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Rencek in *Wayang Sasak* as a Medium for Character Education Through Social Criticism: A Literature Review

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Abstract
This literature review examines the potential of *rencek* in *Wayang Sasak* as a medium for character education in higher education, using social criticism in the Brambang Ulung performance as its main context. The review focuses on how the play's conflict creates opportunities for moral reasoning, how *rencek* mediates social voices through everyday language and humor, how improvisation contextualizes inherited narratives, how cultural and religious plurality shapes meaning, and how these findings can be translated into pedagogical use for university students. The study employs a narrative synthesis by distinguishing direct evidence on Brambang Ulung, general studies of *Wayang Sasak*, studies of carangan plays and character values, and contextual non-journalistic sources. The synthesis indicates that social criticism in Brambang Ulung lies not only in explicit moral messages but also in competing claims, the legitimation of violence, stigma, leadership responsibility, and choices for resolving conflict. *Rencek* expands this space by translating social issues into language and experiences closer to audiences. Drawing on a character-education framework that connects moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action, the article proposes a pedagogical model: experiencing social criticism through *rencek* → moral awareness and knowledge → moral reasoning and decision-making → empathy, self-control, and humility → moral action and habituation. The model is a pedagogical proposition rather than an empirically tested effectiveness model. The main limitation is the lack of complete transcripts and audience-reception data specifically for Brambang Ulung; therefore, the proposed model requires empirical testing through classroom or student-reception research.

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Introduction

Character education in higher education cannot be understood merely as the transmission of a list of values that students are expected to possess. The pedagogical challenge is how to provide students with opportunities to recognize moral issues, understand the values at stake, consider the perspectives of others, weigh possible choices, and connect their deliberations to action. The character education framework summarized by Ningsih (2021) from Thomas Lickona's work situates good character within three interrelated dimensions: moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. Moral knowing encompasses moral awareness, knowledge of values, perspective-taking, moral reasoning, decision-making, and self-knowledge; moral feeling includes conscience, self-esteem,

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empathy, love of the good, self-control, and humility; while moral action involves competence, will, and habit (Ningsih, 2021).

This framework has important implications for the educational use of local culture. A performance does not automatically constitute character education simply because it contains moral values. Such values must be mediated through learning experiences that enable learners to recognize issues, interpret values, consider alternative courses of action, and engage in reflection. Accordingly, the educational question is not merely 'what character values are contained in wayang?' but rather 'how can the structure of a performance become an experience that helps learners develop moral knowledge, feelings, and actions?'

The position of the dalang (puppeteer) strengthens this pedagogical possibility. Through a study of puppeteers in Surakarta and Yogyakarta, Van Groenendael (1987) identifies the dalang as a central figure who not only brings stories to life but also fulfills social roles within the community. Literature discussing this work notes changes in the dalang's role: from a community educator and spiritual leader to a figure associated with court institutions and, during the New Order period, an instrument of state communication. At the same time, puppeteers retain room to adapt their repertoire to performance circumstances and to those who commission the performance. The dalang can therefore be understood as a cultural agent who selects, processes, and communicates values in performance, rather than merely operating the puppets (Van Groenendael, 1987).

This perspective can be connected to Kayam (2001), who examines the world of puppetry in relation to social change in the mid-1990s amid changes in the national cultural order following the New Order. Kelir Tanpa Batas illustrates how puppeteers and puppetry traditions confront changes in society, institutions, audience preferences, and the relationship between tradition and modernity. Values in wayang are thus not understood as a fixed package, but as something continuously negotiated through puppetry practice. This perspective matters to the present article because it suggests that *rencek* may be one of the spaces in which puppeteers translate social issues into a performance language recognizable to contemporary communities (Kayam, 2001).

Habiburrahman's (2024b) findings in Strategi Dhalang Muhammad *dalam Arena Wayang Sasak* provide a more specific basis for examining the relationships among the dalang, *rencek*, the performance patron, and social issues. Using a sociology-of-literature approach and a Bourdieusian perspective elaborated through the concept of the transindividual, the study shows that Dhalang Muhammad's strategies are collective and involve various agents from preparation through the staging of the play. One important finding is the division of the performance into the main play and the *rencek* play (the puppeteer's own composition): the main play tells the story of Amir Hamzah in the language of wayang, whereas the *rencek* play draws on elements of the main story and connects them to the patron's requests concerning social issues. This finding is especially relevant because it shows that *rencek* is not simply an added humorous interlude, but a creative space through which puppeteers connect traditional repertoires with the social needs of patrons and their communities (Habiburrahman, 2024).

