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ESSENCE OF REJANG LILIT PERFORMING ARTS IN MUNDEH TRADITIONAL VILLAGE, TABANAN, BALI IN GLOBAL ERA

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ABSTRACT

The aim why this research is conducted is to understand the essence of Rejang Lilit Performing Arts in Mundeh Traditional Village, Tabanan, Bali in global era. This research is done because there is an imbalance between assumption and reality in the field. Generally, developed and modern community will be more glad to modern and showable performing arts. However, the questions may be different. The questions are: (1) How is the form of Rejang Lilit Performing Arts?; (2) What values are contained in the Performing Arts?. This research uses qualitative method. Types and data sources, both primary source and secondary source, of this research are obtained from observation technique, interview, FGD, and literature study. All data is analyzed critically in the perspective of cultural studies. The research result reveals that: (1) Rejang Lilit Performing Arts is shown in form of playless performance by a group of girl dancers aged 6-8 years old followed by Semar Pegulingan *gamelan*; (2) Till nowadays, local community still maintains Rejang Lilit Performing Arts because it is considered having religious, social, and local culture meaning for local community. The strong belief of local community on myth about life essence causing that they keep maining Rejang Lilit Performing Arts until now.

KEY WORDS

Essence, form, Goddess of Yadnya Ceremon, Rejang Lilit performing arts.

Rejang Lilit Performing Arts is a traditional performing art of Bali danced by a group of girl dancers aged 6-8 years old, accompanied by Semar Pegulingan *gamelan* (Suwariyanti, 2014). Based on observation result in field, it can be known that Rejang Lilit Performing Arts in Mundeh Traditional Village, Tabanan, is shown in aesthetic concept of traditional performing arts. It can be seen from the regularity, coreography balance, performance structure, fashion make up, and accompaniment of the shown performance.

Rejang Lilit Performing Arts performed in aesthetic concept of traditional performing arts look very united with Ngusaba Desa ceremony that is being conducted in the village. Regularity, symbols serving balance, movement variety, performance structure, stage pattern, and music accompaniment that accompany dance in the context of Ngusaba Desa ceremony look very harmonious and religious.

In Bali, there are some kinds of performing arts for ceremony (Bandem and Frederik de Boer. 1973). As expressed by some observers that Bali has various performing arts (Vickers,

1989). There are also some say that performing arts of Bali are dominantly in religious nuance (Hobart, 2007). It is also same as Rejang Lilit Performing Arts which until now is still preserved in Mundeh Traditional Village, Tabanan.

As a ceremony dance, Rejang Lilit Performing Arts in Mundeh Traditional Village besides having interesting performance, its serving process is unique and special. It is different from other performing arts for ceremony in Bali. Ceremonial dance is related to religious symbols (Dibia, 1985).

Before dance, the dancers of Rejang Lilit consisting of children are quarantined first for 16 days in Pesamuan Temple area in the local village. During quarantine, the children are taught about cultural values, customs of local community. Some cultural activities like learning of dancing, singing, wearing traditional clothes of Bali, praying, and making traditional snacks taught by *stakeholder*, as Hindu figures in the local village. Traditional snacks produced by them are brought to community's houses in the village. As the reward, the children are given rice to be produced as the ingredient to make snacks again. Process of cultural preservation towards young dancers of Rejang Lilit Performing Arts is performed in 16 full days in Pesamuan Temple in the local traditional village. It is a challenge for community in Mundeh Traditional Village, Tabanan, who have been developed and modern.

Generally, the developed and modern community will tend to adopt global, critical, and full-of-rational-consideration, and profit-oriented culture. Their lives in global era that is busy facing some life problems in order to increase their income to fulfill their daily needs makes them tend to choose practical and efficient things. However, the fact is different. Until now, community in Mundeh Traditional Village seems to maintain their cultural tradition. Even if at that time, they must expense much and leave their jobs for a moment in order to participate in preparing ceremony which is always completed with Rejang Lilit Performing Arts.

