The 1st International Conference for Arts and Arts Education on Indonesia (ICAAE)

Theme:
"Rethinking The Human Dignity and Nation Identity: A Review Perspective of Arts and Arts Education"

Venue:
Faculty of Languages and Arts,
Yogyakarta State University, March 5-6, 2014

Invited Speakers:

Prof. Dr. Kanchana Witchayapakorn
Faculty of Humanities, Naresuan University,
Thailand

Dr. Goh Beng Lan
Department of Southeast Asian Studies,
National University of Singapore

Rudi Corens
A Belgium Artist – Curator Educational and Toy Museum “Kolong Tangga”,
Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Prof. Dr. F.X. Mudji Sutrisno, S.J.
Driyarkara School of Philosophy, Jakarta, Indonesia

Prof. Dr. Ign. Bambang Sugiharto
Department of Philosophy, Parahyangan University,
Bandung, Indonesia

Prof. Dr. Suminto A. Sayuti
Faculty of Languages and Arts, Yogyakarta State University,
Indonesia

Reviewers and Editors:

Dr. Kasiyan, M. Hum.
Dr. Widyastuti Purbani, M.A.
Ayu Niza Machfauzia, M.Pd.
Siti Sudartini, M.A.

Faculty of Languages and Arts
Yogyakarta State University
Karangmalang Yogyakarta, Indonesia 55281
Website: http://fbsuny.org or http://uny.ac.id
THEME:
RETHINKING THE HUMAN DIGNITY
AND NATION IDENTITY:
A REVIEW PERSPECTIVE OF ARTS
AND ARTS EDUCATION

Reviewers & Editors:
Dr. 'Kaslyan', M.Humi.
Dr. Widyastuti Purbani, M.A.
Ayu Niza Machfauzia, M.Pd.
Siti Sudartini, M.A.

PRESS
2014
PROCEEDING
The 1st International Conference of Arts
and Arts Education in Indonesia (ICAAE) 2014
March 5-6, 2014

RETHINKING THE HUMAN DIGNITY AND NATION IDENTITY:
A REVIEW PERSPECTIVE OF ARTS AND ARTS EDUCATION

xvi + 940 hlm; 21 x 29.7 cm


I. Artikel II. Judul III. Dr. Kasiyan, M.Hum., dkk

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Penyunting :
Dr. Kasiyan, M.Hum.
Dr. Widyastuti Purbani, M.A.
Ayu Niza Machfauzia, M.Pd.
Siti Sudartini, M.A.

Desain Sampul:
Ika Dyah Afriani

Tata Letak :
Pudji Triwibowo

Penerbit:
UNY Press
Kompleks Fak. Teknik UNY, Kampus Karangmalang
Yogyakarta 55281 Phone : (0274) 589346
E-mail : unypress.yogyakarta@gmail.com
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MUSIC, IDENTITY AND HUMANISM

Theme: "Rethinking the Human Dignity and Nation Identity: A Review Perspective of Arts and Arts Education"
THE ART OF GEJOG LESUNG IN MODERN TIMES: 
A DEDICATION FOR LOCAL WISDOM

Ayu Niza Machfauzia
Yogyakarta State University
ayu@uny.ac.id

Abstract

Gejog Lesung is one of traditional arts which belong to the people of Indonesia, especially Yogyakarta. Generally, this kind of art is always related to agriculture-based society because it is based on musical expressions resulted from agricultural tools, particularly alu (gejog) and lesung struck into each other. Gejog means 'to hit'. Alu is used for hitting paddies, while Lesung is a boat-shaped container for paddies. Therefore, paddy can be separated from grain. Both tools are made from wood. On this paper, the explanation is focused on the art of Gejog Lesung and the efforts to save it from extinction, as well as its symbolic meaning. Gejog Lesung, which came from rural society, has a symbolic meaning of appreciation of simplicity, cooperation, togetherness, and mutual respect for each other.

Keywords: Gejog Lesung, traditional art, rural.

Introduction

Indonesia is one country that is known for having the diversity of art and culture. The diversity comes from Sabang to Merauke, and this is an local wisdom asset owned by Indonesian society. It is said that because according to the concept of local wisdom is a conceptual idea that living in the community, grow and develop continuously in the public consciousness, to function in regulating the lives of the people that are related to the life of the sacred to the profane (Dhamardjati, 2011:2). Diversity of art and ethnic culture that adorn the Persada Nusantara (Hamengku Buwono X, 2007:3) feels so wonderful in the hands of the workers arts and cultural observer. Furthermore, Hamengku Buwono X (2007) said that the workers arts and cultural observer pouring it phenomenon into the harmony of dance, music, song lyric, poem and painting. Thus, for the workers arts and cultural observer to be continue to turn on the harmonies of dance, music, song lyric, poem, and his paintings, it is necessary to support the various
parties to the diversity of art and culture of can grow and develop continuously in community awareness.

