

Mendu Traditional Theater as a Treasure of the Local Wisdom of West Kalimantan

Gunta Wirawan

Faculty of Teacher Training and Education
Universitas Sebelas Maret, Surakarta, Indonesia
gwirawan91@student.uns.ac.id ; gwirawan91@gmail.com

Herman J Waluyo

Faculty of Teacher Training and Education
Universitas Sebelas Maret, Surakarta, Indonesia
hermanjwaluyo@staff.uns.co.id

Sarwiji Suwandi

Faculty of Teacher Training and Education
Universitas Sebelas Maret, Surakarta, Indonesia
sarwijiswan@staff.uns.co.id

Sahid Teguh Widodo

Faculty of Cultural Sciences
Universitas Sebelas Maret, Surakarta, Indonesia
sahidteguhwidodo@yahoo.com

Abstract—*West Kalimantan has a lot of hidden local wisdom, one of which is the traditional Mendu theater. Mendu's strength lies in his dialogues as a medium for delivering messages that are always accompanied by moral advice and education. The storyline brings evil and kindness, with a good story that is always the winner at the end of the story. Therefore, the preservation of Mendu's traditional theater is very important because it is a storage identity and archive with contains values that are good for social life. The purpose of this research is to describe Mendu's traditional theater as a communication medium for local West Kalimantan so that people know culture that almost extinct this area. This research includes qualitative research with descriptive methods. The technique is used by library research (documentary study). Based on the results of the study it was found that Mendu had a communication function, among others, as an educational tool, disclosure of aesthetic feelings, and public entertainment media.*

Keywords—*mendu; traditional theater; local wisdom*

I. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia has a variety of cultures and traditions (Meliono, 2011: 222, Wangi, 2012: 1, Ismawati, 2017: 1028). Malays as ethnic groups hold various cultural treasures. Regional culture is an indigenous culture that is inherited, internalized, grown and developed by certain ethnic groups in a relatively small area. All of the many arts, one of them is the performing Mendu's traditional theater in West Kalimantan. Mendu's art is an art that belongs to the people of West Kalimantan and Riau Islands. With determination of the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia as Indonesia's Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2014.

Through traditional theater, life in the past is more clearly illustrated, concerning the procedures, customs, and problems that emerged in that era (M. de Bruin, 2003: 1). Headrick (2003:3) says the theatre is the most communal and collaborative of the arts, involving a live audience reacting and interacting with live actors on stage. Language and action bridge the gulf between audience and actor. The theatre is the art form that often "leads" popular culture. It is a truism in the theatre that popular concerns and issues of the day first find their way into the public consciousness via the stage.

Effendi (2006a: 2) said that one of the significant elements of the beauty mosaic cultural of West Kalimantan was performance art. With the term "performing arts" meant is a variety of arts that are performed in front of audiences who enjoy the audience or listeners. With this limitation, performing arts includes various forms of art such as dance, theater, and also oral text presentations (Yudiaryani, in Alfarizi, 2016: 49).

People's literature is literature that lives in the midst of the people, usually known as oral literature (Indiarti, 2017: 27.). This kind of story is passed down orally from one generation to the younger generation (Asmoro, 2005: 367). The birth of oral literature first from written literature. Indeed, oral literature lives together with written literature, especially in remote villages (Fang, 2011: 1). Finnegan (in Effendy, 2006a: 8) says that oral literature is a socio-cultural phenomenon that lives well in the uneducated societies or in the midst of educated societies. Decreasing of oral literature text from generation to generation is carried out from mouth to mouth. Therefore, according to Effendy (2006a: 9) there is no exact same of oral literary text when performed in different times, even if it is performed by the same speaker. Every time there are always occur alteration. As for the fixed relatively is the 'core story' or the parts that are considered importantly.

This matter causes of the oral literary text to disappear easily in the midst of society. The copying is not carried out on a concrete master document. Fewer enthusiasts and connoisseurs make oral literature increasingly marginalized. Add more with technological progress and globalization that are inevitable (Samidi, 2006: 236). Likewise with the fate of Mendu's performing arts, many young people do not know their own cultural heritage. Asfar (2016: 404) said that revitalization must build collective awareness of the Malay community to be proud and maintain their culture. It means that the documentation and inventory of Malay treasures have to involve the appreciation of commoners to revitalize the culture. With revitalization, it is hoped that it can to grow up and create positive appreciation from the village community for their local culture (Ismawati, 2017: 1028)

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Every community (ethnicity, religion, region) in Indonesia definitely have certain noble values that are good considered and used as social rules and norms. These values afterward bind the community into a community and to guarantee them to live in peace, harmony, friendship, mutual appreciate, mutual respect and help each other. This fact must be recognized as one of the natural forces that grow from the community and be useful for the community itself.

