

Research Article

Wayang China-Jawa's Preservation Through the Recreation in Animation

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Abstract.

Wacinwa or Wayang Cina Jawa is one of the artifacts that resemble the traditional Javanese shadow puppet' show with traditional Chinese elements. Originally created by master Gwan Thwan Seng in 1937, this unique performance disappeared later after Soeharto's New Order Regime triumphant in Indonesia in 1967. For many years some academics and shadow puppet's artists have been trying to bring back this artefact and reintroduce it to younger generations nowadays. Unfortunately, because of the extinction of this kind of puppet show, the academics and the artists then also try to recreate and reconstruct it. This research also tries to recreate Wacinwa in animation, based on how the puppet moves after doing some research using qualitative research with reinterpretation and adaptation theory. What the research finds is that animation could bring back Wacinwa in a modern approach.

Keywords: Wacinwa, animation, shadow puppet, cultural heritage

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1. Introduction

Wayang or Shadow Puppets show is more like a traditional version of the animation. It has animated movement and is performed using audio and visual. *Wayang Cina Jawa* or *Wacinwa* also had the same concept. As the previous research said, Wacinwa is a product of acculturation between Javanese and Chinese culture, it had traditional Chinese visual language meanwhile the performance was delivered using gamelan and Javanese language, so the Indonesian Chinese communities' members that couldn't speak in their mother's language anymore could enjoyed the show. The origin of *Wacinwa* was in Yogyakarta, brought by *Gwan Thwan Seng* in 1937. Local people there also called this art as *wayang thithi*, it said that this name comes from the sound of the music that accompanies this puppet performance (the sound goes 'tick-tick' in the ear)[1]. Unlike the other puppet that used animal skins as the material, the other uniqueness of

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Wacinwa is the puppet use cardboard for its material, and the head could be remove and replace with another to create a new character based on the script[2]

Unfortunately, during Soeharto's New Regime Order, the government banned most of Indonesian-Chinese cultures, including some arts and performances to be shown in the public [3]. This situation made the Indonesian Chinese descendants lost their cultural roots, even the cultural artifacts only found in Indonesia as the acculturation process for hundred years. [4],[5]. After Gwan Thwan Seng passed away in 1967, *Wacinwa* soon disappeared. Master Gwan's family seems intimidated with the New Order's policy and obliterated all the scripts that Master Gwan been worked at, because they did not know what to do with them. They also sold the puppets, and later found in the only museum that keep *Wacinwa* as their collection is Sonobudoyo Museum that located in Yogyakarta. [6]. And the rest of one sets of *Wacinwa* Puppets could find in Uberlingen (Bodensee, Germany) [7]

1.1. Research Objectives

The goals of the research are, **1.)** Reintroduce *Wacinwa* to younger generations using animation, because animation still one of popular media among the youngsters to adults, besides, *Wacinwa* itself use the same principle with modern animation using the moveable parts assets system (Figure 1). Some other research also tried to reconstruct the *Wacinwa*'s puppet as well as the original, and they also arrange the performance either to revive the *Wacinwa* just like their origins. [6]. Although this effort should be appreciated and support in many ways, it seems hard enough to reintroduced the *Wacinwa* to the public, especially for the young generations from Chinese-Indonesian community. **2.)** Not just reintroduce only, this research also wants to bring *Wacinwa* in a new media without renounce its origin, the part of the Chinese Indonesian acculturation and assimilation. That's also the cause, why the research merges the *Wacinwa* with the narations from Kho Ping Hoo's *Wu Xia* novels, the fiction literature that became one of most favored Chinese-Indonesian pop culture for many people in Indonesia [8]. For doing this, the research will do some narration's adaptation as Linda Hutcheon states that, Adaptation can be described as: 1) The movement/movement from one work to another that is recognized and acknowledged. 2) The act of awarding or saving creative and interpretive [works]. 3.) Extended inter-textual involvement with works that have been adapted.[9]



Figure 1: *Wacinwa* Puppet and Its Head Variations as the parts of asset's systemSource: <https://chc.ft.ugm.ac.id/mengenal-sejarah-seni-Wacinwa-wayang-kulit-cina-jawa/>.

2. Methods and Equipment

This research uses qualitative research methods. The qualitative method uses in this study because this research relies to the observation on cultural phenomenon that tend to change as the times goes by, considering that the results of this research will target the younger generation, who disconnected from their culture roots. This research does studies and examines from the data related to objects, shapes and forms of *Wacinwa's* puppets, So, the visual research method approach is also applied in this study. Visual research methods are related to understanding 1). Visual Culture, 2) Designs thinking, and 3) Reference data.

