

Preservation of Renganis Art in Penglatan Village, Buleleng, Bali

Luh Putu Sri Ariyani¹, Tuty Maryati², Nengah Bawa Atmadja³

{putu.sri@undiksha.ac.id¹, tuty.maryati@undiksha.ac.id², nengah.bawa.atmadja@gmail.com³}

Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha^{1,2}
STAHN Mpu Kuturan³

Abstrak. Renganis is a sound art typical of Penglatan Village, Singaraja, Bali, combining various sound elements such as *geguritan*, animal, and natural sounds. All sounds generated are played using sound from the mouth. The purposes of this study are (1) explore the history of the creation of the Renganis and the themes performed by this art group; (2) explore the changes and continuity of Renganis art from when it was first created until now; (3) explore various efforts to preserve Renganis artists in protecting this art from extinction. This research is qualitative, in which data were obtained using observation, interview, and documentation techniques. The results of the study show that (1) the Renganis art was created by a group of farmer artists who spent their free time irrigating the rice fields in the 1930s by singing to the sounds of nature around their fields; (2) The Renganis dance underwent various changes according to the times, such as bringing in female artists to enrich the voice in the Renganis art play, as well as adding dance elements to it; (3) the regeneration of Renganis artists is so slow that senior artists try to preserve this art by diligently performing in the village as an effort to socialize and popularize this art among young people, as well as teach seriously young people who want to learn Renganis art. These findings will raise the awareness of various parties to encourage the preservation of the Renganis art to avoid extinction.

Keywords: Sound art, Renganis, Preservation, Socialization, Performance.

1 Introduction

In 1897, a Russian writer and philosopher, Leo Tolstoy, wrote an essay entitled "What is art." In his writings, Tolstoy defined art as expressing human feelings induced by external stimuli. This opinion is in line with the writings of John Dewey in his book "Art as Experience" in 1934. In his book, Dewey works with aesthetic concepts and bridges art with everyday life. For Dewey, art expresses the human experience that involves emotion, understanding, and reflection. The birth process of art requires creativity, inspiration, exploration, and hard work. Art begins with an idea or concept that arises from the artist's thoughts or experiences. After the presumption arises, the artist will choose materials and media that suit their conditions. In the process of exploration and experimentation, artists try different techniques, styles, and approaches to express their ideas. Art that defines the human experience of the environment around humans is found in dance, drama, sound, painting, sculpture, and so on. Balinese art inspired by the natural environment is numerous, especially those that imitate animals. Call it butterfly dance, paradise dance, Kijang dance, and still a lot again. In addition to dance, almost all types of art present a natural atmosphere as a source of inspiration.

One art also inspired by nature is Renganis art in Penglatan village. Renganis himself was born to two peasant artists from Penglatan village. When hearing the word Renganis, people often equate this art to Rengganis dance. Even though the two are much different. Rengganis is a performing dance play in Banyuwangi [1] art in the form of dance, while Renganis is the art of sound chanted using *pupuh dandang gula or dandang gendis*. *Pupuh* in Bali is often referred to as *tembang macepat*, which serves as a communication tool to continue a story and story of folk stories. Each *pupuh* develops different stories. *Pupuh dandang gendis* usually tells about Panji stories such as Jayaprana Layonsari.

Penglatan is a village in Buleleng Regency, nicknamed an agricultural line area. The majority of the population are farmers. This art was born amid busy farmers working the land. The farmers beat or sing *pupuh dandang gendis* at night to relieve fatigue. A farmer will start the *pupuh* by singing and followed by other farmers. When farmers sing at night, their *songs* are accompanied by the sounds of the surrounding nature, including the animals in the fields. The accompaniment of animal sounds in the rice fields fascinated the farmers because the *pupuh* they found became more harmonious and beautiful.

