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Logic Interrelation of Embedding the Word "Kyai" in the Gamelan Ensemble: A Cultural Deconstruction Process

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Abstract

Some Heirloom Gamelan which are considered sacred by some cultural areas, have a place of honor with the title "Kyai". This phenomenon must be read in the context of local culture, which is currently being used by supporting communities. For example, in the palace areas, which are quite large and still exist today, namely, the Yogyakarta Palace and the Surakarta Palace. Outside the palace area, a similar designation occurs in wider society with the term "Ki". The reading in question can be approached as a theoretical proposition through Derrida's theory of deconstruction with its binary option which allows for two-way conclusions, namely factual justification or rejection of those deemed too far-fetched. To reveal all the premises that might occur in people's lives, research was carried out using qualitative methods with an emic approach that took data sources through literature studies and Personal Narratives. The application of Derrida's Deconstruction theory to the cultural phenomenon of honorific titles like "Ki" allows for a nuanced exploration of their significance in both palace and wider societal contexts. By employing qualitative methods and an emic approach, researchers can gain deeper insight into the lived experiences and personal narratives of individuals within these communities. This methodology enables a more comprehensive understanding of how cultural practices are perceived, maintained, and potentially evolving in contemporary societies.

Keywords: gamelan art, cultural wisdom, logic interrelation, local culture.

Introduction

The opinion that has developed in traditional society is that the embedding of the words "Kyai" and "Ki" in the name of gamelan is no longer a secret, and in some places that seem exclusive this is a sign of cultural dynamics that are taken for granted. *Adi Luhung's* artistic concept of sacred art no doubt implies that the existence of this art continues to resonate as something that has quite a high value. *Adi Luhung's* concept of art, which can be interpreted as *mahayuning janmo* and *mahayuning buwono*, is not just jargon but has a normative attachment to the lives of the people (Soepandi, 2002). The word *mahayuning* which is more interpreted as 'prosperous', and the word *janmo* which means human, and the word *buwono* which means world, are normative references given to traditional arts with a number of benefits. In this way, *Adi Luhung's* sentence about art can be interpreted as art that has brought prosperity to humans and the world around them, and not something that is made up. Gamelan art in several cultural areas is often considered sacred and auspicious. Therefore, to give a unique title, many people add the words "Kyai" or "Ki" in front of it. Not only is it possible to provide an identity that differentiates one gamelan ensemble from another, but there may also be different musical characteristics. In

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philosophical studies, each difference in character also corresponds to its designation, for example, *Ki Handaru* (one of the names of the gamelan ensemble owned by STSI and now ISBI Bandung) shows that the sound of the gamelan is quite loud (Handaru is another word booming) and can be heard everywhere. In fairly exclusive cultural areas, you will find many ensemble names that include the word "Kyai" or "Ki" as illustrated in the table below;

Table 1. The Names of Gamelan at the Ngayogyakarta and Mangkunegaran Palaces

No	Names	Locations
1.	Kanjeng Kyai Guntur Laut	Keraton Ngayogyakarta
2.	Kanjeng Kyai Kebo Ganggang	Keraton Ngayogyakarta
3.	Kanjeng Kyai Guntur Madu	Keraton Ngayogyakarta
4.	Kanjeng Kyai Naga Wilaga	Keraton Ngayogyakarta
5.	Kanjeng Kyai Surak	Keraton Ngayogyakarta
6.	Kanjeng Kyai Kancil Belik	Keraton Ngayogyakarta
7.	Kanjeng Kyai Guntur Sari	Keraton Ngayogyakarta
8.	Kanjeng Kyai Mari Kangen	Keraton Ngayogyakarta
9.	Kanjeng Kyai Panji	Keraton Ngayogyakarta
10.	Kanjeng Kyai Madu Kintir	Keraton Ngayogyakarta
11.	Kanjeng Kyai Sirat Madu	Keraton Ngayogyakarta
12.	Kanjeng Kyai Medharsih	Keraton Ngayogyakarta
13.	Kanjeng Kyai Mikatsih	Keraton Ngayogyakarta
14.	Kanjeng Kyai Harjanagara	Keraton Ngayogyakarta
15.	Kanjeng Kyai Harjamulya	Keraton Ngayogyakarta
16.	Kanjeng Kyai Madumurti	Keraton Ngayogyakarta
17.	Kanjeng Kyai Madu Kusumo	Keraton Ngayogyakarta
18.	Kanjeng Kyai Sangumulya	Keraton Ngayogyakarta
19.	Kanjeng Kyai Sangumukti	Keraton Ngayogyakarta
20.	Kyai Kanyut Mesem	Keraton Ngayogyakarta
21.	Kyai Lipur Sari	Keraton Mangkunegaran
22.	Kyai Seton	Keraton Mangkunegaran
23.	Kyai Pamerdasih	Keraton Mangkunegaran
24.	Kyai Udan Asih	Keraton Mangkunegaran
25.	Kyai Nogo Limo	Keraton Mangkunegaran
26.	Kyai Precet	Keraton Mangkunegaran
27.	Kyai Tombo Ning	Keraton Mangkunegaran
28.	Kyai Udan Arum	Keraton Mangkunegaran
29.	Kyai Windu Segoro	Keraton Mangkunegaran
30.	Kyai Basworo	Keraton Mangkunegaran
31.	Kyai Mardiswara	Keraton Mangkunegaran

