



## The Revitalization of *Garapan of Jemblung* A Traditional Art Preserved in Blakasuta Studio in Banyumas Regency

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### Abstract

Jemblung is a traditional arts developed in Banyumas regency. Modernization has made the society have less interest in preserving the tradition. Hence, this research aims to analyze the revitalization of Jemblung by Blakasuta studio in Banyumas regency. The researcher employed qualitative interpretative method along with interdisciplinary approach for this research. The discipline of this research mainly concerns on ethnomusicology. The collection for the research data consist of observation, interview, and documentation. The validation of the data was through source triangulation. The analysis for the finding started from data collection, reduction, clarification, conclusion, and selective interpretation. The findings showed that the revitalization of Jemblung covers the ideas, materials, creators, facilities, consideration, reconstruction, refunctionalization, reformation, representation, reinterpretation, and reorientation. This research implies that the revitalization of Jemblung is a form of appreciation of traditional arts by Blakasuta studio. The studio continuously holds traditional arts preservation to minimize the effect of modernization. It is a challenge for the studio and the appreciators to consistently promote and perform traditional arts in a more creative way amongst Banyumas community.

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## INTRODUCTION

Arts is inseparable from the society. Arts is a part of the universal society since it exists as the needs of the people. As in Rohidi (2000b, p. 28), arts contain aesthetic expression which includes integrative needs. The expression appears due to the internal motives in human to reflect their existence as a moral, rational, and sensitive being. Nowadays, Indonesian performing arts experiences a setback. The ease of access to modern entertainment makes the society have lack of interest to traditional arts. Later, people start to leave the traditional arts behind. Thus, traditional arts, which initially becomes the expression of collectives, becomes an individual show with minimum participation from the public since they tend to become the audiences of professional modern arts in television, cassette, and radio (Kuntowijoyo, 2006, p. 41)

Modernization is a form of dynamic and progressive changing amongst the society which influences many aspects in human's life. Based on Barker (2015:118), modernity is the era after the middle ages which assigns post-traditional period. The period is visible through the existence of changes, innovation, and dynamism in the society. The result of the changes affects the life of Banyumas community and their traditional arts, including to *Jemblung*. Modernization reduces the interest of the society to preserve *Jemblung* as a part of their identity. According to Soedarsono (2002, p. 1), the existence of a tradition depends on the changes of politics and the capability of competing with other forms of performance. In this case, Banyumas people starts to have more attraction to current popular performance instead of their traditional art.

In order to preserve the existence of *Jemblung*, Blakasuta art studio in Bantarsoka, West Purwokerto, Banyumas revitalizes the culture. Soedarso (2000: 2) says that revitalization is an effort to vitalize the existence of a meaningful element in the society for a cause of conservation and development. The revitalization by Blakasuta studio focuses on

*Jemblung's* performance in *Karawitan Calung* Banyumas and the form of the performance. Supanggih (2009, p. 3) states that the *garap karawitan* (the form of *karawitan*) is a mechanism of musical work which involves scientific construction (intellectual working system) and natural system (cultural). The elements of *garap* consist of ideas and processes (materials, creators, facilities, consideration, determiners). In Sudarsono (2012, p. 77), *garap* means handling and doing something. *Garap* means an activity of handling arts as an aesthetic thing.

The above phenomenon shows the guidance of analyzing the problems in this research which is how to revitalize the *garapan* of *jemblung* by Blakasuta studio, Banyumas. In accordance with Supanggih (2008), revitalization occurs through reconstruction, refunctionalization, representation, reformation, reinterpretation, reorientation, and recreation. Meanwhile, according to Bank (2002, p. 9) the pattern of revitalization can follow the steps of recognition and identification, validation, recording and documentation, document keeping, transferring (socialization, externalization, internalization), and dissemination.

