

The Internalization of Moral Values in Wayang Kulit: The Tale of Begawan Among Raga (An Ethnopedagogical Perspective)

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Abstract

Efforts to strengthen identity related to the existence of *wayang kulit* (shadow puppetry) are being intensively carried out by the community, particularly artists. Ki Dalang Roman and the *wayang kulit* troupe of the *gagrak trowulanan* style have engaged in cultural innovations to preserve the art of *wayang kulit*. The *Lakon Carangan* (non-canonical stories) serves as a solution to address the challenges posed by global cultural influences. This study focuses on the meaning of character reinforcement within society through Ki Dalang Roman's *wayang kulit gagrak trowulanan* performance of *Lakon Begawan Among Raga* and explores the process of internalizing moral values from this *wayang kulit* tale in educational settings. The tale, which has been performed in various shows, carries diverse meanings that are instrumental in strengthening societal character. It is not merely a narrative but is intended as an educational tool. Every *Lakon Carangan* or story presented always incorporates moral values, which are expected to shape society's character positively and achieve harmony.

Keywords: Begawan Among Raga, Ethnopedagogi, moral values, *wayang kulit*



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Introduction

Wayang kulit, a traditional shadow puppet art, remains well-known and valued as an esteemed cultural heritage, passed down through generations. It has been legitimized by UNESCO as a *Masterpiece of Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity* in the realm of narrative storytelling and meaningful cultural traditions since 1997. This recognition aims to raise awareness among communities to register, evaluate, and preserve intangible cultural heritage deemed significant (Nurgiyantoro, 2011). The importance of *wayang kulit* is inseparable from its historical roots, dating back to approximately 1500 SM. Historical events passed down through generations have imbued *wayang kulit* with sacred significance in society. Etymologically, the term "wayang" is derived from "ma-hyang," which means "to worship ancestral spirits." However, this interpretation is often debated due to differences in the syllables "ma" and "wa." More commonly, *wayang* is interpreted as "shadow," reflecting the visible shadows projected behind a screen during performances, illuminated by the light of a *blencong* (traditional lamp). Symbolically, this conveys that the puppets represent ancestral spirits as divine intermediaries and mirror the reality of human life. Additionally, *wayang* is described as a representation or imitation of humans, crafted from materials like wood or leather, used to depict captivating stories (Anggoro, 2018).

Beyond its historical significance, *wayang kulit* has evolved into a complex art form in terms of ritual performances and functions. Initially serving religious purposes, it has developed into an entertaining art form embedded with moral values (Satryowibowo, 2012). In Javanese society, *wayang* functioned as a medium for Sunan Kalijaga to disseminate Islamic teachings. Masroer (2015) further

notes that during Indonesia's New Order era, *wayang* performances were held overnight to convey messages of development and modernization. Over time, the reinterpretation of *wayang kulit* transformed it into not only a spectacle (*tontonan*) but also a guide (*tuntunan*). While the spectacle focuses on entertainment, the guide emphasizes moral values. In this context, *wayang* is seen as a heroic portrayal of the battle against evil, aligned with Javanese moral philosophy. The stories in *wayang* reconstruct foundational Javanese societal values, emphasizing harmonious and balanced principles in the universe (Darmoko, 2015).

The profound meanings embedded in *wayang kulit* performances provide a foundation for using *wayang* as a medium for conveying moral messages to the community. This art form, deeply rooted in the hearts of the people, presents an opportunity to instill moral values and strengthen character through the narratives performed. In *wayang kulit* performances, the term *lakon* refers to the plot or dramatized story that serves as the script for the puppeteer (*dalang*). *Lakon* often denotes a narrative dramatized for the stage (Soetarno, Sunardi & Sudarsono, 2007:48). The *Gagrak Trowulanan* style of *wayang kulit* by Ki Dalang Roman, accompanied by the *Karawita Podo Laras* ensemble, frequently features *lakon carangan* in their performances (Defi, 2019).

In Ki Dalang Roman's performances, *Lakon Begawan Among Raga* is often chosen by audiences for events such as weddings, *slametan* (thanksgiving ceremonies), or circumcisions. The title "Begawan Among Raga" was coined by Dalang Roman, symbolizing humanity's nurturing by *Kakang Kawah Adi Ari-Ari* (siblings from birth). Characters like Gatutkaca, Sena, Krisna, and Lintang Tranggana feature prominently in the tale. As a *lakon carangan*, this story is an original creation by the *dalang*, incorporating new characters and plots to craft a unique narrative. These new tales in *wayang kulit* convey distinct moral values that can be applied in society.

