

Special Features and Local Wisdom on Classical Ketoprak *Manuscript of Surakarta Style: Sociology of Literature Perspective*

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Abstract: Every literary work surely has special features that distinguish it from other literature. This point can be influenced by socio-cultural background, the creative process of an author, and the purpose of a creation. Ketoprak script is a kind of Javanese literature that has widely known in Central Java, East Java, Special Region of Yogyakarta, and many coastal areas in the northern part of Java Island. This research aims to describe and explain the special features of classical *ketoprak* manuscript of Surakarta style from the sociology of literature perspective. This type of research is descriptive-qualitative using a sociological literature approach. The data resources are some classical *ketoprak* manuscripts of Surakarta style composed by artists from Surakarta City. The data were collected by using a content analysis technique and a depth interview. Results of this research show classical *ketoprak* manuscripts of Surakarta style that have special features in terms of the dialect of Surakarta language, special performance technique, and language style used by authors. Therefore, socio-cultural background of authors can be seen from the revenue element of local wisdom from Surakarta and it makes the classical *ketoprak* manuscripts of Surakarta style different from other *ketoprak* scripts in other areas on Java Island.

1 INTRODUCTION

One of the arts derived from Javanese culture is *ketoprak*. It is a form of traditional theatrical arts that is performed in groups and it brings the story taken from the history of kingdoms in Java (Setyawan, 2016; Lisbiyanto, 2013). *Ketoprak* art has been known in various regions in Java (Central Java, East Java, and Yogyakarta) and it becomes a spectacle of people who have many fans. At the beginning, a *ketoprak* art is staged by some farmers as an expression of gratitude for the harvest. Therefore, *ketoprak* art is called a folk art, (Hughes and Freeland, 2008). At that time a *ketoprak* art form is very simple, its musical accompaniment is only mortar-related tools or called *lesung*, so at that time *ketoprak* as also called *ketoprak lesung*, (Hatley, 2010). The story was originally sung and it is still about everyday social issues interspersed with dancing and singing.

Ketoprak art progresses over time. Now mostly staged *ketoprak* must begin or derive from a *ketoprak* script written by the director (Winet, 2009). The use of manuscripts in *ketoprak* performances facilitates the actors, spectators, connoisseurs, and young *ketoprak* arts practitioners. The rapid development of *ketoprak* art is not accompanied by the increase of

ketoprak fans. In fact, many people, young and old prefer watching electronic cinemas (soap operas) to watching the *ketoprak* show. Reasons like less interesting stories, monotonous forms of performance, and old-fashioned impression are often catapulted by society, (Cohen, 2007). As a result, many *ketoprak* groups disperse because they have no audience and income to support their group activities.

Yet, a *ketoprak* art contains a variety of special things that are not owned by other traditional arts. These special features make *ketoprak* unique and attractive for *ketoprak* artists (Fujiastuti, 2015: 5). In addition to having special features, *ketoprak* performances in each region in Java also have differences. Several different kinds of *ketoprak* arts are found in Java, and some of them are *Ketoprak Jawa Timuran* (East Java), *Ketoprak Pesisiran* (develop in North-coastal Area of Javanese island), *Ketoprak Gaya Surakarta* (From Surakarta), *Ketoprak Metaraman* that are developed in Yogyakarta and its surroundings. Each variety of *ketoprak* performances has its own style and uniqueness. Such peculiarities can be viewed from the use of language reflected in the intercultural dialogue, costumes, and music accompaniment used to accompany the performance (Miqdadiyah, 2015:

3). This article will discuss the special characteristics and specificities of the classical ketoprak of Surakarta style. The discussion on the special features and peculiarities of the classical ketoprak texts of Surakarta Style will be discussed not only from the point of view of the manuscript and language, but also the staging structure. This is because the *ketoprak* script cannot be separated from the performances as a visualization of the story in the script. An approach of sociology of literature is used to analyze the object of study because it is mainly concerned with special characteristics and local wisdom in the text of classical *ketoprak* of Surakarta style.

