

Aspect of Art And Meaning of Staging The Traditional *Dolanan* Game in Sanggar Kebo Iwa Badung

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Artikel ini adalah ringkasan hasil penelitian yang mengulas aspek seni, makna pementasan permainan tradisional *dolanan* di Sanggar Kebo Iwa Badung. Untuk mengungkap secara mendalam aspek-aspek tersebut, digunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan teknik observasi partisipasi aktif, wawancara mendalam dan studi dokumen. Berdasarkan metodologi, hasil penelitian menjelaskan bahwa *pertama* makna filosofis, *kedua* makna religius, *ketiga* makna estetika, *keempat* makna pelestarian, *kelima* makna pendidikan, dan *keenam* kebersamaan. *Dolanan* yang dibawakan oleh sekelompok anak-anak, di mana terdapat suatu keindahan di dalam penyampaian pesan-pesan ajaran agama kepada masyarakat melalui media seni. Karena seni sebagai simbol kebenaran (*satyam*), kesucian (*sivam*) dan keindahan (*sundaram*).

Kata kunci: dolanan, permainan tradisional

This article is a summary of the results of research to review aspects of the art, the meaning of staging traditional games studio Kebo Iwa dolanan in Badung. To reveal deeply these aspects, used a qualitative approach with the active participation of observation techniques, in-depth interviews and document study. Based on the methodology, the research explained that the first philosophical meaning, both philosophical meaning, the religious meaning of the third, the fourth meaning of aesthetics, the fifth meaning of education, sixth and seventh pelestarian meaning of togetherness. Dolanan performed by a group of children, where there is a beauty in conveying messages of religious teachings to the public through the medium of art. Because art as a symbol of truth (*satyam*), chastity (*sivam*) and beauty (*sundaram*).

Keywords : dolanan, traditonal game.

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INTRODUCTION

Art is integrated in the culture. The richness of the Indonesian arts, from the Sabang to Merauke, reflects the rich cultures of the nation in which the culture of Balinese people is one of them. The Balinese culture mirrors the ways of life of the people. As one of the cultural aspects, the Balinese art is integral with the other cultural aspects, e.g. the religious, social, education, language, and works.

One of the unique arts of the Balinese people is their traditional songs. Sugriwa (1977:5) classified the

Balinese songs, which are similar to Javanese, into four classes, i.e. (1) *Gegendingan* or *Dolanan*, (2) *Pupuh* or *Mocopat*, *Sekar Alit*, (3) *Kidung* or *Sekar Madia*, (4) *Kakawin* or *Sekar Agung*. Examples of the Balinese *Gegendingan* includes *Gending Rare*.

Gending Rare, which is less popular now with the young Balinese, is sung in a game that may be called *Dolanan* or *Plalian*. Some examples of it are *Gending Meong-Meong*, *Penyu Mataluh*, *Pul Kidu-Kidu*, and *Macepet-Cepetan*. *Gending Rare* may be also sung without a game. The examples of this kind are *Jenggot Uban*, *Semut Api*, *Bibi Rangda*, *PutriCening*

Ayu (Taro, 2011:21). Besides having its art, *Dolanan* also carries high philosophical and moral values that are expressed through the art of voice, movement, and musics.

Historically the *Dolanan* art was inspired by the tales commonly told by the old folks. Therefore, it is an oral tradition of which the origin is unknown. It was mostly sung and played in the afternoons during the full moon day when girls and boys usually gather together in the yards in front of the houses and temples or in the *bale banjar*. As an old tradition *Dolanan* songs and games ought to be preserved (Windu, 1986:49).

A community group called Sanggar Kebo Iwa Badung is a Balinese art group that works with the traditional *Dolanan*. The group's dedication to the tradition has helped the preservation and growth of the art among the Balinese kids. In this research there are three types of the *Dolanan* found to be preserved by the art group, i.e. the original *Dolanan*, the modified one, and the latest type as created by Taro (in Suarka, 2011:10) that are studied.

The components of the traditional art include the rules of the game, the movements, the roles, the formation, the lyrics of the songs, and the story. In addition to them, the art also carries some Hindu educational values, e.g. affection (*asih*), donation (*punia*), and devotion (*bakti*). These all should be preserved contextually.