Mendu's performing arts contain local wisdom. According to Rais (2017: 3) Naturally local wisdom is formed from the empirical experience of the owner's life. Thus, local wisdom can be defined as a tool of knowledge in a community, both from previous generations as well as it experience that related to the environment and other communities to overcome life's challenges (Ayatrohaedi, in Rais, 2017: 3). Local wisdom is a tool of knowledge and practices that can be used to solve problems that faced in a good and right way according to the community (Nugrahaeni, 2013: 315, Ahimsa, (2007: 17)

According to Rahyono (2009: 12) local wisdom is human intelligence possessed by certain ethnic groups that obtained through community experience. It means that local wisdom is the result of certain communities through their experience and not necessarily experienced by other communities. These values will be very strongly attached to certain communities and that value has been through a long time journey, throughout the existence of the community. Meliono (2011: 227) said that the long process has developed local wisdom originally from various knowledge of the Indonesian ethnics. According to Wales (in Rais, 2017: 4) the basic thoughts of local wisdom include (1) cultural characteristics, (2) a group of people as owners of the culture, and (3) life experiences that produce these cultural characteristics. Thus it can be said that local wisdom is formed from the empirical experience of the life of the owner. Mendu as an art belonging to the people of West Kalimantan has values of local wisdom that are good life for community.

According to Achmad (2006: 3-4) that traditional theater performances are generally carried out in the framework of the needs of the community, related to ceremonial, celebration, or other purposes. Traditional art is an art inherited from generation to generation by the ancestors of the ethnic group environment, which has a standard structure and a grip standard that is always adhered by the ethnic environmental artists concerned. Thus, traditional theater is a theater in a particular ethnic community that follows the procedures, behavior and ways of art to following tradition, the hereditary teachings of their ancestors, in accordance with the environmental culture of they adhere to. Traditional theater is sourced and rooted and has been laid down as one's own and accepted by the community. Achmad (2006: 41) says that folk theater is one of oral literature that lives in society. Oral literature is the main foundation in traditional theater in Indonesia. This oral literature produces folk theater with variety forms of appearance.

Literature Tradition in West Kalimantan Includes (a) oral literature, (b) literary writing, (c) rewriting of oral literature, (d) literary writing writing. Although the four activities are different, but each other has a difficult connection that is clearly separated. What is stated literacy writing is not written literature in a rigid sense; literacy writing here is still very strongly influenced by oral literature. Therefore what is stated as oral literature is also not oral literature in its narrow meaning; oral literature that spoken or sung may be written literary writing, which at first may also live in oral traditions as well (Effendy, 2006b: 7).

The birth, growth and development of theater in people's lives in Indonesia cannot be separated from the growth and development of artistic life and culture. The birth of a traditional art, generally determined by the life of the community environment (Achmad, 2006: 39). Thus, the process of the birth of folk theater and its relation to life is an inseparable element that is how society accepts and to perceive traditional arts in its environment.

III. METHOD

This research includes qualitative research with descriptive methods (Creswell (2014), Yin (2011), Leavy (2017). This study uses documentary study techniques (Nazir, 1999: 111, Muliawan, 2014: 71, Zed, 2008)). Documentary techniques are done by reviewing the text. The study is done by classifying the parts that are the object of research in this study. The steps of data collection are carried out through repeated reading activities at the primary source which is the object of research. Then record the parts and classify them. The classification is intended to separate the parts included as data to be analyzed, so that it is easier for researcher to relate them with the problems and objectives in this study. Sources of data in this study are books, journals, writings, and documents. Data in the form of text to shows comprehensive information about the existence of Mendu in West Kalimantan.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Mendu as a traditional theater still shows its function in society and also has ethical and aesthetic values, that is, firstly, as an educational / lighting tool. This is presented to the audience through the main theme of the story which always describes that evil is always defeated by goodness. Secondly, as a means of expressing aesthetic sense. This mainly concerns players/actors. By often practicing playing Mendu means training skills and sensitivity to the aesthetic values that exist in Mendu's artwork. Thirdly, as a spectacle / entertainment. Mendu as one of the performing arts by itself is also a medium of mass communication (social functioning) and that is also as an entertainment media / spectacle of many people (Achmad, et al (ed, no year: 83). : 2).

Mendu's story that is often shown is the story of kingdoms and evil. In the plays that were staged were also inserted jokes and humorous that made Mendu really function as people's entertainment. Uniquely the story plays that were staged were not written in the full scenario. Therefore, the players are required to have high ability of improvisation and spontaneity (Indonesian Intangible Cultural Heritage of 2004: 214). According to Aribowo (2010: 22-23) Basically the background of the plot is always in life in a kingdom or palace. The story is similar to that in Java which tells of the life of royalty. The only difference is different backgrounds, such as China, India, the Middle East, Java, Bugis, Europe, and taken stories from the Malay Chronicles.

