence, hard work, tolerance, social care, and even the socio-cultural aspects can be obtained from the story of the ketoprak performance. In relation to the values of the character building, Hidayatullah (2010: 13) states that character is the quality or mental or moral strength, attitude or individual politeness which is a special personality that is the trigger and driving force, and which distinguishes it from others. Similar opinion was also expressed by Marzuki (Wibowo, 2013: 13) that character is identical with morals so that character is the universal value of human behaviour covering all human activities, both in relation to God with oneself, or fellow human beings, as well as with the environment, which is manifested in thoughts, attitudes, feelings, words, and actions based on the norms of religion, law, manners, cultures, and customs.

One can be said to have a character if he has succeeded in absorbing the values and beliefs that the society wants and using them as a moral force in his life. Character building means having a personality that is viewed from an ethical or moral starting point, such as the nature of honesty, trust, exemplary, or other traits that must be attached to the educator and students (Hidayatullah, 2010: 14). Referring to the eight pillars of character building developed by the Ministry of Education and Culture, there are eighteen character values. These values come from the religion, Pancasila, culture, and national education goals. The eighteen values are: religiousness, honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard work, creativity, independence, democracy, curiosity, national spirit, love of the nation, respect for achievement, friendliness/communicativeness, love of peace, love of reading, environmental care, social care, and responsibility. In terms of its components, character building emphasizes the importance of three components of a good character, namely moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action (Lickona, 1991: 21). Megahwangi (2004) further stated that there are nine character pillars that should be taught to the school-age children: (1) love of God with all



his creation, (2) independence and responsibility, (3) honesty trustworthiness, wisdom, (4) respect and courtesy, (5) humbleness, helpfulness, and mutual cooperation, (6) confidence, creativity and hard-working, (7) leadership and justice, (8) kindness and generosity, (9) tolerance, peace, and unity.

III. METHOD

The analysis and discussion on character building values contained in ketoprak are the result of this research. Accordingly, the research methodology used should be explained. This research was a descriptive qualitative research. Kirk and Miller (Moleong, 2014: 4) define qualitative research as a social particular practice that depends fundamentally on the observation. Qualitative descriptive research was used since descriptive phenomenon is studied.

The sources of the data were events, documents, and informants. The events itself were ketoprak performed in Surakarta. In choosing the stories as the research sample, purposive sampling was done. Popular stories were purposively chosen. In collecting the data; observation, document analysis, and interview were done. In conducting the observation, the events were directly observed in order that the supporting components of the performance and the way the casts play their role could be identified. Hence, the complete descriptive data on the performance were able to be collected. Afterward, documents relevant to research topic including ketoprak script were collected and analyzed to support and strengthen the analysis. Meanwhile, interview was conducted to collect the data from the informants. The informants were the casts, director, and audiences that could give supporting data beneficial for expert judgment. The data analysis technique used was Miles and Huberman's (2007: 18) interactive model of data analysis. Analysis was done continuously and gradually. It covered data reduction, data display, and verification or conclusion drawing.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

As stated before, the aspects of ketoprak performing art are divided into two, the story written in the form of script and the performance. Each aspect, either the script or the performance, has supporting components. All components that ketoprak has are relevant to be used as a media of character building. Therefore, the character building values analyzed covers two aspects. They are the aspect related to the story presented in a script and the performance.

1. Character Building Values in Ketoprak Performing Art

Ketoprak as a performing art has many supporting components that determine the success of how the story is presented, how dialogue is produced, how the casts utter the dialogue by utilizing gesture and expression, and how the casts behave on the stage. Those components represent a certain culture, especially Javanese culture, that has something to do with character building values.

In ketoprak performing art, the characters have different social background. This represents the past and current real life of Javanese. There are casts that play as king, *patih*, *abdi*, kyai, or ordinary society. In the scenes, every character uses varieties of Javanese language according to his/her *unggah-ungguh* or politeness. The varieties of Javanese language that is usually used to utter the dialogue are: *ngoko*, *krama*, and *krama inggil*. The different use of *unggah-ungguh* depends on the social status and the age of the character.

Ngoko is used when the characters have the same social status. Moreover, it is also used by those who have higher social status to those who have lower social status or by those who are older to those who are younger. The variety of ngoko is *ngoko lugu* and *ngoko alus*.

