

Conference Paper

Wayang Jekdong Art of East Java: Visual Transformation of the Bolo Trajutresna Puppet

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Abstract

The values of the Arek cultural community, as a coastal community, are clearly reflected in the shape and color of each Jekdong Puppet. Through the culture of tacit knowledge, the visualization of Jekdong puppets has its own standard, but along with the development of the visual transformation of Jekdong puppets, it continues to perfect and adapt to Arek's cultural values. This phenomenon can be seen in the transformation of the Sabrangan puppet form, which represents the Bolo Trajutresna puppet, into a newer form, which several Jekdong puppeteers in Mojokerto agree upon. This study focused on visual observation of changes in the Bolo Trajutresna puppet both before and after being transformed. An ethnographic approach was used through the Spradley visual component analysis process. The results of the analysis showed that the transformation process is influenced by the values of the cultural character of Arek East Java, which are represented in the transformed Bolo Trajutresna puppet. The values of straightforwardness and simplicity seem to influence the patterns of transformation in the Jekdong puppet. The straightforwardness of form is very important in the socio-cultural community of Arek culture for accommodating the ease in conveying messages. This can be seen in the transformed form of the Bolo Trajutresna puppet. In addition, the drive for equality with forms of court art is characterized by the value of refinement of taste manifested in detailed motifs and coloring patterns / textures, and is considered to be a greater influence on the embodiment of the transformed aesthetic form of the Jekdong Bolo Trajutresna puppet. It is hoped that this research can make a contribution to the development of the Jekdong puppet show from a scientific point of view of art, particularly in the province of East Java.

Keywords: Wayang Jekdong, visual transformation, coastal culture

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1. Introduction

In the world of Javanese Wayang kulit art, you can find a variety of gagrak (styles) that develop in Wayang kulit art. One of the gagrak that is rarely discussed in the realm

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of wayang puppets, one of which is Wayang Jek-Dong. Wayang Jek-Dong grows and develops in the Arek sub-culture of East Java, it can be found longitudinally in the middle of the province of East Java including Bojonegoro, Probolinggo, Situbondo, Lamongan, Gresik, Jombang, Mojokerto, Pasuruan, Surabaya, Malang and Sidoarjo areas [1].

According to Timoer [2] Wayang Jek-Dong is unique in that it grows and develops far from the interference of the Keraton / Palace. This condition is indicated to have influenced the visual effects of the Wayang Jek-Dong puppets, which are different and striking compared to the Surakarta and Yogyakarta sub-styles that live within the scope of the Keraton's influence [3].

In its development, the Wayang Jek-Dong puppet art has changed / transformed according to the times. In Wayang Jek-Dong art, Wayang artists are generally performed by Dhalang or puppeteers as an effort to maintain the identity of the visual character of Jek-Dong puppets. Dhalang Wayang Jek-Dong has skills in visual production of Wayang Jek-Dong. This knowledge is then passed on to successors through the Cantrik or apprenticeship pattern.



Figure 1: Amisuno old and new form (second from left); Yuyungriwa old and new forms (first from right).



Figure 2: Ancakogro old and new form (second from left); Mangudoro old and new forms (first from right).

The most obvious form of the visual transformation phenomenon in Wayang Jek-Dong is one of the examples done by Ki Wardono, a third generation cantrik of Ki Suleman / mbah Leman, the famous Porongan-style puppeteer of Wayang Jek-Dong in his era. Ki Wardono transformed the visual of the Wayang Jek-Dong puppet known as

'Bolo Trajutresna' or the Royal Trajutresna troop into a different visual form of Wayang puppets. The four wayang compositions were approved by Ki Suleman.

Using the ethnographic method, the research focuses on answering questions about the consideration of the Dhalang Wayang Jek-dong's considerations in choosing visual signs to form the form of the new 'Bolo Trajutresna' puppet. And besides that, to see the extent to which Arek cultural values are connected in the transformation process of the Wayang puppets.

