



Creative Thinking Process of Mice Cartoon Creation in *Harian Rakyat Merdeka* the Period of 2019 Presidential Election

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Abstract

Muhammad Misrad or Bang Mice is a cartoonist in *Harian Rakyat Merdeka* who has a unique ability to express his ideas in the form of cartoons. The process of creativity in creating Mice Cartoon's works was very interesting to study. The purpose of this study is to analyze Bang Mice's creative process in the creation of Mice Cartoon which was published in the *Harian Rakyat Merdeka* in the 2019 presidential election period. The research method that was used in this study was qualitative method. Data collection was done through observation, interviews, and document studies. Data validity checking techniques included triangulation of data and data sources. Qualitative data analysis techniques included (1) data reduction, (2) data display, and (3) verification (Miles & Huberman, 1992:17), while the research data analysis technique used Graham Wallas's theory. The results of the study showed that Bang Mice's creative thinking process in creating Mice cartoons that was published by *Harian Rakyat Merdeka* in the 2019 presidential election period began with the preparation stage which was influenced by internal and external aspects of the cartoonist, the incubation stage which became the incubation stage for ideas, the illumination stage which was marked by the emergence of insight, and the verification stage which included the testing that came from the internal and external factors. An important finding of the research was that with a pattern of almost the same work, Bang Mice was able to take a creative perspective so as to produce interesting work for the reader. This research was expected to be beneficial for the community, especially for those who engaged in the field of fine arts/cartoons in order to be able to produce the quality products through the creative thinking processes that was conducted by Bang Mice.

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INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of expressing the experience of sense in the art world is known as expression (Subiyantoro, 2011:70). Art expression is a form of human expression that has existed for centuries, since the humans exist on earth (Sugiarto, 2014:9). The expression of art in life has proven that art is not only a necessity but as a necessity. One way to express art in life is through art media.

The art media used for expression in various aspects of life are very diverse, one of them is through cartoons. Cartoons as one part of the illustrated images that was published in the mass media are not only used as decoration. These cartoons have an important role as a medium to convey criticism and opinions that represent the community.

Art is present in human life, not only as a means to meet aesthetic needs, but more than that, it can accommodate a variety of other needs related to psychological, social, and cultural issues (Triyanto, 2009:153). This was also experienced by Muhammad Misrad, a senior cartoonist from *Harian Rakyat Merdeka*. This man, who is familiarly called as Bang Mice, revealed that in addition to fulfilling the needs of expression, creating cartoons, Bang Mice also has needs in terms of economic factors. Bang Mice has a family to support so that being a cartoonist is both a hobby and a job. Besides, it is influenced by social and political environmental factors that make Bang Mice always eager to express criticism and suggestions for government policy.

Bang Mice revealed that the idea of making Mice Cartoon emerged based on the issues and events that developed in the community. In general, Bang Mice got his inspiration in creating works originating from reading, breaking news, or realities that occur in his daily life. Working since 2003 until now,

Mice Cartoon has always taken up social, political and economic themes. Bang Mice claimed that one of the most productive themes was a political one, specifically related to elections. Since the period of August 17, 2017 to June 2019, there have been 152 works that became the headline news in *Harian Rakyat Merdeka*. The theme "2019 Presidential Election" was the most themed topic that appears to be the headline news compared to the 2019 election themes.

Bang Mice has a unique ability to respond to political issues that were being discussed by the public. The work that was produced was not only about cartoons and caricatures, but also visualized with various objects that were found. His work that always invites readers to laugh when discussing political issues was very interesting to discuss. Bang Mice's work was able to be a cartoon that was able to invite someone to be active and think creatively as expressed by Wardhani (2015:3). This is in accordance with the mission of *Harian Rakyat Merdeka* which wants to make the cartoons published on the front page *Harian Rakyat Merdeka* become an attraction for someone who wants to read the news that is being discussed hotly.

This study refers to the previous research; (1) Hartanto's research (2001: 40-48) which examined the use of illustrations as an attraction in print media advertising, the research subjects focused on the ad rubric, (2) Maryam's research (2014) with the title analysis of humorous discourse in a collection of Mice Cartoon comic series that focuses on the language of humor Mice Cartoon, (3) Tias Satrio Adhitama's research (2014: 104-105) which examined gag cartoon which was published in print media was able to convey propaganda messages. The research that was related to the creative process of the Mice Cartoon edition until his work was published had never been done. This was one of the

novelties that researchers took as the focus of research, especially that was published in the print media *Harian Rakyat Merdeka*, Jakarta.

This research was useful to know how the stages of the cartoonist Muhammad Misrad's creative thinking process before pouring it into the cartoon work, it was hoped that this research would be able to inspire the wider community especially those who engaged in the field of cartoon art to be able to explore their potential through the steps of Muhammad Misrad's creative thinking.

