Wayang In Javanese Mythology: Cultural Communication Through Surakarta Wayang Wong Sriwedari (WWS) Community on Social Media

Joko Sutarso
Communication Science Study Program of Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta

Corresponding email: Joko.Sutarso@ums.ac.id

Abstract: Wayang Wong is a culture which continues to live and thrive in Sriwedari Park, Surakarta, for 107 years. It’s a culture which was born in 2011 and survives and grows in the society because it has philosophical, artistic and moral values, so that it doesn’t only provide entertainment but also lessons for people. Wayang orang is an adaptation of shadow puppet which emerged earlier in the society and was even considered religion by Javanese people. Wayang orang performance is an art performance which combines dance, theatre, literature, voice and pentatonic music harmoniously and is filed by aesthetic values (edi-peni) and moral philosophical lessons (adi-luhung). There are four analysis units used in this paper, which are puppets as mythology, character, story, puppet master and directing. Cultural communication by Wayang Wong Sriwedari (WWS) community on Facebook is done by a group of volunteers who are considered successful in contributing in increasing the number of audience and attention of public policymakers in the preservation of wayang orang as a part of the national cultural wealth.

Keywords: Wayang Orang, Cultural Communication, Cultural Value and Social Media.

INTRODUCTION
The currently popular wayang (puppets) isn’t an original creation of Indonesians, although some experts claim that wayang arrived from India, there was original wayang in Indonesia. In a written source, Serat Sastramiruda, wayang purwa, the origin of the current Javanese wayang, was created by King Jayabaya in Kediri Kingdom in 869 Saka (967 AD) and wayang kulit (literally shadow puppets) performance accompanied by gamelan was developed in 1145 Saka (1223 AD) in the reign of Prabu Suryamisesa of Jenggala Kingdom. After the collapse of Majapahit, Demak Kingdom created wayang made of buffalo hide and it continued to grow in Islamic Mataram Kingdom (Hastjarjo, 2012: 158).

However, it’s undeniable that Mahabarata and Ramayana epics which are popular in modern Javanese wayang today came from India. Interestingly, wayang from native Javanese culture integrated with Hindu culture and when Islam came later, wayang became a tool for spreading the religion and successfully made Islam a part of Javanese culture. The philosophy of wayang performance can be an educational media to develop tolerance (Rahardjo (et al), 2012: 76).

Javanese puppet show became popular and was adapted into theatre to become Wayang Wong (literally human wayang) which was introduced into the world of arts in Islamic Mataram Kingdom, especially in Surakarta and Yogyakarta. At first, wayang orang was only available for limited performances in palaces. Wayang Wong Sriwedari was introduced and popularized as an art in Pakubuwono X era and at almost the same time, Kadipaten Mangkunegaran also introduced wayang orang for the public in a national radio community, SRV (Solosche Radio Vereneging) in 1930s, which was the origin of Surakarta Station of Radio Republik Indonesia (RRI).

This paper focuses on the development of wayang orang in Sriwedari and Wayang Wong Sriwedari (WWS) community which tries to socialize wayang orang Sriwedari to allow it to survive and grow. It’s interesting because it’s a pity if a culture which has edi-
peni (aesthetic) value and adi-luhung (philosophical and ethical) value disappears today. Wayang Wong Sriwedari has existed since 1911. The peak of Wayang Wong Sriwedari was in the 1970s when it produced legendary figures which were Rusman, Darsi, Surono, and Mrajak. Today, wayang oran must compete with modern culture, such as television, musical performances and entertainments on social media. However, amid the decreasing number of audience of Wayang Wong Sriwedari (WWS) a group of people joined forced in a facebook group Wayang Wong Sriwedari (WWS) and successfully increase interest and draw the attention of policy makers to preserve the noble culture.

**THE HISTORY OF WAYANG ORANG SRIWEDARI**

As previously mentioned, the history of wayang oran is inseparable from the role of Mataram Kingdom in Surakarta and Yogyakarta. The history of wayang oran performance for people outside of the palaces started from Sriwedari which is then known as Wayang Wong Sriwedari (WWS). Sriwedari Park, or previously known as Bonrojo (King’s Park) was built in the reign of Paku Buwono X (1893-1939). The name Sriwedari comes from a myth in wayang story on a garden of paradise which moves to the earth, so the name is easily recognizable and was popular among people. In the beginning, Sriwedari Park was built in 1899 as a place for pastime, entertainment and retreat of the royal families, containing plants and pets, then equipped with wayang oran theatre. A commercial Wayang Wong Sriwedari (WWS) community was then established and could be enjoyed by the public. In terms of development of art for the public via radio, especially wayang oran in Kadipaten Mangkunegaran, it was one of the concerns of Mangkunegoro VII on the development of Javanese culture in the national struggle era. The birth of the first national broadcasting agency, SRV (Solosche Radio Vereniging) on 1 April 1933, broadened the broadcast of Javanese arts and cultures as parts of national culture across the country and even to other countries. The role of Surakarta RRI (Radio Republik Indonesia) in supporting and maintaining the spirit of independence was done by broadcasting various traditional cultures, including wayang oran to develop a national identity (Puguh, 2017: 145).

