

Vocal Art in the Javanese Version of the Ramayana Epic by Raden Ngabehi Yasadipura

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Abstract

This study examines the vocal art in the Javanese adaption of the Ramayana, *Serat Rama*, authored by the 18th-century Central Javanese poet Raden Ngabehi Yasadipura. Employing Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutical approach, it explores the meaning and content of the work, including its musical elements. Analysis involved repeated readings and interpretations of the text at the word, sentence, and overall content levels. The findings of this study indicate that *Serat Rama* incorporates musical art through the inclusion of Javanese songs, specifically the *macapat* style. Out of the 11 types of *macapat* songs, nine are represented in *Serat Rama*: Maskumambang, Mijil, Sinom, Kinanthi, Asmaradana, Megatruh, Dhandanggula, Durma, and Pangkur. This study concludes that in *Serat Rama*, there are two educational elements: culturally insightful education and harmony education. The former is reflected in the carefully selected words forming song verses that communicate cultural insights. The latter is evident in the harmonious structure of the songs, where sentences are divided into two phrases to allow singers to pause and maintain harmony. In Javanese song theory, this concept of harmony is known as "*padang-ulihan*."

Keywords: education, Ramayana, *Serat Rama*, *tembang*, Yasadipura

Introduction

Musical art is beauty perceived through our sense of hearing (Cox, 2018). It consists of vocal art, sounds that come from humans in the form of singing, and instrumental art, produced by the sound of instruments. In Javanese tradition, the combination of instrumental and vocal music is denoted by specific terminologies: musical instruments are called *gamelan*, and the vocalist who sings in a *gamelan* performance is called *waranggono* or *sinden*. When a *sinden* sings, Javanese people call this act *nembang*. What is sung—the song—is known as *tembang* (Suyoto, 2019).

The term *tembang* in Java, particularly Central Java and Yogyakarta, includes a variety of songs, classified as “great songs” (*gedhe*), “middle songs,” and “small songs.” The small songs are often referred to as *macapat*. Raden Ngabehi Yasadipura, an 18th-century Central Javanese poet associated with the Surakarta Palace, composed *Serat Rama*, an adaptation of the Indian epic, the *Ramayana*, by incorporating *macapat* throughout its narratives.

Serat Rama isn't a mere retelling of Rama and Sita's journey; it contains literary messages relevant to various aspects of human life, including education. A careful reading of *Serat Rama* allows for direct engagement with these messages. The aesthetic appeal of the messages is enhanced by their poetic presentation within the framework of *tembang* or songs. Thus, the act of singing these songs can deepen the reader's appreciation and understanding of the underlying wisdom in *Serat Rama*.

Methodology

This study adopts a hermeneutical approach and draws on the work of Paul Ricoeur (1981), who posited that hermeneutics is a theory of interpretation that concerns the processes and mechanisms involved in understanding and deriving meaning from texts. Songs, linked to their lyrical content, are not ordinary sentences—they are structured according to specific rules and require theoretical interpretation. Building on Ricoeur, Palmer (1969) contributes to hermeneutics by focusing on two interconnected aspects: 1) the event of understanding a text and 2) the critical examination of that understanding. Based on the insights outlined above, we believe that a hermeneutical approach is key to extracting deeper layers of meanings from the songs in *Serat Rama*.

Hermeneutic research involves not just the explication of a text's literal content. It also requires the identification and interpretation of underlying metaphors. Yasadipura's *Serat Rama* is replete with metaphors. Readers must first recognise that the manuscript is written in Javanese script, which requires dedicated study to achieve proficiency. Once the text is read and understood lexically, the true meaning of the work emerges through the interpretation of its metaphors.

Serat Rama employs *tembang*, specifically *macapat* songs, as its primary form of expression. It is important to acknowledge the diversity of song types within the Javanese tradition. According to Gitosaprodjo (2009), Javanese *tembang* or *sekar* can be divided into six categories: 1) *sekar ageng* (large

songs); 2) *sekar tengahan* (middle songs); 3) *sekar alit* (small songs); 4) *sekar dolanan* (entertainment songs primarily for children but also for adults); 5) *tembang gendhing* (musical songs); and 6) *tembang pedhalangan* (songs especially for puppetry performances).

