

Symbolic Meanings of Noble Values in Srandul Art in Kampung Bumen, Kotagede, Indonesia

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Abstract

Srandul is a traditional art form in Kampung Bumen, Kotagede, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The Purba Budaya group is preserving this art because its activities hold symbolic meanings associated with the noble values for the residents of Kampung Bumen.

The objective of this research is to describe the symbolic meanings of noble values in the Srandul art produced by Purba Budaya in Bumen Village, Kotagede.

The study is based on a single case study. It employs informants, literature studies, documents and archives, and visual data as data sources, and interviews, observations, and documentation as data collection techniques. The informants were purposefully selected based on their gender, age and level of education. Data was analysed using interactive model analysis, which included three main elements: data reduction, data display, and deriving conclusions and verification. Data triangulation was used to ensure data validity.

The paper concludes that noble values in Srandul include: the nature of life, the nature of work and work ethic, the relationships between people and Nature, perception of time, and the relationship between people and others. These values are symbolized by the offerings, story content (play), the rehearsal process, *piring* leaves in the middle of the Srandul performance arena, joke scenes (*dagelan*) in the middle of the Srandul story, and various combinations of clothes worn in Srandul art.

Keywords: Art, Noble values, Purba Budaya Srandul, Symbolic meaning

Introduction

Yogyakarta is made up of a number of urban villages, including old traditional villages and new villages established as a result of urbanization. Each village has a distinct set of social, artistic, and economic activities. With all of its diversity, Yogyakarta has a lot of cultural treasure as it is a tourism destination at both the national and international scales. As a result, art has become an integral aspect of each region. Apart from its role as a native culture with

noble values, art can also help the country earn foreign exchange (Wulandari, Upadani and Alfariasi 2020). Yogyakarta is home to a variety of arts, one of which is traditional village art still practiced today.

Modernization will likely undermine the continued existence of traditional arts in Yogyakarta; hence it is necessary that people strive to preserve these traditional arts. The community's ability to preserve traditional art activities depend on the capacity of its members to uphold it; art can only be given meaning by the community, hence there is no art without community (Prabhawati, 2017:21). Needless to say, the survival of traditional arts depends on how people think of them. Their meanings can take the form of noble values or symbolic meanings associated with traditional art (Rindasih, Izzudin and Baiquni, 2022). The Kotagede area is a residential area in the Yogyakarta region which retains its traditional art activity. It is an urban village with an intriguing history of the development of the arts. Kampung Bumen is the name given to the urban village.

Srandul is an interesting indigenous art form found in Kampung Bumen. After 1998, this artistic endeavor has begun to be observed again (Widihastuti, 2021). The potential of these traditional arts in their growth and development contributes to the identity of the village in relation to its development in a more advanced direction: as an Arts Village. Apart from its commercial value, Srandul for the Bumen people is one of the community art activities rich in symbolic meanings and includes the learning of noble values of collective life in Kampung Bumen.

Furthermore, in the interactions of Kampung Bumen Srandul arts, symbols have been used to interpret the noble values. Traditional art, such as Srandul, can serve as a foundation for the identity of a village while also functioning as a form of communication among the locals. Communication defined as a process, a symbolic activity, and an exchange of meaning between individuals (Ren, 2021) becomes an important pattern for enticing others to join in on the enjoyment (Dewi and Budiwirman, 2020).

Based on the above literature, several strategies need to be implemented to maintain the existence of Srandul as mere entertainment for the people, such as festivals or preservation in the local sphere, such as village cleaning activities or community celebrations. Srandul is additionally believed to be a traditional activity with myths associated with it. Only in Jabrohim's (2012) report is it stated that Srandul could be used as an alternative to supporting Islamic da'wah. That is, banners can be used for reasons other than entertainment as they represent values. Given that there is potential for Srandul to be used for additional uses, such as explaining the symbolic meaning of noble values in the Srandul art of the Purba Budaya Group in Kampung Bumen, Kotagede.