The phenomenon is interesting to be observed in order to comprehend what causes culture and tradition especially Rejang Lilit Performing Arts is able to maintain in this global era?. What values are contained in Rejang Lilit Performing Arts in Mundeh Traditional Village, Tabanan?

The expression of the phenomeon has theoretical and practical urgency. Theoretically, this research result is expected to give advantages in developing knowledge specially in performing arts aspect through deep discussion regarding to Rejang Lilit Performing Arts. Practically, this research result can be used as relevant information with preservation of performing arts especially in Bali and other areas.

METHODS OF RESEARCH

Research method used to investigate the phenomenon of Rejang Lilit Performing Arts in Mundeh Traditional Village, Tabanan is qualitative research method. Types and sources of research data both primary and secondary data, are obtained through observation technique, interview with relevant informants, FGD, and literature study.

Primary data are obtained directly through interview with relevant informants selected baed on purposive sampling techniqu. The chosen informants such as community figures, village figures, dancers, drummers, dancer coaches, drum coaches and local community. The addition of informant is to complete data which is less done by using snowball sampling technique. This research also utilizes secondary data obtained from literature study through search of similar research results made by previous researchers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Form of Rejang Lilit Performing Arts. The establishment of performing arts is not separated from human adjustment with their environment (Hall, 1997). Local social and demography values also influence the form of a performing art (Bandem and Frederik de Boer, 1973). Local human behavior is also influenced by superstructure ideology in it (Sanderson, 1993). Superstructure (value system, belief system, and customs) are the foundations and mindsets of relevant community (Spradley, 1972). Socio-culture,

demography, and superstructure are arts ideology for a community both in creating or in preserving it until the existence of performing arts are sustainable (Geertz, 2004).

Based on data analysis result, it is found that Rejang Lilit Performing Arts shown in the context of Ngusaba Desa ceremony in Muneh Traditional Village, Tabanan is a ceremonial dance served in form of playless dance, accompanied by Semar Pegulingan *gamelan*. Form of performing arts can be seen from performance, coreography, movement variety, performance structure, performance stage, and other relevant elements (Dibia and Ballinger, 2004). Form is a physical element that can be observed as media containing certain values such as idea, opinion, and theme (Dibia, 1985). There are three components that become attention in discussing form of performing arts such as sign, message or text; actor; audience as message receiver delivered through certain symbols. Opinion delivered through sign and symbol (Fitzgerald, 1966).

Rejang Lilit Performing Arts shown by a group of girl dancers aged 6-8 years old is conducted once in 10 years, specifically on Goddess of Yadnya ceremony in Kahyangan Tiga Temple in local village. As a ceremonial dance, Rejang Lilit Performing Arts is really related to religious symbols. It can be seen from the process of dancers selection, dancers' sanctification, ritual offerings, magic formula, head accessories, stage pattern, or properties brought by dancers. According to custom elder of local village, symbols expressed in Rejang Lilit Dabce performance has religious meaning as sanctification towards *bhuwana agung* (natural environment) of where they live in. As media of natural sanctification, Rejang Lilit Performing Arts is performed through phases as follows.

Before dance, the dancers called *Jero Permas* which means angels are made up first. While they are made up, the ceremony heads called *pemangku* and all community in Mundeh Traditional Village prepares ritual offerings for ceremony in Pesamuan Temple. After making the dancers up, they are guided to enter the area in temple called *jeroan* to be worn crown or head accessories namely *gelungan*. After all dancers wear head accessories which is previously purified by ceremony heads, they pray together in front of pure building of temple called *pelinggih*. After praying, the dancers start dancing surrounding Kahyangan Tiga Temple in Mandeh Traditional Village. Before stepping, the ceremony head presents ritual offerings in form of *Banten Segehan Cenik* which is rice offerings as thankfulness symbol to Goddess of Fertility believed as existing in Rejang Lilit Performing dancers' body.

