



The Problem of Javanese Wayang in Javanese Culture.

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Abstract

This article discusses wayang (Javanese puppet) and its problems in Javanese culture. The purpose of this writing is to get a general overview of wayang and the types that developed in Javanese society. The method used is a descriptive method and the main data source is written data. Studies show that wayang in Javanese culture has developed according to the situations and conditions of its time. Initially, wayang was related to mythology and stories of the gods believed in by the Javanese people. In Javanese culture, the type of wayang that is developing rapidly is the type of wayang kulit. This puppet is called the Purwa puppet. This type of shadow puppetry later developed into the Madyo puppet type, Wasono puppetry and modern puppetry. What differentiates the various types of wayang, apart from the characters, is the content of the story. Wayang Purwa contains Mahabharata and Ramayana stories while the next wayang contains other stories such as chronicles, animal stories, historical stories, and so on.

Keywords: wayang, Javanese culture, wayang purwa

I. Introduction

The word wayang contains a number of meanings. The first meaning is 'a depiction of a character, a 'puppet', more specifically a doll used in wayang performances. This definition was further expanded to include performances played with dolls, as well as, more broadly, certain forms of dramatic art (Groenandel, 1987:4).

Puppet theater like wayang is actually not only known in Indonesia, but is also known in China, Thailand, India, Malaysia and Turkey. However, various scholars argue that wayang in Indonesia is an original invention of the Indonesian people so that its characters reflect the culture of the Indonesian people (Sumardjo, 1992:24-25). Each type of wayang actually has its own characteristics according to the culture that supports it.

The authenticity that wayang shows are original Indonesian performances is reflected in the terms used in wayang shows. The word 'wayang' itself is a Javanese word which means 'shadow', because in wayang performances the audience watches from behind the screen the shadows of the puppets played by the puppeteer.

The role of wayang in the lives of Javanese people is very large. Babad Tanah Jawa which is the largest historical record in new Javanese literature takes wayang as one of its models. The wayang in question is the Kandha fiber book which is said to have occurred in Java.(Race, 1987)

This article discusses wayang and its problems in Indonesia, especially in Java. The purpose of this article is to observe the development of wayang over time. It is hoped that this article can provide a general overview of wayang in Indonesia.

II. Method

The method used in this article is a descriptive qualitative method. The data collected is various information about wayang that has developed over time. For this reason, researchers mostly use written data because there are no sources for some of the data. However, in some cases informants are also used to complete the required data

The data used comes from notes from notebooks and various artifacts in museums. In the case of museums, researchers are limited to using the radio library museum in Surakarta as one of the sources of data needed.

III. The Early Role of Puppets.

Wayang has been known for a very long time in our country. It was once known as a means of communication with ancestral spirits (Kayam, 1981:129). In prehistoric times, in Indonesia there were native religious ceremonies to contact ancestors through *shaman* and shamans by presenting their spirits through certain mediums or figures or dolls. With the entry of Indian culture into Indonesia, the continuity of the ceremony



became a wayang performance. At least in the year 900, shadow puppets were known to exist with plays based on Indian epic stories. The function of puppets was still as a ceremony to summon the spirits of ancestors.

In the Majapahit era, the story repertoire was not only focused on Indian epics, but also ruwat Sudamala or spiritual stories such as Dewa Ruci. In the Majapahit era there was also a wayang beber which presented the story of the Panji cycle. The collapse of Majapahit did not bring with it the collapse of wayang. In fact, wayang shows with plays based on Indian characters are increasingly developing and even various types of wayang are appearing. The types of wayang include: wayang gedog made of leather that plays the story of Panji; wayang Menak which plays the story of Amir Hamzah which is Persian literature with Javanese characters; wayang golek made of wood which also tells the story of Amir Hamzah; wayang klitik or wayang krucil which is also made of wood and plays the Damarwulan story; etc.

In the Demak era, wayang was effectively used as a medium for da'wah. This was done by Sunan Kalijaga at the time of the inauguration of the Great Mosque of Demak. During the inauguration, Sunan Kalijaga held a shadow puppet performance all night long, only in the wayang stories or plays, Sunan Kalijaga conveyed Islamic teachings. Meanwhile, the play in the wayang show is "Bima Suci". What's more unique about the show is that anyone can come and watch as long as they can buy a ticket. The tickets stipulated by Sunan Kalijaga were not purchased using money or other assets, but only by "saying two sentences of the creed". (Susilo & Wulansari, 2019).

During the reign of Wayang puppetry, it was also not abandoned because Sultan Hadiwijaya was a student of Sunan Kalijaga. Wayang puppetry developed even more rapidly because it received support from the Sultanate. (Muthi'ah, 2019).