Wayang Sasak offers a compelling context for these questions because performances simultaneously function as entertainment, a means of communicating values, and a space for social communication. Mahendra (2023) shows that *Wayang Sasak* performances can also provide a forum for supporting or criticizing government policies. In that study, humor is constructed through wordplay, insults, code-mixing, particular associations, and violations of

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conversational maxims. These findings are pedagogically important because they demonstrate that messages are not always delivered as lectures; they may be conveyed through linguistic forms and humor that audiences must interpret.

In this context, *rencek* becomes significant. The term *rencek* is used operationally in this article to refer to composed performance segments or characters that bring local social experiences into the performance. The literature on *Wayang Sasak* identifies local characters such as *Mamiq, Amaq Kesek, Amaq Baoq, Amaq Amet, Amaq Ocong, Inaq Itet, Amaq Beko*, and *Jero Dangkem*, associated with simplicity, courage in speaking the truth, harmony, respect for tradition, and wisdom expressed through humor (Arfan & Watoni, 2024). However, this article does not equate *rencek* with punakawan characters, improvisation, or humor. These are related but distinct categories: punakawan denotes a particular set of characters; improvisation refers to the puppeteer's creative or performative process; humor denotes a communicative strategy or effect; while *rencek* is treated here as a compositional space or performance device that may employ local characters, improvisation, humor, and everyday language.

The play Brambang Ulung provides a more specific context. In his dissertation, Habiburrahman (2024b) used the staging of this play to examine its dramatic structure, although audience reception was not included. Research in the same year also examined the content of the Brambang Ulung performance through recorded performances and narrative analysis. An important finding was the appearance of the terms Widi, Hyang Widi, Sang Hyang Widi, and Sang Hyang Wiwakasan, which were associated with Hindu influence in the historical networks of Sasak puppetry. This reveals forms of diversity that developed within the dalang network itself. The study published in SeBaSa documents the conflict in Brambang Ulung, beginning with the death of Ni Diyah Rangdirah and developing into a retaliatory attack and a demand that Alam Daur be handed over to the Brambang Ulung side (Habiburrahman, 2024a).

This conflict enables an educational reading that is more productive than simply identifying good and evil characters. Students can be invited to examine how actions are legitimized, how stigma is used to justify violence, how group honor influences decisions, and what alternative approaches to conflict resolution might be considered. However, because the available evidence on Brambang Ulung consists of selected scenes and does not systematically address audience reception, the pedagogical interpretation advanced here is presented as a potential and a conceptual model, not as evidence of instructional effectiveness. The focus therefore shifts from the structure and content of the performance to literature on rencek and pedagogy, which suggests how this local tradition might contribute to character education as wayang's proselytizing function changes. *Rencek* in this context can be compared with the carangan or independently composed plays found in Javanese wayang traditions.

Research on carangan plays (a type of play comparable to *rencek*) further supports this possibility. Sudiana (2006) shows that puppeteers choose carangan plays because they are more readily created and adapted to the circumstances of supporting communities, changing times, social phenomena, and ceremonial contexts. In another context, Suryanata et al. (2024) show that the carangan play Katundung Anggada depicts social conflict resolved through its dramatic plot, conveying values of honesty, dedication, integrity, and wisdom. Defi (2025) also discusses the internalization of moral values through the carangan play Begawan Among Raga from an ethnopedagogical perspective. Literature on Banjaran Bima and Wayang Cokek indicates that character values in wayang can be related to education across different educational levels (Dwijonagoro et al., 2019; Saputri, 2019).

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Nevertheless, a gap remains. Previous research has tended to follow one of three directions: explaining the role of carangan in social adaptation, identifying moral or character values in plays, or describing wayang as an educational medium. The mechanisms connecting these three directions have rarely been articulated specifically for *rencek Wayang Sasak.* This article therefore shifts the focus from 'lists of values' to 'educational mediation': how social criticism constructed through *rencek* can become an experience that fosters moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action.

