

BAGURAU: MINANGKABAU ORAL LITERATURE IN LUHAK NAN TIGO WEST SUMATRA

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ABSTRACT

This research presents the results of analysis and the description of several problems related to the oral literary work of *Bagurau* which have not been completely and deeply analyzed by previous researchers. The problems are related to the oral literary text of *Bagurau*. In line with the problems discussed, qualitative method with sociological approach is applied in this study. This means that the research was initiated by comprehending the data and then the theory of deconstruction, that is, the theory of “trace” functions and the theory of hypersemiotics were chosen for analyzing the data. The theories were observed in such a way that they could be synthesized into one theory or a novelty.

The description of the results of analysis was initiated by presenting the social context of *Bagurau* which was then continued with the forms of the text including the construction of the text with regard to its scheme, communicative pattern, formulas, sound elements, style, diction, theme, characters and setting. Based on the deconstruction pattern introduced by Derrida, as far as the text of *Bagurau* is concerned, several new forms of text have been found developing. They are the forms of parody, schizophrenia, kitsch, pastiche, hybrid, eclectic, and nonsense. Based on what has been traced, the text of *Bagurau* used to function as amusement to express joy, production and reproduction of local culture, expression, representation, economy, introspection, and togetherness. Then the meanings which have been found are the meanings of pluralism, egalitarianism, emancipation, democracy, the ideology of *parewa*, destruction of phallocentrism, solidarity, social control, and self - esteem - embarrassment.

Key words: *Bagurau* oral literature, text, plurality, deconstruction

1. Background

Bagurau is one of the genres in Minangkabau oral literature in Luhak Nan Tigo, West Sumatra. This literary work is narrated in the form of joking dialogues. It is narrated spontaneously and situationally based on the time when and the place where the participants and the audience are currently available. The forms of text narrated are derived from those spreading in the community.

Such literary work is referred to in social relationship, functions to strengthen norms, contains cultural values, and is directly related to the societal activities. Its roles, functions and values, that is, its “collective imagination” (Piliang, Kompas, 30 October 2000), and “collective concept” (Koentjaraningrat, 1985: 112) in life (Kusuma, 2005: 201) have not been clearly revealed. In addition, it is influenced by the societal dynamism so there is a threat that it and the concepts and values it contain will get extinct (Eagleton, 2002: 4). It is such a situation which has led to this research. In particular, this research attempts to explain (1) the essence, the narrators, and the phenomenon of the oral literature *Bagurau* performed by the community of Luhak Nan Tigo; (2) the forms of the text of the oral literature *Bagurau* performed at Luhak Nan Tigo; (3) its functions for the community of Luhak Nan Tigo; and (4) the meanings contained in it.

2. Theoretical Framework

In explaining the problems mentioned above, the grand theory of deconstruction which includes the theory of “trace” functions and the theory of hypersemiotics is employed.

The theory of deconstruction highly allows a text to be read and interpreted differently (Al-Fayyadl, 2006: 27-28). It understands marginal texts and the empty spaces influencing their content and social totality (Ratna, 2004: 226). The texts are read in a deconstructive way. They are read in parodies leading to meanings (Ratna, 2004: 223; Piliang, 2005: 244-247; Al-Fayyadl, 2006: 8, 80). Meanings constitute endless wealth of signs, which keep moving following the development of forms (signs). No meanings which are permanent and standard in nature (Derrida, 2002:

33; Sim, 2002: v; Sunardi, 2002: 53m 323; Piliang, 2005: 46, 280; Harland, 2006: 191; Hoed, 2008: 16).

Behind the existence of texts, there are traces of other texts. Such other texts function and transform into the current texts referred to as “intertextuality” (Pradopo, 1997: 227; Ratna, 2003: 173; Cika, 2006: 402). Thus, the functions of texts may be understood by elaborating the functions of texts in the past which are in existence in the current text (Al-Fayyadl, 2006: 165).

Hypersemiotics highlights the excessive nature or the excesses on the signs, the sign system and the signifying process. The excessive nature means going beyond the structural semiotic boundary (Piliang, 2005: 49). The process of meaningfulness is undertaken by “postponement” (Asyhadie, 2004: 17). This theory is related to the spheres of hyper- reality, production, and hyper-sign, that is, a sign which goes beyond its principle, definition, structure and function (Piliang, 2005: 53-59).

3. Research Method

In this research qualitative method is employed, in which the oral literature *Bagurau* performed at night at the cultural area of Luhak Nan Tigo, Minangkabau, West Sumatra Province was explored. This area is made up of Luhak Tanah Data, Luhak Agam, and Luhak 50 Koto. It is in these three areas *Bagurau* has been developing.

The primary data in this research include (1) the text of *Bagurau*; (2) the narration of *Bagurau*; (3) the *Bagurau* narrators from whom the oral literature is obtained; and (4) the opinions of the community leaders and the public. The additional data include written documents containing oral literature and Minangkabau socio culture.

The primary data were obtained by participatory observation. The natural performance of *Bagurau* was observed and the data were collected by recording and note taking. Then the data were analyzed from the time the data were collected to the time when the dissertation was completed. The data were analyzed by employing the technique of deconstructive analysis, that is, by deconstructing prospective through

the following stages: (1) all the text elements were equally posited and separately comprehended, and (2) every element was related to the other elements to identify any network (Endraswara, 2003: 270; 2008: 171). What is meant is that the structure of *Bagurau* was deconstructed in order to understand its new form (reconstruction), functions and meanings contained.

