

## **Puppetry Performing Art Role in Mental Development of the Indonesian in the Era of Globalization**

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**Abstract:** One of Indonesia's cultural heritage that is still preserved up to date is the art of puppet show. Puppetry already widely known in Indonesia, and even abroad, with some people sees that puppet show is an interesting art. However, some people sees puppet performance as a boredom. Apart from the two sides, reviewing from history, the puppetry was an effective medium of propaganda in the early spread of Islam in Indonesia.

Walisongo had made a puppet show and art as two things that are inseparable in the spread of Islam in Indonesia. The results of the religious revolution conducted by Walisongo with peace are the positive impacts of acculturation, now 90% of the 240 million population in Indonesia are Muslims. The problem today is the proportion of the quantity to quality. Does the method that delivers moral messages through art puppet show is still effective? This the main concern of this research.

**Keywords:** performing arts, puppet, Walisongo, Islam, globalization

### **1. Introduction**

Indonesia is a country that is rich not only in natural resources but also rich in culture. Abundant natural resources have made people from outside Indonesia came to Indonesia for trading and seeking for spices. They eventually colonize (colonialism) Indonesia. The Indonesian lands is fertile, Koes Plus saying in its song "sticks and stones became the plants", means without any effort trees can grow. While rich Indonesian culture could be seen spread as culture from Sabang to Merauke, both local culture and Acculturation of remarkable Type and shape.

One of Indonesia's cultural heritage which is still sustain now is the art of puppet show. Along with the changing times, the art of puppet show started to be a little bit left due to modernization and globalization. However, some communities in Indonesia are still enjoy puppet as an attractive performing arts, and only partly that see puppets as boredom performance art, this especially happened among young children.

Puppet as a performance art if viewed from the historical fact returns something that is interesting to be studied more in depth, despite the fact that the puppet is a combination of art and performance art. Puppetry is a visual work of art while performed a performing arts area. Important thing that should be not is that the puppet is a medium of propaganda in the spread of Islam in Indonesia by Walisongo during the early days of Islam development in Indonesia.

The issue now is whether the puppet as a performance art can be exposed again in an attempt to edify the Indonesian people who recently experienced a remarkable decline in all levels? Current conditions couldn't be denied that the onslaught of globalization affect the culture and morality of the nation.

When compared with the Walisongo propaganda method that uses puppets as a medium to convey the message that contains the teachings of Islam, the challenge in the nowadays era have some commonalities with the time of Walisongo. This means that when Walisongo in the past successfully spreading Islam, converting many people who previously embraced Hinduism / Buddhism to Islam. The current condition of Indonesia's population is Muslim majority, even it is number one in the world based on the muslim percentage, but it is just in quantity, while the quality is declining drastically. As said by Ainun Najib (2007) that now Islam is only develops in the technical area, but it is not accompanied by the intellectual quality. In this circumstances it is thus intellectual tabayun is necessary. Conditions that is more extreme is that more people are Muslims but do not understand Islam itself.

## **2. Puppet Performing Art is Still Effective for Mental Development of the Indonesian in the Era of Globalization**

Is it still Effective for the Puppet Performing Art in it's relation with the mental development of the Indonesian in the Era of Globalization? This question may be raised before us. Puppet is a product of the past which may be losing its essence at this point. As a result of culture, puppet eroded by the dynamic changes. To be able to survive, of course a product of culture must adapt with time.

In it's time Puppet Performing Art theater is a kind of typical Indonesia and was existed in the various tribes (Javanese, Balinese, Sasak, Sunda and Banjar) (Paeni: 2009) On the other hand, this puppet show also has aspects of religiosity, as we gather the information from the same source (Paeni: 2009), that on an inscription of king Balitung, a text at the beginning of the 10th century AD, mentioned "mawayang bwat hyang" which is translated as "a puppet show for the gods". It is certainly not found in the existing puppet show today.

Sundanese puppet show for example, at the present time, if we look now, still use the Mahabharata tale. This can be seen from the puppet show that often played by Giriharja, in Jelekong Bandung regency. However, there is degradation in the meaning conveyed. Gods who are in the Mahabharata story is no longer regarded as an entity with divine, but was seen as a humanitarian entity (mortal) who has the power. This is a shift in meaning that occurred after the arrival of Islam. Where in the Islamic concept there is only one God, "La ilaha ilallah" There is no god but God. This is something different, for example when we see the puppet shows in Bali that are still using the Ramayana, and still in accordance with the context of Hinduism in Bali.

