



SASTRA DAN TRANSFORMASI DIGITAL

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Kata Pengantar Editor

“Yang muda, yang berkarya!”

Beberapa kali kalimat itu muncul di rapat pembentukan panitia Dies Natalis XXIX Fakultas Sastra Universitas Sanata Dharma dari Bp Tatang Iskarna dan Bp Fajar. Perasaan tidak enak akan ditunjuk sebagai koordinator bagian tertentu muncul di benak saya. Lalu, benar saya ditugasi untuk menjadi koordinator untuk seminar ini. Seminar ini bermuara para artikel ilmiah dan panjang cerita menjadi sebuah bunga rampai.

Sastra dan Transformasi digital, diterjemahkan secara luas oleh para penulis artikel. Ada dua hal pokok dalam tema ini, Sastra dan Transformasi Digital. Sastra berasal dari bahasa Sanskerta *śāstra* yang berarti ‘pedoman’. Secara tidak langsung perubahan massif akhir-akhir ini termasuk era digital, membawa sastra menuju era baru. Ada transformasi-transformasi yang muncul. Di saat ada sesuatu yang “baru” tersebut ada pula jejak-jejak yang tertinggal yang perlu juga dicermati. Gaya Preskriptif yang baru juga muncul. Alat yang membantu kita melalui kaidah-kaidah yang diberikan belum tentu sesuai dengan kaidah alami bahasa manusia. Rupanya identitas manusia yang konon ada pada sastranya tidak dapat digantikan secara digital. Pada hakikatnya digital dan manusia dan sastra berjalan bersama.

Editor

F.X. Sinungharjo.

FROM (ORAL) MYTH TO (DIGITALIZED) LITERATURE: A CASE STUDY OF JAVANESE WAYANG ON KOMPAS'S SHORT-STORIES

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1. Introduction

As a matter of fact, this discussion covers some clues of understanding, and the two of them are the prominent pillars: literature and digitalization. Those two "terms," by applying Saussure's semiotics, are about two very distinctive signs, dealing with our perceptions on time and material. Certainly, literature refers to "the past," since it could be found through many historical references. Even, Greek, Roman, and Arabian civilizations, representing the oldest human histories, did compile their mythological stories, which, at present, are called oral literature. However, the second term, digitalization, seems newer and probably it's more about "the present." The gods and humans of the old mythologies never applied the term in their daily lives, since those stories had no vocabulary at all dealing with it. Digitalization is very popular nowadays because it belongs to this present generation, and it could probably be that people of this 21st century are more familiar, compared to those of the previous centuries. Meanwhile, about material, literature is an art form, which is different from music, dance, and painting, to appear in stories through verbal

words or language, both in speech and writing. On the other hand, digitalization identifies system of technologies, applying hard and tangible tools and devices, or “artefact” (Kotak 2015), such as computer, gadget, and also internet. In other words, literature is the power of language capability and digitalization the power of technology capability.

Due to those entities, time and material, it might occur that between the two there is an obvious gap, especially in how our human mind’s imagination works. The figures, like Shakespeare, Mark Twain, Derek Walcott, VS Naipaul, Chairil Anwar, Pramoedya Ananta Toer, Ayu Utami, JK Rowling, and so on, provide a certain discourse about how to deal with the humanistic problems and concerns. They could deliver the problems by interesting stories, including by the beauty of words. Further, Julius Caesar, Juliet, Tom Sawyer, Omeros, Minke, Harry Potter, Hermione Granger, and so on, deliver imaginative persons or people who undergo struggles and problems similar with our dailies. On the other hand, digitalization seems to suggest our imaginations with robot, which stands as the new “race” of human beings (Fajar SA, 2020), mobile devices, virtual images, and so on. They are even just the objects created by the present human generations to cope our problems about technological system. Surely, complicated hard skills are prominently needed to control and drive them in order to satisfy human needs of solving “computing” problems. However, actually the gap of the two “cultural components” can be bridged by the fact that they exist for the sake of human civilization. The existence of literature is to document human progressions of civilization and literature itself is a form of discourse which has a special and important relationship with the world... (Coyle, 2003). Meanwhile, the existence of digitalization is to prove that human civilization has gained a certain point of the

advanced technological system. Here, digitalization, as the gained point, is a token to identify the civilization's technological improvements.

Therefore, the following talk is about to examine how literature, as the agent of documenting human civilization, could apply the technological system and even how digitalization, as the gained point of the advanced technology, could mingle with literature, especially from the very old era, called myth or oral literature.