For example, when there are characters of mother and her son/daughter; ngoko is used. Ngoko is also used by the king when he talks to his patih or abdi. Meanwhile, krama as one varieties of Javanese language is used by the locutor to pay respect to the interlocutor. Typically, the locutor uses krama when the interlocutor is older. Whereas, krama inggil is used to speak to the one who is being respected the most such as king, patih, and commander. In using Javanese language according to unggah-ungguh, the casts usually are alreafy able to choose the appropriate varieties; especially when they should use krama lexicon for themselves. This kind of krama lexicon used is *krama andhap* not bukan krama inggil. The use of varieties give concrete education to the audiences. It shows how to use unggah-ungguh of Javanese language appropriately. Nowadays, it seems difficult for the young generation to use unggah-ungguh appropriately. They often use krama inggil lexicon for themselves whereas they use krama andhap atau ngoko when speaking to someone older. The use of Javanese language according to unggah-ungguh reflects character pillars stated by Megahwangi (2004: 93), the use of Javanese language according to unggah-ungguh reflects polite character. This value needs to be developed since it becomes one's character in maintaining his/her relationship with others. For Javanese, the locutor that is able to use of Javanese language according to unggah-ungguh is considered as someone who understand politeness. By doing so, the interlocutor will feel that the locutor respect him/her. The use of language varieties is a characteristic of Javanese culture. It should be used by Javanese so that there is no more "wong Jawa ilang Jawane" meaning that Javanese who are no longer Javanese.

Politeness as one of good characters can be learnt from the way the casts utter their dialogue. It can also be learnt from their gesture and attitude on the stage. For example, audiences can observe the way *patih* talks to the king. It is found that from some



ketoprak performing art observed, someone who has lower status talks to someone who has higher status by using low intonation or pitch. If someone disagrees with the king's opinion, for example, he/she says sorry first. He/she does not even interrupt the king's talk. Besides, when the casts talk to someone whom they respect, they slightly bow their head to show their respect. They also slightly bow their body when they walk in front of someone older. Pointing someone older by using thumb is also done. This phenomenon gives concrete example on how to build good character that is beneficial to be used for communicating in our daily life. This is the characteristic of Javanese.

Aside from linguistics aspect, character building values can also be learnt from the casts' habit. For example, religious character can be observed from the character who does *prihatin*. Prihatin is a kind of religious activities such as meditation, fasting, and praying. Someone who does those activities try to avoid doing anything wasteful. This is an example of character building that is related to religious attitude (Waluyo, Kurwidaria, and et.al. 2017: 520).

Ketoprak as a performing art always shows a conflict between the antagonist and the protagonist. In facing the conflict, physical or mental conflicts are usually presented. Besides, the characters usually have a discussion so that they can face the conflict all together. Discussion and mutual cooperation lessen the burden caused by the conflict. This reflects friendliness and tolerance. The same phenomenon can also be found when the king makes decision. Commonly, the king communicates with his abdi so that patih, abdi, and others are able to give their opinions. In another word, the king is being considerate. Although the king has an authority, he considers others' wish. He is also willing to consider others' opinions. Character building values that can be learnt are democracy, communicative value, and social care.

2. Character Building Values in Ketoprak Stories

Stories in Ketoprak are mostly based on folklore, history of kingdom, heroism, and others. In those stories, there are character building values that can be used as learning media. The followings are the examples of character building values in Ketoprak performing art.

a. Ketoprak Performing Art of Rara Mendut

This story tells the struggle of a woman in the reign of Mataram kingdom to pay tax to the kingdom. Due to the economic difficulty at that time, Rara Mendut's parents had a trouble in paying tax to the kingdom; however, with her hard-working, Rara Mendut tried to help her parents pay tax by selling cigarette.

Character building values that can be learned from Rara Mendut Ketoprak is discipline value; Rara Mendut showed her discipline by always being obedient in paying tax to Mataram kingdom. In addition, there is also a Hard-Working value, that is, when Rara Mendut was willing to help her parents by selling cigarette. It was big challenges and risks for Rara Mendut. Firstly, it was uncommon for women to sell cigarette at that time, and secondly, impolite acts of buyers that threatened her safety. Creative value is showed when Rara Mendut had an idea of benefiting the beauty and gentleness of the village women in selling cigarette to draw buyers' attention from the noblemen. With the intention to mend and help her family's economy, Rara Mendut was willing to go around the kingdom alone to sell cigarette. It shows a character value of self-reliant. Rara Mendut who prioritized to earn extra income to pay tax is a representation of nationalism spirit and love to motherland.

