

**MEANING AND CONTEXTUALIZATION OF
THE CONCEPT OF INTROSPECTION IN BALINESE *GEGURITAN***

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Abstract

This research article discusses the concept of introspection (upeksha) in Balinese geguritan (a literary work in the form of traditional Balinese poetry that can be sung). The data used were “Geguritan Gde Upeksha”, “Geguritan Dharma Prawreti”, and “Geguritan Mladprana”. The aim of this study is to disclose the meaning and contextualization of the concept of upeksha. The theory used was Semiotics Theory proposed by Roland Barthes. In the three geguritans, the concept of upeksha is interpreted as an introspective attitude in thinking, speaking, and behaving. The meaning of the concept of upeksha that had been obtained was then used as a framework to measure the knowledge of the society in exploring the concept of upeksha. Based on the results of the interviews, the society had a little difficulty in controlling themselves. An introspective attitude shall work well if there is a will from any persons and also support from anything outside of themselves, such as the concept of upeksha. Therefore, the concept of upeksha needs to be more popular in the society.

Keywords: introspection, upeksha, geguritan, semiotic.

Introduction

The influence of modernization makes people live in an ‘instant’ world. Rapid technological advances make things easier. The utilization of technology shall be more effective if someone has material things (Kariarta, 2020:71). Gradually the existence of material things becomes something essential for the society, thus, they are used as benchmarks in assessing the quality of a person. This kind of phenomenon is called materialism. Karl Marx (as cited in Rijal, 2019: 61) argues that materialism is defined as an understanding when humans only rely on material things and put aside all forms of thought that lead to spirituality. Materialism assesses everything from a material perspective, such as position, standing, wealth, and possessions (Husna, 2015: 9). This material inclination may

lead to moral and character problems, because material things possess attractions that can bind people to be willing to make sacrifices to obtain them.

Material things are able to overpower self-awareness and even make a person forget his/her identity. In addition, another factor that causes a person loses his/her self-awareness is the desire to be recognized/ acknowledged by others. The importance of recognition/ acknowledgment from others makes one unable to think wisely. Over time, the moral values in the society shall be increasingly eroded by materialistic lifestyles. Therefore, the society requires an introspective attitude as a medium to awaken itself from the threat of this materialistic life.

Self-introspection is an attitude of self-monitoring by regulating emotions arising from within and appreciating the feelings of others (Suryomentaram, 1989: 16). An introspective attitude is carried out by instilling the concept within oneself that feelings are only temporary and illusory. When the mind realizes that feelings are only temporary, accordingly that is when inner peace occurs in human beings. Someone who has peace of mind within him/herself shall be wiser in responding to feelings arising both from within him/her and other things that come from the surrounding environment.

The concept of introspection in Hinduism is known as upeksha. Upeksha is one part of the teachings of Catur Paramita. Upeksha is defined as an attitude of introspection and equanimity. People who study upeksha usually live a modest life, meaning the life that is not dominated by the five senses. This attitude is certainly contrary to the notion of materialism which emphasizes material aspects in everyday life. This makes the concept of upeksha important to be applied in the life of people to anticipate the materialistic society.

Data Sources

This study used three sources of data, in the form of geguritan. Geguritan is a form of traditional Balinese literature (a poetry that can be sung). The Geguritan used were “Geguritan Gde Upeksha”, “Geguritan Dharma Prawreti”, and “Geguritan Mladprana”. “Geguritan Gde Upeksha” is a framed story in which the main character is named Gde Upeksha. “Geguritan Dharma Prawreti” is a geguritan telling the story of a teacher character advising his students. “Geguritan Mladprana” is a geguritan which tells the story about its main character named I Mladprana. The three geguritans allude to the concept of upeksha. Each geguritan narrates the concept of upeksha in different ways so as to bring out different meanings as well.

Research methods

This research is research in qualitative form, because of the data is qualitative data. There are three stages that used in this research. First, in the collecting data used a library method to collect data regarding the upeksha concept that contained in the data sources. This method supported by reading technique, namely hermeneutic and heuristic. Besides that, this method followed by transliteration and translation techniques. Another method is used at the data collection stage is interview method. This method used to identify contextualization of upeksha in Balinese society. This method is supported by recording technique. Second, in the

data analysis method used content analysis method. Content analysis is the pressing method discussion of the content of the communication (Ratna, 2020:43). This method is supported by analytic descriptive technique that used to describe data from the facts that exist in the object of research. Third, in the result of the data analysis method used argumentative method. Argumentative method is the presentation of research result in the form of an argument or opinion. This method is supported by deductive and inductive techniques.

