



Folklore Functions and Noble Values in The Performance of *Wayang Gagrak Porongan*

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Abstract

Wayang Gagrak Porongan has experienced a period of decline due to limited performance spaces and a lack of generational succession among artists. Therefore, this study aims to document, preserve, and reveal the noble cultural identity embodied in *Wayang Gagrak Porongan* performances. This study use descriptive qualitative method. Data were collected through observation, interviews, performance documentation, and a synopsis of the story, Wahyu Catur Pujangga. The data were analyzed using William R. Bascom's theory of folklore functions. The analysis involved selecting relevant data, presenting the findings in descriptive narratives and classification tables, and drawing conclusions verified through methodological triangulation. Research result: first, the projection function is reflected in societal expectations regarding the ability to lead oneself and in the projection of the community's straightforward character. Second, the function of validating cultural institutions is manifested through the recognition of the *Gagrak Porongan* identity and the Taruna Budaya institution's involvement in organizing the performance. Third, the educational function is conveyed through the advice of the Punakawan characters, which promotes humility and mutual respect. Furthermore, the noble values identified include religious values, reflected in spiritual practices before and during the performance, and moral values, embodied in Cangkruk's culture as a medium for strengthening solidarity and kinship within the community.

Keywords: *folklore function; wayang gagrak; noble values, porongan*

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INTRODUCTION

Wayang kulit is a noble cultural art form that integrates performing, literary, and visual arts. As a performing art, *wayang kulit* involves a *dalang* manipulating puppet figures to enact a story, accompanied by a *sinden* who performs traditional songs and a gamelan ensemble that provides musical accompaniment. The puppet

figures themselves are products of visual art with aesthetic value, while the stories performed originate from literary traditions (Priyanto, 2021).

Wayang kulit is often regarded as a reflection of human life because its performances portray human habits,

characteristics, and behaviors from birth to death while conveying moral messages concerning the consequences of both virtuous and undesirable actions. (Fitri & Maryanti, 2022; Iman & Falhan, 2025). Therefore, *wayang kulit* serves as a medium of communication and education through which the dalang delivers messages to the audience (Priyanto, 2021). Through the stories performed, *wayang kulit* functions not only as entertainment but also as guidance. Consequently, it must be preserved and transmitted across generations as part of a community's cultural identity. One form of such cultural transmission is the performance of *Wayang Gagrak Porongan*.

Wayang Gagrak Porongan is a distinctive form of *wayang kulit* originating from Sidoarjo Regency, East Java. It is characterized by its unique *sulukan*, accompanying *gendhing*, and the use of *njambon* coloration on the puppet figures' palms. (Shiddhiqy et al., 2024). Despite its uniqueness, *Wayang Gagrak Porongan* experienced a period of decline due to limited performance venues and low awareness among younger generations, both as practitioners and inheritors of the art form. This situation raised concerns about the erosion of Sidoarjo's cultural heritage and identity if not accompanied by sustainable preservation efforts.

In response to these circumstances, the Government of Sidoarjo Regency initiated the revitalization of *Wayang Gagrak Porongan* through performances held in twelve sub-districts beginning in 2024 to commemorate the regency's 165th anniversary, with the

program continuing into 2025 (Hanum, 2024). These performances took place from July until the end of November. They were intended to serve as a medium of cultural education for younger generations, enabling them to become more familiar with, understand, and appreciate their local intangible cultural heritage. At the same time, these efforts marked the revival of *Wayang Gagrak Porongan* as a cultural tradition. This phenomenon demonstrates that the revitalization of *wayang* concerns not only the continuity of artistic practices but also provides an opportunity to reexamine the functions and noble values embedded within it. Folklore studies serve as an important framework for understanding this cultural phenomenon.

Folklore refers to cultural expressions of a community that are transmitted from generation to generation through oral traditions, gestures, and various symbolic forms functioning as mnemonic devices (Danandjaja, 2007). In addition, folklore functions as a medium of cultural communication that conveys advice, provides education, and serves as a mechanism of social control through the noble values it contains (Putri et al., 2025).

Discussing noble values involves understanding a set of principles that form the basis of behavior, social norms, beliefs, ethics, and ways of life that shape a society's identity and character (Herdiana dalam Annas et al., 2024). The noble values embedded in folklore are transmitted and maintained through the functions performed within a community's cultural practices. This perspective aligns with Bascom's theory of folklore functions (as cited

in Mahsa & Pratiwi, 2025), which positions folklore as a means of establishing, maintaining, and reproducing socio-cultural values while preserving social balance and strengthening collective identity. Consequently, examining the folklore functions embodied in *Wayang Gagrak Porongan* performances inherently reveals the noble values they contain and how these values are transmitted across generations.

