

HYPER-SPIRITUALITY OF PUPPET IN THE JAVA SOCIETY IN THE MODERN ERA

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Abstract

The main identity that distinguishes a Javanese and other ethnic groups is the Java language. According to Maria A. Sandjono, Java people ethnically form the majority of population in Indonesia. Java people is characterized by Java language. Marbangun H. said that all of the Javanese is culturally one. They think and feel like their ancestors that Central Java, the city of Yogyakarta and Solo as cultural centers. So it can be concluded that, the Java people speak Javanese, and their life guided by noble values of Javanese culture. One of the results of the Javanese culture is a puppet.

Puppet is a symbol, that is a "shadow" or picture. The usual story of the puppet is the epic of Mahabharata and Ramayana. Javanese life is very close to this puppet story. Although the Java community have their own religion, be it Islam, Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, and Confucian, but Puppet is a very important thing in their life. In the context of the contemporary belief, the presence of puppet still exist in the Java community life.

Puppet is a spectacle and guidance that lives up to now, although their supporters began to decline. Especially in the modern era that are almost instantaneous and fast-paced, frantic-paced, which makes modern people easily saturated. One of the sedative in the modern era is enjoying Wayang. Puppet gives peace of mind. Puppet story presented with a philosophy of life. Java community cannot leave the Wayang culture, because there are a myriad philosophy of life for Javanese themselves. Puppet Hyper-spirituality is there, because people strongly believe there is an autonomous powers contained in the puppet story, and there is no other religion which claimed that was their puppet. Puppet only owned by the Javanese themselves.

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I. Introduction

Puppet is one of Javanese culture that is loaded with value of life. According to Indonesian dictionary, the word 'wayang' means puppet that resembles like a human, made of leather, wood, and so on, which can be used to portray the traditional performance (Dendy, 2008: 1559). Or the word 'wayang' means shadow. There are many types of puppets, such as man puppets, wooden puppets, rumpit puppet, leather puppet, motekar puppet, and so on according to their materials.

There is no clarity that shows Puppet existed before Hinduism spread in South Asia. Until now, early records that can be obtained about the Wayang comes from the Balitung inscription at 4th century which reads *mawayang*.

Since Hinduism comes in Indonesia and adjusting with local culture, art performance became an effective medium to spread Hindu religion. Puppet show takes epic story of the Mahabharata and Ramayana. When the arrival of Islam, when the show featuring God or gods in human form is forbidden, then comes puppets made of cowhide, at which the show is just the reflection. Puppet is what is now known as shadow puppets (Indonesian Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, 2013).

According to Usman, the Javanese also strongly believe in the legend that is play an important role in educating and developing young minds. Puppet is full of symbols of ethics, played by characters in the story. According to Susilo, the use of symbols in the form of culture turned out to be carried out with full awareness, understanding and appreciation, traditionally embraced to the next generation (Susilo, 2002: 2). Puppet show with a story taken from Hindu epics Ramayana and Mahabharata convey the values guiding the life of the spectators. Studying the puppet is a very important thing, if someone want to understand Java deeply.

In the era of modernization, the existence of Wayang already began to dim. This is due to the influence of digital entertainment. People have started to love the spectacle that is modern. Nevertheless most of the Java community is still reluctant to leave the mystical entertainment. According to the theory of hegemony by Antonio Gramsci, culture and society is nothing but a manifestation of the efforts of hegemony which it accepted consensus by those who hegemony (Gramsci, 1999. 53). Puppet is already hegemonized Java community. Hegemony here is interdependent, consensus, no pressure between the puppets and the audience or the Java community that who is hegemonized themselves.

Ambivalences or ambiguous nature can also be shown on the mindset of the Javanese, who generally considers that although the mystical experience is a feeling that is outside the range separating the earthly life to things that could be used in the world (Zoetmulder, 2000: 136). Javanese using Puppet in his life for refusing havoc in the form of *ruwatan*.

