

Visualization of the Character of “Doctor Strange” in the Creation of the Wayang Avenger

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Abstract

Wayang Avenger is a bridge that connects traditional culture and contemporary culture. Harmonization of cultural fusion and open adaptation appears in the concept elements in the story and the puppet characters. The transformation of traditional wayang towards contemporary wayang implies a tendency towards cultural concept choices. Initially, traditional puppets were a medium for religious ceremonies and a medium for spreading religion. Traditional wayang provides both an overview and a guide to behaviour in life. Changes to contemporary wayang show the existence of changes in wayang tendencies which only describe contemporary phenomena of human life. This research seeks to see and explain the visualization of characters in the creation of the Wayang Avenger, especially the characters in the Doctor Strange character. The explanation leads to the visual elements of the character, with the support of the theory of transformation. The visual elements of Doctor Strange show that their creation takes into account the functions of elements that exist in traditional puppet performances. Character design in the Wayang Avenger which is a combination of two elements, namely elements of tradition and contemporary elements. The combination of the two elements shows that there is an aesthetic principle that contemporary aesthetic does not have to deny the values in a traditional aesthetic.

Keywords: *Puppet creation, Doctor Strange, Visual Elements, Transformation*

Abstrak

wayang menjadi sebuah simbol jembatan yang menghubungkan budaya-budaya yang berbeda. Penuangan unsur-unsur konsep yang ada pada cerita dan tokoh-tokoh dalam wayang adalah harmonisasi dari perpaduan kebudayaan yang saling membuka diri untuk bisa beradaptasi. Kemunculan wayang kreasi sebagai transformasi wayang tradisional menjadi wayang kontemporer menunjukkan beberapa hal, pertama wayang yang pada mulanya menjadi media sarana upacara keagamaan dan menyebarkan ajaran agama, yang memberi gambaran atau pedoman bagaimana masyarakat bersikap, berperilaku dan menjalani kehidupan, kini berubah menjadi sebuah media yang menggambarkan bagaimana manusia hari ini. Penelitian ini membedah wayang kreasi Avenger pada tokoh Doctor Strange, terutama pada unsur-unsur visual karakternya ditunjang dengan teori transformasi. Elemen visual dari Wayang Avenger Doctor Strange menampilkan wujud wayang kreasi yang tetap

mempertahankan rupa wayang tradisi. Desain karakter dalam wayang ini merupakan kombinasi 2 elemen, yaitu elemen tradisi dan elemen kekinian.

Kata kunci: Wayang kreasi, Doctor Strange, Unsur Visual, Transformasi

INTRODUCTION

Wayang (puppet) is an original performance art that is held by Indonesia. UNESCO has recognized since 2003 as an incredible cultural work in the field of narrative stories and a beautiful and valuable heritage (Masterpiece of Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity). Puppet shows have existed since the 9th century as evidence by the existence of the term *haringgit* in the Kuti inscription (840 M), and the term wayang found in the Tajigunung inscription (910 M) (Haryono, 2008, p. 34).

Wayang is the essence of Javanese culture, which has been passed down from generation to generation, about how humans behave in their actions and lives. Judging from the development of its physical form, the first growth of wayang has begun in prehistoric times as a form of the embodiment of ancestral spirits. Stone puppets, known as *unduk*, are believed to be the first manifestations of wayang based on animistic beliefs (Yudoseputro, 2008, p. 209).

For people who are involved in the arts, *wayang kulit purwa* is a valuable masterpiece, where wayang becomes a symbol of a bridge that connects different cultures. The pouring of concept elements into stories and characters in wayang is the harmonization of open cultural fusion by adapting different elements. Although it is ancient, traditional, and classic, *wayang kulit* can survive over time, adjusting to the ideas and needs of the times (Indonesia Heritage, 2002, p. 52).

Pratama said that wayang, as a cultural product, cannot be separated from the existence of the community and its environment (Pratama, 2015, p. 380). Therefore various types of puppet creations emerge, each of which has ways, ideas / his creative ideas and aim with the intent as an effort to preserve puppet art in this millennial era. Based on researchers' observations, the creation of contemporary puppets has the following three types. First is wayang, which emphasizes the use of essential ingredients. The second is the creation of puppets as a result of extracting new characters. The third is wayang that combines the composition of essential ingredients and the creation of numbers.

Wayang creation is the aesthetic transformation of traditional wayang towards contemporary wayang. At first, the puppet was a medium for religious ceremonies and the spread of religious teachings. This puppet is to give an idea or guide about how people behave. The behaviour in question is the behaviour in living life under traditional values that emphasize balance. Changes to wayang show that wayang eventually only becomes a medium that describes human life at this time, especially the picture of the dynamics of the society in behaviour (Pratama, 2015, p. 381).

