

Desacralization of Myths and Beliefs of *Malam Jumat Kliwon* by Joni Iskandar

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Abstract:

The result show that desacralization occurs when the meaning of values and symbols that were previously considered sacred changes, so that the younger generation gets a new, more relevant understanding. Joni Iskandar portrays the figure of the ghost in this song in a humorous and playful way, removing the fear that usually accompanies *Malam Jumat Kliwon*. The song manages to ease the tension that often arises in mystical contexts through lyrics that tell the relationship between humans and supernatural beings in a humorous way. The purpose of this research is to study the phenomenon of desacralization in Indonesia's local cultural traditions, especially those related to *Malam Jumat Kliwon*, by analyzing the lyrics of a song created by Joni Iskandar. For centuries, Thursday Night of Kliwon historically considered a sacred time with a mysterious aura, has been an important part of Javanese culture. However, the way people see the world this night has started to change along with modernization, urbanization, and the influence of global culture. A descriptive qualitative method is used in this research to study how sacred elements of culture can be desacralized and incorporated into popular culture through the observation of song lyrics.

Keywords: Desacralization; Javanese culture; *malam jumat kliwon*; cultural phenomenon

INTRODUCTION

One of the most famous mystical beliefs in Indonesia is the *Malam Jumat Kliwon* (Thursday Night on Javanese day cycles of Kliwon). Javanese calendar system recognizes five cycle in a week: Pon, Wage, Kliwon, Legi, and Pahing. In the context of Javanese culture, *Malam Jumat Kliwon* is considered a sacred time with a strong mystical aura. Indonesia is a country rich in cultural diversity, customs, and local wisdom that has been passed down from generation to generation (Antara, Yogantari. 2018). Each region has its own values and culture, which are often related to spiritual and mystical elements. *Malam Jumat Kliwon* is one of the cultural phenomena that has mystical value in the lives of Indonesian people, especially on the island of Java. Historically, *Malam Jumat Kliwon* is considered a sacred and mysterious time, where supernatural activities and the presence of spirits are believed to be more intense. This tradition has been part of Javanese culture for centuries and gave birth to various myths and rituals that are still practiced today. Belief in

the power of *Malam Jumat Kliwon* is not only limited to religious rituals, but has also become part of the narrative spread through folklore, literature, and even popular media such as songs and horror films (Widyatwati, 2014).

Traditionally, in the culturally diverse land of Java, *Malam Jumat Kliwon* is often associated with various ritual practices such as the cleaning of heirlooms. Heirloom cleaning is a ritual of purifying objects that are believed to have spiritual powers such as Keris, Tombak, and Jimat. These objects are sacred to the people of Java, considered as ancestral heritage that must be preserved (Arisky & Fauzi, 2024). In addition, there is also a myth about having sex on Thursday Night of Kliwon which is believed to have certain privileges. In some cultures there are also those who believe that doing it on a certain night, especially Thursday Night, can bring good luck to the child who will be born later (Riyadi & Syibly, 2024). Various other ceremonies aim to maintain harmony between humans and the supernatural world. The belief that this night is the right time to pray, cleanse oneself spiritually, and ask for protection is an integral part of the community's tradition (Zulfikar et al., 2022). This is reinforced by the myth that on this Night, supernatural beings such as the spirits of ancestors, jinn, and kuntilanak are more active. Javanese people, in particular, still hold the view that on this Night the boundary between the human world and the supernatural world becomes very thin, so various prohibitions and taboos are imposed to avoid unwanted things.

However, along with social and cultural changes in the modern era, people's views on *Malam Jumat Kliwon* began to shift. The process of modernization, urbanization, and the influx of global cultural influences have an impact on traditional beliefs that are considered old-fashioned and less relevant to today's life (Harniwati, 2024). Music as one of the popular media also plays a role in changing people's perception of *Malam Jumat Kliwon*. One concrete example is the song “Pada Malam Jumat Kliwon” created by Joni Iskandar. The song explicitly depicts *Malam Jumat Kliwon* as no longer a scary time full of taboos, but rather something lighter and can be enjoyed as part of entertainment.

