



The Symbolic Meaning of Charaters in *Wayang Lupit* and *Slentheng* By Ki Entus Susmono

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Abstract

Wayang Lupit and *Slentheng* are the characters played in *Carangan* performance by Ki Entus Susmono. The characters are based on *Punawakan*. This research analyses the visual elements of *Wayang Lupit* and *Slentheng* by Ki Entus Susmono. This research uses qualitative method with semiotic approach. The researchers collected the data from observation, interviews, and documentation. The data were validated by triangulation. The analyses of the data were through data reduction, presentation, and verification. The visual analysis of the characters implemented the theories of Ferdinand De Saussure and Roland Barthes. The findings show that: 1) The characters of *Wayang Lupit* wear Tegalese costumes, which are clothes, black trousers (in some cases wear Sarong), and *iket wulung* (a head band); 2) The character of *Slentheng* wears moslem apparel with sarong and *kupluk/peci* (moslem cap). Besides, the researchers found that the symbolic meaning of *Wayang Lupit* and *Slentheng* are reflected through its use of traditional costume. pakaian adat. In the end, this research can become a reference for similar study in the future, specifically for art education study in the future.

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INTRODUCTION

Wayang is a traditional art in Indonesia. The tradition is recognized by UNESCO as the world's Masterpiece of Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity at the 7th November 2003 (<http://wayang.wordpress.com/2010>) accessed on 8th August 2018). There are many types of wayang, including *wayang kulit* (made of cow's skin), *wayang golek*, *wayang beber*, *wayang wong*, *wayang klithik*, and *wayang suket*.

Wayang golek is a famous wayang in Tegal. *Wayang golek* is a puppet made of wood carves as the characters in a play of a traditional drama (Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia online accessed on 12th October 2018). Tegal has its own *gagrak* or style of wayang performance. The style distinguishes the performance from other regions, such as Sunda and Kudus. Many *dalangs* in Tegal play the characters with their own styles, which is called as *gagrak Tegal*. One of the famous *dalangs* in Tegal is Ki Entus Susmono. His Tegalese wayang is a modern one which has innovative performance of scripts and play. Ki Entus makes wayang which mimics famous public figures in the world. Besides, he also centralises the story on two characters, which are *Lupit* and *Slentheng*.

This research extends the previous researchers' findings. In Nur Latifah (2014), the performance by Ki Entus Susmono can become a life guidance for the audiences. Besides, the characters become a central object for Tegalese community in all life aspects. The phenomenon inspired the researchers to conduct further analysis on the portrayal of *Lupit* and *Slentheng* by Ki Entus Susmono. The relevance of the previous research to this research is in the visual elements of the characters. The philosophical value of *Wayang Lupit* and *Slentheng* is the basis to reveal the relevance of them with the life of Tegalese community.

The discussion of Tegalese community is based on the characteristic of them by the famous public figure (such as Cici Tegal and Kartika

Putri) as well as the performance which emphasizes the community in the *wayang santri* performance by Ki Entus Susmono. The understanding of the community is essential to discover the concept of humanity around them. The basic concept of humanity is complete and placed on the most valuable point in the civilization. The essential of humanity is related to human's understanding on their existence and their relation with other humans (Samho in Sugiarto, 2013:17).

According to Eko Darmawanto (2015), the analysis of visual elements in *wuwungan* performance, especially in *kelir* and *mustoko* section, represents the identity of local culture from the media, technique, and variation. The portrayal of *wuwungan* as an identity for Jeparanese is the same with the reflection of *Lupit* and *Slentheng* to Tegalese. The outsiders label Tegalese as *ngapak* and *nyablak*. These understandings correlated with the image of the artists on the television and the performance by Ki Entus Susmono, which later is practised by Tegalese community.

Ijah Hadijah (2018) finds that the visual elements of *wayang golek purwa* has a relevance to the femininity of *Pasundan* community. The explanation of the *wayang golek* in *Kuningan* style is similar with the research to the visuals of *Lupit* and *Slentheng*.

METHODS

This research employs qualitative method with semiotic approach. The qualitative approach in this research results data of a description or explanation about a phenomenon, community, or future occurrences.

