

## FOLKLORE AS INSTRUMENT TO INTERNALIZE CHARACTER VALUES

\*Muliadi, Firman & Kasma F. Amin

Faculty of Literature, Universitas Muslim Indonesia, Makassar, Indonesia  
Institut Agama Islam Negeri Parepare, Parepare, Indonesia

\*Corresponding author: muliadi.muliadi@umi.ac.id; mul\_sam@yahoo.co.id

DOI: 10.24815/.v1i1.14507

### Abstract

Folklore is the story told by the teller through narrations or oral expressions. It is believed that folklore contains moral values that must be important to be revealed and documented as the legacies throughout generations. This paper reviewed a folklore entitled La Pagala, which is one of the folklores compiled in a book titled Structure of Bugis Oral Literary. In this study, the authors found three character values, namely the character values of intelligence (*amaccangeng*), perseverance (*apatongeng*), and patience (*asabbarakeng*). The three character values were assessed by using ethnopragmatic approach.

**Keywords:** Folklore, moral values, La Pagala, Bugis.

### 1. Introduction

Folklore is defined as the story told by the tellers based on their actual experience or mere imagination after observing the life around them or their own problems. Both these life's experiences and problems are organized by the tellers into light and relaxing figurative speeches to keep them understandable and entertaining to listeners. It is believed that this language style helps listeners to disseminate the story to their family, friends and other people.

Folklore emerges and grows among people throughout the ages. It is always anonymous (name of teller or writer is hidden) possibly because the story is considered as collective property. Dissemination is often made through oral expressions of the teller. But, nowadays, people seem easier to find folklore in the forms of transcripts or documents possibly for the sake of conservation. Regardless of the form, folklore is a literary work. Being a literary work, folklore has its own shape and structure of language. It is a product of engineering artificial signs and it is positioned as secondary existence created by the teller or the literary person (Muliadi, 2014, p. 1). This understanding is developed based on the assumption that the creation of literary work is started from ideas preceding the signs, which therefore, the shape and structure of language of folklore as secondary existence can never be separated from the teller or the literary person. As a consequence, the literary work (including folklore) is not self-initiated but it is born from the will and hope of the teller or the literary person.

The most important point that must be noted here is that folklore is secondary existence with distinctive shape and structure of language. Therefore, folklore exists not by itself but by the will and hope of the teller or the literary person. During the making of folklore, teller plays role as the maker or literary person. Therefore, folklore is a creative process to metamorphose the will and hope. If these will and hope still remain in the idea or spiritual rooms of the teller, these cannot be called as folklore because it is yet to be told or written in certain language style.

The will and hope exist and affect idea or spiritual rooms of the teller as the result of reciprocal relationship between space and time of past and future. Idea exists after the teller's sensoria function touches and signifies the signal of other existence, namely, context. Without context, ideas in spiritual room never materialize because context always exists preceding the teller. In this reciprocal event, space and time of the past are natural and also sociocultural phenomena deliberately signified and put by the teller into their experience and knowledge rooms, or precisely their empirical realm. In the other hand, space and time of the future are the will and hope deliberately constructed by the teller into their idea room to be materialized into form and structure of novel consisting formal objects and artificial sign objects. Therefore, in every existence of folklore, space and time of the past can be recognized as something written and highlighted, such as phrases, sentences, and paragraphs. Space and time of the future are identified as something implicit, which includes content, theme, and message (or intention), as well as thoughts deliberately inscribed by the teller.

In such existence, the shape and structure of folklore are symbiosis and metamorphosis of experience, knowledge, and recognition of the teller concerning the existence of space and time the teller has passed to pursue their will and hope. In other words, space and time are already existed preceding the will and hope of the teller.

Folklore teller as a poet begins the story by introducing characters (or character values). For example, the poet can say that La Pagala is just a boy, precisely a buffalo shepherd, whose social status put him with low class. He is humble but with the wits. Due to his wits, he successfully took a liberty from reclination done by the robbers. One of character values in this story is that wits or *amaccangeng* (in Bugis language) can save life or elevate one's dignity and self-esteem.

In La Pagala's story, there are three character values studied, namely the character of intelligence (*amaccangeng*), perseverance (*apatongeng*), and patience (*asabbarakeng*). The three character values will be discussed in the detail in the results section and discussion with the ethnoprismatic approach.

Ethnoprismatic is a point of view of understanding literature (folklore) in terms of technical insight ethnicity is at the core of understanding literary pragmatism or folklore. La Pagala as a folktale of South Sulawesi is very appropriate to be recuperated (raised in value) by ethnoprismatic approach. Ethnoprismatic tried to examine literature by prioritizing the concept of cultural territory. It means that ethnoprismatic is a real applied form of literary pragmatics.