This phenomenon is interesting to study more deeply, especially from the point of view of semantic change in the context of popular culture. The song “Pada Malam Jumat Kliwon” shows how sacred cultural elements can be desacralized and adapted into part of popular culture that is more accepted by today's younger generation (Iskandar, 2004). This change illustrates a social transformation in which traditional meanings are reinterpreted in accordance with the times.

METHOD

The method used in the research is descriptive qualitative, which is commonly used by research to describe symptoms and events. Qualitative research is research that is more focused on describing the nature or nature of the value of an object or symptom that is natural. The data collected is in the form of words or pictures so that it does not emphasize numbers (Abdussamad, 2021: 31). The data collection technique used is observation, where researchers observe the lyrics in the song *Malam Jumat Kliwon*. Data analysis uses a qualitative approach that is used to determine the phenomenon of Desacralization in the phenomenon of *Malam Jumat Kliwon*.

This research looks at the representation and response of the community to songs related to *Malam Jumat Kliwon*, with the data collection method of non-participant observation. To understand the phenomenon of desacralization of *Malam Jumat Kliwon* that appears through the songs, data analysis is carried out with a qualitative approach. In addition, the purpose of this study is to identify the social and psychological impact of the changes in the way people see *Malam Jumat Kliwon* depicted in popular songs.

According to Berger, secularization is a process in which sectors of society and culture are separated from the dominance of religious institutions and symbols. When talking about society and institutions (Miessuary, 2015). Furthermore, Nurcholis Majid relates the concept of desacralization to the thoughts of Robert N. Billah, who with sociology equates desacralization and secularism. Desacralization is a model of sociological activity that often signifies the meaning of freeing citizens from the trap of superstition, in the sense of not completely leading to the elimination of the role of religion. By Billah's thinking, what desacralization means is releasing values that are considered sacred from their sacred status (Widiarti, 2021). In this study, the concepts of secularism and desacralization are used to analyze the meaning of the song "Pada Malam Jumat Kliwon" by Joni Iskandar. Through his entertaining and humorous lyrics, Joni Iskandar managed to turn the 'mystical' impression Thursday Night of Kliwon into something entertaining and relaxing.

DISCUSSIONS

The song "*Malam Jumat Kliwon*" created and sung by Joni Iskandar combines horror and comedy in a unique way. The lyrics tell the story of a person's experience with a mysterious figure on the mystical Thursday Night of Kliwon. The song has a simple but imaginative narrative that brings the listener into the gripping and intriguing atmosphere

of the night. In accordance with the theory presented by Berger.

The lyrics of this song not only tell about encounters with spirits, but also describe the fear and antics that often occur when experiencing mystical experiences. Joni Iskandar by using straightforward and descriptive language managed to create a clear picture of the female characters encountered, as well as the main character's reaction that reflects a mixture of comedy and fear.

The researcher will examine various aspects of the lyrics of “Jumat Kliwon”, including theme, character, and symbolism. In addition, the researcher will discuss how Joni Iskandar creates the atmosphere of the story by using elements of local culture and community beliefs. We will also discuss how comedy can help ease the tension caused by the horror theme.

Malam Jumat Kliwon – Joni Iskandar

Pada malam Jumat Kliwon (On the Thursday Night of Kliwon)

Aku pulang lewat kuburan (I returned home through the cemetery)

Aku bertemu perempuan (I met a woman)

Duduk rileks dibatu nisan (Sitting relaxed on a tombstone)

The first stanza describes Thursday Night of Kliwon: In Javanese culture, Thursday Night of Kliwon has a spiritual meaning (Damayanti et al., 2024). However, from a lyrical perspective, this time provides a more desacralized atmosphere, as if eliminating the sacred meaning that usually exists on that night. Depiction of Graves: The graveyard is considered a sacred and sacred place that is commonly traveled through. The woman that the lyrics are referring to is the ghostly figure of a kuntilanak, who is relaxing on a tombstone.