However, if viewed on the culture of today’s technology is increasingly pervasive in the heart and soul of almost the entire society, not exception for the people of Indonesia, especially Java community, making the influence of western culture so easily and rapidly affect the lives of most people, especially the younger generation. A similar sentiment expressed by Hamengku Bowono X (2007:23) that the current Indonesian culture alongside the modern culture that brings new values. By presence this phenomenon, it is not surprising that local wisdom assets in the form of art and culture of the Indonesian nation is no longer touched by the younger generation. The younger generation today is more interested in things related to technology and culture of western culture, so that the phenomenon of Bhineka Tunggal Ika that has been poured the workers arts and cultural observer such as a muted and eroded by both of these cultures.

Not a few from the younger generation of Indonesian people who know the art and culture that exist in the surrounding environment. For example, young people who are in one village in Gunung Kidul, that is Trowono, Karangasem were not interested in the art Gejog Lesung that is an local wisdom asset owned by the village. Although mothers in the village Trowono actively practicing and keep trying to preserve this art, but it does not make young people interested to come and play or be involved in the arts (Wiyatni, 2013:2). Therefore, local wisdom assets in the form of arts and culture needs to be preserved so that it does not become extinct eroded by currents of modernization. One of the local knowledge assets that need to be preserved is the art of Gejog Lesung. It stands to reason, because the art of Gejog Lesung is a unique art owned by the majority of Javanese society, especially the people of Yogyakarta. It is unique because the instruments used are agricultural tools (Alu and Lesung). In addition, this art is generally played by mothers using a simple outfit (which shows the symbol farmed).

Based on what has been described, the following questions can be asked: How does existence the art of Gejog Lesung in the present, and the values of what is contained in them, and how conservation efforts are conducted by local government towards this art? The purpose of this paper is to reveal the presence of art in the present gejog mortar in terms of functions and meanings contained therein, as well as reveal the effort to preserve that made towards the arts.

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Discussion

In this section, we discuss about the art of Gejog Lesung, the existence of the art of Gejog Lesung in the present, as well as the effort to preserve of the art of Gejog Lesung. In detail, these three topics are described as follows.

Gejog Lesung

Basically, Gejog Lesung means hitting the container for pounding rice (Adjie, 2012:3). Clearly, gejog means hitting, and Lesung is container for pounding rice. Meanwhile, the tool for pounding called Alu, and then pair of agricultural equipment is used to separate the grain from the stalks and of the grain was manner threshed. This is done because the farmers at that time there were modern farm implements such as rice milling, so that they are carried out manually. As for these agricultural implements, namely Alu which is a long wooden pestle and used as paddy, and the dimples that resemble a boat and in the middle there is a hole that is used as a place to pound rice.

If both devices are used for pounding rice, then came voice tek tok tek tok. The sound produced from the Alu that pounded on Lesung, and then the sound is a strains voice that can provide a jovial mood for the perpetrators of activities pounding rice. It is as said by Hatley (2008:19) “Gejog or kotekan music is produced through the rhythmic striking of poles in the wooden trough used to pound and husk rice and the beating of smaller sticks against the sides of the trough to supplement the main rhythm”. Therefore, with the passage of time, these activities developed into a traditional art which is owned by the agricultural community as an entertaining art and played on special occasions (Sije, 2013:1) such as clean village, traditional ceremonies, and welcoming guests. Furthermore, this art was named Gejog Lesung. Thus it can be said, agricultural implements, namely Alu and Lesung not only serves as an agricultural tool, but also serves as a musical instrument that is embedded in the local music culture. It is, as expressed by Dawe (2003:274) the following: "The sound-producing devices we call musical instrument are firmly embedded in local music cultures worldwide as well as a part of global cultural flows in which they are swept up and relocated".

Viewed from the sound source generated, musical instruments of Alu and Lesung included in the family Idiophone, because the source of the sound produced from the instrument itself (Lesung), and also can be classified into a rhythmic percussion instrument, because it does not have the tone (untune). Meanwhile, if viewed from the playing techniques, music instruments and Dimples Alu included in percussion techniques, to be beaten with a stick bat (Alu). The same thing was said also by Berkle and Cleaton (2006:21), namely
“All percussion instruments are struck to make them sound. They are struck with the hands or with beaters, or struck against one another like a pair of cymbals.”

From what has been described, it can be said that Gejog Lesung is actually a farming tool used by farmers to pound rice. With development of times, the agricultural tool increasing function into music instruments, and percussion idiophone included in the group. This is due to the way to play it is to use a stick (Alu) to hit Lesung, so that the Lesung were struck wheezes. Furthermore, musical instruments of Alu and Lesung can be termed as the musical instrument of result local cultural. The instruments Alu and Dimples can be seen in Figure 1.

