

The Value of Tolerance in Javanese *Karawitan*

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Abstract—There are various ways to instill the value of tolerance. However, the instillation will be more effective when it is done through the method of pleasant playing such as in the performance of Javanese *gamelan*, a traditional instrumental ensemble including many bronze percussion instruments. Therefore, this study examined the tolerance value contained in Javanese *karawitan*, the act of playing *gamelan* music accompanied by *gamelan* instrument and singing. To explore the value of tolerance in Javanese *karawitan*, qualitative research was chosen as the method used in this study. Further, the results showed that Javanese *gamelan* playing requires its *pengrawit*, *gamelan* players to tolerate other *pengrawit* in order to achieve *garap rempeg*, harmony as one of the indicators which shows the achievement of the aesthetic of *laras* the aesthetic standard of Javanese *karawitan*. Thus, the Javanese *gamelan* playing follow-up values are internalized in the value of tolerance to anyone who learns to play it.

Keywords—javanese *gamelan*, tolerance, *rempeg*, *pengrawit*

I. INTRODUCTION

Since the reformation era in 1998, Indonesia declared itself as one of the largest democratic countries in the world. The implication of the declaration obviously requires all citizens to contribute and participate in democracy so that the democratic life runs in line with the values of democracy. In order to make the democratic life of a nation run as it should, citizens should support by having a high value of democratic culture. When this happens, the dream of becoming a democratic state is not a mere figment but will come true. This is in accordance with Zamroni's statement that a democratic community will grow solidly in a society that has democratic culture and values [1].

One of the democratic values according to Zamroni is tolerance [2]. Based on the *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia*, The Great Dictionary of Indonesian Language (KBBI), tolerance means restraining (appreciating, allowing, permitting) principles (opinions, views, beliefs, habits, behaviors, etc.) which are different or in contrast to one's own stand. Based on this definition, tolerance is related to the willingness to accept others indiscriminately. Thus, tolerance attitude is very necessary for social life whose members have diversity in all matters, invariably Indonesia which is well known for having citizens who have various cultures or called as multi-cultural. However, in daily practice, it is still found that some citizens behave intolerant. This behavior is seen such as in a brawl done between students, villages, soccer supporters, coercion of will, suicide bombings in the name of religion, and many other similar phenomena. These attitudes are surely not in line

with the motto of the democratic country which has been chosen.

When the above phenomena continue to develop without control, the disintegration of Indonesia can happen. The disintegration can create the life of the nation and state less harmonious, even the more fatal result is the breakdown of Indonesia civilization, which is known to be in a high level reflected in the existence of many cultures, attitude and behavior in life both individual and social. This is reflected in some expressions in Javanese, *guyup rukun* (live harmoniously), *samat sinamatan* (care about each other), *daya dinayan* (synergize). These expressions are philosophical thoughts which teach people to live in social life with full of tolerance, and surely there are still many other expressions sourced from local wisdom spread throughout Indonesia. Moreover, the cultural products in form of local wisdom which teaches tolerance as the above expression or philosophy and other forms need to be revealed and formulated as media to teach and ground the value of tolerance to the young generation of this beloved nation.

One of the local cultural products which also belongs to Indonesia local wisdom product is Javanese *gamelan*. Javanese *gamelan* is known to have high aesthetical value or *adiluhung*, so it is obvious that many citizens coming from other countries are enchanted by the aesthetic of Javanese *gamelan*. They are interested in learning this traditional instrument so that in this era, *gamelan* can be considered to have been worldwide. Even, the world-class *gamelan* festival has been conducted several times and the participants consisted of *gamelan* groups throughout the world.

In relation to phenomena indicating the decrease of citizens' tolerance attitude, it seems like *gamelan* is able to use as an alternative way to internalize or instill the value of tolerance. Similarly, this idea was also argued by the education figure of Indonesia, Ki Hajar Dewantara in the following:

Bilih pamulangan-pamulangan kangge lare Jawi yektos bade dados papan penggulawenthah ingkang laras kaliyan adat cara kejawen ingkang sae, boten kengeng nilar wulangan kawruh tuwin kaprigelan gending jawi, amrih saged damel larasing gesang Jawi kangge margi alusing lampah kamanungsan [3].

