

## Social Construction Analysis of Semeleh Concepts in Art Life at Padepokan Tjipta Boedaja in Dukun District

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**Abstract:** In Javanese Culture, *Semeleh* is often considered as 'give in' or accepting fate as it is. Semeleh is applicable in every aspect of life such as education, spirituality, and even any kind of art. This research aims to discuss the meaning of Semeleh, art, and life in Padepokan Tjipta Boedaja which is located in Tutup Ngisor, Dukun. This research use participation observation or close data collection through living with a resident near Padepokan Tjipta Boedaja. The technique this research conduct are interview, observation, and participation in art life. The theory this research will use is Social Construction which can help understand how Semeleh is interpreted by Padepokan Tjipta Boedaja's members. The usage of this theory starts with Padepokan Tjipta Boedaja's history, art activities (playing Javanese traditional instruments and traditional dance), and an explanation of how the members of Padepokan Tjipta Boedaja interpret Semeleh. The result can be seen in three different points; 1) Union between harmony and feel, 2) Togetherness in padepokan, and 3) effort in art life. Seeing the results above, it can be conducted that in Padepokan Tjipta Boedaja, art, living, and Semeleh is a united that fill each other.

**Keywords:** art; life; semeleh.

### RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Based on Koentjoraningrat, culture is a system, feeling, action, and a result that was made by humans in society that belong to themselves from learning (Nurmansyah, Rodliyah, & Hapsari, 2019, p. 73). So to make it simple, culture is a norm that one's society develops from learning from others. In this case, living along with art also becomes a culture in padepokan Tjipta Boedaja. As a place where people can learn about traditional dancing and playing gamelan, the members of padepokan are accustomed to living with art as their need of life.

This was shown through the way they do art. One example worth noting is in Padepokan Tjipta Boedaja, they often held wayang wong, wayang bocah, and many other art performances. However, what makes their life as an artist interesting is that they do every art with many philosophies. But one of them that attracts the writer is called Semeleh.

Semeleh is a state of someone who accepts life as it is while believing that God has full control over it (Sulastuti, 2016, para 18). This statement is also acknowledged by Bambang as the elder from Padepokan Tjipta Boedaja. He said that Semeleh is a state of accepting everything

that happened in life, no matter how good or how bad is it (Bambang, 2022). However, it is also important to know that even though the base of Semeleh is a state of acceptance, there is another different kind of Semeleh in art. For example, one journal that talks about Keroncong Solo show that Semeleh can be shown in the player motion where they close their eyes (*merem*) as if they are sleeping, but the truth is they are enjoying the music (Andini, Sukmayadi, & Supiarza, 2021, p. 28).

Knowing that the meaning of Semeleh is broad, just like what Setyoko, one of Padepokan Tjipta Boedaja artist's exclamations, "Semeleh has so many meanings, and it will be different from one context to another context" (Setyoko, 2022), it make the writer want to uncover what is Semeleh in Padepokan Tjipta Boedaja, and how Semeleh affect their life in art through this journal.

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

### Social Construction Definition

Based on Berger and Luckmann, Social Construction is a Sociology theory that aims to know-how knowledge in society developed and becomes part of everyday life (The Social Construction of Reality, 1966, p. 34). Both Berger and Luckmann in their book, have the same concern where they want to know how social interaction and language can develop knowledge in society (pp. 43-61). The way how Social Construction was done, based on one journal made by Manuaba are through three different steps, which are Objectivity (the connection between human and how it later become a habit), Externalization (human's activity in spite to develop the knowledge), and Internalization (value or knowledge interpretation) (2008, pp. 224-229)

### Semeleh Definition

Semeleh in Javanese culture has a different understanding, but one understanding that comes from Sulastuti tells that Semeleh is a state of accepting fate and believing in God (2016, para. 18). To understand why Semeleh can be considered as a state of accepting fate is because, in Javanese culture, there is a sense as a concept that has two different meanings; feeling and meaning that have flexible nature, and Semeleh is acting as the sense of human life's essence (Sulastuti, 2016).

