**POLITICS OF POWER IN MARGINALIZATION OF *SASAK* *GANDRUNG* PERFORMING ART IN LOMBOK**

**Ida Ayu Trisnawati**

I Nyoman Suarka

I Gde Parimartha

I Gede Arya Sugiartha

Study Program of Dancing Art

Indonesia Institute of the Arts Denpasar

e-mail: dayutrisna@gmail.com

**ABSTRACT**

A change is occurring to the *Sasak gandrung* performing art performed at Dasan Tereng Village, Narmada District, West Lombok District, West Nuasa Tenggara. The development of the understanding of Islam among the Sasak ethnic people has widely affected the development of such a performing art. The marginalization of the Sasak *gandrung* performing art cannot be separated from the limited protection given by the government, the strengthening of the religious fundamentalism, and the decrease in the supporting community’s self-confidence. This present study is intended to identify one of the three phenomena of the marginalization of the *gandrung Sasak* performing art, especially the strengthening of the religious fundamentalism of the *waktu lima* Islam. The data were collected through observation, interview, and documents which are related to the *gandrung Sasak*. The data were analyzed qualitatively using the Theory of Social Practice proposed by Pierre Bourdieu.

The results of the study show that the strengthening of the religious fundamentalism of *waktu lima* Islam caused the *wetu telu* Muslims to convert into *waktu lima* Muslims. The consequence is that the *gandrung Sasak* performing art, inherited from generation to generation, has gradually become marginalized. It has not been included in the list of the performing art in West Lombok Regency. The strengthening of the religious fundalism cannot be separated from the *wetu telu* Islamic teaching which is not in accordance with the *waktu lima* Islamic teaching, which is based on *Al-Quran* and *Hadist*. Such a *gandrung* performing art is believed to be not in accordance with *Al-Quran* and *Hadist* which are believed by the *waktu lima* Muslims.

Keywords: politics of power, marginalization, performing art, *gandrung Sasak*

**INTRODUCTION**

*Gandrung* performing art is the name of an Indonesian traditional performing art which is performed in a number of regions such as Banyuwati (East Java), Bali, Lombok (West Nusa Tenggara). The uniqueness of the *gandrung* performing art performed in Banyuwangi is different from that of the one performed in the other area. Historically, it was a performing art which was performed as part of the ritual of change. The era development, the change in the way of thinking, and the pressure from many parties especially the *waktu lima* Muslims has caused it to be marginalized, as it is a *wetu telu* Islamic performing art.

The *gandrung sasak* performing art has currently been performed not for traditional purposes; it has also been performed as part of the popular music. Such a situation can be stated as a shift from being sacred into being propane.

As the essence of the arts, as part of the culture, such a performing art always changes, following the human development. The arts and society affect each other; this has caused the people’s way of thinking and various phenomena, including the performing art, to develop. Kdoiran (1998: 541) stated that the arts change following the people’s way of thinking.

It is highly interesting to explore such a phenomenon from the perspective of critical cultural studies. The social reality in the *wetu telu* Islamic community, as the supporting community of the *Sasak gandrung* performing art, contrasts with the vision and mission of the government of West Nusa Tenggara Barat, which has committed to developing the society into the one which is civilized, has good characters and cultured, and appreciates plurality and equality in gender (Martono, 2011: 4). However, the fact shows that the existence of the *Sasak* *gandrung* performing art, which has been the cultural heritage of the *wetu telu* Islamic tradition, has been marginalized; moreover, it has been excluded from the list of the arts in West Lombok Regency since 1992.

The less protection from the government, the strengthening of the religious fundamentalism and the fall in the supporting community’s self-confidence have been responsible for such a marginalization. The focus of the present study is the strengthening of the religious fundamentalism in the Sasak society which has caused the *Sasak* *gandrung* performing art to be marginalized.

**RESEARCH METHOD**

This present study is a qualitative one which is within the area of the cultural studies. The data were collected through direct observation. The interviewees were the artists, the observers of the arts, and the experts in the arts. In this case, the artists were the ones who were involved in the *Sasak gandrung* performing art, including the male dancers, and the *wetu telu* Islamic traditional artists who have developed and supported the dance. The common people who are familiar with the dance were also interviewed. In this way, the dance can be more compressively understood. The data were also collected through the documentary method, and were analyzed qualitatively.

**DISCUSSION**

It is predicted that the *Sasak gandrung*  performing art has been performed since between 1907 and 1910. In 1920s, it was a popular performing art among the performing arts which were performed in Lombok. What is initially known by the Lombok society in general and the *wetu telu* Islamic community in particular is that the *gandrung* performing art was performed by a male dancer who dressed as a female. The dance was accompanied by a set of gamelan instruments called *Cungklik* (the Sasak people refer to it as *sabarungan*), and two Sasak songs known as *lelakaq* and *sandaran* (Larasati, 1996: 16). It used to be alternately performed by a male dancer and a female one. However, in 1930s, it was more frequently performed by a female dancer. Since then the dance has spread to every part of Lombok Island.

The *Sasak* *gandrung* performing art is a *Sasak wetu telu* Islamic tradition. Historically, the *wetu telu* Islamic community is an acculturation of the Hindu culture and Islamic culture. Hinduism, which was initially introduced to Lombok, gave the ideological foundation which was strong enough. It is this which featured the existence of the *gandrung* performing art, which was then stated to be identical with the *wetu telu* Islamic culture.