## 2. The Poetry of the Teller

Originally, folklore is oral or verbal literary but always anonymous. The story in this paper (La Pagala) is disseminated from mouth to mouth (orally) without knowing the identity of the original teller. The anonymity of folklore can be understood as a fact that the first teller remains unknown and the story is considered as collective property, which therefore, there is no one dare to claim the ownership of the story. The reason behind this

is possibly that in the old days, the poem or the teller is a humble person who never intends to put the teller's name on the work.

Based on the statement above, therefore, it is not surprising to say that folklore has been containing local wisdom values for long ago, which must be meaningful to the current generations. According to Saleh (in Indonesiastudents.com), folklore is a dimension of the past that can be used as the best instrument of learning to make steps for the sake of better future. Meanwhile, folklore also has positive functions or values to child development, including stimulating child cognitive development, which has relation with language, thought, and socio-emotional attributes (Ipriansyah, in Indonesiastudents.com).

So far, it can be said that folklore has positive benefits because it helps introducing the values of the past local wisdom into the current days. It is also helping to preserve these values because people in nowadays seem disconnected to them.

La Pagala is an oral literary but when and where it happens are unknown. This story is only understood as derived originally from Bugis because the language is Bugis and then translated into Indonesian by Muhammad Sikki and others in 1996.

Bugis is one of the tribes among the four tribes that inhabit the peninsula of South Sulawesi. The Bugis tribe is the largest tribe, both in terms of population and in terms of the area they occupy, then there are tribes of Makassar, Mandar, and Tator. The four tribes each has different languages as one of the identity of the dissenter.

### **3. Role of the Poetry in Society and Culture**

Literary work is a creative work where human's thought and feeling are expressed through oral or written forms (Sudikin, 2003, p. 2), and therefore, folklore is considered as a literary work because it suits with this definition. Literary work is not simple but complex and involute object (Wellek & Warren, 1995, p. 27). Language determines the presentation of literary work. In this position, language is a key instrument in how to bequeath cultural values to the next generations (Spradley, 1997, p. 11). Kluckhohn (in Louse, 1987, p. 84) said that culture without language is unthinkable. Language is one of cultural components that can affect acceptance, feeling, and propensity of human in responding the world around them (Liliweri, 2003, p. 151).

The development or dynamic of literary work is determined by the endorsing society. Literary work cannot escape from what happens in society. Either book writer or literary person is always a part of society (Pradopo, 2005, p. 122; Teeuw, 1984, pp. 228-230). Therefore, literary work always contains cultural aspects although it is created by, for example, a book writer (Ratna, 2004, p. 329).

Regarding this position, it is believed that literary work cannot be separated from society (Hasan, 1990, p. 58; Ratna, 2004, p. 18). Understanding literary work is impossible without knowledge about society and culture that provide the background to the creation of the work (Pradotokusumo, 2005, p. 60). Under this definition, it can be said that literary work is meant to be enjoyed, understood and utilized by the society (Damono, 1979, p. 1). There is a strong connection between literary person (the maker), literary work, and the society along with all sorts of sociocultural dynamics (Pradotokusumo, 2005, p. 78). In this position, literary work and the maker are strongly related, and this relationship becomes the instrument of self-projection or to describe the group where the maker belongs to, or possibly, to become a method to serve personal passion (Hutomo, 1993, p. 9; Ratna, 2004, p. 56).

The maker of literary work must recognize the society where they live with before creating the work (Budiman, 1985, p. 84). It implies strong interaction between literary

work maker and society. The maker stands as the heir of collective culture and most importantly, always finds difficulty to disengage from collective symbolism (Kuntowijoyo, 1999, pp. 138-139). The situation is apparent when literary work has two characters, namely local and universal (Darma, 2004, p. 69). Universal character comes up when literary work expresses the right of every human to raise the votes of compassion and happiness. Folklore as oral literary can be said as having local character when it emphasizes on local features and certain part of a time span.

La Pagala folklore is one of the most interesting Bugis stories to study. It is said to be a Bugis story because it uses the Bugis language as its delivery medium. This story is said to be interesting to study because it contains character values that are still relevant in the era.

Character values in this era have been eroded by the influence of the globalization era, such as the value of obedience and patience. By working on the La Pagala story, the reader is expected to be able to give understanding to other parties about the importance of good character values to be maintained and implemented in daily life.

