

EDUCATION OF ART AS A PROCESS OF INNOVATIVE AND CREATIVE CULTURAL HERITAGE IN THE INDONESIAN SOCIETY

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ABSTRACT: *Transfer of culture from one generation to the next generation takes place in every period. This is an educational process in which knowledge was inherited to several groups of society within one particular country. The knowledge then becomes cultural heritage that will be used by the society. Indonesian art education is divided into traditional art education and modern art education. Despite the differences between the two, the transfer of Indonesian culture's values occurs in both processes. In general, art education is a processing media of cultural heritage in the context of individual development towards a socially and culturally whole human being, since art develops creativity and sensitivity for different, ever-changing aspects of life, such as the culture and the changes within the society. Art education is considered as a process of cultural inheritance and human development – a creative process that functions as an agent of change for culture.*

KEY WORDS: *cultural heritage, educational process, art education, and transfer of Indonesian culture's values.*

INTRODUCTION

Over the course of human history, civilized nations have always been noted as those which are able to respect their cultural traditions, value their artistic achievements, and perform the protection of the nation's values and culture for generations. On the other hand, nations which failed to respect the value of cultural heritage have always lost their culture's value of aesthetic inheritance and remained merely materialistic. When one nation's values of culture remains materialistic, the civilization of the nation will become shallow because of the lack of the understanding for art and its life functions; thus, the society's aesthetic and humanitarian sensitivity will start to become dull.

Art is a universal element of culture. It is a primary necessity in life, as well as integrative secondary necessity, because it correlates strongly with one's sense of

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right and wrong; just and unjust; the value of making sense within whatever dimension of time and space the human exists in. These senses portrays human as a being of reason, moral and value. Thus, since art means so much to one's sense, art is inseparable with one nation's culture (Suparlan, 1985:3-5).

In a perspective of education, art is perceived as a balancing media between sensibility and intellectuality; between being rational and being irrational; between logics and emotions – all aspects that form a whole human being. Greek philosopher Plato is notable for being quoted saying that art should be the foundation of education since art, in a certain extent, sharpens someone's mind and character (Read, 1970; and Lavine, 1984).

Art education should not be exclusive to specific art institutions and professional art educations. It should be applied in a much larger spectrum. Systematically, art education should start in primary education up to the highest hierarchy of education in the context of culture as a whole. Art should be discussed both conceptually and empirically and should be placed as an educational facility in order to achieve an impartial goal of education that is relevant and necessary in today's global perspective.

ART AS EACH NATION'S CULTURAL HERITAGE

Human beings consist of many races and nations that produce different cultural outputs. The cultural outputs depend on the character and life philosophy of each nation, contextual to the nation's geographical location and historical background. One of those cultural outputs is art.

Art may be perceived as an element of culture, or also as a subsystem of culture. It has a clear function in human life. Art, as an element of culture, functions as a guideline for activities done by the society, especially in the context of the society's fulfillment of aesthetic necessities.

Art has incorporated aspects such as cognition-model equipment, symbolic system, or intertwining holistic interpretation of symbols transmitted along the course of history (e.g. ancient illustrations images).

Every nation's art have uniquely different characters. Art has been a tradition inherited since ancient times. The process of arts being inherited by a younger generation from its predecessor is on a course analogous with the inheritance process of other products of culture which is now identical with knowledge-transfer process or education system (Rohidi, 1994).

Some of the products of art are being conserved and studied as they bear strong relevance to the development of time. Others, which are deemed irrelevant and unnecessary, extinct. In this era of global connections, the dimension of space is no longer bounded by distance or territories.

The development of recent technologies, especially information-sharing devices such as internet and television, allow human being to learn and interact with different cultures spread across the globe within very short period of time. Information about the development of education from various places – especially to this context would

be the development of art education – can also easily be accessed.

Every nation has access to absorb the merits of other country's method of art education, in such an extent that the sharing becomes mutually beneficial to enrich each country's education system. At the end of the day, different form of arts from different nations will complement each other and enriching systems of education into a better process of shaping more innovative and creative future generation.

