

DULMULUK TRADITIONAL PERFORMANCE ART: REVITALIZATION AND STUDENTS' APPRECIATION

by Nurhayati Nurhayati

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SENI PERTUNJUKAN TRADISIONAL *DULMULUK*: REVITALISASI DAN APRESIASI MAHASISWA

Nurhayati, Subadiyono, dan Didi Suhendi
FKIP Universitas Sriwijaya
email: nurhayatibizzy@yahoo.com

1 Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan mendeskripsikan upaya revitalisasi seni pertunjukan *Dulmuluk* berdasarkan pendapat mahasiswa FKIP Universitas Sriwijaya dan meningkatkan apresiasi mereka terhadap seni pertunjukan *Dulmuluk*. Penelitian ini menggabungkan metode kualitatif dan kuantitatif. Pengumpulan data menggunakan observasi dan kuesioner. Tanggapan terhadap pengalaman menonton pertunjukan *Dulmuluk* dilaporkan dalam penelitian ini. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa peningkatan apresiasi mahasiswa mencakup tiga aspek, yakni: sikap, pengetahuan, dan psikomotor. Pada aspek sikap dan pengetahuan apresiasi mahasiswa terhadap seni pertunjukan *Dulmuluk* semakin meningkat. Dilihat dari aspek psikomotorik, mahasiswa mampu mementaskan seni pertunjukan *Dulmuluk* secara sukses dengan 1050 penonton. Hal itu menunjukkan adanya peningkatan apresiasi mahasiswa terhadap seni pertunjukan *Dulmuluk*.

Kata kunci: seni pertunjukkan, revitalisasi, teater tradisional, apresiasi

DULMULUK TRADITIONAL PERFORMANCE ART: REVITALIZATION AND STUDENTS' APPRECIATION

Abstract

This study aims to describe efforts to revitalize the *Dulmuluk* performance art based on the opinions of the students of the Faculty of Teacher Training and Educational Sciences, Sriwijaya University and to improve their appreciation of the *Dulmuluk* performance art. The study combined qualitative and quantitative approaches. The data were collected through observations and a questionnaire. The responses to the experience of watching the *Dulmuluk* performance were reported in the study. The results of the study showed that the improvement of the students' appreciation covered three aspects, i.e.: affective, cognitive, and psychomotor. In the affective and cognitive aspects their appreciation of the *Dulmuluk* performance art improved. In the psychomotor aspect, they were able to successfully stage the *Dulmuluk* performance art with an audience of 1050 people. This showed that there was an improvement of their appreciation of the *Dulmuluk* performance art.

Keywords: performance art, revitalization, traditional theater, appreciation

INTRODUCTION

Palembang is the capital of South Sumatra Province. This city used to enjoy *Dulmuluk*, a traditional theater performed to entertain viewers of all ages in 1950s to 1980s. However, this traditional art

performance is increasingly forgotten. Lelawati (2009:1-20) points to lack of promotion, governance, and regeneration. There used to be 28 *Dulmuluk* groups in the past twenty years and now five of them survive.

¹ *Dulmuluk* carries a cultural function. It is necessary to revive the existence of *Dulmuluk* and introduce such art performance to young generation. Efforts to retain and revitalize it need to be done. Such efforts cannot be separated from the younger generation. *Dulmuluk* today is virtually unknown by the younger generation.

It is shown from the data survey conducted in 2012 by Nurhayati, Subadiyono, and Suhendi, 2014:6) that of the 115 students were given a questionnaire, 23 people (15%) of them ever watched *Dulmuluk*. This means that a few of the students, the younger generation, do not know *Dulmuluk*.

Igama (2009) suggests that revitalization efforts to keep *Dulmuluk* alive, must be carried out. The strategic concept is to revitalize *Dulmuluk* and pass it to younger generation. This is called a revitalization strategy. This concept is in line with the results of what the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) has done (Nurhayati, 2014). FGD is known to be a way necessary for *Dulmuluk* revitalization. Fifty students of Teachers College, Sriwijaya University were introduced to *Dulmuluk*. Later on they will become high school teachers, they are expected to introduce the traditional theater to junior and high school students.

