

# WAYANG KULIT AS A WORLD ATTRACTION FOR YOGYAKARTA TOURISM: A STUDY OF WAYANG KULIT PERFORMANCES IN KRATON YOGYAKARTA

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## *Abstract*

Wayang Kulit (leather shadow-puppet play) is one of Indonesia's original cultures that was included in the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage. The Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat Palace, the center of cultural arts in Yogyakarta, regularly shows wayang kulit performances as cultural arts performances. Wayang kulit performances at the Yogyakarta Palace were held every Thursday from 10.00 - 13.00 WIB in Bangsal Srimanganti of Yogyakarta Palace. By looking at the phenomenon of wayang kulit performances at the Srimanganti Palace, the researcher wants to see how far the role of wayang kulit as a global cultural heritage has become a tourist attraction in Yogyakarta. The global role of wayang kulit as a tourism attraction will be studied using the concept of 4A Tourism (Attractions, Amenities, Accessibility, Ancillary) combined with the theory of the Global Village by Marshall McLuhan. The findings show that the management of cultural tourism in the Yogyakarta Palace has successfully implemented the 4A concept in tourism. The application of this concept has had many effects on the sustainability of tourism in the Yogyakarta palace, especially wayang kulit performances.

**Keywords:**Wayang Kulit, Puppet Show, Yogyakarta Palace, Cultural Heritage

## INTRODUCTION

*Wayang Kulit* (leather shadow-puppet play) is one of Indonesia's original cultures that was included in the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage list on November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2003, and is commemorated as *Wayang World Day* every year. For ten centuries, *wayang kulit* developed in the Javanese and Balinese royal

palaces and rural areas. *Wayang* has also spread to other islands (Lombok, Madura, Sumatra, and Kalimantan), where various styles of local performances and musical accompaniment have developed (ICH UNESCO, 2022).

In addition, the thing that attracts *wayang kulit* to the

international community is its magnificent performance which contains philosophical values, guidance, and the moral order of life. *Wayang kulit* also often becomes a means of Indonesian diplomacy abroad on various cultural mission opportunities to establish diplomatic relations with world countries. It can deliver and introduce *wayang kulit* further to the international world.

Even now, in various locations and tourist destinations in the Special Region of Yogyakarta, *wayang kulit* shows are still often held as tourist attractions that aim to increase the attractiveness of both domestic and foreign tourists. Occasionally, *wayang kulit* is held for other ritual purposes, such as *ruwatan* and others.

The *Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat* Palace, as the center of cultural arts in Yogyakarta, also regularly displays *wayang kulit* performances as cultural arts performances. As a series of traditional rituals, all-night *wayang kulit* performances called *Bedhol Songsong* are held every year to mark the end of *Hajad Dalem Garebeg* (Vetter, 2016). In addition, *wayang kulit* performances with a short duration (short *Pakeliran* (vocal and instrument in *wayang kulit* performance)) are also routinely held at the *Kagungan Dalem Bangsal Srimanganti Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat* Palace.

Before 2020, *wayang kulit* performances at the Yogyakarta

Palace were held every Saturday from morning to noon. Then, at the beginning of 2020, the schedule was changed to every Thursday from 10.00 - 13.00 WIB (Visiting Jogja, 2020). Although, the staging location has not changed, which is still in the *Bangsal Srimanganti* of Yogyakarta Palace. The performance is performed by the *dhalang* (puppeteers) at *Abdi Dalem* palace and the *dhalang* associations in the Yogyakarta area. This activity has been done for a long time as part of a series of Tour Package Performances at the Yogyakarta Palace, which also aims to introduce to the broad public the Yogyakarta-style classical *wayang kulit* performance.

By looking at the phenomenon of *wayang kulit* performances at the *Srimanganti* Palace, the researcher wants to see how far the role of *wayang kulit* as a global cultural heritage has become a tourist attraction in Yogyakarta. The global role of *wayang kulit* as a tourism attraction will be studied using the concept of 4A Tourism (Attractions, Amenities, Accessibility, Ancillary) combined with the theory of the Global Village by Marshall McLuhan.

Many previous studies have revealed that *wayang kulit* is a tourism attraction in several areas in Indonesia. In an article entitled "THE ART OF WAYANG KULIT AS A CULTURAL TOURISM ATTRACTION" published in the

Journal of Language, Literature, and Wahana Culture Volume 27 of 2021. Priyanto stated that originally *wayang kulit* as a means of religious rituals and had traditional values, but currently, *wayang* also has another function as a tourist attraction and entertaining storytelling for the public (Priyanto, 2021).