The revitalization of *Jemblung* is a form of appreciation by Blakasuta studio which continuously promotes traditional arts and fights against modernization. The studio attempts to continuously produce creative traditional arts amongst Banyumas community. The previous statement is relevant to Widyastuti (2015) who says that the dynamic society makes the traditional arts amongst them dynamically changing. If people do not preserve traditional arts, they will be extinct. Therefore, there should be a promotion of conservative behavior to preserve, develop, as well as document the traditional arts to become an important element in the society (Triyanto et al, 2016, p. 95)

## METHODS

This research employs qualitative interpretative method. Qualitative research uses more description in portraying the findings

instead of numbers. Through this methods, there will be an explanation regarding the answers to sociocultural problems regarding arts. This research uses interdisciplinary approach, which is the combination of two or more disciplines in one platform resulting new methodology in the context of the limitation of this research (Rohidi, 2011, p. 61). The discipline of the research is ethnomusicology. The sources of the research are in the forms of primary (interview and observation of *jemblung* performance) and secondary data (visual documents: videos and pictures). The data were collected from the observation, interview, and documentation.

This research validates its data to investigate certain things or criteria. Based on Sumaryanto (2007: 13), important data and documents of a qualitative research should have a validation. In this research, the researcher used triangulation. The analysis of the data utilized Miles and Huberman's technique in Rohidi (2011, p. 10). The cycles of the analysis started from data collection, reduction and clarification, conclusion, and interpretation of selected information.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

### Jemblung in Banyumas

*Jemblung* is the reflection of societal behavior in the society. The culture is a tradition which originated in Banyumas regency. The culture started from the *sepasaran* celebration of a baby (a tradition of celebrating the fifth date of baby's birth). Originally, the tradition was known as *macanan* or *macapatan* and then *muyen*. Oral action is the main attraction of the performance.

*Muyen* does not only exist in *macapat* songs, but also in the dialogues between actors in the performance. The songs and stories in *muyen* grew to become *menthiet* or *munthiet*. *Munthiet* transformed to be a complete performance which contains *macapat* and *wayang purwa*. The actor also grew in number, starting from one to become four. Between the actors, there is a *dalang* (the narrator) who is called as

*dalang maca kanda*. The others are called *niyaga*, *waranggana*, and actors.

Most of the stories in *munthiet* cites from *Babat Menak* or *Serat Menak*. The stories is in correlation of the spreading of Islam. The show grew to become a hit in the area and regenerate to other areas. The increasing number of the *dalang* from *munthiet* changed the name of the show to be *Jemblung* which refers to a character in *Babad Menak*, *Jemblung Umarmadi*. The character is a student whose actual name is *Umarmaya*. As a growing favorite, people started to refer the show with his name.

The characters in *Jemblung* are Javanese who play important roles in the society. In Karmini (2017:150), literary objects contain aesthetic values and truth. The objects also covers hedonic, artistic, cultural, ethical-moral-religious, and practical norms. Besides, Iswidayati & Triyanto (2007, p. 9) opines that Javanese aesthetics refers to cultural values, including cosmology, symbolic, and Javanese life orientation. Traditional arts loads culture as an inheritance for the future generation of certain community or a country, since it reflects the symbolic expression of the community (Murni, *et al.*, 2016).

### The Revitalization Of Garapan Of Jemblung

#### The materials for the *garapan*

The materials in *Jemblung* shows the recitation of *Sekar Gadung*, *Bendrong*, *Renggong lor*, and the oral narrative of the actors. The performance starts from *Gendhing Sekar Gadung* which is an identity of *lengger* in Banyumas. All actors believe that there is a mystical power in *gendhing*. *Gendhing Sekar Gadung* is believed as the medium to ask mythical power to the unseen creature to save the dancers in the show. In Anggrahita and Sunarto (2012, p. 11), in *laesan*, the actors summon the spirit through offer burned incense or perfume.

Darno (2006, p. 138) mentions that the most specific element in *Gendhing Sekar Gadung* is *guritan*. *Guritan* is a dialogue between male and female *sinden* along with *kendang* and *gong* in the middle of the *gendhing*. However, the creator did not compose the instrument of *guritan* in the

middle of the *gendhing*. The performance starts from rhythm I to rhythm II in three times repeats. *Gendhing Sekar Gadung* is the longest *gendhing* to perform in Banyumas. The performer use *laras slendro* for the show. The opening of the *gendhing* should start with *gambang barung* with some technique of *tabuhan* like *mipil* and *imbak*. The *pathet* of *gendhing Sekar Gadung* is *pathet manyura*.