Following the development of the times, agricultural work began to be assisted by various agrarian technologies. So, farmers who used to work in rice fields to stay overnight in rice fields began to do rarely. This impacts the rarity of people singing *pupuh dandang* in the areas. Even so, seldom found, this art is suspected to be almost extinct. However, some of the farmer's children who created this art were unwilling if their parents' work became extinct because it had never been studied. So the farmer's children asked their parents to teach them how to sing *pupuh dandang gendis* accompanied by *onggekan* or frog singing in the fields. Apart from the children of farmers who created this art, very few people are interested in learning this art, so there is always a fear that this art will disappear from Penglatan village. Although Renganis artists fear that art will become extinct, since its creation until now, Renganis art is still sung. This condition is fascinating to be explored further to discover the history of Renganis art creation and subsequent developments, including the pattern of knowledge insight of *pupuh* that makes this art still exist.

2 Method

This research was conducted using qualitative research methods in the form of case studies (Yin, 1996: p. 1-20). Correspondingly, the target of this study is not measurement. The research was conducted in Penglatan Village, Buleleng Regency Bali, where Renganis art *tempas* originated. Research data were collected using interviews, observations, and documentation. The informant of this research is a Renganis artist who is still actively displaying this art. Data is analyzed by conducting various activities: data reduction, presenting, interpreting, and drawing conclusions.

3 Results and Discussions

3.1 History of Renganis Art

Penglatan village is located south of Singaraja City. This city is famous as a producer of food called *dodol* and *blayag* in Buleleng. Penglatan Village is also renowned for its agriculture. The majority of the population works as farmers. Agricultural activities in rice fields are very long, ranging from irrigating, planting, and caring for them to harvesting. Farmers usually sing traditional Balinese songs such as *kidung*, *kakawin*, and *geguritan* to reduce the feeling of working on rice fields. In Balinese society, *tembang* is local wisdom that becomes a guideline for acting in daily life [2]. *Metembang* activities are prevalent in the Balinese community. Each

community group will form a pesantian group as a place to learn literature to *Suck* during religious ceremonies in temples. Similar conditions also apply to the people of Penglatan village. Pesantian groups also flourished in this village. In the 1950s, five fellow peasant artists (Pan Madra, Pan Kaler, Pan Dul, Pan Suti, and Pan Pogot) creatively gave natural touches to their songs. Their love for nature was shown by incorporating elements of nature into the pieces they used to sing. In the songs or *pupuh* they perform, they were inspired to insert the tunes they usually hear in the fields. Their daily lives in the rice fields inspired them to add the sound of frogs or *gadagan* in Balinese. They chose the sound of frogs because every night they had to stay up late irrigating the fields, they observed that frogs' sounds varied. The sound of many frogs combines dynamically and produces a very melodic sound. So these five peasant artists creatively added a frog to the song or *pupuh* they sang. And the art of Renganis was born,

Renganis has two meanings, *first* from the word *reng ane manis*, which means musical tone; *Both* the words *renga* and *nis*, which mean sounded in the silence of the night. To adjust the sweet name, *pupuh* that sounds sweet like *pupuh pangkur* and *pupuh dandang*, especially *dandang gendis*, was *chosen*. With the inclusion of imitations of frog sounds, artists played various roles in singing *pupuh* and imitating frog sounds. Farmer artists continue to perfect Renganis art while busy working in rice fields. During breaks, they will practice to produce more harmonious works. That's when several types of *ongkekan* (typical frog sounds) were born, making Renganis art even more beautiful and entertaining. There are three types of *ongkekan*, namely (1) *Bebatelan*, (2) *peangklungan*, (3) *gegambangan*. And what's more interesting about this art is that all the sound combinations are played with the mouth. Even as the number of cross-sections increases, gamelan elements are included. This collaboration is to create a more beautiful, dynamic, and witty sound to entertain the audience.

Since then, the people of Penglatan Village have a unique art of Renganis, of which there is only one in Buleleng Regency. Interestingly, besides being staged for the public, Renganis art in Penglatan is also sung during the ceremony of the god *yadnya*, namely *Usaba Nini*. In Bali, *Usaba Nini* glorifies *Dewi Sri* (goddess of fertility) because it has provided abundant rice products to farmers [3]. *Usaba Nini* in Penglatan village is carried out before the farmers carry out the harvest. *Usaba Nini* usually falls every *Full moon Sasih Kedasa*. At that time, Renganis was proclaimed because Renganis had the magical power to open ceremonies as an accompaniment to the descent of gods.