The above sentences are more or less equivalence to that in order to deliver a young generation (Javanese people) who have a high level of gentle character and humanity value, there is a need to teach them knowledge as well as *gamelan* playing skills (Javanese *gending*).

Even though the statement of Ki Hajar Dewantara did not explicitly express the value of tolerance, the presentation of Javanese *gamelan* playing values which contains good character and humanity somehow shows that the value of tolerance contains in it. Therefore, there is a need to find and formulate the tolerance value contained in Javanese *gamelan*. As a result, it is necessary to conduct a field study. Accordingly, the question in this study is, How are The Values of Tolerance Realized in Javanese *Gamelan* Playing?.

Previous studies on *karawitan* tended to focus on the textual investigation. One of which is the study done by Prasetya who studied *karawitan* in terms of *Habitus ngeng* and the sound aesthetic of *Mleset* and *Nggandul* in *Karawitan*. The results of his study show that the aesthetic of *mleset* and *nggandul* prioritizes the hearing and habitus of *gamelan* players [4]. Another previous study on *karawitan* from its contextual state, namely in terms of educational perspective was done by Afriyanto in his study entitled "The Internalization of the Value of Togetherness through the Learning of *Gamelan* Art (Character Education for University Students). This study attempted to provide alternatives for the instillation of character values through media in *Gamelan* learning. It was in the form of a case study and done in STSI Bandung [5]. Since this study was done in Bandung, the focus was on Sundanese *Karawitan*. In line with this, the current study about the value of tolerance on Javanese *karawitan* done by the researchers tries to fill the gap found in *karawitan* studies in terms of educational perspective or contextual study in general and provides a new color on *karawitan* studies, particularly Javanese *karawitan* viewed from the perspective of contextual, especially in education.

Tolerance means an attitude of receiving others, in particular, accepting differences, whether cultural differences, religions, traditions, languages, habits, etc. Based on the definition, tolerance can also be said as the attitude to accept others indiscriminately. Being tolerant means restraining (appreciating, allowing, permitting) principles (opinions, views, beliefs, habits, behaviors, etc.) which are different or in contrast to one's own stand. Further, in a democratic society, one has the right to have his own views, but he will hold firmly in his stand in a tolerant manner to the views of other people or even contrary to his stand. As a value, tolerance can encourage the growth of tolerant attitude towards diversity, mutual trust and willingness to cooperate with parties who have different beliefs, principles, views, and interests. Moreover, Kouchok states that tolerance is not merely done by accepting the differences of others with all their differences, but also involves the inner felling and behavior [6]. Based on UNESCO declaration of the principles of tolerance in Paris in 1995, tolerance is realized in the attitude of respect, acceptance, and appreciation of the cultural diversity in our rich world, the form of expression and the way we become human. It is cultivated by knowledge, openness, communication, and freedom of thought, conscience, and conviction. Tolerance is harmonious in difference. It is not just a moral obligation, but also a requirement for the political and legal world. Tolerance is a virtue that allows for peace which contributes to the change of war culture into a peace culture [7].

In addition, Reardon explains that tolerance is not a final road but a middle way; tolerance is an essential minimum measure of the form of social relations that is able to resist the occurrence of violence. Without tolerance, peace cannot be realized. With tolerance, the strength of relations between humans can be achieved, including covering evolution in creating a peaceful culture of life [8].

The same opinion was expressed by Tillman, arguing that tolerance is mutual respect, through an understanding with the aim of peace. Tolerance is a method for peace. Further, it is stated that tolerance is an essential actor for peace [9]. Then, Sullivan argues that tolerance is a willingness to extend freedom and protection to anyone, including groups that have different ideas and even being hated [10].

Even though tolerance is open and accepts people indiscriminately, tolerance cannot tolerate behavior that is contrary to human values. As stated by Suparlan that tolerance is mutual respect regardless of ethnicity, gender, appearance, culture, beliefs, abilities, or sexual orientation [11]. A tolerant person can respect other people despite their different views and beliefs. However, in the context of tolerance, people cannot tolerate cruelty, bigotry, and racism. Thus, with tolerance, a human can make the world to be a humane and peaceful place.