The story in wayang is also closely related to heroic actions/heroism, protecting the weak and fighting all forms of evil. It is also apparent in superhero fiction films. Genre films like that become a phenomenon that later becomes very loved by the audience, ranging from children to adults. Call it the superhero fiction films made by MCU (Marvel Cinematic Universe) that adapt from stories on Marvel comics made by Stan Lee.

One of the comic artists from Surabaya, Is Yuniarto, always carries the nuances of traditional arts in all his works. The creativity of the creation of the Garudhayana Comic is to adopt aesthetic elements from the epicentre of Ramayana and Adiwira Wilwatikta. Creators cultivate characters by taking character elements from stories in the Majapahit

Kingdom. Comics have reorganized by assimilating various characters in the Majapahit Kingdom with characters in the fictional American superhero film.

Yuniarto is a creative person. He has creative in the creation of comics. He also creates puppet based on his comics as an adaptation of the fictional superhero film Marvel Cinematic Universe (Avenger) and DC Comic (Justice League). All of his creations, he made by considering the aesthetics of Wayang Kulit Purwa. He tried to adapt the shapes and characters of the face, fashion, and inlay. This puppet creation was appreciated and had the honour of being introduced to the world at the red carpet film Avengers: Infinity War, a superhero film that is said to be the largest in the world.

This puppet creation comes with a visual form of character. Yuniarto still maintains the nuances of tradition. Although the characters he created are very much different from the puppets in the *wayang kulit purwa*, the *wayang kulit purwa* will never change its aesthetic principles but with the creation of this puppet becomes a bridge between traditional arts and the millennial generation, which is increasingly distant from its own culture. *Wayang kulit purwa* will never be replaced by its justice, as Nugraha said that cultural transformation becomes a bridge between traditional arts and millennial generation which is increasingly distant from its own culture ((Nugraha, 2019, p. 28).

METHOD

This study examines creation in the Doctor Strange character, especially in the visual elements of his character supported by the theory of transformation. The focus of attention in this study leads to the process of creating puppets in combining the character of the superhero Doctor Strange in the film Avenger into Doctor Strange with the nuances of puppets in the Avenger Puppet. The research method uses qualitative research. Literature searches in the form of books about puppets, observations in puppet studios, interviews, and documentation of various images, photographs and recordings of Avenger and Doctor Strange films are ways of collecting data. Efforts to add references need to apply data collection methods by looking at puppet shows. In watching the puppet show, attention tries to lead to efforts to recognize the comparison of the shape and character of the superhero character with the shape and character of the puppet.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Puppet is a tradition of art that has flourished and lives up to now (especially in Java) because the values taught contain basic philosophies of life. Wayang for Javanese people has a function as a means of communication (propaganda) and a place of understanding about the nature of life. On the other hand, wayang also functions as a symbol of worldview and philosophy of life. Worldview and philosophy are present in the dialogue and storylines. Although the puppet story originates from India, there are intrinsic differences in its manifestation. If in Indonesia the content of the story takes place in the path of myth and is a legend and history, but in Javanese society, these stories symbolize human behaviour and character in achieving life goals, both physically and mentally (Sardjono, 1995, p. 23)

Developments in the world of wayang continue to occur, not only in terms of performances but also in the development of new types of puppet creations. According to (Soetarno dan Sarwanto, 2010, p. 10) said that the performance of *wayang kulit purwa* today has experienced a development both in form and function, this development is influenced by traditional heritage and the result of interaction with external influences that eventually occur adaptation to the environment and structure social. The variety of puppet creations in the centuries-long evolutionary range experienced ups and downs in its development, and which most showed its plasticity and adaptive ability to continue to

survive, metamorphose and eventually become a force of cultural hegemony for 11 centuries is the *wayang kulit purwa* (Riyanto & Mataram, 2018, p. 8).