Against this background, this review aims to: (1) analyze forms of social criticism documented in the literature on Brambang Ulung and *Wayang Sasak;* (2) explain the function of *rencek* as a mediating device between established conventions (pakem), social issues, and the language of audiences; (3) identify educational potential arising from conflict, humor, dialogue, and contextualization; and (4) formulate a conceptual model for using *rencek* as a medium for character education in higher education, based on the moral knowing–moral feeling–moral action framework.

Research Method

This article employs a literature review with narrative synthesis. The method explicitly differentiates the evidential weight of its sources. Sources are divided into four groups: (1) scholarly studies directly examining Brambang Ulung or recordings of its performances; (2) scholarly studies of *Wayang Sasak, rencek*, humor, and sociocultural contexts; (3) studies of carangan plays and character education; and (4) contextual or popular sources used only to supplement current information on performance practices. Sources in the fourth group are not used as primary evidence for claims about educational effectiveness.

Sources were considered relevant if they were connected to *Wayang Sasak* or rencek plays; addressed social conflict, humor, moral values, character education, or pedagogical functions; and provided verifiable bibliographic information.

The analysis was conducted in three stages. First, information was extracted on the research object, study design, data, findings, and limitations. Second, findings were organized into themes: (a) conflict and legitimation; (b) *rencek* as a social voice; (c) language and humor as mediation; (d) plurality and contextualization; and (e) values and processes in character education. Third, a conceptual synthesis mapped these findings onto Lickona's three dimensions of character education, as summarized by Ningsih (2021): moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action.

Differences in the strength of evidence were also maintained in the discussion of Brambang Ulung. Claims derived directly from research on Brambang Ulung were classified as direct evidence. Findings from other *Wayang Sasak* plays were used as analogical evidence to explain possible mechanisms, not as proof that those mechanisms necessarily operate in Brambang Ulung. The character education model presented in the final section is the authors' synthesis based on the Ningsih/Lickona framework and the reviewed literature; it has not yet been empirically tested.

Table 1. Mapping of Key Literature and Evidential Weight

Source	Object/Focus	Contribution	Evidence status
Habiburrahman (2024a)	Brambang Ulung; sociocultural	Performance context, dalang networks, diversity, and the term Widi	Direct

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Source	Object/Focus	Contribution	Evidence status
	networks		
Mahendra (2023)	*Wayang Sasak*: Diwi Payunjali	Humor and language mechanisms; five sociopragmatic aspects	Analogical
Arfan & Watoni (2024)	*Wayang Sasak* punakawan	Philosophical values, simplicity, courage, harmony, humor	Analogical
Sudiana (2006)	Carangan plays	Adaptability of carangan to social phenomena and performance contexts	Theoretical/ comparative
Suryanata et al. (2024)	Katundung Anggada	Conflict in carangan, resolution, and virtues	Analogical
Defi (2025)	Begawan Among Raga	Internalization of moral values from an ethnopedagogical perspective	Analogical
Dwijonagoro et al. (2019)	Banjaran Bima	Character values and educational implications across levels	Educational analogy
Saputri (2019)	Wayang Cokek	Identification of character values and potential educational models	Educational analogy
Ningsih (2021)	Character education	Moral knowing–feeling–action framework	Theoretical framework

Table 1 summarizes the literature reviewed, highlighting each source's focus, contribution, and relevance to the present study. Habiburrahman (2024a) provides direct evidence on *Wayang Sasak*, while the other studies offer analogical, comparative, educational, or theoretical perspectives. This distinction clarifies which sources directly inform the analysis of *Rencek* and which provide broader context for interpreting its character-education values.

Research Findings and Discussion

Brambang Ulung as a Space for Moral Conflict

Literature directly addressing Brambang Ulung shows that the play does not merely present a series of battles; rather, it constructs conflict from individual actions that subsequently produce political consequences. In the performance studied by Habiburrahman (2024a), Alam Daur kills Ni Diyah Rangdirah following an attempt to abduct Raden Manusantun through the use of leak magic. This incident then becomes the basis for an attack by Brambang Ulung's forces and their demand that Alam Daur be surrendered. Habiburrahman's study identifies the same conflict structure and documents how the issue develops from a personal incident into an inter-kingdom conflict (Habiburrahman, 2024a).