Puppet for Javanese is a religious mythology that universally accepted. This is confirmed by Laksono, that Javanese effort to explain the universe and its presence position itself in the universe, namely

Javanese relationship with the natural order and the supernatural, with fellow human beings and himself (Laksono, 1965: 5).

Puppet story takes the theme of the epic Mahabharata and Ramayana which originated from India. Story of the Javanese trying to find the underlying structure of the minds of the Javanese. This is what will differentiate the puppet story in Java with a true story that originated in India. Mythology in the story of the puppet, perceived by the Java community, reassuring existing inner and psychological satisfaction, although the truth beyond the ratio of modern man itself.

Herusatoto said that human culture is realized because the development of civilization as well as the norms of life. Norms of life is manifested in the form of the mind, the mind of nature, work, deontology, and the arts. Art is divided into several parts, there are fine arts, literature, sound, dance, music, and so on. Puppet is the result of art that gave birth to the properties of living in the form of a sense of human culture. Puppets exist in Java that caused a very high cultural. G. Ritzer confirmed that because he refused rational subject, desirable is a modern focus on subjectivity, soul and mind. And the idea is very appropriate, if it is associated with the story of the puppet itself (G. Ritzer, 2003: 41). Javanese was a supporter and a seeker of Javanese culture. The Javanese culture spread in the area of Central Java, East Java, and throughout Indonesia, even in Suriname (Netherlands). Puppet is one of the Javanese culture itself. According to Koentjaraningrat, Javanese culture is not a homogeneous entity. They are aware of the diversity of regional nature (Koentjaraningrat, 1982: 23). This was confirmed by F. Magnis S., because culture is not homogeneous, then Javanese supporting it different from one another, all have a strong individuality, there is no "typical Java". (F. Magnis S. 31). However, according to Marbangun Hardjowirogo, in his book "Manusia Java", departing from generalization of human nature with their thinking as follows: "Every Java was one culture, their thinking and feeling like their ancestors in Central Java and East Java, as centers of culture".

Javanese seen from the historical culture that is based on the central Javanese culture. Their life is always guided by the Javanese culture itself. One example is highly dependent on the puppet in their life story. Story in the puppet is the source of the Java philosophy itself. Attitude of life which has become a general guideline becomes moral conduct for the Java community. According to Dr. S. De Jong (1976): "People who have different views about God, world, and humans, may in practice show the same attitude. An attitude not only based on the religion, but also the customs and cultural background, and even the nature of the nation".

The attitude of Javanese understands about ethics and adhere to the customs of their heritage. This is due to the influence of special puppet story of Mahabharata and Ramayana which teaches about ethics and philosophy of life of the Javanese, in addition to the influence of others.

II. Existence of Puppet in Javanese People in the Modern Era

According to Dendy S, word existence means that it is the exist or whereabouts. The existence in this case is associated with a puppet. The existence of puppets in the Java community in modern era is still used in things that are magical. From the existence of puppet, it is definitely related to the perpetrator that the Java community itself. According to Koentjaraningrat, the nature Javanese cannot be taken generally, because each other is not the same, and sometimes differ greatly. But the properties of the Java is still preserved. These properties are tolerance and harmony. Ki Dalang Sarjono Hadi said that the ability to understand the difference is called wisdom (Interview, January 1, 2015). This wisdom is the basis of Javanese origin wherever they are.

The existence of puppets in their show, ethics of Java or better known by the term "kawruh Java" is reflected in the behavior of the characters in the stories of the puppet itself. The audience met with a number of various of character. According to M. Suseno, in the story of puppet there are god, Brahmin, knights, giant, and Punakawan. All contents of the story contained in the Mahabharata and Ramayana (M. Suseno, 1996: 161). One characteristic in the puppet is filled with the issues that it raises moral questions. There are many things associated with the presence of puppet.

Puppet in practice, the most important is the role of puppeteer. A puppeteer is a figure of a special man. There are criteria for the role of puppeteer. According to Ki Dalang Sarjono Hadi that to become a puppeteer, he must knows well about Javanese culture, one should be able to memorize the figures of Puppet and good behavior. Especially must be mastermind of *ruwatan* (Interview, January 1, 2015). There are similar that presented by puppeteer Ki Anom Guritno, the puppeteer as the embodiment of Lord Vishnu remained conscious of their identity to carry out the duties and obligations which are based on ethics and the existing grip (Interview, January 10, 2015).

