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Comparative Analysis of Wayang Kulit's (Shadow Puppetry) Characters in the Novel *The Year of Living Dangerously*

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The most precious art *the Ramayana and the Mahabharata* has been one of the part of entertain for the people of South East Asian countries during ancient period. It has been orally told and retold still in the world. One of the forms of oral tradition is shadow puppetry where people sits and watch during their leisure time. In Indonesia, it has a prominent role and the story is mostly taken from the two Indian epics. But Indonesians adopted the plays and includes many Indonesian mythical characters into these two epics in their Wayang Plays. This oral art performed throughout Indonesia in which people get moral values at the end of the play. This has entered into the written form and gained its value simultaneously. In the novel *The Year of Living Dangerously* is like wayang play where one can see each and every character in the novel is compared to the character of Mahabharata. Especially Indonesians not only focused on these two epics they also include their tradition form of storytelling art and its mythical characters. One of the most Indonesian mythical character Semar has also been portrayed by the author Christopher Koch in this novel. The principle characters in the novel encapsulate wayang figures. Hence this paper focuses on the comparative study of the *Mahabharata* wayang Character Arjuna, Semar, Srikandi(wife of Arjuna) in the novel *The Year of Living Dangerously*.

The oral tradition of storytelling is depicted in the form of wayang in the novel *The Year of Living Dangerously*. During ancient period there were no written forms of literature so people heard stories orally from their ancestors. Many traditional, historical stories and were passed generation to generations through oral medium. It includes poetry, dance, and music so on. The oral art of storytelling has a message convey to the people. This eventually develops and entered in to written form. It also helps to regain the art form. It happens when there is festivals, occasions and religious festivals. In South East Asian countries Shadow puppetry plays a vital role and considered to be one of the oral form of storytelling. This paper focused especially on Indonesian art of storytelling Wayang Kulit where Hindu myths and Indonesian myth converged. The author Chrishtopher Koch incorporates these two story telling art in his novel *The Year of Living Dangerously*.

In this novel, the puppetry characters of the *Mahabharata* Arjuna, Srikandi and Indonesian mythical character Semar are resembles the Character from this novel. Semar is a guardian of Arjuna in the Mahabharata, and he is very loyal and adviser to Arjuna. Arjuna is one of Pandawas brother who always accompanied with Semar. The character 'Semar' is a clown in Javanese traditional tale. He is one of the most important figures who has big rounded belly, flat nose and ugly face in Shadow Puppet play in Indonesia. It is believed that, he has indigenous root and he has three sons and they

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four always accompanied with Arjuna wherever he goes. The character semar and his sons are clowns in Indonesian myth and also in wayang culek's Mahabharata. He is compared to the character Billy Kwan who resembles semar in the novel *The Year of Living Dangerously*. The novel itself has compared to a shadow play where each and every character resembles the character of the wayang's *Mahabharata*. To some extent the story of the hero in the novel is manipulated by Billy Kwan as semar in *Mahabharata*. One can see how semar is a good advisor of Arjuna through the performance as well as in the novel.

Christopher John Koch was born on 16 July, 1932 and died on 23 September, 2013. He was an Australian author and wrote many novels during his life time. During his childhood days, he wanted to be a comic strip artist. He studied English, Philosophy and Ancient History at the University of Tasmania. One of the main novels is *The Year of Living Dangerously* which was adapted into a film. The film won many awards. He was awarded the Honorary 'Doctor of Letters' from his alma mater, the University of Tasmania in 1990. He wrote *The Boys in the Island, Across the Sea Wall, The Year of Living Dangerously, The Double Man, Highways to a War, Out of Ireland, The Memory Room, Lost voices*. His works mostly dealt with spirituality, illusion, reality, and cultural identity. So he described as "an old fashioned writer."

The novel *The Year of Living Dangerously* set in Jakarta a capital city of Indonesia during 1965, a year when western colonization came to an end. It is about Indonesian politics and society at the time of Sukarno Regime. The novel is divided into three parts PATET NEM: HAMILTON'S DWARF, PATET SANGA: WATER FROM THE MOON, and PATET MANJURA: AMOK. There are two protagonists in the novel, Guy Hamilton an English Australian and Billy Kwan, a Chinese Australian. The whole story of the novel deals with post-colonial Indonesia where each character in the novel is compared to the character of *Mahabharata* and the love between Hamilton and Jill.