*Wayang kulit* can be called a complex art. In terms of performances, *wayang kulit* performances make it a type of performing art. However, in the manufacturing process, *wayang* itself can be categorized as fine art, specifically craft art. Many of the plots drawn from episodes seen in the Hindu epics *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* also make *wayang* closely related to literary arts (Priyanto, 2021).

Currently, as a tourist attraction, *wayang kulit* is a show that can provide life lessons. *Wayang kulit* can form a person's character. The communicative type of *wayang kulit* show makes the audience feel and adapt their lives to various *wayang* stories. The shape of *wayang*, manner of dress, and manner of speech will determine the nature of a character in a *wayang kulit* show. The same characters can show different characteristics by differences in clothing, form, and how *dhalang* brings the character. It makes *wayang* become a communication medium

between the audience and the *wayang* story (Priyanto, 2021).

*Wayang kulit* is also known as a symbol of human life. *Wayang* shows are depicted human life in an unstable world. While behind the screen (in the shadow) is a parable of humans in the hereafter. Several philosophies in the world of *wayang*, along with stories of *wayang* art have wisdom in real life and will form the norm in society. (Priyanto, 2021).

In addition to Priyanto's previous writing, he took the example of a *wayang kulit* show at the *Sonobudoyo* Museum (Priyanto, 2021). He also wrote about *wayang kulit* which can become a tourism attraction in a special interest cultural tourism village. His article entitled "Javanese *Wayang Kulit* Cultural Tourism Village as a Special Interest Tourism Destination and Indonesian Tourism Commodity" was published in the *Journal of Indonesian Tourism and Policy Studies* Vol. 2 No. 1, 2017.

In his writing, Priyanto indicates that Javanese *wayang kulit* are the main objects of the cultural tourism villages of Pucung (Bantul, DIY), Gendeng (Bantul, DIY), and Kepuhsari (Wonogiri, Central Java). Most locals work as *wayang kulit* craftsmen for generations, so *wayang* became the main commodity of the village society (Priyanto, 2017, 44).

### **Globalization and Global Village**

Many scientists have put forward a definition of globalization. Held and McGrew proposed a definition of globalization as the expanding scale, growing magnitude, speeding up, and deepening impact of interregional flows and patterns of social interaction. It refers to a shift or transformation in the scale of human social organization that links distant communities and expands the reach of power relations across the world's major regions and continents" (Held and McGrew 2004).

The definition of globalization proposed by Held and McGrew focuses on shifting patterns of human social interaction. Globalization has shifted the pattern of interaction that was originally limited, but now being able to cross regional boundaries. In simple language, globalization allows people who are far apart in space to be able to connect and interact with each other.

Globalization can't be separated from the global village term. This term was coined by communications scientist Marshall McLuhan in the 1960s. McLuhan (1962) in his book *Guttenberg Galaxy*, explained that the unprecedented phenomenon of electronic interdependence had re-created the world into an imaginary global village. The emergence of verbal society, a society that is dependent on the elements that make it up, is the result of a dialectic

between cause and effect due to the dynamics within the interacting structure of society. These characteristics are considered to be the nature of a village community, which is also the nature of a global village community (McLuhan 1962).

Both definitions of globalization put forward by Held and McGrew and the global village term presented by McLuhan emphasizes the existence of power relations that cross the distance between space and time. Thus, both of them see that the 'best things' will always win in this global village and will form a new custom in the community. In other words, those who are superior will dominate the inferior, and there will always be a struggle to be the most superior.

In this global village that happens because of globalization, information can be spread smoothly without any barriers in the form of space and time. Various pieces of information from every region around the world will rearrange to fill the spaces in the global village. So does entertainment as one of the products of culture. It might give an opportunity as well as a threat to *Wayang Kulit* as an intangible heritage from Indonesia.

### **4A Concept of Tourism (Attractions, Amenities, Accessibility, and Ancillary)**

The 4A concept in tourism, namely Attractions, Amenities,

Accessibility, and Ancillary is used to see the existing tourism potential. Described by Cooper (1995), an explanation of the 4A concept, namely:

1. Attractions: this is a component that can attract tourists. Both in the form of site attractions (places, historical places, places with a good climate, beautiful views) or event attractions (events or events such as exhibitions, congresses, and other events).
2. Amenities: the availability of facilities such as lodging, restaurants, transportation, and communication tools.
3. Accessibility: a place that is easily accessible using transportation, cheap, safe, and comfortable.
4. Ancillary or can be called additional services that support the tourist destinations such as tourist information, travel agents whose purpose is to promote and develop into a tourism attraction.