Since Semeleh is applicable in any part of life, they have a different meaning from one to another. In Keroncong Solo, Semeleh is known as a state of calmness and peace (Andini, Sukmayadi, & Supiarza, 2021, p. 28). This was shown in how the player of Keroncong closed their eyes (*merem*) as if they were sleeping, but actually, they were enjoying the beat. While on the other hand, Semeleh also appear as a pearl of local wisdom that gives a value that people should avoid bad habit and start to develop their conscience to find true happiness in one traditional game song, *Cublak-Cublak Suweng* (Kurniasari & Rahardi, 2019, p. 139)

## RESEARCH METHOD

Social Construction Berger and Luckmann is a theory that tries to understand how knowledge was made and implemented in society (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 34). Based on Berger and Luckmann, there are three steps to developing knowledge or value in society, starting from Objectivity (finding the connection between human or culture and human activities in that

connection), Externalization (the development of value or other knowledge), and Internalization (understanding meaning) (Manuaba, 2008).

Using data from observation participation, interview, living in Padepokan Tjipta Boedaja, and some library research, this paper will show certain people starting from the members of Padepokan Tjipta Boedaja, as well as some members to get more insight about what is Semeleh and how they apply it to their life of art. Besides using the data, this paper also will be using the theory of Social Construction which aims to understand how knowledge exists in society, together with the process of making the knowledge (Manuaba, 2008).

This concept can help to examine the meaning of Semeleh and how Semeleh affects the life of Padepokan Tjipta Boedaja's members in art. Starting with showing Padepokan's history to show Objectivity in Padepokan. Next is showing the type of art Padepokan do to interpret Externalization, and last is to explain how Semeleh is applied by the members to show Internalization.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### **Objectivity: Padepokan Tjipta Boedaja's History**

Located in Dukun district, Magelang, Padepokan Tjipta Boedaja is an art center that was made by Romo Yoso back in 1937 (Anjilin, 2022). Based on Sitras Anjilin, the seventh son of Romo Yoso, the reason why padepokan exists is to provide a place where the villager can learn marcapat (Javanese song), martial art, karawitan (Javanese traditional instrument), and traditional dance since the district used to be a poor village. As the padepokan grew bigger and bigger, the padepokan become existed and had many impacts on the life of other villagers, starting from how they do art and how they see the world through life advice from Romo Yoso's influence. However, because Merapi Mount eruption back in 2010 that leave a huge impact on Padepokan Tjipta Boedaja, the art center had to shut down and be abandoned. But because of the hard work of Bambang and Sitras Anjilin where they often go out to find out the way to rebuild Padepokan Tjipta Boedaja that make Padepokan grew even bigger than before (Anjilin, 2022). Because of the padepokan's growth, now they gave many people both inside and outside Indonesia the opportunity to learn the art and culture of Javanese, as well as life advice that affect many members of padepokan and society around Padepokan Tjipta Boedaja.

### **Externalization: Art Life in Padepokan Tjipta Boedaja**

Since the village is already developing, now Padepokan Tjipta Boedaja become a place that provides a place to learn karawitan and traditional dance. Besides playing Javanese traditional instruments and traditional dance, this padepokan also offers stage performances such as Wayang Orang and Wayang Bocah that have a connection with traditional dancing.

As their daily necessity, every member of Padepokan Tjipta Boedaja used to always be ready when it comes to doing art, no matter what the purposes are. Their readiness in doing art is not baseless, but because of one philosophy that supports their action and belief. It is Semeleh or a state of accepting fate in one's life while believing that God controlled it (Sulastuti, 2016). However, with that understanding, Padepokan Tjipta Boedaja has their way of doing the concept of Semeleh in their daily life as artists such as union between harmony and feel, togetherness, and effort of living. And based on Setyoko, it was because of Bambang and Sitras Anjilin's influence as the sons of Romo Yoso and head of Padepokan Tjipta Boedaja (2022).

