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Visual Narrative as Strategy of Traditional Texts: A Study on Serat Menak

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Abstract

The study aims to investigate visual narrative as a strategy of traditional texts on Serat Menak via descriptive qualitative research methods. As a result, illumination and illustration images in the Serat Menak script show copyist creativity, mastery of color composition, and knowledge of puppet images. In conclusion, the illustrations in the Serat Menak script have a close relationship with the contents of the story.

Keywords: Puppet, Illustrations, Visual, Language, Images.

Narrativa visual como estrategia de textos tradicionales: un estudio sobre Serat Menak

Resumen

El estudio tiene como objetivo investigar la narrativa visual como una estrategia de textos tradicionales sobre Serat Menak a través de métodos descriptivos de investigación cualitativa. Como resultado, las imágenes de iluminación e ilustración en el guión de Serat Menak muestran la creatividad del copista, el dominio de la composición del color y el conocimiento de las imágenes de títeres. En conclusión, las ilustraciones en el guión de Serat Menak tienen una estrecha relación con el contenido de la historia.

Palabras clave: Marioneta, Ilustraciones, Visual, Lenguaje, Imágenes.

1. INTRODUCTION

The cultural heritage contained in the classical text is the fruit of thought of the elders and ancestors of the Indonesian people. The inheritance deserves respect so that we get the moral duty to care for it. Making relics of literature (classical texts) as heritage objects such as kris, spears, and carts by washing them and giving them food in front of them does not help us to appreciate the spirit of the maker. On the contrary, respect by examining its contents makes it possible to preserve the inheritance for longer. In addition, the values of life that are still valid today will be explored and maintained.

Furthermore, PERMADI (2017) explains the concept of cultural continuity, namely remembering the past, understanding the present,

and preparing for the future. Remembering the past is exploring, identifying, sorting, and getting forms, as well as values from past traditions. Understanding the present is implementing the values contained in tradition as a solution to the problems of today's life. As for preparing for the future is doing things that are useful in the present as preparation for the future. This is useful for character building and improving the welfare of future generations so that generations and nations will be more dignified. Regarding the text, the rulers of the past considered that the text contained literary texts from the narrative side and inserted moral, ethical, manners, mythization, and legitimacy messages that were included through the text.

The Serat Menak text is one of the texts that tells the struggle of Jayeng Rana and Umar Maya in defeating Prabu Nusyirwan. In the text, there are interesting illuminations and illustrations. Illumination and illustration are aesthetic media and explanatory means for the text contained in the text. Illuminations and illustrations can also help explain the origin of the text. The tendency of the motive style of each region has its own character, besides the subjectivity of the style of the maker. Illumination can also help determine when the manuscript is written or copied because the artists who made the Illumination are witnesses of the age. Every era also has a different style (AHMAD & AHMAD, 2018; SAFARI, 2011).

Illustrations and illuminations basically function as supporting texts or subject matter in the text. However, not all illuminations support the text. Because usually illumination is only a picture that beautifies the text so that the illumination is often not related to the

contents of the text. Various images that are often used as illuminations include flowers, birds, leaves, and puppets. The pictures are given attractive colors. Meanwhile, illustration is a codicological term to refer to supporting the text. Illustrations are deliberately made by writers or copywriters to make it easier for readers to understand the contents of the text (MULYADI, 2011).

Serat Menak has many models or puppet motifs. As is generally the case for puppets, Illumination (illustration) of a puppet model is described in an en-profile (visible from the side). The illumination of puppet models is made to explain the narrative of stories contained in the text. The illumination is made on each row (scene) both jejer palace and jejer war. Pictures of puppets in the manuscript are made more flexible and keep up with the times (RAHARJO, 2017). Furthermore, Sears KAYAM (2001) explains that puppets function as a means of preaching, educational tools, communication, literary and cultural sources, and as entertainment. The story is taken from the mix between the Indonesian version of the Ramayana and Mahabarata epics with Arabic or Islamic stories.

2. METHODOLOGY

Every scientific research requires certain methods according to the object of research. In literary research, methods are ways chosen by researchers to consider the form, content, and nature of literature as the subject of study (ENDRASWARA, 2003). The approach is defined

as a way of looking at and approaching an object (SEMI, 1993). In this study, qualitative methods are used, namely the use of words or sentences in a logical structure, to explain concepts in relation to each other. Furthermore, this research is descriptive which means that the data is broken down in the form of words or images and all things in the form of a sign system are not underestimated so that it will provide a more comprehensive understanding.