Historically, the Lombok inhabitants, before becoming Muslims, had believed in animism-dynamism before Hinduism was introduced to them. Islam was firstly introduced through the Javanese ‘wali’ (the leaders who spread Islam). In the beginning, they did not have the opportunity to complete what they should have taught; as a result, the local people were trapped in the transitional period. The leaners whom they left behind were not brave enough to change what they practiced in the transitional era into the complete Islamic practices. That is one of the factors which has been contributed to the existence of the *wetu telu* Islamic community in the modern era. In accordance with some people, the *wetu telu* Islamic community is assumed to be the combination of the bargaining processes between two types of values, namely, the local traditional values and universal Islamic values.

The existence of the *wetu telu* Islamic community and the existence of the *gandrung* performing art were viewed not to threaten the local traditional values inherited by their ancestors which also have spiritual elements and are assumed to be the strong impact of Hinduism and Buddhism as the religious teachings which had been introduced before Islam was introduced to Lombok. The local values which the *wetu telu* Islamic community adheres to have caused the local people not to be brave enough to deconstruct what they had learned before into the *waktu lima* Islamic teaching. Derrida (1992: 24) stated that such a decision should be made through what is called *apria* from the *undecidable* thing (something which cannot be decided).

In reality, the *wetu telu* Islam which the Sasak community adhered to at that time contrasted with what is taught in *Al-Qur’an* and *Hadist*. The traditional practice performed by the *wetu telu* Islamic community contrasts with what is performed by the *waktu lima* Islamic community. The *wetu telu* Islamic community is aware that a number of traditional practices such as respecting and worshipping the souls of their ancestors clearly contrast with the *waktu lima* Islamic law. In accordance with what is stated by Budiwati (2000: 7-8), the local tradition, on which the *wetu telu* Islamic followers give emphasis, plays a highly dominant role among them. They still maintain the *wete telu* Islamic teaching as part of their religious tradition which cannot be deleted. The local traditional value more dominates them than the Islamic teaching that they adhere to. They tried to find a solution through acculturation; however, such a phenomenon is prohibited within the Islamic context.

What is believed by the *wetu telu* Islamic community is that places, books, human beings, specific objects, rites of change such as birth, marriage, moving from one house to another or death are sacred. In addition, according to them, the rice planting cycle is also sacred. Such rites of change are performed by holding the *gandrung* performing art as the *wetu telu* Islamic tradition. Without holding the *gandrung* performing art, such rites of change are incomplete. The *wetu telu* Islam has been purified so that religious misunderstanding can be avoided. The *wetu telu* Muslims still like gambling, getting drunk, and scarcely perform ritual prayers ‘shalat’. In addition, there is still an impression that the *gandrung* dancer may be ordered to sleep with ‘beterus’. In accordance with Bourdieu (1990: 131), habitus includes every type of cultural activity such as production, perception, and evaluation of the practices of daily life.

The *waktu lima* Muslims strongly adhere to the Islamic teachings which refer to *Al-Quran* and *Hadist*. They are more committed to the Islamic *syari’ah* than the *wetu telu* Islamic community. The former’s fidelity to the five pillars of Islam ‘lima Rukun Islam’ is so strong. The latter are the Sasak people; they admit that they are Muslims but they also worship the souls of their ancestors, many gods, and perform the *gandrung* dance.

The religious fundamentalism has been getting stronger since the current governor was appointed the governor; he is a *waktu lima* Muslim and his wife is from Middle East who strongly adheres to the *waktu lima* Islam. The *waktu lima* Islamic community is getting stronger and the *wetu telu* one is getting marginalized. They are marginalized from their faith and native arts, especially the *gandrung* dance.

The religious fundamentalism in every part of Lombok has been made to be stronger; therefore, it is not surprising to see that there is a small traditional group of people who relate the concept of *wetu telu* Islam to the Hindu-Buddha tradition in their customs and traditions. The elders in particular still maintain their old faith. The *wetu telu* followers do not recognize that what they believe in is equal to Hinduism and Buddhism. However, those who have been modernly educated through ‘pondok pesantren’ (traditional Islamic school) have caused the influence of the *wetu telu* to be getting weaker.

As the era and the way of thinking develop and the religious fundamentalism is getting stronger, the traditional performing arts in Lombok in general, and the *gandrung* performing art at Dasan Tereng Village, West Lombok in particular, which is supported by the *wetu telu* Islamic community, are getting marginalized. The *wetu telu* Muslims used to be static; however, they are getting dynamic. The *wetu telu* Islam has been purified into the *waktu* *lima* Islam.

The shift in religious faith at Dasan Tereng Village, West Lombok District, as the village which supports the *Sasak gandrung* performing art, from performing the *wetu telu* Islamic teaching to the *waktu lima* Islamic teaching has contributed to the marginalization of the Sasak *gandrung* performing art in Lombok.

**CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

It can be concluded that the introduction of the *waktu lima* Islam to the *wetu telu* Islamic environment has caused the local people’s faith to shift. As a consequence, the performing art which is related to the *wetu telu* Islam, especially the *Sasak gandrung* performing art as the art product of the *wetu telu* Islamic community, has gradually disappeared.

It is suggested that (1) the government should motivate and facilitate the creativity of the *Sasak gandrung* artists morally and materially; (2) the art institution should make attempts to maintain the traditional arts qualitatively and quantitatively; and (3) the art observers, artists, and intellectuals should importantly contribute to the growth and development of the existing traditional arts.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

In this opportunity, the writer would like to thank Prof. Dr. I Nyonan Suarka, M.Hum., as the supervisor, Prof. Dr. I Gde Parimartha, M.A., as co-supervisor I and Dr. I Gede Arya Sugiartha, SSKar., M.Hum, as co-supervisor II, for their guidance and supervision during the completion of this study. The writer would also like to thank the e-journal of cultural studies, Doctorate Program in Cultural Studies, Udayana University for publishing this e-journal.

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