_Alu and Lesung is being played by mothers (Source: Pramesiti, 2011)_

Figure 1 shows the Alu and Mortar Music instruments being played by mothers in the village Giriharjo, Gunungkidul (Pramesiti, 2011). Both instruments are currently preserved in the Farmers museum as a symbol of the triumph of farmers in ancient times in Java (Deandanecro, 2009:2). In addition, to remind the ancient farming culture in an increasingly forgotten.

The existence of The Art of Gejog Lesung in The Present

Before outlining of The art of Gejog Lesung in the present, it's good to see a glimpse of the art on some time ago. When it comes to this art, which really is not much literature discussing it. However, some references appear and written based on the aesthetic experience gained related of artistry Gejog Lesung.

The Art of Gejog Lesung is a traditional art which owned most of the people of Java, especially Yogyakarta. There are several districts in Yogyakarta, which until now still performing, as well as foster and enhance the creativity of its people in the field of art and culture, especially the arts of this unique Gejog Lesung. Districts include district Kulon Progo, Bantul, Sleman district, and the district of Gunung Kidul. Basically, what is presented in the arts Gejog Lesung

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contained in several districts in Yogyakarta is not much different from one another.

If look at the history, Gejog Lesung is an art that has been around a long time. Initially, the farmers mother are used a Lesung tool for pounding rice, and using Alu as the pounding rice (Adjie, 2012:1). These tools are generally used at harvest time arrives. In addition, this activity is done as a sign of gratitude to the rice goddess Dewi Sri or over abundance of harvest (Pramesti, 2011:1). However, with the development of the times, especially the culture of technology, makes it easy for farmers to grind the rice to separate the grain from the stalk. Therefore, it is considered much more effective, then the activity slowly pounding rice using Lesung began to be abandoned, replaced by the use of more modern farming tools, more practical, and more time-namely rice milling tool. Lesung that appear at this time, no longer used to pound rice, but used to play Gejog Lesung, and preserved as the art Gejog Lesung. Sound of tok tek tok tek generated from the beaten Alu-tap to Lesung because that is the art of producing a rhythm. By the sound of that, some people call it by Kothekan Lesung.

Previously, the function of the art of Gejog Lesung used as a marker that a human child is born, and then followed by the event, as well as a hint of villagers to prepare everything that aims to ease the burden for residents who will have the event. Another function of Gejog Lesung is to fill the time for farmers after a tired day's work to pound rice (Wiyatni, 2013:2). Further Wiyatni (2013) describes Gending-gending commonly played as an expression of notification of the birth of a baby. Gending-gending these are Wayangan, Kebo Ilang or Gejlug Loro, and Randhu Sedompol. Gending-gending is also not only as an expression of news delivery, but also notice children who in the village who and where the place of birth of the baby, so gending-gending continue to play until the people hear and know.

Judging from the functions Gejog Lesung in a village, it can be said that in anthropology, the function of music sung in the art of Gejog Lesung has a function as a communication tool and function as symbolic offerings. Function as a means of communication, that gending-gending played in Gejog Lesung is a means of communication between the players and the community, while function of offering symbolic as intended gending-gending are giving symbol or a sign the art of Gejog Lesung is included as described by Merriam (1964:219-226), namely 1) as a communication tool, and 2) as a symbolic representation. As a communication tool means music presented by local people (the players Gejog Lesung) conveyed a message of its own to support the culture of society (local community), and is only known by the people themselves. Meanwhile, the function of music as a symbolic representation, meaning that the music played is the symbol of the state of the local culture. Thus, it can be said that the function of

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music sung in the art of Gejog Lesung in ancient times has a function as a communication tool and as a symbolic representation.

At the beginning of each performances, the art of Gejog Lesung played by 5-6 people as drummers (the pound). However, in order to play in arts Gejog Lesung is not monotonous, now, that the art is combined with traditional songs as well as equipped with the dancers who performing as a group. In fact, in some places like in the village Candran, the play of Gejog Lesung accompanied by gamelan. Generally, this art is played by mothers from the local area and act as drummers. In addition, the clothes are simple clothing used during farming, as shown in Figure 2.

![Mothers in Candran village, Kebonagung Imogiri Bantul was playing Gejog Lesung (Source: Enggar, 2013)](image)

Currently, rhythm sung by the drummer of Gejog Lesung called gendhing-gendhing kothekan Lesung. Wiyatni (2013:4) explains, the name of gendhing kothekan Lesung usually contain symbolic meaning as Gendhing Butterfly fight which means butterfly mating or meeting of two sex is a symbol of fertility in agrarian culture. This suggests people proximity with cultural agrarinya, so the names gendhing that sung have meanings associated with the agricultural world.