The emergence of various types of wayang shows that the Indonesian people love wayang performances. With this fact, wayang performances often accommodate various interests; both positive and negative, for example for educational purposes, to promote development programs, for political purposes, and so on. The Indonesian people's passion for the art of wayang performances encouraged the Ministry of Information to create special wayang as a medium of lighting called wayang suluh.

IV. Development of Wayang in Indonesia

Various ethnic groups in Indonesia know various types of wayang. Javanese society has the most types of wayang compared to other societies. In Javanese society there are 5 types of wayang, namely:

- (1) shadow puppets;
- (2) wayang klitik/ krucil (telling the story of Damarwulan);
- (3) wayang golek (telling the story of Amir Hamzah);
- (4) wayang beber; And
- (5) wayang wong (Holt, 1967).

Of the types of wayang, wayang kulit can be divided into four types, namely (a) wayang purwa (Ramayana and Bharatayudha stories), (b) wayang gedhog (Panji story), (c) wayang madya (telling the story of King Jayabaya, Kediri), and (d) modern wayang. There are various types of modern wayang and have experienced developments and changes from time to time. Among the types of modern wayang include Pancasila wayang, Javanese wayang (telling the story of Prince Diponegara's struggle), Kancil wayang (telling the story of Kancil), wayang struggle, wayang torch, Adam Ma'rifat wayang, revelation wayang, and others (Holt, 1967).

Sundanese people have two types of wayang, namely wayang kulit and wayang golek. Rather than wayang kulit, wayang golek is more popular in Sundanese society. Apart from presenting the story of Amir Hamzah, this wayang golek also presents the story of the Mahabharata and Ramayana (Brandon, 1967:50).

Balinese people have wayang kulit and wayang wong, but do not have wayang golek. Balinese shadow puppets mostly take stories from the Mahabharata and Ramayana. Sometimes Balinese shadow puppets also present legends of a religious nature, for example the Calonarang story (Brandon, 1967:53).

Wayang is also owned by the Malay community. It needs to be explained here that the definition of Malay society includes people who use Malay. Geographically, the Malay community is found in the Malacca Peninsula (Malaysia), Sumatra, Java (Betawi), Ambon, Kalimantan (Banjar), and so on. Malay-Malaysians recognize three types of wayang, namely Malay wayang, Javanese wayang, and wayang. Siam (Brandon, 1967:56-57 and Holt, 1967:130). The Malay-Betawi community has wayang which is called Betawi wayang kulit or wayang Tambun (Ismunandar, 1994:104, Haryanto, 1988:66), Malay-Banjar in Kalimantan has wayang kulit



which is called wayang Banjar (Haryanto, 1995:119).

Wayang in West Java (Sundanese and Malay-Betawi) is influenced by shadow puppetry in Central Java and East Java. This influence can be seen in the form of wayang, story characters, and language. In the West Java region there are at least four versions of wayang kulit art, namely the Betawi version, the Cirebon version, the Cianjur version, and the Bandung version (Haryanto, 1988:54-56).

V. Puppet Purwa

The types of wayang can be divided into 3, namely (1) wayang purwa, (2) wayang gedog, and (3) wayang madya (Holt, 1969:124). Apart from that, new wayang creations or modern wayang are also known. Another term is contemporary wayang. There are many types of contemporary wayang, but on average they only live for a short time, then no longer develop. Wayang sadat, wayang torch, wayang ukur, wayang Diponegara, wayang Pancasila, and so on are types of modern wayang or in other terms referred to as contemporary wayang.

The most famous type of wayang in Java is wayang purwa. In Javanese, purwa can mean "early, old, original". The term wayang purwa contains ambiguity because wayang purwa can mean old, first, and early wayang. However, wayang purwa can also mean wayang which adapts stories from the Mahabharata which consists of parwa-parwa.

Pakubuwana IV has contributed greatly to the development of shadow puppetry in Surakarta. Sajid wrote that the king's wayang creations can be divided into two groups, the first is the Kadipaten group, which was created before his accession to the throne (consisting of Kyahi Mangu, Kanyut, and the Kadipaten's Pramuka) and the group created after his reign (consisting of Kyahi Jimat, Kyahi Kadung, Kyahi Dewakatong and Kothak Dhagelan). Pakubuwana IV is considered to be the only king who mastered the skill of wayang, and in the era of the reign of the kings after him no one could match the beauty of the wayang created by Pakubuwana IV (Wiratama, 2021)

This Mahabharata story has a very important meaning for the dynasty of the Mataram kings because their lineage is connected to wayang figures. Therefore, the history of the emergence of wayang stories and gamelan instruments in wayang is mythological in nature which is connected to wayang stories. a puppetry manual entitled *Sastramiruda Fiber* (Kamajaya, 1981) tells

about the origins of wayang and the mythological wayang purwa equipment.

