

Oral Tradition as a Medium of Inheriting Dramatari Wayang Topeng in Padepokan Seni Topeng Asmarabangun, Malang, Indonesia

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Abstract

Masked performance depicting various characters in Panji stories from Java is called Mask Puppet Dance-Drama (Dramatari Wayang Topeng or DWT for short). Panji stories consist of a collection of stories from the Kediri Kingdom themed heroism and love with Panji Asmarabangun and Dewi Sekartaji as the main characters. As the nation's cultural successor, many younger generations have not known the DWT performance. This can threaten the preservation of DWT as one of the nation's cultural heritages to be preserved. This study aimed to examine the process of the DWT inheritance in Asmarabangun Mask Art Gallery (Padepokan Seni Topeng Asmarabangun) through oral tradition. This research was based on the theory of social construction in which a process of meaning done by each individual to himself consists of the process of externalization, internalization, and objectivization. This study used a qualitative method. Data were obtained through observation, interviews, and documentary studies. The data were analyzed using Milles & Huberman's theory of data reduction, presentation and verification. The result of data analysis shows that oral tradition in DWT inheritance process occurs institutionally which requires a process of meaning making by every individual to himself which consists of externalization, internalization and objectivization process. In the process, people can learn about the material either directly or indirectly. People get information and interact to achieve certain goals. The tradition is inherited through the process of seeing, listening, and doing.

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INTRODUCTION

Oral tradition is a message or testimony delivered from one generation to the next. The message or testimony is delivered through utterances, speech, and songs, and can take the form of pantun, folklore, advice, ballad, or verse. In this way, a community can convey oral history, oral literature, oral law, and other knowledge to the future generations without engaging written language. For Serbian Gypsies, telling and listening to stories is an important traditional behavior, which is distributed and disseminated from one generation to the next (Čvorović, 2009).

As social beings, humans have the ability to communicate using spoken or written language. Communication made by humans sometimes involves the delivery of information on past inheritance. In a community that is not familiar with writing systems, it does not mean that they have no ability to record and pass on their past experiences. Although not yet familiar with such system, the community passes on past experiences through a custom called oral tradition.

Dramatari Wayang Topeng (Mask Puppet Dance-Drama) Malang is one kind of oral tradition that is called folklore. Folklore is a story in ancient times that lived among the people that were told from generation to generation. Although most of the folklore only contains fantasy stories, it contains moral messages in the form of advice. Therefore, folklore can be used as a means of inheriting the culture and customs of a community to the next generation. The oral tradition is regarded as a way of indigenous people to give life lessons to their young people (Samsiah, 2013). The afflictions can affect wellbeing by transmitting information and reinforcing cultural codes of ethics (Schniter & Nathaniel, 2018). At the theoretical level, through education and performances of ancient and modern dramas, the mask has been proved to be identical to drama. The mask is a symbol of iconic theater from the time of Socrates to Modern western theater. Put simply, the mask symbolizes the adoption of roles and holds a central position in the drama across time and culture. In drama (as

the field itself), the mask has been used by drama theorists who have an explicit influence in the training of drama specialists (David, 2016). Cultural heritage through role models can promote rather than erode the heterogeneity of behavior in the natural population (Catherine, 2018).

Folklore consists of three categories, namely myths, legends, and fairy tales. Dramatari Wayang Topeng is a legend because it tells about the legend of Panji. Panji plays in various villages in Java evolved as oral literature, which is known by word of mouth. The puppeteers even do not have a certain grip or plot except instructions of their predecessors (Sunaryana, 2002). The current Panji theme plays a role in revitalizing Javanese culture. "Panji Culture" has had tremendous potential to strengthen the identity of Javanese culture. The possibility of transformation of the Panji tradition occurred in Java and in the greater Southeast Asian Region. The whole culture is a great learning process (Kieven, 2017).

