



The Existence of Jemblung Islamic Arts at the Jemblung Sanggar Proff Jim Kediri City

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Abstract: Islamic Jemblung art in Kediri City, East Java, Indonesia, is a form of oral performance art that has developed within the community. The Jemblung Studio, led by Proff. Jim, serves as a custodian of this art form, even as fewer people become familiar with it. This research aims to reintroduce this art through field studies conducted on Jl. Raung, Lirboyo, Mojoroto District, Kediri City. A qualitative research method is employed, utilizing techniques such as interviews, documentation, and observation of the studio and its owner. Grounded in the theory of existence, this study discusses preservation strategies, comparisons with other art forms, and modern challenges. The findings indicate that Jemblung art has a rich history deeply rooted in local culture, which has transformed with the introduction of Islamic values. The Jemblung Studio, led by Proff. Jim, plays a crucial role in cultural preservation by engaging the younger generation through training programs and regular performances. Furthermore, comparing Jemblung art with other Islamic arts, such as Qasidah and Hadrah, reveals both uniqueness and similarities in conveying religious messages. Despite facing challenges such as decreasing government support and waning interest from the younger generation, the studio capitalizes on opportunities through innovation and creativity, including the use of social media for promotion.

Keywords: Jemblung Art, Cultural Existence, Kediri City

1. INTRODUCTION

The development of science and technology influenced by the changing times has created new problems for many people. The influence of the development of science and technology also affects the culture in it, one of which is the traditional theater art that exists throughout the archipelago. Traditional theater is one of the arts that can depict life and advice in an area. So it can be said that traditional theater art is a symbol or characteristic of the area. Each type of traditional theater, such as lenong, ketoprak, ludruk, and Jemblung, has its own characteristics and uniqueness that reflect the identity of their respective regions. Traditional theater is not just entertainment, but also serves as an educational medium and conveys noble values that have been passed down from generation to generation. However, along with the development of the times and the entry of various forms of modern entertainment, people's interest in traditional theater art is declining.

This phenomenon is further exacerbated by the recognition and taking of elements of indigenous Indonesian culture by other countries, which makes our traditional arts increasingly endangered. This shows the urgent need to preserve and develop traditional arts to remain relevant in the midst of changing times. In this context, the traditional Jemblung theater from Kediri is an interesting example to be researched. This art, which has existed since 1987, not only serves as a



means of entertainment, but also as a medium of da'wah that conveys moral and spiritual messages through songs and poems.

Jemblung as an Islamic art, has the potential to educate the public about religious and cultural values, therefore, through traditional theater art Jemblung can be revived and introduced to the younger generation. One of the real examples of this effort can be seen at the Jemblung Proff Jim Art Studio in Kediri. This studio not only serves as a place for training and performances, but also as a center for education and preservation of Jemblung Islamic art. Through various programs held, such as workshops, regular performances, and collaborations with local artists, the Jemblung Art Studio Proff Jim seeks to delve deeper into the history and development of Jemblung art.

This studio also faces challenges in maintaining the relevance of Jemblung art in the midst of modernization. According to Kiregaard, existence is a bold decision made by man to determine his life, and accept the consequences that man has taken. If humans do not dare to do so, then humans do not exist in reality. Therefore, this study aims to further explore how the Jemblung Proff Jim Art Studio can be an example in the preservation of traditional arts through the jemblung studio that still survives today.(Husnah, 2017)

2. METHOD

This article uses a qualitative research approach to dig deeper about the Jemblung art in the Jemblung Studio in Lirboyo District, Kediri City. The main source of data in this study is the owner of Sanggar Jemblung, who has direct knowledge and experience related to the practice, history, and development of the art. To collect data, researchers applied several techniques, namely observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation is carried out by directly observing the process of rehearsals and performances in the studio, so that researchers can understand the dynamics and interactions that occur. In-depth interviews were conducted with studio owners and several other members to get a more comprehensive perspective on the challenges, hopes, and strategies for preserving Jemblung's art. In addition, documentation in the form of archives, photos, and performance recordings was also collected to complement the existing data.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 History of the art of Jemblung

The emergence of Jemblung Islamic Art has not been confirmed until now. Based on several sources, there are 3 different versions of the history of this art.