Wayang Avengers began to be widely known when in early March 2018, Is Yuniarto had the opportunity from Walt Disney Indonesia to work together to make the physical character of the shadow puppets from the Avengers character that had been drawn before. *Wayang Avengers* made physical form consists of the characters Iron Man, Doctor Strange and Nebula. These three puppets were then given to Benedict Cumberbatch (cast of Doctor Strange), Karen Gillan (cast of Nebula), and Avengers: Infinity War director Joe Russo. According to Is Yuniarto, Indonesian wayang tradition, whose story originates from the epic Mahabharata and Ramayana, as a medium tells the story of heroism and war, similar to the film Avengers (Putra, 2018)



Figure 1: Is Yuniarto with Benedict Cumberbatch (Doctor Strange cast), Karen Gillan (Nebula cast), and Avengers director: Infinity War Joe Russo
Source : (Putra, 2018)

In this study, the focus of the study lies in the visual elements of Doctor Strange's character that are transformed into puppet forms. Etymologically transformation is a change in form (shape, nature, function and so on). Transformation can also be interpreted as a change into something, transformation can be considered as a process of transition from a form into a new figure that can be interpreted as the final stage of a process of change. According to Silvetti (1977) transformation of those operations performed on the elements of a given existent code which depart from the original, normal, or canonical usage of the code, by distorting, regrouping, reassembling, or in general altering it in such a way that it maintains its references to the original while tending to produce a new meaning (Stephanie & Johansen, 2011, p. 120), Actions of changes made to the elements or rules (codes) that exist by means of deviations, regrouping, assembly / recollection, which refers to authenticity and is expected to produce a new meaning. These methods are able to maintain their authenticity in producing new meaning and form.

In the film, Doctor Stephen Vincent Strange is a surgeon who is reliable, detailed, careful and planned in every action taken when handling his patients. But behind it all, Doctor Strange has an arrogant, arrogant and selfish character (as a result of his popularity being a wealthy doctor), until at one point Doctor Strange had an accident and damaged the nerves in his hands. At this point, Doctor Strange was frustrated that no neurosurgeon could cure him, so he finally sought a place that was believed to heal his hands in Kathmandu, Nepal named Khamar Taj and met a teacher called The Ancient

One. From there, Strange began to learn something that he could not answer simply by holding on to science knowledge and logic alone, namely magic.



Figure 3 : Puppet Avenger "Doctor Strange"
Source : <https://www.instagram.com/is.yuniarto>

In *Wayang Avenger*, Doctor Strange is visualized as in the film. According to Haryanto, the form of shadow puppets in general is a depiction of human shadows that can be analyzed and divided into three parts, namely: (1) the upper part of the neck and head, (2) the middle part of the body, (3) the limbs of the legs and hands (Haryanto, 1991, p. 31), including Tatahan and Sunggingan.