In conjunction with the revitalization efforts, fifty two students of Teachers College, Sriwijaya University were offered the *Dulmuluk* course. The purpose was to train them to be able to write a variety of stories to be adapted by *Dulmuluk* groups. They presented their stories the general public and staged the plays they had written. Plays of Abdul Muluk written by Raja Haji Aliare referred. Selection of the *Dulmuluk* stories, usually written in the form of poems were staged in front of the public.

Rusyana (1982:7) defines appreciation as introduction of higher values. Natawijaya

(1982:1) states that appreciation is the appreciation and understanding of the arts or cultural works. Similar feelings were expressed by Hartoko (1990:25) who says that appreciation is an act of giving value rewards. Furthermore, the appreciation of not only the range of rewards, but also a deep understanding even an increase in a more positive attitude to literary works. Oemarjati (1991:57) explains that appreciation is related sensitive responses something sensitive or understanding something. Complementing this opinion, Effendi (2002) states that appreciation is a friendly activity to understand literature seriously. In the process of recognition, intimacy, understanding, appreciation, and enjoyment occur and after that their application. As defined by Moody's (1989:59) appreciation can: (1) help develop language skills, (2) increase cultural knowledge, (3) develop creativity and taste, and (4) support the formation of character.

Based on the above opinions, it can be concluded that the appreciation includes three main parts, namely the improvement of attitudes, knowledge, and psychomotor. The fifty two students taking the *Dulmuluk* course are teacher candidates. They are a younger generation who may become a major pillar in revitalizing *Dulmuluk*. *Dulmuluk* as an endangered performing art should be known by the student teachers and appreciated in the three domains namely attitudes, knowledge, and psychomotor skills. In the aspect of attitudes, these students are expected to have a positive attitude towards the existence of *Dulmuluk*. A positive attitude is shown, for example by way of enthusiastic play writing and *Dulmuluk* performance. In the aspect of knowledge, students get to know *Dulmuluk* through introduction to the poems written by Abdul Muluk Raja Ali Haji. The introduction to Abdul Muluk poetry as the foundation to write a play and perform the show is crucial. In addition,

the strengthening of the knowledge base of the students to *Dulmuluk*, can be done through the written form of *Dulmuluk* and watching *Dulmuluk* performed by the groups. It must be certainly done in earnest way. Seriousness in these activities is geared towards a gradual introduction to the level of understanding up and to the application level. In the psychomotor aspect, the students are expected to have the ability to perform *Dulmuluk* in public. A *Dulmuluk* performance also pays attention to the suggestions put forward by FGD in the revitalization of the play. FGD suggests to focus on the following elements of (1) the length of time the show needs to be shortened for just one hour, (2) the existence of a play primarily for conservation purposes, (3) the presence of a director who can provide interpretation and colors of the role and performance, (4) the existence of cosmetology for supporting roles, (5) the presence of the selection of players based on roles, (6) the election fashion in accordance with the role/character figures, (7) the existence of setting the stage, (8) the presence of lighting arrangements that support the story, (9) there is a sound system use including the music that supports the story, and (10) the presence of an audience (Nurhayati, 2014:11). These elements are the parameters of revitalization.

METHOD

This study combined qualitative and quantitative research methods (Creswell, 2009). The qualitative aspect was done by using a case study through observations. The observations were carried out to see the reactions of the students when they were watching *Dulmuluk* contained in the Compact Disc (CD). An open questionnaire to obtain data relating to revitalization was administered in order to find out their reactions on *Dulmuluk* retention. Quantitative aspects were implemented using a questionnaire, too. It

was conducted to determine the students' opinions related to the intrinsic elements of the staging of *Dulmuluk* that they watched. These elements include plot, characters, setting, vocals, costumes, and make-up. Another questionnaire was administered to collect data related to whether the *Dulmuluk* exercises contribute to improve the students' ability of appreciation especially in the aspect of knowledge. In addition, the open questionnaire was given to the respondents (*Dulmuluk* audience) to know about their opinions on the *Dulmuluk* show staged by the students. The data in the form of an open questionnaire results and the observations are described. They are presented in the form of percentages.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Here are the results of research related to the revitalization and appreciation which include those on the attitudes, knowledge, and psychomotor of the students taking the course.