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From the perspective of character education, the key point is not to determine definitively who is 'good', but to identify moral issues open to debate. For example, can killing be justified because a person's actions are considered deviant? Can family honor justify war? Can surrendering an individual be accepted as the price of peace? Such questions correspond to moral awareness, perspective-taking, moral reasoning, and decision-making within moral knowing (Ningsih, 2021).

It is important to emphasize that these pedagogical questions are the authors' synthesis, not an explicit claim that the puppeteer performing Brambang Ulung intended to teach them. The available literature does not yet provide complete transcripts or audience-reception data that would allow conclusions about how audiences actually interpret the conflict. Its educational function must therefore be positioned as a pedagogical possibility to be activated through instructional design.

Rencek as Mediation between Established Conventions and Social Experience

Carangan plays in the Javanese wayang tradition share formal similarities with rencek plays and can be adapted to their social environments. They form part of the broader performance tradition of the dalang, whose social role has been discussed by Van Groenendael (1987) and in relation to social change by Kayam (2001). Sudiana (2006) shows that carangan is selected because it allows puppeteers to create stories suited to community circumstances, contemporary developments, social phenomena, and ceremonial settings. In *Wayang Sasak*, this function becomes particularly evident when local characters and everyday language are used to connect stories with audiences' lived experiences.

Arfan and Watoni (2024) identify several local punakawan characters in Lalu Nasib's performances who embody simplicity, the courage to speak the truth, harmony with nature and others, respect for tradition and ancestors, and wisdom conveyed through humor. Sauri et al. (2025) likewise describe local characters as channels for social, cultural, political, and religious commentary. These findings support the view that locally grounded performance spaces serve as mediators of communication.

Rencek, however, should not be understood merely as a 'language translator'. Its mediation is selective and interpretive. When the royal world of the established repertoire is connected with everyday life, abstract issues can be illustrated through examples closer to people's social experiences. In educational terms, this process can be understood as contextualization: students do not simply receive an old story but are asked to relate it to problems they recognize while maintaining a critical distance from the analogy.

Humor and Language as Pathways to Reflection

Mahendra (2023) identifies five sociopragmatic aspects of humor in the *Wayang Sasak* play Diwi Payunjali: wordplay, insults, code-mixing, pornographic associations, and violations of the maxims of quality and manner. In that study's data, violations of the cooperative principle account for the largest proportion, approximately 35%, followed by insults at 24%, pornographic associations at 21%, wordplay at 13%, and code-mixing at 8%. These percentages cannot be transferred directly to Brambang Ulung because the research objects differ. What can be drawn upon is the mechanism: humor can reduce the distance between serious issues and the audience's experiences. This mechanism can also be understood in the distinction among the main play, intermediary segments, and the dalang's compositions (Habiburrahman, 2024b).

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Pedagogically, humor allows criticism to be expressed without taking the form of a lecture. Students may be asked to distinguish between instances where humor merely entertains and those where it involves reversals of social position, criticism of authority, or judgments of conduct. Such activities can be directed toward moral awareness and perspective-taking. Thus, humor is not itself the aim of character education, but an entry point into interpretation and reflection.

Social Criticism: From Antagonistic Characters to Structures of Power

A critical reading of Brambang Ulung should avoid the simplification that criticism is directed solely at antagonistic characters. The demand for Alam Daur's surrender illustrates how power, law, honor, and the threat of war intersect. Drawing on this conflict structure, students can be guided to distinguish actions, the reasons invoked to justify them, and their consequences. This process is more closely aligned with the development of moral reasoning than with memorizing values.

Suryanata et al. (2024) provide comparative support. In the carangan play Katundung Anggada, social conflict and its resolution are linked to honesty, dedication, integrity, and wisdom. These findings show that conflict–resolution structures can provide a basis for analyzing values. However, because the objects of study differ, this article does not claim that the same values necessarily emerge from Brambang Ulung.

Cultural Plurality as a Learning Context

Habiburrahman (2024a) shows that Brambang Ulung takes place within a cultural network that brings Muslim Sasak and Hindu communities into contact. The terms Widi, Hyang Widi, Sang Hyang Widi, and Sang Hyang Wiwakasan appear in the performance and are associated with Hindu influences in the early networks of Sasak puppetry. This finding is important not because it automatically establishes Brambang Ulung as an example of 'harmony', but because it demonstrates that performance traditions are formed through cultural encounters and negotiations among groups sharing a social space.