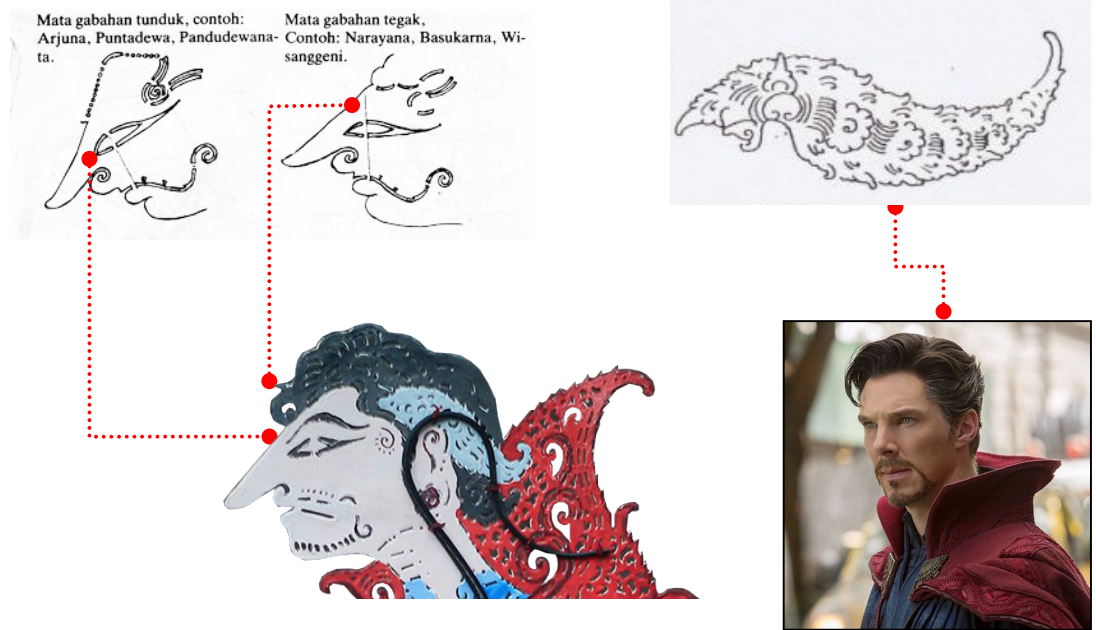
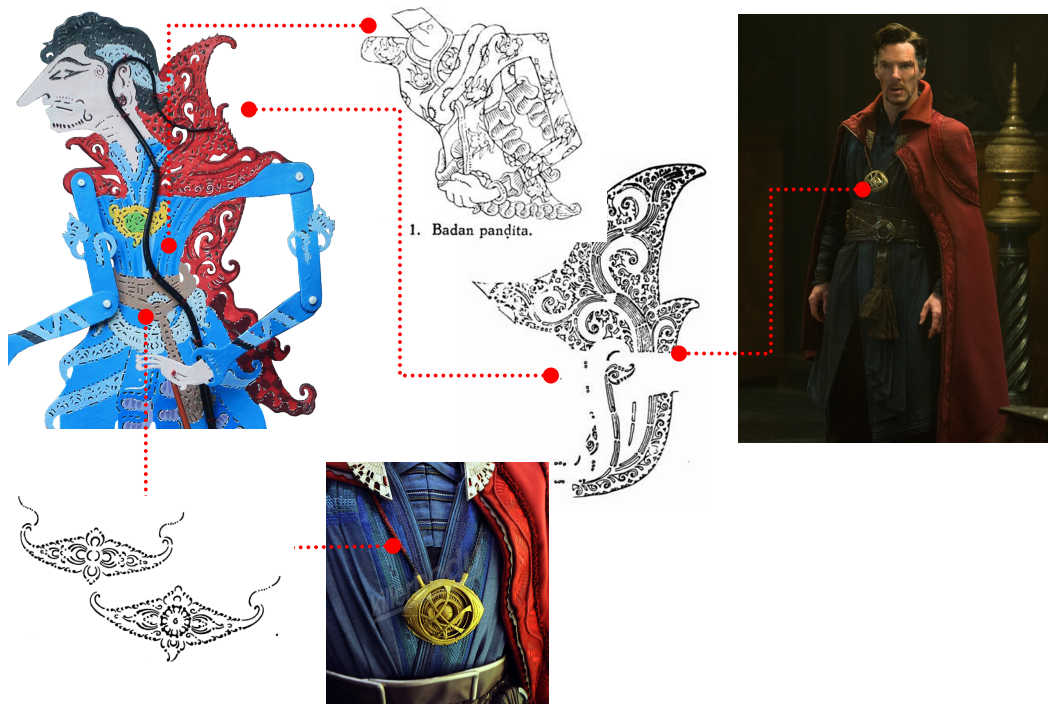


Figure 4: Transformation of visual elements in the Doctor Strange Section Head On the Avenger Puppet "Doctor Strange"

At the top (head to neck), the Avenger Doctor Strange Puppet is visualized as a wayang halusan, sharp-nosed, uncouth-eyed, and a flat face position facing forward. The head does not use a lot of accessories / attributes in the puppets, which appears only in the upper part of the ear seen the use of attributes sumping (a type of jewelry worn on the ear) with gold-gold inlay and a simple inlay, as a substitute for gray hair Doctor Strange on the real character.



