

## Transcending Notation: An Exploration of *Padhang-Ulihan* and *Pathet* within Javanese *Karawitan* Music

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### Abstract

This research aims to explore the manifestation of the immanent-transcendental relationship between Javanese individuals and their deity within their performance art songs. The analysis focused on Javanese scale settings known as *pathet*, as well as *padhang-ulihan* structures, which represent Javanese sentence styles in composition. These elements were examined to understand how the Javanese express their emotions and convey their thoughts to their deity. The data for this study were collected using ethnographic methods, including participant observation, in-depth interviews, and literature studies. The findings indicate that, as immanent beings, humans require symbols to communicate with their deities in the transcendental realm. Javanese people embody their way of life and perspectives on the universe through the melodies and song structures of *Karawitan*, a form of Javanese musical art. The analysis of *pathet* and *padhang-ulihan* reveals that Javanese individuals shape their worldview by selecting and playing *pathet* in conjunction with the coordinated construction of the *padhang-ulihan* model within a *Karawitan* musical notation.

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*Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi bagaimana relasi imanen-transendental antara masyarakat Jawa dengan Tuhannya termanifestasi dalam lagu-lagu seni pertunjukannya. Lagu-lagu tersebut akan dianalisis melalui struktur pathet, pengaturan tangga nada dalam musik Jawa, dan padhang-ulihan, struktur pembagian kalimat lagu dalam sebuah komposisi, untuk melihat bagaimana orang Jawa mengungkapkan perasaan dan berbagi pemikirannya kepada Tuhan.*

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*Data dalam proyek penelitian ini dikumpulkan melalui metode etnografi yaitu observasi partisipan, wawancara mendalam dan studi pustaka. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa manusia sebagai makhluk imanen membutuhkan simbol untuk berkomunikasi dengan dewa-dewinya dalam dimensi transendental. Orang Jawa kemudian mewujudkan cara hidup dan pandangan mereka tentang alam semesta ke dalam melodi dan struktur lagu Karawitan, seni musikal Jawa, jenis musik seni pertunjukan mereka. Melalui analisis pathet dan padhang-ulihan, ditemukan bahwa orang Jawa mengkonstruksi pandangannya tentang alam semesta dalam bagaimana pathet dipilih dan dimainkan dengan sinergi model padhang-ulihan yang dibuat dalam partitur Karawitan.*

**Keywords:** anthropology; ethnomusicology; Javanese cosmology; *Karawitan*

## Introduction

*Karawitan*, the traditional Javanese classical ensemble music of Yogyakarta, plays an important role in various aspects of people's lives there, including rituals, customary festivities like weddings, and entertainment. Using a symbolic approach similar to Geertz's methodology for analyzing culture, *Karawitan* can be examined in context by relating it to the Javanese philosophy of life and worldview, including how Javanese people perceive the natural environment around them, and so forth. *Karawitan*, a Javanese classical orchestra, like other arts, is an expression of human experience from their interaction with nature to produce musical compositions that tell stories about the process of human life as their interpretation of the nature and their relations to it, in addition to compositions that are intended for the purpose of entertainment.

Art is primarily a matter of perception of order in relations, accompanied by a feeling of rightness in that order, not necessarily pleasurable or beautiful, but satisfying some inner recognition of values. (Firth, 1994). We need to underline that, *relations, feeling of rightness, not necessarily pleasurable or beautiful, but satisfying some inner recognition of values* are based on “feelings”, which do not require him to fulfill beautiful and pleasant feelings, but “feelings” which fulfill a value of satisfaction (Dibben, 2012; Gell, 1999). The feeling Javanese people have for God is made tangible through *Karawitan* music, which aims to evoke God's

presence and connect people with the divine. Art plays a role in the relationship between humans and the transcendent by taking abstract thoughts and emotions and giving them concrete expression (Gie, 1976; Sumarsam, 2003).