In this context, this study aims to describe the symbolic meaning of noble values in the Srandul art of the Ancient Culture Group in Kampung Bumen, Kotagede. Its objectives are:

1. To interpret Srandul art as the product of aesthetic literary expressions, which requires the use of meaningful symbols by village communities who live and develop in an area, especially in Kotagede, Yogyakarta.
2. To record the folk art of Srandul art, with insights into cultural semiotics, to be used as a reference.

Review of Literature

There are numerous studies that explain and analyze Srandul art. For example, Jabrohim (2012) presents Srandul as an option to supporting Islamic da'wah because Srandul performance is visual. Sulistianto (2016) discusses the journey of Srandul art in Karangmojo Hamlet, Sleman Regency, Yogyakarta from 1985 to 2013, showing that Srandul is a traditional art that is still developing in Yogyakarta society and maintains its authenticity and simplicity amidst globalization of dominating modern culture. Similarly, Pratopo (2018) discusses the presence of the Suryo Arum Cokrokusuman Srandul community as entertainers in the entertainment held at the Kali Stone Arrangement Art Festival on October 14th, 2018 at Kali Code Yogyakarta. Moreover Supriyanto (2020) explains that Srandul art is performed once a year in a series of village cleaning ceremonies in Bulu Village, Karangmojo, Gunungkidul,

Yogyakarta, because the Bulu people still believe in the myth that their territory has been protected by the forerunner of Bulu Hamlet, namely Kyai Mojo.

Srandul is a group dance, often known as a dance theatre, because it incorporates dances, dialogues, and songs accompanied by *terbang*-styled music, *angklung*, and *kecrek*. Rohman (2020) discusses the art of Srandul in Dukuhan Hamlet of Magelang, which first appeared around 1982 and whose performances are frequently based on public demands to fill in ceremonial events (circumcision or marriage). Widiastuti, (2021) shows the Suketeki community's efforts to revive Srandul as a type of oral literature through composition, transmission, and performance. As a result of renewal, the original function of Srandul's oral literature, which was a propagator of Islamic da'wah, has become an entertainment, and subsequently has also become an instrument of critique, notably of government policies. Widyasari and Yuwanti (2022) points out that Srandul is recorded as a folk performing art which has originated in Yogyakarta, where enthusiasts are beginning to fade. Thus, the communication strategy in the form of festivals is seen as being helpful in preserving the traditional arts of Srandul through the younger generation (regeneration). Dermawan (2021) draws attention to the Srandul dance's body record feature in Dukuh Seman, Wonosari Village, Bulu District, Temanggung Regency, Central Java. In this case, the *suita* dance is separated into four parts: the first is about birth, the second about knowing dancing, the third about inner conflict, and the fourth about rebirth. Despite these studies, there is a paucity of research that delve deeply into the performances and values of this art.

This study seeks to discover connections that have not been examined by previous relevant studies. The main area of study is Srandul art, which is seen as being comprised of symbols conveying local wisdom of the vernacular settlements.

Research Methodology

This study uses a qualitative research method with textual or symbolic analysis, also known as hermeneutic analysis. It focuses on modes of aesthetic expression and symbolic meaning in Srandul art. Data collection methods include participant observation and documentation studies. The data analysis implemented refers to Miles and Huberman's (2018) analysis, in which the data analysis process is used concurrently beginning with the process of collecting data, reducing, clarifying, characterizing, concluding, and interpreting all information selectively. The last step in data analysis is verification, or verifying the validity of the data using dependability and confirmability (Guba and Lincoln 1994). Data from observations, interviews, and documents are then evaluated to draw conclusions through cross-examination with specialists or colleagues. It also uses member checking, which entails soliciting checks from informants, players, and spectators.

Findings

The Background

Traditional art has developed as a means of aesthetic expression and entertainment (Umazah 2021). Their presence is inextricably linked to the ideology, worldview, and traditions that apply and are enforced by the indulging community. Thus, traditional art is sustained by its socio-cultural environment. Most traditional arts begin as traditional ceremonies/rituals. Hence, their development and preservation are constantly linked to community ceremonies, such as cleansing the village/*sedekah bumi* (earth alms) (Darmawan et al. 2019). People in most vernacular settlements think that if the arts were not presented in traditional ceremonies, it would lead to catastrophe (Harpawati 2017). Generally, almost all performances begin with a prelude, which is frequently followed by a prayer and offerings of sacrifices (Sunarto 2021). Thus, from the perspective of function, traditional arts are considered to be able to perform actions to repel destructions (preventing calamities), even though the function of entertainment eventually dominates these traditional arts activities.