Source: <https://yogyakarta.kompas.com> (Setyaningrum, 2023) and <https://puromangkunegaran.com> (Mangkunegara, 2024)

In reality, the names of the gamelans that have been embedded in front of the word "Kyai" are gamelans from two large palaces on the island of Java, which are considered heirlooms that are

treated and cared for. One of the special things is that every year (especially in Bulau Maulud), a *jamasan* (read: washing or bathing) is held using special water. This treatment is not only in the palace area which already has standard traditions, even in society (outside the palace); it also follows the same method. Apart from the name "Kyai" (specifically for gamelan in the palace), people outside the palace will also get it, some examples are as in the table below;

Table 2. The Names of Gamelan at Society

No	Names	Locations
1.	Ki Muntili	Kedungsana - Cirebon
2.	Ki Handaru	STSI/ISBI Bandung
3.	Ki Mega Mendung	STSI/ISBI Bandsung

(Afryanto, Nalan, & Rachmadi, 2023)

The word "Ki" is an abbreviation of the term "Aki" which means someone who is old (old) and highly respected by the community. Like the gamelan *Gong Rénténg Ki Muntili*, where *Ki Muntili* is taken from the owner of the gamelan who is famous in his area, who is wise and wise (Sudianto, 2016). Because of its special treatment, every year, the gamelan (*Gong Rénténg Ki Muntili*) *jamasan* is performed with water mixed with seven types of flowers. Based on the opinions circulating in the surrounding community and their beliefs, it is possible that the gamelan must be bathed in flowerwater so that the gamelan will spread a fragrant fragrance throughout the world, just like the nature of fragrant flowers. However, there are also scientific studies showing that it is possible that a mixture of various types of flowers will have a positive effect as a substance (compound) that functions as an anti-toxin or anti-virus. Therefore, after being bathed or washed with water from the seven flowers, to dry them they were dried and smoked with incense smoke. As with the assumption about flower water, incense smoke, besides being fragrant, also has an antitoxin effect.



Figure 1. Air Kembang Tujuh Rupa (Afryanto, Nalan, & Rachmadi, 2023)

If you look at the facts above, how does traditional (old) society treat the heritage art they have inherited over the years? Of course, this has its own reasons, where the position of culture, both as culture and civilization, is well maintained. Views culture in the sense that culture is considered a configuration of values, principles and normative ideals that are always referred to in everyday life; culture can also be seen as civilization that consists of a collection of intellectual knowledge and technical means (Soetrisno, 2001) as a human effort to exercise control over

nature and its environment. The second position of the definition of culture conveyed by Weber may be old values that are always maintained as a manifestation of how to care for roots (traditions), even though times continue to change and develop. A society that positions heritage art within a more normative scope is a sign that the spirit of tradition is still being carried out. If this phenomenon is considered unique, then the research that has been conducted attempts to map the problem more openly and will also be presented openly.