Arfan and Watoni (2024) also show that the philosophical values of *Wayang Sasak* can be associated with harmony, respect for tradition, and wisdom expressed through humor. In character education, such plurality can help students recognize that cultural identities are not necessarily singular. A similar point was made in earlier research on Brambang Ulung, which conceptualized this condition as diversity (Habiburrahman, 2024a). Nevertheless, students should also be encouraged to ask who is speaking, whose position is legitimized, and how different groups are represented. Character education can thus move beyond normative tolerance toward critical reflection on social relations.

Habiburrahman's (2022) article provides the most concrete evidence of how the structure of the Brambang Ulung performance operates within *Wayang Sasak*. A recording of Brambang Ulung performed at a wedding celebration in Penenteng Aik, Bonjeruk, on 22 September 2018, shows a total duration of approximately 6 hours, 56 minutes, and 21 seconds. Of this duration, the staging of the play accounted for 71.63%, preparation for 6.56%, and gending (musical accompaniment) for 21.80%. More importantly for the discussion of *rencek*, the staging itself did not consist solely of the main play. Habiburrahman (2022) distinguishes three modalities: the principal modality (52.26%), the intermediary modality (17.66%), and the puppeteer's composition, equated with independently composed or carangan plays in Javanese wayang (30.08%). Accordingly, elements associated with the

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puppeteer's creative work—the intermediary modality and the puppeteer's composition—accounted for a combined 47% of the performance's dramatic portion, approaching the principal modality's 52.26%.

These findings are crucial to this article because they demonstrate that *rencek* cannot appropriately be treated as a minor insertion outside the play's structure. In the Brambang Ulung performance studied, the intermediary modality remained linked to the principal modality, employed Middle Javanese and Sasak, and communicated the content of the principal modality in Sasak without interrupting the performance's narrative flow. The puppeteer's composition, meanwhile, drew on a small portion of the wayang storyline but was predominantly shaped by the dalang's creativity, used Sasak, involved peripheral characters, and tended to connect with the social setting in which the performance took place. The article explicitly states that such social contexts may involve criticism of religious behavior and other social issues (Habiburrahman, 2022).

Habiburrahman's (2022) study therefore provides a strong empirical bridge for the pedagogical argument advanced here: the message of the main play is not confined to retelling the story but is translated through the intermediary modality and then discussed again through the puppeteer's composition in relation to everyday experience. In the Brambang Ulung case, the puppeteer's composition accounted for 30.08% of the dramatic portion of the performance. The article explains that messages in the principal modality are communicated through the intermediary modality and subsequently revisited through the puppeteer's composition, which draws on elements of the Amir Hamzah story and relates them to the dalang's daily experiences through *rencek*.

The Dalang as an Agent of Values and Culture

This position is reinforced by Habiburrahman's (2024b) focused study of Dhalang Muhammad. The research shows that a performance is not produced solely through the individual actions of the puppeteer, but through collective strategies involving poets or literary contributors, wayang troupe members, musicians, performance patrons, elders, patrons' families, and audiences. In staging a play, *rencek* connects segments of the main narrative with patrons' requests concerning social issues. Thus, the dalang's agency in the dissertation is understood as operating within the performance's social network. The puppeteer works with tradition, but this process is also shaped by requests, social relationships, and the patrons' life contexts.

If *rencek* is positioned as a space for articulating social issues, the dalang is the agent who activates that space. Van Groenendael (1987) demonstrates that the puppeteer's role cannot be separated from the relationships among performance, community, tradition, puppeteer training, and social life. Kayam (2001) shows that the world of puppetry is likewise in continuous negotiation with social and cultural change. Together, these perspectives help avoid the essentialist assumption that educational values are automatically inherent in wayang objects. Pedagogical potential emerges through human actions: selecting plays, shaping dialogue, arranging humor, adapting performances to the patron's context, and directing audience attention.

The conceptual relationship proposed in this article may therefore be expressed as follows: social change or social issues → interpreted and processed by the dalang → constructed through *rencek*, dialogue, humor, and conflict → performed before the community → interpreted by audiences → revisited in learning as moral reflection. This sequence clarifies

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why the dalang's role matters for character education: the puppeteer acts as an agent of cultural mediation, while rencek is one of the devices that makes such mediation possible.