2 RESEARCH METHOD

This is a qualitative descriptive research using a literature sociology approach. The focus of this research is directed to the detailed and in-depth description of special characteristics and wisdom in the classical *ketoprak* manuscript of Surakarta style. The manuscripts selected in this research tell about the Mataram kingdom of Islam in the Surakarta style of texts such as *Amangkurat Agung; Bedhah Kartasura; and Adegung Praja Surakarta*. The selection of manuscripts is a sample of research because it represents the *ketoprak* style of Surakarta texts because the script is made by the classical *ketoprak* artists from Surakarta. The data in three textures of *ketoprak* used content analysis techniques, along with data reduction stages, data presentation, and data verification (Sutopo, 2002). To strengthen the data analysis, in-depth interviews were conducted with some artists and experts in the field of literature especially *ketoprak* scripts. This research also used a triangulation technique to test the validity and the validity of data. A triangulation technique deals with a triangulation of data sources and triangulation theories, so that data and research results about special characteristics and local wisdom in classical *ketoprak* texts of Surakarta style at this time can be held scientifically.

3 DISCUSSION

The research on a literature sociology approach is a study of literary work that has been undertaken by many researchers or writers who struggle in the field of literature. However, only a few studies of the sociology of literature examine classical *ketoprak* scripts of Surakarta style. The sociology of literature

examines the direct link between the elements of literary works and elements of society (Endraswara, 2011: 9). The study of sociology of literature can be used to analyze special features and local wisdom in the classical *ketoprak* texts of Surakarta style that distinguish the classical *ketoprak* texts from other texts in other areas, such as in Yogyakarta, East Java, and in the northern coastal areas of Java Island. As previously mentioned, the mostly staged *ketoprak* in the present era tends to use the scripts. *Ketoprak* manuscripts are a source of stories that must be interpreted by the director, players, and other staging elements (setting interpreters, artistic stylists, and stylists) (Satoto, 2012). *Ketoprak* story is a representation of events that occurred in the past to tell about life and all the jolts in the Javanese kingdom.

The development of *ketoprak* art emerged at the first time in Surakarta precisely in Kampung Madyataman. The name of the creator is RMT Wreksodiningrat. A special feature in the classical *ketoprak* manuscript of Surakarta style can be identified from the story, the language reflected in the dialogue among the *ketoprak* players in traditional costumes, and musical accompaniment is used to accompany *ketoprak* performances. The translation of each point is elaborated as follows:

3.1 The Story of Classical Ketoprak Manuscript of Surakarta Style

The classical *ketoprak* scripts of Surakarta style tell about a story that contains a historical value, namely the history of the Islamic Mataram kingdom. A *ketoprak* manuscript does not contain a history as a whole, but it contains some historical facts given by the author's touch to create dramatic elements in the text (Setyawan, 2016). Although it contains only a small portion of the story of the Islamic Mataram Kingdom, it cannot be denied that the script or *ketoprak* performance has information about past events that can serve as a historical knowledge transmitted to the younger generation. Elements such as setting of figures or setting of places of events are even similar in terms of the problems or conflicts in a *ketoprak* text in historical documents, namely *Amangkurat Agung, Bedhah Kartasura, and Adegung Praja Surakarta*.

In *Amangkurat Agung script* the setting of events took place during the time of Mataram Islam. The main character in the script of *Ketoprak Amangkurat Agung* is Sunan Amangkurat Agung. Other figures in the *Amangkurat Agung script* are Rara Hoyi, Prince Anom, Prince Pekik, Ratu Batang, Trunojoyo, and

Kraeng Galengsong. When tracing back to the documents and historical evidence, some of these figures are mentioned in a story that tells about the reign of the Mataram dynasty of Islam around the year (1646-1677). The conflicts occurring in the manuscript are almost similar to those described in some historical documents (*babad tanah jawi*) about the arbitrary reign of Sunan Amangkurat Agung, without thinking of the fate of his people. The performances of Sunan Amangkurat Agung and Prince Anom were increasingly widespread because Prince Anom liked Rara Hoyo, the girl who became the concubine of Amangkurat Agung. At the height of his rebellion, Prince Anom joined the pirates from the Land of Sulawesi, Kraeng Galengsong to commit a coup to his father.

