

Perspective of *Wayang Kulit Purwa* Figure Creation Product by Bambang Suwarno (A Case Study on *Sanggar Ciptoning* [Ciptoning Art Studio], Sangkrah)

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Abstract: *Javanese wayang kulit* (leather puppet) performance is a form of art living and developing in Java. The word *Wayang* in Javanese means “shadow”. The objectives of research were 1) to find out the important position of *wayang kulit purwa* position, and 2) to find out the visualization of *wayang kulit purwa* creation. This study was a descriptive qualitative research using straightforward observation, in-depth interview, and documentation as the technique of collecting data. The sampling strategy used in this study was snowball sampling. Data validation was carried out using data triangulation. Bambang Suwarno created his work by developing a new work and integrating it into the existing *wayang kulit* work, aiming to increase the *wayang* vocabularies. The *dalangs* (puppeteers)’ response indicated that Bambang Suwarno as *dalang* figure could be stated as *wayang* fine art expert as he had concept and productivity in creating his works.

Keywords: *wayang, wayang kulit purwa, creativity, Bambang Suwarno*

Introduction

Javanese leather puppet (*wayang kulit*) performance is an art living and developing in Java. In addition to being entertaining media, *wayang* also functions to be media of communication, extension (illumination), and education. In Malayan, it is called “*bayang-bayang* (shadow)”. *Wayang* in Javanese language, the word *wayang* means “shadow” (Sri Mulyono, 1978: 11). Hazim Amir (1991: 17) argues that *wayang* serves as “life encyclopedia”.

Bambang Suwarno is not an ordinary puppeteer (*dalang*) figure, and serves as the teacher of puppeteers (*dalangs*). As an educator in both studio and Indonesian Art Institute of Surakarta (ISI Surakarta) scopes, Bambang Suwarno contributed to raising Ki Manteb Soedarsono, Ki Enthus Susmono, Ki Purbo Asmoro, and a number of other well-known *dalangs* (Bram Setiadi and Amin Pujianto, 2011:15). Bram Setiadi and Amin Pujianto (2011) add that the classical puppet by Bambang Suwarno develops in the term of character, *tatahan* (inlaid) work, and *sunggingan* coloring. Classical puppets include several *gunungans* (mountainlike figure in the *wayang* play symbolizing the universe): *Pawukon*, *Purwaning Dumadi*, *Hakekat*, *Lingkungan Hidup*, and *Gunungan Samodra Mantana* (page 18). Bambang Suwarno creates new works in order to be fused into the preexisting *wayang kulit* work, intended to increase the vocabulary of *wayang*.

Wayang has been contained in *Arjunawiwaha* book by *Mpu Kanwa* in Prabu Airlangga time (1019-1049 AD). Bambang Suwarno in a compilation of papers entitled *Berbagai Kajian Estetik Wayang Kulit* (1996:3) adds that Javanese people has inherited esthetic observation on leather puppet doll since a long time ago. An idea of the manifestation of each puppetry character was obtained from the puppeteer’s representation (*pencandraan*) and anatomic form of puppetry character we have ever seen. S. Haryanto in a book entitled *Pratiwimba Adiluhung: Sejarah dan Perkembangan Wayang* (1988:48) mentions that *wayang purwa* is a show staging a story deriving from Mahabharata and Ramayana books. Among Javanese people, the term

purwa is defined as ancient or old times. Therefore, *wayang purwa* is defined as *wayang* presenting the ancient or *purwa* time story.

The form of fine art formerly realistic proportional as included in the temples is now changed (stylized) into imaginative abstract one, in the sense of not like human beings, but remaining to be proportional. *Walis* (religious leaders) developed Islamic *wayang* fine art world precisely, in harmony with the development of society at that time (Solichin in Heru Sudjarwo *et.al*, 2010: 52). The proportion of *wayang kulit purwa* is commonly has head-body ratio of 1:4 or 1:3, so that the head shape seems to be larger. Hand of *wayang* goes from shoulder down nearly touching the sole; it is much longer than the proportion of human beings; and its two legs seems to be longer compared with to head and body (Haryanto, 1991: 32). In addition to its performance art, *wayang kulit* can be seen from the beauty of *wayang* shape. *Wanda wayang* producing artists will develop their own *wayang* more creatively. *Wanda* can be defined as the representation of face looks (Javanese: *pasemon*) of a character, constituting the visible manifestation of the character's mood (Sudarso Sp in Heru Sudjarwo *et.al*, 2010: 22). The use of character manifestation in *wayang* including *wanda* enlivens the circumstance of *wayang* performance (S. Haryanto, 1991: 270).