Wayang Gagrak Porongan performances belong to the category of partially oral folklore. This classification is based on the combination of oral and non-oral elements, including speech, movement, and material objects (Danandjaja, 2007; Endraswara, 2009). The oral elements consist of the *dalang's* narration of folk prose and the recitation of *sulukan*. In contrast, the non-oral elements include the manipulation of puppet figures accompanied by music as an integrated folk performance. As a form of partially oral folklore, *Wayang Gagrak Porongan* performances not only present aesthetic and entertainment aspects but also represent the character and noble values that are transmitted as part of the collective identity of the Porongan and broader Sidoarjo communities.

To understand this framework, the study uses Bascom (1965) folklore function theory as the foundation for analysis. Bascom proposes that folklore serves four primary functions: (1) as a projection of collective aspirations, (2) as a means of validating cultural institutions, (3) as a source of education, and (4) as a mechanism for enforcing, monitoring, or controlling social norms through implicit criticism and satire.

These functions may or may not be present depending on empirical findings in the field (Endraswara, 2009).

Several previous researchers have studied the function of folklore. Some of these were conducted by Prameswari & Prawoto (2025) through research entitled *Fungsi Wayang Kulit Lakon Tirta Perwitasari oleh Dalang Ki Cahyo Kuntadi: Perspektif William R. Bascom*. The research shows that the Tirta Perwitasari play represents the four functions of folklore: the insertion of humor, the message of building the habit of fasting on Mondays and Thursdays as a spiritual responsibility, and a prohibition against greed, abuse of power, and the importance of wisdom in facing injustice.

Furthermore, research by Mahamuri et al. (2025) title *Fungsi dan Nilai dalam Sastra Lisan Legenda "Mbah Boyo Pati dan Ikan Lele": Kajian Sosiologi Sastra*. The research findings show that legends serve as a medium for conveying cultural values and social norms, including the prohibition on consuming catfish, the tradition of pilgrimages to the tomb of Mbah Boyo Pati, messages about perseverance, honesty, and gratitude, and the spiritual consequences for violators. Furthermore, the study emphasizes the role of legends in transmitting noble values that strengthen community identity through the continuity of oral traditions and efforts to preserve sacred sites in Medaeng Village, Lamongan.

In line with this, the research by Aisyah & Ula (2024) entitled *Fungsi Tradisi Dhekahan pada Pesarean Mbah Nyai Syarifah di Kota Gresik* also shows the function of the *dhekahan* tradition, which originates from the legendary story of Mbah Nyai Syarifah's

struggle, and advises always respecting teachers and parents. Furthermore, this tradition also serves as an expression of gratitude to God Almighty, teaches the value of politeness through the act of bowing the head when entering the tomb, and is a means of preserving culture and reminding us of the services of our ancestors.

The next study was conducted by Rinawati & Indah Puspitasari (2022) with the title *Fungsi Mitos 'Sedekah Bumi' Teori William R. Bascom*. The results of the study describe five functions of the earth alms myth in *Drokilo*: the existence of *tayub* and *wayang* arts as community entertainment; the element of cooperation to strengthen brotherhood; the teaching of always being grateful; and the prohibition against abandoning traditions, as abandoning traditions will cause disaster.

Similar research on *Wayang Gagrak* was conducted by Ahmad Maulana Iqbal Shiddhiqy et al., (2024) entitled *The Educational Value Of Wayang Kulit Gagrak Porongan*. The research highlights the uniqueness of *Wayang Gagrak Porongan*, which are seen in the initial *sulukan* or poetry, such as *pelungan* (regarding the philosophy of puppet performances), *janturan* (narration of circumstances to explain the character of the character), accompanied by *gendhing gandakusuma*, and *sendhon prabatilarsa* (before the puppet begins to speak, this part contains praise and prayer) as well as explaining the history; general educational value, including moral values in the form of Javanese ancestral teachings, *ruwatan* culture, mythology from *Serat Kandha*; and the aesthetic value of art which is seen in the form of puppets, musical strains, to the improvisation

of the puppeteer's voice to suit the puppet characters.

Based on a review of previous research, it appears that Bascom's functional studies are still generally used to analyze the forms of myths, legends, and oral traditions. Meanwhile, similar research on shadow puppets using Bascom's functional theory has been found only in Tirta Perwirasari's plays. Meanwhile, research on *Wayang Gagrak Porongan* still focuses on the historical scope, the form's characteristics, general educational value, analysis of poetry, and the aesthetics of *wayang*. This research specifically reveals the role of folklore and noble values in organizing *Wayang Gagrak Porongan* performances, especially the plays of Wahyu Catur Pujangga, which have not yet been found.

To fill the contextual gap, this study attempts to describe the function of folklore while also revealing the noble values in the *Wayang Gagrak Porongan* performance, *Wahyu Catur Pujangga*. The motivation for this research is to document, preserve, and discover the noble identity of the Sidoarjo community.