The data analysis involved a meticulous examination of each word, sentence, and paragraph. Due to the poetic nature of the lyrics, the interpretation was conducted stanza by stanza to understand the overarching narrative. The verses, known as *pada* in the context of *tembang*, exhibit variations and were interpreted with careful consideration of the specific song type. The *macapat* song types found in *Serat Rama* are 1) *Maskumambang*; 2) *Mijil*; 3) *Sinom*; 4) *Kinanthi*; 5) *Asmaradana*; 6) *Dhandanggula*; 7) *Durma*; 8) *Pangkur*; and 9) *Megatruh*. To ensure comprehensive textual analysis, the study also identified the specific sections of the text corresponding to each of these *macapat* song types.

Results and Discussion

Serat Rama unfolds entirely through the medium of song. When these songs are arranged to tell the Ramayana story and performed according to their specific musical structures, they achieve a heightened aesthetic appeal, particularly when sung by a singer skilled in Javanese vocal art.

In *tembang*, alongside the poetry, a system of notation or tone symbols exists, referred to as *cakepan* in Javanese (Endraswara, 2009). These tones are arranged to form a melody and culminates in a song. As a musical art, *tembang* is ingrained in Javanese cultural life, whether performed with gamelan accompaniment or a capella. Songs are considered literature because they transcend solely written text; they express artistic value, consistent with Wellek and Warren's (1948) assertion that literature is art. Thus, a song is a written work with artistic merit but also a distinct form of musical art. Logically, one might anticipate widespread appreciation for *tembang* in Indonesia given its musical nature, but empirical evidence suggests that its popularity does not surpass that of other musical styles, such as Western music.

As a literary and musical art form, *tembang* consists of more than just beautiful words and melodies—it is the product of poets skilled in both literature and music. According to Dwijanagara (2014), the beauty of language and voice can be termed the beauty of speech. The creation of songs involves a process of selection and creative expression, with consideration of both word choice and tonal arrangement. Poets often endow their works with deeper meanings, including educational content. The blend of music and literature, enriched with life-related messages, has the capacity to captivate listeners.

As has been mentioned, in Javanese, the act of singing is known as *nembang*, while the song itself is called *tembang*. Traditionally, Javanese people performed these songs with just their voices, unaccompanied by instruments. Over time, *nembang* evolved to include the accompaniment of gamelan. Within the context of *nembang*, three terms describe different roles: 1) *sinden*; 2) *panembrama*; and 3) *gerong*.

Sinden

Performers of Javanese songs are called *sinden*, *swarawati*, or *waranggana*. Typically, a *sinden* is a woman who sings during *wayang kulit* (shadow puppet theatre) performances or in *karawitan* concerts (concerts that feature gamelan music). Occasionally, a male singer may choose to perform as a *sinden*—he is then referred to as *wiraswara*. The term *swarawati* is also commonly used to describe a *sinden*. Both *sinden* and *wiraswara* frequently participate in shadow puppet shows and other gamelan performances. To engage in *nembang*, one, regardless of gender, does not need to aspire to become a professional singer or performer. Indeed, the act of *nembang* is not synonymous with formal assessments or competitions—anyone can sing freely without hesitation.

Panembrama

If singing alone induces embarrassment or a lack of confidence, those who wish can invite friends to participate. This collective singing, in conjunction with the art of *karawitan* is known as *panembrama*. In musical terms, *panembrama* is akin to a choir. According to Daryanto et al. (2021), *panembrama* is performed during ceremonies to honour kings or royal guests and to pay respect. As fewer people are confident in singing compared to those who are not, it is not surprising that many feel apprehensive about singing in public. To build confidence, a person can sing with a group of friends, for example, through *panembrama*.

Gerong

Like *panembrama*, *gerong* involves group singing. However, within the framework of *nembang*, a *gerong* focuses on specific sections of the song. Lyrics are often omitted; in some instances, vocalisations such as "ho'ya," "ha'e," or "ya'e," are used.

