



Visual aesthetic of *Petta Puang* theater group performance in South Sulawesi

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Abstract

This study aims to provide a description of the visual aesthetics contained in the show Puppet Theater *Petta Puang* in South Sulawesi in connection with the network of symbolic meaning inherent in it. The method used is descriptive-interpretive method symbolic, with data collection techniques through direct observation, interviews, and documentation. The result of the research shows that in the performance of *Petta Puang* Puppet Theater there is a visual aesthetic that characterizes the main character «*Petta Puang*» in every appearance that is *jas tutup*, *songkok guru* (*songkok to Bone*), and *lipa 'sabbe'*. Some visual aesthetics have symbolic meaning directly related to the socio-cultural values of the people of South Sulawesi. *Lipa 'sabbe* (*silk sarong*) is a Bugis sarong which has a fine texture as a representation of the tenderness and social politeness of Bugis tribe, while vertical and horizontal lines are markers of human relationship with God and human relationships in the social system. *Jas Tutup* originally consists of two colors, namely black and white. Two elements of color is a neutral color that confirms the impression of depth and sanctity that became the patron of Bugis tribe values.

Keywords: theater; *Petta Puang*; visual aesthetic

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Introduction

In South Sulawesi theater or drama performances have been presented since the colonial period. From the stories told by elders who have lived in that era, there has been a community of performances such as "*baco puraga*", a type of puppet theater that displayed Chinese community using Makassar language - Mixed. There is also a play "*ember bocor*" featured at several family events such as wedding, *sunatan* and night fair, as well as folk theater such

as "*kondo buleng*", and "*koa koayang*" theater. On the Ujung Pandang TV, a puppet theater entitled "*Wa 'Mappe*" is presented each afternoon with which the cultural values of the people of South Sulawesi is raised. The aforementioned theater group often presents critiques of social criticism as the theme of the show and has its own aesthetic in every performance. Although they have ever lived and got their triumph, some of them do not last long, even some of them do not exist anymore.

In the era of the 80s, a theatre group

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Petta Puang was founded by Bahar Merdu. This group is able to win the hearts of the audience from any realm by raising the concept of comedy shows with social themes. The *Petta Puang* Theater Group has its own aesthetic in every show, both from stage, makeup, lighting, property and costume. Thanks to the shrewdness of Bahar Merdu concocted his show to make this group survive and experience rapid development, it can be proved with the intensity of the show that always presents in every event or in the program of local television station. The uniqueness of the *Petta Puang* in each show is marked by its consistency in displaying local characteristics of South Sulawesi, such as the use of costumes, the style of language used, the local characterization representation, the locality of the scenario and the typical narrative of the story. In each scenario of the story of *Petta Puang*, there is a message or 'paseng' of local wisdom as a representation of the noble testament contained in the area of South Sulawesi. Besides that, the other uniqueness of *Petta Puang* is its involvement in situations and circumstances that do not look at the class, social strata, place, space and so on, so that the *Petta Puang* can be present anywhere that is not bound by political interests and power around.

In addition, *Petta Puang* has its own aesthetic in every appearance. It is characterized by a not-rigid staging, unfaithfulness to the script, casual dialogue with a variety of occasional improvisations using Bugis and Makassar, and every turn of the scene is marked by a musical instrument of tradition in the form of kacapi, Sinrilik, pui-pui and Tanjidor music. The most prominent aesthetics in every show is that the main character in *Petta Puang* always wear the traditional costume of South Sulawesi that is; *Songkok Guru* (Songkok Recca), *Jas Tutup* and *Lipa 'Sabbe* (silk sarong). Since 1985, they have already had approximately 100 shows, and until now the main character of *Petta Puang* remains faithful using the costume and property mentioned above. This is then of interest to the author thoroughly related to the visual aesthetics

(costumes) contained in the show of *Petta Puang* in South Sulawesi. Actually, when we talk about the visual aesthetics of a theater performance, then we will be dealing with various aesthetics contained in it such as; Layout, lighting, makeup, motion and properties. But in this paper the authors focus more on the costumes used by the character of *Petta Puang* which are loaded with symbolic meaning because it is related to the socio-cultural values of the people of South Sulawesi.

Furthermore, in the search of various sources, the author did not find a special study that discusses the aesthetics of *Petta Puang* although this theater group has various cultural values as an identity, including aesthetic values that require philosophical affirmation, which is not just a show. Therefore, the authors try to conduct research on "Aesthetic Visual of *Petta Puang* Performance in South Sulawesi" as a cultural movement that can provide understanding of the discourse to the wider community, as well as the cultural identity of South Sulawesi. This study aims to provide a description of the visual aesthetics contained in the show of *Petta Puang* in South Sulawesi in connection with the network of symbolic meaning inherent in it.