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach because it is appropriate for describing empirical data on all aspects of *Wayang Gagrak Porongan* performances, based on actual field conditions. The data consisted of story narratives, character dialogues, and interview transcripts collected from several informants. According to Sugiyono (2022), qualitative research aims to understand a phenomenon in its natural setting by obtaining factual findings in the

field, with the researcher serving as the primary instrument for collecting data through triangulation and analyzing them inductively. The resulting data, presented in words or images, are systematically described to facilitate understanding by others (Bogdan & Biklen). The empirical data were analyzed using William R. Bascom's (1965) theory of folklore functions to identify the functions of projection, validation of cultural institutions, education, and the enforcement, supervision, or regulation of social norms, as represented in the *Wayang Gagrak Porongan* performance. Based on these functions, the study further explored the noble values embedded in the folklore to reveal the identity and characteristics of the community that sustains it.

The primary data source was obtained through direct observation of a *Wayang Gagrak Porongan* performance held on 25 October 2025 in Jenggot Village, Krembung District, Sidoarjo Regency. The performance was presented by Ki Hasan Yulianto and Ki Ngadollah, featuring the story *Wahyu Catur Pujangga*. Additional data were gathered through interviews with selected informants. Informants were chosen according to Spradley's criteria (as cited in Fatih et al., 2025) Individuals who possess extensive knowledge of the research object remain actively involved in the cultural practice and are willing to provide information openly and objectively based on their experiences. Supporting data were obtained from the literature on Bascom's folklore theory and on noble cultural values.

The research data included the narrative of *Wahyu Catur Pujangga*, character dialogues performed by the *dalang*, and interview transcripts and transliterations that represented the community's folklore functions and noble values.

Data collection was conducted through observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation was carried out using a passive participation approach, in which the researcher attended the performance as an observer and carefully examined all elements that potentially reflected folklore functions and noble values. Interviews were conducted in depth through guided question-and-answer sessions with the key informants. All data were documented in the form of photographs, video recordings, field notes, and interview transcripts. The collected data were analyzed using the interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman. (as cited in Sugiyono, 2022). The analysis consisted of three stages. First, data reduction involved selecting relevant information and excluding data that were not directly related to the research objectives. Second, the data were organized and presented in descriptive narratives and classification tables that illustrated the functions of folklore and noble values. Third, conclusions were drawn and verified to ensure the credibility of the findings. Data validity was established through methodological triangulation by comparing observational findings, interview results, and documentation records to ensure the consistency and reliability of the information obtained.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

History of *Wayang Gagrak Porongan*

Wayang kulit has developed into various regional forms throughout Indonesia, each characterized by a distinctive performance style known as *gagrak* (Shiddhiqy et al., 2024). Each *gagrak* embodies the cultural identity of the community from which it originates. One such tradition is the East Javanese style of *wayang*, widely known as *wayang Jekdong*. The term *Jekdong* is derived from the onomatopoeic sound “*jek*,” which comes from the *wayang keprak* instrument, which is clamped between the legs during the performance. Meanwhile, the sound of “*dong*” from the drum or large gong in *karawitan* music at the beginning of the performance (Kurniawati, 2018; Shiddhiqy et al., 2024).

The East Javanese *gagrak* developed within the *Arek* cultural region, which includes Lamongan, Gresik, Surabaya, Sidoarjo, Mojokerto, Jombang, Pasuruan, and Malang (Ayuswantana et al., 2021; Shiddhiqy et al., 2024). The shared dialect and cultural ties among these regions have contributed to the continuity of the tradition while simultaneously fostering diverse local variations of *wayang* performance. One of these regional variations is *Wayang Gagrak Porongan* from Sidoarjo.

Wayang Gagrak Porongan was first introduced by the late Ki Suwoto Ghozali from Siring Village, Porong District, in the 1960s (Shiddhiqy et al., 2024). Since Ki Suwoto resided in Porong, the local community collectively agreed to recognize and designate the distinctive Sidoarjo style of *wayang kulit* as

Gagrak Porongan. This was further clarified by one of the informants:

Kenapa disebut Gagrak Porongan, karena yang menciptakan gaya versi porongan itu orangnya itu tinggalnya di daerah Siring, Porong

Meaning: Why is it called Gagrak Porongan? Because the creator of the Porongan style lived in Siring, Porong. (Interview with informant)

This statement indicates that the designation *Gagrak Porongan* functions not merely as an administrative reference to the dalang's place of residence but also as a form of social recognition by the local community of Ki Suwoto's contribution to the formation of Sidoarjo's distinctive *wayang* identity. Despite its cultural significance, *Wayang Gagrak Porongan* experienced a period of inactivity due to limited public awareness regarding the importance of preserving cultural heritage. Consequently, beginning in 2024, after years of decline, *Wayang Gagrak Porongan* performances were revived as part of broader efforts to preserve the cultural functions and values inherited by the people of Sidoarjo.

This revival has been realized through a series of performances staged across various districts in Sidoarjo Regency. The present study is based on observations conducted during one of these performances held in Jenggol Village, Krembung District. The performance was also livestreamed on *Kartika Laras Jolotundo's* YouTube channel.