Modernity bring people tend to hedonist, materialist, consumerist, thus being pursued in public life more priority to goods. One characteristic of the modern age is a man no longer worship the god or ancestral spirits, but also goods (Atmadja, 2004: 15-16). Modern-day society also needs the spectacle that gives guidance for life, especially the Java community itself. Puppet still exist in Javanese people due to the belief of the wayang which is the basis of their philosophical life. Thus inspiring life are difficult to abandon. The existence of puppets show benefit the Javanese itself. There are several factors that cause puppets still exist in the Java in the modern era, are as follows:

Puppet as Leisure and Moral Message

Puppet show beside as a means of ritual, it also serves as an entertainment for Javanese people. Audiences who watched in addition to local residents, as well as people from outside the village, even from other area. Their arrival, generally want to look for entertainment, so with the entertainment they can release the routine of life, forgetting the problems faced and gives inner satisfaction.



Puppet show

Modernization which implicitly said by Baudrillard (1983), in the simulation, has led the global community in a condition, in which reality has been taken by "models" or simulated reality. Or the creation of models of reality is no reference in the hyper-real. Associated with puppets, myth, fantasy, fairy tales, fiction, imagination, hallucinations, which formerly was considered not as a part of reality can be realized into reality through technology. Baudrillard insists "I do not hate technology, it can produce stunning special effects. But with the ability to create reality, the possibility of an imaginary, illusory, everything is gone.

Baudrillard statement is true, if the modern era is not matched by the entertainment that is cooling the mind, life would feel empty. Puppets as entertainment is very important in the life of the Java community in particular. Moreover, puppet show is free entertainment for the spectators. The audience after listening to the dialogue in the traditions of Javanese puppet characters, they seemed to gain life experience that can reconcile their hearts. Puppet play and dialogue bring the audience into the spiritual atmosphere, so there are two experiences obtained for the audience is the entertainment experience and moral message of a religious nature.

Puppet as Public Communications Media

Puppet show both as an entertainment and as ruwatan containing various functions. One of them is of communication. The public are invited to communicate through symbols / signs in the puppet, through the mediator Dalang. If viewed from the side of semiotics, the puppet will deal with semiotic signs, as Lechte's word in Sobur (2001: 191), is the theory of signs. Semiotics is a discipline that investigates all forms of communication that occurs with the "signs" and by signing system (code), the system marks. Charles Morris, called semiotic as a process of mark, which is a process when something is a sign for some organisms (Sobur, 2009: 17).



The public is watching Wayang Kulit

Puppet show is a living organism that is inseparable from one another. There are four components in the puppet show, the puppet, puppeteer, people perceive, and the audience (the public). These organisms are not separated from one another, because all they support in order to achieve a good show. Implementation of a puppet show as a communication process, among which the perceiver and the puppeteer with Sinden (singer who accompanied in the show), sinden with musicians, the audience with the puppeteer.

Puppeteer as a symbol of communication mediator in expressing emotions or express joy, sorrow, peace, and so on for the pleasure of himself and the community is visualized through a puppet characters displayed or through arable *pakeliran* contents (story). The content is something that is captured through a form or shape. If the audience heard Sinden sing, capturing the sad impression, sad impression that the intended contents. If the audience catches a loyalty value of attitude, then the loyalty value of the content, and so on. According to Sarwanto (2008: 263), the contents were revealed through each element of the claim *pakeliran*, namely *Sabet*, *catur*, and musical *pakeliran*. Or through a combination of its elements.

So puppeteer in capturing or deliver content, content that can be impregnated or internalized by the audience, which is a form of public communication as a culture. If communication occurs with them, sense of satisfaction of both parties is achieved.