Efforts are being made to make *wayang kulit* more accessible to a broader audience, particularly the younger generation, as it is primarily favored by older demographics. Strategies, such as incorporating its moral teachings into formal education, are vital to ensuring its relevance. Schools, as secondary agents of socialization after families, play a critical role in optimizing the internalization of *wayang kulit*'s moral values for future generations. The national education curriculum has integrated local wisdom into the learning process. Local wisdom is part of culture, encompassing principles and practices upheld and applied by local communities, often reflected in customary norms and values. (Oktavianti & Ratnasari, 2018). As local wisdom holds significant pedagogical value in shaping behavior, the curriculum inherently incorporates ethnopedagogy into the educational process.

The 2013 curriculum, based on the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation No. 79 of 2014, mandates that educational content from elementary to high school levels includes local content. This aims to foster students' understanding of the uniqueness and advantages of their local region (Oktavianti & Ratnasari, 2018). Utilizing local wisdom as an educational tool not only preserves cultural heritage but also supports national development.

Recognizing the importance of ethnopedagogy as a medium for transmitting *wayang kulit*'s moral values, this article explores the moral values embedded in Ki Dalang Roman's *Lakon Begawan Among Raga*. It also examines the process of internalizing these values within sociology education from an ethnopedagogical perspective. The discussion will delve into one of the basic competencies in the sociology syllabus, analyzing the methods, models, and approaches to learning as an implementation of cultural practices.

Methods

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach, with data collection methods including observation, interviews, and documentation. The study aims to build upon previous research conducted in 2019 on the creative process behind the *Wayang Kulit Gagrak Trowulanan* by Ki Dalang

Roman. Unlike the earlier study, this research focuses more specifically on a single narrative, *Lakon Begawan Among Raga*. The sampling technique used is purposive sampling, where informants are preselected based on their knowledge and expertise related to the research theme. If the information gathered is deemed insufficient, snowball sampling will also be employed. Snowball sampling involves identifying additional informants based on recommendations from the initial informants or other considerations by the researchers. For data analysis, the Miles and Huberman framework is applied, which involves data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The research findings are presented in a detailed and in-depth descriptive format (Sugiyono, 2014).

In addition, an ethnopedagogy-based learning concept will be designed by integrating one of the core competencies from the sociology curriculum.

Results and Discussions

1. Results

Each wayang performance has its own distinct style, known as gagrak in Indonesian wayang culture. Among the various gagrak styles in Indonesia's wayang tradition are the Pesisiran, Jawatengahan, Surakarta, Jawatimuran, and Ngeyogyakarta styles. These styles exhibit significant differences, especially in the performance process. The Jawatimuran style, also referred to as gagrak trowulanan, is commonly used by many wayang kulit groups, with various regional terms for it. The history of the Jawatimuran style or gagrak trowulanan was spread mainly through the education system of the Indonesian Secondary School of Arts (SMKI) in Surabaya. In Mojokerto, this style has existed since 1930, stemming from the dalang (puppeteer) education initiative led by the Regent of Mojokerto. At that time, Ki Candra Wisastra, who was regarded as a master teacher, mentored a student named Pit Asmara, who lived in Trowulan. Thanks to Pit Asmara's brilliance in performing wayang kulit, he was awarded the 1972 Arts Award by the Minister of Education and Culture in recognition of his influence on other dalang practicing the Jawatimuran style in other regions (Sunarto Timoer, 1988:23). Ki Dalang Roman is one of Pit Asmara's students, and thus his performances are characterized by the gagrak trowulanan or Jawatimuran style.

The Jawatimuran style differs from the Surakarta and Yogyakarta styles. This distinction is evident in the fact that Surakarta and Yogyakarta styles are more popular among the upper class, while the Jawatimuran style has found greater appeal among the lower class. Ki Dalang Roman seized this opportunity to choose gagrak trowulanan as the style for his performances. The distinctive features of the gagrak trowulanan style include: 1) the use of Krama Madya and Krama Inggil language registers, 2) the Suluk beginning with the words "rep sirep sirep saking kersane sun," and 3) the absence of the note "dreg jer dreg jer" (Defi, 2019). Furthermore, the characteristics of wayang kulit are also influenced by the lakon (story) being performed. The lakon plays a central role in wayang kulit performances, as it serves as the theme or title of the story unfolding during the performance.