In its performance, Mendu theater opened with typical Malay dances such as Beladun dances and other Malay dances. Beladun dance is Mendu's opening dance which is performed with male and female couples wearing typical Malay clothes. For the men, they use the bay cove clothes, while the women use baju kurung which further adds to the nuances of Malay culture when displayed. After opening with the Malay dance, Mendu continued with the appearance of a theater or royal drama which was packed so nicely, interspersed with Beladun songs and jokes that made Mendu even more interesting to enjoy. Mendu, packed with jokes, made Mendu worthy of being used as a media for people's entertainment.

Mendu's strength laid in its dialogues which are always accompanied by moral advice and education. The storyline presents the values of evil and goodness, with a good story that is always the winner at the end of the story. Thus, Mendu also be functioning as an Education facility, in addition to its entertainment function (Indonesian Intangible Cultural Heritage of 2004: 214). When we watching people's theater including Mendu, besides enjoying our stories and treats as a spectacle or entertainment, there is also something very important that can be taken from it. There is a mission, a message, an advice, and admonition in it. Both the advice that is already in playing of the standard story, as well as the insertion message regarding the issues of education, information, development, or social criticism. Of course it is not conveyed vulgarly, but it is entrusted to the sentence or scenes of jokes or humorous. Mendu did not escape the slapstick and jokes, even though there was no specific round for that. And no less important, it also serves as a disclosure of the aesthetic sense of the owner (A.Halim. Ed, 2013: without page number).

According to Juliastuti (2014: 39-42) The function of Mendu's arts in society is, as follows:

a. Entertainment Media

Mendu is a folk theater that was born in the middle of society to entertain the public. Mendu became an entertainment media because it was watched by public as a free spectacle.

b. Media Reveals Aesthetic Feelings.

Mendu Theater became a media to express the aesthetic sense of the artists and connoisseurs of this folk theater art. The skills and sensitivity of the artists to aesthetic values are channeled through the theater that they display. Their skills and sensitivity to the aesthetic values contained in Mendu will be further honed by the increasing frequency of artists practicing and entertaining to the public. In addition, the aesthetic taste of the performing art lovers can be channeled with them watching the performance. The theater is a media to express the aesthetic sense of the audience.

c. Media Education.

The show is used to tell about human actions to store, organize, and communicate most of the things they know, namely in the form of goodness and truth always win against badness and wickedness. Therefore, it becomes a medium of education because in

every performance / story it always ends with the victory of goodness against evil. Kindness always defeats evil. This becomes a standard in the performance. It contains important messages and is intended to be conveyed to the public. Mendu is a cultural heritage that is inherited from one generation to the next. Mendu's theater can also be the widest storehouse of customs and knowledge of an oral culture because of the size and complexity of the scenes and actions. This can be seen in the performance of Mendu with a combination of music, dance, songs, poetry, dialogue, martial arts, and jokes / humor that make the atmosphere become familiar between the player and the audience.

d. Message Delivery Media,

For example the Development Message. In the 1980s the performance of Mendu was as an entertainment watched by the public with messages — development visions and missions, family planning programs, even at the time of the election, which could contribute as much as the media of information, education and the delivery of development missions. Mendu's performance also has a social function for the community, namely activating the fatigue function of the language, activating communication between members of the community, sharing social news, and socializing social values to children.

Thus it can be said that the theater has many purposes in human culture, including entertaining, enlightening and informing an audience. Some forms of theater focus purely on the aesthetic and serve no other purpose than to entertain an audience through a story or event. In other cases, theater has served as a catalyst for social change (Segedin, 2017: 3). Therefore, it is not an exaggeration to say that Mendu is a cultural treasure as one of West Kalimantan's Malay identities, and Mempawah in particular. This is because (1) Mendu has existed in West Kalimantan for hundreds of years ago, (2) has become a treasure owned by his speaking community, (3) has a literary function (4) has kept the assets of local customs and values (5) has been recognized as Indonesia's intangible cultural heritage by the 2004 Ministry of Education and Culture.

V. CONCLUSION

Mendu's traditional theater is a cultural treasure as one of the West Kalimantan Malay identities that contains the values of local wisdom as oral literature.

Mendu's traditional theater has a function as a communication medium, namely, firstly, as an educational / lighting tool. Secondly, as a means of expressing aesthetic taste. Thirdly, as a spectacle / entertainment. Mendu's traditional theater is experiencing disordered or suspended animation. For this reason, this art is not extinct, it requires concrete efforts from all parties so that the pride of West Kalimantan can be preserved and recognized by the next generation

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