3.1.1 First version

The people of Banyumas have been since ancient times when there was a mother who gave birth, so the family of the mother who gave birth earlier had to hold a special event to get protection from God Almighty. The event lasted for one night called "Nguyen" or "Muyi". At the event, a book containing the story of the chronicle was read, namely in the form of Javanese songs with certain benchmarks. Along with the passage of time and the development of the times, over time the reading of this macapat has changed to maca kandha, which is from the reading of songs bound to the verses of poetry to reading in the form of prose.

Over time, the performer in the Muyi event changed his function to become a puppeteer in the world of entertainment. However, the puppeteer presents the story without using puppet props or those who show props as a role in the story. The puppeteer (puppeteer) when delivering the story uses a question and answer dialogue that is done by himself without the accompaniment of gamelan so that he looks like a crazy person. The word gemblung is this which over time changes to Jemblung and the person who becomes the puppeteer is called "Dalang Jemblung".

3.1.2 Second version

The art of Islamic Jemblung has a rich history, which can be traced back to the reign of Amangkurat I around 1677. At that time, this art was used as a means to listen to the Creator, which aimed to bring people closer to God. Thus, the art of Jemblung Islam not only became a cultural expression, but also a form of devotion and respect to a higher power, creating a close relationship between art, religion, and the life of the people at that time.

3.1.3 Third version

This version was spoken by Ki Suparman, the leader of the Dalang Jemblung Kencana Jaya group in Sumpiuh Banyumas District. This story began when the village of Watukumpul Purbalingga was controlled by Raden Kaligenteng. Once Raden Kaligenteng was about to propose to the son of a priest. When the time for their wedding had arrived, the ruler asked for a special event to be held which contained reading and chanting poems that told historical events, especially about the stories of the performances, which were liked by many people at that time and gradually the activity became a habit and was preserved by the community. At that time the show was known as "Jem-jeme wong gemblung" which means "a healthy or healthy but crazy crazy person".

Along with the changing times, the performing art changed to Dalang Jemblung. The stories he brings are not only limited to the stories of the prophets, but include various stories or stories classified as myths, legends, chronicles and puppet epics. Not only that, when Islam has entered the archipelago, this art has developed and even been used as one of the methods of da'wah of Islamic teachings. Because

of this, there is no doubt that this art is one of the historical arts, not only as entertainment but also as an Islamic method in preaching and spreading its religion.

The Jemblung performance is a performance in the form of a socio-drama that is easily accepted by most people, this performance can also be performed anywhere such as on stage or in the halls of the house. One of the areas that still maintains Jemblung Islamic Arts is the city of Kediri, a city that is often known as the city of tofu until now still maintains Jemblung Islamic Arts by creating communities or studios in certain villages. In the past, when Islam in Kediri was still poorly known, there was a religious leader who used art in preaching and what was used was the Jemblung Islamic Art. The goal is to introduce Islam to the people of Kediri.

Jemblung art was initially used as a means to attract people to be interested in Islamic teachings. However, with the passage of time, Jemblung developed not only to attract public interest but also to function as a medium of cultural communication, as well as a medium for learning and applying Islamic teachings and other life systems. When the Jemblung performance was performed, the stories presented by the puppeteers were stories about the history of the kingdoms in Java, especially in Kediri, and especially about the history of Islamic culture, as well as other themes that were woven as story material.

3.2 Sanggar Jemblung Proff Jim

3.2.1 Sanggar Jemblung Proff Jim

Prof. Jim, whose full name is Sujiman, is an artist who cares deeply about cultural preservation. In 2025, he will be 64 years old. Sujiman emphasized that he was not a professor, the nickname of the proff was caused when he crossed the title of Proff in the waste management seminar certificate, because the mistake in writing the title was allegedly due to an institution that did not know him well. Sujiman graduated from the Senior High School of Agriculture (SPMA) in Kediri Regency in 1982 and never went to college.

In 1987, Sujiman established Sanggar Jemblung in the city of Kediri. The decision to establish this studio is inseparable from his family background, where jemblung is a legacy that has been in his family for generations. Prof. Jim feels that it is important to maintain and preserve this art so that it is not lost to the times. With high spirits, he is determined to revive the art of jemblung which is rich in cultural and spiritual values.