The expression 'community educator' is used cautiously in this article. It does not mean that every dalang in every historical period automatically serves as a teacher; rather, it refers to historical changes in the puppeteer's role discussed in puppetry scholarship. In higher education character education, what is carried forward is not the dalang's authority as a formal teacher, but the possibility of drawing on the puppeteer's cultural work—interpreting tradition and social issues—as a source of learning experiences subsequently facilitated critically by lecturers.

Rencek as an Epistemic Intermediary

The literature synthesis suggests that the pedagogical strength of *rencek* can be located in its function as an epistemic intermediary. This does not mean that *rencek* constitutes a separate theory of knowledge; rather, it mediates encounters between inherited cultural knowledge and contemporary audience experiences. The established repertoire (pakem) provides a symbolic world and narrative legitimacy; *rencek* provides accessible language, social examples, humor, and topical commentary; and students contribute interpretation and reflection.

Within this framework, *rencek* can be viewed as a meeting point between cultural literacy and character education. Students not only learn 'what a character means' but also investigate how meanings are formed, how criticism is communicated, and how a value is applied across different situations. This position is consistent with Ningsih's (2021) argument that knowledge of values alone is insufficient: character also involves moral feeling and moral action.

A *Rencek*-Based Character Education Model in Higher Education

This section presents a conceptual proposal developed to make the educational dimension central to the article. The model adapts the moral knowing–moral feeling–moral action framework discussed by Ningsih (2021) based on Thomas Lickona's theory, and relates it to the functions of *rencek* identified in literature on *Wayang Sasak* and carangan plays. Ningsih's book situates character education within three domains—theoretical, methodological, and practical—and explains that values and character are internalized through educational activities (Ningsih, 2021).

The proposed model does not assume that a performance in itself constitutes an educational intervention. A performance is a source of cultural experience; education occurs when that experience is processed through purposeful pedagogical activities. The following model should therefore be understood as a conceptual design for higher education learning, rather than an empirically validated model.

Table 2. Conceptual Model for Using *Rencek* in Character Education for University Students

Stage	Function of *Rencek*	Student Process	Character Dimension	Example Activity
Contextual exposure	Presents criticism/issues through familiar language and situations	Identifies social issues and cultural contexts	Moral awareness	Watch/read a *rencek* segment; note the issues
Values clarification	Links humor/dialogue to	Identifies values, parties, interests,	Moral knowing	Map actors and values;

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Stage	Function of *Rencek*	Student Process	Character Dimension	Example Activity
	values at stake	and perspectives		perspective-taking
Moral reasoning	Presents conflict and alternative justifications	Evaluates reasons, evidence, proportionality, and consequences	Moral knowing	Case debate; moral-dilemma questions
Affective reflection	Creates both distance from and closeness to social experience	Examines empathy, prejudice, self-control, and humility	Moral feeling	Reflective journal; group dialogue
Decision and action	Transforms reflection into possible actions	Formulates ethical responses to contemporary cases	Moral action	Small social project/action; action commitment
Habituation and transfer	Links lessons to campus life	Repeats character-related practices in real situations	Habit	Follow-up reflection; behavioral evaluation

The first and second stages primarily activate moral awareness and knowing moral values. Students must first recognize that a scene raises a moral issue and then understand the values at stake. The third stage moves toward perspective-taking, moral reasoning, and decision-making. At this stage, students are not given a single answer but are asked to examine the reasoning of different parties. This corresponds to the elements of moral knowing summarized by Ningsih (2021).

The fourth stage addresses a gap often found in the use of the arts for character education: the tendency to stop at knowledge. The Lickona framework discussed by Ningsih includes moral feeling, which encompasses empathy, conscience, self-control, and humility. Accordingly, after evaluating a conflict, students need to consider how social position, prejudice, and personal interests influence their judgments.

The fifth and sixth stages connect learning to moral action. Ningsih (2021) summarizes moral action in terms of competence, will, and habit. Character education is therefore not considered complete once students can explain the values of honesty, justice, tolerance, or responsibility. They need opportunities to practice moral choices and repeat them in relevant contexts.