Dulmuluk Revitalization Efforts

Dulmuluk revitalization concept regards that *Dulmuluk* as something disappearing or still "dead" but it is tried to relive. If you view the definition of the revitalization, it means an activity to be relived or reactivating something back. There is an understanding that *Dulmuluk* should be performed more frequently and brought back from extinction (Nurhayati, Subadiyono, Suhendi, 2013b:51-52). Thus, this revitalization needs to be done in order to make *Dulmuluk* stay alive among the Palembang community, especially among the younger generation. The questionnaire data show that all the students think of the importance of revitalization; there is a need for *Dulmuluk* retention as an art form. The revitalization efforts are as follows.

Exhibition of routine *Dulmuluk* performances. For example, every two

months, *Dulmuluk* theater is displayed in the media that can be watched by public on television. In addition, it can also be broadcast on the radio. In addition to the media, it can be staged at various events, for example on the independence day of the Republic of Indonesia and in various cultural arts festivals. Thus, this way, *Dulmuluk* can still survive in society.

Teaching of how to stage *Dulmuluk* at school/university. *Dulmuluk* can be taught to all students, especially students of a teachers college. It is intended that the student teachers who later become a teacher can teach *Dulmuluk* or at least introduce it to his or her students. In addition, scripts of *Dulmuluk* can be based on the materials of local content. Further more, for teachers who have served in the field can understand and teach *Dulmuluk* in the performing arts class. The teachers incorporate *Dulmuluk* performing arts in school subjects, such as subjects through Indonesian and local content.

Documentation of *Dulmuluk* performances. Documentation is related to the staging of *Dulmuluk* custody and retention efforts. The documents are the most valuable historical evidence. In addition, there should be research on *Dulmuluk* which aims at improving and understanding of the audience reactions. Action research helps improve it.

Promotion of *Dulmuluk* as an art. *Dulmuluk* art is more meaningful when promoted to audiences living outside the Palembang City, either outside the region or abroad. The traditional theater of this city carries cultural values that outsiders can learn from. This is clearly related to regeneration. The most essential factor is the young generation who can play an important role in the promotion of *Dulmuluk*. *Dulmuluk* can survive in a more conducive environment and its potential continuing existence guarantee cultural sustainability.

Seeking the status of *Dulmuluk* in Government Policy/Related Agencies. *Dulmuluk* revitalization needs to be implemented with the strategic plans and policies with clear and realistic goals, and they can actually be achieved. In order to keep the preservation of local culture, it can be promoted nationwide, to be supported especially by agencies that handle cultural issues in the area. In addition, the culture as a tourism asset should be developed creatively to maintain virtuous values of the regional area.

Appreciation in the Aspect of Attitude

The data was collected from the same 52 students who took *Dulmuluk* course. The observation was carried out to find out the reasons and attitude of students for watching and staging *Dulmuluk* group. The students watched the activities carried out in the airing of *Dulmuluk* in CD.

Based on observations, when watching the CD show, the students looked bored. It was shown by their body language as seen in their agitated feeling, unfocused attention, sour faces when there were no funny scenes. Additionally, the students' responses indicated negative appreciation towards those impressions with disappointed tones. Negative responses were heard, for example: huh, a cheap opera. Only a few students seemed enthusiastic and entertained. After watching *Dulmuluk* from the CD, the students completed questionnaires related to their attitudes towards the content/substance *Dulmuluk*. In general, 85 % of the students stated that the content of the story is hardly interesting, not creative, and monotonous. In the characterizations, the characters showed no originality. This is shown by facial expressions, voice, and enthusiasm. In the arrangement of the stage, the stage was bare, not showing the setting of a palace. The vocals of the performers were almost entirely unclear. The costumes did not fit each

character. The dancer costumes, the core of a performance, were too simple. The make-up did not support the characters. Female characters were played by men. Even though the make-up was done professionally, characterizations were not strong enough. They still looked the men. From the questionnaire related to the students' attitudes towards *Dulmuluk*, fifty students stated that *Dulmuluk* art should be preserved. *Dulmuluk* should be taught from generation to generation so it does not become extinct with age. In addition, they (the prospective teachers) are also ready to go into the community, especially in education, to develop and preserve this traditional theater. However, the retention should be in line with the dynamics of the students. Retention should pay attention to the principles of a good management that includes aspects of artistic performances and non-artistic aspects such as organizational management.