Through Sanggar Jemblung, Proff. Jim teaches the art of jemblung to children to teenagers, with the aim of preserving the art of Islamic jemblung so that it can continue to exist and be enjoyed by future generations. He believes that by introducing this art to the younger generation, they will appreciate and understand the existing cultural heritage more. In addition, this studio is also a gathering place for art lovers, where they can learn, practice, and collaborate. With this effort, Proff. Jim hopes that the art of jemblung

will not only survive, but also develop and be known more widely, so that it can make a positive contribution to society.

3.2.2 Characteristics of Islamic art Jemblung Proff Jim

In Jemblung Islamic Art there are many elements in it. At the time of display, this art is similar to a puppet show. However, unlike the usual puppet performances, the Jemblung Islamic Performance can be done without any puppet property or in other words it can be done only with the sound of the mouth. As for the proverb, namely "Seje deso mowo coro" which means "Each village has different customs or traditions", the proverb is very suitable to describe the diverse culture of Indonesian society. Almost every region in Indonesia has a distinctive art, even though it is not a typical art, but each region has its own way of carrying out the art which is a unique thing that distinguishes one region from another. Similar to this, although the Jemblung Islamic Art is not original and distinctive of Kediri, the Jemblung Islamic Art has its own characteristics that distinguish it from the Jemblung Art from other regions.

One of the studios that still preserves the art of jemblung is the Jemblung Proff Jim Studio located in Kediri City, East Java. There are several characteristics of Jemblung Islamic art from Sanggar Jemblung Proff Jim in Kediri, namely:

3.2.2.1 Musical instruments

The existence of different musical instruments or accompaniments does not mean that the meaning of the art of Jemblung Islam is eliminated. The musical instruments used are kendang, kempling, saron, jidor and kepyak.

- a. Kendang, kendang is a musical instrument that has the sound of dang dung functioning as a rhythm regulator.
- b. Kempling, is a type of ketipung but the size is longer.
- c. Saron, is a traditional musical instrument that is usually found in karawitan, played by being hit with a wooden hammer
- d. Jidor, is a traditional musical instrument that has a large sound and echoes as its characteristic.
- e. Kepyak, producing a rattling rhythmic sound.



Picture 1
*Musical Instruments by Prof. Jim
(Doc. Ken, 2022)*



Picture 2
Jidor Musical Instruments
(Doc. Ken, 2022)

3.2.2.2 Delivery of material

Relying only on sound in his performance is a characteristic of Jemblung's art. In the Jemblung performance, there is a puppeteer in charge of conveying stories or materials using various characters. In the Jemblung performance, a puppeteer will tell a story only using sound without any puppets as props. However, unlike the one in Kediri, in Kediri there is a Jemblung performance in which there are puppets that are moved only occasionally as props or props in conveying stories. Jemblung also uses sound media. Namely to chant the prophet's prayers, songs, and dagelan (as requested).



Picture 3
Proff Jim's Jemblung Studio Trains Young Children
(Youtube: <https://youtu.be/H-cCzd6vg4c>)

3.2.2.3 Songs/verses



Picture 4

Silaturrahim and Kupatan IKA -PMII Kediri Raya
(Youtube: <https://youtu.be/PIM5zfZgY80?si=RI1oYB58vmJKNOWO>)

Songs are a must-have as an interlude to the stories conveyed by the puppeteers in the Islamic Arts of Jemblung Kediri. During the event, there were several songs sung by singers, there were 2 types of songs that were often played, namely tembang and shalawat. In the art of Jemblung Islam in Kediri, one example of a song sung by a Jemblung puppeteer, which is such as:

