

Gunungan Wayang Sadat: The Study of Its Religious Values and Its Relevance in Fine Art Learning in High Schools

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to explain (1) religious values in *gunungan wayang* (a leather puppet shaped like a mountain) *sadat* (the facilities of preaching and conveyance—*sarana dakwah dan tabligh*), and (2) the relevance of the visual structures of *gunungan wayang sadat* to arts and culture learning in fine art subjects in high schools based on the curriculum in 2013. The research was conducted in Mireng village, Klaten, Central Java using a qualitative descriptive approach. Research subjects were *gunungan wayang sadat* and fine art teachers. Data were collected using interviews, literature study, and content analysis. Data source triangulation was applied to increase the data validity. The data were analysed using an interactive model of data analysis, including data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing were continuously conducted in a cycle. The research findings indicate that *gunungan wayang sadat* implicitly and explicitly contains religious values which are in accordance with Islamic values. The religious values contained in the structures of *gunungan wayang sadat* are highly relevant to the material of fine art learning in high schools based on character education in the curriculum during 2013.

Keywords: Creation, *gunungan*, Islamic values, preaching of Islam, *wayang sadat*

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INTRODUCTION

The studies of *wayang* (puppet show) have been conducted by some researchers. One of them is Sutarno (2002, p. 21) who investigated puppet shows in Javanese culture. Abdullah (2008, p. 39) conducted an ethnolinguistic study related to Javanese

terms in sculpturing and colouring *wayang purwa* (the first shadow puppet) in Surakarta City. *Wayang kulit* as a medium of character education was reviewed by Arifin (2002, p. 75), and a study related to *wayang kancil* (mouse deer puppet) was conducted by Nurwanti (2013, p. 95). Meanwhile, a similar study of the *wayang kulit purwa* show in Surakarta style was carried out by Junaidi (2010, p. 141).

A study of another type of *wayang*, which focused on *wayang klithik* (a flat wooden shadow puppet) as a medium to help autistic children learn to speak, was conducted by Sunardi (2016, p. 195). A study focusing on the figure of Dewa Ruci is utilised as an alternative to the education system (Isnaniah, 2010, p. 41). The contents of a visual arts teaching course, such as *wayang*, could be planned according to postmodern art education and these planned course contents could be taught with different instructional methods. Postmodern art education approaches can be suggested for all the art education courses that take place in teaching programmes (Kaynar, 2012, p. 1049).

The research of *wayang wong* was historically examined with reference to the Priangan cultural background (Ruslana, 2000, p. 45). Wicaksana (1998, p. 85) studied *wayang sapuh leger* (Hinduism for purification) on its functions and meaning for Balinese people. The functions include inaugural ceremony, purification rites, social institutions, and reflection of aesthetic expression. A study concerning *gunungan*

wayang purwa has not been associated with religious values.

Of the aforementioned studies, there is no study focusing on *gunungan wayang sadat* (a mountain-like leather puppet), its connection with religious values, and its relevance to the curriculum of 2013. The present study, therefore, seeks to examine the religious values of *gunungan wayang sadat* and its relevance as a teaching material of fine art learning in high schools based on the curriculum during 2013.

METHODS

The research was conducted in Mireng village, Trucuk subdistrict, Klaten regency of Central Java using a qualitative descriptive approach. The research subject includes *gunungan wayang sadat* made by a *dalang* (puppeteer) of *wayang sadat* named Suryadi. A *gunungan* was selected using purposive sampling out of four provided *gunungans*. Data were collected using interviews with a *wayang* maker and high school teachers, a literature study, and content analysis of *gunungan wayang sadat*. To gain data validity, data source triangulation was applied by crosschecking interview data with the results of observation and content analysis. The data were then analysed using an interactive model of analysis, comprising data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The aforementioned analysis components were continuously conducted in a cycle until valid data were obtained.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Results

Below are research findings which include the comparison data of *gunungan wayang purwa* and *sadat*, elements of shapes and

meanings of *gunungan wayang sadat*, as well as visual aspects and the relevance of *gunungan wayang sadat* to enrich fine art teaching materials based on the 2013 curriculum.

Table 1
The comparison between gunungan wayang purwa and wayang sadat

No	Types of <i>Gunungan</i>	Structure		
		Top	Middle	Bottom
1	<i>Wayang purwa</i>	Plain	Trees, animals, giants	Gates, giants, winged heads
2	<i>Wayang sadat</i>	the word Allah	The calligraphy of Islamic Creed	Demak mosque, stars, wings, surah Ibrahim: verse 24

To find out the religious values of *gunungan wayang sadat*, some data are demonstrated in Table 2.