The primary data source of this study is the Serat Menak script found in the MPU Tantular Museum. This text is still good, the illuminations and illustrations are still clear, although there are some pages whose text is unreadable. The illustration shown still shows a chain of events that strengthens the storyline, a picture of characters more alive with various forms of images along with colors according to the character's character, and a setting that gives a picture of the place and atmosphere. For primary data, data is taken from data sources in accordance with the formulation of the problem. In this study, a literature study was used by researchers to obtain data sources, namely the Mpu Tantular Museum, where the Serat Menak text was stored. Next, use the technique of note-taking, which is conducting listening and recording to get the data according to needs. Furthermore, the classification of data according to the problems mentioned above. In accordance with the formulation of the problem, the data analysis of this study uses a semiotic approach to find out the meaning contained in the Serat Menak script.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Illustrations and illuminations basically function as supporting texts or subject matter in the text. However, not all illuminations support the text. Because usually illumination is only a picture that beautifies the text so that the illumination is often not related to the contents of the text. Various images that are often used as illuminations include flowers, birds, leaves, and puppets. The pictures are given attractive colors. Meanwhile, illustration is a codicological term to refer to supporting the text. Illustrations are deliberately made by writers or copywriters to make it easier for readers to understand the contents of the text (MULYADI, 2011). The purpose of illumination and illustration makes the text more interesting to read and enjoy so that readers can understand the intent written in the narrative text. In other words, dramatic illustrations contained in the text can be interpreted separately or even integrated into the narrative (FOKKEMA & ELRUD, 1998).

The illustration is images that mark text. The images reinforce or help clarify the story as well as the plot, setting, and characterization. The illustration in the Serat Menak script is in the form of puppets. There is one picture of illumination that is not related to the content of the story, while the other is a variety of depictions of characters that can be grouped as knight figures, enemy figures, warfare, and pictures of vehicle animals to fight. RAHAYU (2011) describes the visual language popularized by Primadi Tabrani in line with visual literature which means that in artworks contained in

the luminance of manuscripts there are narrative aspects through structured, patterned, and meaningful language texts (HAZIM, 1994; MU'JIZAH, 2009).

The term visual literature is also used to understand concepts, symbols, ideas, philosophies, typologies of characters in illustrations, visual markers that are not explicitly translated in the narrative. The artistic aspect, as an illustration, has a function as a complement, decorating text, and making it easier for readers to understand the meaning according to the character of the image and the content of the text. The visual language approach is used to view representative or descriptive images or illustrations. The interesting part is about the way the object is described. In addition, the iconographic approach is used to solve character problems in the character depicted. Prog focus on literary form at the Fiber Kangjeng K y a i Brangtayuda collection of Kraton Yogyakarta.

Illuminations and illustrations are contained in the Serat Menak script. There is only one illumination image in the form of a flying horse that has spurs. The image is a picture of a buroq, a vehicle in the form of a winged horse that has incredible speed. In addition, the image is decorated and given many colors as a form that beautifies the image. Next, the words owned by the flower of Sambiroto are added. In Serat Menak there is only one image.

Figure 1: Picture of a flying horse illumination

The next pictures are puppet-shaped illustrations that are closely related to the contents of the story. Various portrayals of characters can be grouped as knight figures, enemy figures, wars, and pictures of vehicle animals to fight. The knight figure is the main character and figure who helps the main character's struggle in fighting against the enemy. Serat Menak gives a picture of a figure who is dashing, powerful, and always wins in war. The knight figure is depicted facing the ground as a vigilant, calm symbol, accompanied by loyal servants or soldiers. The clothes that are used are also colorful, showing elegance. The vehicle used can be either a horse or a strong elephant.

In warfare, some knight figures die bravely in fighting the enemy. The death of the knight did not make the struggle ebb but made an encouragement for other knight figures to claim revenge. Picture of knight figures as shown below.