Wis Wancine

Wis wancine tansah dielingake

Wis wancine podo nindaake

Adzan wus kumandhang wayahe sembahyang

Netepi wajib dawuhe pangeran

Sholat dadi cagak ing agomo

Limang wektu kudu tansah dijogo

Kanthi istiqomah lan sing

tumakninah

Luwih sampurno yen berjama'ah

Subuh Luhur lan 'Asar

Sholat sayekti ngadohke tindak mungkar

Maghrib lan 'Isya' jangkepe

Prayogane ditambah sholat sunate

Jo sembrono iku perintah agomo

Ngelingono neng ndonya mung sedelo

Sabar lan tawakal pasrah sing kuoso

Yen kepengin mbesok munggah suargo

3.2.2.4 Properties

In the performance of the jemblung art, there is a property used, namely puppetry. There are two types of puppets used, namely original puppets and puppetpuppets. Original puppets are usually made of leather or wood, which are carved with intricate details and often depict characters in traditional stories. Meanwhile, the wayang suket is a unique

and distinctive property, made of grass shaped into puppet figures. The puppet is used to become a character when the puppeteer tells the storyline like puppets in general, but in this jemblung not all storylines are demonstrated with puppets.

Wayang suket is one of the creativity of the jemblung studio profff jim because wayang suket is made of natural materials, namely grass, which reflects the connection between art and nature. This puts pressure on the importance of environmental preservation in local culture, is more environmentally friendly by utilizing natural resources, and provides a unique and different visual attraction compared to other traditional puppets.



Picture 5
Wayang kulit
(radarkediri.jawapos.com)



Picture 6
Wayang Suket
(Youtube: <https://youtu.be/60t8EJzH-WM?si=kl7-r1IXP7vAUQNK>)

3.2.3 The Role of Sanggar in Cultural Preservation

The Jemblung Studio has a very important role in the preservation of culture, especially the Islamic art of Jemblung in Kediri City. As an institution founded by Proff. Jim, this studio serves as a platform to teach and develop the art of jemblung to the younger generation. Through various programs and activities organized, this studio not only teaches techniques and skills in the art of jemblung, but also instills the cultural and spiritual values contained in the art. By involving children and adolescents, Sanggar Jemblung seeks to ensure that this cultural heritage is not

only learned, but also practiced and appreciated by future generations.

Sanggar Jemblung also actively participates in various events and performances, where they are often invited to perform jemblung art. The presence of the studio in these events not only provides an opportunity for participants to show their skills, but also helps introduce the art of jemblung to the wider community. One of the interesting aspects of the jemblung performance is the use of a very unique property, namely wayang suket. The grass suket puppet gives a distinctive and traditional touch to the performance, as well as adding visual appeal that captivates the audience. Thus, the Jemblung Studio not only contributes to the preservation of jemblung art, but also strengthens the cultural identity of the people of Kediri City as a whole, as well as making jemblung art a living part of various cultural activities in the area.

4. CONCLUSION

Jemblung is an oral performance art that originates from the Javanese folk tradition, where a puppeteer performs a story without the accompaniment of gamelan, relying only on sound and body movements. Jemblung is also a performance in the form of a socio-drama that is easily accepted by most people, therefore this performance can also be displayed anywhere such as on stage or in the halls of the house. Its characteristic lies in improvisation, elements of humor, and moral messages that are always conveyed in every performance. Like the characteristics offered by the Jemblung Sanggar, Proff Jim has great potential to attract the attention of the public and encourage them to preserve traditional theater culture. The distinctive use of musical instruments not only provides a unique feel, but also enriches the performance experience, creating a closeness to local traditions.

In addition, the way of delivering dynamic and interactive material makes the audience feel engaged and connected to the story being told, so that the message to be conveyed is easier to understand. The verses performed also play an important role, because the lyrics that are meaningful and contain moral messages are not only entertaining, but also educate the audience about the values of life. its relationship to the theory of existence, namely the Islamic Art of Jemblung Kediri is still well maintained even though there are few enthusiasts and only a few communities have preserved it. There are many ways that artists and the jemblung cultural community do to continue to preserve it. In addition to holding art merger events, artists in this *modern* era have certainly published through social media such as *Facebook*, *YouTube*, etc. This makes the wider community and the current young generation know the traditions that still exist in an area.

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Video Jemblung Proff Jim :

1. <https://youtu.be/H-cCzd6vg4c>
2. <https://youtu.be/PIM5zfZgY80?si=Rl1oYB58vmJKN0WQ>
3. <https://youtu.be/60t8EJzH-WM?si=kl7-r1IXP7vAUQNK>