Table 2
The elements of shape and meaning of gunungan wayang sadat

Shape	Meaning	Description
Demak mosque	The structures of three worlds	Islam, faith (<i>iman</i>), perfection (<i>ihsan</i>)
Calligraphy	The Islamic Creed (<i>syahada</i>)	<i>Ashadualla ila ha ilallah wa ashaduanna muhammadarosulullah</i>
The six stars	The six articles of faith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belief in Allah • Belief in His angels • Belief in divine books • Belief in prophets • Belief in the day of judgement • Belief in God's predestination
The five wings	The pillars of Islam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shahadah (sincerely reciting the Muslim profession of faith) • Salat (performing ritual prayers in the proper way five times each day) • Zakat (paying an alms (or charity) tax to benefit the poor and the needy) • Sawm (fasting during the month of Ramadan) • Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca)
Tendrils ornaments	Plants	Life

Fine art teaching materials are closely related to parts of *gunungan wayang sadat* in terms of a number of visual elements with such Islamic concept-based forms as the Demak mosque, calligraphy, the six stars, the five wings, and tendril ornaments. Meanwhile, in relation to the method of teaching fine art, the structure of those visual elements can be used semiotically/

semantically as a teaching method to raise students' emotional intelligence, and as a teaching aid to internalise religious values, attitudes, and skills in performing good deeds. In addition, the data of the visual elements of *wayang sadat* in relation to teaching materials in fine art subjects are displayed in Table 3.

Table 3

The visual elements of gunungan sadat and their relevance to the teaching materials of fine art in high schools based on the curriculum (2013)

Color	Meaning	Application in <i>Gunungan</i>
White	It symbolises purity, sanctity, smoothness and softness.	Mosque, yard, calligraphy
Black	It symbolises valour, strength and death.	The upper limit of the <i>gunungan</i>
Gold	It symbolises immortality and perfection.	The mosque, border of the <i>gunungan</i>
Brown	It symbolises warmth, serenity, naturalness and calmness.	Wings, bottom part, the mosque roof

DISCUSSION

The *gunungan* in a *wayang kulit purwa* context is often referred to as *kayon* or *hayat* which literarily means living. Its structure consists of three parts, comprising top, middle, and bottom parts. The top part is taper-shaped which reflects that the world above is abstract, sacred, and pure; it goes towards God's power. The middle part is the visible part, which is round in shape, describing the real world, similar to the world we live in as part of our daily lives. The third structure reflects an underworld described by arrangements in temples which are called *kamadhatu*.

Generally, in the world of *wayang purwa* performing art, *gunungan* is used in opening and closing scenes. For the

Javanese society, the *gunungan* tradition is closely related to the philosophy of life (*sangkan*) and death (*paran*) or *sangkan paraning dumadi* – that is, remembering the origin and destination of life) (Sutarno, 2002, p. 34). The Javanese traditional society considers that human perfection is in life and death. Humans exist in order to live a perfect life and die peacefully.

Some elements existing in *gunungan wayang sadat* include the mosque shape with a Demak motif. A mosque is the heart of Islam and the House of Allah (Haryanto, 1995, p. 195). The mosque roof consists of three structures. The top structure describes three phases of world, comprising life before birth, life in the world, and life after death. The three structures in Islam can be

transformed to conceptual levels which are so-called Islam, *iman* (faith), and *ihsan* (perfection) (Gazalba, 2000, p. 247). Islam means total surrender to Allah. *Iman* is belief in Allah and should be orally stated and proved with good deeds involving worship, both through the relationship between humans and the one with Allah. *Ihsan* means to believe and feel that Allah always watches and pays attention to human movements and activities in life. In addition, Murtisari (2013, p. 123) states that belief in God has become a core source of values among the traditional Javanese people and how they are further developed into their daily norms of conduct. The aforementioned level is the top level of being a Muslim since it involves a feeling of being physically and emotionally sincere.

There are a door and two windows in the picture of a mosque, and these form an upwards tape shape which represents the oneness of Allah. The windows are in the left and right sides of the door, which symbolise that the world and its contents are balanced. The world simply consists of two kinds since they were basically created in a pair; for instance, man and woman, day and night, the strong and the weak, the rich and the poor, etc. Meanwhile, the one door symbolises an uneven number, which means that Allah has no pair and no one can rival Him since He is the only Creator and the first existing in the world. On the other hand, the Earth and its inhabitants are only His creations, so they are mortal or can be damaged. In this case, the door symbolises the path to life perfection and

death, confirming that the only possible way towards Allah is Islam.

The calligraphy in the *gunungan* written in Arabic language is *syahadah* (a declaration of Muslim faith). It is in the first sequence of the pillars of Islam since it underlies the other pillars, and therefore its existence is very fundamental. The *syahadah* expresses that there is no God but Allah, and that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah, and therefore, it is meant to be a declaration that one is a Muslim. It is hence what differs a Muslim and a non-Muslim. The *syahadah* is the foundation of Islam; it implies the acknowledgement of Allah's existence and that the Prophet Muhammad was sent as the servant representative in the world and that his behaviours should be imitated or followed as he is the most perfect human among others.

