

STORY OF EPOS SUTASOMA AS DANCE ORATORIUUM IDEA CREATION IN IMPROVING UNITY AND HARMONY OF NATION

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Abstract

The Majapahit kingdom has a vast territory covering Nusantara archipelago and Malay peninsula. In addition to greatness and glory, the Majapahit kingdom also has great writers at that time, one of them is Mpu Tantular. One of his literary work is *Kakawin Sutasoma* which is taken as motto of the Republic of Indonesia "*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*". *Kakawin Sutasoma* tells a sacrifice of a King Prabu Mahaketu's son of the Astina kingdom named Sutasoma. This research is using a qualitative methodology with participative observation method by observing various performing art activities which is related to Sutasoma epics. The result obtained is the determination of character becoming an important part because it becomes a supporting element of dance. In addition, an artist involves intellectual potential, the emotional potential, and the spiritual potential proportionally to acquire aesthetic forms and open for a value understanding. Communication of symbols are created through dance movements that are expected to be interpreted by the audience and can be implemented in daily life. If this is realized, violence can be avoided and unity and harmony can be realized.

Keywords: *Sutasoma, Dance Oratorium, Character, Aesthetics, Communication Art*

I. INTRODUCTION

Historically, Indonesia once had large kingdoms that is glorious in its era. One of them is the Majapahit kingdom. Majapahit Kingdom has a vast territory. In *Kakawin Nagarakretagama pupuh* 13 and 14, it is said that the extent of the Majapahit kingdom is in the archipelago of Nusantara and in the Malay Peninsula. The easternmost islands of Java Island in *pupuh* 14/5 are the islands of Ambon or Maluku, Seram and Timor. The Malay Peninsula includes ⁷ Langkasuka, Kelantan, Tringgano, Paka, Muara, Dungun, Tumasik, Klang, Kedah and Jerai (Muljana, 2005).

The majesty and greatness of the Majapahit kingdom is well known and respected by various kingdoms in Nusantara and various other kingdoms outside Nusantara.

In addition to triumphing in terms of territory, the kingdom of Majapahit also has great writers at that time. One of them is the Mpu Tantular. Mpu Tantular is a poet who lived in the glorious era of the Majapahit kingdom in the 14th century. Mpu Tantular still has brotherly relations with the king and becomes the king sister's son in law. Mpu Tantular is a Buddhist, but he is open to other religions, especially Hindu-Shiva. This can be seen from two *kakawin* which he made quite famous, namely *Kakawin Arjunawijaya* and *Kakawin Sutasoma*.

In *Kakawin Sutasoma* as one of the largest literary works to date, has a very deep philosophical value, especially for the values of nationality. *Kakawin Sutasoma* tells of a sacrifice of a King Prabu Mahaketu's son of the Astina kingdom named Sutasoma. The Sutasoma as the incarnation Sang Hyang Buddha left the kingdom to deepen the teachings of Mahayana Buddhism rather than replace his father to become king. Furthermore Sutasoma went into the forest to do meditate in a temple and got a blessing. Then he traveled to the Himalayas with the priests. In a hermitage, he heard the story of a giant king named Prabu Purusada who likes to eat human flesh. The priests and Batari Pretiwi persuaded Sutasoma to kill Prabu Purusada but he refused the persuasion because he wanted to continue the journey. In the journey, he met with an elephant head giant and a snake dragon. With the blessing he got, eventually both subdued and willing to be his disciples to study Buddhism. Next Sutasoma also met with a tigress that will eat her own child. Because the tigress insisted on carrying out her intentions, Sutasoma offered him as prey of the tiger to keep the tiger's child from death. The offer was accepted by the tiger, and he pounced on the prince. The death of Sutasoma made the tiger regret his actions. It was then that the God Indra came to the scene and Sutasoma was revived. The tigress then surrendered to the Sutasoma, even declaring herself willing to be her disciple.