#### 4. Representation of Character Values in Folklore (La Pagala)

Representation is an effort to reconstruct and present various facts and thoughts through the form of language (Ratna, 2005, p. 612). However, folklore representation is unique because it is not talking about facts and thoughts describing folklore. Indeed, the representation of folklore is determined more by perception of the maker (or the poet). Therefore, it is more precise to say that folklore is the mirror, shadow, or image of reality. Based on this statement, folklore can be said as description of reality (Teeuw, 1984, p. 220). Literary work (including novel or folklore) is the reflection of society life, and therefore, surely created in accordance with the situation of society and powers at the time (Abrams, 1981, p. 178). A poem cannot free from sociocultural effect, and this effect can manifest into many forms such as public figures, social system, local customs, social perception, art, and cultural artifacts (Pradopo, 2005, p. 254).

Folklore that is told in a novel is attempting to represent facts and thoughts that will teach human about how to identify the self, other humans, other creatures, universe and God (Amir, 1990, p. 58). In this understanding, folklore is presenting the life but also making questions about mentality, mind, and feeling of the people in the life of the story (Jassin, 1977, p. 12). In certain point of life journey, human creates literary work after having religious contemplation or exploiting imagination, divine power, peace, wisdom, paragon and other sublime attributes of life (Saryono, 2009, p. 12).

#### 5. Discussion

Three important character values are found in Folklore La Pagala, and these are: 1) *amaccangeng* (wits), 2) *apatoreng* (obedience), and *asabbarakeng* (forbearance). Each value will be elaborated as follows:

##### 5.1 *Amaccangeng*

In Ugi/Bugis language concept, *amaccangeng* (wits) is defined as the capability to read and sense the situation, which as a result, will facilitate one to go through the life. This concept is expressed in La Pagala, which is described as follows.

The story of La Pagala starts with three robbers. They loot everything as they walked down the road until they met with a buffalo shepherd, named La Pagala. One of the robbers asked the shepherd, "Where are you going boy?" The shepherd answered, "I am looking for

my lost buffalo, Sir." The robber pursued with other question, "How many buffalos do you have?" The shepherd calmly replied, "Only one, Sir." "What is your name?" the robber hunted for other clues. "La Pagala, Sir", said the shepherd. "If your name is La Pagala, it means you take a joy of bracing (*menggala*) others with your hook," the robber tried to deduce. The shepherd objected, "No, Sir. My father took the name from Lontarak La Galigo, which said that *pagala* is a man of discreet."

In this awkward moment, La Pagala was threatened to be killed by the robbers if he refused from going along with them. Their journey was showered by torrential rains that force the herd to take shelter beneath a huge tree. During the resting, they tried to entertain themselves by telling a story one to another, while the shepherd just abreacted of it. They seemed proud of themselves because Bugis people are known for their skill in telling story. They drew straws to decide the turn. The result was that first turn is Makkarumpak, second is La Pabellak, third is La Pallirak, and finally, fourth is La Pagala.

Each told the story. All stories are described as follows.

- Makkarumpak is telling a story about a high mounted house. The high is very incredible, which when one drops a newly hatched chick from the summit, it hits the ground with cockspur emerged.
- La Pabellak is giving a story about a very huge tree. The huge is beyond measure. When a toddler walks around it, the first round is completed with gray hair grown.
- La Pallirak is presenting a story about a huge buffalo he has ever seen. The horn is very capacious and also commodious enough for people to perform kick-body dance above it.
- La Pagala is finishing the round with a story about a very large drum. The size is massive. When one strikes the bump, the sound will hold out for seven years. The drum is made from leather and woods. The leather comes from the huge buffalo as told by La Pallirak and the woods are provided by the giant tree as told by La Pabellak. The drum is planned to be suspended on the ridge of the mounted house as told by Makkarumpak.

It was found that La Pagala had adopted all stories told by the robbers. Feeling surprised, they were astonished by him and respecting his cleverness. But, they also worried about the fact that if they still keep him under arrest, he might deceive them with his wits. Being afraid to be fooled around, they decide to liberate La Pagala to go home.

*Amaccangeng*, here called as wits, is a capability that if it is used for kindness, it might provide safety and happiness in life. To have wits, people must do sincere learning. The Holy Quran said that "Read in the name of your Lord who created" (Al-Alaq:1).

La Pagala is a man of wits and he successfully attains his liberty from robbers by using his wits. Clever person gets respectful position in Bugis society, which in this context becomes La Pagala story's background. It has been declared in Holy Quran that "Allah will raise those of you who have faith and those who have been given knowledge to some degrees" (Al-Mujadalah/58:11).

