

*Tracing the Existence of Javanese Gamelan Music Through the Role of Karawitan Masters: The Pillars of the Existence of Surakarta Style Javanese Gamelan Music (1950s-1970s)*¹

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I

A pillar is an upright structure which strengthens or supports something but it can also mean ‘a prominent figure.’ If we associate the word pillar with Javanese karawitan, we can take it to mean something which supports the existence of Javanese karawitan during a particular era, and provides a foundation and direction for the development of karawitan in the next era. In connection with the meaning ‘a prominent figure,’ the word pillar can be taken to mean prominent karawitan figures (master musicians or *empu*) who have made an important contribution to the development of karawitan by transmitting their knowledge and skills, helping to form a new generation of Javanese karawitan musicians, developing new conceptual and theoretic ideas, and pioneering creativity in the field of karawitan. If we understand the meaning of the word pillar in a broader sense, we can interpret it to mean those who have coloured the life of karawitan during their lifetimes. Coloured in the sense of creating a number of ideas and works using various different approaches, the results of which are used as a point of reference by numerous Javanese karawitan communities. The ability of these master musicians to play several instruments and the way in which they treated or interpreted the music also influenced the karawitan community or other musicians. As such, they ensured the continued existence of Javanese karawitan, which has continued to develop in various new forms, genres, and using a variety of different compositional approaches. Hence, these karawitan masters played an important role in the context of the life of Surakarta style Javanese karawitan. Why is this so?

Javanese karawitan exists because it was intentionally created or invented by man. The music grew, developed, and underwent changes because it was intentionally nurtured, developed, and changed by man. Those who have the ability to develop Javanese karawitan in this way are no ordinary people. They are creative human beings who have a forward looking perspective, a broad knowledge, and a sensitivity to various social, cultural, and artistic phenomena. For this reason, the rest of society idolizes them, looks up to them, and regards them as important sources of information and as leaders. In the world of Javanese karawitan these people are known as karawitan masters or *Empu Karawitan*. Some people even believe that whatever the karawitan master does in the field of Javanese karawitan is always right. As such, his followers will defend his actions at all costs if anyone tries to disturb him. In the world of karawitan it is thought that this kind of attitude emerged because of the master musician’s level of excellence in his work (including his knowledge, skills, creativity, and the ability to transmit or pass on this skill to others, so that he is able to influence the perception of other people to emulate his actions. Hence, these master musicians are not only artists but also leaders in a particular field of the arts

¹Most of this paper is taken from a book by the same writer entitled *Gagasan dan Kekaryaannya Tiga Empu: Pilar Kehidupan Karawitan Jawa Gaya Surakarta Masa Pascakemerdekaan Periode 1950-1970-an*. Bandung, 2008. Most of this book was originally the writer’s doctoral dissertation (2005).

who have done a great deal for the life of the particular art in which they are involved.²

On this basis, tracing the existence of Javanese karawitan (also other kinds of gamelan music or genres of ethnic music) in a particular area and during a particular period of time through the role of these master musicians/leaders is a model/methodology which deserves to be given more attention in the field of art research. By tracing the steps of the master musicians who played an important role in preserving the existence and development of Javanese karawitan, the following points were discovered:

1. the process of transferring their skills and knowledge
2. the ways in which they musically interpreted the repertoire
3. the changes and innovations made
4. their views on karawitan
5. the ways in which they reacted towards the phenomenon of change in each era
6. the ideas behind their compositions
7. their contribution to developments in the life of karawitan
8. their influence on the life of karawitan
9. their methods of learning, creating, and formulating knowledge about karawitan
10. the ways used to ensure the continued existence of karawitan
11. the colour of their karawitan creations.

If all of these aspects can be uncovered, the life of karawitan, related to a particular style, area, and period, can be outlined to discover the causal process along with rational explanations. This means that within certain limits, this kind of study can provide a contribution to the growth and development of karawitan knowledge, which is also important for strengthening the history of karawitan. This paper focuses on a discussion about a study of the existence of Surakarta style Javanese karawitan between the 1950s and the 1970s through the role of three prominent karawitan masters of that time, Ki Tjokrowasito, Ki Martopengrawit, dan Ki Nartasabda.

II

When Ki Tjokrowasito, Ki Martopengrawit, and Ki Nartasabda made changes and developments, or created new karawitan compositions, they most certainly used new ideas as the background to these changes. These men were artists who were recognized for their superiority compared with other artists. In Javanese they are often referred to as men who are “*punjul ing apapak, mbrojol ing akerep*”, which means being superior to other men in their abilities. They were karawitan masters who were not only great virtuosos but also had a high sense of creativity and a good understanding of the numerous artistic problems associated with the field of karawitan. In this context, these karawitan masters were actually a living library, and a source of knowledge and information about Javanese art and culture.