Image 1. *Wayang Gagrak Porongan* Performance (Kartika Laras YouTube channel)

The performance featured the story *Wahyu Catur Pujangga*, an original work written by Ki Hasan Yulianto. According to the author, *Wahyu Catur Pujangga*, the teachings (caturan) delivered by respected elders (pujangga) are guidance and moral instruction intended to lead young people toward the righteous path. Taking from Bascom's theory, the folklore functions represented in the performance, including the projection system, the validation of cultural institutions, the educational function, and the enforcement, supervision, or regulation of social norms, as well as the noble values reflected in *Wayang Gagrak Porongan*, are discussed in the following sections.

Folklore Function in The Performance of *Wayang Gagrak Porongan*

Projection Function

A projection system functions as a medium through which a community reflects its collective aspirations and fulfills its social expectations (Bascom, 1965). Through this function, folklore provides lessons and insights that may guide people in their future lives while simultaneously reflecting and representing communal hopes (Aisyah & Ula, 2024). In the performance of *Wayang Gagrak Porongan*, the

projection function manifests in two forms: the projection of communal aspirations embedded in the narrative of *Wahyu Catur Pujangga*, and the projection of the social character of the Sidoarjo community through performance practices.

Projection of Communal Aspiration

The projection embedded in *Wahyu Catur Pujangga*'s story relates to the community's conception of leadership. Leadership is not understood merely as a structural position or formal authority but rather as an individual's ability to act wisely by exercising self-control and aligning moral values with everyday social life. This projection is illustrated in the episode involving Prabu Kresna, the king of Dwarawati, when he receives a request from a Brahmana who wishes to *nyuwita* (devote himself in service) to the kingdom.

In the story, *Prabu Kresna* rejects the request because he perceives a mismatch between the Brahmana's character and intentions. The rejection provokes the Brahmana's anger, as he feels that his dignity has been insulted. The Brahmana claims that accepting him would bring *mukti wibawa* (glory and authority) to *Kresna*, whereas rejecting him would indicate that *Kresna* is not truly the incarnation of *Bathara Wisnu*. Faced with this provocation, *Prabu Kresna* remains calm and attempts to de-escalate the conflict by saying:

Kresna: "Sliramu punika sampun golekan prekawis, metua menyang njaba! alun-alun, ngentosi putusan kawula." (DP-TC-1-SP)
Kresna: "Samba, Sencaki, kawula nyuwun tulung, punika prayogane dipun kandani, supados mboten nerusaken perkawis, menawi saged, dipun aturi kondur." (DP-TC-2-SP)

Meaning: You are looking for trouble. In that case, leave and wait in the town square for my decision. Samba, Sencaki, I ask for your help. Please speak to him so that he will not continue this matter; if possible, ask him to return home.

The dialogue illustrates *Prabu Kresna's* hesitation as a ruler in making an important decision. Rather than resolving the issue immediately in front of the Brahmana, *Kresna* chooses a middle course by allowing himself time to reflect before reaching a final judgment. This finding is consistent with the argument of (2025), who maintain that wise leadership requires the capacity to make carefully considered decisions that take into account both short- and long-term consequences. Every decision should be based on thoughtful consideration of its potential impact on society and the surrounding environment. This attitude is reflected in openness to various views, the ability to think objectively, and a commitment to making fair and beneficial decisions.

Kresna's first instruction, asking the Brahmana to wait in the town square (DP-TC-1-SP), demonstrates a deliberate pause before taking action. This pause serves to prevent misunderstanding and maintain social harmony. His second instruction, directed to *Samba* and *Sencaki*, asking them to persuade the *Brahmana* not to continue the dispute (DP-TC-2-SP), represents the safest strategy for preventing the conflict from escalating into violence or war. This concept of leadership was further interpreted by one of the informants as follows:

Pimpinan iku ndak kayak bupati, wali kota, gubernur, presiden, bukan. Jadi, itu memimpin diri sendiri. Kalau semua orang bisa menjalankan seperti itu (memimpin diri sendiri), itu nantinya akan setara, tidak ada perbedaan

Meaning: Leadership is not about being a regent, mayor, governor, or president. Rather, it is about leading oneself. If everyone were able to do that—to lead themselves, then all people would become equal, and there would be no differences among them. (Interview with Informant)

This statement suggests that, in *Wahyu Catur Pujangga*, the concept of leadership is fundamentally concerned with authority and personal responsibility. It emphasizes an individual's capacity to direct, control, reflect upon, and improve oneself before attempting to lead others. In this sense, *Prabu Kresna's* hesitation becomes a form of reflection. If even a king, endowed with great authority, can be shaken by provocation, then ordinary people, especially younger generations, require steadfastness and emotional maturity to withstand social pressures.

Therefore, the projection function reflected in this performance reflects the community's aspiration for individuals who can lead themselves with integrity, are not easily manipulated, and consistently practice humility in every aspect of their lives.