Gerong singers generally find this style more enjoyable and less demanding than *panembrama* because it allows for a more relaxed and sometimes playful performance, depending on the nature of the lyrics. Occasionally, the lyrics sung in *gerong* are not from the original composition but are newly created to complement the existing ones. When the words contain a serious message, they are performed with the appropriate gravity.

Content of Raden Ngabehi Yasadipura's *Serat Rama*

Scholarly inquiry, particularly in educational science, continues to predominantly rely on foreign materials, despite the potential to derive insights from domestic sources, such as those available in Indonesia. A notable instance of local knowledge is encapsulated in Javanese songs, which convey meaningful messages through their lyrical content. These songs have been preserved in texts that date back several centuries. One such significant source is Yasadipura's *Serat Rama*. During the reigns of Kings Pakubuwana III and Pakubuwana IV in the 18th century

(Poerbatjaraka, 1964), Yasadipura transformed the epic *Ramayana* into *Serat Rama* and rendered it in the form of song.

Java is home to a substantial corpus of literary works known as *serat* (Abimanyu, 2014). Noteworthy examples include *Serat Kalatidha* by Raden Ngabehi Ranggawarsita, *Serat Wedhatama* by KGPAA Mangkunegara IV, *Serat Wulangreh* by Pakubuwana IV, *Serat Nitisruti* by Pangeran Karanggayam, *Serat Sastra Gendhing* by Sutan Agung Hanyakrakusuma, and, of course, *Serat Rama* by Raden Ngabehi Yasadipura, all originating from the Surakarta Palace. The Surakarta Palace has historically served as a centre for poets who have contributed to a rich heritage of literary and vocal art (*tembang*) containing philosophical and aesthetic values.

Listening While Singing

When readers engage with the text of *Serat Rama*, they are simultaneously learning and singing, as the work is composed of *macapat* songs that convey messages of virtue. For those unfamiliar with the melodies, reading the text aloud might result in a standard reading voice. Conversely, if the reader is knowledgeable about the specific song associated with the passage being read, they will vocalise it in the corresponding melody, such as *pangkur* or *kinanthi*. Each type of *macapat* song possesses a distinct melody that differentiates it from others—this adds to the reading experience because it facilitates the effective transmission of the educational messages.

The forebearers of the Indonesian nation have bequeathed a rich legacy of methods, media, and approaches for disseminating messages of virtue. Among these, *Serat Rama* stands out, framed within the *Ramayana* story. The medium used to deliver these messages is the *macapat* genre of Javanese songs. Javanese songs constitute a distinct form of artistic expression, particularly within musical art, as the act of reading the text in accordance with established song patterns results in a recognised form of song. The incorporation of rising and falling notes, which collectively form a melody, heightens the appeal for listeners and transforms the experience from mere recitation to an engaging auditory performance.

The inclusion of melodies into the reading of *Serat Rama* elevates the text to musical art, specifically vocal art. This musical experience is further enriched by the accompaniment of gamelan instruments, which are specifically adapted to match the song patterns. For instance, the *Subakastawa gending* (instrumental composition) is used for the *Kinanthi* song pattern.

The enduring value *Serat Rama* is evidenced by the continued performance of its songs during significant events (e.g., Indonesia's Independence Day celebrations), engaging professional musicians, such as *sinden* or *waranggana*, and laypeople alike. A frequently performed section is Song XVIII, Stanzas 7 to 9, which features the *Kinanthi* song:

Nalikanira ing dalu (one night)
Wong Agung Buath Semadi (The King meditates)
Sirep kang bala wanara (All the monkey warriors sleep)
Sadaya wus samya guling (Everyone is asleep)
Nadyan ari sudarsana (Including soldiers)
Wus dangu denira guling (She's been sleeping for a long time)

(Translated by author)

In Javanese vocal art, songs are defined by specific features and rules. Beyond entertainment for teenagers and adults (and distinct from *dolanan* songs, which exhibit a more child-like nuance), Javanese songs are broadly classified into three categories: *tembang gedhe*, *tembang tengahan*, and *tembang alit* (Saputra, 1992). The *tembang alit* is commonly referred to as *tembang macapat*, or simply *macapat*. The composition of *macapat* songs requires following particular rules regarding the number of lines, syllables, syllable endings, and melody.