Once lived a giant king named Purusada or Kalmasapada. This king is fond of eating human flesh. Years of Purusada king's habit took place by eating the flesh of his own people. Many people have been victimized to satisfy his greed. Resulting the population of the country remain a little because it was consumed as a king's meal or has fled to another country. Then

the giant king suffered an incurable illness and settled in the forest. Then he pleaded with the temple to heal his illness with the promise of giving the victim 100 kings to be offered if he could be healed. Finally, the Batara Kala grant the request of king Purusada. After recovering from his illness, the king Purusada kept his promise by capturing 100 kings to be offered to Batara Kala. But Batara Kala rejects it because he wants to eat The Sutasoma. Hearing the words of Batara Kala, King Purusada went to look for The Sutasoma. Finally the king Purusada found The Sutasoma and told his intentions. The Sutasoma and King Purusada then went and faced Batara Kala. To him Sutasoma said that he was willing to fall prey to God Kala as long as he freed the hundred kings who had been handed over by Purusada to him freed. Hearing the utterance of the Sutasoma, King Purusada was aghast. He did not think Sutasoma so humble and willing to redeem all the evil that he did. He feels guilty and sinful for his actions, then repents and has since not consumed human flesh.

II. Literatur Reviews

Kakawin Sutasoma is taken as the motto of the Republic of Indonesia: "*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*" or different but one (Wahid & Ikeda, 2010: 33). In the story *Kakawin Sutasoma*, there are many characters that appear on every performances that are made. Characters such as kings, king's servants, folk, Sutasoma and other figures that exist on *Kakawin Sutasoma*'s story. Of course, before the work, there needs to be an observation about the characters of the characters in the story of *Kakawin Sutasoma*. Determination of this character is important because it becomes a supporting element of dance. Dance supporting elements such as motion, body, and motion design become a raw material for dance creation (Sumaryono & Suanda, 2006).

Aesthetics as a measure of the beauty of a work of art must go through a long process. The beauty process of a work of art can be an artistic form and a symbolic form. The formulation of artistic form and symbolic form is manifested in a process ¹ of art creation. The process of art creation is done by the artist actively, diligently, and systemically, with the aim of expressing the understanding and/or claiming the values of an object (Sunarto, 2013: 9).

The context of performances are based on roles and functions, performing art is referred more closely as communication media. Correspondingly, performing art is a communication media between creators (artists) and appreciators (audiences), between actors and connoisseurs of art, and be interpreted by both. Performing Art is created by an artist with his interpretation and observed, watched, or appreciated by the audiences with their interpretation (Jaeni, 2007: 20). Kuntowijoyo (in Jaeni, 2007: 24) divides the human environment into three environments, namely (1) the material environment; (2) Social environment; (3) symbolic environment. In relation to the world of performance as a front stage, the representation of the universe is a symbolic environment which is defined as an environment in which everything that includes meaning and communication, such as words, languages, myths, songs, art, ceremonies, behavior, objects - items, concepts and so on. Susanne K. Langer divides art symbols into two categories: (1) art symbol; (2) symbol in art. From the two categories of art symbols, the application in folk theater performance is divided into two meanings, discursive symbols and presentational symbols. Discursive symbol is understanding symbols in the performing art which is built by various regular symbols and bounded by structures, while the presentational symbol is understanding symbols by understanding its performance (Jaeni, 2007: 25).

III. Problem Statements.

1. How is the description of the main characters in *kakawin* Sutasoma as an inspiration on the creation of oratorium dance?
2. How is the process of artistic and symbolic manifestations as an art creation ?
3. How is communication art done by an artist ?

IV. Methodology

In this research using descriptive qualitative methodology which has the understanding to give description, picture or painting qualitatively about an object based on facts, properties and its relation with phenomenon being studied. Data collection method used is participative observation method by observing various art activities related to epos Sutasoma.

V. Result of Analysis

V.a. Character

1. Sutasoma.

Based on the story presented, it can be described about the character of Sutasoma as the main character in the creation of the oratory. Using the background of The Sutasoma: The son of a king and a Mahayana Buddhist, the character's description of the Sutasoma will be seen as follows: gentle, loving, giving, and so on.