Projection of Community Character

Bascom's folklore framework not only explains projection as a reflection of communal aspirations but also as a representation of the character and social habits of the community that sustains it (Bascom, 1965). In the performance of

Wayang Gagrak Porongan, the projection of Sidoarjo society is evident in its orientation toward speed, clarity, and effective communication, as expressed through the *dalang's* performance style. This characteristic is emphasized in the following explanation regarding the distinctive features of *Gagrak Porongan*:

Ciri khasnya sulukan. Kalau versi Porongan itu, kata-katanya jelas dan bisa dipahami oleh masyarakat. Contoh: "Syukur bangun asmoro, bau kiwo pangubat wojo kanten playune nir kadya kencana." Kalau di luar porongan, "syukur bangun asmoro, eeee... woow...", banyak eee, woow. Itu kan gak ada artinya. Jadinya ngulur waktu, ritmenya gak bisa singkat, dibuat lambat, dadine gak isok cak-cek ndang mulih ndang selesai. Ada greget, gak perlu panjang-panjang; yang dibahas langsung. (Interview with Informant)

Meaning: The hallmark is the *sulukan*. In the *Porongan* style, the words are clear and easily understood by the audience. For example: 'syukur bangun asmoro, bau kiwo pangubat wojo kanten playune nir kadya kencana.' Outside the *Porongan* style, it might be performed as 'syukur bangun asmoro, eeee... woow...' with many elongated sounds. Those additions do not carry any meaning. They merely prolong the performance, slowing the rhythm and making it less concise. Here, there is energy and intensity; there is no unnecessary elaboration. We go directly to the point. (Interview with Informant)

This statement indicates that the variation in vocal pitch and the fast rhythm of *sulukan* delivery constitute an established convention of *Wayang Gagrak Porongan*, developed in accordance with the character of the Sidoarjo community. As part of the Arek cultural region, the people of Sidoarjo are widely recognized as straightforward, pragmatic, and averse to unnecessary complexity (*sat-set*) in both communication and everyday activities. As explained by

Jauhari (cited in Ayuswantana et al., 2024) Communities within the Arek cultural sphere tend to communicate directly and openly, avoiding excessive elaboration while maintaining strong social solidarity and openness to feedback.

The expression "*gak pake panjang-panjang yang dibahas langsung*" highlights the audience's preference for messages that are concise, easily understood, and delivered efficiently. Consequently, *sulukan* are performed with a faster rhythm so that the philosophical messages embedded in the *wayang* narrative can be readily understood. This performance style reflects a broader social tendency to prioritize clarity, efficiency, and practical outcomes.

Validation of Cultural Institution

The function of folklore as a means of validating cultural institutions and social practices enables researchers to understand folklore as a collection of symbols, norms, traditions, and values that have been collectively recognized and endorsed by a particular community (Bascom, 1965). Similarly, Safitri & Rizal (2024) argue that local communities establish such institutions to regulate and guide their members' behavior. In the context of *Wayang Gagrak Porongan*, this function is reflected in the existence of *Taruna Budaya*, which serves as a tangible manifestation of the people of Sidoarjo's collective acknowledgment and preservation of *Wayang Gagrak Porongan* as a living cultural heritage.

According to a report published by TIMES Indonesia (Latowa, 2023), the Head

of the East Java Office of Culture and Tourism, Hudiyono, established *Taruna Budaya* with the mission of advancing cultural development, village tourism, and the creative economy. A total of 222 *Taruna Budaya* institutions have been established across 38 regencies and municipalities throughout East Java. One of these institutions is *Taruna Budaya Sidoarjo*, which serves as a social institution that bridges cultural policies and community-based cultural preservation practices. Its role is particularly evident in its involvement in organizing and supporting *Wayang Gagrak Porongan* performances. This involvement was highlighted by one of the members of *Taruna Budaya Sidoarjo*:

Lebih fokus ke acara wayangnya, karena emang kalau di dinas kebudayaan selalu ada acara Wayang Gagrak. Rutin.

Meaning: We focus more on the wayang performances because the Department of Culture always organizes *Wayang Gagrak* events. They are held regularly. (Interview with Informant)

This statement indicates that *Wayang Gagrak* performances have become institutionalized, continuous cultural events. *Wayang* is therefore presented not merely as a traditional art form but as a cultural practice supported by formal institutions and the community that owns and sustains it. From Bascom (1965) From this perspective, this condition demonstrates the role of folklore in validating cultural institutions, as it is maintained through socially recognized structures. Furthermore, the social legitimacy of *Wayang Gagrak Porongan* performances is

reinforced by another informant's explanation regarding the objectives of these performances:

Tiap pementasan, semua masyarakat iku, termasuk perangkat desa, budayawan, dan masyarakat umum dari berbagai usia, ikut menonton dan ikut nyengkuyung agar wayang ini tetap hidup. Karena semua misinya Pak Hasan iku gak menghibur, aku iki merangkul semuanya. Merangkul semua aliran

Meaning: At every performance, everyone participates, including village officials, cultural practitioners, and community members of all ages. They come to watch and support the continuation of this wayang tradition. Pak Hasan's mission is not merely to entertain people; it is to bring everyone together. To embrace all groups and communities. (Interview with Informant)

The statement above emphasizes that *Wayang Gagrak Porongan* performances are not solely for entertainment but also serve as a communal gathering space and a medium for social cohesion, embracing all segments of society. The expression *nyengkuyung* (supporting or collectively sustaining) embodies the spirit of cooperation and collective ownership. It reflects the role of *wayang* as a cultural institution that has been accepted, legitimized, and maintained collectively by the people of Sidoarjo.

