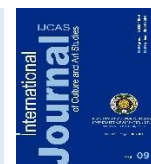




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The Dynamics of the Development of *Canang Kayu* Musical Instruments in the Aceh Singkil Community

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ABSTRACT

This study discusses the Dynamics of the Development of *Canang Kayu* musical instruments in the Aceh Singkil community. *Canang Kayu*, which initially served as a traditional musical instrument in rituals and religious activities, has undergone changes in form, function, and context of use over time. Using a descriptive qualitative approach through observation, interviews, and documentation, this study was analyzed based on Herkovits' Theory of Change. The results of the study indicate that the *Canang Kayu* musical instrument has undergone changes in its aesthetic subjects, objects, and ethics. These changes can be seen in the number of notes and in the player's position at formal events and traditional ceremonies. Despite the changes, *Canang Kayu* continues to uphold the values of local culture and the identity of the Singkil community.

Keywords: *Canang Kayu, Dynamics, Aceh Singkil Community, Local Culture*



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1. Introduction

The Singkil people are one of the ethnicities located in the southern coastal area of Aceh Province. The origin of "*Singkil*" comes from the word "*sekel*," which means "want." The people of Singkil live alongside the Gayo and Alas tribes. Physically, the Singkil people are similar to and related to the Gayo people and the people of Alas. Their traditions and culture are also different from those of the Acehnese people, who are the majority in Aceh Province. The Singkil people have experienced significant mixing with neighboring ethnicities, such as Gayo and Alas, as well as immigrant groups, namely Mandailing, Nias, Aceh, Malay, and Minang. However, most of those living in the Singkil tribe's customary territory have integrated into the Singkil culture.

Singkil also has traditional arts that are usually performed at large events such as weddings and traditional parties. The art of Singkil itself consists of dance and music. The dance art consists of the *dampeng* dance and the *ambe-ambeken* dance, accompanied by musical instruments such as *rabana*, gong, double-sided drum, and *canang kayu*. *Canang kayu* is a traditional musical instrument that has an important role in the culture of the Aceh Singkil community. This musical instrument is generally made of convenient wood, measuring 20-30 cm in length and 3-4 cm thick, and is used in various traditional ceremonies and social activities. This musical instrument falls into the classification of idiophones; the sound comes from the vibrations of its body. This musical instrument is a form of xylophone made of wood and produces the tones do, re, mi, and fa. Usually, the *canang* is placed on the feet and then hit. In the past, in the Aceh Singkil community, this musical instrument was played in the rice fields for self-consolation, but now it is played at major events such as weddings, traditional parties, and during circumcision.

However, as time went by, the *canang* experienced a change in dynamics, from 4 notes to 8 notes, or 1

octave (Adi, 2024; Afrianto, 2020; Lubis, 2024,2019). Likewise, the presentation, which used to be performed solo, is now performed in an ensemble with several other traditional instruments, such as 2-sided drums, *rapai*, gong, and *sarune*. Likewise, the author will discuss the function and position of the *canang* music game itself later.

The change to *canang* music was made by a singkil artist, namely Rafliansyah. He is the chairman of the traditional music group Destanada II. Rafliansyah considers that changes in *canang* music are affecting the development of *canang* itself. Finally, he took the initiative to compose music, combining *canang* music with modern music. He did not want the use of *canang* to be limited to entertainment in the rice fields or to traditional party events. He wants the *canang* displayed at formal events and entertainment for the Singkil people. That way, he tried to expand the scale from 4 notes to 8 or even more. Likewise, with the ethics of the game position, which is considered not good, he tried to change it with a resonator box by sitting cross-legged with his legs, which he felt was better than the previous one, which stretched his legs. Because when the Destanada group wants to perform in front of regional leaders, it must be in a good, polite position. With this change, the public is interested in enjoying *canang* in a new style, especially among young people. And the change continued, and there was nothing that made people angry about it.

Assessing how these changes affect the community and efforts to preserve local culture, because it is known that, in the era of globalization, people switch to technology, which affects the style of art itself, especially in the *canang* musical instrument. To understand more deeply about the dynamics of the development of this musical instrument, it is important to conduct in-depth research. Therefore, the author wants to research the dynamics of the development of wooden *canang* musical instruments among the people of Aceh Singkil. This research provides a broad insight into the understanding of the traditional arts of Singkil and the importance of preserving cultural heritage as part of the nation's identity.

2. Method

The research method in this study is descriptive qualitative research. This research will try to describe and interpret what exists (it can be about existing conditions and relationships, emerging opinions, ongoing processes, consequences or effects that occur, or developing trends). According to Whitney (1960), the descriptive method is the search for facts by interpreting them correctly. According to Suryabrata, descriptive research aims to make sense of situations or events (i.e., provide a description).