In the previous presentation, Renganis was chanted using a *pupuh dandang gendis* by taking the *Panji* story as his story. *Panji's* story is often called the only globalized local story [4]. During the *Majapahit* period, *Panji's* story spread not only in the archipelago, such as Bali, Lombok, Sumatra, and others, but also to the Malay Peninsula, Thailand, Cambodia, etc. [5] This is why traces of *Panji's* story are found outside Indonesia. *Panji's* story is well known for its noble, exemplary value that can be used as an example from generation to generation. *Panji's* story teaches about courage, heroism, unyielding spirit, creativity in carrying out tactics, caring for others, loving animals and plants, not being grudges, not being cruel, liking to study, filial piety to mothers, loving and mastering various arts and so on. [6] One of the characteristics of *Panji's* story is that it contains a dramatic romance between male and female characters who love each other. But in addition to romantic stories, *Panji* stories also include the philosophical value of "seeking and finding" and uniting not only lovers but, in a broader context, a nation. That is also what is told in Renganis art and with chanting *Pupuh Dandang* who are fascinating, told touching *Panji* stories, such as *Jayaprana-Layonsari*, *Anglung Semara*, and so on.

In the 1960s, Renganis art experienced a decline because not many young people were interested in preserving this art. Only the older generation is still diligent in performing this art. Even then, only during religious ceremonies. Getting the younger generation to join was very

difficult, so these pioneers persuaded and invited their children to watch the learning *sambal* while their parents practiced *Renganis*. *Renganis* artists tried to reform this art by incorporating several elements of art. In 1980, *Sekaa Renganis* attempted to collaborate with *sekaa Genjek*. However, the results are not good, so this collaboration cannot continue. This condition lasted for quite a long time, until in the 1990s, the third generation of pioneers of this art or the grandchildren of the founder of this art had the consciousness to continue what their grandparents had pioneered. So, the older generation who are still alive began to teach *Renganis* art skills, especially the sound elements that must be present in *Renganis*. One of the grandsons of *Renganis* creator is Wayan Sukerena (60 years old), currently serving as a member of *Renganis* art. Since the 1990s, he and his friends in *Penglatan* village began to study and explore *Renganis* art. With the second generation and his peers, Wayan Sukerena started to perform this art again in *Bale Banjar* or in the homes of people who were having ceremonies (*manusa yadnya* or *pitra yadnya ceremony*). After a long time in art, Wayan Sukerena observed fewer young people interested in joining the *Renganis* group. It was even said that no young people were interested in watching it. This raised concerns from Wayan Sukerena. So, on his consciousness, Wayan Sukerena tried to incorporate other elements of art into *Renganis*. Various art fusions are carried out, so *Renganis* is fascinating to watch. In 2010, *Sekaa Renganis* innovated by incorporating dance fragments and gamelan elements in *Renganis* art.

3.2 Development of Renganis Art

From the history of its birth, *Renganis* art was born as an expression of the creativity of farmers who had been pursuing art since the beginning of *mating*. To enliven the atmosphere of innovation carried out by the Third-generation *Renganis* artists (Wayan Sukerena et al.) by cooperating with several parties. One of the parties invited to collaborate is Ganesha University of Education. At that time, the Department of Balinese Language, Faculty of Language and Arts, Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha, offered rare/sacral art courses. *Sekaa Renganis* signed a cooperation agreement in the teaching of rare arts. Wayan Sukerena, an artist and head of the group *Kelihan Sekaa Renganis*, teaches students in the Balinese language department the art of *Renganis*. At that time, students were taught *Renganis* art by displaying stories of Jayaprana-Layonsari, Sampek-Ingtag, Tuwung Kuning, and others. The characters in the stories chosen by students have exemplary moral attitudes in character education.[7]. The above stories are staged as test scores for rare art courses. In addition to dance fragments, *Renganis* performances are accompanied by gamelan, making *Renganis* art even more lively. The students who watched the performance were enthusiastic and watched the show to the end.