2.1. Methods of Data Collecting

The data collecting method that used in this research divide in several stages : **1.) Approach.** In this part, the research observes how *Wacinwa* puppets were created to understand their anatomy and the differences from other shadow plays' puppets forms. In this step the research also studies the narration behind the characters designs. After that, the results from the data used to make the digitalized recreation version of the puppets for the modern media such as animation in this case. **2). Research Object.** The objects in this study are the *Wacinwa* puppets design and forms, and the

wuxia novel *Dendam Membara* by Asmaraman S. or Kho Ping Hoo. **3.) Data Collection Techniques and Data Types and Sources.** a) Primary data sources: During a pandemic like nowadays, to do an interview to some experts or coming to a location are limited depend on the situation in the field. Therefore, the alternative in obtaining primary data is by joining some webinar events that related into, asking people and communities who also observe Chinese culture and also the members from Indonesian wu xia literatures reader groups on social media. b) Secondary data sources; literature studies in the form of various reference books, articles, theories about Peranakan culture, Chinese-Javanese puppets and the process of making short animations.

2.2. Analysis

From the data above, this research finds there are three important aspect in creating *Wacinwa's* puppets, there are Narrations, Aesthetics and Technologies. Narrations is the important aspect, because there is a background stories in each character, that make them unique, and recognizable. In *Wacinwa*, a heroic character such as **Sie Djin Koei**, has the heroic imagery based on his background story. The second aspect is the aesthetics aspect, the aesthetics also involved the artisanship and the creativity of the puppet master and its craftsman in making the puppet. Technologies is related to the material processing to create the puppets and how the puppet will put in performance. Therefore, the recreation process uses the same three aspects. The prototype making process divided into several steps, Data Collections, Deconstructing, Reconstructing and Prototyping. The Figure 1. Below, shows the flows of the recreation process for the research:

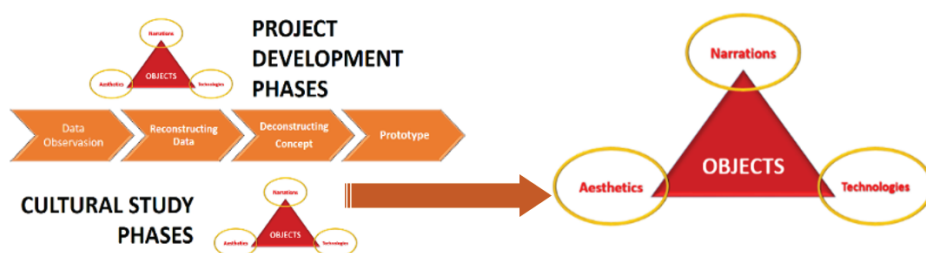


Figure 2: Data Analysis for Wacinwa Recreation Used in This Research Source: Dimas Krisna Aditya.

3. Results and Discussion




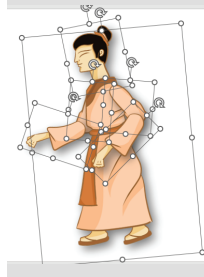
So, the research chooses short animation as the medium. Animation will accommodate the concept of *Wacinwa*, because of the asset systems create by Gan Than Seng similar with assets systems that use in animations. For the narrations, this research will develop a narration based on popular local *Wu Xia* (Romance Martial Arts) story written by **Asmaraman Sukowati** or Kho Ping Hoo. For decades Kho Ping Hoo 's stories have been reprinted and love by his fans, all around Indonesia and lately, one of his works translated and printed in China. With the huge numbers of his fan base, this research could collect more data about Koo Ping Hoo's works, and choose which story can be performing with this new incarnation of *Wacinwa*.

Until this paper is written, the research still develops the early models as the results of the 'recreation' of the *Wacinwa*'s media in animation. The research has done some several models alternatives. The first thing to do is that the research make the comparisons of the puppets model from original Chinese's shadow play puppets, Javanese shadow play puppets, *Wacinwa* puppets with the model that the research has done so far. (Table 1). This Comparison is an important phase for the research to make the model still close with the original ones. The comparisons result are to make the mapping which body parts can be moved and play for the new model. We already know that both Javanese wayang puppets and *Wacinwa* puppets feet cannot be moved because of the *lemahan* elements below their feet, so, it will be noted if we are going to make an animation, especially if we want make the characters moves since we're adapting *Wu Xia* novels for the narrations.

4. Conclusion

Although this research still developing the early models and do some experiments with the models. This research optimizes that, we can provide many innovation ways to preserve and reintroducing *Wacinwa* as Indonesia's cultural heritage artifacts. This so important, because *Wacinwa* has teach us about the value of respect to diversity and blend together as one identity. The technologies that we have nowadays can be explore as new medias that possible to the traditional culture to blend with the modern society, in order to prevent the values behind the artefacts for being extinct in future generations.

TABLE 1: Comparison of Puppet's Models

Information	Chinese Shadow Play Puppet	Javanese Shadow Play Puppet	Wacinwa Puppet	Research's Project First Model
Visualizations				
Materials	Paper, Animal Skins, parchment	Animal Skins such as goats or cows.	Cardboard	Digital, Vector
Proportions	Distortions, Deformations	Distortions, Deformations	Distortions, Deformations	Distortion Deformations
Points of Articulations	Head, hands, arms, legs, Torso	Arms and Hands only	Arms Hands only	Head, Arms, and hands
Detachable parts	None	none	Head	All
Special Distinctive	All body parts can be moved	The Feet connect to <i>lemahan</i>	Head can be removed and replaced with another head to create new character	All body parts can be moved with animation

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