Communication is the most obvious is the appearance of the scene like jokes and *goro-goro* (riot). It is intentional to emphasize the entertainment aspect, or as a means of entertaining the audience. The appearance of several requests songs of *dolanan* (game) is the fact that the spectacle and entertainment get deeper portion to puppet show. These changes are not inevitable, because it is related to the situation of the state of society today. Java community has been shaken by modern technology products with the inclusion of a variety of entertainment through television shows that attractive to look at and easy to understand.

The show can be enjoyed if the audiences understand Javanese language, know accompaniment puppet, and a little more understanding of some of the storylines puppet. The young generation of the Java

community now is less familiar in this matter, so that an alternative that fits for them is the form. Therefore scene that is always eagerly awaited and desired audience is the jokes and *Goro-Goro* (riot). There is a sense of competitive urge to grab the attention of the audience or for the sake of maintaining popularity, some mastermind bestselling choose somewhat exaggerated scenes jokes and *Goro-Goro* (riot) as a means to provide entertainment to the audience, so that viewers at home watching a puppet show.

Puppet As a Mean of Eliminating Mala (Danger)

The existence of a puppet than as entertainment, as well as a means of resisting mala (danger). The realization of the puppet as resisting mala (danger) is in the form of *ruwatan* puppet. *Ruwatan* event is not only for resist the mala alone, but in the Java community there are also *ruwatan* for village and others. Because the change in culture due to modern technology, the existence of a special ritual *ruwatan* began shifting.

According to Ragin Pamungkas that the Java community today is less confidence about the myths or mythical story. It has been largely forgotten and most people chose technology as an option which is more scientific. (Ragin, 2008: 1). At this time the story or myth more likely on a spiritual touch that can only be felt by those who still believe.



Ruwatan Process

Ruwatan puppet, until now considered the most powerful solution according to the Java community trust. In this *ruwatan* puppet story, the characters are: Bathara Kala, Batara Guru, Bathari Durga, Lord Vishnu, the Sukerta (children who become prey of Lord Kala). According to Ragin there are 36 people who considered as sukerta, for examples: 1. *Ontang-anting* (single child male or female), 2. *Kedana-kedini*

(two brothers, one man, one woman), 3. Uger-uger lawang (two brothers) 4. Lumunting (children born without placenta), and so on (Ragin, 2008: 30).

According to Ki Dalang Hadi Sarjono, mantra that is chanted in removing mala in Sukerta kids are seven types: 1. Purwaning dumadi, 2. Caraka Balik, 3. Santi Parwa, 4. Singgah Singgih, 5. Sastra Telak, 6. Banyak Dalang, 7. Ajian Banyak Dalang (Interview, January 1, 2015).

Mantra that is strongly associated with the preservation of Javanese culture is the mantra *caraka balik*.

Mantra caraka balik is:

NGA, THA, BHA, GA, MA

NYA, YA, JA, DHA, PA

LA, WA, SA, TA, DA

KA, RA, CA, NA, HA

It is clear that it is true, have the same force with which praised, that is the instructions. (Interview, January 1, 2015).

Based on the belief that mantra contains the power, if sung with deep conviction. Foucault (1961/1967) stated briefly that correcting the issue is by talking about the will to power, and the will to truth. So What it is said by Foucault is accurate to say about *ruwatan*, because Javanese have the will for the sake of truth, which is to eliminate the mala itself.

Javanese in the modern era leave the customs which is regarded as a heavy thing to do. For example, many people no longer know the Java script: HA, NA, CA, RA, KA, DA, TA, SA, WA, LA, PA, DHA, JA, YA, NYA, MA, GA, BHA, THA, NGA namely the letters which is one of high cultural value.

The role of puppeteer in a puppet show of ruwatan is very central, because a puppeteer must be perfect. According to Ki Dalang Hadi Sarjono, a puppeteer power of ruwatan would be very dangerous for him and also those of Sukerta. Therefore, before becoming puppet ruwatan Dalang, a puppeteer must do penance and master the emotional and physical strength to know the secrets of the buana alit (human body) and buana agung (the universe) as well (Interview, January 1, 2015). The success of the ruwatan determines the role of puppeteer itself. Dalang exist depending on the intelligence and proficiency in puppet plays, and also offset by a high mysticism.