Unfortunately however, traditional art has begun to be negatively affected by modern culture during its development since it is felt that it could not keep up with developments/changing times and was also not dynamic (Sunarto 2021). The solid mystical

thoroughness prevalent in traditional arts is also rejected by people who are enthusiastic about a particular faith, as well as by people who increasingly do not believe in superstitions. Nonetheless, the community acknowledges what resides in traditional art, including the noble values/life and work hard to constantly preserve them (Nursyam 2022).

The rise of art and pop culture as an impact of globalization has put traditional art under the threat of extinction (Pranitisari 2016). People of Kampung Bumen, on the other hand, have never shied away from preserving their culture and traditional arts, one of which is Srandul. It is an act of theatre similar to theatrical performances or acting (Rohman 2020). Indeed, it is based on traditional folk play and tells stories about agricultural topics such as fertility, prosperity, epidemics, and calamities (Sulistianto 2016).

The use of the *oncor* (torch), which is stuck in the midst of the performance venue, is the most noticeable feature of this artistic production. Furthermore, the aspect of spontaneous interaction between players and musicians who can have direct conversations fills in the narrative. Srandul is frequently accompanied by simple musical instruments such as *kendang* (drums), *angklung*, and huge *terbang*. It is performed by a group of approximately 15 people. Srandul conversation takes the form of *parikan* (a type of rhyme) or songs and discussions. The traditional art form, as well as the clothing worn, is akin to *kethoprak ongklek* (*kethoprak barangan*). Some of the gamelan instruments used are: *saron peking*, *kendhang*, *kethuk kempul*, *gong*, and so forth. The ongklek is not used by Srandul of Kampung Bumen Kotagede to hang the gamelan when they are carrying the singing. The gamelan is still functioning. At the heart of the arena, there is an oncor (torch) with five axes. A support pole adorned with various types of leaves and plants may be found beneath the oncor. Puring leaves are commonly used to make Srandul in Kampung Bumen.

The Purba Budaya group and Srandul art

The Purba Budaya group is one of Kotagede's Srandul groups. Purba Budaya is located in Kampung Bumen of Kotagede. Mr. Basis Hargito's group of about 35 people never forgets to finish each stage with *ubarampe* offerings such as market snacks (*jajan pasar*), *kembang setaman* (multi-various flowers), and incense.



Fig. 1: Srandul Art Performing Dance

Source: Author

Srandul art performances are typically held in an open location. Performances can take place in the yard or on the field. The performance area of Srandul art is typically in the form of an arena stage between players, musicians, and the audience, rather than the proscenium stage. The lighting instrument used is merely a torch placed around the performance area. The choice of performance location is particularly flexible because the Srandul art performance at Ratu Boko Temple does not have a distance between the artists and the audience, which is backed

by Javanese common and cultural aspects. Audiences of performing arts, whose nature only lasts a moment or flashes through sight and hearing, require audio-visual acuity, specifically observational acuity, in order to properly create the communication relationship between the spectacle and the audience (performers-audience). The Srandul art performance space does not have particular standards with the audience around when the performance is in process, and the audience can join in, such as performing songs and dancing together (Sumandiyo 2012).