² Waridi (ed). *Menimbang Pendekatan Emik Nusantara* (Jurusan Karawitan dan Pascasarjana ISI: Surakarta, 2004).

The period from the 1950s to the 1970s was an important period in the history of Surakarta style Javanese karawitan. During this period there were a number of fundamental changes in orientation which affected various Javanese karawitan activities. These changes included new ideas, a change in the orientation of compositions, developments in the function of karawitan, and developments in aesthetical concepts. This period also witnessed the establishment of formal institutions for karawitan education by the government, namely Konservatori Karawitan (KoKaR) Indonesia (1950), Akademi Seni Karawitan Indonesia (ASKI) Surakarta (1964), art schools and colleges which were educational institutions for studying, researching, and documenting the arts, including Surakarta style Javanese karawitan. At approximately the same time, a number of radio stations also began to open, funded entirely by the government. During the same period, several pioneers appeared in the field of Javanese karawitan, developing both new forms of composition and also new karawitan theories and concepts.³

If we look at the problems in the life of karawitan during the post-independence era, many of them are closely related to the following questions:

1. Was the life of Surakarta style Javanese karawitan the same before and after Indonesian independence?
2. If there were changes, why did these changes occur? What aspects changed? What factors caused these changes? Who were the pioneers to these changes?
3. What was the nature of Surakarta style Javanese karawitan compositions during this period, and who coloured and acted as pillars to support these compositions?

There are of course still many other questions that can be posed related to the problems in the life of Surakarta style Javanese karawitan.

There is one essential point implied in the above set of questions, that the life of karawitan during the post-independence era was definitely supported by pillars which enabled Surakarta style Javanese karawitan to continue to exist and even to develop. The pillars which supported Javanese karawitan at that time included institutions, communities, and leading figures in the community. In my opinion, these figures were the most important pillars. Why? Because I regard these figures as the main pillar of support. The reason for this is outlined below.

I believe that the life of Surakarta style Javanese karawitan during the post-independence era between the 1950s and 1970s was strongly coloured by the work, thoughts, and role of Ki Martopengrawit, Ki Tjokrowasito, and Ki Nartosabda. The three of them were important figures at that time, and their work, position, and status in the karawitan community is believed to have played an important role in colouring the life of Surakarta style Javanese karawitan. For this reason, I intend to focus my attention on the role of these three karawitan figures in supporting, colouring, and developing the life of Surakarta style Javanese karawitan. To discover more about their role, it is necessary to trace the steps of these three figures in their karawitan activities, as well as their credibility, thoughts, views, compositions, and influence on

³ Waridi, "Tiga Pilar Kehidupan Karawitan Jawa Gaya Surakarta Masa Pascakemerdekaan Periode 1950-1970-an". Dissertation for PhD in Cultural Studies at UGM, Yogyakarta (2005).

the life of Surakarta style Javanese karawitan, and various other aspects of their lives which are related to social, cultural, and artistic activities. In order to support the argument that the role of these three figures as pillars in the life of Surakarta style Javanese karawitan during this period merits a more in-depth study, it is necessary to position the three figures proportionally in context.⁴

These three figures who coloured the life of Surakarta style Javanese karawitan during this time can be viewed as individuals who expressed the era in which they lived through their work in the field of karawitan. Individuals can only grow and develop in the context of their own community. An artist is a social being and a social product, who forms his own community. An artist forms his self-identity through a struggle to confront the social and historical tasks that he understands and performs in his own way. Individual achievement is a convergence between strength and internal inclinations, and the social conditions in the environment in which the individual lives.⁵ In this context, the achievements of these three karawitan masters who each played their own individual role in their own way, performing social and historical tasks by applying the internal strength of their own creativity on the social conditions of the time.⁶