If this character is described using a mask can be seen below:



Picture 1. *The Sutasoma* Character by mask artist Cokorda Raka Sedana

(source: <https://senidibali.weebly.com/featured-events/mengusung-ke-bhineka-tunggal-ika-an-lewat-pagelaran-seni-tari-topeng-lontar-lukis-dan-fotografi>)

2. Giant

An image of a giant as a creature that resembles a human or animal but has a size larger than the normal size of the human or animal in question. Based on fairy tales and legends stating that the giant has a stupid and ruthless character, likes to interfere and eat humans. But there are some fairy tales and legends that state otherwise. Giants are considered a threat because humans are incapable of matching their size and enormous strength, but not a few who give the idea of a giant as a living thing that coexists with humans. In the story of *Kakawin Sutasoma*, the depiction of the gigantic figure is more to the negative elements of cruel and likes to eat human beings look clear as in the story of the giant-headed elephant,

snake dragon, and giant tiger. All of these characters give a clear character that giants possess traits that tend to lead to negative rather than positive elements.



Picture 2. Elephant Headed Giant

(source: <https://baliartandcultures.files.wordpress.com/2015/10/baronggajah.jpg>)



Picture 3. Giant Tiger

(source: <https://baliartandcultures.files.wordpress.com/2015/10/barongmacan3.jpg>)



Picture 4. Snake Dragon Giant

(source:<https://i.pinimg.com/originals/fa/4a/03/fa4a039c18e329e8fd9b40f903a02545.jpg>)

3. Purusada

Purusada is an antagonist who becomes the opposite of The Sutasoma. As depicted in the story of *Kakawin Sutasoma*, this figure is a gigantic king who is very cruel with the fondness of eating human flesh. As has been explained before about the giant character that is cruel and like to eat humans then the king Purusada has the same character as that.



Picture 5. *Purusada* Mask

(source:<http://iwanlemabang.blogspot.co.id/2013/08/7-topeng-berwajah-menyeramkan-di-dunia.html#.WsBz7ZcRXIU>)

V.b. Aesthetic

The process of artistic and symbolic manifestation ¹ in the creation of artwork is done by an artist by involving proportionally the intellectual potential, emotional potential, and spiritual potential. The results are aesthetic and open forms for a value understanding.

The process of art creation often begins with the development of ideas not in the form of real manifestation but needs to pour the idea first. The existence of abstract images in the nature of mind, especially in the creation of orator Purusadasanta sourced from the work of literature *kakawin Sutasoma* creation by Mpu Tantular. The story depicted in *kakawin* is transformed into the performing arts that prioritize unity in the differences that need to be

preserved. Literary works give a closer look to the work of literature than those of the conceptor who give more importance in attraction without regard to the limitations of the truth of the description in the literary work. Mastery of literature material is absolutely mastered by the conceptor because it will give the spirit and maturity of the work. There has been a mistake in the community in staging the stanza of the story. Such performances do not follow the appropriate groove so that the work will be considered not established among the writers. The dancers and musicians are invited to dissolve in the cradle of interesting attractions but less attention to the plot so that the work will look foreign to those accustomed to wrestle with literary works. To avoid such inequality, researchers seek to give an appreciation of appearance, but more that it provides a comprehensible understanding for perfection.

An oratory's orchestration at the beginning of the introduction to the art connoisseurs, containing the story prologues that emphasis more on the view side. Embed the philosophy of the story content is inclined to the dialogues between the main characters but not yet to the deep philosophy study. The speeches and advice given by the main characters are still general. The content of philosophy is seen when there are constraints on solving the problems faced.

The stage that gives the most opportunity to embed philosophy is at the climax where the antagonist has returned to the identity. Then universal counsel can be displayed in the dialogue. The philosophical value embodied in the dialogue at Purusadasantha's work is now telling the king of Purusada the wisdom to always walk on the right path according to the conditions of the kingdom at that time. Such comment can be picked up by its meaning by the connoisseur. This function needs to be mastered by the story teller so that the philosophy value contained in the stage conversation is beneficial to the connoisseur/audience at this time. Speech that contains the value of self-awareness and beneficial to most in togetherness. The development of philosophy seems to have a great opportunity in the Purusadasanta story when the Purusada has been conquered. There the Sutasoma gives philosophical teachings about the life of nirvana and effort is no longer incarnate because the rotation of life death that goes on and on is a suffering. This is the essence of the highest teachings presented in Purusadasanta's story. The expertise of a cultivator is seen in the delivery of this philosophy of life in the story.