Educational Function

Education encompasses all activities and processes aimed at expanding knowledge, developing skills, and shaping positive character through social institutions, including the family, which serves as a source of informal education (Endraswara, 2013). According to Bascom (1965), folklore functions as an effective educational medium because it shapes attitudes, behaviors, and life principles within a

community, particularly in societies where literacy may be limited. As a form of partially oral folklore, *wayang* performances can serve as a valuable educational resource for children, as they convey moral lessons on virtue, honesty, and proper conduct (Prameswari & Prawoto, 2025). In the *Wayang Gagrak Porongan* performance, this educational function is primarily conveyed through the advice delivered by the *Punakawan* character Semar. The first piece of advice is expressed when Semar intervenes during a heated conflict between the *Brahmana* and the soldiers of *Prabu Kresna*:

Semar: "Aja angkara duga, angkara murka, sing digoleki perkoro mesti soal mangan." (DP-TC-4-SPD)

Meaning: Do not be greedy; do not be quick to anger; the root of most conflicts often lies in worldly needs.

This statement criticizes negative human traits such as greed, anger, and the tendency to create conflict, all of which threaten social harmony. Furthermore, the reference to disputes arising from matters related to "*mangan*" or basic needs serves as a satire on human behavior, particularly the tendency to prioritize material interests over collective well-being. This finding is consistent with Sholikin & Jamil (2024) who argue that social conflicts frequently arise from inequalities in the fulfillment of needs, access to resources, and competing interests that generate feelings of injustice and social jealousy. In this sense, social conflict may be interpreted as a consequence of an individual's inability to manage personal desires and ambitions. Through this advice, Semar reminds people to avoid greed and exercise self-

restraint. The second piece of advice is delivered after peace and stability have been restored in the Kingdom of *Dwarawati*:

Semar: "Wahyu iki duduk kanggo wong kang gumedhe, nanging kanggo sira kang andhap asor, eling marang sepuh, lan tansah setya marang laku kabecikan." (DP-TC-3-SPD)

Meaning: This divine blessing is not intended for the arrogant, but for those who are humble, respectful of their elders, and steadfast in practicing virtue.

Semar's statement implies that blessings and divine favor are not granted to the arrogant but to those who demonstrate humility, respect for elders and ancestors, and an unwavering commitment to virtuous conduct. This advice resonates with the well-known Javanese educational and leadership principles *ing ngarsa sung tuladha, ing madya mangun karsa, tut wuri handayani*, which emphasize being a role model, inspiring others, and providing encouragement from behind (Apriliyanti et al., 2020).

Within informal educational settings, such moral teachings can be transmitted to younger generations through *wayang* narratives such as the Mahabharata and Ramayana. These stories exemplify devotion to God, respect and affection for parents, honesty in speech and action, compassion, and the cultivation of moral character. They also teach that life is cyclical, like a wheel turning, in which individuals may experience both prosperity and hardship. Consequently, people are encouraged to remain humble, self-aware, and reflective in all circumstances.

The moral message of *Wahyu Catur Pujangga* is summarized by one of the informants as follows:

Seorang kesatria iku layak nerimo anugerah lan dadi pemimpin sejati kalau iso ngormati leluhur, patuh nang wong tuo, taat kepada guru, lan nduweni bekti menyang negara.

Meaning: A true knight is worthy of receiving blessings and becoming a genuine leader if he respects his ancestors, obeys his parents, honors his teachers, serves his country, and upholds humility and wisdom. (Interview with Informant)

The moral lesson conveyed through *Wahyu Catur Pujangga* places character formation at the center of ideal leadership. Leadership in this narrative is founded upon respect for ancestors, obedience to parents and teachers, humility, and dedication to society. Through these values, the story demonstrates that successful leadership is determined not only by intellectual knowledge but also by proper conduct and ethical behavior. Character and manners serve as the foundation of learning because knowledge can only produce meaningful benefits when accompanied by good character (Setyorini & Martoyo, 2024).

Therefore, through this story, children and younger generations are encouraged to understand the importance of virtues such as mutual respect, humility, obedience, honesty, compassion, and devotion to parents and teachers. These values contribute to moral education and the development of noble character within the Sidoarjo community. Such lessons are transmitted indirectly through the *Punakawan* characters, who function as moral exemplars for the audience.

Noble Values of The Sidoarjo Community in The Performance of *Wayang Gagrak Porongan*

Efforts to preserve *wayang* traditions align with Koentjaraningrat (2015), we view culture as inherently dynamic and continuously evolving. As inheritors of cultural traditions, communities must therefore recognize, protect, and preserve their cultural heritage so that ongoing changes do not erase the identity and original character of their culture. To maintain social order, a moral framework is essential, and folklore fundamentally provides teachings that function as guidelines for life (Endraswara, 2009).