Various ways have been done by the government, especially the artists to maintain the Dramatari Wayang Topeng Malang, Particularly in Malang Regency, there are some areas of dramatic development of Wayang Topeng Malang, namely Jambuwer village, Tumpang village, Jatiguwi village, and Kedungmonggo village. Each DWT group has a way of maintaining artistic existence, from packing its performing arts, its inheritance strategy to its promotional form. For example, the process of inheritance requires a teaching strategy that needs to be studied not only in terms of motion but also characterization of characters or characteristics of masks, costume and musical accompaniment. As one of the traditional performing arts, Dramatari Wayang Topeng Malang can be passed on to the next generation to maintain the existence of the local culture in the progress of globalization.

The first cultural heritage preservation strategy is institutionalization. For example, traditional institutions (such as religious institutions in Balinese community), modern institutions such as formal education and inter-banjar art organizations can act as dynamisators, as 'challengers'. These two types of institutions

should be seen as core institutional strengths, while economic institutions, including tourism and cultural industries, are marginal institutions, in the sense of benefiting in marketing efforts. The preservation method should have an organizational establishment that makes systematic changes and management procedures for maintenance (Prompayuk & Chairattananon, 2016)

In the process of inheriting Dramatari Wayang Topeng Malang, oral tradition is one of the media that can be used to preserve it. Oral tradition can be interpreted as a process as well as a product. As a process, oral traditions are related to the habits of community members in communicating daily life experiences and past experiences through spoken language. As a product, oral traditions are seen in legends, folklore, stories or myths.

In oral tradition, Dramatari Wayang Topeng Malang is a product of local tradition that uses mask. At the theoretical level, throughout the education and performances of ancient and modern dramas, the mask has been seen to be identical to the drama. The mask is a symbol of iconic theater from the time of Socrates to Modern western theater. Put simply, the mask symbolizes the adoption of roles and holds a central position in the drama across time and culture. In the Drama (as the field itself), the mask has been used by drama theorists who influence explicitly in the training of drama specialists (David, 2016).

Research related to the inheritance process among others is conducted by (Azhari, 2015) stating that there are strategies performed by Wayang Orang Sriwedari to maintain its existence. There are also inhibiting factors that are divided into internal factors and external factors and the existence of supporting factors in the form of public appreciation so as to strengthen the existence of Wayang Orang Sriwedari. Masunah (2003) also explains the process of inheritance of the Sawitri Generation Mask Dance found in Purwa Kencana studio. Jazuli (2014) describes the pattern of inheritance of Soreng art performers and understands the values inherited by Soreng art performers. The research on Dramatari Wayang Topeng has studied a lot about symbolic meanings and

values that are inherited. However, research focusing on inheritance process with oral tradition media in Dramatari Wayang Topeng Malang in Malang Regency has not been studied. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to explore oral tradition as a media to inherit Dramatari Wayang Topeng Malang in Padepokan Seni Topeng Asmarabangun Dusun Kedungmonggo District Pakisaji Malang Regency. The results of this study can provide benefits in the form of information and documentation that can be used as a reference in doing further relevant research.

METHODS

This research employed a qualitative method, with an interdisciplinary approach, i.e. anthropology and art approach. The research focused on oral tradition as a medium of inheriting Dramatari Wayang Topeng in Padepokan Seni Topeng Asmarabangun of Kedungmonggo Pakisaji Sub-district of Malang Regency, Indonesia. The subjects of this research were trainers, students, audience, dancers, pengrawit, puppeteers and community around the Padepokan.

The data were collected through observation, interviews, and documents. The researchers placed themselves as observers in participant observations. The data taken were all elements related to the inheritance process to obtain materials about story structure, characterizations, music accompaniment, costumes, and puppetry. The observation and interview results were recorded and analyzed and followed by visual recording with the help of photo cameras and camcorders. The data were analyzed using Milles and Huberman's theory of reduction, presentation, and data verification. The results of the obtained data were related to the inheritance processes of inherited materials.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Padepokan Seni Topeng Asmarabangun (PSTA) is a place for everyone to learn especially children who want to learn mask art. As a system of traditional education

(non-formal education) which has a major contribution in improving human resources, especially in creating a competent person in a particular field. In this case, learning mask art includes learning mask dance, learning to make a mask, learning traditional music, and even learning to be a puppeteer. The (PSTA) has contributed positively to the students, namely the cultural heir. This is the reason why the traditional education system needs to be revealed to be a cultural document and as an educational development that is charged with local culture.