It is hoped that with this research, the process of the Wayang Jek-dong scientific dialogue will be built so that it can enrich science, especially in the realm of visual development of the Wayang Jek-dong puppets in East Java.

2. Methods

The analysis will use the text analysis method. Jekdong puppet artefacts as a visual text were analyzed by identifying significant visual signs that were still displayed with slight changes and the elements displayed had drastic changes. Each visual sign will be identified with the relationship between the puppets' determination as a whole. By comparing the four puppet specimens, it can be identified how the visual sign patterns in each paradigmatic wayang puppet. The visual sign analysis process will use several steps of the component analysis method from James P. Spradley. Some of the Spradley processes used are the Domain analysis process, Taxonomic analysis and especially the Component analysis used.

The Jekdong puppet as a text is the result of a collection of intercultural essences immortalized in the form of text, as explained by Roland Barthes [4].

The essence / values of these various cultures, either intentionally or unintentionally, are recorded in the form of text artefacts. The understanding of a cultural artifact cannot be separated from the social context of the community as the foothold of a particular culture. Honigmann [5] presents three cultural phenomena.

In this theory, the idea is an ideal form of a culture, which is abstract and is located in the minds of the people where the culture lives. The second form is a social system, namely the patterns of human behavior in a particular culture. This pattern also covers the activities of human activities in a particular culture to interact, relate and communicate. The third form is physical culture which includes all physical results and human activities, actions, and works in a culture. In this third form, Wayang Jekdong art takes place. The three forms of culture cannot be separated from one another, each cultural artifact always contains ideas and social systems of society that are interrelated.

The process of identifying visual markers that change or are retained in puppet samples is grouped using the help of analysis theory from James P. Spradley. The analysis divides the relations between signs based on the breadth of the cultural system of work, from a wide working area to a very specific one. Spradley [6] divides the analysis stages into several stages, the most specific is the partition that divides into taxonomic space (components). Component analysis is used to compare the visible transformations of the Wayang.

Wayang Jekdong puppets always have a classification of wayang visual components, each of which is related to building a certain character's visual character through the relation of choice of visual paradigmatic components.

The visual components of the Wayang Jekdong puppet which are the basis of this study will use the division of the visual components of the Wayang kulit puppets in general as described by Soekatno BA [7] which is re-explained by Claire Holt [8] with the term 'syndrome'.

The visual components in the Wayang kulit puppet described by Holt above include the puppet's height, puppet posture, torso shape, shape elements (eyes and nose), face color and appearance of clothing attributes (clothing, jewelry, head covering).

3. Results and Discussion

The change in appearance looks much different from the previous Wayang puppet form in the figures of "Bolo Trajutresno" (the name for Wayang figures who are subordinates to Raden Suteja or Boma in Trajutresno's country) by Ki Wardono (interview 22 March 2018, in Jiyu Mojokerto Village, at 17:57). Ki Wardono created several Wayang puppets 'Bolo Trajutresno' which are more in line with the descriptions of Wayang Jekdong's stories of some of the main characters 'Bolo Trajutresno'.

During this time, these figures use the puppet show of the "srambahan prengesan" character which is used as a puppet to play additional characters in the Wayang Jekdong story. This Wayang group consists of several Wayang puppets that are able to describe the positions of ranks such as kings / queens and their subordinates.

According to Ki Wardono's explanation, in the past there were Wayang puppets that were more suitable in terms of the four figures, but now they are no longer found and have replaced them with these "prengesan sabrangan srambahan" puppets. Ki Wardono was challenged to reconstruct the Wayang puppet when he felt offended by his fellow Dhalang's words from Solo,

“Bolak-balik, the bolo Trajutresno wayange, yo iku-iku ae...” (Again, the Wayang bolo Trajutresno puppets used were the same). This sentence encouraged Ki Wardono to be creative in designing new forms of Wayang puppets that were more suitable for the four figures.