Figure 2: Bunadir along with soldiers preparing to battle

Figure 3: Figure Jayeng Rana, Umar Maya, Maliyat Kustur, etc.
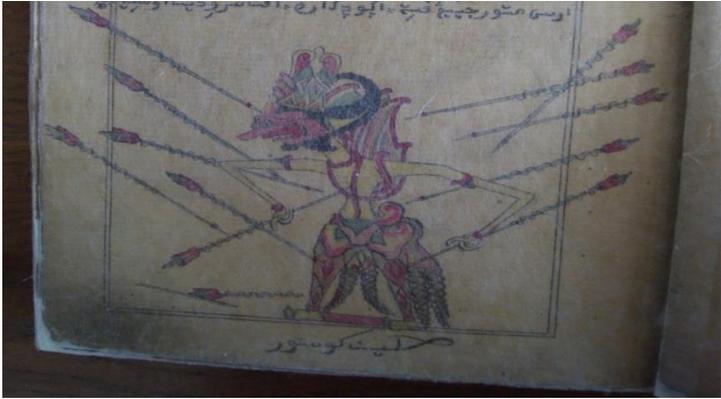
Figure 4: Ksatria Maliyat Kustur is bombarded with arrows

Figure 5: Figure of the main character (knight)

An evil figure is an antagonist who fights against and tries to thwart all the efforts of the main character, even intending to kill the main character. In Serat Menak it is deliciously depicted a rough figure, uses all means to kill the main character, and always loses in

fighting against the main character. The following picture shows the figure of an antagonist.

Figure 6: King Ban Kumala, Kala Serenggi, Raja Satiyat, and his retainer planning to kill Jayeng Rana.

Figure 7: Kala Radu, Kala Ramu, Kala Pudu, Kala Kaludu who lost against Umar Maya.

A battle took place between a knight figure and his enemies. War is depicted in several forms, such as a knight with an enemy, war by using vehicles, and joint warfare.

Figure 8: War between Sadat Kabul Umar and Sadar NgalamF

Figure 9: War of the King Arbusamawat with Jayeng Rana

Figure 10: War between Abdul Jahal and Raja NgalamF

Figure 11: The war between the Early Angels of Umar and Maliyat

Kustur

Some pictures of animals adorn illustrations in Serat Menak. These animals are used as animal vehicles such as horses and elephants. In addition to giving a beautiful picture, the picture also confirms the greatness of the driver's figure. This can be expressed as follows.

Figure 12: Horses and elephants as vehicles of war

Philology is a language study and study of civilized nations' cultures such as those expressed in language, literature, and religion, especially those whose sources are derived from old texts (PRADOTOKUSUMO, 2005). The old text contains a variety of contents, such as stories of solace, stories of faith, stories that breathe history and religion, teachings of Islam, and many other fields (MULYADI, 1994). IKRAM (1997) further explained that from the old manuscript can be obtained a clearer picture of the mind, customs, beliefs, and value systems in the past. The diverse contents of the old manuscript show that the people of the archipelago have a well-written tradition in recording every problem in the community. However, the current reality is that many people do not know the contents of the text because of a number of things such as letters, rarely used languages, and value systems that have changed. Therefore, a study of the text helps reveals problems, solve problems, and cultural values of the past that are still relevant to present life. Community life is now a

continuation of the past that adapts to the challenges and changes of the times.

The Serat Menak script is one of the old manuscripts that shows the peculiarities of old literature. It was marked by the illumination and illustrations in the form of puppets depicted en-profile (visible from the side). The images are distinguished by ksatria (protagonist) and evil (antagonist) figures. In addition, it is also decorated with images of carving patterns to beautify accompanied by various colors such as yellow, red, gray, black, orange, and so on. The colors that adorn the puppet picture reinforce the role of the main character (protagonist) or as an evil character (WIRYONAGORO, 1998).

Illumination and illustration images in the Serat Menak script show copyist creativity, mastery of color composition, and knowledge of puppet images. With the illustration, Serat Menak Story becomes more interesting and alive. This is possible as the beginning of the development of comic stories in Indonesia.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of Serat Menak text above, researchers can draw conclusions as follows. An illustration of illustrations in Serat Menak shows a picture of puppets with several characters. These figures include knight figures, enemy figures, giant figures, and pictures of animals. The illustrations in the Serat Menak script have a close relationship with the contents of the

story. Each illustration depicts a series of events in the text. The Serat Menak text is a text of Islamic influence containing the struggle of Islamic leaders in fighting their enemies. From the illustration in Serat Menak, an illustration of the tireless struggle of the main character in fighting against the enemy and upholding the teachings of Islam was obtained.

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