METHOD

This research was a qualitative study, because the results were qualitative in which one of the main elements was a variety of analytical procedures (Strauss and Corbin, Shodiq and Mutaqien translations, 2013: 7). The focus of this research was to observe and analyze Muhammad Misrad's creative thinking process in producing Mice Cartoon's work that was published in the *Harian Rakyat Merdeka* in the 2019 presidential election period.

The data obtained were in the form of written and oral data. Written data in the form of written books, journals, articles, and the work of Mice Cartoon. While oral or unwritten data in the form of information that was obtained directly from informant, the data was in the form of the results of conversations and discussions with the resource persons relating to the work process.

Written data sources came from books, journals, articles, as well as from internet media, manuscripts, and works of Mice Cartoon. The source of the unwritten data came from the results of observations in the field, the results of interviews with informant, and the processing of documentation data. Data collection

techniques used in this study were observation, interviews, field notes, and document studies.

The data validity checking techniques included informant review and data triangulation. Informant review was done by asking the opinion and approval of the informant. Triangulation was a data checking technique that utilizes something other than the data that had been concluded, for the purposes of checking or as a comparison of the data. Triangulation in this study was carried out in 2 ways; source triangulation and method triangulation.

In general, qualitative data analysis techniques include the following procedures: (1) data reduction, (2) data presentation, and (3) verification (Miles & Huberman, 1992:17). While the analysis technique used relating to the research objectives was to analyze data using Wallas's creativity theory as quoted by Munandar (2012: 39), which was classified into 4 stages; 1) preparation, 2) incubation, 3) illumination, and 4) verification.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Editorial cartoons are cartoons that carry the messages of social criticism that are usually published in newspapers (Ranang, 2010: 3). Through this editorial cartoon Bang Mice expressed his social criticism as a form of communication in society that aims or functions as a channel for aspirations of the course of a social system or social process. Most of the style of editorial cartoon work that appears realistic is close to the accuracy of objects, both humans and natural objects around themr (Cahyadi, 2010:48).

Adhitama (2014: 104-105) explained the reason for editorial cartoons perched on the start page with the position of matching headline news; (1) cartoons as funny and simple visual images allow it to be a clear explanation of the news presented by the

editor, (2) cartoons can convey any message, although impressed as playful, humorous cartoons are able to convey serious and important messages, they are able to convey political, social, moral messages, in a humorous form, (3) only as a refresher between tiring rubrics, (4) in terms of the appearance of print media, the presence of cartoons adds to the window of the newspaper to be more varied, fresh, and impressive.

Based on the research findings, before Muhammad Misrad or Bang Mice created cartoons, Bang Mice had to go through the idea-seeking phase. This is in line with Sumartono's statement (2015: 195) which reveals that the creation of works of art is a creative process, which begins with the desire to express ideas represented in visual language, a strong desire to work consciously as a means to translate ideas which arises from the urge from within oneself to express. Mostly, it represents the reality around him as part of the individual expression of his life (Mujiyono, 2009: 178).

As according to Krullik and Rudnick (in Siswono, 2008: 61), a process is identical to the indicator in the level of creative thinking that is to synthesize ideas, build ideas, and implement these ideas. The ability to think creatively can be trained and developed continuously (De Bono in Jamaludin, 2010: 203). That's what Bang Mice did since senior high school age by continuing to hone his ability to draw cartoons, especially editorial cartoons.

A good editorial cartoon must meet five requirements; unique, artistic, communicative, humorous, and special techniques used in the work. It was not an easy thing for Bang Mice to fulfill the requirements of a good editorial cartoon. Bang Mice must go through a process of creative thinking.

The creative process is a real picture that explains how creativity occurs (Fauziyah,

2013: 76). The creative process is able to build mental and extraordinary new ideas (Sormin, 2016: 21). Meanwhile, according to Krullik and Rudnick (in Siswono, 2008: 61), a process is identical to the indicator in the level of creative thinking that is to synthesize ideas, build ideas, and implement these ideas. The ability to think creatively can be trained and developed continuously (De Bono in Jamaludin, 2010: 203).

Wallas as quoted by Munandar (2012: 39) classifies the process of creative thinking in four stages; 1) preparation, 2) incubation, 3) illumination, and 4) verification. The following was the result of an analysis of Bang Mice's creative thinking process when producing Mice Cartoon work with a political theme, with the chosen topic being the 2019 Presidential Election.

Preparation Stage

Bang Mice has a well-structured preparation phase, because Bang Mice has a schedule of his own work specifically to make the cartoon edition of *Harian Rakyat Merdeka*. Bang Mice also did not depend on the mood in the work, Bang Mice has been able to work professionally with a schedule that he has made himself and he is consistent with the schedule, although occasionally Bang Mice requires more time.