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The Philosophical Meaning Of The Traditional *Dolanan*

As found in every regional Indonesian traditional game, the Balinese *Dolanan* is also a unique one. Philosophically the *Dolanan* game has metaphysics. The most obvious one is the belief in the God as the One who can give an inner power of the game as part of its aesthetical side. This power is known as *taksu* in the local language. It teaches how to believe in the power as a foundation in progressing in life. The holy *Adi Parwa* mentions the following.

A Brahmana named Dhonya, performing in the state of Ayodhya. His disciples were three men, his name was the Utamanya, the Arunika, and the Vedic. All in the test will be endurance and duty to the teacher, Begawan Dhonya who tested the loyalty of the three students,

namely the Arunika, the Utamanya, and the Vedas. The Arunika was told to paddy. But the flood came to ruin his rice fields and inundate his seeds. Repeatedly the bund was repaired but repeatedly damaged too. So the Arunika used his body to hold back the flood as a substitute for bunds throughout the day and night. Finally the Arunika was awarded a magic spell by his teacher. The Utamanya suffered more. He who is a beggar is forbidden to beg for the oxen. It is also prohibited to drink the rest of the milk when calves suckle on the mother. The Main finally only drank the sap of waduri which caused it to become blind. But the Main also got anugera thanks to loyalty and obedience to the command of his teacher. Similarly, the Vedas are no less miserable suffering.

The line of Sloka above teaches how to leave the self-inconfidence as it only invites misfortune, whereas confidence can bring success. It teaches the importance of having faith in God and in self because it helps the mind focus on the task. The faith in God therefore will bring positive effect. In the context of playing the *Dolanan* game, the belief in *taksu* can keep the spirit and energy to bring the players to create life and charm to the game.

According to Dibia (2012:24), *taksu* is basically a spiritual energy that can change an ordinary thing into an extraordinary one, men into super men, and common everyday life into uncommon one. When *taksu* manifests, something special will be felt. Art performers with this kind of power can maintain their audience for long time and their stage shows will touch souls. Art crafts with this spiritual energy will charm those who see and wear them.

Civa Natharaja or the Dancing Shiva, as the manifestation of God, is the symbol of these all. Its beautiful motions, rhythm, exoticism, harmony, are all beauty (Yudabakti, 2007:60). Thus, Civa Natharaja is the god of art. He is then the god of *taksu* for Balinese Hindus. His shrine is found in all Balinese Hindus' traditional homes called as *sanggah* or *merajan*. This is the same place where God and all of His manifestations, and the holy spirits of the ancestors, are worshipped during special days. Thus, traditionally, *Sanggah Taksu* has been always part of the holy area in the Balinese Hindu family homes (Dibia, 2012:32-33). The place is for the power of God with which the family can do their daily duties and jobs. In the context of art, in the place ones are to do holy offerings before ones learn and do performances so that ones can receive *taksu*.

Another philosophical aspect is named *rwa bhineda*.

Mantra (1996:25), said that *rwa bhineda* is the Hindu concept of two sides always found in life, e.g. good and bad, holy and filthy, start and stop. *Rwa bhineda* becomes the basis for cultural development of Balinese people. It can be observed in the traditional *dolanan* as described below.

The chosen players in the game ought to be some males or *purusa* and others are females or *predana*. There should be players with big bodies (*mokoh*) and thin (*berag*), with melancholic natures (*cengeng*) and plain (*polos*). In the performance the concept is also reflected in the act of crying, laughing, modern and traditional. The numbers of the players are 20; consist of 10 male and 10 females. Aesthetically these all reflect the need for balance and harmony.

Basically the philosophical aspects of the art game mirrors the belief in the metaphysical power that should be with the game that can be attained through worshipping God in His manifestation of Civa Natharaja through a ritual and spiritual practice.

The ritual practice here can be also associated with the theory of religy as proposed by Durkheim (in Koentjaraningrat, 1990:201-202), who explained that one of the basics in a religion is ritual with which a connection to the metaphysical world is made.

When seen from the theory of interactional symbolism, this can be explained that the two-side-components as always found in the game are symbols of balance that are in turn expected to help balance the audiences' minds. The photo below shows some players in the traditional *Dolanan* game.