The Lakon Begawan Among Raga is a type of lakon (story) created and developed by Ki Dalang Roman himself. As this lakon is an original creation by Ki Dalang Roman, it is categorized as a lakon carangan (composed story). In his wayang kulit performances, Ki Dalang Roman frequently creates lakon carangan, adhering to his principle of performing a lakon a maximum of two times. This approach is designed to prevent audience fatigue. Additionally, given the challenges posed by social changes that produce various popular cultures with their own unique attractions, Ki Dalang Roman is motivated to remain creative in his performances to maintain audience interest. This aligns with Etzioni's (1986) view that, in response to social change, individuals must maximize their utility in a rational manner by choosing the best means to achieve their goals. Individuals who are independent must be able to make decisions with at least two utilities that cannot be reduced, which include pleasure and morality (Prayitno, 2014).

In addition to economic considerations and cultural preservation, Ki Dalang Roman strategically hones his creativity to convey moral values subtly through his wayang kulit

performances. Wayang kulit performances are not merely events or entertainment; they also contain sacred rituals full of symbolic meaning, aligned with the background of each lakon (Sudarko & Sarwanto, 2010). In Javanese mythology, wayang kulit is defined as the crystallization of concepts, values, and norms that embody the attitudes and life principles of society, and it serves as an efficient communication tool for the community. Wayang is not just a popular art form but has become an essential part of life for society (Nurgiyantoro, 2011). For many wayang enthusiasts and cultural experts, understanding wayang means understanding how life should be lived. The lakon performed in wayang shows depict human life itself, and it is not uncommon for audiences who enjoy these performances to identify with certain wayang characters and reflect on the qualities of these characters in shaping their actions in real life (Defi, 2019).

The Lakon Begawan Among Raga is a type of lakon carangan believed to carry profound meaning within its story. Initially, the lakon was titled Edan Lamun Raga—with "Edan" meaning crazy or mad. The title was changed because the name Edan Lamun Raga was considered unpleasant and harsh-sounding. Therefore, it was revised to Begawan Among Raga, which consists of three words: Begawan, Among, and Raga. Begawan refers to the essence of a person, Among means to care for or protect, and Raga signifies the body or self. Thus, Begawan Among Raga implies that within every individual, there exists a protector. In Javanese tradition, this is interpreted as Kakang kawah Adi Ari-Ari—the idea that from the moment a person is born, they have a spiritual sibling or guardian who will protect them. This also suggests that if a person performs good actions, they will be safeguarded in return. To this day, this lakon has been performed twice, during circumcision ceremonies and village or earth thanksgiving events (ruwah desa or sedekah bumi).

The central story of this lakon begins with the theft of the Pusaka Cakra Pamungkas (a sacred heirloom) in a kingdom called Negara Dwarawati, which is described as a peaceful and prosperous land ruled by Bathara Kresna. The people suspect that the theft was committed by Gatot Kaca, based on the physical resemblance between the thief and Gatot Kaca. Bathara Kresna, as the leader, immediately goes to Sena (Gatot Kaca's father) to inform him of the incident. Sena's trust in Bathara Kresna leads him to skip questioning the truth and instead rushes to punish Gatot Kaca. Despite being severely ill and bedridden, Gatot Kaca is unjustly punished by Sena, even though he is innocent of the crime.

Finally, Sena forced Gatot Kaca to confess, but since Gatot Kaca knew he had not committed the crime, he remained steadfast in his conviction. Filled with disappointment, Gatot Kaca flew higher and higher, until he collided with the wheel of the Sun (Srengenge). As a result of this encounter with the Sun, Gatot Kaca's physical appearance began to change. He no longer looked as handsome as before; his body turned blackened and grotesque. The drastic change in his appearance made him think of changing his name, as he believed no one would believe he was still Gatot Kaca. Therefore, he decided to change his name to Begawan Among Raga. True to his new name, Begawan (meaning wise man or ascetic), he sought a place to meditate and retreat.