Learning Behaviour by Singing

A thorough examination of *Serat Rama* reveals that it contains educational messages that speak to various aspects of Indonesian life. These messages pertain to living a religious and humane life, nurturing love for one's country, advocating for justice, and encouraging a life of mutual assistance and respect. Furthermore, the content of *Serat Rama* includes both culturally insightful education and harmony education.

Culturally Insightful Education. *Serat Rama* is structured around songs that integrate language and art. In this context, the songs represent artistic expression, while the accompanying words manifest linguistic elements. Both art and language are emphasised throughout *Serat Rama* and reflect cultural elements. The messages within the text, including educational ones, are expressed with cultural sensitivity. This approach is in line with the perspective of Ki Hadjar Dewantara, a prominent Indonesian educational figure, who asserted that education is a form of civilisation (Djohar, 2017).

Ki Hadjar Dewantara's view that education is linked with civilisation is demonstrated in the *Serat Rama*. The messages within this work are crafted using Javanese words and arranged into song verses. It is a common understanding that people are interconnected and reliant on one another, particularly within a national context such as Indonesia. A harmonious life involves interactions that fulfill mutual needs, cultivating peace, effective communication, and respect for the rights of others. These behaviors become habits for those committed to harmonious living.

Living peacefully within a society, maintaining effective communication, engaging in deliberation to address societal issues, and respecting the outcomes of these deliberations are deeply ingrained instincts among many Indonesians. Every nation aspires to coexist in peace, tranquility, and happiness. However, this ideal is jeopardised if the citizenry loses its commitment to national unity. Despite such challenges, many Indonesians have striven to uphold their national identity and allegiance to the state. In our view, *Serat Rama* serves a reservoir of knowledge that

can strengthen the nation's resilience and reaffirm its commitment to its identity as a unified Indonesian nation.

In relation to cultural education, Knowles et al. (2005) define pedagogy as "the art and science of teaching children" (p. 36). This definition stresses that pedagogy includes both scientific and artistic dimensions, with a focus on the education of children. Educators need to prioritise the artistic element, which requires transforming educational activities into aesthetically pleasing experiences. By adopting this approach, educators can enhance student engagement and satisfaction and increase the likelihood of successful learning outcomes. This perspective is congruent with the principles of andragogy, which place emphasis on functional and contextual learning.

Andragogy is associated with age and requires that educational approaches be tailored to the specific characteristics of the intended audience. For example, a teacher instructing students on effective communication with people of higher social standing would stress the importance of precise word choice and sentence construction to communicate respect. While children may often disregard linguistic subtleties, adults tend to be more attentive to them.

Knowles et al. (2005) describe andragogy as "the art and science of helping adults learn" (p. 61), distinguishing it from pedagogy by stressing the verb "help" in relation to "adults." This distinction points to the importance of educators maintaining strong emotional engagement, as they are instructing adults who have different experiences compared to children. The emphasis on "helping" implies that adults are assumed to have substantial experience and encourages educators to facilitate learning rather than direct it, even when students encounter difficulties with certain concepts. According to Knowles et al. (2005), adulthood can be defined across four dimensions: biologically, legally, socially, and psychologically. Biologically, adulthood is reached when a person attains the capacity for reproduction. Legally, it is recognised when they become eligible to vote, obtain a driver's license, or marry. Socially, adulthood is acknowledged when they begin full-time employment or get married. Psychologically, adulthood is achieved when they develop a self-concept, assume responsibility for their lives, and engage in self-directed learning. Knowles et al.'s (2005) perspective demonstrates that education requires a precise "moment" or timing.