Dolanan putri
dok. Sanggar Kebo Iwa tahun 2017

The Religious Meaning of the Traditional Dolanan Game

The word "meaning" here refers to the hidden values within the art creation. Value is a subjective things; it depends on the one who gives the judgment (Sumardjo in Suarningsih, 2004: 159). The word "religious" here means holding to a religion; (Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia, 1989: 739). Thus, by "religious meaning" here means things related to the religion.

The art game of *Dolanan* performed in Sanggar Kebo Iwa Badung, besides entertaining, it also carries some religious values. Before starting a plan of performance there is a ritual. The ritual is known as *nuasen*. It is carried out before a shrine named *Padmasana* in the area of Sanggar Kebo Iwa, and led by or *Jero Mangku*. All of the players, show assistants, and some local officers may also join the ritual. The ritual is done with some offerings to ask for some blessings to the performance. Related to such offerings the holy *Lontar Yadnya Prakerti* states as quoted below.

*Sahananing bebanten pinaka raganta tuwi,
pinaka warna rupaning Ida Bhatara,
pinaka andha buwana.*

*Sekare pinaka kasucian katulusan kayunta mayadnya,
Reringgitan tatuwusan pinaka kalanggengan mayadnya,
Raka-raka pinaka widyadhri*

Translation:

all of us symbolizing ourselves (human), the symbol of God's Omnipotence, the symbol of the universe. flowers symbol of purity and sincerity do yadnya. carvings on banten symbol of the sincerity of the mind doing yadnya. fruits and fruits of snacks of symbols of heavenly scientists.

The offerings described in the line of the sloka are named *sesajen* or *banten* in Balinese language. When put together into an art decoration, it is called *canang* by the Balinese Hindus. It is accompanied with holy water called *tirtha* that may be put in a piece of leaf called *takir*. Before the show, all of the performers and the assistants join another ritual called *Majaya-jaya*.

For the rituals an important offering prepared is called *banten pejati* that contains some parts of smaller offerings, namely *daksina*, *peras* and *sodan*. They

symbolize thankfulness and requests for blessings of the God so that the performance runs without any obstacles. The rituals then prove that there is strong relation between art and religion believed by the Balinese Hindus. This supports the theory of religy which states that men are urged by religious emotion to do religious things.

The Aesthetical Meaning of the Traditional Dolanan Game

A good art work must integrate three important elements, i.e. truth (*satyam*), holiness (*sivam*) and aesthetics (*sundaram*). Each of these is related to morality, spirituality, and beauty (Dibia, 2012:53). A performance of art should meet these three elements. When they are met, the audience will be entertained and satisfied.

An art is a form of beauty in happiness and satisfaction. A beauty in conducts is balance or harmony. When a harmony is preserved there is eternity. A beautiful act should show balance and harmony because it provides satisfaction. The balance brings peace and prosperity. As they are all abstract they belong to nature. However, men should do things to attain them. That is the reason why they are all said to be derived from men.

The photo below shows the costumes worn during the game of *Dolanan* by the players in the Kebo Iwa art group. They are simple, flexible, sweat absorbing, without *prade* or gold paint, but still pretty.



Photo of the *Dolanan* Players in Their Costumes during a Performance

doc. Sanggar Kebo Iwa 2017

Arts in dancing, painting, singing, all reflect beauty. The beauty is originated from the heart and aimed at serving the spiritual need in human. In other words,

a beauty is a balance, harmony, and calm the soul or spirit (Artadi, 2011:179).

It can effectively teach moral values (Artadi, 2011:181). It is like a mirror. Thus, the game of *Dolanan* can reflect the life. Its moral teachings are useful.

For the people doing the art, what they perform is religious because religion and art is one. In Balinese language it is considered as *nyolahan sastra* or 'doing what the religious text says' (Suamba, 2003:3). In other words, an art performance is seen as an act of practicing religious teaching. Art is a symbol of the truth, holiness, and beauty. When seen from the symbolic interaction theory, the values and meaning of a symbol is not separated in the mind but come as one.

In the *Dolanan* performed by the kids, lots of meanings to be learned in the collective artful playing of it. The truth is learned through the songs and the dialogs. The holiness is learned through the rituals. The beauty is seen in the dances, costumes, and the instrumental playing.