The effort to Preserve of the Art of Gejog Lesung

Although the art of Gejog Lesung has evolved over time, but at this time, the arts still rare found in its performances. To maintain and to keep the art of Gejog Lesung from the threat of extinction, some local governments do a variety of activities, and in its the activities featuring the arts of Gejog Lesung performances. For example, the government of Bantul district which organizes the Festival Cultural Food Sovereignty (Enggar, 2013:1) in December 2012.

In this activity, in addition to held the various competitions, also held Gejog Lesung performances that combined with musical scarecrow. Another

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example is the effort to preserve the art of Gejog Lesung in the present, doing by the Kulon Progo district government is to hold a Festival Gejog Lesung (TVRI Yogyakarta, 2013:1), where the festival was attended by 12 Gejog Lesung groups from 12 districts in Kulon Progo. In fact, at this time, the art of Gejog Lesung has begun to be commercialized and commodified (Adj, 2012:1) as entertainment programs for tourists both domestic and foreign tourists. Thus, the art of Gejog Lesung currently has a sale value more (commodities).

In addition to conservation efforts undertaken towards the art of Gejog Lesung, other efforts undertaken by one group that is developing the art of Gejog Lesung becomes the art of Gojek Lesung (Kusumaningrat, 2002:1). Furthermore, Kusumaningrat (2002) explains that the art of Gojek Lesung is the result of the development of traditional the art of Gejog Lesung and has experienced modification with the addition of other musical instruments such as drums, saron, keyboards, demung, gender, gong. This was done because with the aim to attract viewers to the art of Gejog Lesung and provide a fresh entertainment without reducing the values of tradition in it.

Preservation of the art of Gejog Lesung needs to be done, due to several things, among others, 1) to revive public awareness of the existence of rural traditional art in it full of noble values and philosophy of life, such as togetherness, mutual cooperation, simplicity, harmony, and excitement, and 2) the art of Gejog Lesung is a traditional art that is unique. It is unique because musical instrument that used is farm tools an impressed antique and old-fashioned.

**Conclusion**

Based on what has been described, it can be concluded that the art of Gejog Lesung in existence today have been progressing. It can be seen from each of the performance. The art of Gejog Lesung is no longer staged only for the purpose of religious ceremonies as well as to inform a story, but this art has become an entertainment needs of local communities in particular, and the wider society in general. In fact, in each of its performance, the art of Gejog Lesung has been experiencing develop, especially in terms of the use of musical instruments.

As the preservation of traditional the art of Gejog Lesung which is one of the cultural assets of local wisdom possessed by the Java community and almost extinct, done in the various staging in tours areas Yogyakarta and also commercializing this traditional art as a means of entertainment for tourists, as well as conducted sharing of the various competitions and festivals involving Gejog Lesung art community as artists who created the creativity in the arts, and supported by the local government as the coach and manager of art. The conservation efforts of other local government towards this art is the main musical
instrument kept the art of Gejog Lesung, namely Alu and Dimples at Museum of Farmers Indonesian Java in Imogiri. In addition, the need for the art of Gejog Lesung being developed and preserved is the noble values and philosophy of life in it, and this indirectly makes the lesson of life for the community, especially Java society, and the nation of Indonesia in general.

References


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"Bagi yang biasa berprosa
Belajarlah berpuisi
Bagi yang biasa terabai berpuisi
belajarlah berprosa,
Agar dialog peradaban diperjuangkan,
Dipermulakan”
(Mudji Sutrisno)

"Education of art, in its specific and most poetic sense, is important in that it is capable of disclosing the real condition of identity (personal or collective), the plight of human existence, and new possibilities of understanding their own personality and the world".
Pendidikan seni, dalam arti spesifik dan paling puitis, adalah penting bahwa ia mampu mengungkapkan kondisi riil identitas (pribadi atau kolektif), penderitaan keberadaan manusia, dan kemungkinan-kemungkinan baru untuk memahami diri dan dunia.
(Bambang Sugiharto)

"Terwujudnya demokratisasi budaya pada dasarnya juga tidak bisa dipisahkan sama sekali dari sumbangan yang diberikan oleh teks seni dan jagat artistik yang dibangunnya. Hingga masa tertentu, bahkan hari ini, bagi sejumlah orang, teks-teks seni merupakan sumber yang melalui karya nilai-nilai dan pengetahuan tertentu dinyalakan, di samping sebagai sumber kesehatan yang tak pernah kering".
(Suminto A. Sayuti)

"One of the most important reasons why arts and art performances are always interesting to be discussed along with the history of civilization, is their potential forces or strengths that relatively possess an ability to be the house of witnesses or ‘the testimony' for life and humanity”.
Salah satu alasan paling penting mengapa seni dan kesenian selalu layak diperhitungkan di sepasang lintasan sejarah peradaban, lebih dikarenakan potensi daya atau kekuatannya yang secara relatif mampu berperan sebagai 'rumah kesaksian' bagi kehidupan dan kemanusiaan.
(Kasiyan)