2. Basic Concepts: Literature, Digitalization and Myth

The concept of literature may refer to several possibilities of definition, but there are two which are important and representative to hold, especially in examining the present topic. Those two were suggested by Terry Eagleton (1996) and Sylvan Barnett (2008). Each definition stands complementary to each other. By Eagleton's definition, there are two entities prominent in literature, i.e. imaginative writing and language play. The first entity identifies literature's content which is not real but just fictious. However, this also emphasizes the concreteness of literature's appearance, which must be visibly written and tangible. Meanwhile, his second point of entity focuses on literature's verbal language, which is in words. The term dealing with "language game or play" means that the language's words are twisted and readers must be aware of their connotative meanings. In this context, the language usage is in accordance with literature's delivering beauty through its words, since literature is also art providing pleasure or enjoyment to its readers. The second definition, by Sylvan Barnett, on the other hand, stresses literature's role to its audience or users. Here, literature is performance in words and there is significance from it. As performance,

literature functions to please audience through its usage of words. However, it's clear that its appearance as performance is not limited by its written words, as Eagleton emphasized it, and it means that Barnett's definition allows speech to perform literature. Meanwhile, Barnett's second notion, about significance, is more or less in accordance with Eagleton's "language game or play," since here significance refers to literature's hidden meaning/s.

The next concept is about digitalization. Recently this term, digitalization, is common to our daily life because the present era is in fact called the era of digitalization as well. People may identify the era as the computerized utilities, in which almost all human ways of lives have been facilitated by computers. In other words, about literature people talk about story, and about digitalization they think of computers as system of technology. However, [Gartner](#) defines digitalization as

"the use of digital **technologies** to change a business model and provide new revenue and value-producing opportunities; it is the process of moving to a digital business." Digitalization moves beyond digitization, leveraging digital information technology to entirely transform a business' processes – evaluating, reengineering and reimagining the way you do business. (<https://www.truqcapp.com/digitization-vs-digitalization-differences-definitions-and-examples/>)

Gartner's statement has at least provided the notion dealing with the gained stage of technology improvements. Technology itself is simply understood as how humans create and apply any tools or devices to facilitate human lives easier, and the era of computer is the present point of humans gaining the improvements. Further, Miguel Goede has also shown that the advanced improvement of

technology is called "the Fourth Industrial Revolution." Here, the era of digitalization has been completed by computers and internet. (<https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Miguel-Goede/publication/339003662/figure/fig3/AS:856473324249090@1581210561256/The-Five-Industrial-Revolutions-Gauri-Eerden-2019-The-Fourth-Industrial-Revolution.ppm>). It means that the era of digitalization is in fact not just about computers but it covers also how those computers are connected each other.

Eventually, the next basic concept to deliver is about myth. There are also several definitions conveying what myth is, but fortunately the their differences have even proven "its development" due to the civilization progress. At first, myth is understood as the story about gods, and by this context, as emphasized by Armstrong (2008), myth was designed to help humans to cope with the problematic human predicament. He also stressed the realities or facts, brought by myth, which are simply not true. From this, at least an important notion dealing with the existence of myth is about its function, rather than its content correctness. Therefore, Eric Csapo (2005) preferred to define myth as "... a narrative which is considered socially important, and is told in such a way to follow the entire social collective to share a sense of this importance....." Obviously, the entity of being "social" is the most prominent element in understanding myth because myth would operate only in the context of social life. Meanwhile, to complete it, for Robert A Seagal (2004) there are always three main questions about myth, i.e. origin, function, and subject matter. Its "origin" refers to the society holding their myth, and it means that myth functions only locally. A society's myth is for the society itself, and it's not applicable to the other

societies, which might have their own myths. Due to its function, myth is understood and “a guide” for its society. As Armstrong (2008) also noted that “it tells us what we must do in order to live more richly..” Finally, “subject matter” identifies and qualifies its society in selecting or applying referent of myth for the society. However, Csapo have put the essential understanding of myth by revealing that

“There can be myths about recent events, contemporary personalities, new inventions. To insist that a myth or legend be a traditional tale is to confuse a symptom of their function of transmitting something of collective importance for part of their essence.” (1)

Next, it’s about “wayang” which is certainly worth understanding, as part of the Javanese mythology. The stories of “wayang” derive in fact from the tales of Ramayana and Mahabharata, but the Javanese feel and believe those to be originally theirs and painting the characters, both the heroes and heroines, in Javanese hues (Lauries J Sears, 1996). Even, the Javanese people, especially from around Central Java, are very familiar with the “wayang’s” characters, such as Kresna, Arjuna, Drupadi, Bima, etc. Jill Forshee (2006) examined those people by stating that,