The questionnaire also indicated that of 52 students who were asked, 35 people (67%) of them stated that they have a positive attitude towards the process of staging *Dulmuluk* play if they were to give an opportunity to perform it. They would practice *Dulmuluk* if they were given the chance to do so. Furthermore, all the students (100% of 52 people) showed a positive attitude by stating that when they learned the staging of *Dulmuluk*, they enjoyed doing it. This experience indirectly fostered a love and concern for the traditional arts. The questionnaire data showed a positive attitude of the students in terms of responsibility and cooperation. The students felt happy for the assignment to undertake because they wanted to achieve successful staging. In staging practice, they were responsible for their role and respected other roles. They divided the work task as fairly as possible based on the potential of each. They realized that the staging of *Dulmuluk*

needed great sense of responsibility and greater cooperation. To perform *Dulmuluk*, they need to work together and their work had to be shared. In other words, it required a shared responsibility. Good interpersonal relationships among the players were highly required. Otherwise they might fail their fellow performers. Each had the same mission that staging needed to be conducted successfully. All had to work optimally to do their task in hand. They also realized that the discipline aspect played an important role. For example, the players who opted for specific leaders should adhere to regular exercise schedules. In addition, the discipline in collaboration with other fellows guaranteed a key to their success.

Appreciation in Aspects of Knowledge

Aspects of knowledge are related to the students' understanding of *Dulmuluk*. The questionnaires contained 10 statements. The data showed the following: 12 people (23%) chose the answer yes to the question relating to whether they understood the concept of dramaturgy, especially in *Dulmuluk* staging, training methods, understanding of management, and the artistic mastery of the task and production. Meanwhile, a number of 40 students (77%) chose not to answer the same question. This means that the students did not know the concepts related to dramaturgy. The main reason was they do not have time to learn about the dramaturgy especially with regard to staging of *Dulmuluk*. They had never performed *Dulmuluk*. Therefore, they did not know. Although they wanted to revive *Dulmuluk*, they did not have knowledge about it. At the beginning of the data related to the time suitability of the show, the students argued that the show was not appropriate because the story content depicted characteristics of the empire with clothing and groove. Conformity refers

to the similarity of clothing, especially in terms of materials, the type/fabric used by the public now. Even so, some students criticized the clothes and makeup.

Preliminary data also indicated that the students casting *Dulmuluk* wore simple and poor clothing and marginalized condition of the players. Related to general aspects of the highlights of the students as a 'spectator' it was mentioned about the content. In general, the students expected the story content improvised and adapted to today's current issues or issues that are being hotly discussed by the community. Increased appreciation was shown by the students toward the end of the questionnaires. It was about the field tests in which the students had to perform their roles in a *Dulmuluk* show held on October 9, 2012. The final field tests raised aspects of the attitudes and knowledge of students in staging *Dulmuluk*. Another questionnaire was administered after the students began the training process and ended in the staging of *Dulmuluk*. Based on the final results obtained from a questionnaire about *Dulmuluk* knowledge sharing aspects and aspects of attitudes towards staging *Dulmuluk*. Two aspects were outlined below. The questionnaires related to aspects of cognitive (knowledge) obtained the following data. Of the 52 students, 47 of them (90%) understood and knew the dramaturgy, the others (10%) had not. This is evidenced by their answers stating that they began to understand the theories of dramaturgy. This insight is obtained by studying the theories of staging drama and literature. The questionnaires on understanding dramaturgy was directed to *Dulmuluk* staging, training methods, understanding of management, as well as mastery of artistic and production tasks of *Dulmuluk*. Increased appreciation is also evidenced by the ability of the students to create a *Dulmuluk* play. The script was derived from *Dulmuluk* poems

grouped into 18 rounds. Departing from this collection of poetry, the students developed their knowledge, especially in relation to dramaturgy, writing creative and interesting texts. Thus, it can be concluded that the level of appreciation of the students on aspects of knowledge increased.