Most of the students of the Padepokan are children. In the learning process, students are not subject to any prerequisites; as long as they are fond of or interested in it they can directly join the padepokan. The students are given the freedom to learn mask art in accordance with the time and field of interest. According to David (2015), in a developed 'western society', masks are consistently used in Drama Education though usually through specific knowledge of Drama and Theater practice; they are contextualized (David & Ladwig, 2015).

As one of the media of inheriting Dramatari Wayang Topeng Malang in Padepokan Seni Topeng Asmarabangun, oral tradition is intended to convey all the elements contained in the theatre-dance. The elements contained in it include stories, figures, costumes and gendhing or music accompaniment. Based on the observations, these elements can be accepted by the community especially those directly involved (players) or people who are not directly involved (spectators or observers) through the ways of seeing, listening and doing.

Learn by Seeing

Learning by seeing is one of the first processes for a child to learn something. From seeing, a person can decide, like, or dislike. In order to learn something, people can not be forced, specifically when learning the traditional art that is considered by most people as an ancient tradition. Similar with mask art learning, people can not directly ask students to like it. Initially people just play around the Padepokan area or follow their parents to see the mask art performance.



Figure 1. Performance of Mask Puppet at Pundhen



Figure 2. The students watch the trainer demonstrating a motion

The process of learning by seeing can be divided into two namely seeing the event directly on the spot and seeing it from a distance (audiovisual). First, seeing a live event in place. One can see students who are practicing mask dance or mask show by chance or indeed on purpose. The coincidence factor can be caused by the fact that he/she does not know that the lessons of mask dance or the f dramatari show of wayang mask is performed in PSTA has been scheduled. It is possible house of the person is around the Padepokan or he/she just passes at the time when there is an exercise or show activities. Second, seeing through audiovisuals. In this case, people see students who are learning mask art through audiovisual media (via television, mobile, youtube). Once people are interested in mask art, he/she will often come to the padhepokan either to learn directly or just want to see the mask art practice.

Learning by seeing be it in the form of learning mask dancing, maskmaking, gamelan playing or puppeteer learning at Padepokan has the same strategy. The The teaching strategy

used by trainers at PSTA is a demonstration strategy; trainers give examples of motion in front of the learners with the counting or sounds spoken from the mouth of the trainers. Some activities done by the learners and audience in the process of seeing include among others (1) the students see dance moves that are exhibited by the trainers; (2) the students see mask-making process; (3) students and the audience see the puppeteer during the performance; (4) students and audience see gamelan musicians; (5) students watch the trainer who is teaching how to play the gamelan music.

Learn by Listening

At the stage of learning by listening, the inheritance process that takes place through oral tradition is the students listening to the material presented by the trainer. Listening is evidence that students are concerned with the material presented by the trainer. Listening is the stage of students' understanding before they take action. The materials that are listened to by the students or the audience in the art of Dramatari Wayang Topeng Malang are as follows.

The subject matter of Wayang Topeng

Some stories for the Dramatari Wayang Topeng Malang are developed or packaged by Padepokan Seni Topeng Asmarabangun as a form of preservation. The players who are mostly children can better understand the stories that they perform. The stories are packed in such a way that the audience is interested and not tired of seeing and listening to the stories performed in the show. The inheritance of various stories in Dramatari Wayang Topeng Malang provides very important benefits to children who act as players or spectators. The inheritance includes (1) building an emotional closeness between story and child; (2) as an effective medium of conveying message/moral and religious values; (3) as the education of imagination/fantasy; (4) channeling and developing emotions; (5) helping the process of imitating the good deeds of the characters in the stories; (6) providing and enriching the inner experience; (7) as a means of entertainment and attracting attention; (8) triggering interest in understanding traditional stories; (9) as a means of building noble character.