“Through fantastic imagery and a mystical theatrical ambience, wayang performances transport audiences to other worlds—whether of a glorious past or a godly realm. These puppets enact all-night dramas behind a stretched white cloth screen, backlit with a hanging oil lamp.” (54)

The most interesting story, from Ramayana, is about the conflict between Rama, who strives to bring his future wife home from kidnapping by the enemy, and Rahwana,

who is the kidnapper of Rama's future wife. Meanwhile, from Mahabharata, the story is usually about the family conflicts, between Pandhawa, representing good quality of characters, and Kurawa, representing otherwise. The Javanese people hold the stories well, including also the characters in undergoing any good or evil deeds.

3. Discussion

KOMPAS, which is the biggest print media in Indonesia, functions to bridge communication among the Indonesian people, since it applies Bahasa Indonesia as the main and prominent language. There are various contents brought by this daily newspaper, ranging from politics, economy, education, law, and the other aspects of life, including literature, which is mostly by the appearance of its weekly short story. Surely, compared to the other previous columns, literature in short story of KOMPAS is absolutely just a very small piece of cake, but at least it proves that KOMPAS still provides "a special opportunity" for literature to exist. People may suggest the contradictory perspective undergone by KOMPAS due to its literature, because different from the other contents literature, as both Eagleton's and Barnett's notion about it, delivers message/s and not fact/s. Eagleton's "language game or play" of literature is surely Barnett's "performance in words" which conveys beauty, which peaks in its hidden significance or meaning.

One of the realities or phenomena of literature in KOMPAS is about "wayang" (the story of puppet), which is mythology for most of the Indonesian people, especially the Javanese. In the year of 2021, there were several short stories applying and holding "wayang." This reality at least shows that mythology still has an important role among the

Indonesian people, and how it presents is surely in accordance with the way of KOMPAS in communicating it to its audience. In this context, “wayang,” which is the Javanese myth, is just the object similar with the other topics or contents, and as media which must always comply with the technological developments KOMPAS also undergoes the advanced technological system. In other words, though “wayang” belongs to the realm of mythology which refers to the past, and sometimes addressed “simply not true,” it also stands as the content which must be digitalized in KOMPAS. Therefore, this media may represent the agent which could bridge the realm of “past,” in the existence of “wayang” as mythology, and “recently modern,” in the application of the digitalized technology. The present people, who are in the world of the very advanced technology, which might live by only “true” facts, could still mingle with the past in mythology, which is “simply not true” in the existence of wayang of KOMPAS.

Aku Ngenteni Tekamu (“I have been waiting for you”)

This short story, published in January 31, 2021, has two entities important to talk. The first is the usage of the Javanese language and the second is its “wayang.” The two are obviously interconnected because, as previously conveyed, they represent the Javanese people. As the “identity” the performance of “wayang” is always in the Javanese language, and this stresses the spirit of owning it. However, the short story, *Aku Ngenteni Tekamu*, itself is in Bahasa Indonesia, due to the language of KOMPAS. The content of the story is also not about facts or events from “wayang,” meaning from the tales of Ramayana or Mahabharata, but it delivers the present and modern people in dealing with daily life, especially about political conflicts. The existence of “wayang,” then, is represented by the name

of Kresna, which is one of the characters from the story of Mahabharata. In “wayang” Kresna is famous as the very wise and helpful person to the marginalized and oppressed people. Through its story, KOMPAS seems to deliver a qualified character, who has no spirit of revenge, despite his own oppressed mother's in the past. Readers, who have the Javanese tradition on “wayang,” would easily understand it since they know who Kresna is in the story of “wayang.”

***“Drupadi, Dengarkan Aku! Kamu Hanya dibodohi”
(Drupadi, Listen to Me! You're Just Being Fooled)***

Similar to the first story, this short story, published in Dec 9, 2021, applies some characters taken from “wayang,” such as Drupadi, Arjun(a), and Sinta. A special place is also shown, i.e. Pringgondani. However, there is also some names of characters, who seem from the present era, like Earnest, and *tukang becak* (the pedicab driver). Even, some utterances are in the Javanese language. Those facts are to suggest that “wayang” is an important element among the readers, who are mostly the Javanese people. However, this story interestingly presents the character Drupadi in the different perspective of “wayang.” Here, Drupadi is insane because of her visit to Pringgondani, which is in Tawangmangu, a tourism resort close to Solo. She thinks and feels that there is someone, Earnest, who always tempts her to do weird deeds. Her brother, Arjun, and sister, Sinta, are very concerned with Drupadi's condition. However, in her vision, Earnest convinces her that they are bad and evil and want to harm her. It happens then Drupadi kills Arjun by hitting his head with a big hammer, and she waits for the next chance to destroy Sinta from her life. This plot confuses surely the readers, because in “wayang” Drupadi is a person who greatly suffers from insults due to her sexually abusive acts