Method

This study focuses its attention on the visual aesthetics contained in the costumes worn by *Petta Puang* figures in the performance of *Petta Puang* Theater group in South Sulawesi. The underlying reason for focusing attention is that: *Petta Puang* has performing traits on each stages of traditional costume (Bugis-Makassar traditional dress), consisting of *Songkok Guru*, *Jas tutup* dan *Lipa Sabbe*. This whole element is not only worn, but besides its aesthetic value, it also has a symbolic meaning related to the cultural socio-culture of South Sulawesi.

In collecting data, the authors did direct observation of the show, interview and documentation. The direct observation here is to watch the show of *Petta Puang*

entitled “Adong Pulang” at Al Amien Auditorium of Muhammadiyah University of Makassar in 2016. In interviewing technique, the authors ask Bahar Merdu directly as the director and owner of *Petta Puang* related to the costumes worn by Petta Puang. In the documentation technique, the authors collect data relating to costumes and properties in the show by using a image or video recorder (handycam and digital camera), voice recorder and notepad.

Data analysis was done to find answers from the problems in the research by using the parameters of observation, documentation and interviews related to visual aesthetics on the performance of *Petta Puang* specifically related to the costume as well as analyzing the symbolic meaning that was built in the show.

Results and Discussion

Performance Form

Watching the performance of *Petta Puang*, then the audience can guess the shape of the show very easily. Patterns of *Petta Puang* show rely on elements of traditional culture with comedy frames/ jokey style of the innocent people, closely with the typical Bugis Makassar. But it does not necessarily close the opportunity to insert contemporary elements that are full of symbolic, poetic and suggestive including the elements of advertising as in one of the *X Gula* script performances. The key of *Petta Puang* show is in the populist character, familiar with the audience that they always create and this makes the show very popular with South Sulawesi society, so *Petta Puang* got much invitation to enliven various events (Yudistira, 2001, p.59).

The observers found that theatrical phenomena of Petta Puang’s performances are seen as a form of transition to Indonesian theater; a form of theater that does not comply with the rules of the western theater. For example, in terms of practice, every player can be a director, at least for himself.

In addition, the story they play, if implemented at different times, it will

change and adjust to the situation. *Petta Puang* realized that without continuous exploration, they would eventually drown the idea.

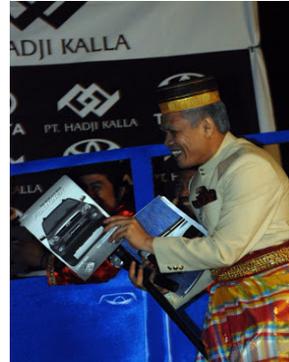


Figure 1. One of *Petta Puang* show styles as MC (*Master of Ceremony*) in Kalla Group anniversary (RSPP Document, 2008)



Figure 2. *Petta Puang* theater group adapting a traditional South Sulawesi theater, “Kondo Buleng” (RSPP Document, 2005)



Figure 3. One of the scene in *Adong Pulang* in the beginning of the show, where the main character of *Petta Puang* accompanied by Conga’ and Gimpe greeted the audience (Andi Etal document, 2016).

To anticipate that, then they are focusing the exploration only on the distinctive colors of Bugis Makassar culture, especially how the portrait of Makassar Bugis

society that interact with the progress of time. *Petta Puang* presents as a personal figure of feudalism Bugis Makassar who tried to adapt themselves in global culture. The style of expressing their thoughts sometimes becomes intriguing analytics. *Petta Puang* avoids the style of play as Srimulat style. Manuscripts played by *Petta Puang* is very flexible. Even some script numbers are made on the spot. This means adjusting to the circumstances in which the story will be performed. They memorize the dialogues as well, but the actualization depends on improvisation of players or direction of the director in the context of the exercise. The dialogue played by the plot and the standard of dialogue comes from the script; the rest improvised. The language used is the average of the lower community languages. Sometimes Bugis language, Makassar is mixed with Indonesian with Bugis accent. The number of sentence improvised is adjusted to body motion/ gesture. Such tendency is seen in almost all the performances of *Petta Puang*, including its performance in Jakarta when invited by one of organizations participated in election, in Surabaya and Balikpapan. (Yudhisthira, 2005)