On the other hand, currently has emerged other media consuming public audiences mind. The emergence of the mass media has offered a medium that is very effective and efficient in the delivery of messages such as radio and television. Puppet Performing Art on a side has also entered into this medium, in its original form, the puppets by the puppeteers Ki Manteb Sudarsono is also televised. Furthermore, the puppet show has undergone a transformation further in it's shapes, Cepot for example has become a contemporary character, collided with the role figures the new puppet as Sule for example. Here, there has been a shift in meaning and shape, where new characters can be created to compete with the role of a character who is

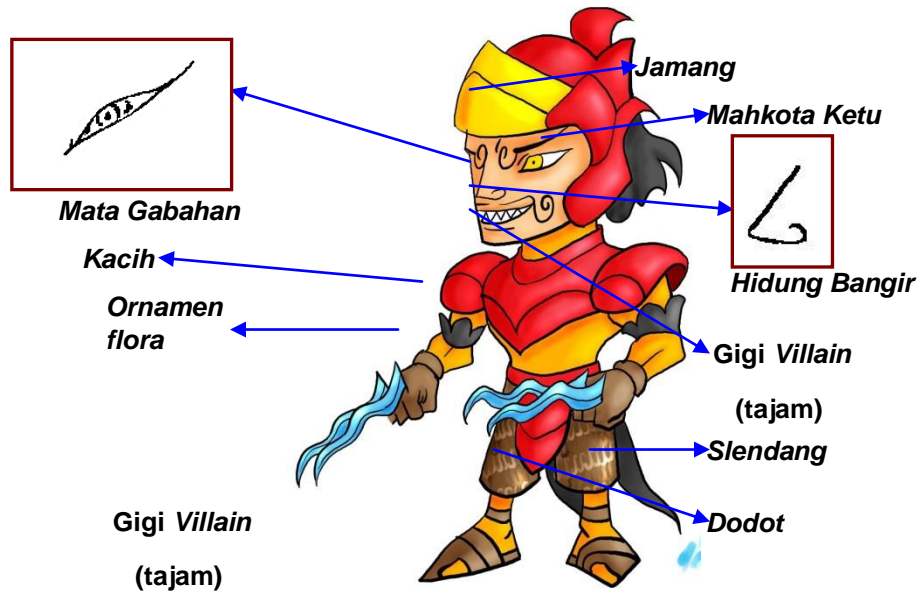
"*pakem*" or standard, that was already exist from an earlier age. The message conveyed in the art of puppet show that "new" or novelty is such that the performing art are purely controlled by "rating". On the one hand, this puppet culture can continue to grow, but there is deterioration in the essence and meaning, this is has to be avoided. Efforts that can be done for example by giving chance to performing artists who were graduated from the college of Arts and Performance, to compensate for what has been achieved in the past, which is the result of a puppeteer effort in the past.

The specificity of the puppet is not only located in the performing arts alone. In it's form, the puppets are made with certain *pakem* or standard, that was exist since the earliest times of its creation. When we look at the process of making a puppet for shows, for example, a puppet craftsman has to have knowledge of this *pakem*. *Pakem* can be seen from the visual variables such as shape of the eyes, nose shape, the shape of the mouth, face shape, the shape of the torso, arms and hands shape, the shape of accessories and ornaments, costumes, crown shape and color. All of these variables are summarized into what is called the look. In *pembabakan*, a character also can have several forms, as its role in the story, this is called the *raut wanda*.

In Sundanese Golek Puppetry, it is explained that the expression is divided into three, namely: the role of expression, the expression looks and expression *wanda*. The explanation is as follows (Suryana, 2002: 222).

1. *Raut* role is a grouping that is based on the nature of puppet figures that have similar properties or characteristics. On the role of the illustrated expression also features dual role that shows class alloys (such as the Satria-Dewa, Satria-Raja, Ponggawa-Pandita, Ponggawa-Buta, and Panakawan-Raja).
2. *Raut Wajah* is a more specific taxonomic characters and grip example Arjuna, Ghatokacha and so forth. *Raut* look illustrate the nature of each individual character. The look on this face was the look on the role of character traits plus figures, like-Dewa Satria Arjuna, Ponggawa-Raja Suyudana and so on.
3. *Raut wanda* in the puppet show is an additional 'atmosphere', be it heart, the environment and all kinds of 'other atmosphere' (Suryana, 2002: 222). *Wanda* is not only limited to the expression that can be perceived visually. *Wanda* means exhaustive, which indicates the mood, physical state, and the state of the environment the puppet characters are in. Visually, the characteristics of syllables can be seen especially in the elements of puppet expression. The interpretation of golek processing visual elements into a form of Galek that shows certain syllables. This puppet is only used by puppeteers in any particular story environment. Golek display when turned on with the flick played puppeteer and Antawacana the same breath with *Wanda Golek*.