III

“Ki Martopengrawit was a karawitan master, maestro, and intellectual genius in the field of Javanese karawitan. He was the first master of Surakarta style Javanese karawitan who was willing to and capable of writing a wide range of material about karawitan. Equipped with a broad range of knowledge and the skill to interpret or treat karawitan in different ways, he began to formulate a number of concepts and theories about Surakarta style Javanese karawitan. Many of these concepts and theories inspired young intellectuals to study and write more seriously and in more detail about these subjects. Some of his well-known concepts and theories which have inspired and are used as a reference by young intellectuals include subjects such as *wilayah gembyang* and *kempyung* on the *gendèr*, the theory of *arah nada* (pitch direction), the concept of mode or *modus* in *patet*, the concept of *padhang ulihan*, and the concept of irama. All these theories and concepts were founded on the approach of *garap* or the way of interpreting or treating Surakarta style Javanese karawitan. Ki Martopengrawit also contributed many new ideas about the education system for traditional music in Indonesia through the educational institutions Konservatori Karawitan Indonesia (KoKar) and Akademi Seni Karawitan Indonesia (ASKI) in Surakarta from the 1950s until the end of his life (1986). He was also a productive composer, a talented performer on several of the main instruments, and a great teacher. All of his work was related to the current problems in the community. He also composed many karawitan compositions for dance accompaniment, dance-drama, and religious purposes. Although he never taught abroad, Ki Martopengrawit had many foreign students.⁷ All of Ki Martopengrawit’s works, ideas, and creativity were of course founded on a number of specific considerations as well as his broad

⁴ Waridi, 2005.

⁵ Arnold Hauser, *The Sociology of Art*. Translated by Kenneth J. Northcott (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), 308-313.

⁶ Op.cit.

⁷ See Waridi, *R.L. Martopengrawit Empu Karawitan Gaya Surakarta* (Yogyakarta: Mahavhira, 2001) and Waridi, 2005.

knowledge, including knowledge of theoretical matters and also knowledge about karawitan composition and teaching systems for Javanese karawitan. It is widely believed that the fruit of his thoughts, creativity, and ideas about the teaching system for Javanese karawitan had a significant impact on the life of karawitan in the following era.⁸

Ki Tjokrowasito was a karawitan master and maestro of Javanese karawitan who had the opportunity to teach and spread interest in Javanese karawitan in the United States of America (1971-1992). He was a karawitan composer who, through his compositions, spoke about and revealed the problems of those living round about him, and also supported programs to help improve the lives of the Indonesian people. This attitude can be seen in a number of his compositions, such as *Rondha Malam*, *Sopir Becak*, *Sepur Truthuk*, *Modernisasi Desa*, *Tiga Lima*, *Gembiraloka*, *Irian Barat*, *Tari Bali*, *Gula Klapa*, and so on.⁹ In addition to these musical compositions, or *gending*, he also composed many *gending* for *beksan* dances and the Ramayana dance drama, and also a suite entitled *Jaya Manggala Gita*. Not only was Ki Tjokrowasito known as a productive composer, he was also a skilled performer who passed on his ability to play various gamelan instruments to many in the younger generation, especially playing techniques and patterns, vocabulary for *garap*, vocal technique, and the broad repertoire of Surakarta style *gending*. It can of course be assumed that all his hard work played a prominent role in supporting the existence and development of karawitan at that time. Although Ki Tjokrowasito was born in Yogyakarta, he specialized more in Surakarta style Javanese karawitan because his work was based more in the Pura Pakualaman than the Yogyakarta Keraton. He learned much about karawitan from the karawitan masters of the Kraton Kasunanan Surakarta.¹⁰

Ki Nartosabda was not only a phenomenal puppeteer or dalang, he was also a highly productive karawitan composer who composed around 500 works for karawitan, including both arrangements of existing pieces and new compositions. Ki Nartosabda had a talent for capturing the wealth of material found in traditional folk and pop music and then arranging it in the form of popular works for karawitan with a lively, flirtatious character. Most of the themes found in his works are based on the reality of the lives of the common people, with a small number of metaphors and symbolic references to the beauty of women and romance. A few examples of this are *Aja Lamis*, *Sléndhang Biru*, *Sarung Jagung*, *Tukang Cukur*, *Wandhali* (Jawa, Sunda, Bali), *Kudangan*, *Glopa- Glapé*, and *Setyatuhu*. Ki Nartosabda was the first composer to include *garap langgam* and '*dangdutan*' in Javanese karawitan. Several of his ideas and patterns of *garap* were used as a reference by karawitan composers in other areas, and his compositions strongly coloured virtually every karawitan performance. Even to this day, some of his compositions are often included in Campursari performances."¹¹

⁸Op.cit.

⁹Rahayu Supanggah, "Komposisi (baru) Karawitan", paper presented at a Seminar on Music Composition at Institut Seni Indonesia (ISI) Yogyakarta in April, 1996.

¹⁰ Waridi, 2005.

¹¹ Ibid

The brief description above about the position of these three figures in the context of the life of Surakarta style Javanese karawitan can be used as a reference point for answering the questions posed above, by looking at how the three figures played their own role as a pillar for the life of Surakarta style Javanese karawitan during the post-independence era (between the 1950s and 1970s).