From its birth until now, the development of *Renganis* art has experienced ups and downs in its performance. To increase public interest in *Renganis* art, in the 1980s, this art was combined with *Genjek*. After being connected, it turns out that these two arts do not produce a harmonious combination, so it is not pleasant to listen to. The pakem pupuh dandang gendis in *Renganis* art is second to none. This art is often considered similar to *genggong*. But the influx of frog sounds in *Pupuh Dandang* never ceases to be a characteristic of *Renganis* art. Hence, this art is different from *Genggong* and *Genjek*. From the name, *Renganis* art is an art full of natural harmony that shows their love for the ruler. The selection of *panji* stories full of ethics and character content is how parents taught their children and grandchildren good values. Born from peasant artists, the *Panji* story raised in *Renganis* art contains the values of constancy in principle, hard work, loyalty, and patience. These attitudes were those developed by peasant artists[8] in *Penglatan* village. The birth of *Renganis* art in the rice fields also taught that life must be harmonious. Life must be filled with many things, including art. Considering that in

every result, Balinese cultural creativity is bound to noble aesthetic values derived from Hinduism, including truth (*Satyam*), purity (*sivam*), and balance (*Sundaram*)[9].

3.3 Renganis Art Preservation

Art is an integral part of human culture and history. Through art, someone can understand a society's values, traditions, and history. Renganis art, as part of the creative expression of the people of Penglitan Village, holds various stories from their predecessors. In Renganis, the next generation of this art knows how older people used to have very detailed observations of the natural environment. The love for the universe is poured out in various imitations of the sounds of nature. By creating Renganis art, they also want to teach their successors that being busy can hone emotional sensitivity amid busy work. A work of art can inspire, comfort, unwind, and touch a sad heart.

As an art considered rare, Renganis artists try to maintain this art to exist amid changing times. Especially with the rapid advancement of technology, the younger generation is rarely interested in pursuing this traditional art. Today's Renganis artists are mostly the older generation. A small number are the Second generation, and the rest are the Third generation, the grandchildren of Renganis art pioneers. As told by Wayan Sukerena (63), the regeneration of this art is very slow because it takes a long time to master the standard of Renganis art. Until now, the Renganis art group has been a combination of the third, fourth, and fifth generations. These three generations have grown from each other through various exercises that are continuously practiced in the Penglitan village. Transferring knowledge about Renganis takes a long time for the younger generation to appreciate love and correctly sing this art. Because Renganis art competes with modern art, the first step taken by the older generation so that young people want to join this art is to cause love in their hearts. After they like it, then they will be taught these art techniques. Seeing that modern art is increasingly attractive, Renganis artists try to attract young people by including other elements of art in Renganis. The arts included are music/gamelan and dance/drama. Other aspects of art included in Renganis art attract young people to join Renganis art groups. The old artists realized that Renganis art was not only entertainment. But what is more important is to pass on the reflection of life and the various values and identities that the ancestors hold dear.

Artists who joined the Renganis art group are currently in the fifth generation. According to Gede Edi Subawa (29 years), his interest in joining the arts must be balanced with his talent in the art of gamelan music. Edi observes that Renganis is like playing a gamelan instrument, except that Renganis is played with the mouth. Edi realizes that he is an essential agent in Renganis art because if he is not the one who preserves it, then the generations below him will love this art even less. After joining in 2013, at that time, Edi was not immediately allowed to play *ongkekan*. He first played a dance drama player. After joining for a while, he was allowed to be the voice actor for Renganis.

