Visualization Elements of Shadow Play Technique Movement and Study of Computer Graphic Imagery (CGI) in Wayang Kulit Kelantan

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ABSTRACT

In the attempt to preserve and safeguard the unique heritage of Wayang Kulit (Shadow Play), UNESCO has designated it as a Masterpiece of Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity on 7th November 2003. Wayang Kulit Kelantan in Malaysia is threatened with imminent extinction. This paper reviews the critical situation of Wayang Kulit Kelantan in Malaysia. The visualization and movement of Wayang Kulit Kelantan is described in four major aspects, which are the puppets, shadows, screen for shadow projection (Kelir), and its light source. It also reviews the comparison methods and techniques between Wayang Kulit Kelantan traditional shadow play and Computer Graphics Imagery (CGI) used as a prototype design in Wayang Kulit Kelantan.

Keywords: Computer Graphic Imagery (CGI), Kelir, Prototype, Puppets, Shadow Play, Visualization, Wayang Kulit Kelantan

INTRODUCTION

Puppetry is one of the most ancient forms of representation, diffused all over the world in different shapes, degrees of freedom in movements and forms of manipulation (Jaring Communications, 2009). This research focuses on Wayang Kulit Kelantan. It is believed to have originated from Cambodia, but brought to Kelantan kingdom. The wayang kulit kelantan is widespread on the Coast East Peninsular Malaysia. Wayang Kulit Kelantan is the pre-eminent form of shadow puppet theatre in Malaysia and the stylistic differences seem to be particularly evident (Bordwell & Thompson, 2010).

The wayang kulit kelantan is well known performing arts heritage symbol to the country. It was one time fairly widespread that Wayang Kulit Kelantan served not merely as entertainment but more importantly it functions as a vehicle for the transmission of norms and values and as an intermediary between the real and the nether worlds.
As mentioned by Mohamed Ghouse “that traditional theatre (refers to wayang kulit) has been neglected and a few have succumbed to this neglect and died a natural death” (Bottoni & Faralli, 2008). One of the degree factors of this traditional culture is the process of modernization or using high tech gadgets such that cinemas and videotape recorders to villages. Among the steps taken by the Pas-led Kelantan Government when it came to power was to ban several traditional performances like performing arts of wayang kulit, dikir barat and menora, which were deemed un-Islamic has made the situation worse.

The addition of *Heritage (Warisan)*, to the functions of the Arts and Culture Ministry recently, actually augurs well for the local entertainment industry. It is clear that with the current situation and the level of support in Malaysia, Wayang Kulit Kelantan is unlikely to last long without some kind of strong official support (Roble & Bin Zafar, 2009). Hence, important steps needs be taken to preserve this art or heritage form slowly vanished.

Not many attempts have been made to digitalize wayang kulit. Some researchers suggested that in order to survive in the era of globalization, Wayang Kulit need a new alternative in media output, to be digitalized into the Iworld and to be watched on the computer screen or cinema (Faber & Walters, 2004).

This paper describes the visual styles of Wayang Kulit Kelantan focusing on the four major aspects, which are its puppets, shadows, Kelir (screen) and light source.

**Puppets**

The puppet design or concept used in wayang kulit Kelantan or sometimes referred to as Wayang Kulit Siam are reflected on iconography and design in Malaysian Wayang Kulit, connections with cultures beyond Malaysian shores are apparent (Yousof, 1997). Usually, Wayang Kulit shadow puppet characters measuring approximately 71 centimeters in length and width not exceeding 30 centimeters. The puppets are divided into profiles (gods, warriors, princess, prince); they are constructed and carved from cow, buffalo hide and either depict stylised human shapes or an amalgam of human and animals shapes. The facial characteristics include mouth, nose or forehead which has some similarity with Javanese puppets, and the overall impression conforms ideal of Malay beauty (Yousof, 2004).

Indian influence is evident in the colour symbolism. Wayang Kulit Kelantan performs stories from local version of the Ramayana from episodes lores & legends. Noble characters such as Hanuman or Seri Rama are usually colored in white and green, symbolising the characteristic of princes and to portray them as part of protagonist character to the audience. Indirectly, color creates an outstanding reflection of the character. The colours are not regarded as continuing a guide to temperaments of various puppet characters. According to Mr Hamzah Awang Mat the famous Tok Dalang familiar with Wayang Kulit Kelantan, the puppets has being flourishing in state of Kelantan for many years and the puppets or doll are colorfully decorated and their vivid colors are reflected on screen (Yousof, 2006). another important aspect here is that all characters be patterned batik clothes that become the identity of the puppet itself.

The character craft or orges uses colors such as red that symbolize warriors, which highlights significant elements of Islamic culture that have shaped Indonesian and Malay traditional theatre through the adaptation of borrowed genres such
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