The story told in Srandul art is carried out through conversations and songs presented in Javanese. The *saron*, *demung*, *bendhe*, *gong suwukan*, *angklung*, and *kendhang tengahan* are the most common instruments used at this time. Srandul is typically played in open places (yards or fields) and within structures, while performances in Kampung Bumen take place in the Kampung Bumen Pendapa. The show lasts around 4 hours, from 20.00 to 24.00 WIB. Some of the performed plays are: Babad Arab, the story of Sayidina Ali in the play Sword of Kangkam Pamor Kencana Musna; Babad Jenggala, the play of Kethek Ogleng; Babad Demak, with the play Perawan Sunthi; and Folk Tales, with stories of Andhe-Andhe Lumut, Jaka Bodho, Jaka Wasis, and more. Srandul art is also known as dialogue dance drama since it is presented through the means of stories, dance routines, dialogues, and songs. One of the plays often played in the Srandul art in Kampung Bumen is a story from the Babad Arab, about Sayidina Ali in the play Sword of Kangkam Pamor Kencana Musna. Srandul is not a traditional art that originated in Bumen Village, but it has risen in popularity in Kotagede, particularly in Kampung Bumen. The interaction activities that are interlaced amongst artists in this Srandul art are intertwined using the dominance of language symbols; the language used in this Srandul art is Javanese Krama (the Javanese language of everyday conversations). It is easier for artists to communicate with this language-based communication in order to capture and respond to meaning in communication. Symbolic interaction is predominant in this art form, with artists communicating directly without the use of intermediaries (Blumer 1986). Srandul Purba Budaya in Kampung Bumen has its own characteristics, such as the presence of Srandul Kampung Bumen's vocal poems (singing) that recounts about the situation of the people of *guyup rukun* (those who get along harmoniously) in Kampung Bumen, being calm, and also the hopes to build Kampung Bumen. These verses are commonly performed during plot shifts in Srandul.

The verses are as follows:

<i>Simbok alah simbok anakmu njaluk thiwul</i>	'O mother, your child asked for thiwul'
<i>Simbok emoh thiwuuuul...emoh thiwul....simbok, emoh thiwul ayo kanca pada ngumpul.</i>	'Mother, you don't need thiwul, don't be thiwul..mother, don't be thiwul, let's gather together'
<i>Simbok alah simbok anakmu njaluk ketan</i>	'O Mother, your child asked for ketan (sticky rice)'
<i>Simbok emoh ketaaaaaan...emoh ketan....simbok, emoh ketan ayo kanca pada jejogetan.</i>	'You don't need ketan, don't have ketan (sticky rice)...mom, don't have sticky rice let our friends dance'
<i>Simbok alah simbok anakmu njaluk tela</i>	'O mother, your child asked for cassava'
<i>Simbok emoh telaaaaaaa...emoh tela....simbok, emoh tela ayo kanca suka-suka.</i>	'Mom, you don't need sweet potatoes, don't have sweet potatoes.... Mom, don't have sweet potatoes, let's be happy friends'
<i>Simak ramak kembang duren ndara</i>	'Simak ramak durian flower , master'
<i>Kembang duren, iki Srandulsaking Bumen</i>	'Durian leaves, this is Srandul from Bumen'
<i>Simak ramak kembang mlathi ndara</i>	'Simak ramak Bungan Melati (jasmine flower), master'
<i>Kembang mlathi, Kampung Bumen Kampung Seni</i>	'Bungan melati, Kampung Bumen is the Art Village'
<i>Simak ramak kembang angka ndara</i>	'Simak ramak jackfruit leaf, master'
<i>Kembang angka, budaya ayo dijaga.</i>	'Jackfruit leaf, Let us preserve culture'
<i>Yongka-yongki mbok cilik kembang uwi</i>	'Young and old, ladies and gentlemen of uwi leaves'
<i>Kembang uwi, limang RT dadi siji</i>	
<i>Yongka-yongki mbok cilik kembang sukun</i>	
<i>Kembang sukun, RW 6 guyub rukun</i>	
<i>Yongka-yongki mbok cilik kembang jambu</i>	
<i>Kembang jambu, kampungku tansaya maju</i>	

<i>Mas emaseeee kembang aren</i>	'Uwi leaf, five RT (neighborhood Association) into one'
<i>Kembang aren, ayo mbangun Kampung Bumen</i>	'Young and old, ladies and gentlemen of <i>sukun</i> (breadfruit) leaf'
<i>Mas emaseeee kembang gedhang</i>	'Sukun leaf, RW 6 <i>ruyub rukun</i> '
<i>Kembang gedhang, Kampung resik ati padhang</i>	'Young and old, ladies and gentlemen guava leaf'
<i>Mas emaseeee kembang pelem</i>	'Guava leaf, my village is progressing'
<i>Kembang pelem, kabeh rukun ati ayam</i>	'Mas... palm leaf'
<i>Mas emaseeee kembang mundhu</i>	'palm leaf, let us build Kampung Bumen'
<i>Kembang mundhu, monggo sami bersatu padhu</i>	'Mas..banana leaf'
	'Banana leaf, clean village, bright heart'
	'Mas...manggo leaf'
	'Manggo leaf, all is harmonious and tranquil'
	'Mas... <i>mundhu</i> leaf'
	' <i>Mundhu</i> leaf, let's all come together to unite'