According to Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI), noble values refer to teachings that serve as the foundation of behavior because they are believed to be true and worthy of practice. These values originate from the life experiences of ancestors and are transmitted through narratives, images, and symbolic representations, which are subsequently embraced by cultural communities (Harvianto & Abeng, 2021). Furthermore, Hartini et al., (1992) Classify noble values into two primary categories: religious values and moral values. Religious values emphasize the relationship between human beings and the Creator, whereas moral values emphasize relationships with oneself, with others, and with the natural environment.

Sidoarjo Regency is part of the *Arek* cultural region, which encompasses the areas surrounding Surabaya, including Lamongan, Gresik, Mojokerto, Jombang, Pasuruan, and Malang (Ayuswantana et al., 2021; Hilman dalam Wicaksana et al., 2025). Based on observations of the *Wayang Gagrak Porongan*

performance, these two categories of noble values represent the characteristics of the Sidoarjo community as a subculture within the broader Arek cultural tradition.

Religious Society

As part of the *Arek* cultural region, the people in Sidoarjo are characterized by a strong religious orientation, in which spiritual and religious values serve as the foundation of everyday life (Ayuswantana et al., 2024). Religious values derive from sacred beliefs concerning the relationship between humans and the Creator, including faith, religious practices, and moral conduct that guide attitudes and behavior (Gracia dalam Aslan & Pugu, 2025). Based on observations and interviews with the *Wayang Gagrak Porongan dalang*, religious values are reflected in the recitation of prayers before and after performances, the chanting of *shalawat*, the performance of the *gendhing Allahul Kahfi*, and several spiritual practices undertaken by the *dalang* prior to appearing on stage. One informant explained:

Kalau sebelum naik panggung baca mantra. Mantra itu jeneng liane doa, terus puasa selama satu hari sebelum pementasan, sholawat, supaya ada wibawa... Ada juga gending religi, Allahul Kahfi.

Meaning: Before going on stage, I recite a mantra. A mantra is simply another name for a prayer. I also fast for one day before the performance and recite *shalawat* so that I may possess authority and dignity on stage... There are also religious musical pieces, such as *Allahul Kahfi*. (Interview with Informant)

This statement indicates that religious values are manifested through practices such as prayer, fasting before the performance, and

reciting *shalawat*, all of which are regarded as spiritual disciplines that contribute to the authority and success of the performance. Such practices reflect a perception of *wayang* as a sacred tradition rather than merely a form of entertainment. This interpretation is also evident in the timing of performances, which are commonly held at night and continue until dawn. As one audience member explained:

Wayang ditampilkan tengah malam menggambarkan agar selalu ingat kepada Yang Maha Kuasa. Agar manusia bisa berpikir jernih, makanya pementasan dilakukan di malam hari karena dijadikan tuntunan dan lebih mengena di hati.

Meaning: Wayang is performed at midnight to remind people of the Almighty. It helps individuals think more clearly; that is why performances are held at night. They serve as guidance and resonate more deeply within the heart. (Interview with Informant)

This statement suggests a shared understanding among community members that nighttime is an appropriate period for spiritual reflection, self-evaluation, and strengthening one's relationship with God. Consequently, *wayang* is perceived not merely as a spectacle but also as a source of spiritual guidance.

The religious character of the Arek community is reflected not only in performance practices but also in the physical design of the *wayang* figures. Ayuswantana et al., (2024) explain that *wayang* traditions within the *Arek* cultural region have adapted the costumes of respected characters, such as Semar and Bagong, by dressing them in long garments that cover the body from below the navel to the ankles. This adaptation reflects the community's strong Islamic values.

Therefore, the religious character of the Sidoarjo community, as part of the Arek cultural tradition, is reflected in the integration of religious practices, spiritual interpretations, and artistic adaptations of *wayang* elements that align with the strongly upheld religious values of society.

Cangkruk Culture

Based on observations and interviews, *Wayang Gagrak Porongan* performances also represent the noble values of the Sidoarjo community through the culture of *Cangkruk*, which embodies moral values concerning relationships among individuals. According to Hartini et al. (1992), moral values in human relationships are reflected through principles of togetherness and interdependence.

Cangkruk is a term commonly used in East Javanese society to describe a social activity in which people gather informally to converse while drinking coffee (*ngopi*) at local stalls or coffee shops (Santoso, 2017). This practice is particularly common among adult men and functions not only as a form of leisure but also as a symbol of social unity that reinforces kinship, solidarity, cooperation, and concern for others (Niam & Nurhayati, 2021). Setiawan (as cited in Hidayah et al., 2024) further argues that a well-established *Cangkruk* culture serves as a space for cultural expression and communication.

