

Sunggingan Art in Purwa Srikandi Puppet of Surakartan Style

Dyna Prastiwi^{1*} Zulfi Hendri^{1**}

¹ Graduate School, Yogyakarta State University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

*Corresponding author. Email: dynaprastiwi@gmail.com

**Corresponding author. Email: zulfi_hendri@uny.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This paper aims to describe the arts of *tatah sungging* (carving and decorating) in puppetry. *Tatah sungging* has become arts with high cultural value. Puppets, as one of the educational media, also have character values to teach. Up to now, a small portion of the community is still pursuing the practice of *tatah sungging*, and in terms of creation, there certainly exist forms of creative works that artists do. This research was conducted by using qualitative methods, and its data were obtained through leather puppet figures and craftsmen in Gogon Arts Center in Surakarta, Central Java, Indonesia. The identifying artistic features of Surakarta style Purwa leather puppets of Srikandi are depicted through their finely detailed shapes and harmonious (monochromatic) colors. The technique employed for crafting these arty leather puppets involves coloring with the precise brush strokes using acrylic paint.

Keywords—*Sungging, Wayang Purwa, Srikandi, Surakarta*

1. INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, particularly Javanese, puppet mythology is a tradition and culture that underlies and plays a significant role in the process of forming the character of the Indonesian nation so that it becomes a nation that can be seen as it is today [1]. Puppet is an art of Indonesian ancestral heritage that has been able to survive for centuries by undergoing changes and developments in such a way that it is shaped as it is today. The world of puppetry is a cultural treasure and inexhaustible source for those who want to dig it up, absorb exemplary examples, then live it in the context of forming their character. The good and bad are shown in the form of symbols with a distinctive character. These symbols are not limited to presenting personal life but reaching a wider target for the life of the community, the nation, and the state [2]. Puppet art has evolved through times, regions, and its supporting communities, creating various shapes and styles of *sunggingan* following the appreciation and creativity of the local artists. This process results in the emergence of local styles such as Surakartan and Yogyakarta styles, which has distinctive shades.

For puppet coloring, Javanese community uses the term *sungging* for the term has become embedded in the leather puppet craft art [3]. [4] describes *sunggingan* process as a series of coloring activities using gradation system on a piece of leather that has been through the *tatah* (chiseling) process. It was due to the fact that this field is more related to the philosophical values, especially in the provision of the meaning or significance of the properties that reflects the characteristics of a particular character symbol, especially those of *Srikandi* figure as portrayed by esthetic values in the form of colors poured on leather that has been carved beforehand. Coloring requires carefulness, diligence, and artistic skills.

Leather puppet art presents beauty by combining complex sculptures (*tatah*) with a matching *sungging* art. [4] said that the art of *tatah* (chisel) could be seen in the puppet shapes as engraved in the leather of buffalos, cows, woods, or other materials through a process that requires persistence. For *sunggingan* artists in *purwa* puppet, they need training and understanding, which includes crafts and fine arts. In decorating shadow puppets, the puppet bodies are generally painted in gold, when it should be the jewels. Undoubtedly, the use of color is intended to clarify the nature of the puppet characters. They must understand the puppet characters that will be put in the decoration, the flat areas in the form of leather to be used, and the skills in color processing. The puppet itself is not only represented by its beautiful shapes, but also by its special value for the Indonesian people in general for it contains deep intentions that give a depiction of this life [5].

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study was conducted using qualitative methods. The data were obtained through interviews with the puppet characters and *sunnging* in *Gogon Arts Center* in Surakarta. [6] Asserts that qualitative research produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from the participants or the behaviors under observation. Data collection was also carried out through direct observation in *Gogon Arts Center* to observe the process of puppet production. The process of data validation was done by the provision of observation and in-depth interviews.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1. History of the Art of *Sunnging* in *Wayang Purwa Srikandi* of the *Surakartan Style*

In the age of Mataram kingdom, 1586 – 1680, puppets are equipped with moveable hands. A puppet is a high-value art inherited from the ancestors of the Indonesian people. A puppet has a message and moral values expressed or implied through its symbols. A puppet able to convey the message visually. One of the puppets illustrates *Srikandi*'s characteristics. Puppet art evolved according to the times and areas as well as supporting the community. Thus, it creates various forms of puppets according to the appreciation and creativity of local artists. It raises *Surakartan style* puppets.



Figure 1 Puppet of *Srikandi* Surakarta Style in *Gogon Arts Center*

A female puppet of *Surakartan style* is characterized by the end of the fabric which protrudes to the rear. Formerly, the purpose of the puppet maker artist is to express the inner atmosphere puppet pleases. For *sunnging* artists in shadow puppet, decorating puppets requires training and a thorough understanding. They must understand the character of the puppet characters to be decorated and also have skills in processing colors.