Puppet As Java Cultural Identity

Each ethnic has its own culture, which is different from the cultures of other ethnic groups. Similarly, the Javanese has a distinctive culture which in the system or method used cultural symbols as a means to advice the people.



People Watched Puppet show in the ruwatan event

According to Daeng (2005: 304), determining the identity of a person's status and role, as well as the principal symbols include a person, whether it be physical or cultural emblem. Barker (2005: 14), states that identity is more of a discursive construction, regulated ways of speaking about the world. It is said that as a discursive construction because through "conversations and writing", a person or group of people can be known and introduce their identity.

Puppet is a Javanese cultural identity, because it belong to the Javanese. According to Sobur, the theory of semiotics is called to interpret (to signify) and cannot be combine to communicate. Interpret is the objects that not only carry information, in which the objects were about to communicate, but also constitute the structured emblem of the mark (Sobur, 2009: 17). Puppet identity of the Java community is not only carry information that is communicated by a puppeteer, but also to the audience who understand the Java language.

III. Hyper-spirituality of Puppet In Java Community Life in the Modern Era

Hyper-spirituality is a word that has the autonomous power and able to support or move something else from outside, both about godhead or not (Piliang, 2004; 25). The Function of symbolic meaning contained in the show can be seen from the symbols supporters. This has a fairly broad sense, because it is closely related to the life of the whole human relationships (microcosm) and the universe (macrocosm).

The symbols that support the puppet show in the Java community life includes the equipment, mythology, offerings, time show, and the play. Puppet show has its own power to move the Java community in preserving the puppet. Javanese culture is used as a means for requesting God to avoid the misfortune of living presented in the form of "ruwatan". For the Javanese Bhatara Kala is not be one group or any particular of religion, but a local genius possessed and believed by the Java community.

According to Ki Dalang Hadi Sarjono, believe in this puppet is able to grow autonomous power for theirselves as the owner of a culture that has been handed down by their ancestors for generations.

Likewise the role of puppeteer who is able to provide exemplary in the play is presented to support or move something else from outside and the audience (Interview, January 1, 2015). The ability is obtained through the faith that Bhatara Guru as god for the Javanese people who symbolized by Dalang to defeat Bhatara Kala.

Dalang has been chosen, because the puppeteer must know the science of perfection or knowledge of the Godhead, able to cant a variety of Java script, able to pronounce correctly the script of Kala Chakra. Otherwise, the puppeteer is not be able to generate power and go beyond himself. The role of puppeteer in *ruwatan* is very significant, to mediate between people who is man that is in ruwat with Hyang Murbeng Dumadi (God). Powers when it is implementing in ruwatan and the powers who believe from ruwatan as means to plea God to remove sukerta, that is practiced by the Javanese with various religions and beliefs is an embodiment hyper-spirituality.

Hyper-spirituality of the puppet show is driven by various things in staging. According to Jung, symbol can be divided into two parts: the first symbol that appears (visual sign) and symbol that is mystical or supernatural and metaphysical. One of these is the symbol of allegory, parable and others. Symbol in the form of visual sign associated with the music and language. Javanese music has its own sign for the Javanese. According to Ki Dalang Juwito Gendeng, music as accompanist of puppet is should be arrange. Sound of gambelan (traditional music) must be aligned with one another. Rhythm is a symbol of harmony. Chaotic rhythm is symbol of disharmony (Interview 3 Maret 2015). The language in the puppet is the identity of sustaining Javanese culture. Language in the puppet can touch the heart Java community. Java language in a puppet not only the spirit of the religion in Javanese but the spirit of all the Java community in a variety of religions and believes.

Hyper-spirituality is associated with abstract symbolism that can be seen in a symbolic meaning in the offering equipment (sajen). The offerings in ruwatan puppet show has a special meaning for the Java community. All offerings have a special meaning in conjunction with the cleansing of all causes of bad luck. The offerings consist of a broom, whip, pigeons, cone, grilled chicken, snack, bananas ayu.