Motion materials of Wayang Topeng

The motion materials of mask puppet include motion names and sequences of mask dance movements.

Materials of Making Topeng Malang

The materials of making Topeng Malang among other things include materials and tools used for crafting the mask, the sequence of crafting the mask, the order of mask painting with the colors corresponding to the mask character.

Materials of Wayang Topeng musical accompaniment

The materials of musical accompaniment of wayang topeng include names of the gendhing music accompanying each character, names of the gendhing used for scene shift, names of gendhing music used for supporting the atmosphere (calm, sad, and anger or war). By listening to the musical accompaniment of traditional dance, the students of the padepokan and even the audience can understand deeply in the music that is relevant with the context they experience in their culture for complete self-development. The legacy of music art is loaded with ethical, aesthetic and religious values. As stated by Morrison & Demorest (2009) inheritance has a very good role to the students, not only in terms of the role of the characters discussed but also the music that is beneficial to students. The role of inheritance in the perception and cognition of music as well as the extent of cultural influence on children is reflected in the function of the brain. Exploration of music cognition from a cultural point of view can lead to a better understanding of the core processes underlying the perception and the process to result in a diversity of forms and expressions of the world music. Likewise is students who act as a craftsmen in the performance of Dramatari Wayang Topeng Malang.

Materials of Dance Costumes

The materials of dance costume include the names of the parts of the clothing used in mask dance, how to wear the costume, and the sequences of wearing the costume. Costume that is used in a drama-dance or dramatari show is very important to support the character of each character but sometimes dance clothes are

created only based on the element of beauty. Fashion that often appears reflects the identity of an area that also points to the origin of the dance.

Materials of Puppetry

The puppetry materials include differentiating the voice quality for each character, listening to the voice of each character during the performance, listening to the utterances produced by each character, listening to the utterances uttered for the turn of the scenes.



Figure 3. Trainer presenting materials of mask making



Figure 4. The students listen to the trainer who is presenting the material

Figures 3 and 4 represent a series of material presentation activities on the mask making process, from the selection of wood as a raw material, the shaping stage, the painting stage to the finishing stage.

Learning by Doing (Practice)

The Dramatari Wayang Topeng Malang which is an oral tradition is also inherited by

means of doing besides seeing and listening. Doing is a process whereby a person can prove what he/she has seen and heard. By learning to do, someone is really interested to learn more deeply or master what he/she has seen and heard.

The training at Padepokan Seni Topeng Asmarabangun is not always scheduled on Sundays, meaning that it can be scheduled any time whenever anyone is interested to practice or just see it as far as the trainer is in place. The trainer's house is very close to the padepokan. The scheduled training activities are in the form of mask dance exercises performed every week from 08.00 - 12.00. The practice of laying gamelan music is done every Tuesday and Saturday evening from 19.00 to 22.00 p.m. Meanwhile, the practice of mask making or puppeteering practice is not scheduled.

The term 'learning by doing' is quite common. A person can understand and master things by doing what he/she wants to master. Indeed, sometimes initially things are felt clumsy, scared, wrong, shambles, and so forth. But after that, he/she gains an invaluable experience, the initial mistake becomes the basis for further action.

The trainer at Padepokan Seni Topeng Asmarabangun presents learning materials with demonstration and modeling methods. When presenting mask dance material, the trainer gives an example in front of the class and then the students imitate the motion according to the trainer's instruction. After giving examples of sequences of movement by counting, the trainer turns on the music of dance accompaniment and the trainer and the students perform the movements together. After providing an example in front of the class, the trainer gives the opportunity to the students to try themselves without any instruction. The trainer gives the students a chance to remember the material that has been given. Besides that, the coach wants the students to be self-confident to perform the mask dance moves without a coach. Figure 5 illustrates the coach giving examples and the students imitating him from behind.