The shift in cultural values of the younger generation is a challenge to preserving Renganis art. Traditional values have shifted, so young people's interest in traditional arts has dramatically decreased. The experience of teaching rare skills in educational institutions (Ganesha University of Education) began to be applied in Penglitan village. Renganis artists began to collect Panji stories in the Gedong Kirtya and Puri Buleleng libraries. Young people who can dance are invited to take part in the art. Likewise, young men who can play traditional musical instruments are asked to accompany the singing artist *Pupuh Dandang*. The efforts made by artists with the collaboration of various other types of art are an effort to invite young people to love traditional arts more. Collaboration in general art applies. Not only in music and dance but also in architecture [10]. The partnership carried out by the Renganis art group also

involved various parties, namely the Cultural Office of Buleleng Regency. The Cultural Office and the Penglatan village government allow for greater collaboration in the form of opportunities to perform more and more performances around the province of Bali. The role of the government is vast in disseminating Renganis art to the Balinese people. The group leader, *Kelihan Sekaa* Renganis, also tries to prepare various interesting Panji stories that contain thick character values so that people are more familiar with Panji stories that have existed for a long time. What it does by the *appearance of Renganis* shows that Renganis art has implemented a sound performance management system [11][12].



Figure 1. Incorporating elements of drama and dance, as well as musical instruments, made Renganis art increasingly favored by the public. (Source: I Wayan Sukerena, 2023)

In popularizing Renganis art, technology plays an essential role in the preservation of Renganis. Young people who join in *sekaa* or Renganis groups record all their activities during Renganis practice. Some of them shared stories on social media about Renganis art. They recorded and shared Renganis art training activities. They documented everything related to Renganis. There are several ways in which the older generation transfers their knowledge of Renganis. At the beginning of joining, the youth were given a companion role first, until the time came when they were fluent in developing Panji's stories in Renganis art. The internalization of moral values in the story of Panji is told while being practiced together. The older generation always accompanies their every exercise to avoid deviating from the Renganis plan. When young people have begun to master the art, they will invite them to perform in front of the community. In transferring knowledge of Renganis art, character values are instilled in the developed Panji story [2].



Figure 2. The Buleleng Regency Government supports conservation efforts by sending the Renganis group as art ambassadors for the Buleleng Regency at the Bali Arts Festival and other festivals. (Source. Culture Office of Buleleng Regency, 2023)

To evaluate the exercises carried out so far, the youth of Penglatan village will be tested by holding a performance at the Village Hall. The Buleleng Regency Government also showed appreciation for the younger generation's love for traditional arts by sending Renganis art from Penglatan Village as the Buleleng Regency Ambassador to perform at the Art Center in the framework of the Bali Art Festival. This arts group is routinely allowed to perform at every arts event held by the Buleleng Regency Government. The performance location can be at the Gede Manik art building, Sasana Budaya, or Bung Karno Park. Art exhibitions and performances in front of the public are one of the efforts to foster a love for traditional art [13]. It should be realized that knowledge in the field of art is mainly conveyed orally and passed down through tradition. Efforts to preserve oral heritage, such as Renganis art, can help maintain knowledge not documented in writing. Turning the Panji story vehicle inward, *Pupuh Dandang Gendis*, combining frog sounds and nature, is the actualization of local wisdom of Balinese culture [14]. Presenting various Panji stories in Renganis art not only enriches different stories *pupuh dandang gendis*, but what is more important is the revitalization of Panji stories that are very rarely socialized to the public, as well as the popularization of various Panji stories full of character values.

4 Conclusion

Renganis art is a rare art in Buleleng Regency. Renganis artists, to maintain the oral legacy of their predecessors, took various ways so that art still existed and was increasingly loved by the public. The strictness of Renganis art makes artists work hard to pass on Renganis' artistic abilities. Some steps artists take to maintain this art include (1) documentation. Documentation efforts are essential to preserve the continuity of an art. By recording various art activities using videos, photos, or others, this art will be able to be watched and learned by the next generation even though the founder is gone; (2) collaboration. Creativity in art is created through cooperation between arts such as *tembang* with *gamelan* and *drama* and dance. Collaboration is also carried out with various parties or stakeholders to preserve a traditional art; (3) The transfer of rides is carried out by chanting Panji stories using *boiler pupuh*, and so on. The ride transfer allows young people to love literature and traditional arts increasingly.