Art work is born due to the presence of artists in charge of presenting the work. Furthermore, Jakob Sumardjo (2000) explains about creativity. Creativity is a very individual condition, attitude or mentality, constituting the manifestation of human's freedom as an individual. Artists' working creativity reveals a floating condition: existent and not-existent. Thus, a creative individual is always in chaotic, critical, seeking, and trying conditions to find something never existent before from the preexisting order. It is because creativity needs creative bravery (page 80). Creative bravery is the invention of new shapes, symbols, and patterns (Rollo May, 2004:12).

Rhodes in Utami Munandar (1999:25) concludes that creativity is generally formulated in personal (person), process, product and environment terms pressing (encouraging) an individual to behave creatively. The creativity definition approach from product aspect emphasizes on originality, novelty, and significance elements. It is in line with Baron (1969) stating that creativity is an ability of creating or producing something new. Furthermore, the product of creativity is not only limited to object or product, but also manifested into idea, management, and organization (Tritjahjo, 2014:18).

The objectives of research were 1) to find out the important position of *wayang kulit purwa* creation, and 2) to find out the visualization of *wayang kulit purwa* creation.

Method

This research focused on Bambang Suwarno's residence located in Sungai Musi Street Number 34, Sangkrah, Pasar Kliwon, Surakarta as the main data source. Considering the problem studied, this research employed qualitative descriptive form. Moleong (2013: 6) adds that the qualitative research intended was to understand the phenomenon experienced by the subject of research descriptively in the form of words and language. Qualitative research employed qualitative method including observation, interview, and document study.

Techniques of collecting data used by the author in this study were observation, interview, and documentation. Observation was used to show the manifestation of *wayang purwa* creation. Observation used was straightforward observation technique. Interview was conducted to obtain complete information from the resources participating within it. Interview was conducted with several informants, including Bambang Suwarno as the main informant, Manteb Soedharsono,

Purbo Asmoro, and Mujiono. Documentation was intended to document activities related to the search for works created by Bambang Suwarno.

Results and Discussion

1. The importance of wayang kulit purwa creation

A creative individual is always in chaotic, critical, seeking, and trying conditions to find something never existent before from the preexisting order. The form of creativity is intended to produce work to support *pakeliran* staging. Manteb Soedharsono, as the puppetry performer (*dalang*), revealed that *dalang* or individual is entitled to develop character adjusted with the character of *wayang* (interview on June 13, 2018 at 04.00 p.m.). Manteb Soedharsono added that many things can be done by *dalang* in the presence of real *wayang* from the necessary utility. Considering the actual shape of *wanda wayang*, *dalang* can understand the character owned by such form of puppet doll that in turn can help *dalang* presenting the figure corresponding to its character. Furthermore, Mujiono (interview on July 25, 2018 at 05.10 p.m.) suggested the importance of *wayang* production position corresponding to certain character in affecting the *pakeliran* and adding reformation to the *wayang*. Purbo Asmoro as a *dalang* admitted that leather puppet by Bambang Suwarno increases the vocabulary of *wayang*, so that *wayang* can be seen more beautifully (interview on June 4, 2018 at 01.00 p.m.). The addition of argument is suggested more by Manteb Soedharsono in which the addition of *wayang* character becomes a distinctive instrument in puppetry world to make *wayang* performance more attractive and more recognized as the product of Indonesian art and culture throughout world (interview on June 13, 2018 at 04.00 p.m.).