The notes in *Karawitan* music are played with an instrument called *gamelan* (Soeroso, 1983). *Gamelan* itself as a Javanese classical music instrument itself is divided into two tunings, *slendro* and *pelog* which are then still categorized into *pathet*, such as *slendro pathet manyura*, *pelog pathet barang*, and others (Gunawan et al., 2022; Suprpto, 1993). Regarding how the tones of *pelog* and *slendro* can be formed, it seems to have something to do with the concepts of *pasar* (nuance) and *dina* (days) in Javanese society. Becker explains that the *slendro* tone system in Javanese *gamelan* is related to the knowledge of the Javanese people regarding the calculation of time which they call the *pasaran dina*, which includes *wage*, *legi*, *pon*, *kliwon*, and *pahing* (Becker, 1979). In short, *slendro*, *pelog*, and *pathet* are musical tunings and modulation used in Javanese classical music which will be explained and analyzed further in this study.

Based on the informant clues in this research, the naming of the tones in a barrel construction which resembles the naming of the human body and in turn how these tones are played in the *pathet* style is an embodiment of how the tonal symbols are used in the song to connect the human construction of realities and their perspective on the unseen world into something that is more material, something that is believed to be able to become an intermediary between oneself and entities outside oneself that cannot be reached by other media, such as painting, sculpture, or movement (dance).

The Javanese musical instruments known as “*slendro*” *gamelan*, with its five tones, symbolizes the five days of the week in the Javanese calendar called *pahing*, *pon*, *wage*, *legi*, and *kliwon*. In contrast, the “*pelog*” *gamelan* with its seven pitches represents the seven-day cycle of the Javanese calendar, which is based on Islamic calculations. In addition to marking the seventh day of the Arabic calendar and the five days of the Javanese calendar, Javanese music also assigns symbolic meanings to the notes in each octave,

specifically *penunggul* (1), *gulu* (2), *dhadha* (3), *lima* (5), and *nem* (6), which serve as metaphors for parts of the human body. Starting from *penunggul* which symbolizes human's head in which the logics are processed, *gulu* where the logic are connected to heart as source of life which placed in *dhadha* (chest), to *lima* and *nem* where each representing the lust and the sixth sense of human being as a symbol of perfection. This metaphor will further be explained in the discussion.

These melodies will eventually be arranged and performed in a manner that produces specific subtleties of feeling through *pathet* categorization and the *padhang-ulihan* model. The goal is to evoke certain “emotions” and connect with supernatural beings. The tone and delivery of the compositions examined in this study – “*Ladrang Mugi Rahayu*” and “*Gending Tunggul Kawung kethuk 2 kerep minggah Ladrang Pacul Gowang*” – serve as a bridge between people in the physical world and God in the transcendental realm. Both of these *gending* have *manyura* and *barang*<sup>1</sup>, which are interpreted as the final chapter of human life, and therefore in an all-night shadow puppet performance, the *slendro pathet manyura* and *pelog pathet barang* are played at the very end before dawn. Because of this meaning, *slendro pathet manyura* and *pelog pathet barang* have a “sense/feeling of approaching the end stage” because humans have entered the final stage of their life in the world and are getting closer to God/the hereafter/transcendent realm (Putranto, 2012; Sumarsam, 2003; Supanggah, 2009).

Using the example of Balinese music, Senen and Sethares discussed the relationship between objects (anything represented by a sign) and a sign or representation (R). In terms of ritual music, an object (O) refers to anything that is thought of as a reference in sounds. For example, if the vocal sound of a song in a ceremony is a representamen (R), then the conception or idea about the meaning of the song sound is the object. If the sound of the

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<sup>1</sup> *Manyura* and *Barang* are two of the total of six types of *pathet* in karawitan music. *Pathet* and its types can be compared to the concept of chords in the context of western musicality. Further explanation regarding *pathet* and *laras* (*slendro* and *pelog*) and their types will be discussed in a more detailed manner in the next sub-chapter.

instrument from ritual music is the representamen, then the nature or mood of the sound presentation is the object. Meanwhile, the interpretant (I) refers to the effect the sign has on the recipient and is the meaning or interpretation of the relationship between the representamen (R) and the object (O) (Senen, 2015; Sethares & Vitale, 2022).

