

MAPPING WAYANG TRADITIONAL THEATRE AS A FORM OF LOCAL WISDOM OF SURAKARTA INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

This article is aimed at describing how to map wayang (puppet) traditional theatre found in Surakarta and its vicinity. The mapping of the wayang performance becomes significant in understanding the improvements of wayang in Surakarta, as one of the forms of Javanese local wisdom. The results of the research show that from the six kinds of material used to make wayang only four kinds of material are commonly used in Surakarta. They are kulit (leather), kain (cloth), suket (grass), and human beings as the wayang. Out of the four kinds of material there exist eight kinds of wayang theatre loved by the community of Surakarta: (1) from kulit: wayang purwa, wayang wahyu, wayang kancil, and wayang kampung sebelah; (2) from kain: wayang beber and wayang potehi; (3) from suket: wayang suket Slamet Gundono; and (4) human beings as the wayang is called wayang wong. Most wayang theatre take wayang purwa as their source of wayang creation as seen in wayang wahyu, wayang kancil, wayang kampung sebelah, wayang beber, wayang suket Slamet Gundono, and wayang wong. Only wayang potehi is not included in the classification above because this kind of wayang theatre is Tiongkok (China) in origin, so that it has been influenced by Chinese culture.

Keywords: Traditional theatre, wayang, mapping wayang traditional theatre

INTRODUCTION

Wayang traditional theatre was one kind of palace traditional theatre which was developed by the Kingdom of Mataram, the biggest Islamic kingdom in Java, developed the art of wayang theatre throughout its authority. Now, the region of Surakarta and Jogyakarta (ex-Mataram Kingdom) embrace the region of Jawa Tengah (Central Java) and Jawa Timur (East Java). Wayang theatre is a traditional art of Javanese community which develops over very vast region and has lasted for ages.

Wayang is a form of performance art which is highly appreciated. There is a mixture of literary art (role/theatre), music art, painting, sculpture, and semiotics. Moreover, wayang can be used as informational and educational media, medium of entertainment, and a medium to understand philosophical values. Different kinds of function, usefulness, and the unity of several fields of art cause wayang to possess complete functions. In short, wayang has entertaining power (*dulce*) and usefulness (*utile*) at the same time. As Marzanna Poplawska (2004:1) stated that wayang is a vital art form in Java. Its performances are still very popular and are often staged for all kinds of celebrations, from family to state events. Wayang giving a good performance (*tontonan*) and guidance (*tuntunan*).

Nowadays, however, wayang, as well as other traditional theatres, faces the problem of extinction. Wayang theatres are often thought of as identical to performance arts for the old generation, entertainments for the aged, obsolete performances which are performed at unattractive places, boring stories; all these make wayang theatres unpopular and disliked by

young generation. Whereas actually within *wayang* stories there contain some values of local wisdom which can be developed as one aspect of nation and character building.

Low appreciation toward *wayang* theatres is also caused by minimum support from the government. Things which look traditional and not in line with globalization are supposed not to conform with the development era. Whereas through keeping the local wisdom which bears educational values (national identity) can act as a filter against the negative influence of globalization.

In the country of its origin, Indonesia, *wayang* theatre is a marginalized art. But in foreign countries *wayang* theatre becomes an art which is studied scientifically. Several universities in California: Berkeley, Santa Cruz, San Francisco, and Universiteit Leiden in the Netherland, studying *wayang* are one of important subjects in the university. In the year 2004, UNESCO provided appreciation to Indonesian *wayang* as the world greatest art work. Why Indonesians cannot appreciate *wayang*, while people from other countries try to study, to understand, and even try to be professional *wayang* performers?