ART: IRRATIONAL AESTHETIC TRANSCENDENCE WITHIN LEARNING PROCESS

Universally, human beings move towards a better level of life. In this movement, they have to fulfill first the primary necessities, which are biological; then the secondary necessities, which are social; then an integrative necessity which consists of morality, reasons, and sense – these are the goals of education. These needs are integrated into a system morally understandable by thoughts and sensed through feelings (Rohidi, 2000).

The result of the anthropological and cross-cultural research on many specific bodies of culture shows that human-made cultural outputs have always been heavily incorporated with the artist's aesthetic expression. This shows that however simple the daily life of an ancient culture may seem, there is always a necessity of aesthetic expression that emerges alongside the primary necessities. This is evidence to the statement that art is a universal element of culture that is inherent in every situation of time and place (Read, 1967; and Rohidi, 2000).

The integrative necessity in a community is reflected in daily life's aesthetic necessity. Also, on some parts of Indonesian community, for example, these necessities are reflected in human's aesthetic needs which are materialized in daily activities embodying senses of right and wrong, just and unjust, the value of making sense. Ultimately, decision making when creating cultural outputs has always been based on integrative reasoning sharpened through mind-and-body-revitalizing art activities. Consequently, art activities become an integral part of life itself (Rohidi, 2000).

The type of activity that revitalizes both mind and body is playing. Playing is parallel to art activities. In art activities or artistic processes such as kinesthetic art, music art, or visual art; a process of enjoyment always occurs.



Indonesian traditional playing is parallel to art activities
(The Dolanan Anak Jawa, 1920)

Art activities, as well as activities considered as “playing”, is a creative process that involves a lot of imagination, otherwise, it’s boring. These types of activities allow human being to live in a boundless imaginary world that pushes them to sharpen creativity and find the side of newness in every ordinary thing.

A human’s learning process is a lifelong process. However, this process should not be without fun and enjoyment, since if in this process the mind and body becomes stressful, the process would not be able to last long. Learning process, which incorporates hard work, runs effectively in a relaxed and peaceful condition of mind and body. This is where art plays an important role – learning process that incorporates enjoyable activities would be essential as a mean of creative thinking. Creativity is very important for problem-solving, the fulfillment of freedom of thoughts, as well as expressions of self-actualization. Based on those thoughts, it becomes blatantly clear that art activities and activities of enjoyment is an important part of human life (Tabrani, 2006).

Fun activities like games in the form of art activities imply virtues such as sincerity (less materialistic), independence (freedom), innovativeness (creativity), balance (fairness), and attitudes of transcendence (spirituality). Art is a learning facility to perform all those thinking activities holistically. This is the reason why art activities should be an element integrated permanently in general education process (Aronowitz & Horoux, 1991).

Art education is a form of education that will sow the seeds of humanity and the sense of physical and mental transcendence, precisely the reason why art should be the foundation of education. Art education as able to be applied for children since a very early age, even since the “deep-sleep ages”, and most importantly, as soon as children’s capacity of reasoning starts to develop. Art should prepare children for further process of education that makes them perceive education as an enjoyable process (Read, 1970).



**Art education as able to be applied for children since a very early age
(Bumi Limas, 2007)**

Results of the research conducted by education experts concede the fact that human being's learning process starts with activities like playing that starts at a very early age. Education, altogether, will work better when started at an earlier age. Thus, systemically, early-age education is crucial in determining the results of someone's learning process on whatever subject (Tabrani, 2006).

MODERNIZATION IN MODERN EDUCATION AND ITS IMPLICATION ON ART EDUCATION

Modernization is generally understood as a method of applying positive modern thoughts in problem-solving done by humans. The positivistic approach and the rapid development of industry and technology are conventionally perceived as a Western success in applying science into important universal aspects of human life.