The growth of wayang oran in the society at that time was quite rapid so that wayang oran wasn’t only performed in Sriwedari, but also in Balekambang, Alun-alun and even by community groups in villages, which is known as wayang wong tobong. The popularity of wayang wong tobong, which is a mobile stage, happened almost at the same time as the popularity of other travelling theaters such as ketoprak tobong in southern Central Java and ludruk tobong in East Java. However, there is a difference between wayang oran and ketoprak. Wayang represents ethical and aesthetical values of more refined culture because it came from palaces while ketoprak and ludruk were born among common people. In refined culture, symbol plays an important role, as well as communicates cultural values using high-context communication. Wayang oran is an adaptation of Ramayana and Mahabharata epics which manners, majesty and grace along with unity, orders, and harmony, as well as myths on the dependency of creatures in the universe to the Creator (God) (Tebba, 2007: 156).

The development of wayang oran in the era of struggle for independence to the 1970s is interesting. For example, in Semarang, Ngesti Pandawa wayang oran community was established in 1937 and officially closed in 2001. The decline of Ngesti Pandawa wayang oran performance started since the death of its leader, Ki Sastro Sabdo, who was replaced by Ki Narto Sabdo. However, Ki Narto Sabdo was busy with wayang kulit performances, so since early 1970s, it declined and finally closed performance (Rinardi, 2002). In Jakarta, specifically around Pasar Senen, Wayang Orang Bharata group was established. In 1963-1999, WO (Wayang Orang) Bharata performed every night, however it then only performed every Saturday night before it finally disbanded. Therefore, today the only wayang group that still performed every weekday, except Saturday night all year long.
is wayang orang Sriwedari. However, the number of audience and people’s attention to Wayang Wong Sriwedari need to be improved. The efforts of community groups to socialize and promote wayang orang should be appreciated to preserve Wayang Wong Sriwedari.

WAYANG MYTHOLOGY IN THE LIFE OF JAVANESE PEOPLE

Wayang lives in the mythology of Javanese people in Central Java and East Java in the following aspects: 1). Every opening of a performance is accompanied by praying. Prayer is intended to make the wayang performance go smoothly from start to finish. The prayer is said by the dalang or symbolized by gunungan. Symbolically, gunungan is a picture or stylization of a mountain which narrows down at the top. Gunungan in performance serves to signify time change or scene change and to open or end the performance. All ornaments in gunungan portray the universe, or life from birth, childhood, adolescence, adulthood, old age and the end of life (Rusdy, 2015: 97). As an opening, gunungan is often portrayed as the narrowing down of prayer to the Almighty because wayang performance is held in certain event and the performance tries to covey spiritually, implicitly and explicitly the wishes of the people who nanggap (hire) the wayang performance.

2). Wayang contains the dreams and lives of people, whether in janturan (presenting the beginning of story) which is said by dalang when the first jejer (scene) opens the story. It’s considered sacred, containing prayers and exultations to the beauty of nature created by God Almighty (Rusdy, 2015: 87).