### **Internalization: Semeleh, Art, and Life**

In Paedpokan Tjipta Boedaja, Semeleh has its meaning when it comes to art. As a philosophy, Semeleh is a concept that can be implemented in many ways (Setyoko, 2022) which makes the meaning of Semeleh from one context to another context has a different meaning. However, in Paedpokan Tjipta Boedaja itself, there are three meanings of Semeleh that can be found throughout living as an artist.

Starting from the union between harmony and feel. This concept of Semeleh, as stated by Widyo should start with oneself first before getting into others (2022). It means that Semeleh is a balance between personal being and other people. It is important to point out that many of the members are farmers, which means that they live two different lives. Widyo state that as quoted; “In the house, I have my own role, while when I am in padepokan, I have to be able to align with other people.” (2022) This statement lead to a conclusion where Semeleh in padepokan means that a person should be flexible with every condition that happened in life.

One event that supports this statement happened in one observation the researchers have done, it is a must for every member of Padepokan Tjipta Boedaja to meet and have a conversation with the guests no matter where they are from. The conversation becomes part of their habit because from there both the members and the guests can learn many things. This is the reason why members of padepokan love to have a chat. It helps them to be flexible both at work and as an artist.

Next, in one conversation that happened between the researchers and Setyoko, he said that togetherness in padepokan can be considered Semeleh. Togetherness here means cooperation which is considered Semeleh because of the genuineness of members (Setyoko, 2022). This statement gets approval from Sitras Anjilin who state that without genuineness from every individual, there will be no cooperation, which can lead to the failure of Semeleh (2022). What the meaning here is that Semeleh is not about just doing art, but as a personal being, people have to be genuine with whatever they do.

The way padepokan do togetherness can be shown through the collaboration that happened between male and female members. When the male members accompany the researchers in a conversation or when learning how to play Javanese Gamelan, female members are responsible for providing snacks and drinks for leisure time. Their collaboration shows not only a good task division but also the fact that without one or another role and understanding everyone plays an important part in padepokan.

The effort of living can be seen as the third point of Semeleh. Bambang stated something similar to the journal from Sulastuti, as quoted; “I just give everything to God, and we should only do our best living our life. That is Semeleh.” (2022) This is also what Sunan Toro said to the researchers, that every member of padepokan should enjoy the process whatever the result is. Seeing from both statement from Bambang and Sunan Toro said that Semeleh has a meaning that as a person living on earth today, we should give our best in everything, and accept the result the universe give us (2022).

This statement was shown through a real-life example when members of Padepokan Tjipta Boedaja got a chance to perform at Mantran last month. They almost get to perform but got delayed, even canceled because of another circumstance. The members who already wore makeup and costumes have to clean the makeup and go back home with nothing. However for

them, instead of disappointment, they instead feel sorry for the audience (Anjilin, 2022). Setyoko also stated; “We were going to drink coffee that time. And if we were protesting then, there will be another problem, so we decided not to.” This showed that they accept the circumstance as it is without worrying or complaining about their performance getting canceled.

## CONCLUSION

Padepokan Tjipta Boedaja is an art center that provides a place for people to learn to play Javanese traditional instruments and traditional dance. Besides that, they also often perform different performances like Wayang Bocah. The members keep doing the art as part of their life. The way they did art in Padepokan Tjipta Boedaja is through one value called Semeleh. Semeleh is often interpreted as ‘give in’, but in Padepokan Tjipta Boedaja, Semeleh has 3 different meanings as follows: 1) The union between harmony and feeling (can be seen from a conversation no matter where the guest or member from padepokan coming from), 2) Togetherness (a collaboration between female and male members in padepokan), and 3) The effort of living (Event in Mantran that got canceled, leaving the members worried for the audience)

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