In addition to being mastermind (narrator) in a variety of Javanese puppetry such as *wayang kulit Purwa*, *wayang kulit Madya*, *wayang kulit Gedhog*, Bambang Suwarno can also draw (Javanese: *nyorek*), inlay (Indonesian *menatah*), and color the *wayang* (Javanese: *nyungging*). It leads Bambang Suwarno to be labeled as creator and expert or master of *wayang* and should be appreciated. The address *empu* leads to an individual who creates work productively (interview with Manteb Soedharsono on June 13, 2018, Purbo Asmoro on June 4, 2018, and Mujiono on July 25, 2018). *Empu* (master) of *wayang*, according to Sugeng Nugroho in Didik Kurniawan (2008: 81), is an artist not only producing *wayang* but also associated with symbol, meaning, and capable of explaining the reason of *wayang* character development and/or change.

2. The manifestation of wayang purwa creation character

There have been many *wayang kulit purwa* works created by Bambang Suwarno. The categorization of *wayang* created by Bambang Suwarno is developed, among others, to meet the criteria of *garap* or *sanggit pakeliran*, born from inspiration or commandment, favoritism, *pasemon* or sarcasm. In addition to some background above, there are also some works created by Bambang Suwarno intended to request for *wayang* order. Several examples of *wayang kulit purwa* works created by Bambang Suwarno are explained below.

a. Ramawijaya wanda tundhung

Ramawijaya wanda tundhung work was produced in 1975. The figure of *wayang* was created for *sanggit lakon* purpose to support *pakeliran padat* of Rama story, but it was used for the first time in *Wibisana Tundhung* story (interview with Bambang Suwarno on April 3, 2018 at 01.00 p.m.)



Figure 1. Ramawijaya wanda Tundhung (original) created by Bambang Suwarno

Rama *wanda tundhung* tells about Ramawijaya who lived wandering in the jungle for fourteen years to meet the wish of Dewi Kekayi (Prabu Dasarata's wife, Ramawijaya's step mother) in *Kekawin Rama Ramayana*; it is described as *ngulandara kawanwelas warsa, anglugas raga busana sarwa cerma, miwah anggegimbal rikma* (wandering for fourteen years, wearing worn-out clothing made of animal leather and with dangling hair). The manifestation of new Rama shape creation is considered as bridging the preexisting *wayang* figure: young Rama and *Rama Keprabon*, with fourteen dangling hair bunches indicating Rama's length of wandering (years) in the forest until coming back to Maespati. Entire clothing seemed to be tight without greatness apparel (Bambang Suwarno, 1999:41-42).

b. Kayon Klowong



Figure 2. Kayon Klowong, Bambang Suwarno's collection

The shape of *kayon klowong* (figure 2) is the expansion of small-size *gunungan* figure. The structures of peak and body (Javanese: *genukan*) contain hole (cavity). *Tatah* element is used by inlaying it penetrating up to the back, while *sungging* element is utilized according to the motif contained in the *kayon klowong*. The edges of *genukan* hole unite creating a cloud shape.

On the right and left sides of hole, there is dragon-shaped *makara* with soaring tail meeting on the peak of *kayon*. Its shape is like a clamp split into two, and bending to *kayon* direction following the body of dragon (Budiyatmi, 2004: 83). The original name of *kayon klowong* was *Kayon Kabut Sutura Ungu* (interview Rudy Wiratama, on April 22, 2018 at 06.20 p.m.). *Kayon klowong* was produced in 1986 to support Trisno Santoso's staging with *Rama Bargawa* story (Didik Kurniawan, 2008:93)

c. *Kayon Hakekat*



Figure 3. *Kayon Hakekat*, Bambang Suwarno's collection

The shape of *kayon hakekat* (figure 3) is an expansion of common *kayon* or *gunungan* shape. *Kayon Hakekat* represents the harmonious life of religious communities uniting into one *gunungan*. Those religion diversities include Islam, Christian, Catholic, Hindu, and Buddha. *Tatahan* element is used penetrating up to the back. In the presence of religion greatness, this *kayon* represents the afterlife, the world higher than the present world (Budiyatmi, 2004:74). *Tatahan* element is reinforced with *sunggingan* in the front adjusted with ornament and motif applied to the *kayon*. Meanwhile, the back is dominated with fire stylization element in the center through the peak of *gunungan*. *Kayon hakekat* is used to support *pakeliran padat* in *Dewa Ruci* story and *Ciptoning* created by Bambang Suwarno (Didik Kurniawan, 2008:95).