Rejang Lilit Performing Arts is performed together with Goddess of Yadnya ceremony conducted in Pesamuan Temple. Started with *pengenter* (dance guide) brings *pasepan* (flame) as the symbol of natural sanctification, the dancers of Rejang Lilit Performing Arts in Pesamuan Temple. They make a line to be 3 groups with order as follows: *first*, it is called *Pengarep* (a dancer in the front), *second*, it is named *pemade* (five dancers in the middle), and *third*, it is called *pekitut* (a dancer in the back). The order of dancers are adjusted by dancers' age, the oldest one is followed by the younger dancers.

Image 1 – Dancers pray before dancing Courtesy of Ruastiti, 2015

The dancers of Rejang Lilit Performing Arts with variety of *ngelikas* dance movement which is the movement of walking slowly with swung hands and accompanied with *ngenjet* movement which is the movement of stamping on body up and down. Then, the dancers walk with *tayung* movement (swung hands) and *ngenjet* movement. The dancers take shawl as well as *ileg-ileg* movement (head movement to right and left) with both hands released to side. This dance movement is done repeatedly while making round stage pattern, surrounding *jeroan* (middle yard) of Pesamuan Temple for three times, turning right like clockwise turn. Before leaving Pesamuan Temple, the dancers dance surrounding *banten*, ritual offerings placed in the middle of temple area.

Afterwards, the dancers make a line and walk with *tayung* movement guided by *pengenter* (dance leader) headed by Pesimpangan Kangin Temple. After they finish dancing in Pesimpangan Kangin Temple, *segehan cenik* (rice ritual offerings) is presented. The dancers of Rejang Lilit Performing Arts then make a line to Pesimpangan Kauh Temple, and back to Pesimpangan Temple again. When they are in Pesimpangan Kangin Temple, in Pesimpangan Kauh Temple, in Pesimpangan Temple, they dance with similar coreography and stage pattern. It can be seen from figures as follows.

Image 2 – Rejang Lilit Performing Arts in Mundeh Traditional Village, Courtesy of Ruastiti, 2015

Rejang Lilit Performing Arts uses soft girl fashion make up as shown in the figures above. It can be seen from the use of *eye shadow* (red, yellow, blue), *blush on*, and lipstick. Every colors contains certain meaning (Geertz, 1994). As a ceremonial dance, Rejang Lilit Performing Arts uses special fashion. Some parts of the dance fashion are made sacred in Pesimpangan Temple of local village like hand accessories namely *gelang*, belt namely *sabuk*, and crown/head accessories namely *gelungan*. Crown/head accessories of Rejang Lilit Performing Arts is decorated with frangipani flower called *bancangan*. In every crowns, it is decorated with three *bancangan*. While in the back part of the crown, it is decorated with white paper set hang loosely like hair. In the front part of crown, it is decorated long earrings called *prakapat*.

For fashion design, the dancers of Rejang Lilit Performing Arts uses fabric called *kamen gringsing*, body cover called *sabuk prada* worn in dancers' body, shawl worn on the right of waist and the left side of dancers' waist, long fabric in form of yellow shawl called *lamak* which is used as chest cover of Rejang Lilit Performing Arts.

Rejang Lilit Performing Arts is accompanied with *Semar Pegulingan* gamelan. *Semar Pegulingan Gamelan* is a traditional instrument of Bali categorized as medium *gamelan*. Music can make certain situation tertentu (Tenzer, 1991; Fischer and Cooper, 1998; Gold, 2004). As religious nuance that accompanies Rejang Lilit Performing Arts in Mundeh Traditional Village, Tabanan. The local community makes religious nuance by using *Semar*

Pegulingan gamelan completed with *Gender Rambat* consisting of 15, *gong* and *Kempli*. As expressed by Jro Mangku Istri, the coach of Rejang Lilit Performing Arts, it is stated that since long time ago Rejang Lilit Performing Arts is accompanied with Semar Pegulingan *gamelan* that has soft nuance as the present for Goddess of Fertility in Mundeh Traditional Village, Tabanan.