This paradigm has become a model applied in the daily life of the Western culture, thus obviously has a tangible causal correlation with this decade's lifestyle of loving instantaneousness. This paradigm spreads all over the globe through information technology and social interaction, up to the point where it becomes a model of thought that infiltrates many cultural aspects of many different communities across the planet.

Modernization is an application of rationalistic thinking-sequence that is deemed paramount in defining all sorts of natural phenomenon as well as the dimension of life. The keenness on being rationalistic had been applied for such a long time, and becomes a regular practice, in modern education system in many countries nowadays.

Despite its good impact on human's capacity of logical sequence, rationalism also reinforces human being to be too rational in assessing many dimensions of life. This leads to an imbalanced room of thoughts and creativity freedom, as then the potentials and emotions in human mind, other than logical rationalism, become massively unexplored. The domination of rationalism because of modernization, up to the frightening extent of being the only correct answer to the process of education, has its effects far on many life aspects and the community's way of thoughts, in it also the effect rationalism has towards educational institutions.

In today's modern education, the exclusive treatment on strategy, productivity and teaching management in blaringly visible. This exclusivity is a product of the domination of rationalism that puts into peripherals the potentials and emotions inherent in human being. This gradually erodes student's level of humanitarian sensitivity, and even on a further scale may result in a numb generation incapable of interacting and involving their souls with their surrounding sphere of living beings.

The question is how would this happen? The problem starts with how modern education efficiently follows scientific pedagogy – a form of potentially solidified “rational-logical culture”. Putting rationalism on a dominating governance that is almost tyrannical would abandon and deteriorate “the culture of imagination”. “Rationalization” in education ends up in a system of education that forsakes imaginative, aesthetic, intuitive and creative aspects of human being – aspects that actually are crucially potential (Rohidi, 2000).

Art education, which is supposed to sharpen those aspects, is impacted by the wave of rationalism. The result is how art education is made as secondary element in education. Or, the art education that exists in primary elements is then made too rational, to the level of cognitive education that doesn't support aspects of sense (Barret, 1982).

The phenomenon of modernization happens in the system of education in a lot of third world countries. These are the countries where generally the infrastructure of education is not ready to adjust to methods of modernization. This starts with Western colonialization in many countries, such as Indonesia.

The domination of Western rationalism affects a lot of aspects in the life of Indonesians, including the system of Indonesian modern education. The knowledge of art and senses is no longer deemed important in daily life, when in the past, art has been such an important part of the community. Influenced by modernization, the current system of education no longer understands the function of art education as an integrative necessity, a function that is managed to be comprehended by the system of education prior to modernization

The framework of art education also suffers from rationalism. It becomes massively linear and focused on materials, technology and industrialization. The art education, which previously was an inherent part of life and learning process in general, no longer bears any fundamental importance and suffers from the reduction of development of sense, imagination, and intuition.

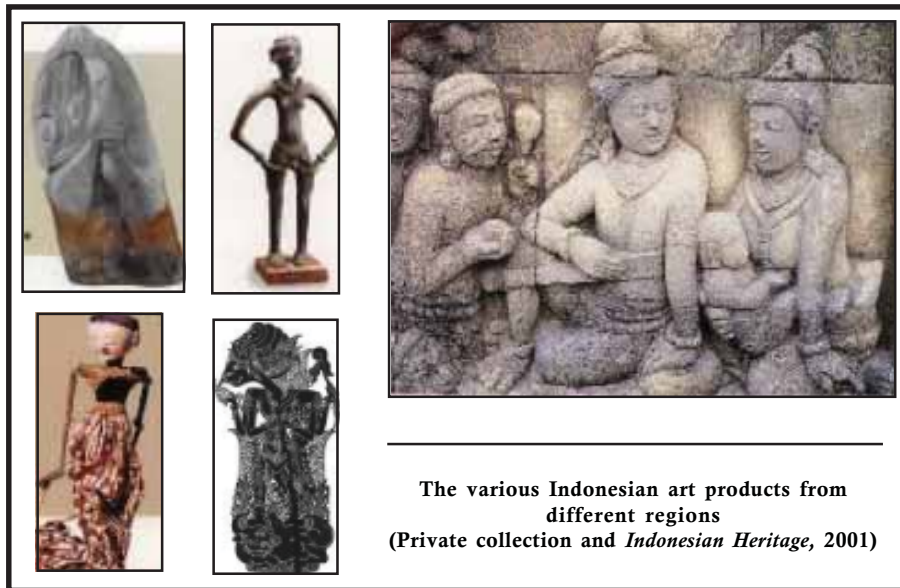
To avoid unwanted impacts of modernization and materialistic culture, it is important to propose a revolutionary strategy of education, productivity and learning management. Education should play a role in proliferating the transfer of knowledge of the importance of art and its function on daily life. The comprehension that art is important as an agent in cultural heritage would be vital, as without comprehension upon that matter, the society is on an easy road towards losing sensitivity towards aesthetics and humanitarian senses.