In the manuscript *Bedhah Kartasura*, a similar setting of events occurred at the time of Mataram Kingdom has been moved from Pleret to Kartasura, precisely west of Surakarta. This is in accordance with another document written in Babad Tanah Jawi that the court of Mataram Kartasura founded around the year 1705-1719 AD (Fawaid, 2015). The perpetrators were also the same, namely Mas Garendi, Susuhunan Pakubuwono II, Raden Mas Said, Prince Mangkubumi, and the Dutch/VOC. Broadly speaking, the conflict was almost the same, which is about a rebellion conducted by Raden Mas Said, Prince Mangkubumi, and Mas Garendi assisted by the Chinese ethnic population. The end of this civil war was the agreement of Giyanti Agreement in 1755, which divided the power of the Mataram Kingdom into two, namely Kraton Surakarta Hadiningrat and Kraton Yogyakarta Hadiningrat (Arifin, 2013).

Furthermore, in *Ketoprak Adeging Praja Surakarta* script, the setting of events occurred in *Kampung* or *Desa Sala*, the place chosen to be built as the Kraton Surakarta (Surakarta Sultan Palace). The book *Babad Tanah Jawi* mentioned that the Kraton Surakarta was established in 1745 AD. The figures in the story are Sunan Pakubuwana III, Kyai Ageng Sala, Kyai Hasan Besari from Ponorogo, and of course the villagers of Sala. Broadly speaking the *Adeging Praja Surakarta* script tells about the polemic establishment of Surakarta Kasunanan Palace, starting from the election of a determined place between Sukoharjo and Kadipolo areas until a chosen Sala Village as the location where Kraton Kasunanan Surakarta (Monfries, 2015) is established. Until now some of the previously mentioned areas can be found around the Surakarta Palace.

When reviewed in depth, historical information can be found in *ketoprak* texts. For example, the previously mentioned manuscripts contain historical

information that includes the setting of events, figures or historical actors, and conflicts that are largely similar to those in historical documents. Having known the content of historical elements in *ketoprak*, the texts of *ketoprak* can be used as a means to actualize the knowledge of history, especially the history around the city of Surakarta.

3.2 Languages in the Classical Surakarta Ketoprak Script of Surakarta Style

As one of the literary works, the classical *ketoprak* manuscript of Surakarta style certainly has the distinctiveness of language reflected in the dialogue between the soldiers. Viewing from the variety of languages used, the classical *ketoprak* manuscript of Surakarta style tends to use a variety of archaic or literary variety. This can be known from the still-used-varieties of *Bahasa Jawa Kedhaton* (a Javanese language variety commonly used in the Palace of Solo and Yogyakarta).

The artists and practitioners of *ketoprak* in Surakarta tend to use the *basa kedhaton* when performing *ketoprak*. *Basa kedhaton* is the language commonly used by the courtier and the palace servants at the time of speaking and reporting something to the king (Sulaksono, 2016: 83). They still hold the idea that *ketoprak* art is a great art that has high cultural values as well as *wayang wong* (literally: human puppet) art and *wayang kulit* (literally: leather puppet) art. Therefore, they must use standard concessions or rules, one of which is the use of a language that retains the use of the *basa kedhaton* or archaic language. Language defense in literary works can also increase the community's love of the Javanese language (Saddhono and Rohmadi, 2014). The foundation of the writers of classical *ketoprak* manuscript of Surakarta style in writing their script (the script writers) puts forward the beauty of language in the script. In contrast, the *ketoprak* text of *Mataraman Style* of Yogyakarta tends to use every day Javanese language commonly called the *Basa Padinan*.

3.3 Costumes and Musical Accompaniment for the Classical Ketoprak Script of Surakarta Style

After reviewing the script from the viewpoint of story and language, it is necessary to discuss the performance because the final product of a *ketoprak* script is a *ketoprak* staged performance. From the standpoint of *ketoprak*, the special features of the

classical Ketoprak of Surakarta style can be viewed from the costumes worn by the performers and the accompaniment of musical performance.