The novel is narrated by cookie (Koch). It begins with the character, Hamilton entering Indonesia for an assignment while working for Australian radio network. He was welcomed by Billy Kwan who is a Dwarf and also he met more Journalists and diplomats. He wanted to get information about Sukarno's regime but he couldn't get at first. He became close with Billy Kwan. Guy got only limited information then. With the help of Billy, he goes to take interview. Billy shows slum area to Hamilton thinking that he could get help from Hamilton for the slum people and he believes in it too. He found a *wayang* once he went to Billy's home. He introduces the puppets and its character says that "if u want to understand Java, Ham, you'll have to understand the *wayang*." During the age a *wayang* is the only entertainment for the people. They even beg for food. Billy wants to feed the people and he believes Sukarno will help and feed them. Billy writes this also in his file and keeps it with him. He feels Sukarno betrays his beliefs. So he wants to be an anti-Sukarno. He wants to commit suicide so he makes a banner and hand it in the hotel building. It has written "SUKARNO FEED YOUR CHILD" before committing suicide. He pushed from the window and died. Guy discovers that it was a murder. Then they investigate Guy and Jill.

So the whole part of the novel deals with the love story of Ham and Jill. Later Hamilton was introduced to Jill by Billy Kwan. She is a young beautiful diplomat who works for the British Embassy. Billy and Jill are close friends, meanwhile Billy use to keep files on the people whom he met. He manipulates them like a *dalang* who manipulate puppets. Koch describes the characters, which resemble the characters from *Mahabharata*. The protagonist sees the puppet which is hanging on the wall and he wants to know who the character was. It is Semar who serves Arjuna. Billy says: "That is Semar. He is a dwarf who serves Arjuna. But he is also a god in disguise the old Javanese god Ismaja." (76)

He reads the poem which was given by Billy. Then he and Kumar go to Presidential place but he was attacked by the guards. Guy returns to his car and his eye was badly injured. Finally the *wayang* of the left is under Aidit, head of the Indonesian communist party against Sukarno *wayang* of the right. *Wayang* of the right triumphs over the *wayang* of the left. Guy decides to flee Indonesia realizing his love for Jill more than his career. So he goes to the airport with Kumar and Guy discovers Jill, who is pregnant with his child. Then they two are united and fly safely to Europe. In the end Billy commits suicide because of the president Sukarno's rule. After communist parties enter, the country becomes good and they were against sukarno. Finally they won and both Hamilton and Jill flee to Europe. The whole novel can be viewed as a wayang play in which the characters are incorporated by the author.

The Year of Living Dangerously may even be considered a wayang novel, a hybrid or synthesis of the two forms. Koch does this self-consciously: his narrator Cook (an English translation of the German name Koch) is absent from the film but is absolutely central to the novel. The novel's events are filtered through his consciousness and memory as he reconstructs what happened with the benefit of hindsight. Cookie identifies himself as a dalang: "I whisper the invocation of the Javanese dalang, the master of the shadow show: 'May silence prevail: may the strength of wind and storm be mine'" (87). While obviously drawing on the Javanese tradition, this also echoes the invocation of the Muse in Epic poetry. (Shadow on Screen 49).

In shadow puppetry, the *dalang* can perform the story of two epics according to their own story telling as the other narrator Billy Kwan who manipulates the life of the protagonists Hamilton and Jill. *Wayang* adapts Hindu mythology like the author adapts the *wayang*. The *wayang* plays a crucial part in narrative techniques of the novel. Koch uses *wayang* as a metaphor and Billy tries to make the *wayang* by imagining himself as 'Semar', Guy as 'Arjuna' and Jill as 'Srikandi'.

The author uses the mythical character from *Mahabharata*. The crucial shadow puppet characters are used in this novel. In shadow puppetry, the characters are drawn from *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*. The characters of in this novel are taken from *Mahabharata* through shadow puppetry. Hamilton is depicted as 'Arjuna', the warrior hero, Jill as princess 'Srikandi', one of 'Arjuna's' wives and Billy Kwan is represented as the two characters 'Krishna', the divine friend of 'Arjuna' and 'Semar' who is one of the clowns of 'Arjuna'. So the main character of this novel exemplifies *wayang* figures. In 'Bhagavat Gita', the character 'Krishna' who instructs 'Arjuna' in the way Billy Kwan guides Hamilton. In the sixth chapter, Kwan says that:

Krishna tells Arjuna how to master himself before he can master others. Nothing's black and white, you see. Arjuna a hero, but he can also be fickle and selfish- that his weakness. And when Arjuna asks Krishna what makes a man sin, Krishna says' "Greedy lust and anger: This is the enemy of the soul."(75)

He is represented as the dwarf 'Semar', who is mysterious and guides Hamilton in the novel. 'Semar' is a symbol of the guardian spirit of all Javanese tradition. In Javanese shadow puppetry, 'Semar' is a humble and comical character, the most powerful of the Gods. His physique is compared to Billy Kwan whose resembles him physically. 'Semar' is fat with heavy breasts and is short. He is very divine and a wise character in *wayang* plays. But he is not from Indian mythology. He is often appears in Javanese shadow puppetry. He presents himself as 'Krishna'. It can be easily understood by the readers. He says to Hamilton

Here's king Kresna-Kresna the black: he's obviously Krishna, who's one of the incarnations of the Hindu god Vishnu. Vishnu comes to the earth as many things: as Krishna, who acts as Charioteer to the hero Arjuna- and also as a dwarf, in Hindu myth. (75)

Though Billy Kwan is resembled as ‘Semar’, he is guides Hamilton like ‘Krishna’ who masters ‘Arjuna’. In the novel, Guy Hamilton works according to Billy Kwan’s wish. He is the one who makes Hamilton love Jill even though Billy loves her himself. He also masters him to take an interview with the Indonesian authorities. In Javanese shadow puppetry, the five sons of ‘Pandu’ is adapted from the Indian epic *Mahabharata* and is placed before the curtain through the shadow performances with the help of a *dalang*.