The leather puppets of *Surakartan style* could be based between the size puppets, shape, and position. In terms of size, shadow puppets can be classified into five categories. They are big puppet (70-100 cm), bigger puppet (55-70 cm), medium puppet (40-55 cm), and smaller puppet (under 30 cm). Related to the elements, the puppet is listed on the form and fashion. For example, *putren* puppet consists of *Srikandi*, *Sembadra*, *Sinta*, etc. [7]

3.2. The Process of Making *Srikandi* in *Purwa Puppet* of *Surakartan Style*

Leather craft art cannot be separated from the *natah* (chisel). *Natah*, a chiseling work, which in this case is the skin sculpt, is intended to obtain the desired shape. The main material to make a leather puppet is buffalo leather. According to puppet craftsmen, puppet material from young buffalo's leather will produce better quality puppets. According to most leather puppet craftsmen, the skin of a young buffalo will produce puppets with better quality. The results of inlay will be more perfect than if you use an old buffalo skin. Equipment for carving leather puppets are *tatah*, *ganden*, wax, runner, ruler, grindstone and water, oppressor, *pandukan*, and *corekan* nail. In a puppet carving process, the chisel (*tatah*) must be held upright. This can be explained that in chiseling puppets, *tatah* must be held upright. This is very important so that the results of the inlay are not skewed. *Ganden* is a kind of hammer made of hard wood, for example sawo wood. Making *Surakarta style* puppets use the type of inlay (*tatahan*): *tatahan bubukan*, *tatahan tratanan*, *tatahan lanjutan*, *tatahan bubkan ireng*, *tatahan emas-emasan*, and *tatahan sembulan*.

The process of *natah* starts with chiseling the basic shape of the puppets, then proceeds it with chiseling the details of the puppets and various ornaments in it. The activity produces *putihan* puppets, namely puppets that have not been colored. The more complicated part is usually done in the final stages of chiseling [5].



Figure 2 The Process of Carving in *Gogon Art Center*

The process and technique of *tatah* of *Srikandi* in *purwa puppet* in *Gogon studio* is to design or make a pattern. This aims to find the desired ideas in the form of a classical *purwa* puppet and sketch it on paper. Next prepare the tools and materials for working on *Srikandi purwa* leather puppets. First prepare the tools and materials. The materials used are from buffalo skin. The tools used include 14 types of *tatah*, *pandhukan*, *gandhen*, *tindhih*, etc. Furthermore, by *nyorek*, *purwa* puppet design on paper is considered good for pouring on buffalo skin. After chiseling the *gebingan purwa* puppets, the next process is chiseling the *purwa* puppets. Chiseling starts from the inside, especially the part that covers other parts. Here are some chiseling stages, namely *sumping*, i.e. chiseling that

should take precedence over chiseling hair and bows. Chiseling the necklace should take precedence over stewing. *Badhong* chiseling must take precedence over *Uncal Wastra* chiseling. *Uncal Kencana* chiseling must take precedence over *seluwar* (short pants) or *kunca* (pleat) sculptures. Chiseling the anklet takes precedence before chiseling the leg. The last stage of the *ambedhah rai* is surgery on the face or face of the *purwa* puppets, including the nose, mouth and eyes. Surgery on this part of the face will manifest character and not *wanda purwa* puppets.

3.3. The Process of Making Decorative Art in Srikandi Prototype Puppet

As with the chisel (*tatahan*) form, *sunggingan* art can be classified into three categories namely *sungging* art for puppet art, *sungging* art for puppetry and *sungging* art for *pasaran* puppet. In *sunggingan* art, puppet art must have a harmonious, beautiful and complicated color composition. Unlike the art of *sunggingan* for puppet puppetry, that is not so complicated or *pasaran* puppet that uses striking colors and uses a lot of golden yellow brons to make it look more sparkling and attract the attention of buyers [3]. In decorating puppets, artists must be able to combine many colors including, red, green, blue, yellow, white, indigo, and mixed. That is known as harmonious principle. The point is to make the colors have an identity that matches the other colors.