The audience of *Petta Puang* is always happy, as the audience is deliberately involved in the story. The goal breaks the boundaries of communication barriers as well as people's theater techniques that tend to promote friendship. Because of that concept, they are often called the concept of urban theater. *Petta Puang* has become one of the media capable of laughing at ourselves, for our own psychological well-being. Because the figure of *Petta Puang* can still be found around us. The acting style of *Petta Puang* absorbs the acting community of Kondo Buleng theater. They offer folk style acting unaffected on the dramaturgi concept of the West. Their body movements absorb the daily movement as what it is; only the accent that always brings Bugis ethnic nuances. If in Srimulat's slapstick, they often treat the head in an inappropriate way. *Petta Puang* never does that. The reason is that in Ma-

kassar Bugis culture, head is a symbol of honor.

Visual Aesthetic of Petta Puang Performance

In the realm of science, aesthetics is often referred to as a science that serves to assess the problems associated with the beauty of artwork. Substantially aesthetically dealing with all branches of art. Agus Sachari (in Sahid, 2013; 14) says that aesthetics is a philosophy that addresses the essence of the totality of aesthetic and artistic life that is in line with the times. Often the aesthetic is also called the theory of beauty that is contained in a work of art. In this sense aesthetics discusses aesthetic objects, the quality of artwork and its effect on the human psyche, that is feeling, imagination, mind, and intuition.

Because art has different mediums such as lines, shapes, colors, language, tone, motion and the like, the beauty usually appears after the relationship between the medium, the essence and the element of that element of beauty. Although the medium of art is different, but in essence has the same substance value about beauty. Almost no works of art does not attach importance to beauty.

Monroe C. Breadsley states that something beautiful in the work of art contains at least three main points which include: a) unity (unity), ie every work of art is structured according to the rules of the art rules concerned and has a perfect form; B) complexity, ie the elemental elements that build the artwork show the diversity, so that the work has its own peculiarities and charms; C) sincerity (intensity), ie good works of art must have its own qualities, so it is different from other works. Meanwhile, The Liang Gie says that there are five conditions that must be fulfilled to say that something is beautiful, that is: a) unity, totality (unity), b) harmony, c) symmetry, d) Balance), e) contradiction (contrast), (Sahid, 2013).

Furthermore, the existence of the artwork is analyzed based on the aesthetic theory of Edmund Burke Feldman; how the meaning of symbols towards aesthetic

manifestations is described based on the structure of the form which includes elements of art and composition. Feldman's theory classifies the function of art in three major groups: personal functions of art, the social functions of art, and the physical functions of art. These functions are placed in accordance with the role and usefulness of art in community groups. When attributed to Feldman's theory above, the presence of *Petta Puang* in South Sulawesi certainly has its own function and role in line with the view of community life that supports the presence of the elements of art.

Art and aesthetic theories are needed at the level of understanding, analysis and interpretation. This theory departs from the assumption that every area of art can be considered to have a number of basic aesthetic elements that are universal. In the performance of *Petta Puang*, we can find the following elements: wiraga (element of motion), wirasa (appreciation element), wirama (musical element), wirupa (visual aesthetic diversity element: costume, property, space, etc). Furthermore, each universal element has distinctive embodiments in every cultural and sub-cultural sphere, included in the cultural sphere of South Sulawesi. In relation to this research, borrowing aesthetic theories such as the use of visual art elements supported by Feldman's theory, then related to the form, appearance, or form of art contained in the performance of *Petta Puang* in South Sulawesi can be described, analyzed, and reviewed in depth. Related to this research, then the resulting art is a form or a real form of art that is applied with all the supporting elements that have the value of art and its own aesthetic value.

The visual structure in the performance of *Petta Puang* has the link with the socio-cultural value system of Bugis Makassar. Its aesthetic markers affirm the symbolic meaning of several aspects. In Kowzan's theory, he classifies or makes the segmentation of a theatrical system by highlighting the centrality of actors on the thirteen sign systems: Word, Tone, Mime,

Gesture, Motion, Makeup, Hair Style, Costume, Property, Setting, Lighting, Music and Sound Effects. Then Kowzan uses the distinction between audible marks and visual signs. But in the show of *Petta Puang*, not all elements will be discussed. However, it focuses more on the costumes worn as they relate to the socio-cultural values of people in South Sulawesi.

According to Nur Sahid (2004), the costume worn by an actor includes a sign system that is quite important. This is because the costumes worn by the actor more easily perceived by the audience. It is not surprising that the initial identification of the audience of a performance usually begins with the costume. Costumes and roles are closely related. The theater costume functions largely on the functions derived from social life. In theater, the costume includes a special system to create meaning whose units are determined by material, color and shape. With the form of units, the costumes can create a set of different meanings all related to the identity of the story character (Lichte in Nur Sahid, 2004).