She is protected by Billy Kwan as ‘semar’ protects ‘Durga’ and ‘Shiva’. ‘Semar’ is more loyal to everyone and is comical in Javanese shadow puppetry. Koch uses two narrators in the novel. So both novels can be seen as a puppet play. The author has the experience of shadow puppetry. But the novel has gained success by the way of narrating the story. The narration of the novel is similar to shadow puppetry. The *wayang* bar in Koch’s novel is related to the shadow theatre. Both writers give importance to the story, narration, as well as shadow theatre and its importance.

Arjuna performs with the help of ‘Semar’ so there is parallel between Hamilton and Billy. Billy tires to make *wayang* in realistic way with manipulating the life of Hamilton in a short period of his life. The love between Jill and Hamilton is represented as ‘Arjuna’ and ‘Srikandi’. They both manipulate by Billy Kwan. He is convincing Hamilton to marry Jill. Koch novel emphasizes the vision of important characters. It is like another Shadow story of Koch. So the characters are represented as *wayang* in the sense is a form of Puppet play performs the master Koch, Billy and Sukarno.

The novel cannot have a voice of *dalang* (Puppet master) but it has the inner voice of Billy who manipulates the main characters Hamilton and Guy like puppets. After meeting with Hamilton he makes Hamilton to love Jill and the way he keeps file on the people whom he met in his life. This manipulation can be seen in the novel, where he tries to convince Hamilton to marry Jill. His own status on his Dossier reflected as *dalang*:

Here, on the quiet page, I’m the master _ just as I’m master in the darkroom, stirring my prints in the magic developing-bath. And here, among my files I can shuffle like cards the lives I deal with. Their faces stare out at me from these little pieces of gazed card: people who will become other people: people who will become old: betray their dreams become ghosts. But they wait, in my files, to see what I’ll do with them. Charting their blind course on paper, I own them, in away! They can lock me out of their hearts, dear friend, but not out of their lives. They are tenants of my secret system, whether they like it or not... (101)

Billy accompanies Hamilton wherever he goes. Hamilton does whatever Billy says. This reflects now the master gives movement to the puppets. He is also a puppet master who manipulates his friend’s life and shaping the stories. Billy personally attempts to manipulate the people, manipulate his files like a puppet.

The following lines portrays the manipulating the life of Hamilton by Billy:

All this because I banked everything on you. You seem to think I just got you leads for stories. He picked up the shopping-bag, and tilted hid face up to Hamilton’s again. Stories! Is that what lives about? What’s a bloody journalist, really? Nothing but a Pepping Tom You slow idiot: I put you on course; I made you see things; I gave you the woman I loved, who loved you, who’s carrying your child: she needed all your understanding, all your constancy.’ His voice rose to a flat shout. ‘I created you!’ (223)

The *wayang* screen is lit; Hamilton and Billy watch the play. Each and every character is introduced to Hamilton by Billy. “He hears the *dalang* was singing, his wailing almost female voice climber higher and higher.” Arjuna is represented as Hamilton and Jill is represented as ‘Srikandi’. In this

context Billy is represented as *dalang* but when he accompanies with Hamilton he is represented as ‘Semar’ thus the President Sukarno is represented as *dalang* who manipulates the people of Indonesia and balanced *wayang* of the right and *wayang* of the left. Finally the *wayang* narrative at the end Hamilton finds him in danger and united with Jill. In the article “Shadow on the screen the wayang kulit in *the year of living dangerously*” states that

The screen version of the narrative draws attention to the central role of vision, seeing and gazing in the story. On one level the wayang raises issues of form in the narrative, and especially the ways in which the novel can incorporate local traditions and forms of entertainment. Koch incorporates material from outside his own culture for specific purposes, to which we shall return.

Thus the author Koch narrates as if the puppet master narrates and manipulates. This novel is evidently said to be shadow puppet novel draws upon the character from Hindu myths and Indonesian mythical character Semar. This acts as a central structure of the novel. The voice from the master is represented as Billy Kwan’s voice as well as the dalang’s. It helps to shaping the story by the author’s own voice. In *wayang* play the spectators can only see the shadows and watch. Koch’s writing is like a shadow of the novel *The Year of Living Dangerously*. Thus the character from the wayang is observed and portrayed in the novel *The Year of Living Dangerously*.

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