done by the people from Kurawa. She vows to take revenge on them by asking Bima and to take a bath with their bloods. Meanwhile, Arjun, which is surely from the name of Arjuna, and Sinta represent beauty for male and female characters. By this different perspective of story, KOMPAS might convey “a space” for readers to muse the good and evil deeds of Drupadi, and also the helplessness of Arjuna and Sinta. However, at least by those characters, the existence of “wayang” is still important in stimulating the Javanese people to think and consider this present life by referring to the possible acts, such as those done by Drupadi.

“Wayang Kulit” (The Puppet Show)

This short story, published by KOMPAS in December 11, 2021, also has the names of Shinta and Rama, which are derived from the character names of “wayang.” Those two names are very famous, and they’re from the tale of Ramayana. The two love each other but there is a conflict from Rahwana who intentionally robs her to become his wife. The conflict is overcome by Rama who defeats Rahwana. Again, it is not the plot’s events which are important to KOMPAS in publishing the short story, but the existence of those qualified characters. However, here the notion of presenting “wayang” is the most prominent talk. The title of the story itself explicitly delivers the words, *wayang kulit*, and it’s obvious that readers should have the cultural background of “wayang” prior to the reading. The “wayang” background is more complete by some details, like the term, *dalang*, and the other terms dealing with the performance of “wayang” or puppet show. It means the short story qualifies a certain group of readers, in spite of the fact that the readers of KOMPAS are not just the Javanese people, but it seems to want to “reunite” those being in one identity. Again, the story has the plot’s events of the present

daily life of the common Indonesian people, but since literature is about to bring "hidden message/s" KOMPAS seems to flame a certain ideology held by those Javanese people.

"Wisanggeni"

The title of this short story, *Wisanggeni*, published by KOMPAS in December 16, 2021, would certainly go to the readers as the token or clue that it's close to the story of "wayang." The "wayang" lovers know very well that the name is special due to his power or capacity in holding and controlling flames and fires. The root word of "Wisanggeni", *geni*, means fire, and in the story of wayang *Wisanggeni* fires are "his friends." For the common people, fire is untouched because it would burn skins or any other materials. That's why *Wisanggeni* is famous due to his capability dealing with the dangerous fire. By this kind of story KOMPAS seems to emphasize the unique power and capability of a child in helping the other child from being burned by fire. When many people are ignorant of what to do for helping the suffering child, *Wisanggeni*, as a child as well, appears to save the child and to bring him to his mother. However, *Wisanggeni* doesn't know his own name, when many journalists ask him it. Finally, a very old man tells him that his name is *Wisanggeni*. In the world of "wayang" it's told that *Wisanggeni* is in fact a child who is not expected, but he could contribute "his power" to fight evil deeds. Again, KOMPAS puts the emphasis not on the facts or events but in the existence of the character *Wisanggeni*, which is taken from "wayang." People or readers are invited to be aware that action is more important than name, as *Wisanggeni* helps the others without knowing of his own name.

4. Conclusion

From the above short discussion, there are some concluded ideas that may appear here. First, myth refers more to a local identity, in which its society keeps to establish “sense of belonging” towards its people. It’s an identity which unites the society’s members, and in this context myth or mythology functions as a social device in bonding them. That’s why myth is also called a collective unconsciousness.

“Wayang,” which is in KOMPAS, is a tool or device to collect or reunite the Javanese people in their own local identity. Secondly, in its practice myth, as literature does, delivers itself by a certain story which is familiar and totally understood by the society’s myth. It’s also a kind of performance in words by applying verbal language. Dealing with KOMPAS, the next conclusion is that as one of the agents of the very advanced print media, KOMPAS still maintains literature as an important column because literature may bring myth to preserve identity for the most readers of it, i.e. the Javanese people.

Consequently, KOMPAS must stand as the bridge between the past, represented by literature’s mythology in “wayang,” and the recent modern era, represented by the digitalized technology of media. In other words, KOMPAS is “the place,” digitalization is “the code,” and literature is “the content.”

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