Aku nyengir dia tertawa (I grin, she laughs)

Gigi ompong, panjang taringnya (Missing teeth, with long fangs)

Rambut gondrong, botak atasnya (Long hair, bald on top)

Jari tangan keriting semua (Her fingers all curly)

In this stanza, the singer describes the figure of Ghost Kuntilanak in a funny way. Contrary to the figure imagined by people in general who are considered scary. Through this lyric, the singer reverses the creepy meaning of the ghost into something funny and absurd. In the sentence “Gigi ompong, panjang taringnya” it describes the ghost in an inverted way, usually having sharp and scary teeth, but the ghost here has an imperfect appearance. Although “Panjang taringnya” has a creepy meaning but with imperfections in the teeth that make it seem funny. Furthermore, the sentence “Rambut gondrong, botak atasnya” has an unkempt impression on the ghost, usually kuntilanak is depicted with long hair that covers the face.

Merinding bulu jaketku (My jacket's hairs stand on end)
Tak dapat ku berlalu (I can't move past)
Ketika aku mau pingsan (When I was about to faint)
Akhirnya dia pingsan duluan (She fainted first)
Melihat celana kedodoran (Seeing her pants sagging)

In this stanza what is meant by 'my jacket' is compared to scent fur. In addition, in this lyric the singer reverses the situation where generally when someone meets a ghost he will faint but in this lyric the ghost is the one who faints because he is surprised to see 'kedodoran' pants. The use of the word 'kedodoran' serves to give a funny impression. Usually 'kedodoran' is used to describe pants that are too loose or fall down due to improper use.

Malam Jumat yang selanjutnya (The next Thursday Night of Kliwon)
Kubermaksud lewat lainnya (I intended to take another way)
Malah nyasar ke hutan rimba (But ended up lost in the jungle)
Tempat setan berpesta pora (Where demons were having a wild party)

In this stanza, the singer implies that he tries to avoid the road he previously traveled, which is the graveyard, the next night. One of the highlights of this lyric is "Tempat setan berpesta pora" as if changing the creepy impression attached to the forest into a fun place.

Pada malam Jumat Kliwon (On the Thursday Night of Kliwon)
Aku pulang lewat kuburan (I returned home through the cemetery)
Aku bertemu perempuan (I met a woman)
Duduk rileks dibatu nisan (Sitting relaxed on a tombstone)

In the same repetition as the first stanza, it explains Thursday Night of Kliwon: In Javanese culture, Thursday Night of Kliwon has a spiritual meaning (Damayanti et al., 2024). However, from a lyrical perspective, this time provides a more desacralized atmosphere, as if ignoring the sacred meaning that usually exists on that night. Depiction of Graves: The graveyard is considered a sacred and sacred place that is commonly traveled through. The woman that the lyrics are referring to is the ghostly figure of a kuntilanak, who is relaxing on a tombstone.

Aku nyengir dia tertawa (I grin, she laughs)
Gigi ompong, panjang taringnya (Missing teeth, with long fangs)
Rambut gondrong, botak atasnya (Long hair, bald on top)
Jari tangan keriting semua (Her fingers all curly)

In the repetition of the second stanza, the singer describes the figure of the Kuntilanak Ghost in a funny way. Contrary to the figure imagined by people in general who are considered scary. Through this lyric, the singer reverses the creepy meaning of the ghost into something funny and absurd. In the sentence "Gigi ompong, panjang taringnya" it

describes the ghost in an inverted way, usually having sharp and scary teeth, but the ghost here has an imperfect appearance. Although “Panjang taringnya” has a creepy meaning but with imperfections in the teeth that make it seem funny. Furthermore, the sentence “Rambut gondrong, botak atasnya” has an unkempt impression on the ghost, usually kuntilanak is depicted with long hair that covers the face.