4. Discussion

Bagurau is derived from the egalitarian tradition of Minangkabau community. In order to be the narrators, it is directly learned rather than from any senior. Being the narrators means earning additional income for those who are the performers, while being the *pagurau* means spending income as they should contribute '*maisi lapiek*'.

Bagurau is performed without being bound to any religious ritual and vice versa. The narration is performed at night from 20.30 to 04.00 anywhere without being bound to any religion. It is performed by singing and reciting intonationally accompanied by the sounds produced by wind instruments known as *saluang*. Currently the narrators of *Bagurau* are from the young generation who live in urban areas and are educated. They function to create, to request, to fulfill what is requested for and to make *Bagurau* lively.

The text of *Bagurau* constitutes dialogic traces involving the participants of *pagurau* who play the role of giving instruction; *tukang oyak*, the participants who play the role of mediating; and *tukang dendang*, the participants who play the role of fulfilling what is requested for and trembling the emotion of the *pagurau*. What is meant is that *Bagurau* contains the paradox of power (Widijanto, 2008). However, the dialogues are performed by the egalitarians. It is performed regardless the social status and the positions of the participants, who are free to express their ideas, feelings, emotions, and whatever aesthetics they have. In addition, the text narrated constitutes the traces of the texts in the past. *Bagurau* is a celebration of diversity which originates from the performance situationally based on the time when and the place where the participants and the public are currently available (*kekinian-*

kedisinian) and which originated from various texts in the past coming from various regions in Minangkabau.

The text of *Bagurau* is composed of the introductory scheme covering the introductory rhetoric and the song *imbau singgalang*, the text materials *gurau mudo* and *gurau tuo*, and the closing covering the song *jalu-jalu* and the closing rhetoric. The text scheme is divided into two stages; they are the episodes of *gurau mudo* and *gurau tuo*.

When creating and composing the text of *Bagurau* the narrators refer to the formulas available (Lord, 1976: 30), sound elements (final rhymes, alliteration, assonance, euphony, cacophony, and filler) (Pradopo, 1997: 22), either denotative or connotative diction, literary style (simile, parable, metaphor, personification, inversion, and parallelism), imagery (sight, hearing, touching, telling nonsense, smelling, and thinking), the characters of the narrators (not to be taken seriously, solidarity, sentimentality), setting (place and time) and theme (matters related to biology, love, longing, suffering, disappointment, daily behavior, and so forth) (Lord, 1976: 68). Those are all intended to give clear pictures, to create particular atmospheres, and to attract attention.

The forms of the text of *Bagurau* vary, as it is the spontaneity of the narrators' creative process when performing. The text varieties can be seen from several aspects such as the length of the text and the dialogues in it, the words chosen to express the main ideas and the formulas repeatedly used in it.

The deconstructive reading results in the reconstruction of the text of *Bagurau*, that is, the text develops in various new forms such as (1) the parody form which spreads all over the Minangkabau community; (2) the schizophrenia form as the self identity of the *pagurau* in Luhak Nan Tigo; (3) the kitsch form, that is, the form which maintains and continues *Bagurau*; (4) the pastiche form, that is, what was culturally standard in the past is brought into the current *pagurau* era enthusiasm; (5) the hybrid form, that is, art crossing; (6) eclectic form, that is, various phenomena get diffused; (7) the form of nonsense words, that is, the words which are meaningless according to the dictionary.

Based on the functions of the *Bagurau* in the past, it functioned as (a) amusement which could lead to joy, laugh, contentment and addiction; (b) production, reproduction, and local cultural heritage of Minangkabau; (c) expression of aesthetics, contentment and sadness, logic, and reality; (d) representation of individuality and group, material, social awareness, societal integration, social criticism, socialization, and cultural strengthening; (e) economy; (f) informational media; (g) self introspection; (h) educational media; and (i) togetherness.

The meanings of *Bagurau* exceed the structural semiotic boundary. One of its meanings is related to plurality, that is, it appreciates pluralism as a reality which should be adopted from diversity. The next meaning is related to emancipation; it gives freedom to create and enjoy diversity in expressions and aesthetics made by the public. Apart from that, it also has egalitarian meaning which regards all forms of expressions aesthetic ones. Democratic meaning is its further meaning; what is meant is that openness is spontaneously created from whatever material made available by the environment. Openness is a plural mode and the participant or the public has the spontaneous authority to claim that the text of *Bagurau* has the value of beauty. In addition to the meanings mentioned above, *Bagurau* still has many other meanings. One of them is that it has ideological meaning of *parewa* which expresses joy and ecstasy for the *Bagurau* public. The next meaning is related to solidarity in that it forms associations and collective identity of the *pagurau*. Any interaction in *Bagurau* which is related to the essence of controlling the community as the owner is one of its further meaning. Its last meaning includes embarrassment and self esteem. What is meant is that any interaction in *Bagurau* is closely related to wealth and values of life, that is, embarrassment and self esteem.

5 Novelties

Based on the analysis above, several novelties are found as far as this research is concerned. They are (a) *Bagurau* adheres to the egalitarian culture; (b) *Bagurau* is closely related to the public as the text contains the Minangkabau local genius, main transactional language, adaptation ability, and oral literacy; (c) the text of *Bagurau* develops in such a way that different varieties, which have broken the

conventional rules, have emerged. They are in the forms of parody, schizophrenia, pastiche, kitsch, hybrid, eclectics, and nonsense; (d) it is used to express joy and ecstasy and contains socio cultural values, and functions as amusement, production, reproduction, heritage of local culture, expression, representation, economy, self esteem, and togetherness; and (e) *Bagurau* has several new meanings such as egalitarian, plurality, democracy, *parewa* ideology, and destruction of phalocentrism.

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