It is said that wayang purwa was created during the time of King Jayabaya. Prabu Jayabaya's goal in creating wayang images was to depict images of his ancestors. The picture was painted on palm leaf. The first to be created was the image of Batara Guru until finally the image of Perikenan (Pariksit (?)) (see Kamajaya, 1981:12).

In this fiber, it is also told about Sastramiruda who asked KPA Kusumadilaga about: How the salendro gamelan was formed and who created it. When did the salendro gamelan start to accompany wayang purwa?

Kusumadilaga answered this question by relating the incident to the puppet gods as follows.

a. When Bathara Guru incarnated (became a human) holding the royal throne and had a palace in Medangkamulan with the title Sri Paduka Raja Mahadewa Buddha, then he made a palace in the form of Heaven on Mount Mahendra, namely Mount Lawu and was pleased to create the sounds of Lokananta, the details were: gending, kalam, sangka, pematut, sahuram. The gending is a series of: kemenak, kala, kenong, sangka, kenthuk, pematut, kendang, sauran, gong. These sounds accompany every time the gods dance rhythmically, but they don't yet use musical pieces, only in the form of playon, two kethuks, three kenongs and two gongs. After Prabu Dewa Buddha ascended to heaven where the Gods reside, the one who replaced him as king was Bathara Endra, who had the title Sanghyang Surapati and had a palace in Suralaya.

b. The Lokananta gamelan was given to Bathara Endra with additional details: caluring, namely the flute adjusted its tone to the Lokanan gamelan. Gending has five and six notes, namely: kenak, Kala has five notes, Sangka has a gulu tone, Sauran has a gulu tone. Caluring is given four holes, made from reed (small bamboo) and has five holes, gulu and goods. Pematut has three sounds, namely: bem, gendung, and kempp which are the drum beats to signal the ebb and flow of the rhythm. After completion of the gamelan, song accompaniment is used when the angels dance the badaya and the gods dance rhythmically. The song is called gendhing ketawang. There are nine types of dances performed by angels, namely: Jawata's wife has the rank of minister. Nowadays the badaya is called pambatak, awit endhol ajeg, endhel weton with a gamelan called Lokananta, with the tone surendrabbawana" (the residence of the king of the gods). This event is commemorated with the statement Swara matenggeng karna.



c. Bathara Citrasena was sent to visit the land of Purwacarita to give Surendra's sounds to Sri Raja Kano. After receiving the gift, it wasn't long before Sri Raja Kano added to it with ricikan, namely grantang, namely rebab, salundi, namely saron, a set consisting of five blades, each with the appropriate tone, each blade having six, five, chest notes, sugar, and goods. Everything was adapted to the tunes of Surendra's gamelan, then it was called the Salendro gamelan. This incident was denied by Swara Guna ingkang katon (337) (see Kamajaya, 1981:33-34). This wayang purwa developed in tandem with other contemporary types of wayang such as wayang klitik, wayang beber, wayang golek, and so on.

The description above shows us that the history of wayang and its gamelan, according to Javanese perception, originates from the time of the gods and is mythological in nature.

VI. Types of Puppets

Another type of wayang that is quite famous, but still mysterious in its origin is wayanggedhog. The meaning of the word gedhog is not clear. This wayang tells the story of the Panji story cycle. The characteristic of this wayang is the shape of the headdress which is different from the wayang purwa. Gedhog puppets are rarely found in Central Java, but are still relatively popular in East Java. In development, the wayang gedhog story also took the Darmarwulan story.

In this article the author wants to contribute thoughts about the name of the gedhog puppet which is still mysterious. In the author's opinion, wayanggedhog is a form of wayang in the transition period when Indian influence began to wane. That's when the Panji story emerged, which is an original Javanese/Indonesian story. Changes in stories not only appeared in the field of stories, but also in the field of performance. Wayang stories which initially took Indian stories then gradually took local stories, namely the stories of Panji and Damarwulan.

The word gedhog itself is another word for horse. This word was taken to refer to the Panji story whose characters' names often have the additional title Kuda, for example Panji Kudawanengpati. This means that the gedhog puppet is none other than the puppet about Panji. According to the Javanese concept, the Pandawa figures are the ancestors of the Javanese kings. After the period of wayang figures, their successors were figures from the Panji cycle. In this way, the emergence of wayang gedhog can be considered as a dividing line between the stories of the

Mahabharata cycle and the stories of the Panji cycle, which according to Javanese historical perception are different periods.