These four concepts are then used to see the potential for developing tourism products in Indonesia.

## **METHOD**

The research uses a qualitative method that could explore and understand the meaning derived

from social or humanitarian problems and phenomena. Phenomenology approach, a form of qualitative research where the writer attempts to understand how one or more individuals experience a phenomenon is used in this study.

This qualitative research involves observation of the primary data and literature study as the secondary data. The writer observed the activities in *Karaton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat*, especially its *wayang kulit* performances, both offline and online (through regular digital media monitoring). Primary data are taken from several posts on Kraton Jogja's official social media.

As for completing this research, the writer was also doing a literature study to find an appropriate theory and other supporting data about the online activities of *Kraton Jogja* through books, journals, and articles. Primary and secondary data are further elaborated for triangulation with the 4A Concepts of Tourism and Global Village theory. The descriptive analysis technique was used to analyze the results. The data is evaluated, then explained or interpreted to get a complete picture of the phenomenon under study.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The Global Village concept presented by Marshall McLuhan explains technological advances and dependence on technology, such as

communication tools that make the world's citizens connect without any limitations of space and time. This concept can be seen in the global phenomenon that occurs in tourism development in the Yogyakarta Palace at this time.

The development of tourism in the Yogyakarta Palace is currently very much supported by technological advances. Through this technology, the Yogyakarta Palace can introduce and develop the historical and cultural values of the *Kraton* to the wider society, especially the international community. The international community currently can access various information about the Yogyakarta Palace, including various performing arts performed by the palace through various social media, one of which is the *Kraton Jogja* Youtube channel (Youtube *Kraton Jogja*, 2015).

Afterward, this phenomenon can be explained through the Global Village concept, that advances in information technology, media, and communication can make it easier for the world's people to interact and communicate with others without any boundaries of space, time, geographical location, or existing culture. Besides, it is also easy for the international community to access all information related to the Yogyakarta Palace, and vice versa. The Yogyakarta Palace can also easily promote and introduce Indonesian

culture, especially Yogyakarta, to the international community through technology.

Communication emphasis in the Global Village concept is important to introduce and promote Javanese (Yogyakarta) culture. It is also a means to introduce the identity of the Indonesian nation through cultural channels, especially the *wayang kulit* performances at Yogyakarta Palace.

For example, on the *Kraton Jogja* Youtube channel, people from all over the world can easily access the *wayang kulit* performances that are broadcast. One of the recently held *wayang kulit* was an all-night *wayang kulit* show entitled "*Bedhol Songsong Sawal Alip 1955: Ringgit Wacucal Lampahan Slagahima Contest*" which was a series of *Hajad Dalem* in the month of *Sawal* which held last Tuesday, 3 May 2022 (Youtube *Kraton Jogja*, 2022). The *wayang kulit* performance, called *bedhol songsong*, was held at the *Bangsas Srimanganti* Palace, Yogyakarta, but it was not open to the public due to the pandemic situation. In the live chat column during the performance, it was observed that several viewers were present from all over Indonesia, from Central Java, East Java, West Java, North Sumatra, Kalimantan, and Sulawesi, including the Indonesian diaspora abroad such as Suriname.

Focusing on the discussion of Wayang Kulit Performance as a Tour Package Performance at the Yogyakarta Palace which was held at the Srimanganti Ward, although it was not broadcast online via live streaming on the Kraton Jogja Youtube channel. Several tourists also shared their recordings of watching the dense-duration *wayang kulit* performance on their respective social media channels, as did the Poh Wani YouTube channel, which uploaded a video entitled "Wayang performance at the Yogyakarta palace" on December 25, 2020.<sup>5</sup>

Wayang Kulit performances have a short duration that is shown in the Yogyakarta Palace Tour Package Stage at Kagungan Dalem Bangsal Srimanganti Kraton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat, with the 4A Concept of Tourism can be discussed as follows:

### **Attractions**

*Wayang kulit* show is a cultural attraction. The *wayang kulit* show is held for a short duration; every Thursday at Bangsal Srimanganti of Yogyakarta Palace becomes an added value for tourists visiting the Yogyakarta Palace. Tourists not only see historical buildings and objects as well as various explanations and stories from tour guides but have the opportunity to witness firsthand one of the art forms that were born and preserved by the Yogyakarta Palace.

### **Accessibility.**

The Yogyakarta Palace is one of the tourist destinations in the city of Yogyakarta and is easily accessible from various areas with various transportation. For large groups of tourists who have to park the bus at the Ngabean or Senopati Parking Pockets, they can easily access the scheduled shuttle bus.