Berikut estetika visual serta makna ke-khas-an kostum tradisional dan beberapa property yang di gunakan tokoh *Petta Puang* meliputi: jas tutup, songkok guru (songkok to Bone), *lipa' sabbe'* tongkat dan kursi.

The following are the visual aesthetics as well as the unique meaning of traditional costume and some of the properties used by *Petta Puang*, including: *jas tutup*, *songkok guru* (songkok to Bone), *lipa' sabbe'* sticks and chairs.

Jas Tutup, a Special Clothes of Bugis-Makassar

Jas tutup actually resembles the traditional costumes of Chinese ethnic costume. What distinguishes is the type of fabric and thickness. *Jas tutup* generally uses a rather thick cloth with good quality. Inside, it has a thin and smooth fabric layer. The pocket is on the top left side. The buttons used are generally only two colors, namely Gold and Silver color. The color of gold usually means that the person has a

high social status. In the pocket, there is a small chain connected to *Jas's* button. *Jas tutup* has become a tradition in every ceremony and local art performances to the Bugis and Makassar.

The colors used vary like red, yellow, blue, white and so on. In each performance of *Petta Puang*, *Petta Puang's* character always wear *jas tutup* based on the show material, but on another occasion, they wear more dominant brown. Brown color is believed to be the mark of nobility, friendship, and visual sanctity. Some of *jas tutup* that are used then experience design enrichment because aesthetic factors are now a necessity in a show.



Picture 4. One of brown *jas tutup* worn by *Petta Puang* on their performance, combined with *songkok to Bone* and *lipa sabbe* (Silk Sarong) to show a very harmonious color combination

Songkok To Bone

Songkok is the identity of men as the crown. In addition to reflecting one's virtue, *songkok* is also often used as a symbol of the identity of the customs and culture of a region. In Bone District itself, there is a *songkok* that became the identity as well as complementary when someone is wearing customs bugis, and it will reveal the charisma of its user, but we should know the rules when we will wear this king relic *songkok*. The *songkok* which has become Bone bugis identity has three different names, namely *Songkok Recca*, *Songkok Pamiring Ulaweng* and *Songkok To Bone*, but the meaning of the three names are generally the same. *Songkok recca* refers to the pro-

cess of making and the raw materials used to make the *songkok* as the material used is made of palm leaf ladar leaves which is called *direcca* or *ure'cha* in bugis.

Songkok pamiring refers to the tip or the bottom of the *songkok* which is decorated in golden color. Usually if the bottom is decorated with gold thread, it is called *songkok pamiring*, but when it is using real gold, it is called *songkok pamiring ulaweng* (gold-clad *songkok*). *Songkok to Bone* is a name that many people say outside Bone, South Sulawesi; it is related to the history of the maker or the user of the *songkok*, the Bone people.

Regarding the rules of use, people are divided into several groups, like the high nobility status or position as the king of a great kingdom and for the child king who descended from Maddara Takku (blue blood), child Mattola, children Matase', they can wear *Songkok pamiring* made entirely of Pure gold or in term bugis *Ulaweng bubbu*. For other nobles, they can wear *songkok pamiring* with a width of three-quarters of gold. For *Arung Matola Menre*, *anak Arung Manrapi*, *anak Arung Sipuwe* and *anakarung*, they can wear *songkok pamiring* with a three-fifths. Bagi *Rajeng Matasa* and *Rajeng Malebbi*, they can wear *songkok pamiring* with a half of the height cap. For *Arung Maddapi*, *anak Arung Sala*, and *anak Cera'*, they can wear *songkok pamiring* with a quarter of high cap. For *Tau Deceng*, *Tau Maradeka*, and *Tau Sama*, they can wear *songkok pamiring* with golden angle, while *Ata* class is not allowed to wear *songkok pamiring* at all. For *Arung Lily* and *Karaeng Lili* under the kingdom of Luwu, Gowa and Bone, they can wear *Songkok Pamiring Salaka*; it is similar to *songkok pamiring* above, but the decoration is silver, not gold, as the use of *songkok pamiring* decorated with gold in the nobility of great empires before, the level of decoration above *songkoknya* accordance with the degree of *Arung Lily* and *Karaeng Lili* concerned. But along with the development in society, this is no longer seen as a caste distinction, the rules are no longer valid and everyone may wear them. But this *songkok* is

still special because it shows the charisma of the wearer. The privilege will be seen if this songkok is above the heads of people or important and famous figures, officials, descendants of nobility, the rich, and the like only that will be the difference is the authority of the wearer.