The Preservation Meaning of the Traditional Dolanan According to *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia*, the word *pelestrian* means 'an act for avoiding the destruction or loss' (Tim Penyusun KBBI, 1989: 520). In the Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia No 11/2010 on the Cultural Preservation Cagar Chapter I, Section 1 and 2, it is stated that a preserving act is a dynamic act of protecting a culture by maintaining, using, and developing it.

Based on these, the act of performing *Dolanan* can be seen as a dynamic act of a cultural preservation. In this case preserving it, means to protect it from losing; developing it means to grow its potency; using it means to take benefit from its potency locally and universally.

As it has been described previously, the globalization has caused a worry of losing the traditional art game of *Dolanan*. As a matter of fact the art is more seldom played by the children nowadays since the coming of *video games* with the content that is of foreign culture. The more they are played the deeper the foreign ideology might penetrate the souls of the children that can gradually take off them from their own cultural roots.

The traditional *Dolanan* game is a respond to the global situation. The modification of the tradition has been designed for the preservation of the high values within the art. Thus, this has suggested that the performance is a kind of effort of a cultural preservation.

The Educational Meaning of the Traditional Dolanan Education is a conscious and careful way of creating a learning process in order that the learners actively develop their potencies and skills that are needed by themselves, the societies, and the countries (Undang-Undang No.20/2003 on National Education System 2003:3). The learning process can be formal, nonformal, or informal.

The traditional *Dolanan* is a form of education, which is of a nonformal type. All children involved in the game is educated for skills and other valuable potencies. They learn to dance, play traditional instruments, sing, act on the stage. Since there is lots of moral values within the tradition, the children performing the game are educated with the positive values needed for their developing characters.

I Wayan Rai. S (Balipost, 24 July 2012), suggested that moral values are abstract foundation that are needed for the development of children souls. They are important to strengthen their personalities especially in the middle of today's global era.

He emphasized that art is a means of education for children and life values and skills are developed through this. Their identities are becoming stronger through learning and performing it. Children who are learning *Dolanan* are learning to be disciplined with time as it is needed for success in their stage performances. They are also learning to be polite through selecting and valuing the traditional *adat madya* costumes and interacting to one another in the group. They are taught how to sit politely during the rituals and stay together as a team for unity.

They are taught not to walk over the *gamelan* as the traditional musical instruments are sacred through rituals. They are also learning to value money when they are told about the price of the costumes and other costs for the performance.

These all mean that the traditional game is of a high value of education, from the start to the end, not only for the children but also for adults.

The Meaning of Togetherness in the Traditional Dolanan Game

The togetherness in the traditional game of *Dolanan* reflects through its complexity. This can be seen in the performance. Starting from the dance, musics, costumes, all suggest that the art can never be completed without a collective work in which there is a need of togetherness. In this case the sociological aspect of the art should be understood.

According to Hadi (2005:30), in order to understand it all the macro sociology, which is a society as a cultural system, should be understood as a basis. In this, the group of people is seen as men who find ways to adjust to one another and to their environment and to act together in a pattern to give their life meaning. In the context of the *Dolanan*, all of the people involved are expected to understand the meaning of their group performance as togetherness. The art director, the dancers, music players, support to one another as they learn it as social behaviors.

They are motivated by the attitude of *jengah* (competitive pride) that they can do well. Without togetherness a group art performance like *Dolanan* is never possible.

CONCLUSION

The traditional *Dolanan game* as found to be performed by the art group of Sanggar Kebo Iwadi Badung has philosophical and metaphysical meanings. The performance has its belief in the God and the concept of *rwa bhineda*. Religiously, it is related to the selection of the holy day for starting the preparation for the performance and the ritual before it. Aesthetically, the show has its beauty in how delivering the moral and religious education through the symbols. As art can symbolize truth (*satyam*), holiness (*sivam*) and beauty (*sundaram*) the effort to preserve the game should also mean the effort to preserve and develop all of the three. From the perspective of education the traditional game has also taught how to develop the skills in dancing, singing, acting, and musical playing. Through its values, it also helps the children to grow strong characters and personalities. There is also meaning of togetherness that reflects the complexity of its performance as well as its preparation. It suggests that the success of the art performance comes from a collective group work.

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