With the foundation as mentioned above, research that takes the topic of embedding the word "Kyai" or "Ki" in gamelan ensembles will open the curtain on what has been considered a myth that leads to a certain spiritual power. The reason that strengthens the dimension of spirituality is quite high in traditional art and can not be separated from the use of creativity through views that prioritize philosophical thinking and juxtapose it with human cognitive knowledge. Plato (t.t.) mentioned that the issue of creativity is often associated with mystical and supernatural things. In this view, is somewhat contradictory, and he brings the creative process closer to modern psychological issues, namely the results of creativity, which are considered extraordinary because they originate from cognitive processes and/or knowledge (Norris, 2017). The issue of spirituality, which also has supernatural value, can be elaborated through a cognitive knowledge approach that is tested from time to time. This is the mystery of traditional art which presents an interesting story between the past and present.

Theoretical Study

Borrowing Derrida's theory of deconstruction, which specifically focuses on the world of literature in terms of text, is a little more possible than targeting theoretical propositions that are too far apart. The essence of the deconstruction theory that will be borrowed is more about the issue of debating the reading process (cultural aspects), which can be in accordance with facts or not at all and tends to make things up. As stated by Norris (2017), the elements that are traced or re-read, and then dismantled, are not first of all logical inconsistencies, weak arguments, or inaccurate premises contained in the text, as is usually done by modernist thinking, but rather elements that are philosophically determining or allowing the text to be philosophical. Roughly speaking, it is the possibility that the philosophy itself is being questioned. Regarding this matter, Darmanto Yatman emphasized the assumption that for (certain) artists, the creative process carried out and taking the form of works of art may not just be a mere artistic concept, but rather philosophically identified with the philosophy of his life (Alisjahbana, 1980). In fact, art and creative processes (artists) are the philosophies of a person's life, especially in traditional (old) societies. In fact, some people dominate the element of devotion throughout their lives through art and without any excessive self-interest other than self-existence. This perspective has shown a cycle, where for cultural servants (in certain environments), this can be due to the beliefs they hold to continue to grow within themselves. This is the crux of the problem, why embedding the words "Kyai" or "Ki" which cannot contain very conventional logic into something factual, is possible for certain groups where cultural texts are interpreted as beliefs related to the philosophy of their life. By juxtaposing myths and facts, the deconstruction theory approach, which aims to find shortcomings, injustices, lies, and other things that society does not want, can be avoided. Analytically, deconstruction can be said to be a way of looking at texts to distort conventionalized meanings. Thus, the public's statement that the issue being discussed is between myth and fact through a deconstruction theory approach may be that it is a fact and not a myth. The complete research results will attempt to reveal everything described in the narrative above.

Research Methods

Two approaches were adopted in this research to capture what is meant by the phenomenon that is currently occurring, as in the title above, namely, using the life story method and personal narrative. From the viewpoint of the qualitative life story method, at least four steps must be taken in carrying out a historical search: (1) family data, (2) autobiographical data, (3) selection system, and (4) comprehensive observation results (Batubara, 2020; Batubara, 2021; Galingging et al., 2023; Panggabean et al., 2023; Steven et al., 2025). Family data describes the relationship between economic, social, and religious life. Thus, human life by nature cannot be avoided from relationships that support themselves as *homo economos*, *homo sociologos*, and *homo spirituality*. However, these three bases cannot be separated. Thus, describing the data on the existence of a group (humans) can be identified through such steps. Data regarding autobiography will provide a map of the progress of humans and their families, including the psychological dimensions in which they live, grow, and are raised in a cultural environment. Meanwhile, from a psychodynamic perspective, the human selection process is based on the family tree and its members, which exhibit characteristic differences. For in-depth studies, this can be achieved by making comprehensive observations. The life story approach will be effective if it is carried out continuously and involves oneself in the life of the object being studied (Alwasilah, 2017).