ART AND ART EDUCATION IN INDONESIA AS A MEDIA OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

Traditional Indonesian communities found their civilization through art. With art sensitivities, dynamic cultural heritages were invented – they are full of passion and warmth, being both realistic and imaginative. Culture is indicated by the forms of art that contains values within them, reflected in the output of the culture work itself.

Indonesian community is a heterogeneous community of many different races, ethnicities, tribes and cultures. The heterogeneous culture materializes itself in the form of various art products originating from different regions. This diversity is acknowledged in Indonesia's fundamental philosophy, which is *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, a Sanskrit phrase that means "unity in diversity" (Bachtiar, 1986).

The Indonesian community can be classified into two groups. The first group is the group of those who are isolated/isolate themselves from the outside world. This group has a profound understanding about art, as they put art as a fundamental



guideline for their daily activities in the form of rituals with strict aesthetic rules that needs to be followed.

The other group of the community is the group of those who have open and active interaction with the outside world. This group usually exists in big cities and metropolitan areas. They have huge scope of socialization and social dynamics because of the intensity of interaction with the outside world.

Between these two groups emerges varied forms of art, ranging from the simplest form to the most complex one. This shows how the society reacts to external influences, the ability to receive and absorb foreign cultures, and appreciate many kinds of art relevant and significant for the society's life.

The course of history shows that Indonesia, as a nation that has a beautiful sense of art, appreciates the culture they inherit from their ancestors. This is also shown in the valuable art products, the capability to transfer this to succeeding generations as well as how the cultural values are being transferred to succeeding generation, then adjusted to relevant application of recent forms of life.

Indonesian community has a huge potential in arts. This is visible in many forms of aesthetic expression that are distinctive one another geographically, spreading from the most Western part of the country up to the most Eastern point.

Art in the life of traditional communities functions as an educational facility and also a form of learning process about traditional knowledge inherited from one generation to another. This learning process takes form of many activities such as kinesthetic art, music art, or visual art.

These models of art activities are used selectively by Indonesian community in the past as an effort to communicate and preserve knowledge and also as efforts to

fulfill integrative necessities of aesthetic expression and appreciation starting from its simplest form up to the most complex one.

Art, according to the traditional concept of Indonesian community, has attributes that tries to integrate other elements of culture that correlates with mind, thoughts and morality. Art activities directly sharpen the sensitivity of understanding natural phenomenon and how nature works and interpreting the surrounding nature. With the sensitivity towards the surrounding nature, a human is rendered more humane and civilized (Durkheim, 1961).

Traditional Indonesian communities found their civilization through art. With art sensitivities, dynamic cultural heritages were invented – they are full of passion and warmth, being both realistic and imaginative. Culture is indicated by the forms of art that contains values within them, reflected in the output of the culture work itself. Directly, cultural heritage is an education for knowledge that is integrated with elements of life because it is directly applied in daily life.