On the other side, Kresna continued searching for the lost heirloom. Eventually, Kresna arrived at a place with the hope of meeting a wise ascetic who could help him recover the stolen pusaka. Upon reaching the place of meditation, he encountered Begawan Among Raga. Bathara Kresna asked for Begawan Among Raga's assistance in finding the missing pusaka. In exchange, Begawan Among Raga agreed to help, on the condition that when they eventually found Gatot Kaca, Kresna and Sena would both apologize to him. Kresna did not object to this condition, indicating his agreement.

Begawan Among Raga then set out to search for the thief of the heirloom and encountered Lintang Trenggana. Lintang Trenggana indeed had a physical appearance identical to Gatot Kaca. Lintang Trenggana transformed his form to resemble Gatot Kaca in order to seek revenge for being killed by Gatot Kaca earlier. Lintang Trenggana had once been an evil demon (Buto) who was killed by Gatot Kaca. His soul or spirit was revived and took the form of Lintang Trenggana. A fierce battle took place between Begawan Among Raga (Gatot Kaca) and Lintang Trenggana, ending with

Lintang Trenggana being killed by Begawan Among Raga. Upon Lintang Trenggana's death, Begawan Among Raga's physical form reverted to that of the mighty Gatot Kaca. The stolen pusaka was then returned to Bathara Kresna. At this point, Bathara Kresna and Sena both apologized and knelt before Gatot Kaca, acknowledging their earlier mistake of accusing him of stealing the heirloom. With a generous heart, Gatot Kaca forgave Bathara Kresna and Sena.

In the story of Lakon Begawan Among Raga, the main characters are Sena/Bimasena, Bathara Kresna, and Gatot Kaca. The performance of this lakon features many wayang characters, including Sencaki, Baladewa, Jombloh, Semar, Lintang Trenggana, Sena, Kresna, and Gatot Kaca. However, the central characters remain Sena, Kresna, and Gatot Kaca. In wayang kulit performances, every lakon or story typically contains moral values intended to help shape the character of the audience, encouraging better behavior and achieving harmony. The performance of Lakon Begawan Among Raga is one such lakon that conveys numerous moral messages through its plot.

2. Discussions

Based on the story above, there are several moral values that can be derived from Lakon Begawan Among Raga, as follows:

a. Value of Persistence

In the story of Lakon Begawan Among Raga, the value of persistence is shown through Gatot Kaca's determination to uncover the truth behind a distorted issue. His search for the truth is reflected in his efforts to find Lintang Trenggana and prove to Bathara Kresna and Bimasena that he did not steal the pusaka, but it was Lintang Trenggana who was the thief. Gatot Kaca's persistence shows that truth must be fought for.

b. Value of Patience

The value of patience in Gatot Kaca is seen when he is accused of stealing the Pusaka Payung Tunggal Naga from the Kingdom of Dwarawati. Despite being punished by his father, Bimasena (Sena), while in a weakened condition, Gatot Kaca endures without retaliating, even though he knows he is innocent. His patience is evident when he does not resist his father's harsh treatment. This is shown in the scene when Sena comes to Gatot Kaca's house and strikes him without mercy. Despite being falsely accused and beaten by his father, Gatot Kaca does not resist or strike back. Instead, he accepts the treatment, tries to understand his mistake, and asks for forgiveness if he has done wrong. Gatot Kaca accepts his father's actions with an open heart, showing his great patience, even when deeply hurt.

c. Value of Politeness

The Javanese people are often associated with the culture of upholding politeness and noble ethics. In the conversations between characters in Lakon Begawan Among Raga, the value of politeness is shown through the respectful language used by the Pandhawa (the sons of Pandu) when addressing Bathara Kresna as their teacher. The use of *krama madya* (a polite Javanese language register) in their speech is a reflection of the respect they show to their teacher. In Javanese culture, language registers such as *ngoko*, *krama madya*, and *krama inggil* are used to show respect, with *ngoko* used among peers, and *krama madya* and *krama inggil* used for addressing elders or people in positions of respect, like parents, teachers, or leaders. The politeness seen in the Pandhawa's conversation with Kresna, particularly in Ngamarta, demonstrates how they treat their teacher with great respect. In Javanese society, politeness is a fundamental character trait, often used to judge the quality of a person's character.

d. Value of Religiosity

In addition to the above-mentioned values, Lakon Begawan Among Raga also carries a moral message that, as humans, before relying on others, we should first remember God, who has created humanity. The story suggests that every person has someone who watches over them. The religiosity implicit in this part of the story encourages individuals to remember their faith in God when facing both good and bad times in life.

e. Value of Truth

A character lesson that can be drawn from this story is the importance of thinking carefully and not rushing into decisions. Acting hastily without considering the truth can lead to harmful consequences for oneself and others. Another lesson is to avoid judging others based on their physical appearance. This story teaches that true value lies in a person's character, not in how they look. In conclusion, Lakon Begawan Among Raga embodies several important moral values that can serve as indicators for developing the character of society. These values include persistence, politeness, discipline, truth, patience, religiosity, and the attitude of not judging others by their appearance.