The second material for the *garapan* is *gendhing bendrong kulon*. In the scene of *calung* Banyumas, it is rare to use actor in the *senggak*. The *gendhing* has a characteristic of involving a *senggakan* between *sinden* and the other performers as a form of interaction. The used *senggak* is *senggak nglagu* which directs the flow of the show. The used *laras* in the performance is *laras slendro* with *pathet sanga* and fluent rhythm.

The third *garapan* is *gendhing ricik-ricik*. The *laras* of the *gendhing* is *laras slendro* with *pathet nem* and fluent rhythm. This *gendhing* has the characteristics of involving male and female vocal under the structure of *balungan*. The male and female vocal are reciprocating each other. The fourth *garapan* is *gendhing gudril*. The rhythm of *gendhing gudril* starts from rhythm I to rhythm II with *pathet manyura* in *laras slendro*.

### Penggarap

Penggarap or creators are artists who become the *pengrawit*, whether as the gamelan player, *sindhen*, or *nggerong* (also called as *swarawati* and *wiraswara*) (Supanggih R, 2009). Some influencing stuffs of the *pengrawit* are *trah* or genetics and formal education. *Trah* means the legacy or the family relatives (Supanggih R, 2009). *Trah* affects the development of *pengrawit* as an individual player in the show which skills are inherited from their parents, including to the *pengrawit calung* Aji Cahyadi (24) *penabuh gambang barung*, Eko Pramono (24) *penabuh dendhem*, Uki Tri Harnowo (25) *penabuh ketuk kenong*, and *wiraswara* Teguh Septiawan (28). Meanwhile, the other performers does not have the legacy of that, whose are the *penabuh gong sebul* Hendro Yulianto (30), *sinden* Ari susyani (27), and *penabuh gambang* Prasetyo Aji Wibowo (27).

### The Facilities for Garapan

The facilities for the *garapan* is the physical tools used by *pengrawit*, including vocalist as the media to share ideas, musical ideas, or expressing themselves in musical way to the audiences. In *karawitan*, the media for *garapan* is *ricikan gamelan* (Supanggih R, 2009). Overall, the facilities of *garapan* in the performance of *Jemblung* consist of six instruments, which are

#### Gambang barung

*Gambang barung* consist of 14-16 tones which contains 2,5 *gembyang* (octave). *Gambang barung* is a *waditra* which becomes the main source of melody in the *gendhing*. The instrument is played with two sticks with rounded head in the diameter of 4-5 cm and covered with rubber.



**Figure 1.** Gambang Barung  
(Source: Researcher's Document, 2018)

#### Gambang penerus

*Gambang penerus* has the same physical instrument, tone, and musical scale with *gambang barung*, which is in 14 parts. The difference of this *gambang* to *gambang barung* is in the function of the presentation of the *gendhing*. *Gambang penerus* has a function to be a supplement of song's flow from the tone of *gambang barung*. Both *gambang barung* and *gambang penerus* play the melody in reciprocating ways and completing each other.



**Figure 2.** Gambang Penerus  
(Source: Researcher's Document, 2018)

### Dendhem

*Dhendhem* is also known as *slenthem*. This instrument has six blades on the lowest *gembyangan* (octave). *Dendhem* has a bigger stick to play the instrument than the one in *gambang*. *Dhendhem* has a similar function to *balungan* in Javanese *gamelan*, which is to give a beat in the flow of *gendhing* song.



**Figure 3. Dhendem**  
(Source: Researcher's Document, 2018)

### Kethuk kenong

*Kenong* has a *wilahan* in the same shape and size to *dhendhem*. In *gendhing*, *kenong* has a function as the structural *ricikan* which functions is to become the sign of beat pattern in the music. The performers beat *kenong* with two sticks. They play it by using one hand to beat the *kethuk* and the another to beat the *kenong*.



**Figure 4. Kethuk Kenong**  
(Source: Researcher's Document, 2018)

### Gong sebul

*Gong* in *calung* Banyumas has different specification to the other instruments. The instrument consists of two sections of bamboo. One section has a diameter of 15 cm in a tube form as the resonator of the music. Meanwhile, the smaller bamboo is the part where the player beats it by blowing the bamboo. The sound of the *gong* comes from the combination of the blows and the wind inside of the bamboo. Due to the blows, the *gong* is known as *gong sebul*.