Songkok pamiring no longer belongs to kings or nobles only, but for those who understand the philosophy of *songkok pamiring*, they will not carelessly wear it. In addition to showing the charisma of the wearer, *songkok pamiring* also shows who actually the person who wear them.

In the performance of *Petta Puang*, the characters always wear songkok wherever or whenever they are as a symbol of descendants of nobility although they wear different motifs on each performance.



Figure 5. One type of Songkok To Bone used by Petta Puang in "Adong Pulang" (Andi Etal Document, 2016).

Lipa " Sa'bbe (Sarung Bugis)

Lipa 'Sa'bbe or Bugis sarong is a kind of traditional Bugis cloth which has beautiful stripe lines, and made of silk produced by bugis community itself. Bugis community from the village of Tajuncu, South Sulawesi. In addition to being a day-to-day wear, Bugis sarongs are worn for sacred ceremony, as well as gifts for the bridegroom. *Lipa* 'Sa'bbe has a variety of shades of small box box called *balo renni*. Meanwhile, the big box-like pattern of Scottish tartan cloth is called *balo lobang*. After the pattern box, there is also a zig-zag pattern that is named *bombang* style. This style describes ocean waves. In the performance of *Petta Puang*, the main characters of *Petta Puang* wear *Lipa* 'Sa'bbe with a large black-and-cream boxed box motif. While *Conga* 'and *Gimpe* has a large box motif as well but the type of fabric is not from silk. This shows that there is a difference in status between

Petta Puang and *Conga* 'and *Gimpe* coming from ordinary people. While the characters of *Puang Beddu* wear a small-checked sarong. Although *Puang Beddu* is the descendants of nobility but the type of cloth used is different from that worn by *Petta Puang*, it is as a differentiator in terms of work.



Figure 6. Several types of *Lipa Sabbe* ' (Sarung Bugis) are worn in performing arts in South Sulawesi. Each motifs has a meaning based on the social status it uses, but now, it no longer characterizes certain people (Andi Etal Document, 2016).



Figure 7. *Lipa* 'Sa'bbe (Sarung Bugis) with various motifs worn by four characters in the performance of "Adong Pulang". Motif used is in accordance with the status in society (Andi Etal Document, 2016).

Conclusion

Based on the above description, it can be concluded as follows: First, that the visual aesthetic of the show of *Petta Puang* in South Sulawesi always raised the values of Bugis-Makassar tradition which is characterized by its consistency in displaying local characteristics of South Sulawesi. The visual aesthetic in this discussion includes: the use of costumes, which consists of Songkok Guru, *Lipa Sabbe* and closing

suit. These three visual elements become social-cultural markers of the Bugis tribe as its use is closely related to adaptation and symbolic communication. It can be described as follows:

1). *Songkok Guru*, Hat (head cover) typical Bugis tribe made from natural lontar leaves made with traditional methods with the priority of quality materials. *Songkok guru* has an opal with a combination of black, gold and silver. While the composition of gold thread is a marker of social strata Bugis, the higher the gold is, the higher the social strata attached to a person. What is interesting in the findings of this research that not only the symbolic form found, but the use of *songkok* became a symbolic communication in every element of its use. Basically, the position of the hat above the head becomes the most important requirement in the delivery of communication and symbolic adaptation in this performance.

2). *Lipa 'sabbe* (silk sarong) is a Bugis sarong which has a subtle texture as a representation of the tenderness and social politeness of Bugis tribe, while vertical and horizontal lines are markers of human relationship with God and human relationships in the social system. The colors contained in silk sarongs emphasize the colors of contrast and light, the subject indicates the character of the Bugis tribe who opposed each other binner in certain situations and circumstances.

Furthermore, the sarong made of silk is dominantly produced by the bugis community itself, especially *Sengkang, Bone and Sidrap* areas.

3). *Jas tutup* (typical *Jas Bugis*), another character that distinguishes the other suit is a form that almost covers all parts of the torso on the human body, its elegant form affirming the attitude that upholds the dignity and dignity of the Bugis. *Jas tutup* originally consists of two colors: black and white. Two elements of color is a neutral color that confirms the impression of depth and sanctity that became the patron of Bugis tribe values. Along with the development of the times and the social

dynamics, the use of color of *jas tutup* also varied; it is influenced by a considerable aesthetic needs in displaying elegance and conjugation in major events of Bugis tribe.

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