The Internalization Process of Moral Values in Ki Dalang Roman's Wayang Kulit Play 'Begawan Among Raga' in the Learning Process

The process of internalizing moral values from the Wayang Kulit performance of Lakon Begawan Among Raga in the learning process involves the application of ethnopedagogy. Ethnopedagogy, which has been designed in the Indonesian Education Curriculum, is a learning approach that introduces and preserves local wisdom, helping students develop a sense of pride and love for their local cultural heritage. Local wisdom is nurtured in education using four key principles:

1) alignment with the students' development; 2) meeting competency needs; 3) flexibility in type, form; and 4) scheduling, benefiting national interests in facing global challenges (Oktavianti, I., & Ratnasari, Y, 2018).

Moral values from the Lakon Begawan Among Raga are a part of this local wisdom. These values can be integrated into formal education, particularly in the subject of sociology, which is taught in senior high schools, especially in the Social Sciences and Language departments.

Competency Standard: 3.4: Understanding how to empower communities by promoting local wisdom values amidst globalization.

This competency focuses on community empowerment strategies that utilize local wisdom values. For effective implementation, an appropriate approach and method are needed so that students can grasp the material well. One such method is inquiry-based learning.

Inquiry-based learning involves actively engaging students in systematically, critically, analytically, and logically exploring phenomena, living beings, or objects. According to Hamnuri in Damayanti (2014), this model emphasizes maximizing students' activities in discovering and finding answers, positioning students as the primary agents of learning. In this approach, students are not merely passive recipients of verbal explanations from the teacher but are active in discovering the essence of the subject matter themselves.

In this context, Field Observation/Discussion based on Literature Study is an appropriate method. This method provides students with an open space to engage critically in discussions with their peers and utilize scholarly literature to broaden their understanding. After determining the relevant competency standards, methods, and approaches, the following steps can be outlined for the learning process: 1) Teacher prepares the learning material in the form of a video of the Wayang Kulit performance of Lakon Begawan Among Raga; 2) Teacher stimulates students by providing statements that encourage them to identify key aspects of the video; 3) Form groups of 4-5 students for each group; 4) Provide guiding questions for each group, such as: "What moral values are contained in the Lakon Begawan Among Raga?"; 5) Allow students time to search for relevant information from various sources, such as scholarly journals or other literature; 6) Each group presents their findings in front of the class, after which the other groups can critique or respond to the presentation; 7) Challenges and Opportunities:

The process of internalizing moral values from Wayang Kulit might be less effective due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which makes it difficult for students to engage in direct fieldwork. However, ethnopedagogical studies would be more effective if students could experience the material firsthand in real-life settings. This could be accomplished through mini research projects or

practical skill applications. Lastly, the teacher can assess the students' understanding of the moral values embedded in Lakon Begawan Among Raga by evaluating their daily behavior, which reflects the internalization of these values.

Conclusion

Shadow puppetry (wayang kulit) is a highly meaningful cultural product. Its performances feature various epic tales, one of which is Lakon Begawan Among Raga, a derivative story crafted by Ki Dalang Roman. This story conveys numerous moral values, including perseverance, politeness, discipline, truthfulness, patience, religiosity, and humility. These values can be optimally internalized in society through formal education, particularly in schools. One subject that aligns with this purpose is sociology education.

This study predominantly focuses on exploring the moral values embedded in the story of Lakon Begawan Among Raga. However, the discussion related to the design of ethnopedagogy-based learning models remains insufficiently developed. Future researchers are encouraged to delve into studies emphasizing ethnopedagogical learning models. Furthermore, the moral values encapsulated in Lakon Begawan Among Raga could serve as teaching materials for other subjects, thereby enabling broader comparative studies on ethnopedagogical approaches.

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