**Figure 5. Gong Sebul**  
(Source: Researcher's Document, 2018)

### Kendang

*Kendang* in *calung* Banyumas is divided into two types, which are *kendang batangan* (medium size) and *kendang ketipung* (small size). In Banyumas, there is a *kendang* which is different with *kendang wetanan* of Surakarta and Yogyakarta, which is *kendang batangan* without *rau* (the cavity of resonator). However, the *pengrawit* in Banyumas does not usually choose to use this *kendang* for the *gendhing*. *Calung* Banyumas also uses the same *ketipung* as in Surakarta and Yogyakarta, which is *ketipung wetanan* and *kulonon* (for Sundanese).



**Figure 6. Kendang**  
(Source: Researcher's Document, 2018)

### The consideration of *garapan*

Supanggah (2009, p. 350) explains that the consideration of *garapan* consists of three parts, which are internal, external, and objectives. The internal consideration is the physical condition of *pengrawit* in doing the *garapan* and beat the *ricikan* of *gamelan* or in singing.

The physical condition of *pengrawit* in the composition of the *tembang* should be in a healthy and good condition. Somehow, in the research, there are some players of the *calung* who were absent, and it affects the process of composing the music. In this condition, the responsibility and professionalism of *pengrawit* usually become the motivating support for them



to perform the best. The condition of the *pengrawit* also depends on the external elements.

The external elements are the audiences. Supanggih (2009, p. 351) theorizes that the responses of the audiences and the completion of the infrastructure in the performance of *pangekruh* are the important things for *perngawit* to show their *garapan*. The performers will be pleased and proud with the acceptance and the existence of many audiences in front of them.

The existence of the audiences in *Jemblung* show is the honor for the *pengrawit* in optimizing their talent in the performance. The audiences can response the performance by appreciating the show, commenting it, and even giving some *senggakan* to the flow of the show.



**Figure 7.** The Interaction between the Audiences and *Jemblung* performers (Source: Researcher's Document, 2018)

The consideration of the *garapan* also contains the aims of the *pengrawit* to do the which to become a way to deliver a message of social critics or only as an entertainment for the listeners or audiences.

### Reconstructions

Reconstruction is an important thing to do for an extinct culture. Some people things that the extinct culture can be preserved. In this case, Blakasuta art studio in Banyumas preserves the existence of *jemblung*. Blakasuta was established at 27<sup>th</sup> October 2017 at Jalan Stasiun Raya II Rt 05 Rw 01 Bantarsoka – West Purwokerto, Banyumas.



**Figure 8.** The Poster of Blakasuta Art Studio (Source: The Document of the Head of Blakasuta Studio).

The ideas of Blakasuta studio in reconstructing *jemblung* is projected through the creation of the scripts and the promotion of the culture in the social and electronic media. The reconstruction is a part of conserving the art itself for Banyumas audiences. The process of the reconstruction requires the creativity of the performers during the play. In the context of tradition, the performers should be able to innovate imaginary new ideas to the old *Jemblung* show to be popular amongst the millenials.

### Refunctionalization

Refunctionalization means add, develop, change, and give new function to a tradition. The tradition experiences a revitalization. Blakasuta studio develops *Jemblung* by adding new elements to *calung* Banyumas as the instrument of the play. *Calung* is a *jarwodhosok* (abbreviation) of *carang pring wulung* (the top part of *bambu wulung*). *Calung* is different with *sukendar*, which comes from the Banyumese word of *pracal*, which means *diraut/dibobok* until *melung-melung* (beats outloud). The definition is in accordance with the physical condition of *calung* which comes from *bambu wulung*. *Calung* is made with *laras slendro* which tones are *Ji (1)*, *Ro (2)*, *Lu (3)*, *Mo (5)*, *Nem (6)*. In the initial development, *calung* has a function of being a ritual medium in a long dry season performed along with *lengger* and *syukuran* in the harvesting season. The popular Banyumese songs for *calung* performance are *ricik-ricik*, *renggong lor*, *eling-eling banyumas*, and *bendrong kulon*. From the phenomenon above, the varieties of insruments of *calung* show that the art develop in the village community who consider bamboo as an

important part of their life. *Calung* is a simple tool as a part of technological device of Banyumese in music.