Javanese karawitan during the period between the 1950s and 1970s existed in three different social situations which occurred from 1950 to 1960, 1960 to 1968, and 1969 to the end of the 1970s. Each of these situations had a strong influence on *garap*, on the compositions created, and on the existence of karawitan itself. In order to discover more about these social situations and their connection with Javanese karawitan and the supporting figures, a situational analysis is essential.¹²

The three karawitan masters being discussed in this paper can essentially be viewed as actors who had the sensitivity to interpret different situations and to base their actions on the results of these interpretations. These actions can result in two different effects: wanted effects and unwanted effects. The unwanted effects subsequently call for a new interpretation.¹³

A situational approach is used to discover and understand the lives of Ki Tjokrowasito, Ki Martopengrawit, and Ki Nartosabda in the context of space and time. The study focuses on how the three actors responded to the social, cultural, and political situation around them, and the actions they took in their karawitan work, as a result of these responses. From this situational analysis, we can learn the factors which caused changes in the paradigms of their work in the field of Surakarta style Javanese karawitan, and also the nature or colour of their works. It is thought that the social, economic, cultural, and political situation had a strong influence on the response of these artists which affected their imagination to produce new compositions. All three of these karawitan masters had a strong sensitivity to various phenomena which could be found in the surrounding community. It is likely that the wide variety of colour found in the karawitan compositions written during the period between the 1950s and 1970s in the life of Surakarta style Javanese karawitan was due to the role of the three figures described above.

IV¹⁴

During the post-independence era, Surakarta style Javanese karawitan underwent a significant shift in orientation in several of its aspects. These changes in orientation affected aspects of musicality (the *garap* and aesthetics of karawitan), function, freedom of creativity, the system for transmitting knowledge (karawitan education), systematization of notation, the fields of work available for artists, and their paradigms. This is an indication that Surakarta style Javanese karawitan is not static

¹² See Waridi, 2005.

¹³ Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr. *A Behavioral Approach to Historical Analysis* Toronto: Collier-Macmillan Canada Ltd, 1971, 69.

¹⁴ Most of this part is taken from a conclusions by the same writer entitled: "Tiga Pilar Kehidupan Karawitan Jawa Gaya Surakarta Masa Pascakemerdekaan Pereode 1950-1970-an". Dissertation for PhD in Cultural Studies at UGM, Yogyakarta (2005).

in nature but rather open and accommodative to every dynamic of social and cultural change in the supporting community. As such, Surakarta style Javanese karawitan is not living in a vacuum but rather undergoing a long journey which is constantly coming into contact with various dimensions of life. Musically, it not only has contact with the culture of the royal court or *kraton*, but also with the lives of the community and the karawitan which develops outside the *kraton*.

The shift in orientation of Surakarta style Javanese karawitan was clearly visible during the period between the 1950s and 1970s. This shift in orientation took place as a result of the changes in the political situation, which moved from a system in which the country was governed by the royal courts to a system in which the country was ruled by a republican government. In the post-independent era, Surakarta style Javanese karawitan was no longer simply oriented towards the needs of the royal courts. The *kraton* and all its officials were no longer able to act as Maecenas, nor did they have the power to control the aesthetical quality of karawitan, as was the wish of the *kraton*. The aesthetics of karawitan which were full of nuances of the *kraton*, both in the style of *garap* for *klenengan* and also *bedhayan*, spread rapidly outside the *kraton* walls through the servants (*abdi*) and former court musicians (*abdi dalem niyaga*) from the *kraton*. The quality of *kraton garap* was interpreted and practised by individuals with a high level of skill in karawitan, and was also determined by some karawitan communities according to their own musical taste. Ultimately, Surakarta style Javanese karawitan was no longer only understood as karawitan which was full of nuances of the *kraton* but also covered a much broader perspective.

There was also a shift in orientation in the field of work available for court musicians. When the *kraton* still held power, court musicians were seen as holding a high status and it was a position coveted by many skilled musicians outside the *kraton* but in the post-independence era, this image began to change. During this period, court musicians from the Kasunanan Surakarta and Mangkunegaran palace worked not only as servants to the king but in many cases found new jobs in a variety of different government institutions. Those who found new fields of work usually gave priority to their new jobs and their status as *abdi dalem niyaga* in the *kraton* was viewed more as a kind of service. This kind of attitude appeared because their new jobs offered a better and more secure future. Their skills as karawitan musicians were largely used for the benefit of the country and the general community. Under the republican government, karawitan acquired many new functions, being performed in social rituals or ceremonies, as entertainment, in competitions, as a means of expressing social phenomena, to accompany other performing arts, as political propaganda, and as independent concerts.