Essence of Rejang Lilit Performing Arts in Mundeh Traditional Village. Essence is part of sematic and speech (de Saussure, 1996). The definition of essence itself is various, essence is always united in sentence or speech or its community collectively. It means that essence as part of life created from tradition experience, history, and its social relationship. Essence is intangible socially which then it gives more value on its society behavior. As community in Selembung Village, Karangasem values Rejang Lilit performing Arts as part of ceremony in Puseh Temple which is used by local community as mediation in seeking for their arts competence since childhood for ritual ceremony of environment purity where they live collectively.

Deconstructively, Performing Arts is aesthetical practice symbolized by collective belief of local community (Coast, 2004; Coldiron, 2004). As the performance of Rejang Lilit Performing Arts in Mundeh Traditional Village in which they still maintain the performance until now since they value it as fertility ceremony. Through ceremony involving their power relation in re-setting their social structure for collective interest. The construction process then gives effects towards positive image of community in Mundeh Traditional Village for harmony enforcement and social control in that village. The religious activity can proliferate respect and discipline to create a harmony for life unity in that community (de Boer, 1996).

Aesthetic Essence. The beauty of Rejang Lilit Performing Arts in Mundeh Traditional Village has aesthetical essence. In the performance of Rejang Lilit Performing Arts, it shows beauty elements seen from its dance movement variety which is harmonic with its music. Harmonic essence of a performance can be made if there is a balance concept among its movement variety, stage pattern, and music (Ruastiti, 2010).

Rejang Lilit Performing Arts starts with the appearance of a dance guide bringing *Pasepan*, they dance in order like a rope with dancers order are started from the oldest one. They dance starting from Pesamuan Temple, in Pesimpangan Kangin Temple, in Pesamuan Temple, Pesimpangan Kauh Temple, and back to Pesamuan Temple. They dance by using *Gringsing* fabric and a pair of yellow shawl, beauty essence on self strength element, certainty, firmness, and religiousity.

Aesthetic essence of Rejang Lilit Performing Arts fashion makeup consisting of soft girl *make-up* and ceremony clothes in form of fabric covering body and feet in yellow and white colors. Yellow means purity (Geertz, 1994). As the cover of lower body cover, fabric called *kamen* is worn. While, to cover upper body, *sabuk* is worn which is yellow fabric worn surrounding dancers' body. On that fabric, there is a touch of prada in goldish color containing essence of beauty and greatness. While, face make up of Rejang Lilit Performing Arts consisting of eye shadow mean sun light beauty, and red lipstick means beauty.

Rejang Lilit Performing Arts covers balance, harmony, and respect values expressed through movement variety and stage pattern shown in balance composition between right and left. Harmonization between movement and music can create peaceful situation (Gold, 2004; Herbst, 1997). While, the beauty of Rejang Lilit Performing Arts which is full of religious symbols are valued as pure truth (Dibia, 1985). Rejang Lilit Performing Arts containing movement of walking in order can be valued as truth manifestation, sincere offerings of purity to God as the Universe Creator.

Religious Essence. Community of Mundeh Traditional Village, Tabanan places Kahyangan Tiga Temple as *state of power*, center of religious power. Nature environment as *Palemahan* for community of Mundeh Traditional Village, Tabanan, is believed as having magical power to free themselves from anxiety in their lives. Besides, by performing Rejang Lilit Performing Arts, they believe that their relationship with nature will create a harmony. Nature, believed by society, has power in giving blessings or disasters. Both blessings and disasters in the world are not separated from natural natural law. It is also believed that natural law works in regulating universe cycle and every phase of cycles determined by

power of Ida Sang Hyang Widhi. Natural energy mastered by Gods is believed as having supranatural power for safety and luck of human life. The magic of natural energy makes human wonder. It can be seen from community in Mundeh Traditional Village, Tabanan who still worships its existence through ceremonial symbols as well as Rejang Lilit Performing Arts. The religious practice still continues peacefully because it is valued as having magical power since long time ago.