Studies and publications on the subject of *Karawitan*, particularly concerning *pathet* and *padhang-ulihan*, have been produced by both academic researchers and practical experts. However, research into the concepts of *padhang-ulihan* and *pathet* in relation to Javanese cosmology has not been extensively explored, especially regarding how *Karawitan* is viewed as an effort to concretize human contemplations to chart their cosmology and connections with their deity. While writings such as *Bothekan I* (2002) and *Bothekan Karawitan II Garap* (2009) by Rahayu Supanggah can be said to be a dictionary of *Karawitan* knowledge, and Marc Benamou's writing entitled *Rasa: Affect and Intuition in Javanese Musical Aesthetics* (2016) translates the concept of thinking of Javanese people which kind of rough and abstract enough to be a good logical analysis, these two and some others are not discussing *padhang-ulihan* and *pathet* concepts using anthropological approach specifically (Harwood, 2011; Supanggah, 2002, 2009). Starting from this idea, this study would try to use the “*Ladrang Mugi Rahayu*” and “*Gending Tunggul Kawung kethuk 2 kerep minggah Ladrang Pacul Gowang*” as material objects and analyzed symbolically so as to prove whether it is true that while culture is a system of symbols, human beings need certain symbols either material, behavioral, or ideational to communicate with the transcendental dimension.

Considering that factors, this study would like to analyze two *Karawitan*'s *gending* (Javanese song), “*Ladrang Mugi Rahayu*” and “*Gending Tunggul Kawung kethuk 2 kerep minggah Ladrang Pacul Gowang*” as the material objects of this research. How Javanese people put meaning in their existence in the universe. How they see themselves in the correlation with nature and God, how they perceive deities, to the point where they somehow, communicate with that power/beings with symbols as tools, in this case, *Karawitan* music, especially those two songs. The two

songs will be seen as a metaforic mediation for Javanese people's conceptual ideas about universe and the deities. This conceptual ideas appear as unseen but not unnoticed in tunes in Javanese *Karawitan*'s partiture. The partiture, as a material symbol, connects the ideas and thoughts of Javanese people about their surroundings and how they should behave according to their idealism of a perfect, harmonious life that aligns with the presence of God. In other words, the partiture and its tunes can be seen as a symbolic system that provides insight into the Javanese construction of thought and culture. The partiture shows how Javanese people attempt to connect with their abstract, distant deity by creating material symbols like tunes and philosophies encoded in the *cakepan Karawitan* (partiture). Analysis of the partiture using the *pathet* and *padhang-ulihan* models allows interpretation of these symbolic connections between people and their God.

### Tones and Tunes as Symbols

Contrary to what has been thought so far, emotions and feelings are in fact not something that is natural and just happen, but are formed differently depending on the time and place. Humans learn to feel things that happen around them, cultivate emotions, and then show them in various ways and mediums (Bierema, 2023). *Pathet* and *padhang-ulihan*, through their conventions, categorize, control, and simultaneously restrict how these feelings are conveyed. By utilizing specific tones organized in a certain way in a notation, *pathet* and *padhang-ulihan* attempted to make concrete human abstract emotions. Human sentiments and affections are communicated and depicted in the notation symbols of *gamelan* scales (Ahimsa-Putra, 2012; Kayam & Ahimsa-Putra, 2000).

The input of this experience will eventually produce knowledge that is interpreted and expressed in the tonal structure of the partiture and is played in *pathet* and *padhang-ulihan*. When the traditional Javanese music composition called *gending* is used in the *padhang-ulihan* structure and the Javanese *gamelan* orchestra is performed with a certain *pathet* melodic mode, the human consciousness will act to interpret these musical elements after the body has first received external sensory input in the form of the

audible music. In this case, Benamou divides it into, 1) the musical quality of a musical performance or playing, the music itself, or its effect on the witness/viewer, 2) a mental phenomenon acquired through experience, and 3) a perception expressed in playing music. which is possible after going through a lot of practice (Benamou, 2016; Harwood, 2011).

The musicians and listeners, whether intentionally or not, will connect the music they are experiencing in the moment to the experiences they've had in their lives up until that point. They may ask themselves if they have heard music with similar subtleties before, or if that type of music has impacted the way they have lived their lives thus far. In this way, the experts reflect inward on themselves as they take in the music (Gwervevende & Mthombeni, 2023). The tones in *gamelan* play become material symbols that bridge human immaterial feelings either to be conveyed to other people (witnesses), or to be returned to oneself to contemplate when played. Listeners make associative links between musical elements that are present in any given piece, and at the same time make associations with similar or functionally equivalent to elements or gestures in the wider repertoire of music with which they are familiar (Clayton et al., 2012). Simply listening to music does not just involve the auditory experience. It also involves interpreting the meanings and symbols that are conveyed whenever a musical note is sounded (Tamagawa, 2019). So that the tones in a (musical) piece can be seen as a symbol that represents a certain feeling, especially if the sequence of tones in a piece is seen as a structure. These symbols materialize human immaterial desires and connecting humans to their God (Bielo, 2015; Clayton et al., 2012; Coote & Shelton, 1994).