Local wisdom, especially *wayang*, is potential energy which is owned collectively by the society to live above the values which lead civilized people. Local wisdom can be maintained through performance arts, literary works, architecture, sciences, and so on. The value of local wisdom that can be maintained will appear in the life activities of man. These activities can solve the problems in the mids of globalization streams. Man is not only washed away by the negative influences of globalization, but man can also answer the challenge courteously based on his own culture. Local wisdom becomes the bridge between local and global values.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses the qualitative descriptive method (Miles and Huberman, 1984: 11-15) and the technique of collecting data is: (1) Literary studies. To collect written materials about *wayang* from different books, newspapers, magazines, and from the internet. Books about *wayang* as a form of traditional theatre, books about Javanese culture, books on character education, books about local wisdom, and so on; (2) Interviewing informants. To interview several *dalang* (*wayang* performer) in Surakarta and its vicinity. The *dalangs* are Jilitheng Suparman, Fendi Susanto, Sarwono, Asmoro Hadi, Mudjiono, Slamet Gundono, and Tio Thiong Gie; (3) Observation. To observe *wayang* theatre presented by several *dalangs*. Those three techniques result in mapping *wayang* traditional theatres in Surakarta and its vicinity.

The data analysis technique is interactive analysis technique which involved three simultaneous activities: data reduction, data presentation, and verification (Miles & Huberman, 1984:13). The technique used for validating data in this research is triangulation, including the triangulation of data sources, method, and theory. Triangulation of sources is comparing various sources in order to establish validity. In this research, the data derived from observation will be validated by comparing to the data presented from interviewing informants and literary studies and so on.

Mapping Wayang Traditional Theatre in Surakarta

All traditional theatre in Java have aesthetic base as agricultural community. Traditional theatres are often identified with several magic ritual ceremony related with fertile ceremony, warding off misfortune ceremony, wedding ceremony, giving birth ceremony, etc. In those ceremonies traditional theatres are asked to come on a certain date in accordance with the Javanese calendar which is related to the belief of the Javanese agricultural community.

Amir Mertosedono (1999:10) and Pandam Guritno (1998:3) stated that *wayang* (puppet) is a Javanese original culture. This statement is supported by Hazeu (Ensiklopedi Wayang Nasional Indonesia 17th edition, 1991: 274) who stated that *wayang* is a native Javanese performance which originated from the 11th century (in the period of the King Erlangga throne). *Wayang* means “shadow performance” (Soedarsono, 2007: 459 – 460), whereas according to Hazeu (Ensiklopedi Wayang Nasional Indonesia 17th edition, 1991:274), *wayang* is *walulang inukir* (carved leather/skin), the shadow of which is to be seen through a screen.

R. Djajakusuma in Jacob Sumardjo (2004:17) traditional theatre is divided into two categories, namely human theatre and doll theatre. Each category is divided further into two smaller groups, namely public theatre and palace theatre. *Wayang* theatre is one of the theatres which develop in the palace. In line with the development era, *wayang* theatre can be enjoyed by common people. *Wayang* theatre can be categorized as both human and doll theatre at the same time.

Sri Mulyono (1998:164-165) classified kinds of *wayang* as follows:

1. *Wayang* made from *kulit* (leather, specially processed animal skin):
 - a. *wayang kulit purwa*
 - b. *wayang kidung kencana*
 - c. *wayang gedog*
 - d. *wayang klithik kulit*
 - e. *wayang madya*
 - f. *wayang kuluk*
 - g. *wayang dupara*
 - h. *wayang wahana*
 - i. *wayang kancil*
 - j. *wayang perjuangan*
 - k. *wayang adam makrifat*
 - l. *wayang Jawa*
 - m. *wayang suluh*
 - n. *wayang Pancasila*
 - o. *wayang wahyu*
 - p. *wayang sejati*
2. *Wayang* made from leaves are:
 - a. *wayang rontal purwa*
 - b. *wayang daun kluwih*
3. *Wayang* made from cloth are:
 - a. *wayang beber purwa*
 - b. *wayang beber gedog*
4. *Wayang* made of wood are:
 - a. *wayang krucil*
 - b. *wayang thengul*
 - c. *wayang golek purwa Jakin Nata*
5. “Man” as the *wayang* consists of:
 - a. *wayang wong*
 - b. *wayang pethilan* (fragments from the *wayang* theatre)
6. *Wayang* made of grass, paper, or bamboo