Then, another character building value is Social Care, that is, by helping her family economy, Rara Mendut showed social care of environment, especially family. Selling cigarette that is made of tobacco is a representation of Rara Mendut's care of benefiting environment potential so that there is a connection between tobacco farmers and cigarette sellers. It shows a value of character building, that is, environmental care. Rara Mendut's natural attitude as a daughter who wanted to help her parents' economy, and as a citizen who was obedient in paying tax, reflect a value of responsibility.

b. Sengkala Ketoprak Performing Art (adapted from Greek drama, Oedipus)

Sengkala Ketoprak is an adaptation of mythology from Greece. A king named Prabangkara who killed his blood father, and married his own blood mother. The story began when the little King was thrown by his parents since they felt embarrassed about having a son with physical defect on his foot. At his young age, he became a robber, and one day he unintentionally robbed and killed his father. From that robbery, he succeeded in advancing and giving prosperity to the people in his village. He was then appointed to be the King, and he advanced the kingdom with all his best efforts.

The followings are character education values that can be learned from Sengkala Ketoprak performing art, 1) Religious, after being warned and revived by his subordinate, Prabangkara remembered the power of God and realized that he disobeyed norms, customs, and fate after killing his own father, marrying his mother, and making his country in disarray due to his authoritative government. 2) Honest, honesty of his subordinate who was brave to reveal the badness of the King deserves to be used as the example in this ketoprak, although in this show, life was a bet once he was brave to be honest in front of the King. 3) Self-reliant, although there was a lot of bad things in Prabangkara, but his self-reliance since he was kid is good to be the example of becoming a king who is fair to his people, and being a king who is a good model for life. 4) Democratic, Sindumurti as an adopted brother of Prabangkara became a democratic figure since he always considered public interest in every policy. In addition, he was



also a Vice King and trusted by Prabangkara in taking decision, although sometimes he was disliked by the King. 5) Nationalism spirit, Prabangkara can be said as a nationalist; he always investigated the causes of misery in his country. Even though he had not found the causes yet, Prabangkara was still an important figure, that is, a king who wanted his people become prosperous. 6) Social Care and Environmental Care, both sons of Prabangkara, Prabasemi and Prabasasi were the two figures loved by people because of their care to the sellers and refugees after natural disaster occurring in the kingdom. Prabasasi and Prabasami allowed people to use the Hall of the Kingdom to become temporary shelter. 7) Responsibility, as the king, Prabangkara had responsibility in all aspects to his people. Although his kingdom was in conflict, Prabangkara still found the way to give prosperity to his people.

c. Harya Penangsang Ketoprak Performing Art.

This is a ketoprak performing art that used a setting of Pajang Kingdom in the reign of Harya Penangsang Kingdom (Aryo Penangsang). It tells a story of a fight to get Islamic Mataram Kingdom's authority which was in the early reign of Panembahan Senapati. In this story, Arya Penangsang felt that only himself who deserved to be the King of Mataram since he had line of decent to Demak Bintara, different from Panembahan Senapati who was an adopted son of Sultan Hadiwijaya. However, a quarrel between the two kings ended in an unavoidable civil war, until finally Arya Penangsang died in the hand of Panembahan Senapati.

The followings are some character building values that can be learned from Arya Penangsang ketoprak show. 1) Religious, although Arya Penangsang was characterized as an idealist and egoist person, he also had a religious side when asking for advices from one of the Walisongo as his spiritual guide. With the advices from one of the Sunan, Arya Penangsang turned to be wiser in perceiving conflict occurring in the war of Mataram and Pajang. 2) Tolerant, after getting advices from one of the Walisongo, Arya Penangsang became more tolerant to Panembahan Senopati; all his actions were more controlled although at the end he was defeated by Panembahan Senopati. 3) Discipline, Arya Penangsang always obeyed the rules stated by one of the Walisongo. With his discipline, he had a better personality. 4) Hard-working, to be the King of Mataram, he was willing to sacrifice his self-respect as the King of Pajang with insults and repeated attacks from Mataram. 5) Nationalism spirit and Love to Motherland, to maintain the power of Mataram, he was willing to sacrifice his life for the sake of Arya Penangsang's ambition. 6) Responsible, to make his predecessors' desires come true, Arya Penangsang wanted to succeed by continuing *Trah Demak Bintara* in Mataram kingdom, although he was failed and lost his life.

d. Kyai Kala Gumarang Ketoprak Performing Art (Bedhah Madiun)

This ketoprak performing art tells about Madiun Duchy which rebelled against Mataram. The rebellion occurred due to the rejection of the Duke Rangga Jumena to join Mataram since he had line of decent to Demak Bintara. Finally, with all the strategies he used, Panembahan Senapati successfully destroyed Madiun Duchy; however, the Duke Rangga Jumena escaped, and it was remained Retna Dumillah who was a daughter of Madiun kingdom. Retna Dumillah was very strong since she had keris as a weapon named Kyai Kala Gumarang given by his father, Rangga Jumena. At the end of the story, Panembahan Senapati intervened personally to fight against Retna Dumillah. With Panembahan Senapati's power, Retna Dumillah was defeated and married by Panembahan Senapati to be the queen of Mataram.