## 5.2 *Apatoreng*

In Ugi/Bugis language, *apatoreng* is signified as a person who is diligent, obedient and loyal. Since long ago, Bugis people are known for their loyalty. It is like a wife who must let her husband go away to look for the better fortune. The husband might go for years before he came back. There is a case when the wife was actually pregnant when she said goodbye to her husband who got a job far away. The husband went home when his child was already twenty years old.

La Pagala belongs to Bugis people who have remarkable loyalty and obedience. The following excerpt might explain about it:

While the robbers swarmed around La Pagala, one of them said, “Now La Pagala, we intend to take you and bring you with us. Do not run. If you do, we kill you. We might not pardon you. To prevent you from fleeing, we better tie you up. Do not resist unless you want to die.”

After being abducted, La Pagala never argued anything the robbers said to him. It is a description of obedience or loyalty rather than of being afraid for sanctions. Based on experience in the old days, Bugis children are educated to be obedient and therefore, it is rare to find them arguing with their parents. Reason behind this is “authoritarian parenting style” among Bugis people in the past. This feature is already shown by the phrases in the excerpt, which is: Do not run. If you do, we kill you. We might not pardon you. To prevent you from fleeing, we better tie you up. Do not resist unless you want to die.

Words or phrases that sound authoritarian are: .... kill you. We (robbers) might not pardon you. To prevent you (La Pagala) from fleeing, we better tie you up. Do not resist unless you want to die. Such authoritarian tones are often produced or expressed by Bugis parents to keep their children obedient. Somehow, it brings positive impact because children are becoming sincere in finishing the tasks ordered to them.

La Pagala is symbolizing a person who obeys the robbers and then gets respects, and because of that, they allow him to go home to look for his lost buffalo. He wins the respects because he provides his obedience to what the robbers say and order. It gives indication that obedience and loyalty are values that must be conserved in life because both give positive outcomes. Bugis people must ever hear the expression of *Reso temmangingngi malomo naletei pammase Dewata*. President Joko Widodo has ever cited this expression during the 2018 Annual Session of People’s Consultative Assembly in front of the members of People’s Consultative Assembly, People’s Representative Council, and Regional Representative Council, in Senayan Jakarta (fajar.co.id, 2018).

Each word in the expression has important meaning, respectively: *reso* is equaled to “work”; *temmangingngi* is signified as “never bored, never surrender, and never give up”; *malomo* is meant as “easy”; *naletei* is described as “to get, to be given, or through”; *pammase* equals to “blessing, or favor”; and *Dewata* is identified as “God or Allah”. In whole sentence, the expression can be translated into English as “one who works sincerely and never giving up is one who easily gets blessings from Allah SWT”. Implicitly, this expression is also a motivating encouragement stating that success can only be achieved when the work is completed sincerely despite problems hampering. This advice is often given by parents, teachers, and public figures in Bugis-Makassar locals to their children, pupils, and followers because it is believed that this advice promotes positive spirits in work.

### 5.3 *Asabbarakeng*

In Ugi/Bugis language, *asabbarakeng* is a person with attitude and behavior to accept with resolute heart to the occurrences happening befallen. La Pagala is a person with *asabbarakeng* (or forbearance). The following excerpt is described as follows:

“Your wish is my order, Sir (the robber). It is not possible for me to resist,” answered by La Pagala.

“It is not possible for me to deny your words, Sir (the robber) because it is you who says it,” La Pagala insisted.

La Pagala is a forbearing person who is willing to serve the wish of the robbers. For Bugis-Makassar Tribe, *sabbara* (forbear) is attitude and behavior required by the parent from their children believing that forbearance might help their children to gain success in the

future. *Sabbara* is a positive attitude that must be fertilized and grown to keep the next generation from situations of despondency, emotionally offended, and incriminating others when the errands bog down or simply do not work. Persons with *sabbara* always look or wait for wisdom when what they wish for is not yet coming true. Be calm easily is a prominent characteristic of such person.

Bugis-Makassar tradition has educated children with forbearance to obey orders of their parent or older person. Forbearing to serve the orders is not pleasure, and it is just what is suffered by La Pagala, as shown in the excerpt: "Your wish is my order, Sir (the robber). It is not possible for me to resist". In the story, La Pagala is just a boy, and the robbers are adult and possibly already growing up. The proof of La Pagala's age is provided when one of the robbers accosts him by questioning, "What are you looking for, boy?"