Based on the results of the research, only four out of six kinds of material above still exist and are still developing in Surakarta, namely: *wayang* made from leather (*kulit*), *wayang*

made of cloth (*kain*), human beings as the *wayang*, and *wayang* made of grass. They are, among others things:

1. *Wayang* made from *kulit* (leather), among other things:
 - a. *wayang purwa*
 - b. *wayang kampung sebelah*
 - c. *wayang wahyu*
 - d. *wayang kancil*
2. *Wayang* made of *kain* (cloth), among other things:
 - a. *wayang beber*
 - b. *wayang potehi*
3. Human beings as the *wayang*, among other things:
 - a. *wayang wong* (*wayang orang*, human puppet)
4. *Wayang* made of *suket* (grass), among other things:
 - a. *wayang suket Slamet Gundono*

From the 16 kinds of *wayang* made from leather, only four kinds which are growing in Surakarta, they are *wayang purwa*, *wayang kancil*, *wayang wahyu*, and *wayang kampung sebelah*. *Wayang kampung sebelah* is a form of contemporary *wayang* created by JIitheng Suparman. His wish is that young generation will love *wayang* show. From the two kinds of *wayang* made of cloth, *wayang beber* and *wayang potehi* are growing in Surakarta. *Wayang potehi* is Tiongkok (China) in origin. Chinese ethnic communities in Surakarta have the opportunity to develop their culture including the *wayang potehi*. This kind of *wayang* is fortunately appreciated by Surakarta citizen. While the two kinds of *wayang* with human beings as the actors or actresses, only one is still in progress of development, the so-called *wayang wong* or *wayang orang*. Only at Sriwedari Park Surakarta and Indonesia Radio Broadcasting Surakarta perform *wayang wong*. *Wayang suket Slamet Gundono* is the only *wayang* made of grass and is classified as contemporary *wayang*.

Based on the classification of *wayang* according to the material used, there are eight kinds which is still growing in Surakarta; they are (1) *wayang purwa*, (2) *wayang wahyu*, (3) *wayang kancil*, (4) *wayang beber*, (5) *wayang potehi*, (6) *wayang wong*, (7) *wayang suket*, and (8) *wayang kampung sebelah*. Leather as the material used in making the *wayang* becomes dominant in Surakarta, because *wayang kulit purwa* is the oldest, and therefore becomes the model of creation of a new kind of *wayang*.

The performer of contemporary *wayang kampung sebelah*, JIitheng Suparman, admitted that he was inspired by the performance of *wayang purwa*. The performance which uses screen for the *wayang* show (*kelir*), puppets made from leather, *gunungan*, *gamelan* (music instruments), *niyaga* (gamelan players) proves that *wayang kampung sebelah* is inspired by the concept of *wayang purwa*. But their stories which are presented in the show are different from each other. *Wayang kampung sebelah* presents stories from everyday social lives, especially the marginal people, by using komical, satirical, and critical language. JIitheng often use mixture of Indonesian and *ngoko* Javanese languages so that the stories can easily be understood by his audience. While *wayang purwa* presents an epic about Mahabarata and Ramayana and uses *krama* and *krama inggil* Javanese languages. The story performed maybe a complete story of Mahabarata or Ramayana, therefore it may last all-night (*lakon pakeliran banjaran*). But *wayang purwa* can also present episode from Mahabarata or Ramayana where

only one hero is told all-night (*lakon pakeliran padat*). In *lakon pakeliran padat* the story can be presented only in a few hours.