Srandul used to be a story that was related from one story to the next. Therefore many people called it the story of Pating Srendil. The songs (rhymes) in this subtitle are new inventions developed by Kampung Bumen performers in order to attract more observers and can be used to express many different meanings all through the Srandul performance. In Kampung Bumen, there are noble ideals inherent in Srandul art, which are interpreted through the presence of symbolic meanings in various elements, such as stories, poetry (singing), costumes (dressing), preparatory activities, or arts implementation equipment. Among these noble values are:

a. Noble values regarding the life essence

Noble values regarding the essence of life in general include beliefs in the rulers of Nature and life meaning as a gift from the Almighty (God). Such values in Srandul art can be noticed in the initial stages at the beginning of the practice as well as the beginning of Srandul performance. *Srandul* is distinguished by the fact that it always opens with an offering (now substituted with flowers) and is staged at the heart of the performance area. This is simply an appeal for safety and smoothness during the staging process.

b. Noble values in terms of the work essence and work ethic

Values such as unwavering spirit, patience, tenacity, persistence, struggle, and heroism in achieving goals are embodied in Srandul art, both in its narrative and in the performance of its acts. In Srandul's stories, such as the Play Pedang Kangkam Pamor Kencana, a king in the land of Puser Bumi, Sayidina Ali, losing a royal heirloom that was seized by Raja Lakat, a powerful and arrogant ruler. Sayidina Ali lost the war with King Lakat while searching for this heirloom and then retreated to his domain. However, on the way back, it was discovered that Sayidina Ali's wife had gone to follow Sayidina Ali to the kingdom of Lakat and had met Raja Lakat.

By trickery, she has been made to agree to marry Raja Lakat but was allowed to keep the heirloom of the Kangkam Pamor Kencana Sword. Sayidina Ali's wife subsequently assassinated Raja Lakat with the heirloom and returned to the kingdom to get back with Sayidina Ali. This story teaches the characteristics of perseverance and never giving up when fighting for something worthwhile.

Because this Srandul art involves many people in its performance, it demands hard work and a rigid attitude in practice. This training use instils in the younger generation the principles of hard effort and never giving up. Training for the art requires patience, perseverance, and determination from those taking part.

c. Noble values governing the human-nature relationship

These noble values related to the relationship between people and Nature are more appropriately interpreted as an attitude of balance and harmonization with Nature. This attitude reflects an admiration for Nature and an understanding of the meaning of its presence to the lives of the residents of Kampung Bumen. These values are embodied in Srandul art in the form of Puring leaves, which are constantly used to decorate the *oncor* (torch) for lighting in the staging area. Apart from being attractive, the presence of Puring leaves serves as a warning to Kampung Bumen villagers that Nature/environment (plants) live with human life, therefore they should always be friendly with Nature for the sake of harmony and harmonization with the surrounding Nature. Not only Puring leaves can be used to decorate the *oncor* (torch) in the center of the arena, but they can also be substituted with other leaves that have symbolic importance regarding the nature of the relationship between people and Nature (environment).

d. Noble values related people's perception about time

This art embodies noble values related to human perception of time, with a direction that leads to the difficulties of time discipline. Because the art involves a large number of individuals in its performance, it requires time discipline repercussions for the performers who are involved in it, both in terms of rehearsal and performance.