Clothing is worn when staging the *ketoprak* of Surakarta style as elaborated as follows: 1) *Blangkon* or headband for male players. Kings and Patih figures, wearing a head cover called the *kuluk*. 2) The King figure wears a suit called *Sikepan*, just as the groom wears in the Javanese customs. The other player wears a suit called *sorjan*. The servants and soldiers wear the vest. 3) The King figure always wears flower-patterned trousers (*cinde motif*) with *jarik* accessories tied up to the knee. Players whose titles are lower than the Patih Royal and Royal Riders wear long-stretched fingers to cover the legs. Soldiers and commoners wear the *jarik* tied to the knee alone called *supit urang style*. High-ranking female players, such as the wife of the king and the wives of the royal courtiers wear the *kebaya* clothes and use the *jarik* to cover the legs. For female characters that have low titles or ordinary people just wear a cloth that is linked to the chest to cover the feet or commonly called the *kemben* clothes.

The musical accompaniment used in the classical *ketoprak* performance of Surakarta style is generally the same as the performance of *ketoprak* in other areas, namely the gamelan music as the main instrument. There is also a musical accompaniment like *srepeg* (a musical accompaniment for a scene change), *lancaran*, and *ladrang*. The accompaniment is a common accompaniment used in some other traditional Javanese arts performances. However, in performing classical *ketoprak* of Surakarta style, there is a specificity namely the use of *Srepeg Tali Jiwa* to accompany the turn of the scene. *Srepeg Tali Jiwa* is an accompaniment created by one of the *ketoprak* artists who come from the *ketoprak* of RRI group in Surakarta.

Not only limited to the story, language, costumes, and musical accompaniment, but other elements also make the performance of classical *ketoprak* of Surakarta style different from *ketoprak* performances in other areas. The "*keprak*" tool made of wood or bamboo is used as a code for musical accompaniment and a change of scene in performing the *ketoprak* (Ulya, 2016: 45).

The special features in the classical *ketoprak* of Surakarta style is a peculiarity not shared by the *ketoprak* in other regions. The peculiarities in stories, languages, costumes, and musical accompaniments are also a local Javanese cultural wisdom in the classical *ketoprak* of Surakarta style. For that reason, studying the classical *ketoprak* texts of Surakarta style indirectly aims to learn about the culture of

society that exists in Surakarta which is reflected in the story and figure in the script of classical *ketoprak* of Surakarta style.

4 CONCLUSION

Ketoprak script is one of the literary works and the traditional dramas. Viewed from the literary and sociological perspectives, the classical *ketoprak* text of Surakarta style has various special features that represent a local wisdom of traditional arts originating from Surakarta. These special characteristics can be viewed from the standpoint of the manuscript and *ketoprak* performance that is a product continuation of the *ketoprak* classical script of Surakarta style. The story in the classical *ketoprak* script of Surakarta style tells about the history of the Islamic Mataram Kingdom. The language used in the classic *ketoprak* script of Surakarta style is the archaic language of the *Basa Kedhaton* of Javanese variety. From a performance point of view, the classical *ketoprak* script of Surakarta style has a peculiarity when viewed from the costumes and musical accompaniment used to accompany the performances. The costumes in the classical *ketoprak* script of Surakarta style performances represent costumes used in the royal period; the details are *blangkon* or headband, *sorjanese* cloth, and batik cloth of Surakarta. Relatively musical accompaniment is almost the same as *ketoprak* performances in other areas, namely using the gamelan as the main instrument. Its specificity lies in the use of *Srepeg Tali Jiwo* as a musical accompaniment change of scene. In addition, the special feature of *ketoprak* of Surakarta style is the use of "*keprak*", a kind of bat tool made of wood or bamboo. *Keprak* is used as a code against the musical accompaniment and the change of scene in the classical *ketoprak* performance of Surakarta style.

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