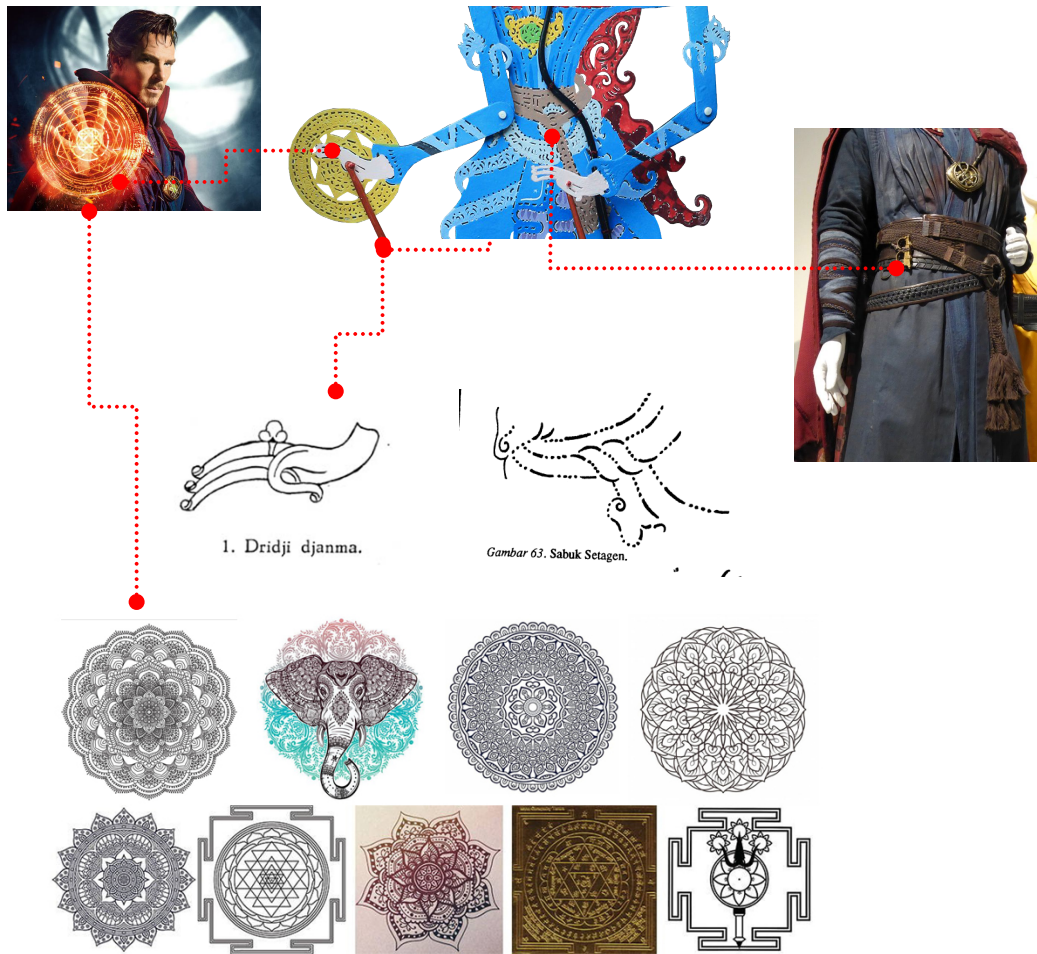


Figure 5: Transforming visual elements in body parts

In the center (body) the Avenger Doctor Strange Puppet is depicted using his distinctive outfit, complete with Doctor Strange's iconic artifacts such as the Cloak of Levitation cloak, the Eye of Agamotto necklace, and his leather belt called the Sash of Doctor Strange. This Cloak of Levitation robe has the main function that makes the wearer fly. The advantage of this robe is that the user does not need to know much about magic or use magic power to be able to operate it. There is a clothing modification to the attributes of this outfit, Cloak of Levitation robes depicted like praba but on the shoulders like using sampur. In the Purwa Wayang Kulit clothing, praba is a great outfit for the puppet king or patih figure, even for some figures in the purwa shadow puppet, praba can also be interpreted as a special outfit that can make the user fly. Similarly, the Cloak of Levitation robe can only be used by a Supreme Sorcerer, a title given to the best practitioners of magic and mysticism and gives the wearer the ability to fly. Then the magic necklace of the Eye of Agamotto which has the power to manipulate time. In the avenger puppet, this magical necklace is depicted as a form of a kebomanggah necklace on a purwa puppet. Furthermore, the Sash of Doctor Strange belt is taken not from the belt in the puppet, but taken from the belt in the Doctor Strange film.



Figure 6: Transforming the bottom visual elements

Parts of the limbs (hands and feet) Puppet Avenger character Doctor Strange is depicted using the calumpringan model of the shoulder kelat on the arm. In the film, Doctor Strange wears a watch on his left hand, but in his puppet works, the watch does not appear in the form of a bracelet. On the feet, a fashion model that is usually used by the sage / priest and deity, can be seen from the body to the feet. In the sage / priest and deity figures, wayang figures are depicted wearing a robe with a single prayer on the edge of their robes and shoes, so the avenger Doctor Strange puppet also adopts the fashion style of a priest / resi.

CONCLUSION

Transformation into an established strategy is used to combine tradition and modernity. The transformation process of Doctor Strange's superhero character into the work of the avenger puppet, made in such a way by its creator while maintaining and adjusting the shape of the traditional puppet. The visual elements of the Avenger Doctor Strange Puppet that are appointed do not only come from one source, but are combined with other sources so that they are able to display the form of puppet creations that still maintain the appearance of traditional puppets. Character design in this puppet is a combination of 2 elements, namely elements of tradition and contemporary elements. The strength of this Avenger Puppet is the understanding of an Is Yuniarto who is very

good in adapting the character of Doctor Strange and in-depth research on the art of wayang including the inlay and puppet sunggingan.

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