Culture is an organism that always open to diverse negotiations and individual interpretation (Soewarlan, 2019). If culture is a set of symbolic texts (Geertz, 1973), then the human ability to read and interpret these texts could be guided by musical structures and techniques of playing songs or *gending*<sup>2</sup>, which are metaphorical and emotional in nature because they are not just analyzed technically, but also expressed and interpreted with

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<sup>2</sup> *Gending* or *gendhing* is a Javanese term for “song”.

emotion. Concepts that were previously abstract in people's minds acquire concrete form through material symbols, allowing them to be shared and comprehended jointly with others (Hefner, 2011; Throop, 2009). These symbols can be found in the shape of tones that are structured with rules and guidelines to be performed in musical partiture. Culture is a pattern of understandings or meanings that are thoroughly intertwined in historically transmitted symbols, a system of conceptions inherited in symbolic forms by means of which humans communicate, preserve and develop their knowledge and attitudes towards life (Geertz, 1973).

This article therefore explains how the Javanese people understand the natural world and life, develops principles and philosophies about life, and then makes material symbols in musical notation to symbolize their God. The two songs in this paper are material embodiments of the human concept of the existence of immanent and transcendent realms which have song titles and lyrics in the form of prayers, are played through certain rules (*pathet*), and have song structures (*padhang-ulihan*) that all have one aim, namely reaching God in the transcendent realm. The musical tones in *Karawitan* represent the Javanese people's perspective on the idea of natural harmony and external influences. In analyzing these tones, they can be seen as symbols that connect with one another to make a certain mood when played. The tones and composition of the songs can convey implicit well-wishes, or explicit ones through the spoken poetic lyrics. The human who creates this style of music composes the rules and principles of his music as an expression of his need for God and in turn communicates, which requires symbols, both material, behavioral and ideational (Kayam & Ahimsa-Putra, 2000; Soewarlan, 2019).

A symbol is defined here by Ahimsa-Putra not as something meaningful, but as something that is interpreted, because the meaning of a symbol is not attached or present in the symbol itself (Ahimsa-Putra, 2012). This meaning comes from outside the symbol, namely from humans who give meaning to something, like the notes in musical instruments which have meaning attached to them by the composer. The meaning of Javanese *Karawitan* music and *gamelan* instruments has to do with the Javanese worldview,



particularly how Javanese people see themselves in relation to the universe, how people ought to live in this world, and connect with the transcendent realm (ancestors, God, and everything beyond material existence). Javanese people make *Karawitan* music and *gamelan* instruments as a musical bridge between themselves and immaterial, transcendent entities.

Symbols are like lines which connecting the human's mind and idea with the reality they faced in the world, which both of them need to be face each other, and in this case, human's mind could be seen as a traffic system of significant symbols (Geertz, 1973). That is why the performing session of a *gending's* composition sits on certain roles as symbolical media or metaforic media, related to the cultural phenomena and people's construct of ideas to exchange roles and positions each other. *Gending's* plays serve an important role as the translator and mediator of conceptual ideas that may be too abstract to comprehend at first. Through engaging the audience's senses of sight and sound during a play performance, the ideas can become more graspable. Ultimately, the plays aim to help construct an understanding of the universe and transcendental realms that humans strive to map out and make sense of.

Another theory on the importance of material symbols in bridging the gap between the immaterial and material realms comes from Hauser, Howell, and Meyer. They argue that religion uses symbols to help people traverse the divide between the spiritual and physical worlds to experience or imagine, from a certain perspective, the transcendental realm. The rosary in Catholicism, for example, is made of wood, silver, and color, infused with meaning by humans. It materializes spiritual consciousness, even though it is clearly human-made. In this view, religion functions as a symbolic medium - God does not literally or physically descend, but is constructed and shaped by mediation processes while also transcending mere human creation (Hauser, 2012; Howell, 1982; Meyer, 2008). The God will descends through the feelings that created from the mediation procesess created by humans by making material symbols such as rosario, and in this case, musical tunes.