Wayang wahyu is a kind of *wayang* created in connection with religion, Christian or Catholic. It is created by Brother Thimoteus, also inspired by *wayang purwa*. Brother Thimoteus adapts the performance of *wayang purwa* by using *kelir*, the *wayang* (from leather), *gunungan*, *gamelan*, *niyaga*. Which are similar. For a while, *wayang wahyu* almost the same as *wayang purwa* theatre. Nevertheless, looking more closely, the stories presented in *wayang wahyu* are far more different from *wayang purwa*. The stories are created based on the bible, both old and new testaments, the holy book of Christian and Catholic. Therefore the heroes, here are also different. *Wayang* as a medium is used to communicate the word of God to his followers. Used as a medium, the creation of *wayang wahyu* is not a means of “*cristianization*”. Setya Budi (2000:4) stresses his view by stating that *wayang wahyu* does not interpret the contents of the bible. *Wayang wahyu* does not try to communicate the principles of Christianity, nor how to be a Christian, *wayang wahyu* is not used to communicate religious rituals, but it simplifies the contents of the bible in the form of performance art.

Wayang wong is a form of personification of structure found in *wayang purwa*. *Lakon pakeliran banjaran* as well as *pakeliran padat* (all-night performances) may be performed by *wayang wong*. The story presented by *wayang wong* are also taken from the same source, Mahabarata and Ramayana. The difference is only in the material of the *wayang*: *wayang purwa* uses leather but *wayang wong* uses human beings as the *wayang*. Since *wayang wong* uses human beings as *wayang*, the stage is also different from *wayang purwa* theatre. The structure of *wayang wong* stage is set like the stage of modern theatre. The stage can be set in accordance with time and place, for instance: in a forest, in the palace, in a park, and so on. The modern stage is influenced by the modern theatre which first entered Indonesia, i.e. Dardanella and Komedi Stambul. The dialogues are also different. In *wayang purwa* the dialogues are done by the *dalang* himself, but in *wayang wong* the actor or actress use song and dance as dialogue among the figures. That is why *wayang wong* actors and actresses must be able to dance and sing.

The structure of the story, the selection of figures, and the language of the dialogues (language style) in *wayang wong* are the same as those in *wayang purwa*. In *pakeliran banjaran* the flow of the story may digress because the Mahabarata and Ramayana story may digress because the Mahabarata and Ramayana story are presented in full length. These kinds of *wayang* need much time to perform the epic of Mahabarata and Ramayana. In *pakeliran padat*, the flow of the story is compact because the story is *lakon carangan*, so that the performance time can be shortened. Selection of figures in two kinds of *wayang* are the same. The costumes worn by *wayang wong* also in accordance with the costume regulation practised by *wayang purwa*. The language style in dialogues is spoken or sung while dancing smoothly, and like in *wayang purwa*, the language levels also used in *wayang wong*, namely *krama* level and *krama inggil* level.

Wayang kancil is also created after the pattern of *wayang purwa*, especially the stage style and the dominant role of the *dalang*. *Wayang kancil* also use *kelir* (screen), *gunungan*, *wayang* made of leather, and *gamelan* accompaniment. The figures set for *wayang kancil* are animals. The stories for *wayang kancil* are taken from the book *Serat Kancil Kridomartono*, the work of Raden Panji Notoroto that tells about the activities of a kancil as a cunning animal which love to help others. Like the name of the *wayang*, the main character is kancil. The other animals like snakes, buffaloes, crocodiles, tigers, and so on become less important

character. These animals are used by the *dalang* to represent human beings and their characters.

Wayang suket is admitted by Slamet Gundono, the creator, is inspired by *wayang purwa*. The different is that *wayang suket* is flexible. If it needs screen, the *dalang* will choose a black screen without any ornaments. If it does not need one, of course, screen can be taken away, then the *dalang* can immediately begin to perform in front of the audience.

Wayang suket can be said as *wayang* dolls which are made of grass, the big grass (*suket gajah*) or the small one (*suket teki*). The grass, then, is created to represent human beings or animals according to the figures or characters determined by the *dalang*. Music accompaniment for *wayang suket* is also the result of Slamet Gundono's creativity. The music is a blend of traditional and modern one.

Wayang potehi is the only kind of *wayang* which is influenced by Chinese culture and is growing in Surakarta. *Persatuan Masyarakat Surakarta* (PMS) which consists of Chinese ethnic group has the role of saving *wayang potehi* from extinction. *Wayang potehi* used dolls from cloth as puppets. The dolls are moved by inserting the hand of the *dalang* into the body of the dolls. The costumes of the dolls are colourfull in agreement with the characters.