Merinding bulu jaketku (My jacket's hairs stand on end)

Tak dapat ku berlalu (I can't move past)

Ketika aku mau pingsan (When I was about to faint)

Akhirnya dia pingsan duluan (She fainted first)

Melihat celana kedodoran (Seeing her pants sagging)

In the repetition of the third stanza, “my jacket” describes scent fur. In addition, in this lyric the singer reverses the situation where generally when someone meets a ghost he will faint but in this lyric the ghost is the one who faints because he is surprised to see 'kedodoran' pants. The use of the word “kedodoran” serves to give a funny impression. Usually “kedodoran” is used to describe pants that are too loose or fall down due to improper use.

Mencium badanku bau menyan (My body smells like incense)

Akhirnya dua-duanya pingsan (In the end, both of us fainted)

This last stanza shows that in Javanese culture, Menyan usually appears in spiritual traditions related to mystical things (Suwardi, 2006). However, in this context the situation is reversed, where usually the smell of menyan indicates the presence of ghosts but in this lyric it is described as a sign of the singer's presence as well. This shows their surprise when they met until they fainted.

After analyzing the lyrics of the song “*Malam Jumat Kliwon*” sung by Joni Iskandar, it shows that there is a phenomenon of desacralization that occurs in Javanese culture, especially in matters related to *Malam Jumat Kliwon*. This desaclarization is clearly seen where, *Malam Jumat Kliwon* which was originally considered sacred and mystical, but through this song Joni Iskandar turned it into something funny and entertaining. This creates a new outlook, from something tense to something lighter.

Through this song, Thursday Night of Kliwon which is always associated with the presence of supernatural beings, is depicted with humor. The supernatural creatures that are considered to always appear during Thursday Night of Kliwon, through the lyrics of this song are described in an absurd way, compared to what people generally think. For example, “Toothless, long fangs”, “Long hair, bald on top”, and “Curly fingers all over”.

This changes the image of the supernatural creature, which was initially considered scary, into a cute figure. These depictions eliminate the fear that arises on Thursday Night of Kliwon.

In addition, music, which is a part of popular culture, plays an important role in the desacralization phenomenon Thursday Night of Kliwon. Music is a part of human life in both sacred and profane activities (Nafiah & Azzhara, 2020). Furthermore, music has the power to change one's perspective (Shaleha, 2019). This includes, how a person views a tradition or belief that is associated with mystical elements. In a fun way, music as one of the people's preferred entertainment, easily spreads or reintroduces traditional cultural elements, which were originally considered sacred, into something relevant.

Desacralization is also related to Modernization. Modernization in social science is a form of transformation from a less advanced or less developed state towards a better one in the hope that a more advanced, developed and prosperous life will be achieved. Modernization does not only concern material aspects, but also immaterial aspects such as mindset, behavior, and so on (Rosana, 2015). As the times developed, people began to question the values that existed before.

CONCLUSION

This desacralization, the values and symbols that were previously considered sacred have changed their meaning. Providing more understanding of the role of music media, especially as a means of communication in conveying the values of norms and traditions. Thus, this research is expected to make a significant contribution to culture, especially understanding how local traditions will continue to develop despite the challenges of continuous change. We can better appreciate the richness and diversity of existing cultures, and encourage people to actively participate in maintaining their cultural heritage. This research is expected to contribute to understanding the phenomenon of changing meanings in local cultural traditions, especially in the context of how music media can influence people's perceptions and beliefs. Providing new insights into how local traditions can change and adapt to the evolving social context and enrich the study of popular culture and music. In addition, it is how components of local culture can be maintained or changed in the face of the influence of globalization. By understanding this process, we can see how people do not just become passive consumers of popular culture, but keep redefining their own cultural identity. This shift in meaning encourages us to reconsider the way we

interpret tradition in an ever-changing world. By looking at how local traditions change, we can understand how communities maintain and actively renew their cultural identity. As a result, this research is crucial to understanding the process of desacralization and giving credit to creativity and capabilities. It also gives credit to the creativity and ability of cultures to survive in various contexts of the current context and enhances understanding across generations.

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