Another symbolic aspect of Srandul story can be discovered in the humorous interlude. This scenario contains satire and education that can be used as a guide. The education communicated in this joke is usually strongly tied to community activities in Kampung Bumen village on the basis of kinship, mutual collaboration, courtesy, harmony, and so on, concluding with an expression of pride in Kampung Bumen. The presence of *dagelan* (humor) is also interpreted as a symbol that in this world, it is necessary to have a division of time and when to determine the transition, living life must indeed be serious, but it must also be accompanied by educational entertainment so that there is no saturation in oneself and surrounding environment.

e. Noble values in interpersonal relation between people

Srandul's artistic endeavors reflect the outstanding characteristics of human relationships with others. These values include mutual cooperation, harmony, unity, and respect for others. Love between people, kinship, and even religion in society are examples of wonderful relationships with others. Srandul art is a multi-artist collaboration that serves as a gathering place for people to maintain peace and communicate with one another in order to sustain connectedness and kinship as an integrated whole.

Some of the stories that are frequently staged in Srandul art include the story of the Babad or chronicle of Kediri Jenggala (Panji Asmarabangun), stories from Demak with the play Perawan Sunthi, and stories with the play Pedang Kangkam Pamor Kencono (Sayidina Ali). The three stories all teach patience, justice, and doing good for others. The story in the literature is essentially a warning to people on how to behave in everyday life. The story of Perawan Sunthi urges all living beings to be grateful, humble, and not disobedient. The story also emphasizes that in order to benefit everyone, people must forgive one another. Sayidina Ali's story also has many heroic values that can be used as a lesson for all the viewers. The moral of the narrative is that good will always achieve victory, and that women are powerful beings capable of defeating arrogant men. The fundamental themes of Sayidina Ali's story are justice and never giving up.

From the standpoint of costumes (clothes), Kampung Bumen captures the values of diversity, acculturation, and togetherness in Srandul's story for the younger generation. On stage, Sayidina Ali's dress with typical Middle Eastern features looks to be a complete opposite of his wife's attire with traditional Javanese feminine

characteristics. Raja Lakat wears Javanese qualities in this narrative, as do the jokesters in this Srandul story, who wear Javanese attire and Islamic featuring characters such as caps/*kopyah* on their heads, a sort of cultural acculturation in Bumen. In general, several young generations of Kampung Bumen have captured traditional art in Bumen Village as holy art with positive guiding values.

Conclusions

Traditional art, particularly Srandul in Bumen Village, has evolved into an important resource in the development of the Bumen Village community's welfare, namely as Bumen Village's self-identity. Bumen Village has a distinct identity as an Art Village, thus traditional art activities within the Bumen Village community have begun to be packaged in the form of tourism products in order to achieve commercial success. Nonetheless, Srandul by Purba Culture of Kampung Bumen, in its evolution, reflects symbolic meanings of noble values for the people of Kampung Bumen. These symbolic meanings communicate a number of messages to the people of Kampung Bumen in particular, and to the people in the surrounding area in general.

There are symbolic connotations that express noble values for the community in the art of Srandul Purba Budaya in Kampung Bumen.

The forms are as follows:

- (1) Offerings are defined as media used to seek safety. Efforts to find safety at work are interpreted as noble rules concerning the essence of life.
- (2) The narrative (play) and the training process of Srandul involve a lot of learning about the values of hard work, perseverance, patience, hardship, and heroism. These values are viewed as noble values addressing the nature of work and work ethic, where doing work has always been a goal that affects the work ethic.
- (3) The presence of *Puring* leaves in the middle of the Srandul performance arena is interpreted as a reminder that when carrying out any work, one must always pay attention to harmonization with nature (environment), harmonization with nature is interpreted as noble values regarding the relationship between humans and nature.
- (4) The humorous scene (*dagelan*) in the central part of the Srandul story is seen as an analogy of how life must be managed (time distribution/harmony). The act of Srandul art training itself teaches a lot about disciplinary values. In terms of time, the ideals of discipline and harmony are viewed as noble virtues in terms of human sense of time.
- (5) The presence of symbolic meanings in the form of varied clothing combinations used in Srandul itself includes learning about the values of mutual respect for diversity. While the plot (play) in the staging of Srandul, as well as the Srandul training session itself, contain an enormous amount of learning about values such as mutual cooperation, harmony, love, kinship, and justice. These values are viewed as noble values in human relationships with one another.

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