Rejang Lilit Performing Arts in Mundeh Traditional Village, Tabanan during this time can recall its community comprehension towards the existence of Ida Sang Hyang Widhi. Religious practice is believed by local community as the source of happiness and *adikodrati* power. God has higher value regarding to life essence (Geertz, 2004).

Rejang Lilit Performing Arts which is done frequently and continuously can give happiness, soul comfort of community in Mundeh Traditional Village, Tabanan. It means that *Adikodrati* power can be pursued through religious appreciation. As in the implementation of religious value towards power of Ida Sang Hyang Widhi and its manifestation explicitly and implicitly is seen from the whole structure of Rejang Lilit Performing Arts. In religious aspect, ceremony moment for Mundeh Traditional Village has a role in intensifying and re-thicken the dependence between human and Ida Sang Hyang Widhi as well as its manifestation as religiousity center. In that context, community of Mundeh Traditional Village, Tabanan can keep their kinship unity through Rejang Lilit Performing Arts in a ceremony moment in Pesamaan Temple. Community has life essence which needs religious obedience (Picard, 1996).

Theoretically, ritual is the expression of religious belief of community which is very difficult to change (Hobart, 1987; Hitchcock, and Norris, 1995.). The religious essence of Rejang Lilit Performing Arts is strengthened and kept in every person of community in Mundeh Traditional Village. So that Rejang Lilit Performing Arts can still alive until now in its community synergy. It is reflected by the expression of relevant parties who are serious and glad in continuing the cultural tradition (Slattum & Schraub, 2003).

Social Essence. Rejang Lilit Performing Arts tremendously upholds togetherness aspect. It can be observed from every ceremony conducted by community. The togetherness makes community in Mundeh Traditional Village feel easier in performing Rejang Lilit Performing Arts for purity ceremony in their environment. All religiousity aspect covering the ceremony is a mechanism in having relationship between human and nature where they live spiritually. While, community empowerment that has been manifested on human animus in performing Rejang Lilit Performing Arts seriously has effects to the beauty performance of traditional ceremony. The animus shows spirit of social religious in performing Rejang Lilit Performing Arts for comprehending the almightiness of Ida Sang Hyang Widhi.

Solidarity essence in Rejang Legong Dance includes involvement of relationship among community in order to keep harmony in togetherness. It is needed to solve complex life problems. Community frequently uses performing arts as media to strengthen social relationship (Ruastiti, 2005; Hobart, 2002; Herbst, 1997).

Solidarity essence has a meaning that all people in community of Mundeh Traditional Village collectively support one another in presenting Rejang Lilit Performing Arts in every ritual ceremony. It is started from preparation, all community in Mundeh Traditional Village conducts social activity voluntarily that is *ngayah* to prepare everything related to ceremony. This *ngayah* activity actually is still relevant in proliferating integration, communication, and unification of comprehension in releasing collective burden and village security. Through arts activity, community can preserve their tradition and culture (Fischer & Cooper, 1998).

Culture Essence. Rejang Lilit Performing Arts can mean culture. It means that community of Mundeh Traditional Village who always performs Rejang Lilit Performing Arts in every traditional ceremony in Puseh Temple in local village has implication on cultural preservation. Culture can be preserved through internalization, socialization, and inculturation (Sanderson, 1993; de Zoete and Spies, 1938).