There was also a shift in orientation in the way knowledge was transmitted. In the post-independence era, the orientation of karawitan studies was systemized through formal karawitan education. In order to facilitate the learning of karawitan, the concept of *gatra* was invented, and the playing patterns of different instruments were systematized in the form of *kepatihan* notation and a number of sound symbols. In practice, this karawitan notation was also used in performances. There was a tendency towards a change in orientation in the context of musicianship, from what was formerly a vertical nature, in that a musician tended to specialize on one

particular instrument, to a horizontal nature, where many musicians had the desire to become experts on several different instruments. This change in orientation from vertical to horizontal was a result of the increased level of competition between musicians in the field of practical karawitan performance in the community.

One other shift in orientation which took place in the post-independence era was in the field of karawitan composition. During this era, the norms found in classical karawitan were no longer the only point of orientation for creating new compositions or *gending*. Karawitan masters with a high sense of creativity produced a large number of new works which were oriented more as a response to various social and cultural phenomena in the surrounding environment.

The changes in orientation which took place in Surakarta style Javanese karawitan did not happen without reason. One important factor which caused these changes was the karawitan masters themselves who had the ability to respond to social and cultural phenomena that were undergoing certain changes. These musicians had the ability to express their ideas through their karawitan compositions which then influenced other individuals and/or communities to follow in their steps. They communicated their ideas through karawitan concepts and/or compositions, and they managed to convince the rest of the karawitan community that what they were doing was right. Eventually, the results and influence of their work spread far and wide, through their followers. This factor resulted in a stronger orientation towards public interest. Another factor which caused the changes in orientation was the new situation of national independence. During the first few years after the declaration of Indonesian independence, the spirit of nationalism continued to inspire the creative imagination of Ki Tjokrowasito, Ki Martopengrawit and Ki Nartosabda. In this kind of psychological condition, they devoted all their skills and ability towards the spirit of independence which emerged in the form of new karawitan compositions in their own style. It is evident that the artistic and non-artistic factors overlapped and together determined the direction in which Surakarta style Javanese karawitan would begin to move. This fact strengthens the view that karawitan is not merely a sonic event but behind it there is also a social event. Political, social, cultural, and economic factors, together with the creativity of the artist in responding to a variety of phenomena means that the life of Surakarta style Javanese karawitan is not a single or homogeneous entity but rather a phenomenon which varies or changes from time to time in accordance with the social and cultural dynamics surrounding it.

During the period between the 1950s and the 1970s, Central Java was coloured by a variety of forms, structures, *garap*, *laras*, *patet*, and compositional approaches in the life of Surakarta style Javanese karawitan. The colour of classical karawitan with its court-style *garap* was still preserved and continued to exist in communities which played Surakarta style Javanese karawitan. The colour of classical karawitan was expressed through performances of *gending* from the repertoire that had been passed down from the era in which the Javanese kings held power. These performances could be heard on the radio, on commercial cassettes, in live concerts or *klenengan*, in performances of *wayang kulit*, *wayang wong*, dance, *ketoprak*, *laras madya*, *santiswara*, and in karawitan competitions which were held in some regions. In some communities, Surakarta style *gending* from the Javanese karawitan repertoire were

interpreted and performed according to the taste and requirements of the performance context. As a result of government policies, the style of *garap* from the court spread to many areas with the aid of the technology of radio broadcasting through a number of radio stations which operated on the Island of Java. In the opposite direction the style of *garap* from the village spread into the minds of karawitan musicians who were more oriented towards karawitan from the kraton. The *garap* of classical *gending* from the *kraton* was studied seriously in formal educational institutions and karawitan communities.

The contact between these two styles of *garap* in Javanese karawitan had a positive effect in that it enriched the musical vocabulary of each community. Karawitan in the villages, which was oriented more towards a brighter, livelier style of *garap* (*gobyok*, *sigrak*, *prenès*, and so on), was enhanced by the musical style from the kraton with its more serious and dignified (*agung*, *wingit*, *regu*) style of *garap*. Likewise, karawitan communities which were more oriented towards *kraton* style were enhanced by the village style of *garap*.