Broadly speaking, Tabrani (2006: 280-281) divides preparation into two aspects; the inside and outside aspects. The inner aspect that was prepared by Bang Mice was to calm down and neutralize emotions in order to be able to produce objective work that did not seem to favor one particular group. Besides that, this is Bang Mice's way of being careful to maintain ethics before working. In other aspects, Bang Mice needs a comfortable atmosphere in the work. Bang Mice is accustomed to the work atmosphere accompanied by the music of *The Beatles* and

there must be a cigarette that intersperses every work activity.

The external aspects that need to be prepared were the actual data and information that was being discussed by the public in general. Bang Mice tends to use online media more as a reference in finding ideas to work. In addition, Bang Mice also continued to consider the data and information that was obtained from the general public he met, because this was considered to be far more accurate and more real in the field. The site that Bang Mice was referring to in finding actual information were <https://news.detik.com/>, <https://www.jpnn.com/>, <https://www.merdeka.com/>, <https://www.suara.com/>, <https://www.pikiran-rakyat.com/>, <https://www.beritasatu.com/>, <https://politik.rmol.id/>, <https://nasional.kompas.com/>, and <https://www.cnbcindonesia.com/>. Besides coming from the site, Bang Mice also usually watched the news that was covered by CNN Indonesia, TVOne, and Kompas TV.

Incubation Stage

The incubation stage is a state in which experiences, data, and information that are read and observed are then consciously thought out and then deposited (Rusdi, 2017:266). Glover et al (2013: 180) stated that at this stage, all experiences, data, and information that were obtained in the previous preparatory stage were deposited until finally generating new inspiration. The appearance of this inspiration is categorized as the first step in creating a new creation. Wallas called this stage as a condition or state that is free from the process of conscious thought.

The incubation stage that was experienced by Bang Mice was to contemplate every news that had been read and the information that was obtained at the preparation stage. Beside from reading

sources, he also pondered the thoughts that emerged from Bang Mice himself. At this stage, Bang Mice grappled more with all data that had been obtained, not seeking or gathering further data.

The brood phase was usually passed in a very short time, sometimes even invisible through this stage, because Bang Mice settled the information and the data he got too short. However, at a certain time, Bang Mice needed more time to precipitate the information and the data he had obtained, for example when making a work published on July 13, 2018 edition in *Harian Rakyat Merdeka*, entitled "Presidential Threshold Effect".

The reason for the length of time Bang Mice pondered the idea for this July 13, 2018 edition, was due to the ongoing Presidential Threshold issue. Every five years, more precisely in every presidential election, this problem was always repeated, so Bang Mice has a very long thought process because it compares the current problems with the problems that had occurred in the previous five years. The following are the works published in *Harian Rakyat Merdeka* July 13, 2018 edition.



Figure 1. "Presidential Threshold Effect" July 13, 2018 edition
(Source: Muhammad Misrad documentation)

Illumination Stage

According to Suyanto (2005: 70), the illumination stage is a bright spot in terms of the ability to respond, resolve and express the information that is received in a creative way. Campbell (2012: 23) illustrates the process of creativity at this illumination stage as the AHA stage. It means, this stage is the stage when someone has found a connection between a problem, find a way to work to solve the problem, and get a bright spot to solve the problem before then expressing or realizing it. At this time the emergence of insight or inspiration.

Insight always appears when Bang Mice associates the results of his contemplation with events or everything that becomes his personal experience. One of them was when looking for ideas for the work of *Harian Rakyat Merdeka* January 21, 2019 edition relating to the debates of presidential and vice presidential candidates on January 17, 2019. Bang Mice gained the insight from his morning activities of instant noodle breakfast with his two daughters. This was where Bang Mice found a new idea to use instant noodle packaging as an object of visualization of his work this time. The following was the works that was published in *Harian Rakyat Merdeka* January 21, 2019 edition.



Figure 2. “Debat Capres 2019, rasa cerdas cermat” (2019 Presidential Election, Quiz Taste) January 21, 2019 edition
(Source: Muhammad Misrad documentation)

The reason for choosing the object in the form of instant noodle packaging was because instant noodle was identical to foods that were consumed by many people in the lower middle class. Bang Mice positioned himself as ordinary people who belong to the lower middle class. This is a form of realist implementation of the illumination stage, the illumination stage was displayed in the form of a person's ability to come up with new ideas based on the learning outcomes of events and experiences that was experienced previously. Because in creating a work of art can not be separated from the problem of direct and indirect experience (Fiyanto, 2018:38).