Based on previously mentioned several opinions about tolerance, it shows that the essence of tolerance is an attitude or character that is willing to open up to accept others as they are. However, accepting other people as they do not mean tolerating actions and attitudes that do not fulfill human values and dignity.

II. METHODOLOGY

The method used in this study was a qualitative research method, namely a method that presents the results of the study in the form of narration. Meanwhile, the research data were obtained through three techniques, namely observation, interviews, and documentation. Furthermore, data analysis referred to interactive model data analysis with the steps of data reduction, data presentation and conclusions as well as data verification.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on reality found in the field, the composer or the songwriter of *karawitan* never explained how the song was written in relation to its rhythm, *laya* aspects, *ricikan* (instruments) playing, number of its *rambahan* (repeat) etc. In addition, *karawitan* tradition only requires its composer to give *gending* notation called as *balungan* or *gending* frameworks. The notation used is written or listed in *gending* notation book. Since the notation does not detail how the *gending* should be performed, there is a need for creativity by the *pengrawit* to make arrangement or organization in order to make the *gending balungan* sounds good and enjoyable.

The process of *gending balungan* to become *gending* requires the creative work of the *pengrawit* who express themselves through the *ricikan-ricikan* (instruments) of the *gamelan* they play. It is done as an effort to realize *balungan* or *gending* frameworks to be *gending* which is ready to enjoy in terms of the beauty of the song. This effort is done

because *gending balungan* is only noted in the form of notation from *balungan gending* and cannot show the character or impression of *gending* music without the medium of *pengrawit*. The follow up done by *pengrawit* in arranging *gending balungan* to produce *gending* performance is called as *garap* [12]. In doing *garap*, *pengrawit* interpret *gending balungan* which then is realized in *gamelanricikan-ricikan* playing.

The presentation of *karawitan* is not done individual but is collectively in nature or all *pengrawit* involved in the presentation of *gending* also create expressions. Therefore, it can be said that *karawitan* is a collective work. That is all *pengrawit* play their own instrument independently but in the same frame. The independence of the *pengrawit* means that every *pengrawit* is given the freedom to express himself through the interpretation of *gending balungan* which will be manifested into the playing of *gamelan ricikan*. Playing in the same frame or framework means that the playing done by *pengrawit* should refer to the chosen composition of music. Therefore, *karawitan* can be said as a temporal performance because the *pengrawit* cannot present the same work on different occasions. This is because they play improvised or naturally and are very situational. They do work without being poured into the scores but are immediately manifested into the playing of *gamelan*, so there is no time to revise the *garap*. As a result, in this case, the *pengrawit* accuracy is really demanded because there is no chance to revise the *garap*, and *garap* will keep flowing along with the *gending* performance. In addition, the *pengrawit* need to put forward the attitude of togetherness and tolerance in playing. Considering that the *gamelan ricikan* has a different sound color such as the one which sounds loud, shrilling, and soft so that if each *pengrawit* is not *ngemong* or tolerant in playing the *ricikan*, the sound they produce may not be harmonious. Likewise, when the *pengrawit* do not have a sense of togetherness, the *gamelanricikan-ricikan* will run on their own without heeding shared interests but prioritizing personal interests.

The orientation of the *pengrawit* and the vocalists in working on *gending* shares the same vision and mission that is the performance of *gending* which is able to manifest the category of "*laras*". According to Widodo, *laras* is a type of taste, atmosphere or musical and cultural impression of *karawitan* which are beautiful, enjoyable, comfortably deep, thorough and impressive containing elements of *mat*, *lega*, *betah*, *adhem*, *ayem*, *tentrem*, *jinem*, *sengsem* and *marem*. The results of *gending garap* that lead to the *laras* category are built by *gending garap* which are *leres*, *rempeg*, *greget urip* and *sareh sumeleh* [13].