This study aims to disclose the meaning of the concept of upeksha contained in Balinese geguritan represented by the three geguritan used as the data sources. This signification is carried out by using the theory of semiotics. The theory of semiotics is a science that examines signs. In the science, semiotics functions to express scientifically about all of the signs in human life, both verbal and nonverbal ones (Ratna, 2020: 105). The study of signs is able to clarify the meaning behind the signs.

The theory of semiotics used in this study was the theory of semiotics of Roland Barthes. Barthes admits that the process of signification is not limited to languages, but it covers the entire life on the basis of linguistic concepts to analyze social phenomena. (Ratna, 2020: 260). Barthes sparked his opinion about how signs work, through a two-stage analysis model of meaning or two orders of signification. The first system of signification is the use of signs to be interpreted as denotations. Denotation is the original meaning or literal meaning that is absolutely understood by most people. The second system is that the users of signs develop the use of signs in two directions, namely development in terms of forms (language rhetoric) and development in terms of meaning (connotation). The development in terms of form is that the users of signs give different forms for the same meaning. Meanwhile, the development in terms of meaning is that the users of signs give different meanings to the same form.

Results and Discussion

Upeksha is the fourth part of the ethical teachings of Hinduism, namely Catur Paramitha. Upeksha is the character of someone who is always aware of the situation at hand, is wise, always maintains physical and mental balance, and does not want to interfere in the affairs of others (Suhardana, 2015: 24). Upeksha is also interpreted as an attitude of introspection and equanimity. Upeksha occurs when the mind of a person cannot be influenced by external objects, thus he/she cannot be enslaved by greed, and is not upset if he/she lacks material things. (Suartini, 2021: 67).

The concept of upeksha in “Geguritan Gde Upeksha”, “Dharma Prawreti”, and “Mladprana” is narrated differently by each author. In “Geguritan Gde Upeksha”, the concept of upeksha is depicted in the form of its characters, namely through the character, ‘Gde Upeksha’. The author conveys the concept of upeksha through the character, ‘Gde Upeksha’. As the name implies, the character ‘Gde Upeksha’ is described as possessing a wise disposition and good at carrying himself. In “Geguritan Dharma Prawreti”, the concept of upeksha is expressed in the form of speech conveyed by the teacher character to his students. The speech conveyed by the teacher to his students illustrates that upeksha is a fair attitude, namely not

discriminating against others, as well as being good at carrying oneself, namely being able to position oneself according to the circumstances around him/her. In “Geguritan Mladprana”, the concept of upeksa is conveyed in the form of messages. The messages are conveyed by the character, Ni Dukuh to I Mladprana. In the messages, upeksa is described as an attitude that can distinguish between good and bad and is always careful in taking actions.

The delivery of upeksa to the three geguritan is classified into three forms, namely introspective in thinking, introspective in speaking, and introspective in behaving. Wong (2019: 25) states that the mind determines everything. All words and deeds are born by thought. Thought, speech, and behavior are inseparable units, thus, these three geguritan describe the three parts. One example of upeksa in thinking is found in “Geguritan Gde Upeksa”, namely when Gde Upeksa reminds his children to be wiser in thinking. The following is the quote in question.

(1-1) Jati sarira kadanin, yan jati tonden manawang, usahayang pang da pelih, patakonang prajani, apang seken teges ipun, pang da mapi-mapi prajnan.

Translation:

The true identity it is called, if you do not know, attempt not to be mistaken, inquire directly, thus you know what it means, do not pretend to be smart.

In the quote above, Gde Upeksa conveys the importance of thinking wisely. Sometimes a person really wants to obtain recognition/acknowledgment from others, thus he/she pretends to look smart in front of other people. This is also related to the phenomenon of dissemination of incorrect information (hoax). Hoax is an attempt to trick readers into believing information that is not yet known to be truthful (Triartanto. 2015:33). The desire to obtain recognition/ acknowledgment from other people is a factor behind this phenomenon. People are competing to spread information in order to look smart, without confirming the truthfulness of the information they spread.