The timing of education influences a student's readiness to learn. Student readiness is paramount for the successful implementation of any educational endeavour, particularly considering the principles of pedagogy and andragogy. Educators must understand these principles to avoid teaching methods that are not suitable for their students. Effective adult learning, according to Knowles et al. (2005), requires consideration of several key factors, which are the learner's 1) need to know/learn; 2) self-concept; 3) prior experience; 4) readiness to learn; 5) orientation to learning; and 6) motivation. Adult learners need to have a clear understanding of their learning objectives, the rationale for their learning, and the most effective learning strategies. Furthermore, adult learners possess a sense of self-direction and independence and are capable of guiding their own learning processes.

In contrast to children, adults have accumulated broader experiences that can enrich and support their educational activities. Adults demonstrate a readiness to learn about issues they face, especially those deemed relevant to their lives. Their learning orientation is predominantly problem-centered and focuses on developing and enhancing skills that support their daily lives. Although external factors, such as teachers, can motivate them to pursue better employment or higher salaries, their primary motivation often revolves around increasing job satisfaction, self-respect, and overall quality of life. Danim (2015) identifies several motivations for adult learners: 1) to form new friendships to fulfill social needs; 2) to comply with instructions from authoritative figures; 3) to enhance the ability to serve society and participate in community work; 4) to achieve higher professional status and advancement; 5) to alleviate boredom and reduce stress from routine life; and 6) to pursue knowledge for personal satisfaction and intellectual curiosity.

Sunhaji (2002) describes andragogical education as an activity designed to guide and assist adults in learning—its emphasis is on a lifelong process of acquiring knowledge, skills, and attitudes essential for their lives. Importantly, this process is dictated not by the educator's considerations; rather, it is driven by the interests and needs of the learners themselves. Key components of andragogical education include the regulation of the physical, social, and psychological environment; the diagnosis of learning needs; careful planning; the establishment of clear learning objectives; the implementation of participatory learning models; and the use of materials and techniques that are adapted to the learners' experiences and physical capabilities. This approach stresses the necessity of focusing on adult learners to improve the effectiveness of the educational experience. Furthermore, andragogy is not merely an educational process; it is also regarded as an art form that expresses beauty in its execution. Knowles et al.'s (2005) inclusion of the word “art” in andragogy is a reminder for educators to integrate aesthetic principles in their teaching. The concept of andragogy is central to the study of *Serat Rama* because its verses communicate educational messages that are applicable to everyday life. This approach is often interpreted as adult education, which indicates that the transmission of educational content to adults must be in adherence to established principles of adult learning. Andragogical education is viewed as a process through which learners can readily apply the knowledge they have gained in their everyday lives.

Culturally insightful education is an approach that promotes cultural values within the educational framework. Culture encompasses all aspects of life that evolve and are transmitted across generations, including language, social norms, knowledge systems, kinship structures, tools and technology, religious beliefs, and artistic expressions. This educational philosophy is in line with the view that education is a means of civilising society, a perspective shared by the aforementioned Ki Hadjar Dewantara, who believed that education should be a driving force for cultural development.

Culturally insightful education encourages educators to integrate cultural elements into their teaching practices and to cultivate better living habits. For example, when addressing topics such as humane living, educators should adapt their methods to the prevailing culture of the environment. In regions where art

forms, such as dance, are integral to the culture, educational activities might include dance movements. Conversely, in areas where dance is less prevalent, educators can explore other artistic expressions to engage students effectively. This approach can be tailored to fit the cultural context of the educational environment. In some regions, music—whether instrumental or vocal—may not be a familiar element. The *Serat Rama* employs songs as a medium to communicate its messages. Because *tembang* is a form of vocal music, accompanying music can be simple and widely understood.

In language education, it is beneficial for educators to communicate fluently in the regional language where activities occur. This practice integrates cultural elements into teaching, thereby implementing culturally insightful education. When addressing the topic of living a religious life, which constitutes a key aspect of culture, the language used often consists of sentences that may appear disorganised in comparison to standard sentence structures. For instance, the phrase in *Serat Rama* "Iki wiwit ngidak Ngalengka bumi" can be translated verbatim as "This has stepped on the land of Lanka," which implies "now we have stepped on the land of Lanka." A more precise interpretation would be "This has reached the land of the Alengka State." The process of deriving meaning is not straightforward. When words are seldom used in everyday Javanese, the interpretation process becomes more prolonged, as the meanings of unfamiliar words must be discerned.