Figure 5. The coach gives an example in front of the class

As for mask making material, so far the students have never experienced any mask making stage, they are only given materials about mask painting stage. In this case, the students are given the freedom to paint masks in accordance with their tastes or with the figures which they like. The trainer gives materials about the names of the characters on the masks from Malang, the examples of the mask shapes, and the meaning of each color masks. The material of the mask formation stage has not been given by the coach because it requires consistency from the students. Based on observation on 5 October 2017, when presenting a mask material, the trainer (Handoyo) stated the following.

"... Well, I will convey material about the manufacturing process because we still maintain the tradition or grip so we have the steps to be done. Now there are two categories. As for masks as souvenirs, we make them every day. So, we have no ritual stages to do. However the making of masks with character requires stages that we must meet. For example, before cutting materials i.e. wood, we have a ceremony a day before. The facilities include flowers 3 colors, pegs of bamboo, and incense. Usually we ask the Almighty the day before for the tree to cut down. Later the peg is plugged into the tree to be cut down. If this peg falls, it means the tree should not be cut down but if the peg is still stuck, it means the tree may be cut down. Then, in order to create masks as souvenirs, the wood with a length of 22m and 18m in diameter is split into two and is shaped as a triangle. After

that set a place for eyes and mouth, give the boundary between the face and the carving. Then make the character more vivitly. After that, the decoration carving depends on who the character is. After that, perforate the back then furnish it, base paint and finishing paint according to the character. It takes a 3-week process from start to finish. One mask last for 3 weeks. As for the mask, it can take 3 days to complete ..."

Based on the observations, mask making requires patience and persistence especially for making masks for ritual. Meanwhile, the making of masks for souvenirs only last for three days.

As shown in Figure 6, a child is learning to carve a mask. The trainer also describes how learn to carve masks, but it is only for students who really want to learn it. Usually the students come alone or in groups of 2-3 persons. The students learn make mask free of charge, they are only required to bring their own carving tools, while the wood material has been provided by the trainer.



Figure 6. A student learning to carve a mask

The process of inheriting the material of the mask puppet musical accompaniment. After the students know how to use the tool, and know the notation of the music accompaniment,

they are given the opportunity to learn to play the music. Learning to play a gamelan music instrument is not easy. The students must understand how the rhythm and tempo that must be played so that when playing it is not too fast or not too slow.

Likewise, in order to learn to be a puppeteer, the students are given the opportunity to mimic the sound of each character. How is the loudness of the voice that should be produced for each character, and how is the speed of the voice. Each character has a different voice so that the students have to master it. They are also asked to memorize the sequence of scenes in a story. Indeed, until now, no student learning puppeteering who has been given the opportunity to perform at a routine performance, because according to the trainer, they are not ready to properly perform.

The explanation about oral tradition as a medium of inheritance where there are three processes that occur in the process of inheritance, i.e. seeing, listening, and doing is in accordance with the learning model developed by Nana Sudjana, that is 'listen-see-do'. The model emphasizes on a) the students activity of listening to trainer's instructional information; b) the students activity of looking at the various processes, symptoms, and facts shown by the trainer regarding the teaching materials; c) work activity, i.e. doing the learning tasks provided by the trainer regarding the teaching materials (Sudjana, 2014).

In the inheritance activities that occur in social communities, especially in Padepokan Seni Topeng Asmarabangun, language becomes the main means of delivering of information. Language is a medium of communication. Each of the ethnic groups, regions, as well as the state has very complex language differences. In the science of communication, language is an elusive communication component. Language is unique and complex that only it's user can understand it. Thus, the uniqueness and complexity of this language must be learned and understood for better and effective communication by obtaining empathy and sympathy from others.