“*Ladrang Mugi Rahayu*” and “*Gending Tunggul Kawung kethuk 2 kerep minggah Ladrang Pacul Gowang*” will be broken down by analyzing the *pathet* and the *padhang-ulihan* model it contains, which are not played with contemporary arrangement, but with existing *Karawitan* music standards and are recognized by artists as a “classic” style of playing *gamelan*, namely using the standard *pathet* technique, as per the information provided by the informant from Keraton Yogyakarta. Lindsay pointed out that the meaning of “classic” is not restricted to something being antique or old, but also refers to art forms that have attained an ideal condition and are well-established, as Dewantara also defined “*klassiek*” in Dutch. Elaborating further, classical art has certain connections to palaces. Classical art evolved and flourished in palaces, and the authority to regulate this art was with the Sultan, being the head of the palace. On many occasions, the classical art in Yogyakarta is often referred to as noble art. The word “*adiluhung*” indicates an emphasis on the Javanese nature of the art forms it refers (Lindsay, 1989; Rahapsari, 2022).

In short, *pathet* technique can be compared to a modulation or key that influences the flavor of the music, while *padhang-ulihan* can be described as a model of a question-and-answer interaction from a technical and philosophical viewpoint. The Javanese mentality that stresses utilizing “*rasa*” (feelings) to comprehend the universe is embodied in the use of *pathet* in *Karawitan*, while concurrently they also attempt to build interaction with God through imagined question-and-answer exchanges as seen through *padhang-ulihan* analysis (Hastanto, 2009; Supanggih, 2002, 2009; Tan et al., 2021). This is why in *Karawitan*, *pathet* and *padhang-ulihan* models play important role in determining the “feeling”, as per the information gathered from the informant whom are a performing artist in Keraton Yogyakarta. This “feeling” is the human desire to express his ideas and then represented through material symbols (Rahapsari, 2022; Tan et al., 2021), in accordance with the purpose of this research which analyzes how humans materialize immanent-transcendent relationships into musical symbols, especially *Karawitan*. The existence of *pathet* and *padhang-ulihan* reflects the

philosophy of life of the Javanese people which runs harmoniously in the entire sound cycle of *gending* and serves as an analogy to the balance of natural cycles, which in the view of Javanese people is completely paradoxical.

Javanese have their own construction of thinking about how the universe works with ideal human behavior in it, which Laksono describes in Figure 1.

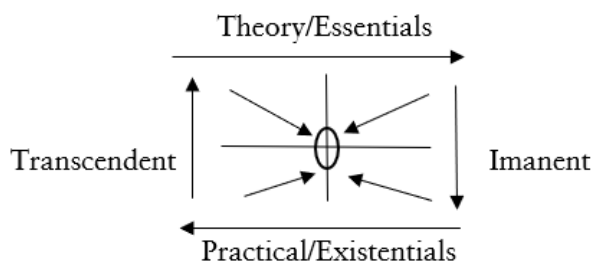


Figure 1  
Diagram model of Javanese's Spiritualism

In this model, human life is imagined as moving from the essential transcendent aspect to the immanent existential aspect via the immanent essential aspect, then life will return to the essential transcendent aspect via existential transcendence, and thus human life moves clockwise from planes I, II, III, IV, and return to I (Laksono, 2009).

The Javanese have an inherent spiritual understanding that they originate from God, journey through the tangible world, and eventually go back to their divine source. This reflects the Javanese philosophy of life called "*sangkan paraning dumadi*," meaning everything arising in this realm will return to that from which it came. The Javanese thus live with the awareness that while they currently exist in the material realm, their essence comes from and will go back to the transcendent. Their life path is from the divine, into the worldly, and ultimately returning to the transcendent again. There is also the point of "0" in the diagram above. It is at this point that the figure of Semar resides, a puppet character who symbolizes all the paradoxical

values in life and the unity of the *Kawula-Gusti*<sup>3</sup> (Laksono, 2009). When someone experiences a journey from part I to the end, the most perfect part is the middle part, not point IV where the journey at first glance seems to end. This point of perfection is what Javanese people try to achieve by various ways of creating silence and absorbing feelings through various methods, one of which is playing musical instruments with *gamelan* as an instrument.