The followings are character education values that can be learned from Kyai Kala Gumarang ketoprak show, 1) Honest, when Dimas Jayakusuma failed at the first shot to beat Madiun, he said the truth to Panembahan Senapati, even though at the end Panembahan Senapati was so angry with him. 2) Tolerant, tolerance performed by Panembahan Senapati is clear when he did not kill Retna Dumillah, but he brought Retna Dumillah to Mataram and appointed to be the queen. If a King really did his/her job well, as long as he/she was an enemy, he must be killed for the sake of the country's duty. 3) Discipline, character of Panembahan Senapati, haste, almost put himself in danger; however, thanks to advice from his uncle, Mandaraka, he was wiser in taking any decisions. 4) Creative, creativity was performed by Mandaraka when having a strategy to beat Madiun by sending Nyai Adisara as a hook in order that Ranga Jumena was complacent about the kindness of Adisara. However, with her beauty, Adisara deceived Rangga Jumena until Mataram soldiers got inside Madiun Duchy hall. 5) Nationalism spirit and Love to Motherland, all the retainers of Mataram kingdom, from Panembahan Senapati until Mandaraka and Dhimas Jayakusuma, loved their country. They showed their love to the country by negotiating for the unity of duchy outside of Mataram kingdom to become the part of Mataram, although there was a lot of rebellions that ended in wars. 6) Social Care, Panembahan Senapati's desire to unite all Mataram that was broken into parts made him become a person with high social care; he said that by uniting Nusantara, the kingdom would be easier in prospering his people. 7) Responsible, there is a lot responsible attitudes in Kyai Kala Gumarang ketoprak, such as Panembahan Senapati who tried to unite Nusantara, Mandarakan who was responsible for being the kingdom's advisor, Adisara, the queen of the kingdom, who was responsible for being the leader in beating Madiun.

V. CONCLUSION

Ketoprak is a kind of traditional Javanese performing arts that is still often staged, especially in Central Java, East Java and *Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta* (DIY). Many themes can be raised in ketoprak, such as struggle, sacrifice, patriotism, love, and others. One of the basic elements in the Ketoprak performing arts is the conflict. Conflict is built by the opposition between



protagonists and antagonists. The problems faced by these characters can represent various aspects of human nature and character in real life. Thus, the story in kethoprak is actually inseparable from the elements of character values. Therefore, the art performance of kethoprak can be used as a media of character education. The value of character education can be explored from the aspect of the story and the aspects of the performance..

References

Fukuoka, Madoka. (2016). The Success Of Traditional Art Forms: A case Study of Preservation Activity in Indonesia. *Osaka Human Sciences*. Vol 2, p. 53-72. doi: 10.18910/56908.

Hassanudin WS. (2015). Drama Karya dalam Dua Dimensi Kajian Teori, Sejarah, dan Analisis. Bandung: Angkasa

Hidayatullah, M. Furqon. (2010). Pendidikan Karakter: Membangun Peradaban Bangsa. Surakarta: Yuma Pustaka

Lickona, Thomas. (1991). Educating for Character, How Our Schools Can Teach Respectand Responsibility. New York:

Bantam Books

Lisbijanto, Herry. 2013. Ketoprak. Yogyakarta: Graa Ilmu.

Megawangi, Ratna. (2004). Pendidikan Karakter: Solusi yang Tepat untuk Membangun Bangsa. Jakarta: Indonesia Heritage Foundation.

Moleong, Lexy J. (2014). Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif. PT Remaja Rosdakarya: Bandung.

Miles, Mattew and Michael Huberman. 2007. *Analisis Data Kualitatif: Buku Sumber tentang Metode-Metode Baru*. Terjemahan Tjetjep Rohendi Rohidi. Jakarta: Universitas Indonesia

Ratna, Nyoman Kutha. (2014). Peranan karya sastra, seni, dan budaya dalam pendidikan karakter. Yogyakarta. Pustaka Pelajar.

Satoto, Soediro. (2012). Analisis Drama dan Teater. Yogyakarta: Ombak

Waluyo, Budi. Kurwidaria, Favorita. et al. (2017). Proceedings from ICERI '17: The Exploration Of Javanese Art Values And Cultural Values In Kethoprak Performance As The Means Of Establishing Character Values For Young People. Yogyakarta: Institute Of Reaserch Service Yogyakarta Education Service.

Waluyo, Herman J. (2002). Drama: Teori dan Pengajarannya. Yogyakarta: PT.Haninda Graha Widya.

Wibowo, Agus. (2013). Pendidikan Karakter Berbasis Sastra. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar