

Traditional values and *Tetekon*: Creativity and innovation in *Padalangan* of Sundanese Wayang Golek Purwa

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Abstract

Wayang golek purwa is one of the traditional art performances of the Sundanese community that has a standardized structure and *tetekon* in its performance. However, along with the times that affect the way of thinking of the performers of wayang golek purwa art, there are changes in function and structure that affect the *tetekon* of the previous wayang golek purwa performance. The purpose of this study is to examine the changes in the value of *tetekon* in the art of wayang golek purwa related to the development of creativity and innovation from the young generation of puppeteers. This research uses descriptive qualitative method through observation, audio-visual analysis of wayang golek performances, and literature study on Wayang Golek Purwa puppetry. Based on these methods, it was found that there is a paradoxical phenomenon in Wayang Golek art: on the one hand, creativity plays an important role in maintaining the existence of Wayang Golek art, but on the other hand, it is often considered to violate *tetekon* or traditional rules. *Tetekon* needs to be interpreted not only as a standard rule, but as a principle that can provide space for creativity and innovation to maintain the relevance of Wayang Golek art.

Abstrak

Wayang golek purwa merupakan salah satu pertunjukan seni tradisional masyarakat Sundanese yang memiliki struktur dan *tetekon* yang terstandarisasi dalam pertunjukannya. Namun, seiring berjalaninya waktu yang memengaruhi cara berpikir para pemain wayang golek purwa, terjadi perubahan fungsi dan struktur yang memengaruhi *tetekon* dari pertunjukan wayang golek purwa sebelumnya. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengkaji perubahan nilai *tetekon* dalam seni wayang golek purwa yang berkaitan dengan perkembangan kreativitas dan inovasi dari generasi muda dalang. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif melalui observasi, analisis audio-visual pertunjukan wayang golek, dan studi literatur tentang wayang golek purwa. Berdasarkan metode-metode tersebut, ditemukan bahwa terdapat fenomena paradoks dalam seni wayang golek: di satu sisi, kreativitas memainkan peran penting dalam mempertahankan keberadaan seni wayang golek, tetapi di sisi lain, seringkali dianggap melanggar *tetekon* atau aturan tradisional. *Tetekon* perlu diinterpretasikan tidak hanya sebagai aturan standar, tetapi sebagai prinsip yang dapat memberikan ruang bagi kreativitas dan inovasi untuk menjaga relevansi seni Wayang Golek.

Keywords

Inovation; Creativity; *Tetekon Padalangan*; Tradition; Sundanese Wayang Golek Purwa

1. Introduction

The existence of wayang performance art in Indonesia, with its various forms and types, reflects the dynamics and creativity of the artists who are the main foundation for the sustainability of this art tradition (Maulana, 2025; Maulana & Sembiring, 2025). The development of wayang, from wayang kulit to wayang golek, shows the importance of innovation to maintain relevance in the midst of changing times (Maulana, 2025; Maulana et al., 2025; Ningsih, 2023). Wayang Golek, as one of the traditional theater art forms, combines various aspects of art such as visual art, literature, dance, drama, and *karawitan* (music) (Soepandi, 1984; Natapraja, 2003). The creativity of wayang artists is not only limited to visual processing, but also includes innovations in various aspects of the arts that support the performance. This creates a deep and meaningful aesthetic experience for the audience (Weintraub, 2004; Sopandi, 2015).

According to Salmun, (1961) Wayang Golek Purwa is one of the traditional Sundanese performing arts rich in cultural and philosophical values, the origin of wayang golek is still not fully ascertained, but many are associated with the work of Sunan Kudus in the 16th century who created wooden puppets for wayang performances. The show flourished in Priangan in the 19th century, along with the use of Sundanese as the main medium for dialog and narration (Maulana, 2025; Wiranata, 1981). The stories in Wayang Golek Purwa are generally derived from the Ramayana and Mahabharata epics, adapted to suit the local values of Sundanese society (Soepandi, 1978; Foley, 2001). With its visual characteristics, storyline, and the use of gamelan as musical accompaniment, Wayang Golek Purwa not only functions as entertainment but also as a medium to convey moral values, traditions, and Sundanese cultural identity.

In the 1960s, dalang in West Java initiated regular meetings to discuss the art of puppetry, which later developed into an annual competition called “*Binojakrama Padalangan*” (Soetarno & Sudarko, 2007; Sudarsono, 2022). The competition became a benchmark for dalang creativity and skill, with *tetekon*-based rules as standard guidelines. However, as the competition progressed, there was a divergence of views between dalang who followed the *tetekon* rules and those who explored creativity. This difference has led to a dichotomy in the art of puppetry, where innovation is often considered to be in conflict with tradition (Sukanda, 1998; Cahya, 2017; Weintraub, 1997). In fact, there is a view that *Binojakrama* is a representation of the “correct” puppetry performance because it follows the rules of *tetekon* (Fauzi & Bahari, 2023).

Creativity is an individual's ability to create something new, either in the form of ideas or real work, by combining pre-existing aspects into original and innovative concepts (Munandar, 2009; Semiawan, 2009). This process is rooted in an individual's experience, knowledge and interaction with their environment, and involves divergent thinking, which is the ability to think flexibly to produce various alternative solutions to a problem (Shaleh & Wahab, 2008). Creativity is an important key in traditional arts, including Wayang Golek Purwa puppetry, where puppeteers are required to present innovations that are not only adaptive but also maintain cultural identity. Meanwhile, innovation is defined as the process of applying creative solutions to solve problems or take advantage of opportunities to create new value (Nasution & Kartajaya, 2018; Luecke, 2003). The innovation process involves the stages of ideation, development, implementation, and evaluation, which ensure that the creative solution has a sustainable impact. Innovations generated in the context of *padalangan* become the driving force for cultural adaptation to remain relevant in the midst of modern challenges.

Creativity and innovation in the art of puppetry are, in essence, not only born from the thoughts of individual practitioners, but also a response to external demands and motivations that develop in society (Maulana, 2025; Wangsadiredja et al., 2023; Yahya, 2007). Most artists view creativity and innovation as the antithesis of *tetekon*, which is considered to threaten the existence and sustainability of “*tetekon*” itself. Ironically, this view comes from the artists themselves, who basically

do not fully understand the meaning and scope of creativity and innovation in the context of puppetry.

There are several previous studies related to the phenomenon of wayang golek performances. Cahya, (2012) in "Konsep 'Nyari' dalam Ranah Estetika Pertunjukan Wayang Golek" examines the aesthetic value of Wayang Golek through the concept of "Nyari," which involves *sekaran*, *sabet*, *lakon*, and *antawacana*. This concept describes traditional aesthetics based on Sundanese and Javanese locality, with the play and drama as the main aspects that strengthen the audience experience. This research offers a relevant system of aesthetic analysis for traditional arts in a modern context. Apriansah, (2024) in study "Konsep Pindah Pasieupan dalam Kakawén Wayang Golek Purwa Sunda" highlights the importance of *kakawén* as a musical aspect and moving *pasieupan* techniques, such as *ligar* and *heas*, in Wayang Golek. Meanwhile, Rukiah, (2015) research on "Makna Warna pada Wajah Wayang Golek" explores the symbolism of colors in wayang puppet characters, which reflect cultural values and artistic aesthetics. The findings reinforce efforts to preserve traditional art in contemporary design.

Of the various types of puppets that developed in West Java, Wayang Golek Purwa is one form of performing arts that is able to reach various groups and still exists today (Agisfi & Rabbil, 2023). This sustainability is inseparable from the creative and innovative efforts of the puppeteers who continue to develop various aspects of the show. Through this paper, the author aims to invite readers to discuss in depth about *tetekon* in *padalangan*. *Tetekon* should not be seen as a barrier or limitation to the creative and innovative process, but rather how it can develop into new ideas that encourage creativity and innovation in the art of Sundanese wayang golek purwa.

2. Research Methods

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach that aims to explore the relationship between creativity, innovation and *tetekon* in Sundanese Wayang Golek Purwa puppetry. This approach was chosen because it is relevant to understand phenomena in depth and contextually, especially related to the dynamics between innovation, creativity and rules (*tetekon*) in Wayang Golek Purwa puppetry (Subandi, 2011).

Direct observations were made of Wayang Golek performances, both traditional and innovative. This observation includes performances led by several puppeteers, such as Deden Kosasih Sunarya (2017), Kiki Mardani Subasrana (2018-2019), Yogaswara Sunandar Sunarya (2023), and Dadan Sunandar Sunarya (2024). These observations cover various aspects, such as puppetry style, story structure, music, stage setting, and interaction with the audience. The aim is to understand how *tetekon* is applied in practice and how innovations affect the dynamics of the performance (Ratnaningtyas, 2022). Document analysis was conducted through the study of *padalangan* literature in the form of *Padalangan* book by M. A Salmun, *Tetekon Padalangan Sunda* by Atiek Sopandi, *Asep Sunandar Sunarya Dalang Wayang Golek Intelek* by Arthur S. Nalan and audio and video recordings of Asep Sunandar Sunarya's performances from 1999-2013. This analysis aims to trace the definition and application of *tetekon* in Wayang Golek and the development of innovations applied (Bowen, Glenn, 2009).

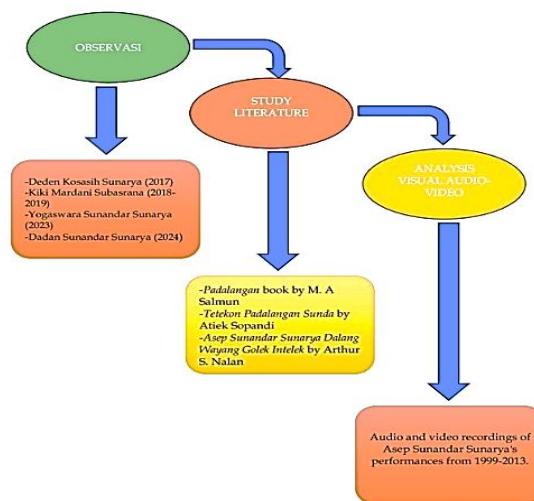


Figure 1. Structur Method (Source: Marsel Ridky Maulana, 2025).

Through this approach, the research seeks to provide a narrative explanation of how Wayang Golek puppetry can develop without losing its traditional essence. This approach also opens up space to explore the creative side of puppeteers, both in creating innovations and creativity in preserving culture.

3. Result and Discussions

3.1. Performance Structure of Wayang Golek Purwa

In general, wayang golek purwa performances according to *tetekon* consist of three main acts, namely *bubuka*, *jejer carita*, and *panutup* (Fauziah et al., 2021; Maulana, 2024).

3.1.1 *Bubuka*

The initial stage of the performance that serves to introduce the theme of the story, the atmosphere, and the main characters. At this stage, the puppeteer usually delivers a prologue (murwa), song (kakawen), narration (nyandra), praise (kawiradia) and dialog (antawacana). This section is also accompanied by an opening *gending* to create a supportive atmosphere and attract the attention of the audience.

3.1.2 *Jejer Carita*

The core stage of the performance that features conflict, story development, and interaction between characters. In this stage, the puppeteer presents various dramatic scenes that are often enriched with humor (banyol), dialogue (antawacana), and action (sabet) that reflect moral, social, and spiritual values. In addition, the expertise (renggep and engés) of the dalang in delivering the story and his collaboration with the nayaga (musicians) are important aspects that provide dynamics to the storyline.

3.1.3 *Panutup*

The final stage (tutug) of a performance that aims to resolve the conflict of the story and convey a moral message. Closure is often signaled and accompanied by a special *gending* that marks the end of the performance. In this round, the puppeteer usually gives advice or advice that is relevant to the theme of the story that has been presented. Nowadays, Wayang Golek performances are equipped with various innovations to maintain their appeal in the modern era. The influence of technology, such as lighting, audio systems, and digital visualization, is used to improve the quality and aesthetics of the show. This innovation plays an important role in maintaining the existence of Wayang Golek as a dynamic and relevant

performing art. The adaptation shows the ability of Wayang Golek to keep up with the times without losing its traditional essence as a medium of entertainment as well as cultural education.

3.2. *Tetekon Wayang Golek Purwa Sunda*

Tetekon, taken from the Sundanese language, refers to the rules that become the foundation or guidelines in carrying out a job. In the context of puppetry, *Tetekon Padalangan* is the rules that serve as the foundation for a puppeteer when performing a wayang performance. Based on this definition, *Tetekon Padalangan* should apply whenever and wherever a puppeteer performs his role, not only in certain contexts such as the “*Binojakrama Padalangan*” event. Therefore, it is important to review the perception that *Tetekon Padalangan* is only relevant for *Binojakrama* events.

An in-depth understanding of *Tetekon Padalangan* in Sundanese puppetry refers to M. A. Salmun's view, which states that *Tetekon Padalangan* includes 12 main aspects, namely: *Awicarita, Amardibasa, Antawacana, Amardawalagu, Paramakawi, Paramasastra, Kawidaria, Renggep, Sabet, Banyol, Enges, and Tutug* (Salmun, 1961). If these 12 aspects are identified as *Tetekon Padalangan*, then a puppeteer who ignores them can be dubbed as “dalang leupas tina tetekon” (dalang who deviates from the rules). This paper will further discuss the 12 aspects described by M. A. Salmun and how they relate to *Tetekon* in the context of Sundanese puppetry.

3.2.1. *Awi-Carita*

Awicarita, which means storyline, is an important aspect of puppetry. According to Salmun, a puppeteer's mastery of the storyline is the key to maintaining the quality of a wayang golek performance (Salmun, 1986b). The storyline is not just a series of events, but also includes a dramatic structure that is built through cause-and-effect relationships between events. This structure is designed to ensure that the story is logical, interesting and easy to understand.

Wayang Golek Purwa performances to this day often present *parwa* (sections) and *kanda* (episodes) rooted in the main sources of the epic stories of Mahabharata and Ramayana. The stories are divided into three categories: *galur*, *sempalan*, and *carangan*. Such as the *galur* story in the Mahabharata of *Jaya Perbangsa* (the fall of Gatotkaca) or the Ramayana of *Sobali Pejah*. Splinter stories describe certain events from the Mahabharata and Ramayana that are not explicitly depicted in the main plot (*galur*) of the epic, such as *Rama Gandrung* in the Ramayana. Meanwhile, *carangan* stories are puppeteer creations that are not directly related to the plot of the Mahabharata or Ramayana, although they still refer to characters or places in the baboon stories of the two epics, such as the story of *Batara Surya Pringga*.

When linked to the concept of *tetekon*, the main focus is not on the puppeteer's mastery of the storyline, but rather on the puppeteer's ability to stage each event based on the dramatic focus of the story. Thus, *tetekon* in the context of *awicarita* (storytelling) can be understood as a rule that centres on the development of a dramatic focus in each performance.

3.2.2. *Amardawa-Lagu*

Amardawalagu refers to a puppeteer's mastery of the musical aspects of puppetry, which includes the understanding and application of musical aspects as a whole in wayang performances. Traditionally, the concept of *amardawalagu* is often narrowed down to only the songs performed by the puppeteer, such as *murwa* and *kakawén/suluk*. If understood only in terms of mastery of singing, the concept becomes reductive, limited to *murwa*, *kakawén*, or other forms of singing outside the context of the main narrative. For example, songs performed by characters such as *Cepot*, *Dewala*, or *balad buta* are often considered an expression of the puppeteer's creativity.

Amardawalagu does not only refer to the singing aspect, but also includes the broader musicality aspect of musical art. This includes the puppeteer's ability to master various musical elements, including rhythm, pitch, *laras*, *surupan*, *embat*, rhythm, tempo, and *gending* forms. This mastery is applied holistically in various aspects, such as in the composition of

kecrék and *cempala*. They serve to mark the beginning or end of a performance, are an integral part of the structure of the music, and act as accentuation for certain scenes.

In addition, musical elements are also present in *murwa*, the opening chant to begin the story; *nyandra*, the prologue that provides an explanation of the scene or event that will, is, or has occurred; and *kakawén/suluk*, which uses the *Kawi* language to describe the situation, atmosphere, or characters in the story. Other aspects such as *antawacana* (dialogue) and *sabet* (puppet movements) complete the narrative and aesthetics of the whole performance.

3.2.3. *Parama-Sastra*

Paramasastra refers to a collection of literature. In the context of Sundanese wayang golek purwa, the literature referred to is Sundanese literature, as the main language used is Sundanese. Although there is a close relationship between language and literature, the two have fundamental differences. Language is a means of communication, while literature is a form of language that has been enriched with aesthetic elements. In everyday life, Sundanese people often use language in literary forms, such as *babasan*, *paribasa*, and *sisindiran*. This tradition is then adapted into the *antawacana* and *nyandra* in Sundanese wayang golek purwa, giving an aesthetic and symbolic dimension to the performance. Here are some examples:

Literature in Antawacana:

Ehh...ladala kakang Udawa,
Coba mernea duduk pada karo ingsun masing parek,
Sembahmu aku trima dening tangan loro pun dihing mastaka.

Literature in Nyandra:

Sang nalendra Prabu batara Kresna manusa titising wisnu,
Tugas para juwata mara sanga jadi pengaman dunya,
Watek wantos dudu wong samanea.

3.2.4 *Parama-Kawi*

Paramakawi refers to the use of the *Kawi* language as an important aspect of the puppetry tradition. However, the younger generation of puppetry artists have begun to question the relevance of the *Kawi* language in modern-day wayang golek performances. The critical question that arises is, if the *Kawi* language is no longer understood by the majority of the audience, does it still need to be maintained? This view is considered logical by young artists who want to keep wayang golek relevant and communicative for modern society. However, senior artists maintain that the *Kawi* language is an important part of the *tetekon* that must be preserved in the Sundanese puppetry tradition. This difference of opinion has led to pros and cons among the artists. The *Kawi* language in wayang golek is used in several aspects, such as *murwa* (prologue), *kakawén* (singing), *nyandra* (narration), *kawiradia* (praise), and some *antawacana* (dialogue). The main function of the *Kawi* language in puppetry is as a literary aesthetic, both as a story opener and song lyric. An example of one *kakawén* in *Kawi* is as follows:

Mandra-mandra ya winulan
Ya soseroting gantinan pamutus ing cinarita
Tedak saking dados tandaning carita
Ya tutung gebang siwalang tunggal
Den ayu ya den ayu-ayu
Ana tetes tumaretes kang tinaretesanana

Until now, no audience has fully understood the meaning of each vocabulary in *kakawén*. Even the puppeteers often have

different understandings. However, both the puppeteers and the audience can still understand that the *kakawén* serves as a marker for the change of acts in the performance. This shows that the presence of Kawi language in *kakawén* is more for preserving tradition and art aesthetics than for literal communication. Despite the pros and cons of its use, if the kawi language is ignored, one of the important features of the art of puppetry will be lost and reduce its traditional value.

3.2.5. Kawi-Radia

Kawiradia refers to the description or explanation of the king's figure conveyed through the use of the Kawi language and realised in the form of *nyandra*. It includes his profile, lineage, dress, and powers or talismans. Some puppeteers refer to *kawiradia* as *kirata* (Akbar et al., 2023). This term is interesting because in Sundanese, *kirata* means something that was initially thought to be conjecture, but has since been proven to be true.

In practice *kawiradia* is not only applied to puppet characters with royal titles, but also to other important figures who are considered significant. In Sundanese puppetry terminology, they are referred to as *wayang dines*. The term comes from the Sundanese word *dines* or *daria*, which means important or serious. Wayang dines include the main characters in the Mahabharata and Ramayana genres, such as kings, queens, *prameswari*, *patih*, knights, as well as female puppet characters. Before being performed, these figures are usually arranged neatly in a symphony.

In addition to *wayang dines* there is the category of *wayang golér*, which includes puppet characters that are not directly related to the main plot of the Mahabharata or Ramayana. Examples are the *pawongan* characters and the *balad buta*. The term *wayang golér* comes from the way these characters are stored, where they are simply placed on the side of the puppeteer without being arranged in a symphony. In Sundanese, *golér* means lying or not arranged.

3.2.6. Anta-Wacana

Antawacana comes from the word *anta* which means end, and discourse which means speech. In the context of Wayang Golek Purwa, *antawacana* refers to the dialogue spoken by each character in the performance such as the type of voice, intonation, and tempo both fast and slow become important aspects in *antawacana*, which are adjusted to the unique characteristics of each character (Salmun, 1986). The characters in Wayang Golek have some distinctive characteristics.

The following table illustrates these characteristics in relation to the concept of *antawacana*.

No	Character	Sound Color	Intonation	Tempo Dialogue
1	<i>Putri Lungguh</i> Character: <i>Drupadi</i>	Small Voice	Soft	Slow
2	<i>Putri Lanyap</i> Character: <i>Erawati</i>	Small Voice	Loud	Quick
3	<i>Satria Lungguh A</i> Character: <i>Rama</i>	Small Voice	Soft	Slow
4	<i>Satria Lungguh B</i> Character: <i>Laksmana</i>	Big Voice	Soft	Slow
5	<i>Satria Lanyap</i> Character: <i>Aradea</i>	Small Voice	Loud	Quick
6	<i>Pongawa Lungguh</i>	Big Voice	Soft	Slow

	Character: <i>Duryudana</i>			
7	<i>Ponggawa</i> <i>Dangah</i>	Big Voice	Loud	Quick
	Character: <i>Seta</i>			
8	<i>Beureuman</i> Character: <i>Dursasana</i>	Medium Voice	Loud	Quick

Table 1. Character Anta-wacana (Source: Soepandi, 1998).

In addition to the eight groups of characters mentioned above, there are also puppet characters whose voice and dialogue style depend entirely on the creativity of the puppeteer. Examples of such characters include giants, *balad buta*, and *pawongan*. In some cases, puppeteers even use their original voices without modification, as Asep Sunandar Sunarya did when playing the character *Cepot*. He uses his everyday voice, without any attempt to engineer or change intonation. The nine *antawacana* characters can be further classified into two forms of *antawacana*. The first form is a group of *antawacana* whose dialogue has a certain tonal pattern, even tending to be melodic. These tones generally refer to the *Laras Salendro*, where the main provisions of the tonal arrangement lie in the last words of each sentence. To give a clearer picture, here is a table of *antawacana* forms.

No	Character	Sound Color	Intonation	Tempo Dialogue
1	<i>Putri</i> <i>Lungguh</i> Character: <i>Drupadi</i>	Pitched	<i>Tugu</i> (1/Da) <i>Salendro</i>	<i>Loloran</i> , <i>Galimer</i> <i>Alit</i>
2	<i>Putri</i> <i>Lanyap</i> Character: <i>Erawati</i>	Pitched	<i>Tugu</i> (1/Da) <i>Salendro</i>	<i>Loloran</i> , <i>Galimer</i> <i>Alit</i>
3	<i>Satria</i> <i>Lungguh A</i> Character: <i>Rama</i>	Pitched	<i>Loloran</i> (2/Mi) <i>Salendro</i>	<i>Tugu</i> , <i>Galimer</i> <i>Alit</i>
4	<i>Satria</i> <i>Lungguh B</i> Character: <i>Laksmana</i>	Pitched	<i>Galimer</i> (4/Ti) <i>Salendro</i>	<i>Loloran</i> , <i>Tugu</i> <i>Ageung</i>
5	<i>Satria</i> <i>Lanyap</i> Character: <i>Aradea</i>	Pitched	<i>Tugu</i> (1/Da) <i>Salendro</i>	<i>Loloran</i> , <i>Galimer</i> <i>Alit</i>
6	<i>Ponggawa</i> <i>Lungguh</i> Character: <i>Duryudana</i>	Release		
7	<i>Ponggawa</i> <i>Dangah</i> Character: <i>Seta</i>	Release		
8	<i>Beureuman</i> Character: <i>Dursasana</i>	Pitched	<i>Tugu</i> (1/Da) <i>Salendro</i>	<i>Loloran</i> , <i>Galimer</i>

Table 2. Form of Antawacana (Source: Soepandi, 1998).

Whether the *antawacana* is pitched or unpitched, there are a number of specific characters whose *antawacanas* are sung, known as *haleuang wayang*. These include Dursasana, Narada, Drona, Sangkuni, and Semar. There are also other characters such as Arjuna, Rama, and Gatotkaca, for example in certain situations such as when experiencing sadness or confusion.

3.2.7. Amardi-Basa

Amardibasa is the concept of using good and polite language. In the context of Wayang Golek Purwa, which generally uses Sundanese, *amardibasa* refers to the application of the rules of language politeness according to the rules of *undak-usuk basa* (Cahya, 2012). The question that arises is, what kind of Sundanese language is considered good and polite? Sundanese language has three main levels: *kasar*, *loma*, and *lemes*. *Kasar* language is considered impolite, *loma* language is more relaxed and informal, while *lemes* language is used in formal situations to show politeness.

Although *lemes* language is often considered a representation of politeness, in practice the puppeteers of Wayang Golek Purwa use all three levels of language flexibly, depending on the context, situation, age, and social strata of the interlocutor. This shows that *amardibasa* does not only mean the use of *lemes* language, but also the ability to adjust the type of language to the rules of *undak-usuk basa* (language levels), which takes into account social and cultural norms. When Sundanese is used as a medium of dialogue in wayang stories, the understanding of the concept of *amardibasa* does not merely refer to the use of Sundanese language *lemes* (smooth) in every dialogue. Instead, *amardibasa* should be understood as the ability to use language in accordance with the rules and regulations of *undak-usuk basa*.

3.2.8. Sabet

In the context of wayang golek art, *sabet* is generally understood as the puppeteer's expertise in visualising puppet movements, both dance movements, war movements (fights), and expressive movements such as anger, joy, sadness, and other emotions. The visual aspects demonstrated by the puppeteers not only include puppet characters, but also such as *kayon* (gunungan), various forms of animals, types of weapons, amulets, and other symbols known as *rerempah* (Cahya, 2012). Both in demonstrating puppet characters and *rerempah*, puppeteers are required to have high expertise, because every movement demonstrated must be accompanied by aesthetic values. When talking about aesthetics, every object that is demonstrated is not only related to motion alone, but also considers the characteristics of each object. The main movements of each character, especially in the form of dance movements, have certain rules that are based on the character's character, as explained below.

No	Character Wayang	Principal Motion
1	<i>Putri</i> <i>Lungguh</i> <i>And Satria</i> <i>Lungguh</i>	<i>Keupat Hiji</i>
2	<i>Putri Lanyap</i> <i>And Satria</i> <i>Lanyap</i>	<i>Keupat Dua And</i> <i>Tilu</i>
3	<i>Ponggawa</i> <i>Lungguh</i>	<i>Gedig Anca</i>
4	<i>Ponggawa</i> <i>Dangah</i>	<i>Gedig Kerep</i>
5	<i>Beureuman</i>	<i>Barongsayan</i>

Table 3. Form of Sabet (Source: Scopandi, 1998).

3.2.9. Banyol

In Sundanese tradition, the term *banyol* refers to humour. So far, *banyol* has often been understood as a joke, so many

puppeteers pack specific scenes as humorous scenes, especially with *pawongan* or *balad buta* characters. However, these jokes are often unrelated to the main storyline as they are placed in separate, non-contextual scenes. On closer inspection, *banyol* has a different meaning from (melawak).

Banyol is a spontaneous, situational expression, either through speech or gesture, that aims to refresh the atmosphere. Anyone can do it according to conditions and situations. (Melawak), on the other hand, is an expression that has been conceptually designed to provoke laughter, usually performed by certain individuals who work as comedians (Wadi, 2021).

In the world of puppetry, there is often an assumption that *banyol* should not be performed by wayang *dines* (formal characters). This understanding is considered a *tetekon* (rule), so puppeteers who present *banyol* to wayang *dines* characters are often considered violating *leupas tina tetekon*. However, if understood from the perspective of the essence of *banyol*, this rule needs to be re-examined. In Sundanese society and perhaps universally, *humor* is part of human expression, from ordinary people to officials, which at certain times is manifested in the form of *banyol*.

Therefore, it is not a violation of the *tetekon* if a puppeteer performs *banyol* on a wayang *dines* character. In Sundanese Wayang Golek Purwa performances, both *banyol* and jokes can in principle be performed by any type of puppet. The key is to adjust to the situation, conditions and ethics, so that the presentation remains relevant and does not violate cultural norms.

3.2.9 *Renggep*

Renggep refers to the ability to create a sense of fun, also known as a strategy for controlling the stage. Based on this definition, *renggep*, like *engés*, does not stand alone as an aspect that can directly create a sense of fun or control the stage. *Renggep* arises naturally when a puppeteer has mastered all the technical aspects of the performance. This mastery results in high self-confidence. From this confidence, a puppeteer can achieve calmness, which allows effective control of the stage. This in turn generates sympathy from the audience. Therefore, *renggep* is not a skill that can be learnt specifically, but rather a quality that will come automatically after a puppeteer has mastered the various technical aspects that support the performance.

3.2.10 *Engés*

Engés in the Sundanese context refers to an extraordinary ability to demonstrate skills that cannot be predicted by others. In the world of puppetry, *engés* does not stand alone, but is attached to various aspects of the art of puppetry, especially those related to skills such as *amardawalagu* (proficiency in storyline), *banyol* (humour), and *sabet* (puppet movement). The ability to perform *engés* comes naturally as a result of a deep mastery of the various aspects of puppetry, gained through long experience and consistent practice. Therefore, *engés* is difficult to teach or learn directly. In fact, a puppeteer often does not realise whether he or she has *engés* or not. Dalang who are recognised as having a special advantage, such as the title of *dalang sabet*, usually show *engés* in certain aspects. This reflects that *engés* is a manifestation of deep expertise and years of experience in the art of puppetry.

3.2.12 *Tutug*

Tutug literally means to finish or complete, which refers to a dalang's obligation to deliver the story in its entirety to completion. (Salmon, 1949). If a dalang fails to complete the story, he or she may be considered to have failed to meet the standard or *leupas tina tetekon*. Based on observations of various performances, almost all dalang always perform the full story. Therefore, cases of *leupas tina tetekon* due to story incompleteness are rare.

In telling the story, apart from through scenes, the dalang also uses the *nyandra* method. *Nyandra* is a prologue narration technique to convey events or scenes more briefly than through a full depiction on stage. This technique is often used to

speed up the completion of the story. However, not all scenes can be conveyed through *nyandra*. Scenes that function to form the main dramatic plot cannot be summarised in the form of a *nyandra* without the risk of disrupting the continuity of the plot. If this technique is applied inappropriately, the dramatic flow of the story will be interrupted, meaning that the story does not achieve *tutug* in a substantial sense.

The traditional understanding of *tutug* is often limited to the completion of the story from beginning to end. However, in my view, *tutug* also includes the clarity of each topic or discussion in the scenes presented, with an organised dramatic structure. In drama, this dramatic structure usually consists of three main parts: problem, conflict, and resolution. Each of these parts, in turn, can be subdivided into problem, conflict, and resolution subsections, which support each other to create a structured and complete narrative. Based on the above, the author concludes that the 12 aspects cannot be seen as *tetekon* (standard rules), but rather aspects that every puppeteer must master or possess. Meanwhile, *tetekon* refers to the provisions or rules that form the basis for each of these aspects, especially those related to the expertise and skills of a dalang in carrying out his role.

3.3. Creativity and Innovation

Wayang Golek is one of the Sundanese traditional art forms classified as a *adiluhung* art, which is an art with high aesthetic and philosophical values. For some parties, maintaining this *adiluhung* status is understood as an effort to maintain the original concept and form without changes that are considered to reduce the authenticity of the tradition (Maulana et al., 2025; Maulana et al., 2025). However, when a new paradigm emerges, especially from the younger generation or the generation below, there is often a debate that assesses the change as a deviation from *tetekon* (rules or *pakem*), even considered as a failure to maintain the value of *keadiluhungan*.

This phenomenon raises the question: is the view of the concept of 'authenticity' or 'tradition' in one generation in line with the paradigm of authenticity and tradition of the previous generation? The answer may be the same, but it does not rule out the possibility of being different. Based on the author's observations, there are similarities in perspectives, mindsets, and performances between certain generations and previous generations. However, these similarities tend to occur in individuals who are very fanatical or even glorify their teachers. However, the number of such individuals is relatively small. Most puppeteers of one generation tend to show quite significant differences compared to the previous generation, including with their teachers. This difference is often the main factor that makes them respected and admired by the community. The young puppeteers of wayang golek who are now widely known in the community stand out because of their ability to present innovations that distinguish them from their teachers.

Each generation tends to produce a new form of creativity that is different from the previous generation. This difference arises because of a change in the paradigm of thinking that produces works that are unique and have the potential to be passed on to the next generation. However, not all puppeteers understand that the next generation also needs space to explore novelty. As a result, creativity is often limited by the existence of *tetekon*, which is considered a standard rule that should not be violated (Muflihatul Salma & Tarpin, 2020).

The puppeteer who developed wayang golek purwa to be more creative and innovative is Asep Sunandar Sunarya, who with his art group called Giri Harja 3 has succeeded in acting as a reformer in conveying his innovative ideas to the audience of wayang golek purwa, both in West Java, Indonesia, and at the international level (Nalan, 2015). He also demonstrates exceptional communication skills as a puppeteer who is able to interact interactively and persuasively. Dalang Asep Sunandar Sunarya is often regarded as a dalang who *lepas tina tetekon*. However, interestingly, his style of puppetry has become a reference and inspiration for other puppeteers (Foley, 2020). This phenomenon raises the

question: is it true that Asep Sunandar Sunarya's puppetry at that time could be categorized as *leupas tina tetekon*?



Figure 2. Dalang Asep Sunandar Sunarya Performing on Stage (Source: www.1001indonesia.net/asep-sunandar-sunarya, 2025).

In 1985, Asep Sunandar Sunarya demonstrated an archery scene using a *gondewa* (bow) in a broadcast on TVRI (Nalan, 2012). The scene was considered unusual because it had never been performed by previous puppeteers.



Figure 3. Arjuna Puppet Character using the *Gondewa* Weapon (Source: www.behance.net, 2025).

Another innovation by Asep Sunandar Sunarya is that his puppet shows use a loose structure and utilize jokes and *wejangan* into a unified whole. And by using a multi-*laras* gamelan (gamelan selap), stage equipment supported by a sound system and a large stage area makes the show look magnificent and beautiful (Weintraub, 2001). Then the emergence of wayang golek with faces that resemble human faces, a breakthrough initiated by him, so that it looks more glamorous, beautiful and expressive (Febrianti & Fauzi, 2023; Maulana et al., 2024). This innovative act sparked a debate, with some previous generations of puppeteers criticizing Asep Sunandar Sunarya, claiming that he had deviated from the rules (*tetekon*) of puppetry. Thus, he is considered a “*leupas tina tetekon*” dalang.



Figure 4. Puppets with Faces that Resemble Human Faces (Source: Marsel Ridky Maulana, 2025).

One form of creativity and innovation by Asep Sunandar Sunarya can be said to still refer to *tetekon* but in some aspects can be said to deviate from it. For example, the use of *gondewa* in the archery scene has artistic, aesthetic value, and looks more logical as part of the *sabet* aspect. Therefore, it is difficult to claim that it completely deviates from *tetekon*. In fact, the use of *gondewa* can be considered a violation of *tetekon* if it is applied unreasonably, such as when a puppet character uses a *keris* or spear accompanied by *gondewa*. This contradicts the rule that the use of a *keris* or spear should be done directly with a hand, not with a *gondewa*.



Figure 5. One from of Asep Sunandar Sunarya Creativity (Source: Marsel Ridky Maulana, 2025).

The phenomenon of pros and cons related to the creativity of puppeteer Asep Sunandar Sunarya is one example of a restriction on puppeteer innovation that is often associated with the *tetekon* rule. However, the dalang's understanding of *tetekon* tends to be limited, where they only refer to the 12 aspects described earlier, without understanding the underlying principles behind these aspects. His jargon “tiada hari tanpa inovasi” and “ngindung ka waktu mibapa ka zaman” show that Asep Sunandar Sunarya understands wayang aesthetics as well as mass aesthetics. This form of innovation is clear evidence of the creative process that continues to live in the world of wayang. It is this kind of creative and innovative process that has enabled wayang art to survive for hundreds of years in Indonesia, even being recognized by the international community as one of the world's precious cultural heritages.



Figure 6. Creativity and new innovations in the form of Den Kisot/Don Quixote Contemporary Puppets (Source: Muhammad, 2024).

Based on the various aspects and findings that have been discussed, puppeteer Deden Kosasih Sunarya states that the highest knowledge in the world of puppetry is known as *wiwhaha*, which refers to a concept that reflects the teachings of life. This concept includes various aspects, including the 12 aspects that have been discussed, all of which are integrated within the *wiwhaha* framework. In the context of *padalangan*, the expression “aya ngadalang, aya ngawayang” is known, which describes the deep essence of *padalangan* practice. In *wiwhaha*, puppetry is not only considered a technical skill, but also a form of deep spiritual and emotional expression. A dalang is required to be able to internalize various emotions, such as sadness, happiness, or anger, so that the story told can touch the hearts of the audience. The puppeteer's ability to bring the audience into the storyline is a measure of his success. However, this success is greatly influenced by the level of appreciation and personal capacity possessed by each puppeteer.

4. Conclusions

Wayang Golek Purwa Sunda faces the challenge of balancing creativity and innovation with the rules of *tetekon* as the main guideline for puppetry. *Tetekon*, which has been considered standardized, can be interpreted dynamically, becoming a foothold for creating innovations without leaving traditional roots. Puppeteers like Asep Sunandar Sunarya show that creativity and innovation can enrich puppetry while maintaining its relevance in the modern era. This research recommends that collaboration between senior puppeteers who maintain tradition and young puppeteers with fresh ideas can create a synergy between preservation and renewal. The utilization of technology and the development of stories that are relevant to current issues, such as humanitarian and environmental values, open opportunities for Wayang Golek to reach global audiences without losing its cultural identity.

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