d. *Kunthi wanda Nggarbini*

Kunthi wanda nggarbini figure (figure 4) is the creation of *wayang Kunthi* character, mother of Karna, Puntadewa, Werkudara, and Arjuna produced in 1986. *Kunthi* figure is created based on *putren luruh*. *Kunthi* figure wears *gelung ukel sangkon gendhong* extending to the foot and front part of body. *Kancing gelung* ornament used is *karang melok*. The neck part uses womb shape apparently lying on back. The clothing worn is apparently loose *samparan*. The impression arising in the hair part covering the body is that the body has volume thereby representing the bigger womb. *Kunthi wanda nggarbini* represents *Kunthi* who is pregnant (Didik Kurniawan, 2008:99)



Figure 4. *Kunthi wanda Nggarbini*, Bambang Suwarno's collection

Furthermore, Purbo Asmoro (interview on 4 June 2018 at 02.00 p.m.) said that this figure can be used as not only *Kunthi* but also as other *putren* figure with *luruh* character with *wayang* bowing looks such as *Sinta*. *Tatahan* follows the pattern created in the *wayang* character penetrating into the two sides, confirmed with *sunggingan*.

e. *Arjuna Purna Baratayudha*

Arjuna Purna Baratayudha is a *wayang* work created by Bambang Suwarno manifested into the figure of *Arjuna* with long dangling hair consisting of twelve bunches to support

Sudarsono's staging with *lakon Aswatama Ngladhak* story. *Wayang Arjuna Purna Baratayudha* created by Bambang Suwarno is manifested in the figure of Arjuna with twelve long dangling hair bunches, dreadlocks extending to buttock, without *sumping* but wearing head accessories with *bintulu* end, and *subang kinjeng mas*. The skin color is dominated with dark green, while the dominant hair color is black with *tatahan seritan*. *Arjuna Purna Barathayuda*, according to *Bambang Suwarno*, reveals Arjuna's sorrow in looking for Banowati and over Abimanyu's death (Didik Kurniawan, 2008:98).



Figure 5. *Arjuna Purna Baratayuda*, Bambang Suwarno's collection

f. *Kayon Jagad Raya Gumelar*

Kayon Jagad Raya Gumelar created by Bambang Suwarno builds on zodiac shapes manifested into one *kayon*. A variety of zodiac symbols is represented in the *kayon*. Originally, every zodiac will be manifested into every *kayon* (Budiyatmi, 2004: 120). *Kayon Jagad Raya Gumelar* work is created in 1995 perpetuated in *sangkalan* used in *suluk pergantian* (transfer *suluk*) of *pathet manyura*.

The lyrics of *suluk* are as follows,

“Tataning Gatra Anggatra Bawana, Ngesti Renggan Wadana Sasi, Oooo..., Wukir Kartika Sekaring Jagad, Manising Sujanma Awarna Lintang, Ing Jagad Raya Gumelar, Ooo..”

The *sangkalan* uses Christian, Javanese, Saka, and Hijriyah years. *Tataning Gatra Anggatra Bawana* contains number 5991 interpreted as 1995 AD. *Ngesti Renggan Wadana Sasi* contains number 8291 interpreted as 1928 in Javanese year equal to 1995 AD, *Wukir Kartika Sekaring Jagad* contains number 7191 interpreted as 1917 Saka year equal to 1995 AD, *Manising Sujanma Awarna Lintang* contains number 6141 interpreted as 1416 Hijriyah year equal to 1995 AD. (interview with Bambang Suwarno on April 24, 2018 at 02.15 p.m., Rudy Wiratama on April 22, 2018 at 06.20 p.m.)



Figure 6. *Kayon Jagad Raya Gumelar*, Bambang Suwarno's collection

g. *Semar Maya Kyai Respati*

Semar Maya Kyai Respati (Figure 7) is manifested in a big-sized Semar created in 1996, representing big power and rule as God. The character created as the expansion of Semar figure is called in *lakon Geger Semar* by Bambang Suwarno (Didik Kurniawan, 2008:109).