Meanwhile, regarding the personal narrative method used, Fisher explained that individual story narratives are the most interesting stories in cultural analysis, especially those related to the nuances of new conversations about representation and diversity (Afryanto, Nalan, & Rachmadi, 2023). This is based on the reality that an individual's view of cultural phenomena cannot be separated from the connection between one individual and another, because culture is actually collective and communal (Afryanto, Nalan, & Rachmadi, 2023). This method prioritizes how the resource person is allowed to tell the story in line with his or her own experience. The principle is that revealing someone's best practices is much more valuable than written data, which do not say much. In local discourse, talking *ngalor-ngidul* (read; going everywhere) is more interesting to arrive at the substance that is hoped for together. Again, these two methods are more effective for extracting some of the research information needed, especially reliable 'what people say'. Oral traditions in the form of oral traditions in traditional community life have dominated the past until today. One of the veracities of the information tested is their experience as witnesses of life exceeding expectations, which is sometimes unexpected. The habit of traditional society is to be more comfortable with chatting to reveal the desired information, rather than asking a number of formalistic questions. So, through life stories and narrative personal data and information, embedding the word "Kyai" or "Ki" in the name of the gamelan ensemble makes its existence more trustworthy.

Research Result

Answering the question of whether the embedding of the words "Kyai" or "Ki" in the name of a gamelan ensemble that has been categorized as an heirloom is a myth or fact, will of course start by looking for an understanding of what "Kyai" is. In the Big Indonesian Dictionary Kyai is a word of greeting for alim ulama (clever scholars in the Islamic religion), or a word of greeting that begins the name of an object that is considered auspicious (weapons, gamelan, etc.) (Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia, 2016). A similar understanding was also conveyed by Dhofier that the

word Kyai or Kiai is a title of honor for items that are considered sacred; for example, "Kyai Garuda Kencana" is used to refer to the Golden Chariot in the Yogyakarta Palace, or a title of honor for elderly people in general (Zamakhshari, 1982).

From some of the information obtained, the word "Kyai" or "Ki" is essentially a form of respect for humans or objects that have benefited human life. A person who is called "Kyai" or "Ki" is someone whose knowledge, experience and attitude are a source of reference for the benefit of society, and are even emulated as a good figure. Objects (such as gamelan) called "Kyai" or "Ki" are considered learning media that deserve respect, because from these objects all knowledge and skills will be obtained if they are studied. For example, when Sundanese Karawitan art maestro Mang Koko (deceased) was still around, he was very angry if any of his students were seen directly by stepping over the gamelan. The maestro will shout prohibitions with the sentence; "*Pamali*, don't step over the gamelan." The word *pamali* is a word with stigmatic nuances that should not be done, and if it is done, there will be consequences, and *pamali* itself is seen as a value system that is full of normative rules in certain cultural areas.

