

RECONSTRUCTION OF WAYANG ORANG DARMA KERTI AT BATU PANDANG: A STRUGGLE FOR IDENTITY IN MATARAM, LOMBOK

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**RECONSTRUCTION OF *WAYANG ORANG* DARMA KERTI AT BATU PANDANG:
A STRUGGLE FOR IDENTITY IN MATARAM, LOMBOK**

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ABSTRACT

Wayang Orang (the stage show usually with the *wayang* theme) is a performing art of which the characters are played by people. As a specific Sasak performing art, the *wayang orang* which is performed in Mataram Lombok, used to use what is referred to as *Serat Menak* as the story source. However, such a performing art was marginalized and was almost getting extinct. Therefore, the Sasak artists and cultural observers, whom were facilitated by UPTD Taman Budaya Lombok, did their best to save such a performing art by reconstructing it. The performing art which was constructed by IPTD Taman Budaya Lombok was the *Wayang Orang Darma Kerti, Dusun Batu Pandang*. Such a reconstruction was made in the middle of the struggle for an identity of those living in Mataram, Lombok, who belong to different ethnic groups and religions. This present study was intended to understand the matter pertaining to the reconstruction of *Wayang Orang Darma Kerti* as part of the struggle for the identity of the people living in Mataram, Lombok. The qualitative method and the theories of deconstruction, multiculturalism, and hegemony were used to analyze the problems of the study.

The result of the study showed that 1) there was a desire to preserve *Wayang Orang* as a local identity, meaning that the desire to reconstruct it was inspired by the Islamic religious value and the *Wetu Telu* Islamic value; 2) it was reconstructed through several stages; they are observation, inventory, and classification; finally, it was decided to reconstruct *Wayang Orang* performed at Dusun Batu Pandang, East Lombok in which the puppeteers and dancers from Mataram, West Lombok, were involved; the puppeteers were gathered, the themes were composed, the performance was practiced, and the *Wayang Orang* was performed; 3) the implication of the reconstruction of the *Wayang Orang* was that the Sasak ethnic group had an art identity, and religion and culture adapted to each other as the implementation of what is referred to as *adathu wirgama*, and the local people's prosperity became better.

Keywords: Reconstruction, *Wayang Orang*

INTRODUCTION

Wayang Orang is a performing art of which the characters are played by people. The specific Sasak *Wayang Orang* used what is referred to as *Serat Menal* as the story source. However, it was marginalized and was almost getting extinct. As a result, the Sasak artists and cultural observers were facilitated by UPTD Taman Budaya, Mataram, Lombok, to save such a performing art by reconstructing it. One type of the *Wayang Wong* which was reconstructed by UPTD Taman Budaya Mataram, Lombok, was the *Wayang Wog Darma Kerti*, Dusun Batu Pandang. Such a reconstruction was an art activity done by the artists and cultural observers in Mataram, Lombok, and facilitated by UPTD Taman Budaya Mataram, Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara. Such a reconstruction was done by the artists as an activity to resurrect the *Wayang Orang Darma Kerti* at Dusun Padang which became marginalized. Such an activity was consciously done; it was planned based on the concept already made (Cassirer, 1970: 193). It was a product of the intellectual subjective way of thinking as what an artist understands that something can change from time to time (Purwanto, 2006: 3). This means that a reconstruction is highly determined by the way of thinking and the point of view of an artist which can change from time to time. As far as this present study is concerned, the reconstruction is defined as an activity in which the text of the *Wayang Orang* performing art was deconstructed.

The ethnicity and cultural diversity which are getting stronger in the current globalization era has led to the struggle for the Sasak identity. The Sasak ethnic people who strongly adhere to the purification of Islam and are oriented towards the *Syariah* ideology consider *Wayang Orang* what is referred to as *biddhah*. However, those who are oriented towards their customs and traditions or the cultural identity consider that the existence of *Wayang Orang* should be preserved and maintained. Such a struggle caused the *Wayang Orang Darma Kerti*, Dusun Batu Pandang to be reconstructed and maintained as the local identity of the Sasak ethnic people in order to understand what peace and conflict were (Ardhana, ed, 2013: 171). The problems of the present study entitled the *Reconstruction of Wayang Orang Darma Kerti, Dusun Batu Pandang: the Struggle for an Identity in Mataram, Lombok* can be formulated as follows: 1) why *Wayang Orang Darma Kerti, Dusun Batu Pandang* was deconstructed; 2) how it was reconstructed; and 3) what was the implication of such a reconstruction.

This present study was intended to understand why *Wayang Orang DarmaKerti, DusunBatu Pandang* was reconstructed, the stages through which it was reconstructed, and the implication of such a reconstruction.