New kinds of *gending* began to appear along the classical style of karawitan, including both arrangements of existing *gending* and also new compositions. These *gending* first began to appear in abundance in the 1950s and continued to develop during the 1960s and 1970s. These new arrangements and new compositions (*kreasi baru*) used at least three different approaches: traditional, reinterpretation, and popular (especially Ki Tjokrowasito, whose works sometimes appear to use a 'modernistic' approach). Several other genres of music began to be adopted in karawitan compositions. With the increased sense of freedom artists were allowed, together with the opportunities for contact with other cultures, the end of this period saw a number of new *gending* which used techniques and/or other elements from other cultural areas and other musical genres which were adapted to suit Surakarta style Javanese karawitan. Some of these innovations included *gending* in triple time, vocal parts in choral style, elements of *langgam* and *dangdut*, and works with an inter-textual or inter-cultural character. These facts prove that the life of Surakarta style Javanese karawitan during the post independence era between the 1950s and 1970s was coloured by classical works which were a continuation of karawitan from the court, accompanied by new inter-textual and non inter-textual works, as well as innovative ways of rearranging existing works. Most of these new compositions, however, were still treated using the basic principles of Surakarta style Javanese karawitan. The continued existence of classical style karawitan along with the spread of innovative styles of karawitan was due to the role played by the prominent figures in Surakarta style Javanese karawitan at that time.

The repertoire of classical Surakarta style *gending* includes thousands of *gending* with different *laras*, *patet*, structures, forms, and characters. This repertoire of *gending* was subsequently treated with the aesthetical principles of karawitan from the *kraton*, in some cases processing and developing the *gending* according to the ability and creativity of the arranger, in accordance with the needs of a particular context. For this reason, Surakarta style Javanese karawitan became known not only as karawitan from the *kraton* but also came to be understood in a much broader sense. During the post-independence era (from the 1950s to the 1970s), the life of

Surakarta style Javanese karawitan in this broader understanding was coloured and supported by the three main figures described above, namely Ki Martopengrawit, Ki Tjokrowasito, and Ki Nartosabda. Each of these three figures, through their different roles and positions, and in different ways, became pillars for ensuring the continued existence of Surakarta style Javanese karawitan.

A strong foundation and the ability to respond to creative stimuli are important factors which helped form the character of Javanese *gending* composed by these three karawitan masters. As creative human beings, they were not satisfied simply with the knowledge they had already gained, but made an active and dynamic effort to shape their own identities. Their actions produced an image of dynamic human beings who were anti-deterministic and full of optimism. They were artists who adhered to an optimistic and anti-deterministic outlook throughout their careers. In their social environment, they had a sense of confidence which continued to move actively through their creative actions to form a charisma without having to be determined by the social environment around them. The works produced as the fruit of their creativity were diverse in the kind of approach used, as well as in the form, ideas, *garap*, goals, and different requirements.

The roles of Ki Martopengrawit (1914-1986), Ki Tjokrowasito (1909-2007), and Ki Nartosabda (1925-1985) in supporting the continued existence of Surakarta style Javanese karawitan during the period between the 1950s and 1970s showed some similarities and some differences. The similarities can be outlined as follows: Firstly, all three of them made use of their musical abilities to preserve and develop the life of Surakarta style Javanese karawitan. Secondly, all three of them used their sensitivity to read and interpret various social phenomena into musical phenomena. Thirdly, they all used the institutions in which they worked to transfer their skills to musicians in the next generation. Fourthly, they all believed that karawitan was not an inanimate or static object but rather a musical phenomena which continually presented new challenges to be treated in new creative ways. Fifthly, they used their followers as a place in which to plant their concepts about Javanese karawitan and to realize their creative ideas. Sixthly, they all emerged as leaders and pillars in the field of Surakarta style Javanese karawitan for a number of reasons: they had excellent skills in Surakarta style Javanese karawitan and other related fields, good opportunities for self-actualization, a strategic position in the community, a high level of commitment to preserve the existence of Surakarta style Javanese karawitan, and they also had people behind them who were able to encourage and support them to achieve their own maximum potential. All three of them were born into families of karawitan artists although with different levels of artistry. With all these similarities, it is not surprising that they used similar strategies to support the life of Surakarta style Javanese karawitan.

The differences between the three of them were primarily in their family backgrounds and their surrounding environments. Ki Martopengrawit and Ki Tjokrowasito were born, raised, and lived in the environment of karawitan from the court, whereas Ki Nartosabda was born, raised, and lived in the environment of travelling musicians who performed in a *tobong* or knock-down theatre with walls made from bamboo, and later became a famous dalang. This difference had a strong

influence on their aesthetical orientation and the choices they made in the context of supporting the life of Surakarta style Javanese karawitan.