This cultural value is represented throughout the preparation, implementation, and conclusion of *Wayang Gagrak Porongan* performances. During the preparation stage, values of kinship and cooperation are evident in community members' active participation in

organizing the technical requirements for the event. Tasks such as stage construction and the arrangement of supporting equipment are carried out collectively in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere while sharing coffee. As one informant explained:

Masang rendo-rendoan, satu set 8-9 meter, nata panggung itu paling 2 jam selesai bersama-sama. Ya sama ngopi

Meaning: Setting up the decorations and arranging an eight- or nine-meter stage can be completed in about two hours when done together. Moreover, of course, while drinking coffee. (Interview with Informant)

This statement demonstrates that community cooperation is highly effective because a shared sense of responsibility and mutual assistance support it. Such cooperation reflects the characteristics of a community that is open, caring, and accustomed to collective work (Juliyanto et al., 2025).



Image 2. Performance Atmosphere (Personal Documentation)

During the performance itself, the noble value most clearly expressed is togetherness. Community members, particularly adult men, use the event as an opportunity to gather, converse, and enjoy food and beverages sold by vendors around the performance venue, including mobile coffee sellers. Even after the performance concludes, many attendees continue gathering and

engaging in *Cangkruk* activities at nearby coffee stalls. This phenomenon demonstrates that *Wayang Gagrak Porongan* performances function as social spaces that strengthen interpersonal relationships within the community. One informant stated:

Kadang pulang gak langsung pulang, mampir nang warkop, nyante, tenggok-tenggok ambek anak-anak. Wong seng seneng njajan iku wong Sidoarjo.

Meaning: Sometimes we do not go straight home afterward. We stop by a coffee stall, relax, and spend time with friends and the younger people. People from Sidoarjo enjoy eating and hanging out (Interview with Informant).

This statement illustrates that *Cangkruk* culture has become an integral part of everyday life in Sidoarjo. The practice of stopping at a coffee stall after a performance offers opportunities for relaxation, social interaction, and strengthening solidarity through informal communication. Consequently, *Cangkruk* creates a communicative space that fosters emotional closeness among community members (Juliyanto et al., 2025).

Furthermore, the statement that “*Wong seng seneng njajan iku wong Sidoarjo*” in English “*People from Sidoarjo simply enjoy eating and hanging out*” reflects a social identity centered on gathering while sharing food and beverages. Firnanda et al. (2021) describe Sidoarjo as a region characterized by a warm social atmosphere, as its residents regularly set aside time to gather with family and friends, whether for conversation, culinary activities, or community events. This condition is clear evidence that the *cangkruk* culture has become a social

character that continues to be transmitted through various activities, including the *Wayang Gagrak Porongan* performance.

This observation is further supported by statistical data indicating that Sidoarjo ranks third among regions in Indonesia with the highest number of coffee shops, totaling 10,061 establishments, according to *GoodStats* (Al Fajri, 2026). Through *Cangkruk*, community members engage in open communication in a relaxed, egalitarian environment where they can express opinions, share experiences, and discuss various social issues (Juliyanto et al., 2025). These findings reinforce the conclusion that *Cangkruk* culture is deeply embedded in the daily lives of the Sidoarjo community as part of the *Arek* cultural tradition.

CONCLUSION

The performance of *Wahyu Catur Pujangga* in the *Wayang Gagrak Porongan* tradition, staged in Jenggot Village, Krembung District, Sidoarjo Regency, on 25 October 2025, represents three of the four folklore functions proposed by Bascom. First, the projection function takes two forms. The projection of communal aspirations is reflected in the episode depicting Prabu Kresna's hesitation, which conveys moral messages concerning self-reflection, humility, and resistance to provocation. Meanwhile, the projection of community character is represented through the direct, straightforward communication style embodied in the *sulukan* convention, which is delivered at a fast pace and focused on the essential message. Second, the function of

validating cultural institutions is reflected in the recognition of the “*Gagrak Porongan*” identity as a product of collective community agreement and in the presence of Taruna Budaya Sidoarjo as an institution that supports and preserves the tradition. Third, the educational function is represented through the advice of the *Punakawan* characters, particularly Semar, who promotes humility, respect for elders, and a commitment to virtuous conduct. The fourth function proposed by Bascom, namely folklore as a mechanism for monitoring and regulating social behavior, was not identified in the observed performance of *Wayang Gagrak Porongan*.

The noble values represented in the performance reflect the characteristics of the Sidoarjo community as a religious society with a strong *cangkruk* culture. Religious values are expressed through perceptions of *wayang* as a sacred tradition and through practices such as fasting, reciting *shalawat*, and praying. Meanwhile, *Cangkruk* culture embodies moral values including kinship, togetherness, social concern, and cooperation. These values are manifested throughout the preparation, implementation, and conclusion of the performance and are closely integrated with the community's habit of gathering and sharing coffee. Consequently, *Wayang Gagrak Porongan* serves as an effective medium for transmitting the values, identity, and cultural heritage of the Sidoarjo community as inheritors of the Arek cultural tradition.

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