Especially in Bangsal Srimanganti as a place for the performance of the *wayang kulit* show, its location is quite strategic. Bangsal Srimanganti is the first building seen by tourists as soon as they enter the *regol Keben* or the main entrance to the *kedhaton* (main area of the palace) area of Yogyakarta palace. Special access and wheelchairs are also available in Yogyakarta Palace for disabilities. The accessibility of the Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat Palace, especially to the Bangsal Srimanganti as a staging area, is important because it is a benchmark for whether or not tourists, both local and foreign, can watch the *wayang kulit* show.

### **Amenities**

*Karaton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat* is the biggest place for cultural tourism activities in the Special Region of Yogyakarta because it has many cultural tours that can be enjoyed by tourists. As a living museum, not only historical buildings and objects, *Abdi Dalem's*

activities can be seen. The existence of *Wayang Kulit* performances in the *Bangsals Srimanganti* will certainly enrich the tourist attractions in the palace.

In addition, the palace also facilitates tourists both physically and non-physically. The special entrance access and wheelchairs for people with disabilities; the tour guides for the convenience of tourists when visiting; the availability of public cleaning facilities, such as toilets which have been renovated to become cleaner and modern; the existence of an open space that can be used by tourists to sit and relax; to the availability of restaurants in the Yogyakarta Palace *Magangan* area. Various renovations and revitalization of buildings are also continuously carried out to increase the comfort of tourists visiting the Yogyakarta Palace.

#### **Ancillary**

The last point is ancillary or additional services to support tourist destinations. The Yogyakarta Palace as a living museum has historical buildings and objects as well as the daily activities of *Abdi Dalem* as the main attractions presented to tourists. However, a series of art performances at the *Bangsals Srimanganti* Tour Package Stage was coordinated by Kawedanan Kridhamardawa as one of the departments within the Yogyakarta Palace is tasked with

preserving and developing palace arts, course it becomes a tourism support capacity in the palace.

The collaboration between Kawedanan Kridhamardawa and Kawedanan Tandha Yekti (as the department in charge of documentation and IT at the Yogyakarta Palace) always tries to encourage the promotion of various artistic performances and cultural education at the Yogyakarta Palace, including *wayang kulit*. Communication technology development is used as an opportunity by the Yogyakarta Palace for the collaboration of Kawedanan Kridhamardawa and Kawedanan Tandha Yekti to promote *wayang kulit* as a tourist attraction with historical and cultural nuances through the Yogyakarta Palace's social media accounts such as Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube, as well as websites.

Even so, looking specifically at the Yogyakarta Palace Tour Package Performance at *Bangsals Srimanganti*, it seems that it has only started to be promoted quite intensively since early 2020. Paused due to the Covid-19 pandemic, which made the Yogyakarta Palace issued a policy to temporarily stop the tour packages in Yogyakarta. In order not to cause crowds that can make spreading Covid-19, the performances start again in July 2022.



Seeing from the social media channels of the Yogyakarta Palace, especially on Instagram @kratonjogja.event, which was created to promote events at the Yogyakarta Palace. The promotion of the Tour Package Performances at Bangsal Srimanganti back in 2020 was not optimal, especially *wayang kulit*. The account only uploaded the schedule, but no other information was found regarding the *dhalang* on duty or the play performed.

But as we can see from their latest post on social media, they're improving their promotion. They share the schedule of the Tour Package Performances at Bangsal Srimanganti weekly, along with complete information about whose the *dhalang* on the duty, the affiliation of the *dhalang*, and what's the story performed (Instagram Kratonjogja.event, 2022). It is a good sign of improvement and hopefully can increase people's awareness about the performances of *wayang kulit* in the Bangsal Srimanganti *Karaton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat*.

## CONCLUSION

The *wayang kulit* show at the Yogyakarta Palace has become a tourist attraction for both foreign and domestic tourists. The management of cultural tourism in the Yogyakarta Palace has successfully implemented the 4A concept in tourism. The application of this concept has had

many effects on the sustainability of tourism in the Yogyakarta palace, especially *wayang kulit* performances.

Through this concept application, tourists can enjoy cultural tourism comfortably, and the Yogyakarta Palace can also introduce its culture. This cultural immunization cannot be separated from the role of using technology in the current digital era. Technological advances have made *wayang kulit* shows at the Yogyakarta Palace known throughout the world. This progress has also created a global order in which everyone can visit the Yogyakarta Palace at any time through the digital page owned by the Yogyakarta Palace.

In short, the writer concludes that the concept of good tourism management, the use of technology, and good communications will create a concept that can develop tourism progress through digital communication.

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