In this research method, data is collected with several qualitative data collection techniques, namely: 1). interviews, 2). observation, 3). Documentation. To obtain data and information for this scientific paper, the author conducted direct interviews with the Music Players who were determined to be informants. The Key Informants the author will interview are Mr. Bahauddin, an artist, and Rafliansyah, a musician with the Destanada II Group. In this case, the documents obtained in the field and used are in the form of literature on scores, recordings, photographs, reports, biographies, articles, and so on.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Changes in Wood Canang

The changes and demands of the times have made some Traditional music into Performances. This kind of thing happens not only with the shift in *Canang Kayu* musical instruments, but also with almost all types of musical instruments in Aceh, both in the coastal area of Aceh Singkil and in the Gayo mountainous area. This is due to a misunderstanding of the law in the field of art. The prolonged lack of concern makes one aspect of art in Aceh almost disappear, further exacerbated by the government's lack of concern in fostering and exploring the potential of Aceh Singkil's cultural arts. In the community, Singkil *canang* is a very important art to be preserved. From the beginning of its history, this art has served a very noble function for the Singkil community, namely as a medium of entertainment and a medium for traditional preservation in the context of wedding parties and welcoming important officials. In its development, the wooden *canang* has undergone many changes in its organological form, function, and performance. From Herkovist's opinion (in Merriam, 1964, p. 303), the author sees the changes that occur in the wood cane as arising from internal factors within the person or the perpetrator himself. Namely Rafliansyah, the leader of the Destanada II group, who developed the concept of changing the wooden *canang* musical instrument both organically and in terms of performance.

3.2 Aesthetics of Canang Kayu

Aesthetics in an individual are also found in a group of people or society. Aesthetic value is the metrics used by the community to assess attractiveness. Because aesthetic experiences can be felt by society, aesthetics can be applied in the study of sociology or anthropology (Dindin, 2013). According to Dharsono (2007, p. 6),

"Aesthetics comes from the Greek *aesthetom*, which means the ability to see through sensing, or perception of feelings, experiences, sights." In Selo Soemardjan's view, society is people who live together, and who produce culture. Soerjono Soekamto, in his book *Introduction to Sociology* (2012), formulated that society is a group of human beings who live together, have long-term relationships, have a sense of unity, and constitute a system of living together. Currently, the community has developed the wooden *canang* not only as an instrument but also as a performance piece that can be enjoyed aesthetically. Some people gathered in a field for a while watching a wooden *canang* show.

However, if the person in the field is seen as part of or a representation of a certain society—for example, the Batak community—by considering all its systems and complexities, then it can be seen as part of society; thus, the audience can become the subject of sociological aesthetics. The music of the *canang kayu* that is watched becomes an aesthetic object. The value that shapes the audience's emotional appearance is aesthetic. As for the object of the Aesthetic subject, namely, what factors affect the *Canang Kayu* musical instrument itself, both in terms of economic factors, entertainment factors, and political factors. Then Aesthetics is seen in terms of its objects, which can be studied physically from the *Canang* musical instrument itself.

3.3 Factors Aesthetic Subjects

3.3.1 Economic

The effect of economic factors on art workers cannot be overemphasized, especially in Aceh Singkil. Many artists still survive despite the challenges of existing *Canang* conditions and fewer job opportunities. As stated by informant Rafliansyah. If we only maintain the *canang* in its original condition, the public will be less interested. Moreover, it only uses four tones. It is not perfect to perform trendy songs now. This makes gig jobs and *canang* orders even less. Moreover, Rafliansyah is also a *canang* producer with his business name *Rumah Canang*. With the change in scale and presentation on *Canang*, it can improve the economic conditions of the artists. Thus, people will call us to play at traditional parties and formal events by performing trending songs. This also contributes to the increase in *canang* production orders and artists' income in Aceh Singkil.

3.3.2 Entertainment Factor

Humans in general need entertainment in various forms to relax their minds from the boredom and fatigue of daily routines. The entertainment he wants depends on his passion, so there are various ways humans use to get it. One of the ways humans use to express their beauty is by listening to music or singing. *Canang kayu*, a musical instrument characteristic of singkil that makes the chanting of tones more unique and beautiful, has become a form of entertainment for the people of Aceh Singkil Regency. With beautiful verses performed by the Destanada Group, this will make for fantastic entertainment. Thus, of course, the public will feel entertained by watching the performance of the art of *canang kayu*.

3.3.3 Political Factor

The presence of political factors within the Government in Aceh Singkil Regency has greatly affected many aspects of *canang katim* and the concerns surrounding it. As conveyed by Rafliansyah in an interview with the author, at the time of the Acting Regent of Aceh Singkil, Mr. Marthunis, ST, DEA, MA, held him. He was very enthusiastic about the artistry of the *canang*. Moreover, the *Canang Players* are performed by young people from Aceh Singkil. His concern was expressed when he opened the *Kayu Canang Festival* in Aceh Regency and other art activities. And he also discussed with Rafliansyah's brother that the *canang* should always be used as a symbol of opening at formal government events.