In Wayang Jekdong it is told that “Bolo Trajutresno” consists of the characters Amisuna, Yuyunggriwa, Ancakogro, and Mangundoro. According to the explanation from Ki Wardono, the four characters in the Wayang Jekdong Amisuno narrative are described as being brought to life by Boma / Suteja from a dog carcass, Yuyunggriwa from a crab carcass, Ancakogro from a grasshopper carcass, and Mangundoro from a bird carcass.

The main differences in the visual form of the Wayang dolls can be found in the taxonomy of the Wayang Jekdong components, especially in the body of the head, body parts, body color and the motif of the underclothes cloth (Dhodot).

On the head there is a visible visual difference. In the four puppet specimens, the initial shape of the face construction uses a combination of Kapuranta / pink face colors, the eyes are wide, which is called the Telengan or the eye that shows half of the eyeballs or what is called Kelipan. The combination of nose and mouth is called Prengesan or seen smiling until the gums appear. The combination of the two facial characters is juxtaposed with various types of crowns as a differentiator. Meanwhile, in the transformed form of the Wayang puppet, the form of Wayang Bolo Trajutresna has a much different character by displaying facial markings similar to the legs and crab claws in the Yuyunggriwa puppet, the snub nose and elongated fangs in the Ancakogro puppet, the dog muzzle in the Amisuno puppet., as well as a marker that resembles a bird’s beak in Mangundoro.

Before being transformed, the Wayang body components use a Wayang type body called Gagahan which is combined with a gold color or is called Bron by the Dhalang on the main body and pink or Kapuranta on the palm. In the new Wayang puppets, the visual signifier of the body generally use the same form, namely Gagahan, but are added with additional body sign such as; The visual signifier of the tail wrapped around the shoulder in the Amisuno puppet, the wing body marker on the Ancakogro puppet, the visual marker for the claws that replace the palms of the Yuyunggriwa puppet, and the signifier similar to poultry feathers all over the body of the Mangundoro Wayang puppets.

“Pulasan” or body coloring in the new puppets no longer uses gold or Bron colors but instead uses brown in Amisuno, dark green in Yuyunggriwa, light green in Ancakogro and light blue with poultry feather motifs on Mangundoro puppets. There is a change in the coloring character of the new visual puppet, no longer using one flat color, but

the body parts even though one color has a textural pattern caused by certain coloring techniques, especially seen in the Amisuno, Ancakogro and Yuyungriwa puppets. Efforts to give the impression of volume to the body of the puppet are by giving a darker color tone to the edges of the puppet body. In the new puppets, there are efforts to use a more realistic-naturalistic coloring with light reflection simulations, such as the coloring of the eyeballs, the coloring of the Yuyungriwa puppet body with the impression of light reflections on the wet shell body, feathers and on Ancakogro's wings. This more complex color difference is not found in the previous Bolo Trajutresna puppet form.

The lower clothing attribute markers have changed, the visual mark of the pants is no longer visible on the body of the new Wayang Bolo Trajutresna doll. In addition, the Dhodot motif which is dominated by green and decorated with Jekdong puppet motifs, namely the Ceplikan motif (a motif inspired by the ceplikan flower along the banks of the Brantas river) is not shown on the new puppet puppets. The dhodot on the new Wayang puppets is dominated by brown and seems more complicated by the motif called Ki Wardono with the Manukan motif.

In the concept of a Javanese concentric kingdom as stated by Lombard [9] it is stated that the center of Java is in the Keraton. The palace as a positive pole and vice versa, the position of the negative pole is at the outer edge of the Keraton. In other words, the periphery / border area becomes the negative pole of the Javanese concept, Lombard explained more specifically that the outskirts area is generally located on the coast or north coast of Java. The farther the distance from the palace center in central Java, the fading quality of 'Javanese' qualities, which conditions like this is described by Lombard as a process of change from the civilized world to the wild. In the above context, the coastal area as a world has lost its subtle Javanese values.