One example of upeksa in speaking found in “Geguritan Dharma Prawreti” is when the teacher gives advice to his students to always be aware in speaking. The following is the quote in question.

(1-2) Yan tan patuh, satrune katiga nyusup, nyilib cara Baka, munyi manis ngalih pati, kadong nahu, ngadok karirihan corah.

Translation:

If there is no awareness, three kinds of enemy’s creep in, secretive like Sang Baka (a heron in Balinese fable), gentle words result in death, habitual uses of evil tricks.

In the quote above, the teacher character elaborates that a person must always be aware of everything in his/her life. One example is being aware when interacting with other individuals. This is conducted to avoid the evil intentions of others. Like the Cangak (the heron) character pretending to speak sweetly and softly, but behind it, he has evil intentions, namely desiring to eat the fish in a lake.

One example of upeksa in behaving found in “Geguritan Mladprana” is when I Mladprana advises Ni Dukuh Sakti about the virtue of being a human being granted a gift to be able to distinguish between good and bad behaviours. The following is the quote in question.

(1-3) Wireh liu jwa kenehin dadijadma, eda mamesik ring sangu, tingkahe patut rahayu, kasida-sida gawenin, da mangulah betek basang, lamun saking twara patut, yan pelih ban inatingkah, pangkah kone ngipik pripit, mretane ia dadi wisia, yan saking bobab ngamawuk.

Translation:

Because there are a lot to think about being humans, do not give priority to provisions, behaviours must be good and righteous, do them as many as possible, do not give priority to a full stomach, if it is based on cheating, if you misbehave, be arrogant, greedy, stingy, the result shall be poison, if you get it by lying.

The quote above has the meaning that being human must have good and righteous behaviours. You cannot just prioritize lust. If you desire something, it should be obtained by diligent efforts and not through cheating. Bad actions shall result in suffering. Good deeds shall bring happiness. Whatever happens in this life is the result of one's past actions. Upeksa can be used as a means to strengthen one's self in dealing with the phenomena existing in the society. The goal is to control yourself so that you are not easily affected by the bad things around you. This concept of upeksa also reminds us not to have inclination towards material things that have a bad purpose. The following is the quote in question.

(1-4) Edot ipune tan nangu-nangu, sukaning bhyudaya, ento kasengguh patitis, ento ya tangseh kaburu, reh kasengguh suka agung, ditu tekek mapangedan, lali ya ring dot puniku, sane nuntun mangojogang, ngungsi ka mretyu bhawana.

Translation:

His/her desire is limitless, pleasure in authority, that is considered the primary goal, then it is very much pursued, because it is considered the greatest happiness, trapped at that level, not realizing that it is this desire, which leads and takes him/her, to the abyss of hell.

The quote above is found in “Geguritan Dharma Prawreti”. The content of the quote is to remind the reader that desire or lust based on the senses shall cause a person to become trapped in misery. This shows that the inclination towards the five senses shall make people unaware of bad things. Self-control is one way for a person to avoid misery in his/her life. Therefore, upeksa is an important teaching that can be a medium for self-awareness and character building for human beings in dealing with the phenomena around them. All depictions of upeksa in the form of introspective attitudes in thinking, speaking, and behaving bring up a more complex meaning of upeksa based on the point of view of the three geguritan discussed. The meaning of upeksa is then used as a tool to measure the level of understanding and application of introspective attitudes from the society.

The contextualization of the meaning of the concept of upeksa in the society was carried out by conducting interviews with several informants. Based on the results of the interviews, it was found that the contextualization of the meaning of upeksa in the society is inseparable from current development. The society has made various efforts to exercise

control over itself, but there are many factors that influence this process. This shows that the concept of upeksa needs to be understood by the society. Most of the informants did not know about the concept of upeksa, thus, it was necessary to familiarize the importance of the knowledge of upeksa in ethics to the society.

Conclusions

Every literary work contains important values to be internalized by the society. One of them is the concept of upeksa in Balinese geguritan. The author of each geguritan has his own way of narrating his understanding of upeksa. In general, the concept of upeksa in Balinese geguritan is described as a form of introspective attitude in thinking, speaking, and behaving. The existence of upeksa in the society needs to be improved, given the importance of this concept to be used as reinforcement for self-control in dealing with the phenomena existing in the society. The concept of upeksa can also lead people to further improve their own characters.

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