As a medium in the process of inheritance, oral tradition is a strategy to convey

the material contained in Dramatari Wayang Topeng Malang. In the process, the students learn from what is delivered by the teacher, they obtain information and interact to achieve a certain goal. In the process of inheriting the theater dance of mask puppet, oral tradition occurs institutionally. This is in accordance with the social construction theory conveyed by Berger & Luckman (2013), who state that a process of meaning making by every individual to himself consists of the process of externalization, internalization, and objectivation. Internalization is an adaptation to the sociocultural world as a human product. Objectivation is a social interaction within the institutionalized world of intersubjective or institutionalized and internalized processes. Individuals identify themselves in the center of the social institutions in which the individual becomes a member. Institutionalization occurs when there is a reciprocal typification of acts that are already accustomed to different types of individuals. Institutionalization requires an educational process that must be implanted strongly so that it will never be forgotten in the individual consciousness.

Externalization that occurs in the community directly involved in the Dramatari Wayang Topeng performance in Padepokan Seni Topeng Asmarabangun has a role for the students who learn about the materials related to the Dramatari Wayang Topeng. The students adjust to all the stages that they have to go through. Communities who are not directly involved in the performance play a role as spectators or observers. As an observer or audience, the people adjust to what happens in the show, they watch and follow all the series performed in the performance.

Social activities in traditional communities are intended to show how the activities or agencies meet the essential conditions. Seni Topeng Asmarabangun conducts activities in traditional communities that always try to maintain local cultural traditions amid the flow of scientific and technological progress. There is a desire to pass on the traditional art of Malang, namely Dramatari Wayang Topeng to the next generation because Padepokan Seni Topeng

Asmarabangun provides training or education to anyone who wants to learn it. As a social organism that has the necessity to exist, Padepokan Seni Topeng Asmarabangun is needed by the community of its supporters to realize that existence. The mask becomes a form of identity expression development during adolescence and to support individuals to free themselves (David, 2015).

A system must be able to set goals and strive to achieve them. Preferred goals are not individual ones but the common goals of the members in the social system. Padepokan Seni Topeng Asmarabangun is one of the nonformal educations that has a purpose in the process of inheritance. Although fewer people are interested to learn and watch Dramatari Wayang Topeng Malang, Padepokan Seni Topeng Asmarabangun still perform routinely once in thirty-five days, i.e. on Monday. It even receives a form of training package to create masks for tourists visiting the padepokan.

In each of the inherited elements there is a purpose expected both by the trainers, the students, and the parents. In addition, the gallery also has a great goal of maintaining the traditional art of Dramatari Wayang Topeng Malang in the midst of the progress of globalization at this time.

The community must regulate the relationships among the components in order to function optimally. Socialization has a very high integrative strength in maintaining the social control and integrity of an organization. Integration refers to the requirements for a minimum level of solidarity so that its members is willing to cooperate and avoid destructive conflicts. Integration becomes important in unifying all elements inherited in Dramatari Wayang Topeng Malang. The elements inherited to the students are clear from the Dramatari Wayang Topeng performance where the students apply all the inherited elements. A form of dance performance is considered to be complete if there is a material in the form of a composition of motion intact, music accompaniment, makeup, and costumes that support the dance performance so that the parts are mutually related, and not a causal

relationship. Likewise, Dramatari Wayang Topeng Malang is a unity of inherited elements.

Every community must maintain and improve individual motivation and cultural patterns that create and maintain its motivation. Latency refers to the basic values and norms shared by the members of an organization. In maintaining the values of local tradition, before performing a monthly routine show on Monday night, there is a ritual activity performed in *pundhen*. Prior to the Dramatari Wayang Maseng Puppet show the students are invited to pray together in *pundhen*.

CONCLUSION

As a medium in the process of inheritance, oral tradition is a strategy to convey the material contained in Dramatari Wayang Topeng Malang. In the process of inheriting dramatari mask puppet, oral tradition results in institutionalization which requires a process of meaning making by the community to himself which consists of externalization, internalization, and objectivation processes. Social activities in traditional societies are intended to show how the activity or agency fulfills the essential conditions. Padepokan Seni Topeng Asmarabangun is an activity in traditional communities that always strives to maintain local cultural traditions amid the flow of scientific and technological progress through the inheritance process. In the process, people can learn about the material either directly or indirectly. Communities obtain information and interact to each other in order to achieve a certain goal. The interaction is done by the process of seeing, listening, and doing.

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