Arek culture can also be said to be a coastal area, which has distinctive characteristics. The uniqueness of the character of the coastal area as explained by Nur Syam [10], as a society with a strong, open, egalitarian and acculturative character. This area was further explained by Syam in East Java covering the area along the north coast which includes the area, Surabaya, Gresik, Sidoarjo (Sidoarjo), Tuban. The same opinion was expressed by Tan [11], the character of coastal communities has a tendency to be rude, straightforward and open.

The geographic location of the Arek cultural community that has been described by Laksana [12] which includes - Bojonegoro, Probolinggo, Situbondo, Lamongan, Gresik, Jombang, Mojokerto, Pasuruan, Surabaya, Malang, and Sidoarjo areas - shows geographic location as a coastal area. The Arek cultural area has the character of an open culture, egalitarian, straightforward, willing to accept differences and suggestions, has

high solidarity, and applies the principle of a win-win solution “yo’opo enake” how the best solution is. The characteristics of the arek culture are slightly different from the Mataraman culture which tends to prioritize the elements of feeling, feel reluctant, and the like, in the context of avoiding conflicts that offend others [13].

Ki Wardono reconstructed the puppet form for the four figures through various inputs and especially by the teacher Ki Suleman. In the end, Ki Wardono succeeded in creating Wayang puppet forms for the four figures which were considered to better represent the iconic realist-naturalistic physical descriptions of the four ‘Bolo Trajutesno’ figures. This proves that the existence of the straightforward values of arek culture in the form of the Jekdong Wayang puppet plays an important role in the Jekdong puppet art.

The character of the Arek cultural community as a outskirts culture can be seen clearly in the forms of the Wayang Jekdong puppets that have been analyzed previously. These simpleness values also appear to influence the patterns of visual change in the Wayang Jekdong puppets, such as the affirmations of visual messages in each character. The straightforwardness of form is very important in the socio-cultural community of Arek culture for accommodating the ease in conveying messages. Unlike the elite cultural community as suggested by Suseno [14] who likes the delivery of messages indirectly through abstract formations as a manifestation of subtle traits. The arek cultural community has a tendency to be straightforward, conveying messages directly, not long-winded. The manifestation of the straightforwardness of the message has a tendency to go through realist-naturalistic formations that are iconic denotative. Iconic forms that are similar to the object being referred to, are easier to understand than abstract forms, because the principle of icons is to present a similarity in shape to the sign reference in question so as to present analogous sensations that minimize misinterpretation [15].

Supported by the condition of coastal communities who are not so tied to or more free to the rules of the palace [9], support the “penyungging” / Wayang artists to more freely realize the creative process of designing the Jekdong Wayang puppets to be more straightforward and in accordance with the the character of the Arek cultural community.

The last visual change is in the complicated dhodot pattern. The newer the Wayang puppets are, the more complex the motifs are. Javanese society highly upholds the values of refinement as explained by Suseno [14] generally the higher social class of Javanese society (priyayi) has more awareness of the values of refinement which are manifested in constant awareness of oneself, control of expression. and self-discipline on a daily basis. The priyayi community, which is generally from the aristocratic court, always strives to achieve these forms of refinement. Starting from the language to

the everyday tools he uses, Hasanudin [16] exemplifies the refinement efforts of the court community that are reflected in the Dasa Sila Keraton. One example of the forms of refinement in the art of clothing is the batik cloth, which according to Hasanudin, is reflected in the process of placing decorative forms on batik cloth. The process of filling the motive (ambatik) requires the most time compared to other processes, this happens because the process requires precision, complexity, craft to achieve the highest aesthetic form as a form of refinement (polite) values.

From the above explanation, it can be understood that the laying of complex decorative textures and fillings such as the Manukan motif on Jekdong puppet clothing is done in an effort to improve aesthetic quality, and to prove the self-alignment of the Jekdong puppet community (Arek culture) as a outskirts/subordinat culture that is considered 'rough' [9], so it is considered less aware of the values of refinement of taste as the highest point of achieving aesthetic form.

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