The example of the emergence of the insight also occurred in the process of creative thinking for works that would be published in the *Harian Rakyat Merdeka* the edition of February 6, 2019. Bang Mice re-linked the problem in his mind with the general habits that exist in his environment. Insight appeared in this phase, Bang Mice remembered that Russia has the characteristics of a sun bear. Quoting from <https://id.rbth.com> the official local site that contains various things about Russia, the fauna that is characteristic of Russia is the sun bear. Therefore, Bang Mice used bears as a strong character who visualized Russia. In addition to sun bears, Bang Mice also added a hat that was characteristic of Russian fashion, which was later worn by a sun bear. The following was the work that was published in *Harian Rakyat Merdeka* February 6, 2019 edition.



Figure 3. “*Propaganda Rusia*” (Russian Propaganda) February 6, 2019 edition
(Source: Muhammad Misrad documentation)

Verification Stage

This stage is also called the testing stage where at this stage a new idea or creation is tested against reality. Testing or assessment of a work can be grouped into two categories; the assessment of an internal nature and the assessment of external nature. Internal assessment is an assessment that was made by his/herself. Whereas external assessments are assessments that was made by other person (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996:79). Tolah (2014: 45) revealed that with an assessment of the work, the weaknesses or strengths of a work, good or bad of the work can be known early and then can be improved.

Internal assessment was more often done by Bang Mice because Bang Mice tends to be more stable with the results of his work, so it did not always require testing ideas from the external side before working. The consistency with his idea was caused because Bang Mice always being careful in generating ideas from the beginning of the preparation stage to the illumination stage. As the idea of the work for *Harian Rakyat Merdeka* March 16, 2018 edition. Bang Mice only conducted internal testing, which evaluated the ideas based on their own idealism. This was because Bang Mice was optimistic that his idea would be able to be accepted by society in general.

The following was the work that was published in the *Harian Rakyat Merdeka* edition of March 16, 2018.



Figure 4. “*Pertarungan Jokowi dan Prabowo sudah dimulai, menghadapi pemilu 2019*” (Jokowi and Prabowo Battle has been started, go to 2019 Presidential Election) March 16, 2018 edition
(Source: Muhammad Misrad documentation)

However, it was not uncommon for Bang Mice to experience emotional upheaval when entering this verification stage. Bang Mice doubted with the idea he had, whether his idea was able to be accepted by readers well or not, whether his idea would reap negative comments or tend to seem impressed in favor of certain groups.

As a step to verify the idea that was carried out on the idea of works related to the “Presidential Threshold Effect” July 13, 2018 edition. Bang Mice used an external assessment to test his idea, that was by asking again the news content that would be published in the *Harian Rakyat Merdeka* the edition of “Presidential Threshold Effect” in the editor of *Harian Rakyat Merdeka*. Then the editorial team gave a little picture of the news to be published is related to the Presidential Threshold 0% Percentage which would have an impact on the stabilization of government. Bang Mice got the results of his corrections and prepared to visualize the final idea into a work.

Bang Mice also experienced the hesitation when testing the idea for *Harian Rakyat Merdeka* April 24, 2019 edition internally. Bang Mice overcame his hesitation by inviting his colleagues to discuss, in this case the cartoonist team who had been helping him completed the graphic works for the benefit of advertising and online media. Bang Mice summarized the suggestions and criticisms of his cartoonist friends and corrected the ideas that he has in mind. Berikut ini adalah karya yang dimuat di *Harian Rakyat Merdeka* edisi 24 April 2019. The following was the work published in *Harian Rakyat Merdeka* 24 April 2019 edition.



Figure 5. "Who actually won the presidential election in the 2019 period?"

April 24, 2019 edition

(Source: Muhammad Misrad documentation)

The research on the creative thinking process of an artist is still rarely done, especially Bang Mice's creative thinking process as a cartoonist who has more than a decade succeeded in maintaining his existence as a mass media cartoonist especially editorial cartoons. The ideas which were always unique, artistic, humorous, and communicative were expected to inspire the other artists to be able to work professionally with quality work.

CONCLUSION

The conclusions of the creative thinking process that was carried out by Muhammad Misrad or Bang Mice based on an analysis of the four stages of Wallas (1926) are: (1) The preparation stage, always neutralizing emotions before thinking, arranging the room so that the atmosphere is more comfortable, reading news online, discussing with the community, (2) The incubation stage, Bang Mice always ponders in his heart, tends to be silent and did not seek further news, (3) Illumination stage, *insight* comes from everyday life, then it is combined with ideas that appear before, so that the new ideas arise, (4) Verification stage, was not always experienced by Bang Mice, depends on the attitude of caution, if he felt that the image that was created would bring up comments from one of the groups, then Bang Mice tested his ideas first by asking the opinions of people who were considered relevant in giving criticism and suggestions, but if Bang Mice felt optimistic that the work he made would be able to be accepted by various groups, then Bang Mice immediately entered the stage of work without testing his ideas first.

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