Figure 7. Semar Maya Kyai Respati, Bambang Suwarno's collection

Semar Maya Kyai Respati created by Bambang Suwarno is described as follows: its body shape (*adeg*) is *wungkuk*, eyes are *kelipan rembes* with red color in the lower part, *sumpel* nose, old face with sorrow and anger feelings, *sumping parisawulis* is not inlaid but colored with gold color and small *bintulu* is inlaid and *sungging*, with *subang lombok ageng*, *kuncung* Semar manifested into flora ornament with various inlay shapes including *patran*, *inten inten mipil*. The inlay shape in arm mover hole is not made in the edge part in order to find out the shape of Semar's body. In the neck part, there is a necklace with pigeon drawing carrying heart ornament containing an eight-end *cakra* inside. The combination of heart ornament and skill reveals something transparent thereby visible from other sides.

Conclusions

Javanese leather puppet performance is the art living and developing in Java. In addition to its performance side, leather puppet can be seen from the beauty of *wayang* shape. *Wanda wayang* producing artists will develop their own *wayang* more creatively. The importance of *wayang* production position corresponding to certain character will affect the *pakeliran* and add reformation to the *wayang*, and the increase in *wayang* character makes *wayang* performance more attractive and more recognized as the product of Indonesian art and culture throughout world.

Bambang Suwarno is not an ordinary puppeteer (*dalang*) figure. In addition to having profession as *dalang* (puppeteer), Bambang Suwarno is also fluent in *wayang* fine art. Bambang Suwarno creates new works in order to be fused into the preexisting *wayang kulit* work, intended to increase the vocabulary of *wayang*. The responses of *dalangs* indicate Bambang Suwarno as a figure of *dalang* can be said as a *wayang* fine art expert as he has concept and created work productively. The address *empu* (master) leads to an individual who creates work productively.

Acknowledgments

In addition, The author also expresses my gratitude to Art Education Master Program for motivation and guidance in completing this research. The author also expresses his gratitude to Postgraduate Program of Surakarta Sebelas Maret University for providing infrastructure, support, motivation, and spirit of learning.

This research can be completed owing to the informants participating in it. Therefore, the author expresses his gratitude to Mr. Dr. Bambang Suwarno, S. Kar, M. Hum, Mr. Ki Manteb Soedharsono, Mr. Ki Purbo Asmoro, S. Kar, M. Hum, and Ki Mujiono. Dr. Bambang Suwarno, S. Kar, M. Hum as the primary data source in this research for their support and motivation. The informants were selected for some reasons. Mr. Ki Manteb Soedharsono was selected because he is the well-known senior *dalang* who has contributed to developing *pakeliran padat* along

with Dr. Bambang Suwarno, S. Kar, M. Hum in a project initiated by S.D. Humardhani. Ki Purbo Asmoro, S. Kar, M. Hum was selected because he is a well-known *dalang* and lecturer of *Pedhalangan* art in Indonesian Art Institute of Surakarta, and Ki Mujiono was selected because he is an instructor in *Padepokan Sarotama* as a non-formal education to develop *pedhalangan* among the present generation and as the brother in law of Bambang Suwarno. The author expresses gratitude as well to Es Bhe Computer for helping the translation process.

Finally, much gratitude is expressed to Atlantis Press for its motivation in this research. Hopefully Atlantis Press will be a medium of developing information, knowledge and data contribution to further research and writing.

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List of Resource Persons

- Bambang Suwarno, 67 years old, Surakarta (primary data source), puppeteer artists
- Manteb Soedharsono, 70 years old, Karanganyar, puppeteer artists

Mujiono, 64 years old, Surakarta, puppeteer artists, instructor in *Padepokan Sarotama*

Purbo Asmoro, 56 years old, Surakarta, puppeteer artist, lecturer of *Pedhalangan* art in Indonesian Art Institute of Surakarta

Rudy Wiratama, 28 years old, Surakarta, puppeteer artist, student in *Sanggar Ciptoning*