All three of these musicians were professional artists who were recognized in the community of Surakarta style Javanese karawitan as karawitan masters, and who were the main orientation and source of information for other karawitan artists. As karawitan masters, the three of them had a high level of expertise and skill, the ability to compose new *gending* and/or songs, the ability to transmit their skills and knowledge to other artists, and the ability to transform or revitalize existing classical *gending* or other pieces of music in a new creative way. They also had a broad knowledge about the philosophy, ethics, and aesthetics of karawitan, as well as the ability to arrange existing pieces of music. All of these talents were used to play their own individual roles in supporting the life of Surakarta style Javanese karawitan. Each of them played a different role through their own chosen channels. They understood karawitan not only as a sonic event but also as knowledge and a way of behaviour.

Ki Martopengrawit's role in supporting the life of Surakarta style Javanese karawitan was carried out by channelling all his abilities into preserving the life of Surakarta style Javanese karawitan from the *kraton*. He not only worked as a skilled musician but was also an excellent teacher, a good organizer, and a creative composer, as well as an intellectual genius who produced many theoretic ideas for developing new karawitan concepts and theories.

Through formal education channels and government institutions such as Konservatori Karawitan, ASKI Surakarta, Radio Konservatori, and PKJT in Central Java, Ki Martopengrawit passed on all his skills and his ability to interpret and perform classical *gending* to his students. In the institutions of Konservatori Karawitan, PKJT, and ASKI Surakarta, he managed to save a number of karawitan techniques or playing styles for some of the main instruments, as well as *macapat* and *gérongan*, the *santiswara* repertoire, *sulukan*, *pathetan*, *ada-ada*, and *gendhing sindhénan bedhaya-srimpi*. The results of his documentation on these subjects are used as the main reference material in various formal educational institutions and also for the practical performance of Javanese *gending* in Surakarta style by community karawitan groups. Some of his musical interpretations are also used as a reference by other musicians and have therefore spread to other cultural areas in which Javanese karawitan can be found. With his creativity, he was able to enrich the repertoire of court style Javanese *gending* for various purposes such as concerts, dance, *wayang*, and social functions. In composing new works for karawitan, he succeeded in producing a new creative model which was based on the vocabulary of *garap* found in traditional court style karawitan. He created new *gending* using the vocabulary of *garap* for the rebab and gender, along with traditional children's songs, and elements of *sekatèn gending*. He also made many experiments to transform classical *gending* and children's songs into new songs and *gending*, using new ways of treating the form, vocal melodies, *irama*, *patet*, *laras*, and playing techniques of some instruments. Some of the problems he experienced during his lifetime, together with a number of social and cultural phenomena, were expressed through his new

compositions, and several of his works were able to enrich the existing repertoire of Javanese *gending* in Surakarta style.

When developing new concepts and theoretical ideas, Ki Martopengrawit formulated them using an approach based on *garap*. Subsequently, the concepts which he had formulated became the foundation and an important source of reference for anyone who wished to develop or learn more about concepts of karawitan. The concepts of pitch direction, *garap*, and melody (*lagu*) which he formulated have been followed up by a number of more in-depth studies. This is clear evidence that Martopengrawit was a pillar of Surakarta style Javanese karawitan which was based on the aesthetics of the *kraton* during the period between the 19050s and 1970s. Thanks to his great contribution, Surakarta style Javanese karawitan which is founded on the aesthetics of the *kraton* is still performed to a wide range of audiences today.

The role of Tjokrowasito in supporting the continued existence of Surakarta style Javanese karawitan was carried out using a number of different strategies, such as transmitting his musical ability to his students, pioneering new innovations in the field of karawitan composition, and enriching the repertoire of Surakarta style *gending* with a variety of forms and *garap*. The musical ability he passed on to his students was the same as that of Martopengrawit, namely his expertise and skills in playing court style karawitan. He worked seriously to pass on all his musical ability to anyone in the karawitan community who needed it. He taught and helped develop the skills of hundreds of vocalists and *pesindhèn*, and also improved the quality of numerous musicians in their ability to play various instruments. He also transmitted his musical ability and knowledge through formal karawitan education channels, such as Konservatori Karawitan Indonesia Surakarta, ASKI Surakarta, Konservatori Tari and ASTI Yogyakarta. Of course, all of these vocalists, *pesindhèn*, and musicians, and all the students who were fortunate enough to absorb some of Tjokrowasito's musical ability became the next generation of Javanese karawitan musicians.