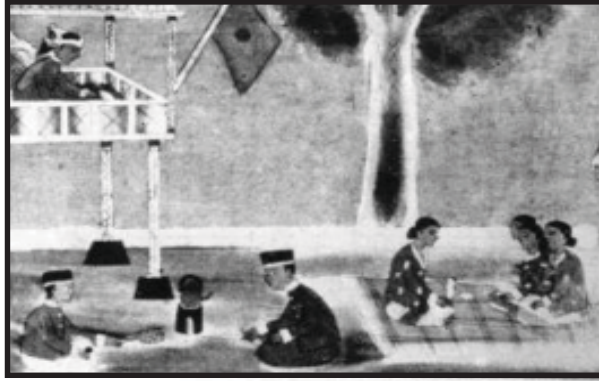
Art, in several parts of Indonesian community, is still a part of daily life, despite the fact that effects of materialistic modernization and bombardment of foreign culture yields such a significant culture shock. So far, Indonesia as a nation is still capable of putting the values of art culture as an aesthetic transcendence and keeping art from degrading into a merely materialistic activity (Geertz, 1973).

Today, Indonesian community still lives in two worlds. They can be defined as a community in transition that struggles to establish new sets of values and tradition whilst unable to completely let go of the past. They still struggle to establish the sets of values that will be effective to put Indonesia in the same power with other countries. In the context of Indonesian education system, an effort of combining adopted modern system of education with the traditional education system is conducted – all the while adjusted to the highly heterogeneous character of Indonesian community.

Past system of education that puts art educational in the same level with other subjects is an education system called as *padepokan*. This type of education systematically transfers traditional knowledge, for example, in Java. The transferred material incorporates heavy influences from once-reigning Hindu as well as Islam teachings which in the past bear huge significance in building culture of literacy across the archipelago of Indonesia.

This system, that has been applied in Java for centuries, apparently has resemblances with traditional education systems in other regions of Indonesia. This implies the existence of general local traits of education that is relevant enough to be formed as an education system that suits Indonesian local characters.

Transformation happens to this type of education each decade. The community manages to develop this system. One of the modern education systems that adopts traditional education system is known as *pesantren*. This type of education system exists in every region of Indonesia. This modernized form of *padepokan* is considered successful in combining modern and traditional education system in the context of Indonesia's heterogeneous and multicultural society.



Picture of education system that puts art educational in the same level (*Padepokan*)

Modern education that uses the platform of *padepokan* applies art as the foundation of education. This leads to the proliferation of the life of art in each region and creatively playing the role of being a media of cultural heritage and knowledge-transfer that is able to adjust with today's demands and necessities. Art education in the system of *padepokan* more or less has become a media in the process of cultural heritage that enables development of individuals that will creatively determine how culture will change in the future (Rohidi, 1995).

CONCLUDING REMARK

Culture embodies important aspects that are passed from one generation into another. In a certain extent, culture is also passed on genetically. Culture is also appreciated and owned by the supporting community. With that description, it is implied that the process of culture transfer occurs within the process of education.

Culture heritage can be defined as a process of culture transfer from one generation to another one, it is implied that the process of culture transfer occurs within the process of education. The transfer is conducted by the "teacher" and received by the "student". Substantially, the goal of this process of transfer is to make students apply the transferred knowledge as a practical guidance in life's problem-solving.

This transferred knowledge/heritage will be appreciated, owned, and developed by the students (the new generation) and adjusted with the demands of the era in which the students live.

The success of the process of transfer (education) is indicated by: (1) applicable transferred material that conserves traditional elements of culture; (2) the process of transfer must include development and adjustment to dynamics and changes in the society's current trends of culture; and (3) the process of transfer must include creativity and play a role of being an agent of changes in culture.

Art education is intended to sharpen human's sensitivity and creativity – potentials that gives them chance to express themselves and support their character development from childhood into adults. Thus, art education is not just an individual necessity, it is also the community's social and cultural necessity.

Art education can be directed into the development of culture and values of humanity in the context of today's multicultural condition. This means that the values owned by one nation no longer specifically belongs to that particular nation, it is shared by the cultures of many nations. Furthermore, art education should be intended to improve international communication as well as national actualization.

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