In higher education, implementation may take the form of case-based learning. A lecturer can select a *rencek* segment or a conflict from Brambang Ulung and ask students to map the issue, identify affected parties, assess each party's arguments, compare the case with contemporary situations, and formulate alternative actions. Learning products may include argumentative essays, structured discussions, reflective journals, or small-scale social projects. This model positions *rencek* as the learning stimulus, while character development occurs through interpretation, reflection, and action.

The targeted character qualities need not be imposed as a fixed list. Based on the reviewed literature and the Ningsih/Lickona framework, those most consistent with the

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identified mechanisms are moral awareness, courage in speaking the truth, empathy, self-control, honesty, justice, responsibility, tolerance, courtesy, integrity, and wisdom. Critical and democratic dispositions may be positioned as capacities cultivated through reasoning, perspective-taking, dialogue, and decision-making activities, rather than as labels for values automatically contained in every *rencek* performance.

The model also clarifies the limits of this article's claims. Existing literature supports the view that *rencek* and carangan plays may contain moral values and serve as educational resources. Dwijonagoro et al. (2019), for example, identify character values in Banjaran Bima and their implications across educational levels, while Saputri (2019) identifies character values in Wayang Cokek. Defi (2025) links carangan plays to the internalization of moral values. However, there is not yet sufficient evidence to claim that a *rencek*–social criticism–character education model is effective for university students. Establishing its effectiveness remains an agenda for future research.

Implications, Limitations, and Research Agenda

The main implication of this review is a shift in how wayang may be used in education. Rather than being treated solely as a 'source of values', wayang may also be approached as a source of problems and interpretive experiences. *Rencek* is important because it allows social issues to emerge through language, humor, local characters, and topical commentary. Through this approach, character education can progress from recognizing values toward developing moral judgment.

Nevertheless, this study has several limitations. The first is an imbalance in the evidence. Direct research is available on Brambang Ulung. The performance's overall structure can be examined in Habiburrahman's dissertation (2024b), but the reviewed literature does not yet include complete transcripts or systematic audience-reception evidence. Second, some proposed educational mechanisms are derived from research on other *Wayang Sasak* or wayang plays and therefore have analogical status. Third, Ningsih's (2021) book primarily discusses the implementation of character education in school settings; its application to higher education in this article is thus a conceptual adaptation, not a claim that the book proposes a model specifically designed for universities.

Future research should test the model through educational studies. A first stage could involve qualitative research on students' interpretations after watching or reading *rencek* segments. A second could involve developing Brambang Ulung-based teaching materials or learning modules. A third could investigate changes in moral reasoning, perspective-taking ability, empathy, or behavioral intentions through quasi-experimental designs. A fourth could use observation and reflective journals to establish whether learning experiences develop into habits or merely produce short-lived responses.

Conclusion

This review shows that rencek in *Wayang Sasak* has pedagogical potential when understood not merely as a comic interlude or a collection of moral values, but as a mediating device connecting established repertoire, social issues, local language, humor, and audience experiences. In Brambang Ulung, the conflict surrounding Ni Diyah Rangdirah's death; the demands concerning Alam Daur; and the themes of violence, honor, law, and leadership provide material for moral reasoning.

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Drawing on Ningsih's (2021) character education framework, which adapts Lickona's moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action, this article proposes a six-stage conceptual model: contextual exposure, values clarification, moral reasoning, affective reflection, decision and action, and habituation and transfer. In this model, *rencek* serves as a stimulus and intermediary for learning experiences; character is not assumed to develop merely because students watch a performance.

The article's contribution therefore lies in repositioning *rencek* from an object of cultural study to a potential pedagogical medium. However, the proposed model is not yet a validated instructional model, and its effectiveness in developing university students' character cannot be inferred from the available literature. Further empirical evidence is required to investigate how students interpret criticism, engage in moral reasoning, experience affective reflection, and translate learning outcomes into action.

Recommendations

Future research should develop and validate the proposed six-stage model in collaboration with *Wayang Sasak* practitioners, cultural experts, and educators. Pilot studies with university students should examine how *rencek* supports moral reasoning and reflection, using validated instruments and qualitative data. Further studies should also assess whether learning transfers to students' actions over time and ensure that the performance's cultural context and local meanings are represented accurately.

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