When Tjokrowasito had the opportunity to lead the karawitan group at RRI Nusantara II in Yogyakarta (1950), he used the opportunity to preserve the quality and ensure the continuation of the performance of classical *gending*. Ultimately, during the period between the 1950s and 1970s, the karawitan musicians at RRI Nusantara II Yogyakarta, RRI Surakarta, Semarang, Surabaya, Jakarta, and Purwokerto were all excellent musicians who were skilled in the field of karawitan. This is one important factor which caused Surakarta style Javanese karawitan to exist in a much wider area than other styles of karawitan, in addition to a number of other factors. Tjokrowasito also played a prominent role in making Surakarta style Javanese karawitan popular in the United States of America. As a result of his refined touch, following on from Mantle Hood and Hardjo Susilo from Yogyakarta, Surakarta style Javanese karawitan thrived in America and attracted many students to study the performance of Surakarta style Javanese karawitan in more depth.

When political changes took place and a new republican government was formed, Tjokrowasito appeared as a pioneer of innovation in the field of Javanese karawitan. Through Javanese karawitan, he spoke much about political issues, democracy,

nationalism, and government programs. He created new works using various different compositional approaches, including 'tradition', 'reinterpretation', and 'modernism'. Most of his compositions used elements of Surakarta style Javanese karawitan. These compositions also inspired new works by younger composers. He expressed some of his attitudes towards social and political phenomena in his works. Tjokrowasito's contribution to the life of Surakarta style Javanese karawitan is concrete proof that he was a pillar for *garap* and a pioneer of innovation in Surakarta style Javanese karawitan.

Nartosabda (1925-1985) was born into a family of musicians who lived in poor conditions in a small village. From the age of 11, he lived among groups of travelling artists who performed *ketoprak* and *wayang* in a semi-permanent bamboo construction known as a *tobong*, travelling from one town to another and moving from one group to another. His experience performing in this kind of environment for 13 years (1936-1949) caused Nartosabda to choose a more entertaining style of *garap* in the karawitan he played. Nartosabda emerged as a different kind of karawitan figure to Martopengrawit and Tjokrowasito. While Martopengrawit and Tjokrowasito grew up in the cultural environment of the upper class, performing their artistic duties in formal institutions, Nartosabda grew up in a poor environment and in the world of travelling performers. This kind of cultural environment gave him a great deal of knowledge about the problems of village communities and also about the aesthetical tastes of the lower classes of society. This background had a strong influence on his artistic attitude or behaviour. With all these experiences, he developed his own way of supporting the continuity of Surakarta style Javanese karawitan.

Nartosabda supported the life of Surakarta style Javanese karawitan by rearranging existing *gending* to make them more popular in the community. One strategy he used was to provide his own creative touch by using a more entertaining style of *garap*. The *gending* which he rearranged became popular and received a positive response from most of the Surakarta style Javanese karawitan community. Another method he used was to create a large number of new compositions with a variety of different styles of *garap* and musical colour. His innovations focused more on vocal melodies, the way in which *balungan* melodies were played, variations in dynamics and tempo, and new musical patterns for some instruments. In this way, his compositions seemed to be more suited to the needs of the general public, and as such, they managed to reach into a broad public area. This shows that Nartosabda succeeded in discovering a new kind of karawitan *garap* which suited most parts of the community. Nartosabda was able to read and understand the taste of the community and to produce his compositions according to this taste. He managed to create his self-identity in the form of karawitan *garap*. The identity of his new style of *garap* attracted most of the Javanese karawitan community to imitate his steps. He also managed to enrich the existing drum patterns with new patterns for *kendhang lancaran*, *kendhangan ladrang*, *langgam*, and *dangdutan*. Both his reinterpretations and his new works were popular and enjoyed by most of the community. All of his new works followed traditional structures and used existing vocabulary from Surakarta style Javanese karawitan and elements of karawitan from other areas. These facts show that Nartosabda's contribution to supporting the continued existence of Surakarta style Javanese karawitan lies in his success in re-popularizing

and re-socializing classical *gending* and enriching the repertoire and vocabulary of *garap* in Surakarta style Javanese karawitan. as a result of his creative touch, the existence of Surakarta style Javanese karawitan became more lively. Nartosabda also passed on his vocal skills and his skills as a kendang player to other professional musicians and *pesindhèn*.

Ki Martopengrawit, Ki Tjokrowasito, and Ki Nartosabda, each in their own way, have been proven to be pillars in the life of Surakarta style Javanese karawitan during the period between the 1950s and 1970s. Without these three figures, it is probable that Surakarta style Javanese karawitan at that time would have been quite different. This fact also proves that the history of the journey of Surakarta style Javanese karawitan from one era to the next is largely determined by the important figures in each era. For this reason, it is important to trace the life of karawitan through the role of these figures. Thank you.

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