Another type of wayang related to the historical perception of the Javanese is wayang madya. The meaning of the word "middle" is middle. Maybe it is called that because the story taken according to Javanese cultural concepts is a story from the Middle Ages, namely the Jayabaya era; not the ancient era or the era of puppets and gods. The wayang madya story is based on the 19th century epic by Ranggawarsita. This wayang used to be performed a lot at Mangkunegaran Temple, but is now rarely seen.

Modern wayang is a wayang that emerged in the modern era, namely after the ineffective government of the kings. This type of puppet is sometimes the invention of a puppeteer. There are dozens of types of puppets, such as Pancasila puppets, Kancil puppets, struggle puppets, sadat puppets, revelation puppets, Adam Ma'rifat puppets, grass puppets, children's puppets, cardboard puppets, and even toy puppets. Wayang sadat is included in the category of modern wayang or also called contemporary wayang.

Shadow puppet performances have multiple functions and dimensions, including as a congregational activity, preaching, didactic, entertainment, art, education, science, and belief (spirituality, psychology, mysticism). With regard to the multiple functions and dimensions contained in wayang, the cultivation and understanding of wayang can only be done with a comprehensive approach. Highlighting just one dimension of one element will produce a false picture, if not a false picture (Mulyono, 1982:281).

Shadow puppet performances are a unified drama which, in its presentation, is a unified whole made up of a combination and concoction of all the elements and dimensions inherent in puppetry which are assembled in such a way, so as to embody the value of puppetry as a whole. So, it is not a collection of elements or dimensions, so to research wayang in depth it seems that a team of scholars with different expertise is needed. This needs to be done because if the highlighting or protrusion is only aimed at one aspect, a new stage shape will result. Maybe the form of the babru will be unsatisfactory and even disappointing. For example, people will highlight the field or dimension of entertainment, which will give birth to new forms of performance such as wayang orang, wayang mask, and so on. If you only emphasize the artistic aspect, a new form of performance will be born, a type of wayang drama



(Ramayana, Arjunawiwaha, Bagawatgitta, and so on). If people will highlight and emphasize in terms of historical education, or just information, then a new form of performance will be born, such as wayang gedog, wayang Pancasila, wayang suluh, wayang kancil, wayang kancil, wayang rides, wayang kuluk, and so on (Mulyono, 1982:282-283).

The shape and form of the new wayang is more appropriate to be called 'contemporary wayang' for its time. In accordance with the name and contemporary nature, of course it will be popular for a while, but not lasting. These renewal efforts were carried out because of concerns that wayang would be hit and crushed by foreign influences which were felt to result in the destruction of wayang itself. According to natural law, with this action a reaction will arise, including foreign influences that will be opposed with the value of authenticity, intellectualism will be opposed with feeling, materialism will be opposed with spirituality. However, it must also be realized that any renewal that is not comprehensive will automatically produce a pseudo-image or stage form that is only temporary. Giving the name of the wayang in the new stage form will of course depend on which elements will be emphasized or highlighted (Mulyono, 1982:283-285).

An example of contemporary wayang is wayang sadat. Wayang sadat is the creation of Mr. Suryadi WS, a resident of Mireng hamlet, Trucuk District, Klaten Regency. This puppet was originally intended as a means of Islamic da'wah. Wayang sadat itself is an abbreviation of the words "Means of da'wah and tablig". Wayang sadat appeared in 1985 with a sengkalan *Basuki Wenganing Gusti clan*". Sadat wayang experienced its heyday in the 1980s-1990. This wayang performed in 1995 at the Istiqlal Festival, Jakarta.

As a contemporary wayang, wayang sadat only lasted a few years. The author's visit in 1999 to the house of Mr. Suryadi, the founder of wayang sadat, found the condition of wayang sadat to be worrying. This puppet has never performed again and its supporters have disbanded and never rehearsed again. The same thing happened to the torch puppets which used to be patronized by the Ministry of Information. Now the wayang torch is no longer effective and has no supporters.

VII. Conclusion

Wayang has experienced many long journeys. The story of the emergence of wayang is related to mythology and the gods on the island of Java. Wayang purwa is the most developed type of

wayang. This wayang is a type of wayang that was performed in the king's palace. One of the figures who developed this wayang is Pakubuwana IV. Wayang purwa has developed into other forms of wayang made from leather. These puppets are wayang madya, wayang wasana, and wayang modern.

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