Children with attitude and behavior of La Pagala are often successful in achieving their goals because such children are likable by their parent or the other adults. In Bugis tradition, when a family member or a descendant must leave their home for the better fortunes, the parents give advice in noble phrases, which are *abbolaiko sabbara* and *kininnawa madeceng*. This paper defines *abbolaiko sabbara* as having forbearance in dealing with problems. Persons with forbearance are not easily offended by the insults and even eager to accept it while seeking for settlement. Such persons will be solidly successful because they deal with the problems with calm and optimism. In the Islam religion, Allah never gives burden beyond capability of human to overcome (Al-Bakarah:286).

*Kininnawa madeceng* is signified as a capability to have sincere and tenacious heart in facing life problems. Persons with such attitude and behavior are always optimist and have propensity to positive thinking. Successful person is absolutely one who has *kininnawa madeceng*, which means that this person is eager to deal the problems, not avoiding it. Local wisdom is expressed through a proverb, "Sailing upstream first, swimming thereafter; Taking pains for bits, having a joy later". This proverb is consistent to Islamic teaching stated in Epistle Al-Insyirah Verse 5 to 6. The meaning of the verses is that "because actually, there is difficulty going along with ease, and actually, there is difficulty after ease."

The verses and verses of the al-Quran above show that success can be achieved if the previous efforts and hard work have been done earnestly without tiring and especially desperate. The La Pagala figure in La Pagala's story is considered successful because he has a patient attitude. That patience was reflected in his behavior that every robber's instructions were carried out so that La Pagala was released by the robber.

## 6. Conclusion

The folklore of La Pagala is a story suitable to the millennial because it contains important values needed in life. Values that this paper wants to promote are *amaccangeng* (wits), *apatongeng* (loyalty or diligence), and *asabbarakeng* (forbearance). Moreover, in this millennial era, *amaccangeng*, *apatongeng*, and *asabbarakeng* are essential values that every individual can exploit and use for the sake of survival or for successful achievement of goals.

## References

- Amir, H. (1990). *Pendidikan sastra lanjut*. Malang: IKIP Malang.  
5 pengertian folklore menurut para ahli dan contohnya. (2017, April, 17).  
Indonesiastudents.com. Retrieved from

<http://www.indonesiastudents.com/pengertian-folklore-menurut-para-ahli-dan-contohnya>.

- Arti kutipan pepatah Bugis pada pidato Jokowi.* (2018, August, 17). Fajar.co.id. Retrieved from <https://fajar.co.id/2018/08/17/arti-kutipan-pepatah-bugis-pada-pidato-jokowi>.
- Budiman, A. (1985). *Pembagian kerja secara seksual sebuah pembahasan sosiologis tentang peran wanita dalam masyarakat*. Jakarta: Gramedia.
- Damono, S. D. (1979). *Sosiologi sastra: Sebuah pengantar ringkas*. Jakarta: Pusat Pembinaan dan Pengembangan Bahasa.
- Darma, B. (2004). *Pengantar teori sastra*. Jakarta: Pusat Bahasa.
- Jassin, H. B. (1977). *Tifa penyair dan daerahnya*. Jakarta: Gunung Agung.
- Kuntowijoyo. (1999). "Masjid atau pasar: Akar ketegangan budaya di masa pembangunan". *Budaya dan masyarakat*. Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana.
- Liliweri, A. (2003). *Makna budaya dalam komunikasi antarbudaya*. Yogyakarta: LKiS.
- Louse, D. (1987). *Culture learning: The fifth dimension in the language classroom*. Boston: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.
- Muliadi. (2014). *Nilai multikultural teks puisi Husni Djamiluddin dalam kajian hermeneutika*. Disertasi tidak diterbitkan. Malang: PPs UIM Malang
- Pradopo, R. D. (2005). *Pengkajian puisi*. Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press.
- Pradotokusumo, P. S. (2005). *Pengkajian sastra*. Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama.
- Ratna, N.K. (2004). *Teori, metode, dan teknik penelitian sastra*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.
- Saryono, D. (2009). *Dasar apresiasi sastra*. Yogyakarta: Elmaterra Publishing.
- Sikki, M., et al. (1996). *Struktur sastra lisan Bugis*. Jakarta: Pusat Pembinaan dan Pengembangan Bahasa, Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan.
- Spradley, P. J. (1997). *Metode etnografi* (Trans. by Misba Zulfa Elizabeth). Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana Yogya.
- Teeuw. (1984). *Sastra dan ilmu sastra*. Jakarta: Pustaka Jaya.