The other structure is the six stars that symbolise the six pillars of *iman* (faith), involving belief in Allah, His angels, divine books, His prophets, the day of judgement, and His predestination, *Al Qadar* (Kaelany, 2000, p. 38). Like in a building, *iman* is similar to the foundation; it is not visible but its existence underlies and exerts strong influences on the robustness to support the building. In behaviour context, *iman* will also be the foundation of behaviour as it serves as a benchmark to see individual behaviour. Therefore, a faithful person should believe, be able to orally declare, and able to prove it with his/her good deeds in daily life.

The tendril ornaments are the symbols of plants of which leaves are connected

to each other. The world is full of green plants. The food daily consumed by human includes grains harvested from plants which symbolise life and fertility. Plants are the forms of Allah's mercy as the universe Creator to His servants, those living in the world. In line with these symbols, Caleste (2016, p. 74) concluded in his study that religion is found to be a particular salient predictor for life satisfaction.

Compared to *gunungan wayang sadat*, *gunungan wayang purwa* has different shapes and meanings. They are not the same both in structures and in shapes. Its top part has a tapered shape, while the middle part contains a house, animals, plants, and guard statues. Furthermore, in the bottom part, a yard is seen.

At the top part of *gunungan wayang sadat* is the word of Allah. The middle part is decorated with *syahadah* calligraphy, and at the bottom part is the mosque picture. Thus, *gunungan sadat* explicitly and implicitly contains religious values which are Islamic values.

***Gunungan Sadat* and its Relevance as Fine Art Teaching Material in the Curriculum of 2013**

In the culture and art curriculum for high schools, fine art subjects are integrated with other arts. In the 2013 curriculum, there were 18 educational values which placed an emphasis on character, such as being religious, honest, tolerant, disciplined, hard-working, creative, independent, democratic, curious, patriotic, being appreciative of achievement, communicative, peaceable,

enthusiastic about reading, aware of the environment, sociable, and responsible. One of these is religious value, namely the values of the six pillars of faith (*rukun iman*) represented on the structure of *gunungan*, which serve as a concept or an idea in actualising them for worship addressed to Allah.

The specific benefits of the study of *gunungan wayang sadat* include improved knowledge, understanding, knowledge of Islamic values through visual language in the form of *gunungan wayang sadat* art, developed positive attitudes towards Islamic values, and improved implementation of the values in accordance with the five pillars of Islam (*rukun Islam*).

Fine art subject materials are closely related to visual aspects such as colour, lines, shapes, textures, and the values in which they are closely related to meanings or symbols. The most dominant visual aspects in *wayang sadat* comprise shape and colour. Shape aspects consist of the mosque, Arabic script or calligraphy, stars, wings, tendril ornaments. The aforementioned shapes are regarded as relevant material sources for high school students in fine art subjects for the purpose of embedding one's character with religious views.

The colour applied to pictures of a mosque yard, mosque, and calligraphy is white; this symbolises purity, sanctity, smoothness, and softness. The colour black is applied to the basic shape of the *gunungan* in the top part to represent valour and strength on the one side, and death or the other world on the other. The golden colour

of the mosque and border of the *gunungan* symbolises immortality and perfection. A brown color is mostly applied to pictures of wings, the bottom part of the *gunungan*, and the mosque roof. This colour symbolises warmth, serenity, naturalness, and calmness (Effendi, 1978, p. 66). The visual aspect cannot be separated from the philosophical meaning aspect, so it also includes character values.

Clearly, there exists an intrinsic or implied value. Both colours and shapes are symbolically used. The various aspects of shapes and their symbolism should be related to its application aspect since it deals with art creativity on the one hand and appreciation value on the other.

The aforementioned aspects of shapes and colours strengthen the symbolic meanings of *gunungan wayang sadat* as the manifestation of the Islamic religious values created by the maker named Mr Suryadi. The symbolic shapes are exhibited through the three-roof mosque describing the world and levels of faith in Islam, the calligraphy of *syahadah*, six stars, five wings, and tendril ornaments in *gunungan wayang sadat*. The picture of *gunungan* which is a transformation of the *wayang kulit* has good visual elements for fine art education in high schools based on the 2013 curriculum which emphasises character values or value education.

CONCLUSION

The research findings indicate that aspects such as shapes and colours strengthen the symbolic meanings of *gunungan wayang*

sadat. Therefore, *gunungan wayang sadat* contains Islamic teaching-based religious values explicitly and implicitly in accordance with moral education. The religious values contained in the structures of the *gunungan* are highly relevant for the teaching materials of fine art in high schools in the area of character education as required in the 2013 curriculum. In reference to the aforementioned findings, it was suggested that high school fine art teachers should utilise *gunungan wayang sadat* as an appropriate teaching material for the purpose of the embedding of students' religious values.

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