Wayang beber is another *wayang* theatre which is also inspired by the *wayang purwa* theatre. The similarity of the two lies on the domination of the *dalang*. The story for the *wayang beber* is taken from the *Panji* stories. There are no puppets because the puppets have been transformed into two-dimensional pictures which are scenes of the stories. The *dalang* tells the story by pointing at the pictures using a stick.

Table 1. The chart of eight wayang theatre in Surakarta

No	Wayang Name	Material	Source of Stories	Characters	On Stage
1.	<i>Wayang purwa</i>	leather	Mahabarata dan Ramayana	Mahabarata: Yudistira, Arjuna, Nakula, Sadewa. Ramayana: Rama, Sita, Rahwana, Hanuman, Sugriwa, Subali, Kumbakarna, Wibisana	- <i>gunungan</i> - <i>kelir</i> - <i>keprak</i> - <i>gamelan</i> - <i>niyaga</i>
2.	<i>Wayang wahyu</i>	leather	The bible: old testament and new testament in Christian and Catholic religions	Jesus, Peter, Luke, John, Bartholomew, Mary, etc.	- <i>gunungan</i> - <i>kelir</i> - <i>gamelan</i> (combination of traditional and modern music) - <i>niyaga</i>
3.	<i>Wayang kancil</i>	leather	<i>Serat Kancil Kridomartono</i> by Ki Panji Notoroto	Kancil(small deer), snakes, Tigers, elephants, birds, etc	- <i>gunungan</i> - <i>kelir</i> - <i>keprak</i> - <i>niyaga</i> singing children songs
4.	<i>Wayang wong</i>	Actor/actress	Mahabarata and Ramayana	The same as for <i>wayang purwa</i> . But the actors and the actresses act as the	-modern stage form with up and down screen, changeable background to fit the

				<i>wayang</i> and they do much dancing and singing instead of dialogues	scene, modern lighting - <i>gamelan & niyaga</i>
5.	<i>Wayang kampung sebelah</i>	leather	Everyday life of Surakarta community. Scripts are created by JIitheng Suparman	Roma Ra Mari-mari, Cak Dul, Karyo, Silvy, etc	- <i>gunungan</i> - <i>keprak</i> -Combo band music -dialogues, interaction the <i>dalang</i> , music players, and audience -a stage with black cloth background and red carpet surrounded with hay
6.	<i>Wayang suket</i>	Grass(suket)	Everyday life of Surakarta community created imaginatively by Slamet Gundono	Depending upon Slamet Gundono's imagination	-music: combination between traditional and modern instruments -interaction dialogues between the <i>dalang</i> and the audience are allowed
7	<i>Wayang potehi</i>	Cloth	Legends, ancient history, and Chinese history	To Let Ho, Sun Go Kong, Tjin Han, etc.	-The size of the stage is 125X100X60 cm -music: traditional Tiongkok music -each scene of the <i>wayang</i> stories are painted on a piece of cloth
8.	<i>Wayang beber</i>	Cloth	<i>Panji</i> stories	-Panji Asmorobangun -Dewi Sekartaji	-The <i>dalang</i> uses a stick to explain every scene of the story - <i>gamelan and niyaga</i>

CONCLUSION

There are 8 kinds of *wayang* traditional theatre which are still developing: *wayang purwa*, *wayang wahyu*, *wayang kancil*, *Wayang Wong*, *wayang kampung sebelah*, *wayang suket*, *wayang potehi*, and *wayang beber*. *Wayang* is the form of local wisdom which emerges in the *wayang* stories. *Wayang* theatres put forward values such as prudent (wise), moral (good), and exemplary (ideal) so that common people can imitate the examples presented in *wayang* traditional theatres. *Wayang* traditional theatres show superior cultural values, especially in Surakarta, which can be used as life-saver because those values are the essence of philosophy, ethics, and behaviour that can stand in this globalization era.

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