There have been efforts to modernize the puppet character *pakem* into a more modern form, such as with the elaboration of the characters in the game, although it is still in a conceptual forms. It can be considered to develop and preserve the Puppet Performing Art, not only in terms of the characters or the story alone, but also into its shapes *pakem*. Examples of characters below may better explain how the *pakem* is translated into a more modern form of character.



**Figure 1.** Character Development, Puppet Figures Karna  
 (Source: Trihanondo, 2009)



**Figure. 2.** Development of Figures Krishna  
 (Source: Trihanondo, 2009)

What is mentioned above is actually not new. In the early days of independence of the Republic of Indonesia, for example, has emerged kind of Wayang Pancasila. The contents of the message delivered at the puppet show are the stories of struggle for independence. The Catholic Church has also been developing Wayang Wahyu, whereas in the field of education there are Wayang Kancil (Paeni: 2009). As a medium, the art of puppet show has its own technique and style,

which need to be continually preserved. Technology developments did not turn off this performance art, but instead enrich it. In contrast to other performing arts that involves a lot of people (actors), in the art of this puppet show moviestar that starring the cast, is transformed into puppets shape, with all kinds of specifics. If in the past there were arrangements that underlie Gamelan and Sinden puppet show, at the moment there are more creative possibilities. Moreover, it turns musicality art of Java / traditional music has also its own form in this modern era.

Indonesia in modern times is not separated from the influence of globalization that in one side can be seen as an advancement, and on the other it could be damaging. We would need to discuss the role of Wali Sanga, who use media that already exist in the Hindu / Buddhist symbols to convey Islam, that the evidence we can see now where the majority of the population of Indonesia has the Islamic faith. It is certainly is the wisdom of the Wali Sanga, which does not damage the existing order of the past, but the message that is changed to that character of Islam and not contrary to the principles of Islam. It is what we must look in modern times. The question is, would it carry Indonesian national pride in the future? This is the message that will be conveyed to the audience so that they can receive the message and carry it in their daily life.

In the modern times, various problems plagued this nation. There are appeared movements that also devastated Indonesian foreign, ranging from George Soros that play a role in the Economic and Political Crisis in 1998, terrorism in the 2000s, to the ideology of ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) lately. Not to mention the problems in the country associated with crime and drugs. It seems hard to imagine a prosperous State, prosperous, tranquil, air-humanity, as listed in the preamble of the 1945 Constitution and Pancasila. Here we see the Indonesian nation is in need of national awareness as a message in the Art of Puppet Shows.

We can take a reflection of what is done by the Wali Songo in spreading Islam in Indonesia, especially in edify. Morals is one of the plots in the teachings of Islam. Good morals is the desire of every parent on the child. Prophet Muhammad faced a great challenge when revolutionize morals that was corrupted towards good morals when preaching in Mecca and Medina, until finally his teachings spread throughout the hemisphere. Walisongo preaching the puppet media to convey the teachings of Islam which is inserted in the puppet story means to automatically teach morals to the audience.

In the current era, the era of globalization, the loss of boundaries between one country and another. The dictionary says that: Globalization is derived from the word "global" is meant to include the entire world. Creation of a world without boundaries, open society, and the free market. So globalization means the process of entry into the scope of the world, "there are no boundaries between countries". The features of globalization: The culture between countries to influence each other through the mass media (mixing). Changes in the concept of space and time caused by the development of science and make free technology. Interdependence trade between one country and another (Diversity). In such circumstances above, the challenge for the art of puppet show would have been more severe in the changing of the times. In addition there is also because given its history that the puppets are very valuable and contains moral teachings for moral guidance.

### 3. Closing

In this globalization era puppets can be seen as diverging Indonesian culture that could make it more sustainable. With the assumption that this Puppet Performing Arts can be acculturated to the culture in Indonesia today. Puppet Shows Art can bring national awareness messages that can bring all the Indonesian people towards civil society, people who belong to an advanced civilization.

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