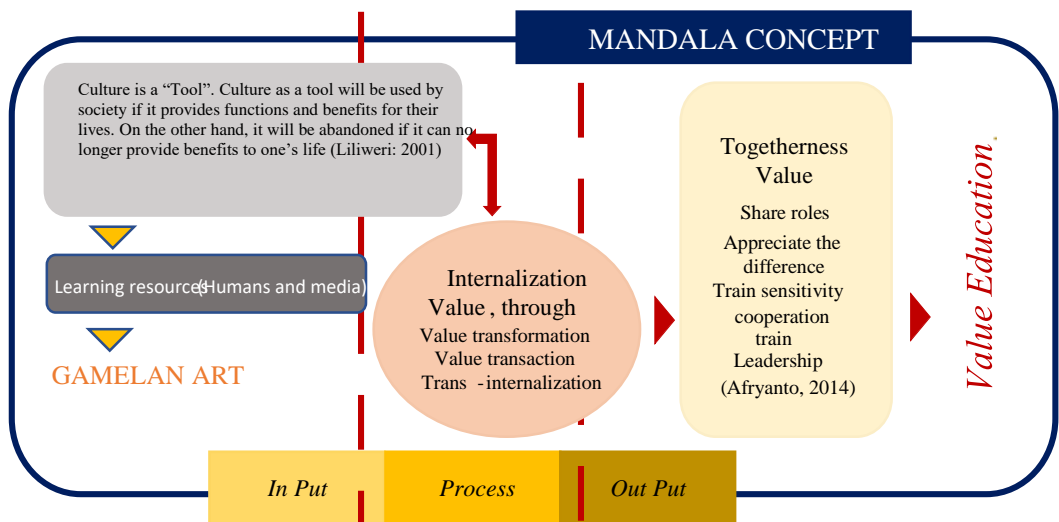


Figure 2. Mandala Concept as a Learning Resource

In addition to being a source of knowledge and skills, gamelan art also influences the formation of learners' attitudes, considering that gamelan art as an ensemble art in principle teaches togetherness. For this reason, Afryanto views gamelan art as a medium for character formation. In the *Mandala* concept (borrowing a term, Sumardjo, 2003), learning resources are actually already in the universe with all its dynamics (Afryanto, Nalan, & Rachmadi, 2023). There are resources (human and natural), learning media, and a learning process that inclusively provide a space that deserves respect. Closing this article, above we have presented an overview of the *Mandala* concept associated with gamelan art as a learning medium. Culture (one of the elements of art) is a tool that will be used by its owner.

Discussion

Based on the concept of *Mandala*, which can be interpreted as an open space full of meaning, a space is used as a process of interaction between one human and another or between humans

and their environment. Thus, gamelan art is a medium for carrying out the interaction process through the learning dimension. There are three stages in this process as illustrated in Figure 2. The first step is called input: namely, gamelan art as a learning medium that takes its source material from the local culture that supports it, which is in line with the normative system that applies to local culture. Then it is taught to humans through the second step called process, namely internalization of values through value transformation, value transactions, and trans-internalization, which shapes the attitudes and characters of the learners. The third step is output as a result of the process that is learned, namely learning gamelan through percussion patterns, rhythmic patterns, melodic patterns, and harmonic patterns, which produce values of togetherness for anyone who learns it. The values of togetherness in question can be in the form of attitudes, respect for each person's role, respect for differences because of each role, training sensitivity because playing gamelan music must produce beautiful and soft tones, and training togetherness among them to achieve the desired harmony. If gamelan art plays a fairly important role as a learning tool for humans that has benefits for themselves, then it is fitting that the learning media is respected by calling it "Kyai" or "Ki" even though it is not a personification of a human being who is indeed worthy of respect. The honorific title "Kyai" or "Ki" bestowed upon gamelan instruments reflects their esteemed role in cultural education and spiritual development. This reverence for the learning medium itself underscores the profound impact gamelan has on shaping individual character and fostering communal harmony. By elevating the status of these instruments, practitioners acknowledge the transformative power of gamelan in cultivating essential values and promoting social cohesion within the community. The practice of venerating gamelan instruments as "Kyai" or "Ki" extends beyond mere symbolism, serving as a constant reminder of the sacred nature of the musical tradition and its teachings. This honorific designation encourages players to approach their craft with reverence and mindfulness, fostering a deeper connection to the cultural heritage embodied in the gamelan ensemble. Moreover, by attributing a sense of personhood to the instruments, practitioners are encouraged to interact with them as respected elders, further reinforcing the values of respect, harmony, and collective wisdom that are central to gamelan philosophy.

Conclusion

Apart from explaining the etymology in Indonesian, lexically, the word "kiyai" was written by Jonathan Rigg in 1862 in his work entitled "A Dictionary of the Sundanese Language of Java". In his etymological explanation, Rigg explains the origin of the term "kiyai" which cannot be separated from the terms "ki" and "ki-ai". Ki described Rigg as a sort of honorific designation placed before men's names or titles; it was also placed before the names of many plants or trees. In the first instance it is probably a contraction of Aki, grandfather, and in the latter of ka-i, which is sometimes though rarely heard for wood. before titles as Ki Tumunggun, Ki Demang- before proper names as Ki Jaman, and Ki Saman (Rigg, 1862).

Rigg's note above emphasizes the explanation of ki as an honorific term placed in front of a man's name or title; Rigg believes the term "ki" is a contraction of aki or grandfather. "ki" as a title, is given to highly respected figures, such as; Ki Tumugunggun, Ki Demang, Ki Saman etc. Rigg's (1862) diachronic explanation shows the strong relationship of the use of the term "ki" vis avis "kiyai" to highly respected personal figures. The intention of this respectful expression is coherent with the term "ki-ai" in Rigg's explanation, where he specifically explains "ki-ai" as: a term of respect for an old man; a term of respect to designate a father in law. compounded of ki, a honorific designation, and aya father. This explanation once again shows

that the meaning of "ki" and "ki-ai" or "kiyai" always conveys respect for male figures.

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