Tradition offerings of ruwatan

Javanese offer rice cone as a symbol that man are required to worship God, because man is under protection. These offerings is an embodiment of the glorification of God, with the hope that God will provide protection to puppeteer and all the audience. According to R. Sulasih, grilled chicken is an offering to the god Kala, so They do not interrupt the puppet show. Snack from market, is all kinds of pastries, fruits and a variety of food purchased in the market, which is devoted to the ancestors. Snack from market has a meaning that the ancestors provide safety and protection to the citizens of the Java community (Interview, 10 April 2015).

According to R. Sulasih that those also use ayu's banana and ayu's betel. Word *ayu* contains the intention of *rahayu* means prosperous. It's as offerings to Dewi Sri, in the hope that She always gives the grace to the Java community for safety, fortune and a bountiful harvest of crops (Interview, 10 April 2015).

According to R. Sulasih, a dish in the form of objects, namely glass, combs, small kendhi, an egg, and rice are placed in the basin, as well as a small mat tied yarn. Glass and comb symbolizing purity or cleanliness. Eggs symbolize good luck that is expected to multiply, while kendhi and rice in a bowl symbolizes prosperity. Small mats tied yarn symbolizes wholeness. Purity, prosperity and integrity is the expectations of the people that holding the puppet of ruwatan (Interview, 11 April 2015).

Dalang Hadi Sarjono describes that the offerings will be complete if there is a chicken who stepped on the nesting period. These chicken is not killed, but allowed to live. Temporarily placed in a cage adjacent to the stage puppets and gamelan. After show is completed, the chicken was brought home by the puppeteer as his property. It is that after the ceremony of *ruwatan* finished, the viewer and puppeteer receive the abundant good luck (Interview, January 1, 2015).

The offerings in this *ruwatan* puppet show is one way to achieve the safety and well-being desirable. This shows that the efforts to achieve the safety and well-being are not only limited to the physical, but also pursued in the inter-religious ritual and belief in a spiritual frame that contains the value of hyper-spirituality.

IV. Concluding Remark

Java people is one whose mother tongue was Javanese. Their system based on the noble values of Javanese culture, one of which is a puppet. Puppet is a symbol of the "shadow" or a picture of puppet

which takes the theme from the epic of Mahabharata and Ramayana. Puppet for Javanese is a religious mythology that is almost universally accepted. Java community based on the historical views of central Javanese culture. In life they always guided by the culture itself, one example is highly dependent on the puppet in their life story. In fact, the Java community has had a strong religious base

The existence of puppets in the Java community in modern era is still in the hearts of Javanese. The ethics of Java or better known as Java *kawruh* is reflected in the behavior of the characters in the puppet show. In the puppets, the audience met with a large number of privately with various kinds. There are a god, Brahmin, ksatria, raksasa and Punakawan.

If viewed from the existence of the puppet itself, there are several aspects related to the role of puppets in Javanese life. 1) Puppet as entertainment and moral message. Puppet play bring the audience into the spiritual atmosphere, so there are two experiences gained by the audience. There is entertainment experience and moral message. 2) Puppet as a public communication media. In essence puppet show was held to fulfill its function as a means of communication, whether vertically and horizontally. Vertical communication is to God. Whereas horizontal communication is a communication with others. 3) Puppet as a means to eliminate mala (danger). Puppet as a reliever mala is in the form of *ruwatan*. 4) Puppet as Javanese cultural identity. It carry information and also communication between puppeteer to the audience.

Powers that comes when performing *ruwatan* as means to seek God to remove mala is implemented by Javanese of various religions and beliefs. It is an embodiment of hyper-spirituality. Hyper-spirituality is associated with abstract symbolism that can be seen in the offerings. All offerings are used to have a special meaning in relation to the cleansing of all causes of bad luck. The offerings in the *ruwatan* is one way to achieve the safety and well-being, not just limited to physical effort, but also pursued in the inter-religious ritual and belief in a spiritual frame that contains the value of hyper-spirituality.

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