References

- [1] I. W. P. Admojo, T. Widodo, and A. R. Prasetyo, "Kesenian Rengganis sebagai Inspirasi Penciptaan Lukisan Surrealistik," *JoLLA J. Lang. Lit. Arts*, vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 1–14, 2023, doi: 10.17977/um064v3i12023p1-14.
- [2] N. W. Aryani, "Nilai Pendidikan Karakter Kearifan Lokal Tembang Bali," *Widyadari*, vol. 21, no. 2, pp. 732–743, 2020, doi: 10.5281/zenodo.4049487.
- [3] I. W. Sugita, I. W. Suteja, and I. N. Rema, "Pemuliaan dewi sri dalam aktivitas domestikasi padi di bali," *Forum Arkeol.*, vol. 34, no. 2, pp. 101–112, 2021.
- [4] S. C. Budiyo, "CERITA PANJI DALAM PERSPEKTIF SEJARAH," *J. Budaya Nusant.*, vol. 1, no. 2, pp. 141–146, 2018.
- [5] R. M. N. Poerbatjaraka, *Cerita Panji dalam Perbandingan*. Jakarta: Gunung Agung, 1968.
- [6] H. Nurcahyo, "Gagasan cerita panji sebagai aspek keteladanan," *J. Budaya Nusant.*, vol. 1, no. 2, pp. 117–130, 2018, doi: <https://doi.org/10.36456/b.nusantara.vol1.no2.a1572>.
- [7] I. K. Suwartika, "NILAI PENDIDIKAN YANG TERKANDUNG DALAM GEGURITAN JAYAPRANA," *Widyalyaya J. Ilmu Pendidik.*, vol. 1, no. 2, pp. 138–147, 2020.
- [8] N. A. Anggraini, "ESTETIKA DAN NILAI PENDIDIKAN KARAKTER PANJI SEMIRANG DALAM HIKAYAT KARYA SALEH SASTRAWINATA," *Matapena J. Keilmuan Bahasa, Sastra, dan Pengajarannya*, vol. 1, no. 2, pp. 53–64, 2018.
- [9] I. G. M. W. Sena, I. N. Kiriana, and N. N. S. Widiasih, "Tri Wisesa Yoga: Satyam, Sivam, Sundaram (Tiga Aspek Realisasi Holistik Menuju Kesadaran Sosio-Spiritual)," *J. Yoga dan Kesehatan*, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 61–77, 2022, doi: 10.25078/jyk.v5i1.839.
- [10] A. Ghozali and A. S. Ekomadyo, "Implementasi kolaborasi pada desain pusat seni pertunjukan: Studi kasus: Pusat seni pertunjukan di Kawasan Sriwedari, Surakarta," *J. Arsit. Komposisi*, vol. 14, no. 1, pp. 41–49, 2020.
- [11] A. T. Atmadja, T. Maryati, and N. Bawa Atmadja, "Bisnis Foto Prewedding: Komersialisasi Ritual Perkawinan pada Masyarakat Bali," *J. Kaji. Bali (Journal Bali Stud.)*, vol. 9, no. 2, p. 339, 2019, doi: 10.24843/jkb.2019.v09.i02.p04.
- [12] Y. K. Sari, A. S. Maria, and R. R. Hapsari, "Kolaborasi Kreatif Kegiatan Pariwisata Dan Pelestarian Budaya Di Taman Budaya Yogyakarta (Tby)," *J. Indones. Tour. Hosp. Recreat.*, vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 85–101, 2020, doi: 10.17509/jithor.v3i1.21853.
- [13] N. A. Amalia and D. Agustin, "Peranan Pusat Seni dan Budaya sebagai Bentuk Upaya Pelestarian Budaya Lokal," *Sinektika J. Arsit.*, vol. 19, no. 1, pp. 34–40, 2022, doi: 10.23917/sinektika.v19i1.13707.
- [14] N. N. T. Turaeni, "Pengalihwahaanan Paribasa Bali Lisan Ke Dalam Lagu Bali Populer," *Aksara*, vol. 29, no. 2, p. 211, 2017, doi: 10.29255/aksara.v29i2.124.211-224.