The concepts of *pathet* and *padhang-ulihan* demonstrate how the Javanese imagination perceives the natural events happening around them, and how they develop ways to engage with these phenomena. Beyond mirroring the paradoxical Javanese perspective on the universe, *pathet* and *padhang-ulihan* are materializations and prototypes of the Javanese relationship between the human and the divine. Javanese people organize their life world and how they convey their ideas about nature and the cosmos according to the principles and subtleties of *rasa* constituted by *pathet*. Meanwhile, *padhang-ulihan* serves as a metaphor for communication between Javanese people and their God, taking the form of a question-and-answer pattern.

### ***Karawitan* Tones and Octaves**

The term *Karawitan* became known to the Javanese community in the early 20th century (1920s) which was used to refer to Javanese *gamelan* music when a *gamelan* playing course was held at the Radya Pustaka Museum (Waridi, 2008). *Karawitan* comes from the Javanese language “*rawit*” which means small, subtle or complicated (refined, subtle, sophisticated) (Poerwadarminta, 1939). The original Indonesian Dictionary provides a definition of “*seni*” as the ability to make works of subtlety and beauty, such as through dance, painting, or carving. In contrast, the modern Indonesian usage of “*seni*” to mean “art” is derived from the Malay

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<sup>3</sup> Javanese terms of human (*kawula*) and God (*Gusti*), or could also be interpreted as the ruler and the ruled in other circumstances.

language, in which the word means “small”. In Javanese terminology, the term “small” is also known as “*rawit*”, therefore in the Keraton Surakarta the term *Karawitan* aside from referring to Javanese music with *slendro* or *pelog* tunings, has also been used to accommodate branches of art that have subtle characteristics such as dance, puppetry, and singing (Supanggih, 2002).

*Karawitan* played with instrument called *gamelan*, a group/set of musical instruments/instruments/pieces which mostly consist of percussion made from bronze, brass, iron, or other materials, complemented by other pieces made from wood, leather, such as fiddle, *siter*, *clempung*, *gambang*, and flute (Hand, 2018). The musical scale is divided into two octaves, namely *slendro* and *pelog*, both of which are pentatonic scales. This scales are written in a notation system known as Kapatihan Notation, created by B.R.M.T. Wreksodiningrat (1848-1913), a servant of the Kaliwon Sewu palace at the Surakarta Palace, who at that time was still named R.M.Ng. Djajasudirdja. The notation symbol uses Arabic numerals 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 for the *slendro* octave, read *ji*, *ro*, *lu*, *ma*, *nem* short for *siji*, *loro*, *telu*, *lima*, *nem*, and numerals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 for *pelog* octave are read *ji*, *ro*, *lu*, *pat*, *ma*, *nem*, *pi*, is short for *siji*, *loro*, *telu*, *papat*, *lima*, *nem*, *pitu*.

In order to understand how *pathet* builds the sense of a *gending* and in the end it becomes an orderly arrangement of material symbols of the human concept of the universe when played, it is necessary to look first at the meaning attached to each note in *Karawitan* (Sumarsam, 2002). The tones from 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 could also be named as *barang* (1), *gulu* (2), *dhadha* (3), *lima* (5), and *nem* (6). Meanwhile *papat/pat* (4) does not have any particular meaning and exist only to connect the octave space between *dhadha/telulu* (3) and *mallima* (5), also the *pi/pitu* (7) is used to end the *pelog* octave with an octave higher tunes (Martopangrawit, 1975; Sunyata, 2017). It is necessary to analyze the meaning attached by the Javanese people to each of these tones. As per the informant who is a senior lecturer from ISI Yogyakarta, and also actively works in art studios in Yogyakarta, each tone in *Karawitan* can mean the following.