**Figure 9.** *Calung* Banyumas in the performance of *Jemblung*  
(Documentation: Nurratri Widya Pangestika, 2018)

**Reformation**

Reformation in art means the change of format or delivery based on the requirement, taste, era, or place (Adzkie, et al 2012, p. 93). The development of modern culture strongly depends on mass productions in order to achieve commercial benefits. Tradition has a difficult position. That is to say, in the context of *Jemblung*, it is a dilemma to change the pattern of performance in the show. The aspects of musical performance are music and song, instruments, players, place, time, order of play, and audiences. The revitalization of *Jemblung* is explained in the following table.

**Table 1.** The Aspects of Revitalization to *Jemblung*  
(Documentation: Nurratri Widya Pangestika, 2018)

Revitalized Aspects	Pre- revitalization	Post- revitalization
Instruments	Oral action from the performers	Oral action with the support of <i>calung</i> Banyumas
Functions	As a medium of ritual in the celebration of <i>Sepasaran</i> Bayi, entertainment, and <i>Ruwatan</i>	Medium of entertainment, social critics, and communication
Scripts	Based on <i>Babad Kamandaka, Babad Tanah Jawa, Serat Menak</i>	The popular phenomena in the society, such as <i>Bawor Jenggirat, Jaka Pangarep, Bawor Plesir Kayangan,</i> and <i>Olih Dewandaru</i>
Players	2-4 people	5-10 people including the <i>calung</i> players
Time	22.00 – 04.00 wib	19.00-22.00 wib
Place	Living room and fields	Art building, Mayor gazebo, City hall
Costumes	Traditional costume of central java: <i>Blangkon, surjan, beskap,</i> and <i>bebedan</i>	Depends on the theme of the performance
Closing	Song entitled <i>Eling-eling Banyumas</i>	Banyumasan songs, such as <i>Bendrong Kulon, Balapan Tengu,</i> and conditional depends on the theme of the performance

## Representation

Art representation is the performance of art in varied context, whether in a festival or in art show. Festival is an important medium of communication to build, empower, and identify the culture. Thus, a medium of communication should have a great plan to make the message delivered effectively (Andrienne L. Kaepler in Falassi 1987: 23) Traditional art show is a part of art representation which disappear in the modern era. Banyumas government has an important role in conserving *Jemblung* due to the era of globalization. The government started to do the conservation in 2002. However, the effort resulted nothing as in 2018, many people do not recognize the existence of the art. Therefore, Blakasuta studio starts the initiative with the hope that their effort will have the support from the government in providing traditional entertainment to local community. The effort is the same to Lontoh (2012:84). He states that the manifested function of Syarafal Anam performed by An-Najjam studio is to become a medium of entertainment to Palembang community.

## Reinterpretation

Reinterpretation is the process of giving meaning to a performance of art or to the element of art. Agung Wicaksono, as the *dalang* of the *Jemblung*, shows that there is a change of the modern *Jemblung* by Blakasuta studio. The changing elements are in the aspects of performing place, stories, players, costumes, time of performance, even to the background of the play. The reinterpretation of the show has attracted many Banyumese as the audience of *Jemblung*. The following picture shows the enthusiasm of local people in seeing the performance.



**Figure 10.** The audience of *jemblung* (Source: Researcher's Document, 2018).

The performance of *jemblung* is not only limited to visual, but also to the delivery of moral message to the audience.

## Reorientation

Traditional art has a reorientation if it is related to a community's daily life, religion, or their nation. The reorientation of *Jemblung* is related to community's daily life. Many artists in Banyumas, including Agus Wicaksono, uses *Jemblung* as a medium to celebrate national day, including Kartini Day at 21<sup>st</sup> April 2018. The *dalang* of *Jemblung* along with *penggarap* utilizes this opportunity to show their talent. The efforts of the *dalang* and *penggarap* can be seen in the following Figure.



**Figure 11.** The pamphlet of Kartini Celebration by Olih Dewandaru (Source: The head of Blakasuta studio)

## CONCLUSION

Modernization is a process of development in the society which affects their dynamic life; it is a process of sociocultural change in directed ways, whether in positive or negative ways. In the era of modernization, the development of arts involve revitalization. In this research, the revitalization of *Jemblung* is expected to attract local interest to preserve its



existence in the place where it belongs. Thus, the effort of preservation by Blakasuta studio should be supported by local government and the society.

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