This research employs observation to collect the data. According to Rohidi (2011), through observation, researchers can take a deep look onto people, community, or environment in an accurate way. The observation is done to some places, such as the *Sanggar Putra Satria Laras* (previously known as *Sanggar Satria Laras*), wayang house at the Official Residence of Tegal Regent, and the performing site for *Lupit* and *Slentheng*.

Besides observation, the researchers interviewed Haryo Susmono as the head of *Sanggar Putra Satria Laras* to collect information in text related to *Lupit* and *Slentheng* and Some artists in *Sanggar Satria Laras* (*sinden*, *gamelan* player, *dalang*). Furthermore, the researchers documented the pictures, videos, and articles about *Lupit* and *Slentheng*. To validate the data, the researchers described and categorised the findings. The validation of the data is based on particular criteria and sources.

The qualitative research in this journal found data of the observation and description related to *Lupit* and *Slentheng* and its impact to Tegalese community. The analysis of this research refers to Miles and Huberman in Rohidi (2011). The processes of he analysis began from selective data collection, reduction, clarification, conclusion, and interpretation.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The initial ideas of arts is the moving tools for artists to work (Heriyawati, 2016). Similarly, an artist work internally in their head and physically with their hand to produce artistic works (Murgianto, 2004). The election of Ki Entus Susmono to become the Resident of Tegal regent brings changes to Tegalese community. If previously he criticised the government through the satires in his *wayang* performance, now, he is doing it in the government system. Despite the changes, Ki Entus still uses *wayang* to change people's perspective about the government. He creates *Lupit* and *Slentheng*, as the fictional figures in his performance which gives meanings to Tegalese community.

There are many models of *Lupit* and *Slentheng* performance. The performance is based on the play it works. These plays were analysed with the theories of Ferdinand De Saussure. The plays focuses on the *Wayang*, *Lupit*, and *Slentheng*.

Lupit

Lupit is a Tegalan *wayang*. The character is created by Ki Bonggol from Brebes. In its initial stage, *Lupit* is adapted from Sundanese *golek* character, Cepot. *Lupit* has a similar role to the

punakawan and played in *goro-goro* (Fikri, 2016). Ki Entus' *Lupit* is almost similar to Ki Bonggol. *Lupit* by Ki Entus Susmono has more variation of dresses based on the storyline or the stages. According to Ki Haryo Susmono, *Lupit* is calm and wise.



Figure 1. Wayang Lupit (personal documentation)

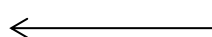
The following sub-unit mentions the characteristics of *Lupit* according to Ferdinand de Saussure in Heru Sudjarwo et al (2010) and Jajang Suryana (2002).

Costumes

iket



black shirt



sarong



Figure 2. Wayang Lupit (researchers' documentation)

The clothes worn by *Lupit* shows that he is a good Samaritan like the other Tegalese. He is not a royal which wears *blangkon*, *beskep*, Tegalese *jarit*, and *selop*.

Facial Form

Analysis

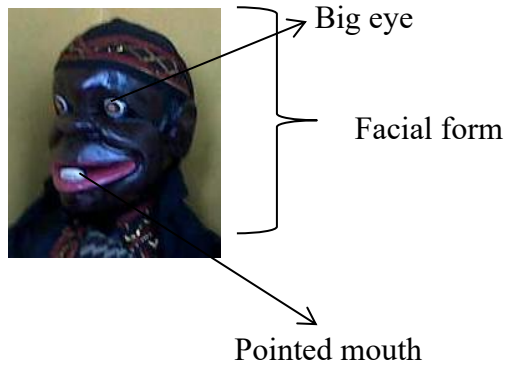


Figure 3. *Lupit's* face
(personal documentation)

Lupit's face is similar to *Hanoman* (in *Ramayana*). The similarity reflects his ability of martial arts. In some scenes, *Lupit* is portrayed of having strong martial art knowledge like *Hanoman*. The big eyes reflects his concerns to those who are in need of help.

Body Shape



Figure 4. *Lupit* and *Semar*
(Youtube)

Lupit has similar characters to *Semar*. They are calm and wise. In some stories, he says some wisdoms quote to the audiences.