RESEARCH METHOD

The method used in the present study was the qualitative method with the approach of cultural studies. The steps taken were collecting the data, analyzing the data, and presenting them systematically (Bailey, 1987: 32; Silalahi, 1999: 6). The data were collected through observation and interview. In this way, the data gained were authentic and valid. Several theories were used to analyze the data. They are the theory of deconstruction proposed by J Derrida (Zehfuss, 2010: 190), which was used to analyze the plot and the text of the *Wayang Orang* performing art; the theory of multiculturalism, which was used to analyze the logical condition of the struggle for the identity of the people living in Mataram, Lombok, who belong to different ethnic groups and religions.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The reconstruction of the *Wayang Orang DarmaKerti, Dusun Batu Pandang*, as the identity of the Sasak ethnic group, was desired by the Sasak artists and cultural observers. Such a reconstruction was motivated by the cultural ideology, that is, the ideology to construct and preserve the *WetuTelu* culture. It is a syncretized concept which can unify the Islamic religious teaching and Sasak tradition, as can be clearly observed from the *Wayang Orang DarmaKerti, Dusun BatuPandang* in which what is referred to as *SeratMenak* was used as the story source. However, the Lombok society has neglected it; therefore, it was reconstructed with the theme “JayengranaMerariq”. It is the theme in which the Islamic teaching is combined with the daily Sasak customs and traditions. The *merariq* tradition, as a daily performed Sasak tradition, is a *WetuTelu* cultural heritage which has been created through a historical process. The stronger ethnicity and cultural diversity has led to the struggle for self-identity. Those who strongly adhere to the purification of Islam and are oriented towards the *Syariah* ideology consider that *Wayang Orang* is *biddhah*. However, the

Sasak ethnic people who are oriented towards the customs and traditions or the cultural ideology consider that *Wayang Orang* needs to be preserved and maintained.

The *Wayang Orang DarmaKerti, Dusun Batu Pandang* is different from the Bali *Wayang Wong*. The dancers of the former do not wear masks and those of the latter do. There is a binary opposition in the *Wayan Orang* text reading in regard to the plot and performance. Such a binary opposition is shown by the dichotomy between the Pure Islamic teaching which is symbolized and played by the character *Jayengrana*, and the concept *merariq* as the Sasak tradition which is considered *biddhah* based on the pure Islamic teaching. J Derrida refers to such plot reading and performance as the deconstructive reading, as the essence of the binary opposition is the system of difference (Norris, 2003:9; Zehfuss, 2010: 190). Such a difference considers that the purification of Islam is more important than customs and traditions, meaning that purifying the Islamic teaching is more important than maintaining customs and traditions (Norris, 2003: 10-11). The group of people who intend to apply the Islamic teaching purely in Lombok feel that they are more important, have more power, and have the single truth, causing them to neglect multiculturalism and leading to hegemony. In the reconstructed version of the *Wayang Orang*, the sovereign *Jubil* is more dominant; he cannot accept *Jayengrana* as a follower of the purification of Islam. In fact, it is performed that *Jayengrana* considers that belonging to Pure Islam shows a wise attitude as it can accept the values of the area where Islam develops; as a result, *Jayengrana* can accept the *merariq* tradition in Lombok.

The *Wayang Orang DarmaKerti, Dusun Batu Pandang, East Lombok*, was reconstructed through several stages; they are 1) the existence of *Wayan Orang* in Lombok was observed to identify whether it was feasible to be reconstructed or not; 2) the *Wayang Orang DarmaKerti, Dusun Batu Pandang*, was decided to be reconstructed; 3) the dancers were gathered; 4) the persons playing the accompanying music were determined; 4) the performance was practiced; and 5) it was performed on the stage. The implication of such a reconstruction is that the concept of multiculturalism has been accepted; the reason is that the players of the reconstructed version of *Wayang Wong* are from different ethnic groups such as the Balinese ethnic group, the Sasak ethnic group, and the Javanese ethnic group. The values which are constructed are that the religious values and traditional values adapt to each other,

as the Sasak identical form and the *WetuTelu* cultural heritage. In addition, it also reflects conflicts and the importance of integration. The reconstructed version of *Wayang Wong* can support the development of tourism in Lombok; as a result, it can improve the prosperity of the Mataram, Lombok, and society.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

As far as the context of the *Wayang Orang* performing art is concerned, reconstruction was an activity which was done by the artists to resurrect the *Wayang Orang DarmaKerti, Dusun Batu Pandang*, which was marginalized and almost became extinct. Such a reconstruction was inspired by the desire of the artists and cultural observers to resurrect *Wayang Orang* as the Sasak identity. The desire to reconstruct the Sasak identity was motivated by the cultural ideology, namely, an ideology used to construct and preserve the *WetuTelu* culture. The *Wayang Orang* was reconstructed in the middle of the struggle for the identity of Mataram, Lombok as a multiethnic and multi-religious society. The stronger ethnicity and cultural diversity in the globalization era has caused the Sasak ethnic people to struggle for their identity. The Sasak people who strongly adhere to the purification of Islam and are oriented towards the *Syariah* ideology consider that *Wayang Orang* is *biddhah*.

The *Wayang Orang DarmaKerti, Dusun Batu Padang* was reconstructed to 1) establish the Sasak identity which is dominated by the Islamic strength; 2) establish the religious and aesthetic values through the story adopted from what is referred to as *SeratMenak*; 3) such a reconstruction affected the development of the Sasak identity based on the religious and traditional values, and contributed to the Sasak ethnic people's prosperity.

Therefore, it is suggested that the *Wayang Orang* performing art should be preserved and maintained as the specific Sasak art identity. It is necessary for the Sasak people to understand the reconstructed version of *Wayang Orang* as it contains the peaceful purified Islamic values which appreciates the truth and can exist with other ethnic groups and cultures. Such a reconstructed *Wayang Orang* gives information that multiculturalism is important, and that the hegemonic characteristic that a group of people is more superior to another should be eliminated through the story *JayengranaMarariq*, which can accept the Sasak customs and traditions and do not contrast with the Islamic purification.

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