Therefore, community of Mundeh Traditional Village continues local values through Rejang Lilit Performing Arts considered important to preserve because it is elemental culture giving identity, special feature, and pride as the society of Mundeh Traditional Village. They

consider that the most relevant action to preserve as well as keep unity of social unity started to be planted since children. The chosen children as the dancers of Rejang Lilit Performing Arts become pride for their parents because the children are considered as the most important children. The children who are prioritized are not separated from their worth to get responsibility as the representatives of the angels in giving blessings through environment sanctification ceremony (*bhuwana agung*). It means that as dancers of Rejang Lilit Performing Arts, they who are still children have been considered being chosen as culture preservation delegate in their village. The artists feel proud of being given chance to perform in presenting their ability in front of audience (Hobart, 1987; Hobart, 2002; Ruastiti, 2010).

Although in the effort of strengthening process of cultural values preservation, besides Rejang Lilit Performing Arts, the dancers as the actors and local community participate in the process of local cultural values preservation and continuation in global era. Some culture components in Rejang Lilit Performing Arts indirectly are preserved because it is sustained since they are young. Cultural tradition considered having worthy values is always used by community to run their lives (Savarese, 2001; Coldiron, 2004; Coast, 2004).

By seeing cultural activities taught to the dancers, it seems that during the process, they obtain ethical education in form of politeness in their community. It really supports the cultural life in the village. Every cultural elements has certain meaning that influences social's opinion. When they start dancing and performing Rejang Lilit Performing Arts, the dancers obtain informal education about religion, arts, and culture. The sustainability of cultural values continuation phenomenon through Rejang Lilit Performing Arts conducted frequently in Mundeh Traditional Village has implication on character strengthening for local community.

The dancers of Rejang Lilit Performing Arts that have mastered material indirectly are advantageous for cultural values continuation of local community. It can be seen from attitude and enthusiasm of community in preparing and presenting the dance that has given positive image for actors in public. It makes their community culture orientation is always in line with their community culture system. Community of Mundeh Traditional Village seems always present Rejang Lilit Performing Arts as a show which is always supported by community of Mundeh Traditional Village showing the suitability with the customs of the village.

Cultural tradition which is considered having *adiluhung* value will always be used by the community in running their lives (Hobart, 2007; Picard, 1996; Ruastiti, 2005). It is in line with perspective of community in Mundeh Traditional Village towards Rejang Lilit Performing Arts who considers that the dance is very beneficial for daily life fulfillment. It can be seen from attitude and way of local community in performing Rejang Lilit Performing Arts show which has been adjusted with norms of community culture in Mundeh Traditional Village. It means that by maintaining the dance, they have participated in continuing cultural values sustainably to their generation. Cultural values are the identity of local community (Bandem and de Boer, 1995; Vickers, 1989). Therefore, Rejang Lilit performance danced by the children is really meaningful in culture inculturation in Mundeh Traditional Village.

CONCLUSION

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that Rejang Lilit Performing Arts is a ceremonial dance performed in form of playless dance by girl dancers aged 7-9 years old accompanied with Semar Pegulingan *gamelan*. Rejang Lilit Performing Arts is performed with performance structures: (a) ceremony of dancers sanctification conducted by praying together led by *Pemangku* in Dalem Temple of Pesamuan Agung Village; (b) dancers surround *Palinggih* of Pesamuan Temple, Dalem Temple, Kayangan Temple, and back to Pesamuan Temple; (c) dancers beg for blessing in praying again together in Pesamuan Temple.

Rejang Lilit Performing Arts is made by *ngembat* movement variety which is movement of right and left hands straightened to side, *ngenjet* is stamping movement of body up and down, and *ngileg* is head push movement to right and left side. The dancers walk in order surrounding *Palinggih* as the symbol of binding, unifying, and purifying *bhuwana agung*.

Until nowadays, community in Mundeh Traditional Village, Tabanan, Bali, still maintain Rejang Lilit Performing Arts because it is considered having religious, social, and cultural essence for local community.

The strong belief of local community on myth about life essence is the cause why Rejang Lilit Dace is still maintained up to now by the local community of Mundeh Traditional Village.

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