- a. *Barang* (1): has the meaning of being or, and is a metaphor of the human head. When two people meet for the first time physically, the first thing to pay attention to is the head, not the arms or legs.
- b. *Gulu* (2): has a metaphor as a road, because as the name implies, namely the neck in Javanese, he is the connecting road between the head and the body which is the conduit for everything that enters from the mouth and nose (head) to the body.
- c. *Dhadha* (3): is a metaphor for life because the source of life, namely the heart, is inside the chest.
- d. *Lima* (5): is a symbolic metaphor which means lust or love. However, it is not the love that departs from taste, but departs from the catch of *panca (lima) indera*.
- e. *Nem* (6): is a metaphor of “feeling”. This is because taste has six aspects. In the Niti Sastra and Dharma Sonya fibers as well as in Kawi and Sanskrit, sadrasa means six (sad) and rasa (rasa). *Nem* sense (6) is the sixth aspect after the five senses when humans get stimulation from the natural surroundings. There are *nem* (6) (six) feelings that humans have, namely feeling dark, light, glare (eyes); pleasant aroma, rotten, rancid (nose); sweet, salty (taste/tongue); cold, smooth, rough (touch); and lastly sorrow, happiness, emotion (inner/true feeling).

Therefore, *rebab*<sup>4</sup> instrument plays as a composer of “*rasa*” (the feel) in *Karawitan* ensemble has the main tones *gulu* (2) and *nem* (6), which can be interpreted as “feeling the way” or “how to run the feeling”, because the continuity of the tones it produces functions as a binder and connecting other tones, including to change the mood of the piece by changing the melody in the piece.

### *Pathet*

The term *pathet* is well known in Javanese music as it is typically included when naming a piece, along with a description of the barrel. *Pathet* categorizes

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<sup>4</sup> Like a violin.

*gamelan* compositions using a system based on the function of notes and other musical elements. As a musical concept, *pathet* conveys a sense of stopping or pausing in a piece, whether temporarily halting or coming to a complete stop at the end. This term evokes feelings of resolution within the structure of a composition. I have rephrased the original text while maintaining its meaning, flow and overall structure (Hastanto, 2009; Martopangrawit, 1975). *Rasa seleh* can be analogous to the punctuation mark in a sentence. The application of *pathet* in musical work is different from the application of *pathet* in the world of Javanese shadow puppet. In an all-night shadow puppet performance, the *pathet* distribution pattern is adjusted to the time of day. *Pathet nem* from 21.00 - 24.00, *pathet sanga* from 24.00 - 03.00, next, 03.00 until the end of *pathet manyura*. These three time periods describe the level of human life, *pathet nem* describes childhood to adolescence, *pathet sanga* describes adulthood until near old age, and *pathet manyura* describes old age until death death (Hastanto, 2009; Supanggih, 2009).

*Pathet* refers to a musical concept in traditional music that has no direct Western equivalent. It encompasses both the melodic mode or modulation scheme of a composition as well as its dramatic and emotional character. Beyond just the notes themselves, *pathet* shapes the overall flow and nuance of a performance. For shadow puppetry, it divides a show into dramatic sections. In *gamelan* compositions like *gending*, *pathet* is the most crucial structural element. The *pathet* sets the sequence of notes and how they should be played. So *pathet* has both concrete musical meaning as well as more abstract dramatic and emotive meaning.

The notion of *pathet* itself still raises a lot of debate among researchers and musicians. Some have equated it with modulation and keys in western music dictionaries. Grouping the pieces based on the *pathet* is done after classifying the barrel type of a piece. For *slendro* there are *pathet nem* (6), *pathet sanga*, and *pathet manyura*, and for *pelog* there are *pathet lima*, *pathet nem* (6), and *pathet barang* (Sumarsam, 2002; Sunyata, 2017).

Each composition in *Karawitan* has its own unique character when considered from the perspective of its *pathet*, which remains connected to a

philosophy with distinguishing traits according to the phase of human life it symbolizes. This again confirms that the notes played in the *pathet* guide are a symbol of Javanese people's ideas about what happens in their natural lives. As stated by the informant from the Yogyakarta Palace, the character of *gending* (Javanese term of song) in *Karawitan* can be described as follows,

a. Slendro

- *Pathet nem*: has a simple character, as is, not complicated, like the mindset of children who still like to play and don't think complicatedly. The notes included in here are 6-5-3-2 tones
- *Pathet sanga*: a metaphor for teenagers or adults. This *pathet* includes 2-1-6-5 tones
- *Pathet manyura*: nearing death, old. Including 3-2-1-6 tones.

b. Pelog

- *Pathet nem*: has a majestic, majestic, grand impression, which includes the tones of 2-1-6-5
- *Pathet lima*: mysterious, haunted, contemplative, includes 5-3-2-1 tones
- *Pathet barang*: melancholy, consists of 3-2-7-6 tones.