An example of janturan for wayang kulit performed by Ki Nartosabdo is: “.....Dhasar negara panjang, apunjung, pasir, wukir, gemah ripah, loh jinawi, karta, tata raharja. Panjang dawa pocapane, punjung luwar kawibawane. Pasir samodara, wukir gunung. Pranyata negara Hastina ngungkurake pegunungan, ngeringaken bengawan, ngenaken pasabinan, ngayunaken bandaran ageng. Gemah kathah para nangkhuda kang lumaku dedaganjeng anglur selur than ono pedhote, labet datan ana sangsayne margi. Aripah kathah para janna manca negari katrem bebale wisalebeting kitha Negari Astina, jejer apiipit, bebasan aben cikut tepung taritis papan wiyar kaingal rupak. Loh subur tukul kang sarwa tinandur, jinawi murah kang sarwa tinuku. Karta para kawula ing padusunan nungkul ing pangolahing tetanen, ingon-ongen kebo, sapi, pitik, iwen tan ono cinancangan rahina aglar ing pangonan laman bengi teka bali sarwa kandhange dhewe-dhewe. Raharja tegese tebih parangmuka karana para mantri bupati wicaksana limpating kawruh tan kendhat denya ambudidaya kaluhuranging sang narpati. Marmaning negara astina jeneng anempuh bebasan gedhe obore, padang jagade, dhuvur khukuse, adoh kuncarane. Ora ngemungke kanan kering kewala, senajaran praja ing mahapraja katha ingkang samya tumungkul datan sarana lawan bandayuda, amung kayungyung poyane kautaman. The free translation of the janturan is: “......... Indeed it is a vast country, consisting of beaches and fertile hills, orderly and safe. It has a long story, admired for its nobleness and authority. Sand of the sea, hills and mountains, the country of Hastina has mountains in the backdrop, in the middle of it a large river flows and supports rice fields, and it has large ports. Gemah because many merchants carry their goods walking in line down endless roads. Aripah many people from abroad love to live and settle down in Hastina, so the population is large, making a vast space looks small. Loh fertile land where any plant grows, jinawi cheap and therefore affordable. Karta the villagers cultivate various agricultural crops, keep various livestock who are left to look for food in the day and return to their sheds at night. Raharja because there is no crime as the officials are wise, knowledgeable, and responsible in performing their duties for the kingdom. Hastina is widely known like a large illuminating torch with smoke rising high so that it’s seen from distant lands. Not only nearby countries, many large countries respect it, not because they’re conquered by war, but because they’re fascinated by its excellence”. In wayang orang, the janturan is summarized as required and depends on time duration.
3). *Lakon/wayang* story is often described as *wewayangan* or shadows of daily lives of people, the happiness and the sadness, as well as the good and the bad. In general, the audience’s motivation in watching *wayang* is gaining lesson on human life. The elderly even watch *wayang* for contemplation and to look for aspirations in life. Essentially, *wayang* audience knows the plots and characters but repeating *wayang* stories is like relearning moral lessons of human life. Watching *wayang* is a learning activity and a way to advise oneself, a reflection on problems in daily life. The major plots of *wayang* always end with the victory of the right over the wrong. The ends of some stories are moral messages that *lelakon* (events) are the will of the almighty and they’re expected to be *koco benggala* (mirrors) in life in the future, so that the stories can serve as examples in life and to avoid bad stories. 4). *Wayang* characters in Mahabharata and Ramayana epics are separated into two sides, the good/right side and the bad/wrong side. In Mahabharata, the right side is represented by Pandawa in the Amarta Kingdom, while the bad/wrong side is Kurawa in Astina Kingdom. Kurawa try to take control of Pandawa’s ending in the epic war *Bharatayudha* which is won by Pandawa. In real life, some Javanese families display *wayang* characters they admire. Characters which are often displayed because they’re considered good examples are Puntadewa (honesty), Kresna (intelligence), Werkudara (firmness), Semar (teaching, love, nurture), Anoman (perseverance in duty), and Kumbokarno (nationalism). 5). *Wayang* characters live in the minds of Javanese people and some people identify with certain characters and even display the characters in the living. There are hundreds of characters in *wayang*, but not all came from Mahabharata and Ramayana. Some *wayang* characters came from pre-Hindu *wayang* or from Javanese culture. Semar, for example, is thought to be a god which lives on earth as a human to be the *pamomong* (a man who accompany life) of the good characters (protagonists), while others are *pamomong* of the evil characters (antagonists) such as Togog and mBelung. Semar has sons called Gareng, Petruk, and Bagong. They’re called *punokawan* (loyal servants) and don’t exist in Hindu Mahabharata and Ramayana. It means *punokawan* are the creations and results of acculturation of pre-Hindu, Hindu and Islamic cultures. 6). *Wayang* stories and characters are restricted by *pakem* (standard plots), but every region has *gagrik pedalangan* (storytelling style). There are at least four *gagrik* in Javanese *wayang* which are *gagrik* Surakarta, *gagrik* Ngayogjakarta, *gagrik* Banyumasan, and *gagrik* Jawa-Timuran. *Gagrik* pedalangan are results of innovation and cultural adaptation which produces an entertainment which suits varying Javanese subcultures. *Wayang* is a result of cultural adaptation of the journey of the art of Javanese people, which was originally *wayang kulit* before turning into a theatre art performed by human.