Figure 1. Acting Regent of Aceh Singkil (Central) and Head of Service (left), artist Bhauddin P (Right), inaugurating the Art Festival (Documentation of Rafliansyah)

3.4 Factors Aesthetic Object

3.4.1 Scales Change

According to the Informant, the scale used to have only four notes: Do, Re, Mi, and Fa. However, as time goes on, many people want a change in *canang kayu* music. That is, to make the wooden *canang* increase in size as the number of scales reaches 1 octave, or even 2 octaves, to be played with the current popular songs. It has aesthetic value for an individual (Rafliansyah) and is also found within a group, the Singkil community. Aesthetic value is the metric used by the community to assess attractiveness. Because aesthetic experiences can be felt by society, aesthetics can be applied in the study of sociology or anthropology.

3.4.2 Changes in the Wooden Canang from the Aspect of the Appearance of the Show

What is meant by the performance in this article is a cultural activity involving Artists and Audiences, as well as the transmission of meanings through the message of the performance. Performing arts usually consist of music, dance, and theater, as well as the study of performance in general that has no limitations in the work done on the stage, but also those that occur outside the stage, such as sports, games, circuses, carnivals, pilgrimages, and ceremonies (Sal Murgiyanto, 1995; Dahlia, 2021).

A performance is a performance/performance, an activity that introduces or showcases music, dance, theater, and other works of art to the broader community. Performances are a way to communicate between the Creator of the Work and the Enjoyer of the Work. In this article, what is meant is an activity that is carried out to give praise to the creator and to someone through verses that are packaged into a unit to convey what is intended. The changes in performance also occurred in the *canang kayu*, both in its presentation and in the way the performance was used.

3.4.3 Changes in Performance

According to Mr. Bahauddin P. and Rafliansyah in the author's interview, a good presentation of Canang is usually played in complete or in an ensemble with other supporting musical instruments, such as gongs, 2-sided drums, and *rabana* drums, so that the sound produces a good tone, and according to the beating of what song will be played. And must know in the beating, and must play it slowly and with a calm soul, so as to give rise to beauty and harmony.

However, the change in presentation was carried out by the Destanada II group, led by Rafliansyah, combining traditional *canang kayu* ensembles with other modern musical instruments, such as guitar, bass, and drums. This is according to Rafliansyah in the author's interview: to attract the Singkil community, especially young people who are no longer interested in traditional music, combining the tradition of Canang music with modern music will be a special attraction for the people of Singkil. However, it still maintains the wooden Canang's characteristic identity.

3.5 Ethics

Ethics in I Nyoman's journal "Ethics as human self-control" (2015, pp. 89-100) is a form of self-control in living together. Humans are Homo Sosius, a creature of friends. He cannot live alone; he is always together with others. Human beings can only live as well as possible and have meaning only if they can be together in

society. It is inconceivable that human beings live alone without contact with and association with other humans. Only by living with humans can they develop naturally. Thus, this shows that humans need the help of others for the perfection of their lives. In life together, people have to govern themselves. No one can do as he pleases. He must adapt to the environment, subject to the applicable behavioral rules. Thus, a person is only free to act within the rules of good behavior. The rules for good behavior are also called morality or ethics. In this ethical framework, a person is judged by his behavior, which can be considered good or evil (Sura, 1985, p. 38).

This also sees an ethical change in the game of wooden *canang* in Aceh Singkil, which in the past people only used 4 wooden *canang* and put it on the feet with a resonator has now changed to use a resonator box, this is done so that when *canang* is played at big events such as wedding celebrations and welcoming important guests such as regents, sub-district heads and village officials can be played without Stretching your legs, because this concerns a position that is considered (impolite), with the resonator box playing *canang* can be done standing while placing it on the table and this is very nice and polite when welcoming important guests.

4. Conclusion

The Singkil people are one of the coastal communities of Aceh, living in Aceh Singkil Regency, and they still maintain their art and daily life. This can be seen in every event carried out by the Singkil community, which displays a musical instrument that has become the identity of the Singkil community: Canang Kayu. Canang Kayu has a history and development that have changed significantly, both in terms of sociological aesthetics and ethics in the game of Canang itself. This is also inseparable from the community's demand that *canang kayu* continue to exist in this era of globalization. And it is also favored by the community, especially young people.

Several factors cause wood *canang* to change aesthetically and sociologically. These factors are grouped into two: subject and object. As for the subject of the change, it includes several factors, such as Economy, Politics, and Entertainment. Meanwhile, in terms of objects, the changes include scales, which were originally 4- to 8-tone. This is the community's desire. Canang continues to perform popular songs with complete tones, while still maintaining the characteristics of his sound. Likewise, the change in the game of canang kayu aceh singkil: in the past, the game was played by projecting the legs; now, it is played with a resonator box and in a cross-legged position. This is considered better than the previous way of playing, which was disrespectful during formal events such as welcoming the regent, sub-district head, and governor.

In terms of its development, *canang* continues to be in the people of Aceh Singkil. But it's just that canang must keep up with existing musical developments and innovations. So that the community still feels like enjoying it. In this case, Destanada made a new change, namely, composed music, traditional music combined with modern musical instruments. While it has minimal functions, its significance lies in the skill required to play it effectively. Although the techniques may seem simple, achieving the desired sound requires a calm, focused approach. Therefore, it is crucial to recognize the genuine artistic value that originates from human creativity, as exemplified by the use of the Wooden Canang in various ceremonial customs of the Singkil community.

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