Based on the models of the *garap* which determine *laras*, we can learn that in arranging *gending*, the *pengrawit* of Javanese *karawitan* are not only demanded musical maturity, but also to present *garap* on certain criteria, and that can only be fulfilled if the *pengrawit* are also mature in self-mastery in term of psychological condition. It can also be said that the process of *garap* demands someone to have two competencies, namely musical competence, and non-musical competence. Musical competence concerns the understanding and mastery of everything related to musical work (as described in the concept of *garap*). This competence is more personal or individual. It depends entirely on individual business. Meanwhile, non-musical

competence involves more psychological actions as a support for mastering musical competencies so that the results of *garap* in the form of *gamelan ricikan* playing can be performed according to the required criteria. For more, this competence tends to be more social (the ability to interact with outside). Also, this competency of maturity is obtained due to the intensity of interaction with other *pengrawit* when doing *garap* (performing *gending*).

Based on the phenomenon of *garap* on in Javanese *karawitan* and discussed above, one of the values contained in non-musical competencies that must be understood and then represented as an attitude is the value of tolerance. This is based on one of the *garap* models that can trigger or contribute to the aesthetic of the *laras*, namely the model of *garap rempeg*. The point is that the musical elements of *gending* are worked out dynamically, even, balanced, compact, and united in one unit, while the ideas of *garap* are led by *ricikan pamuba*. Further, in the model of *garap rempeg*, there are criteria of even and balance. One of the elements of fair and balance criteria is emphasized on the volume of *gamelan ricikan* being played. It requires the *pengrawit* to make even and balance the volume of *gamelan ricikan* so that there is no instrument sounds dominating and all instruments have the same portion in *gamelan ricikan* playing. To achieve such condition, the *pengrawit* really needs to implement the attitude of *samat-sinamatan* or tolerance attitude in organizing the volume of *gamelan ricikan* they play. Not to mention, they need to do self-control with the aim of blending the sound of *gamelanricikan* they play into other *ricikan* in order to fulfill the even and balance criteria.

The necessity of tolerant attitudes is a fundamental aspect that is central to the performance of Javanese *gamelan*, given that Javanese *gamelanricikan* has a variety of sound colors, some are hard and some are soft. This occurs due to different physical forms, different manufacturing materials, as well as techniques or ways to produce sound. Then, it can be said that Javanese *gamelanricikan* reflects the diversity of both the physical form and the color of the sound. Therefore, it is not surprising that in playing Javanese *gamelan*, there is a need for an attitude of listening to others, caring for others, and controlling oneself, so that the Javanese *gamelan ricikan* can be manifested harmoniously in the category of *rempeg*.

According to this case, the *gamelan* playing teaches us about some values. One of which is the value of tolerance. By referring to the concept of tolerance being cited, tolerance is harmony in difference [14]. This concept seems to be in line with the facts about the Javanese *gamelan* playing, namely harmonization or *kerempegan* by which in Javanese *gamelan* playing, it is the manifestation harmonization in diversity. From the diversity of sound colors of the *gamelanricikan-ricikan*, the *pengrawit* make arrangement with high tolerance attitude so as to produce *arempag* and harmonious mixture of sound.

Based on the above discussion, it can be said that the *pengrawit* who are qualified in processing Javanese *karawitan* actually have embedded the value of tolerance as a follow-up value of *karawitan* processing. It could also be said that anyone who learns to play Javanese *gamelan* actually learns to tolerate. Alternatively, playing *gamelan* is certainly a fun activity, therefore internalizing the value of

tolerance through the playing of Javanese *gamelan* is one of the methods to instill tolerance value in a pleasant way.

IV. CONCLUSION

Gamelan playing is a collective performance not individual. The unity of vision and mission is a necessity that must be carried out in the *gamelan* playing in order to produce *gending* that can be enjoyed by the beauty of the song. Collective playing demands solitary cooperation so that their work is truly in line with applicable standards, so does Javanese *gamelan* playing. One attitude that must be possessed in *gamelan* playing is tolerance in playing *gamelan ricikan*. Without being sustained by a tolerant attitude, the performance of *gamelan* will not produce harmonious sound or be categorized in even and balanced categories in order to meet the standards of *garap rempeg*, as one of the elements towards the aesthetic of *laras*.

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