The most important thing to note is that the philosophy is conveyed with the aim of raising self-awareness and being fair in community togetherness.

V.c. Communication Art

The forms of art is an expression or feelings of human ideas. In art, Artists are communicating with their audience. Art can be a communication media between creators (artists) and appreciators (audiences), between actors and art lovers, and interpreted by both. Performing Art is created by an artist with his interpretation about something, and observed, watched, or appreciated by the connoisseurs of art with their own interpretation of meanings (Jaeni, 2007: 20). Performing art communicate using symbols. Symbols are sent by artists through performance art and interpreted by audience or spectators. The meanings will be different that are produced by the audience. The meaning of symbols in performing art cannot be separated from the text and context. Text is the performance itself with its complement, while context is the areas that have a relationship with the text, such as space and time (Jaeni, 2007: 25). In the Sutasoma epic story, the meaning of the text is possessed by Sutasoma's attitude as the main character of the story. Gentleness, compassion, giving and so forth are expecting to be accepted by the audience. This attitude is realized through the accessories used such as masks, clothes, and so on. In addition, the Sutasoma dance movement is also more graceful and calm. Meanwhile, The meaning of the context is presented by the current conditions such as violence, quarrels, and disputes. Gentleness and nonviolence toward all human beings are exemplified by Sutasoma that is expected by audience to be guide for life and stayed away from violence towards others.

It is revealed by Kuntowijaya (2006: 171) that, literary works as verbal symbols have several roles including the ways of understanding (model of comprehension), the way of communication (modes of communication), and the way of creation (modes of creation). The object is reality. Sutasoma epic is formed of performing art by an artist that is understanding of the symbols of reality that is occurring through existing figures and subsequently communicated through creating of dance movements. Symbols sent through dance movements will interact and be interpreted by the audience. Through these symbols, the audience is expected to also

have the same way of understanding with artists and can be implemented in everyday life. If this is realized, violence can be avoided and a sense of unity and unity can be realized.

VI. Discussion

Based on the research, there are three main of important things to be known by artists during creating a dance: (1). Character; (2) Aesthetics; (3) Communication of Art. These three components is determining of artwork to be interested to watch. It is because art is a medium of communication between artists and audience. Created dance is based on literary works that is requiring serious thinking by artists. This is an important things to do so that the audience are not only enjoy the beauty of art but also they can understand, interpret and implement the messages to be conveyed so that the ideas or expressions of artists can be accepted by the public widely.

VII. Conclusion

In *Kakawin Sutasoma* as one of the largest literary works to date, has a very deep philosophical value, especially for the values of nationality. *Kakawin Sutasoma* tells of a sacrifice of a King Prabu Mahaketu's son of the Astina kingdom named Sutasoma. The Sutasoma as the incarnation Sang Hyang Buddha left the kingdom to deepen the teachings of Mahayana Buddhism rather than replace his father to become king. The story of Sutasoma's journey provides many inspirations for the creation of art with the theme of *Kakawin Sutasoma*. In the creation of the oratory work of dance, some of the things that become the focus in its manifest are:

1. Character.

Determination of this character is important because it becomes a supporting element of dance. The supporting elements of dance such as motion, body, and motion design become a raw material for the creation of dance

2. Aesthetic.

Aesthetics as a measure of the beauty of a work of art must go through a long process. The beauty process of a work of art can be an artistic form and a symbolic

form. The formulation of artistic form and symbolic form is manifested in a process of art creation. The process of art creation is done by artists actively, diligently, and systemically, with the aim of expressing the understanding and/or claiming the values of an object. The process of artistic and symbolic manifestation ¹ in the creation of artwork is done by an artist by involving proportionally the intellectual potential, emotional potential, and spiritual potential. The results are aesthetic and open forms for a value understanding.

3. Communication art

Communication through symbols is created through dance movement by artists which is expected to have the same meaning with the audience and can be implemented in everyday life. If this is realized, violence can be avoided and toward unity and harmony.

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