Appreciation in the Psychomotor Aspects

The initial part of the questionnaires were to ask about relevant questions: whether or not they ever watched *Dulmuluk* performance. Of the 52 students, 45 (87%) of them had witnessed *Dulmuluk* and 7 (13%) of students had not. All of the students who had witnessed many *Dulmuluk* performances had known that they watched them on certain occasions such as on Independence Day or wedding, or circumcision parties. From these preliminary data, the responses submitted by the student gave a negative reaction. They were the most responses given by the students. They provided a variety of reasons in each subsection. The responses indicated that many students were not able to play *Dulmuluk*. In fact, some of them were not familiar with *Dulmuluk*. Having carried out this research, it is known that an increase in student appreciation is shown by the questionnaire administered after the students were involved in training and staging of *Dulmuluk* I. The results of the model development was applied to the performing arts *Dulmuluk* 2 by two student groups of two universities namely Sriwijaya University and Tridinanti University. In other words, the questionnaires were administered after the student groups began the training process and staging of *Dulmuluk*. Based on the results of the application of questionnaire 2, the results obtained with psychomotor aspects of the staging of *Dulmuluk*. They showed an increase in appreciation as described below. In general, the students are able to perform

Dulmuluk, both from the stage to other aspects such as a character, artistic team, or managerial functions. In the training and staging, they agreed to adhere to some principles during the staging process of *Dulmuluk*, such as division of labor, authority, responsibility, and discipline, unity of command, as well as fairness, and honesty. They were deeply involved by providing ideas, planning, and staging of *Dulmuluk*. They practiced intensively, for example, in vocal exercises. The training techniques included acting up and out, giving the contents and pressure techniques, engineering development, fostering technical skills, timing, tempo, and game rhythms. The students were also able to apply makeup, hairdressing costume, lighting, sound, stage design *Dulmuluk* during the staging process. The results of the psychomotor aspects were that the students could perform *Dulmuluk*.

Another effort of revitalization was made on 9 November 2013 at the Sriwijaya University Hall. The show was attended by approximately 1,050 spectators. The audience mostly consisted of students of elementary, junior high, senior high schools and colleges in Palembang. In addition, the show was watched also by academics, artists, teachers, and the general public. After the show, 60 spectators chosen as the respondents were asked to complete a questionnaire. They were comprised of 10 academics, 10 artists, 10 students, 10 teachers, and 10 general audience who had watched *Dulmuluk* on that day, a development of the application of the model I. Here is the description of the results of the questionnaire.

The data show that 83% of the respondents (50 people) who watched the show thought that for one hour is a suitable time. This means that the show is not too long and not too short. When compared to traditional *Dulmuluk* appearance that lasts all night long. *Dulmuluk* is designed

to last 1 hour. The one-hour performances covered the entire Abdul Muluk poems and summarized in 18 sections. In addition, 80% of the respondents (48 people) stated that the script was indeed necessary in the management of *Dulmuluk* performances. The script was required to maintain the continuity and sequencing of the stories from time to time. If the script is performed in a different time and appear outside the text interpretation that is part of the process of creativity. As long as the changes are still in the corridor of a "standard" text, such improvisation is still allowed. For example, on the sidelines of the story set in the kingdom tucked issue of "contemporary" by entering the cell phone issues. According to the respondent, who staged *Dulmuluk*, the theme was quite relevant to contemporary conditions. The performances that had been implemented involved a director. The director served as an interpreter of the script, directed and arranged players, music director, make-up, costume, stage, lighting, audio systems, and music. Seventy percent of the respondents expressed the need for a competent director to arrange the show. With the director, the show is managed in a more professional way. In the aspect of cosmetology, 72% of the respondents (43 people) said that the make-up used by the players is in conformity with figures portraying respectively. the make-up of the king depicted his real character, or in accordance with the character who was gallant and wise. That of the empress showed a beautiful, graceful, and wise character. This makeup could not be removed from the fashion aspect. Eighty three percent of the respondents (50 people) stated that fashion and makeup was very appropriate to the characters. For example, clothing worn by the king, queen, prince, and his wives were very attractive and portrayed the nobility. Seventy five percent respondents stated that in general the characters were played according

to each character. The respondents felt close to the characters of *Dulmuluk*. They could imagine, think, and feel as felt by *Dulmuluk* figures. They also stated that the players appeared to be able to cover the stage. Control over the audience was also very good. The respondents noted that there were interesting things, especially during the action scenes played by Siti Rafeah. In addition, there was a scene displayed the princes of Hindustan and palace servant-wage earner that invited laughter