**COMPONENTS OF WAYANG ORANG PERFORMANCE**

In this paper, there are four components of discussion to help us understand why human *wayang* Sriwedari (*Wayang Wong Sriwedari*) has a special place in Javanese culture, especially among the people Surakarta. The components are: Character; Story or *lakon*; Myth; and Dalang/Directing. Below are the descriptions of the components: **Character.** There are hundreds of characters in *wayang orang*. Purwadi (2007) records 280 characters of *wayang purwo* who have *pakem* (standard) stories. It should be noted that beside *wayang purwa* (beginning), there are *wayang madya* (middle) and *carangan* stories (new stories which don’t disturb the main plots in Ramayana and Mahabharata). In *wayang orang* performance, it’s possible to make new names and stories, similar to theater drama but with the tradition and system of *pewayangan*. *Wayang* characters are generally classified into good characters (protagonists) and evil characters (antagonists). In Ramayana, the good side is represented by Prabu Ramawijaya and the evil side by Prabu Rahwanaraja. Meanwhile, in Mahabharata, Pandawa family is the right and good side and Kurawa are the opposite.
Lakon/Story and Myth. Lakon/wayang story is wewayangan (the shadow story of human being), which is description of human life from birth, childhood, adolescence, study period, adulthood, marriage, family life, work, old age and finally departure from the physical world. In wayang orang, story of the birth of a character is called lakon lahiran (human birth), e.g. Gatukacca Lahir, Lahire Wisanggeni, Bima Brongsong. Stories of the adolescence of a character, when they fall in love and marry are lakon Lesmana Wayung, Gatukacca Gandrung, Gatukoko Krama. Stories on adulthood and work life are Gatukacca Krida, Gatukacca Winisuda, Bimo Kruda. Stories which are considered to represent the spirituality and myths of Javanese although they’re commonly found in every wayang story, can be found specifically in lakon lebet (stories containing religious philosophies), e.g. lakon Dewa Ruci, Bima Suci, Arjunawiwaha and Begawan Ciptaning. Plots in wayang lebet stories are generally about looking for the God of Sangkan Paranining Dumadi (the origin of human and where they will return to). After finding it, they try to retreat and exile themselves to devote themselves to God but they’re asked to return to fulfill their duties as satria devoted to their countries for public welfare. Lebet stories produce the concept of satria-pinandita Javanese leader, which is a leader who doesn’t only have the ability and skills to govern a country but also has good spirituality. Although characters and lakon are surrealist art, they’re rationalized as reality (Barthes, 2006: 320). Dalang/directing. In wayang kulit, dalang has a central role in storytelling and conveying messages. Dalang in wayang orang is a storyteller and he sits with the musicians. Scenes and dialogues are performed by humans. The role of a director beside understanding story is also directing wayang kulit scenes so that they can be performed in accordance with stage format story. Thus, quality of directing and totality of actors in performance determine the success of the performance. A wayang orang performance involves 40 to 55 actors and pengrawit. A jejer sepih (opening scene) can involve 10 to 15 roles on stage. Holding a performance which involves many people requires skill and determination to coordinate aspects, as well as skill as wayang orang director. The skill of a director, according manage performance includes casting in accordance with character, voice of actors (antawacana), knowledge on dance, knowledge on stage setting, makeup and costume, and understanding on karawitan (pentatonic orchestras) and various types of accompanying gending (song and rhythm) Sriyadi (2010).

ACTIVITIES OF WAYANG WONG SRIWEDARI (WWS) COMMUNITY

It’s a pity if an activity which involves so many people with varying tasks and which is acknowledged as a beautiful and noble art doesn’t receive any attention from the society. Complaints on the small number of audience are often heard, but in holidays, the number of audience increases sharply. It’s partly due to socialization by virtual community Wayang Wong Sriwedari (WWS) on Facebook which was created on 24 March 2012. There were 4.005 members in the group in early February 2018. People from varying layers of the society are committed to preserving wayang wong in Sriwedari. Their activities are 1). Socializing lakon of wayang every month and every night, except on Sunday nights. It includes informing group members that there won’t be regular performance because a performance is held in Taman Mini Indonesia Indah (TMII) Jakarta since the only regular wayang orang performance left is the performance in Sriwedari Park. 2). Considering the importance of socializing lakon as effective promotion, the admin of the group made Sosialisasi Wayang Wong Sriwedari (WWS) page which is often linked to WWS page. Socialization of lakon of wayang is important because people like or avoid certain lakon for their own reasons. Generally, people know the plot of every lakon, but they want to watch it when they want to. 3). Having discussions which is in accordance with the spirit of the group to preserve the art of wayang orang. The discussions are managed by an admin who will delete posts which aren’t in line with
the voluntary spirit of the community members in the group. 4). Sharing artistic pictures, wayang pictures, pictures related to activities in Sriwedari Park and information on other Javanese cultures. They also discuss wayang stories and the significance of the lakon for the society. Sharing of experience with people who miss wayang orang performances they watched in their childhood, whether they now live out of town or even abroad, is possible via internet.

CONCLUSIONS
This paper observes the declining interest in Wayang Wong Sriwedari (WWS) which is a cultural site and valued art which should be preserved. The City Government of Surakarta through the Department of Tourism has contributed a rather large amount of public fund, but the number of audience was low. If this continues, Wayang Wong Sriwedari which is the last wayang orang group which performed every day, except on Sunday nights, may disband. Therefore, WWS shouldn’t be viewed only from the business perspective but also cultural conservation and preservation. The efforts of facebook group Wayang Wong Sriwedari are voluntary efforts to socialize the importance of wayang orang as a beautiful, philosophical and ethical culture.

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