When in *sungging* process of puppets, the first thing to do before the leather puppets are decorated is to sand the *gebingan* puppet. It is intended that the chiseling does not look prominent and the leather becomes flat and smooth. After that, the leather puppets will be painted in white as the base paint [8]. In decorating leather puppets, the craftsmen must understand the matter of coloring before starting coloring the leather puppets. In this process, a series of tools and materials needs to be prepared in advance, namely brushes, pens, frog pens, *cawen*, pencils, rulers, glue and various paint mixtures to obtain certain traditional colors of the primary colors. The main colors include white made from burned bones, yellow made from stone into powder, blue made from indigo batik cloth, black made from *oyam* blackening materials made in China, and red made from lipstick. In the coloring process, an artist must have the courage to add or replace these colors with pigments, acrylic paint, Chinese ink for black and even Gesso (as a paint for the base to make the surface smoother), and Fox glue to replace the *ancur* in this coloring. That is done if traditional materials are difficult to find.



Figure 3 The Process of Decorating Puppets in Gogon Arts Center

The process of decorating art of making *Srikandi* in *purwa* puppets in the Gogon studio is to sand. First, take the *purwa* puppet that has been finished inlaid with fine sandpaper. The *purwa* puppet is rubbed slowly until smooth. The smoothness of the puppet surface is very influential at all on the results of the later decoration. Provision of basic color becomes the basis so that the pores of the skin are closed and not transparent. The color used is yellow or white by being brushed with a large brush. This decking is actually a gradation coloring process. The color will be added gradually according to the rules of decorating puppets. The earliest color that is highlighted after the dry base color is black. This color is used on the head, *suluhan muka* (*sinom hair*) for all hair types. *Prada* colors need to be patronized, for example for parts of the headgear, *karawista*, *modangan* and *jamang*. Pink is used for *jamang*, *garudha* and *masmasan* shoots. Yellow is given in suitable and harmonious parts, for example in *jamang*, *sumping*, *garuda* and *masasan*. Blue and orange are added to the places where the eagle, *dawala*, diamonds, and *lung praba*.

3.4. Margono, an Artist of Purwa Puppet in Surakartan Style

As a child who was born in the offspring of a large family of puppeteers, it is not surprising that Margono has been a clever puppeteer since childhood. This also made Margono ventured to be creative in making a new *purwa* puppets. In the terminology of art, style is the art that gives information about the existence of certain patterns so that each variety can be clearly seen and distinguished. Puppet artists in each kingdom embody their own ideas and do not want to be the same as others. This makes the appearance of each style. In a local language, it is called "*gagrak*". *Gagrak* is not limited to the realization of the puppet, but broader. *Gagrak* includes the height of the puppet, type of chisel (*tatahan*) and *sunggingan*, and story. In Surakartan style puppets, the hind legs flatten with toes tightly as if the puppets were standing. The most striking thing is seen in the Surakartan female puppets. The puppet looks like it is walking because its *samparan* cloth jutted backwards. Surakartan female puppets do not wear anklets. This research has also covered all the restrictions regarding the Surakarta style *sunggingan* art. When you look at the situation as it is today, it feels extremely difficult and is not possible to maintain the preservation of the *purwa* puppet art as before. Encouraged by his love for *purwa* puppet, Margono S.Sn. feel sorry for the existence of the *purwa* puppet art. So he entered the category of enculturation patterns. This happened because he was a scholar and observer of art, both fine arts and puppets. Next, he began to make *purwa* puppet with art and make puppets that have a strong character according to his character by applying his feelings, aesthetic science.

4. CONCLUSION

A puppet is a high-value art that was passed down by the ancestors of the Indonesian people. It is an art that is full of messages and moral values, either explicitly or implicitly conveyed through its symbols. A puppet art develops according to the times and regions as well as the supporting community. This makes the creation of various forms and styles of *sunggingan* puppet in accordance with the appreciation and creativity of local artists. Leather puppet art presents beauty by combining intricate sculpture (*tatah*) with matching *sungging* art. The use of color is intended to clarify the character of the puppet characters. As with the form of inlay, *sunggingan* art can be classified into three categories namely *sungging* art for puppet art, *sungging* art for puppetry, and *sungging* art for puppet market. In real art, puppet art must have a harmonious, beautiful and complicated color composition. The colors in *sungging* also function to strengthen the character picture that is conveyed by puppet. The colors include red is the color of fire, black is the color of the earth, yellow is the color of air, white is the color of water, green is the color of plant fertility. The *sungging* steps of puppet are performed before the leather puppets are sanding sandpaper puppets, so that the results of the inlay do not look rough protruding and the leather becomes flat and smooth. The making process of *Srikandi* in *purwa* puppets

in Gogon studio is by giving the basic color to be the basis so that the leather pores are closed as well so that the leather puppet is not transparent, while the color used is yellow or white. Sipping is a gradation in the coloring process because the color will be added gradually according to the siting rules.

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