Slentheng

Slentheng is *Lupit's* brother in Ki Entus Susmono's play. Initially, he considers that *Lupit* himself is enough to provide story to the audience. However, he states that there should be an interaction between the central character to another one. Therefore, he created *Slentheng* (Fikri, 2016). *Slentheng* has a striking look with unique *kupluk* like a kid. According to Haryo Susmono, *Slentheng* is funny and blunt. He reflects Tegalese people who acts authentically.



Figure 5. *Slentheng*
(personal documentation)

The following sub-unit mentions the characteristics of *Slentheng* according to Ferdinand de Saussure in Heru Sudjarwo et al (2010) and Jajang Suryana (2002).

Costumes

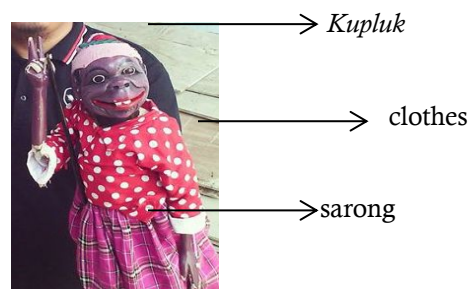


Figure 6. *Slentheng*
(personal documentation)

Slentheng wears ordinary Tegalese costumes, which shows that he is an ordinary person. He wears *kupluk* which indicates that he is a religious person. He reflects a moral value of learning religiosity from the early age.

Facial Form

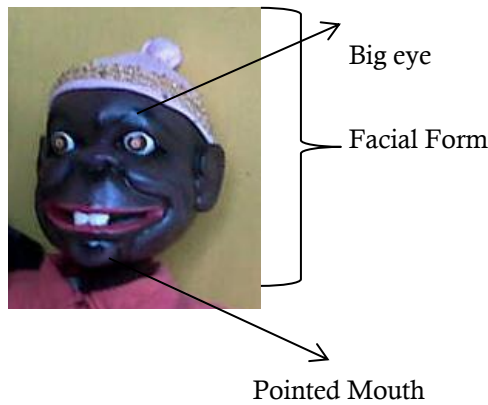


Figure 7. *Slentheng's Face*
(personal documentation)

Slentheng is similar to *Hanoman*. Like *Lupit*, he masters martial arts and take a good look on those who are in need.

Body Shape



Figure 8. *Slentheng's Body*
(personal documentation)

Slentheng has a similar body shape to other *wayang*. However, he only shows his right pointed finger to the top. According to Haryo, it indicates that he only points to God the Almighty. The trait shows that *Slentheng* has strong religiosity.

The portrayal of the figures are based on the semiotics of Ferdinand de Saussure. The theories are supported by Barthes in the form of signified and signifier or denotation and connotation.

After the analysis with 5 Roland Barthes code, it is inferred that the denotation and connotation of the characters are as follows.

Denotation

The denotation of the character is correlated to the literal meaning of the character. The denoted meaning from *Lupit* is he is a Tegalese. Meanwhile, *Slentheng* is defined as a moslem character.

Connotation

The connotation of the character shows that there is an invisible pragmatic correlation regarding the signifier and signified. The interpretation finds that *Lupit* is a reflection of Tegalese community which has an authentic Tegalese character. Meanwhile, *Slentheng* represents moslem community from the religion that he believes.

In conclusion, *Lupit* and *Slentheng* has the symbolic meaning showing that Tegalese moslem are authentic and open to people. Due to these characters, Ki Enthus got a Doctor Honoris Causa in arts from International Universitas Missouri, U.S.A and Laguna College of Bussines and Arts, Calamba, Philippines in 2005 (<http://panturapost.com/perkenalkan> accessed in 10 September 2019). These acts are currently followed by his relatives, Ki Haryo Susmono and Nyi Firma Nur Jannah.

CONCLUSION

From the findings and discussion, there are some points of conclusion: (1) Signs include Signifier and Signified. In this case, signifier is the visible sign (visual or audio), while the signified is the invisible one, such as concept and meaning. (2) The signs analysis focus on 2 characters, which are *Lupit* and *Slentheng* as the communication media of Ki Enthus Susmono to criticise the government and to spread Islamic preaching to the audiences. Ki Enthus Susmono does this as a contribution to the nation's culture, especially in preserving *wayang* as the national heritage.

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