As many as 83% of the respondents (50 people) stated that the characters in the *Dulmuluk* show played by the actors or actresses invited appreciation. For example, the role of the prince, the princess wife of Sultan Abdul Muluk, as well as the roles of the kings and queens were very reflective of the real king/queen of the true kingdom. There were some figures who showed the improvisation, for example, the figure of Siti Rafeah when she was riding a horse. On the other hand, some of the characters played their roles according to the scenario. The respondents stated that the motive or reason for the actions of the characters in most of the scenes looked obvious. Motives were appropriate to the story lines and the characters they played. However, there respondents indicated some characters were played illogically, for example, they created a joke scene that was so excessive that could damage the contents and messages of the *Dulmuluk* story

In the aspect of the setting, 70% of the respondents (40 people) stated that the settings were staged according to the story set in the kingdom. For example, the king's throne was quite fancy that described the luxury of a kingdom. Moreover, the choice of gold-colored curtains reflected the grandeur of a palace. Sixty five percent of the respondents (39 people) stated that the property and hand over the property that were already a visible stage; this helped

the players well. However, when viewed as a whole to the maximum utilization of the stage was only done by a servant leader. As many as 75% of the respondents (45 people) stated that the lighting was pretty good. Lighting had functioned quite well. The stage looked not so dark, which could reinforce the characters by the light settings. For example, grief was indicated by somewhat dim lights. Bright lights indicated a sunny atmosphere. The players could be recognized because the lights functioned properly. They were in the right light points. Thus, the players' faces were clearly visible, the figures clearly visible. As many as 83% of the respondents (50 people) stated that the packaging looks good performances. Even so, several times of blocking occurred, for example, blocking by the wife of Sheikh, Siti Rafeah. Another example, at the scene of an incident of thereporting bodyguard to the king, blocking also occurred. The respondents noted that the composition of the groove stages (introduction, the appearance of conflict, conflict, climax, and denouement) were sequenced appropriately. Appearances of conflicts in different sections were laid out very nicely; they indicated proper continuity with the conflicts. A strong climax was very easy to grasp. The respondents noted that changes had been good and well-sequenced; they depicted storyline and chronology clearly. The respondents stated that the turn round and scenes were consistently maintained.

Fifty percent of the respondents (30 people) stated that the music was less suitable with the atmosphere of the story. Nonetheless, clear voices could be heard and they adequately described the scenes. In the aspect of language, as much as 65% of the respondents (39 people) stated that the language and dialogues were deemed appropriate to the characters. The figures used the language well, though somewhat exaggerated by figures such as

wage earner/ladies who looked too sassy. Overall, 78% of the respondents gave positive responses to the *Dulmuluk* show. Meanwhile, the negative responses were expressed by 22% of the respondents, more particularly on the setting and the music.

CONCLUSIONS

This research ends with three conclusions. First, the data related to the attitude questionnaire initially shows negative responses of the students to the *Dulmuluk* art performance. A general aspect of the highlights produced by the students as spectators was that of content. The students expected improvised story content and tailored to the growing issues today. Meanwhile, with regard to the final questionnaires about their attitudes toward the process of staging of *Dulmuluk*, all the students (100%) stated that the study of *Dulmuluk* staging could foster a love and concern for this traditional theater. In addition, all the respondents stated that *Dulmuluk* art performance should be preserved, and taught continuously and widely regardless of different generations. Second, based on a questionnaires related to aspects knowledge, the data showed the improvement of play writing and understanding of dramaturgy. Only a small percentage of the students have not been able to write a play well. In addition, there are students who do not know the concept of dramaturgy which is directed in *Dulmuluk* staging drama, training methods, management, as well as artistic mastery and production tasks of *Dulmuluk*. Third, based on aspects of psychomotor. They are able to perform *Dulmuluk* before the public. In other words, the students' competence in *Dulmuluk* and its various aspects improved.

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