The concept of living a religious life has long been ingrained in Indonesian society and is reflected in one of the principles of Pancasila, the foundational philosophy of the Indonesian state. In a nation rich in cultural heritage, Indonesia employs its cultural values as a means of filtering external influences that may be detrimental, while also enhancing its cultural identity. By adhering to religious norms, Indonesians may effectively counteract and deter any harmful intentions or actions that may threaten their way of life.

Religious life education in Indonesia has been disseminated through various methods and media to ensure a sense of spiritual well-being among its inhabitants. Historically, even when the region was divided into separate kingdoms, Indonesian people were accustomed to a life of spirituality. This inclination is demonstrated in the *Serat Rama*, which incorporates many educational messages, including those promoting a life of faith, as illustrated in Verse 24 (*Dhandhanggula* song), Verse 33 (*Pangkur* song), Verse 43 (*Mijil* song), and Verses 51 and 81 (*Sinom* song).

The delivery of educational messages related to spiritual life in *Serat Rama* is achieved through the integration of artistic principles, consistent with andragogical learning theories that suggest knowledge and art promote adult learning (Knowles et al., 2005). Art, by nature, embodies elements of beauty and enjoyment, which can enrich the learning experience. In *Serat Rama*, educational content is delivered through both literary and musical arts. The literary aspect is expressed through grammar and word choice, and the musical component is articulated in the *macapat* song structure. *Tembang*, a vocal music, is further enhanced when accompanied by gamelan music. This combination of literary and vocal arts at once elevates the aesthetic quality of the educational messages and increases their effectiveness and engagement for the audience.

Living harmoniously with others through love, respect, consideration, and cooperation is a universal ideal, including among Indonesian people. This concept is concretely represented in Pancasila, specifically the principle of "Just and Civilised Humanity." The *Serat Rama* communicates educational messages about humane living through the *Pangkur* and *Sinom* songs. The *Sereng Pangkur* song, marked by its loudness, functions as a *pitutur* (advice) and reinforces this message. Examples of educational messages can be found in Song 1, Verse 41; Song 2, Verses 1 and 2; Song 77, Verse 8; and Song 84, Verses 23 and 24. It is expected that those who engage with these songs, whether by listening, reading, or singing, will derive strength from the messages promoting humane living.

The educational messages on humane living within the *Serat Rama* are woven into the narrative, presented with the same subtlety and beauty as the *macapat* songs used as their medium. Key passages such as Song 1, Verse 41; Song 2, Verses 1 and 2; Song 77, Verse 8; and Song 84, Verses 23 and 24 offer clues about how *Serat Rama* guides readers towards a more humane way of being, using principles of andragogical education.

Harmony Education. Vocal artistry often requires dividing a sung sentence into two phrases. This division serves a practical purpose—it allows the singer to breathe and maintain vocal control. It also contributes to a key aspect of musical composition: harmony. In Javanese song theory, this deliberate sentence fragmentation in a *macapat* song is termed "*padang-ulihan*." "*Padang*" refers to the initial segment, and "*ulihan*," the latter.

Assuming the singer of the *tembang macapat* has an understanding of the song's lyrical content, the performance isn't just vocalisation—it becomes an act of aesthetic communication. Concurrently, the harmonious structure of *macapat* songs is a vehicle for communicating educational messages. This simultaneous presentation of both artistic expression and pedagogical content can be aptly described as "harmony education."

The concept of harmonious living is typically understood as a lifestyle marked by dynamics that reflect peace, comfort, compatibility, intimacy, and enjoyment. Thus, harmony education can be defined as educational activities that incorporate these principles.

The aesthetic appeal of *Serat Rama* is augmented not only by its sentence structure but also by its adherence to the *macapat* song form, which follows specific poetic and lyrical conventions. This beauty is further enriched when accompanied by gamelan, which complement the *macapat* structure and contribute to the overall experience of the text.

The lyrics of *Serat Rama* represent human efforts to meet basic needs through various activities. In the face of a growing population, cultivating social cohesion is essential for societal security and stability. In the Indonesian context, this unity manifests as a commitment to the collective identity of the nation. When individuals perceive themselves as part of a nation, they are more inclined to strive for national cohesion. This pursuit is reflected in the cultivation of patriotism, mutual assistance, and the establishment of harmony, conform, and peace.

Messages that promote harmonious living and love for one's country are circulated through various media to encourage national unity. *Serat Rama* is one such medium—it is rich in teachings that stress patriotism and love for the nation. The themes are particularly evident in Song 64, Verse 9 and Song 68, Verse 4. Through the character of Kumbakarna (Song 64, Verse 9), the narrative tells a message of national loyalty. Kumbakarna chooses to fight not in defence of his brother, King Ravana, who has abducted Sita, the wife of Rama, but rather for the welfare of his country. Despite his repeated counsel to Ravana to return Sita to prevent conflict and promote peace, Kumbakarna is reprimanded for failing to acquiesce to his brother's wishes.

The story of Kumbakarna in *Serat Rama* teaches lessons on the importance of nurturing harmony, peace, and comfort to prevent discord in interpersonal relationships. The establishment of such conditions is essential for creating a harmonious environment. This message lies at the core of harmony education, which echoes the insights of Zhang and Zhou (2008), who argue that harmony education plays a vital role in cultivating positive social habits.

The relationship between literature and music has long served as a tool for imparting life lessons, including educational messages. *Serat Rama*, composed in the form of songs, demonstrates this harmonious relationship. The integration of literary and musical components within *Serat Rama* suggests that its educational content is founded on principles of harmony, which shows that the messages within embody the essence of harmony itself. The term "harmony" in music refers to the combination of different elements to create a cohesive and aesthetically pleasing whole. Kamien (2011) explains that when three or more tones are played together to produce a pleasing sound, they illustrate the fundamental concept of harmony. Similarly, in *Serat Rama*, the interaction between literature, music, and educational content reflects this concept.

The educational value of harmony in *Serat Rama* is brought to life by the use of melodies characteristic of *macapat* songs. These songs require a nuanced understanding and can be challenging for children to fully grasp due to their complexity. The linguistic choices and structural complexity of *Serat Rama* point towards it being more appropriately targeted towards an adult audience. It should be noted that language and art, as the primary components of *Serat Rama*, elevate the cultural fabric. This is evident in the poetic arrangement of words and the compliance with the conventions of Javanese song forms, particularly *macapat*. Furthermore, the inclusion of musical elements in these songs adds another layer of artistic expression to the educational messages. Aesthetic beauty, universally sought after, is woven into the verses of *Serat Rama*. However, realising this beauty requires sustained effort.

Conclusion

In Raden Ngabehi Yasadipura's *Serat Rama*, educational messages are presented in two primary forms: culturally insightful education and harmony education. Culturally insightful education is featured in Song 6, Verse 12, and Song 80, Verse

30. The narrative emphasises the importance of religious life as a vital aspect of culture, illustrated through specific song sequences, including Song 24, Verses 1 and 2; Song 33, Verse 1; Song 43, Verse 3; Song 51 Verse 14; and Song 81, Verse 3. Messages promoting humane living are articulated in Song 1, Verse 41; Song 2, Verses 1 and 2; Song 77, Verse 8; and Song 84, Verses 23 and 24. Additional culturally insightful education messages can be found in Song 64, Verse 9, and Song 68, Verse 4. The theme of mutual assistance is addressed in Song 6, Verse 12, while the concept of mutual respect is presented in Song 3, Verses 20 to 23. Furthermore, harmony education is expressed in Song 64, Verse 9; Song 68, Verse 4; Song 3, Verses 20 to 23; Song 4, Verses 5 and 6; and Song 4, Verses 17 and 18. The examples given above collectively illustrate the dual focus on culturally insightful education and the promotion of harmonious living within *Serat Rama*.

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