This division of *pathets* is not completely fixed, and altering the tunings is not really that unusual, since it relates back to the view that even though the *pathet* gives direction, it is itself shaped and defined by sentiments and emotions, which are clearly very arbitrary and subjective in nature. For example, songs with *pathet slendro nem* can be played with *pelog pathet lima*, *slendro pathet sanga* with *pelog nem*, and *slendro manyura* with *pelog barang*. This *pathet* style can be seen in the two material objects of this research, namely “*Ladrang Mugi Rahayu*” and “*Gending Tunggul Kawung kethuk 2 kerep minggah Ladrang Pacul Gowang*”, each of which has the *pathet manyura* and *pathet barang*, both of which have the dominant tone *nem* (6), with variations in tone, *barang* (1), *gulu* (2), and *dhadha* (3), trying to avoid the *lima* (5) note as the closing note, as could be seen in Table 1 and Table 2.



Table 1  
Musical notation of Ladrang Mugi Rahayu

<i>Balungan/ Cengkok</i> Notation	<i>Genderan</i> Notation			
<u>3 6 1 .</u> <i>Dll Ageng</i>	<u>565.</u>	<u>5653</u>	<u>6563</u>	<u>6i6i</u>
	..61	212.	653.	6261
<u>3 5 3 2</u> <i>Kkp</i>	<u>i2i6</u>	<u>i2i3</u>	<u>i2i3</u>	<u>i2i6</u>
	..12	33..	.161	2353
<u>3 6 1 .</u> <i>Dll Ageng</i>	<u>565.</u>	<u>5653</u>	<u>6563</u>	<u>6i6i</u>
	..61	212.	653.	6261
<u>3 5 3 2</u> <i>Kkp</i>	<u>i2i6</u>	<u>i2i3</u>	<u>i2i3</u>	<u>i2i6</u>
	..12	33..	.161	2353
<u>3 3 . .</u> <i>½ gt 3, ½ gt 1</i>	<u>3.53</u>	<u>5.5i</u>	<u>2.23</u>	<u>.2.23</u>
	.3..	.263	.535	635.56
<u>6 i 6 5</u> <i>Ayy</i>	<u>2.23</u>	<u>232i</u>	<u>323.</u>	<u>3.32</u>
	.323	5.5.	..16	5615
<u>i 6 5 3</u> <i>C Mati</i>	<u>...6</u>	<u>i6.6</u>	<u>5.i.</u>	<u>656i</u>
	235.	..5.	.3.1	.2.3

<u>6</u> <u>1</u> <u>3</u> <u>2</u>	<u>6561</u>	<u>5616</u>	<u>1213</u>	<u>1216</u>
Ayy	.263	.126	.161	2352

Table 2  
Musical Notation of *Gending Tunggul Kawung kethuk 2 kerep minggah Ladrang Pacul Gowang*

Balungan/Cengkok Notation	Genderan Notation			
<u>...3 6532</u> <i>Ps</i>	<u>.7..</u>	<u>.723</u>	<u>2.32</u>	<u>.7..</u>
	3.35	6...	.7..	6.63
	<u>7.6.</u>	<u>.7.6</u>	<u>.5.6</u>	<u>.7.6</u>
	.5.3	5.5.	.3.7	2672
<u>. . 2 3</u> <i>1/2 gt 2, 1/2 Ayy</i>	<u>2.7.</u>	<u>7.72</u>	<u>6767</u>	<u>2327</u>
	.2.5	32..	..65	3523
<u>5 6 5 3</u> <i>Key</i>	<u>2732</u>	<u>6532</u>	<u>5657</u>	<u>5653</u>
	2732	6535	.2.7	<u>.2.3</u>
<u>...3 6532</u> <i>Ps</i>	<u>.7..</u>	<u>.723</u>	<u>2.32</u>	<u>.7..</u>
	3.35	6...	.7..	6.63
	<u>7.6.</u>	<u>.7.6</u>	<u>.5.6</u>	<u>.7.6</u>
	.5.3	5.5.	.3.7	2672

TRANSCENDING NOTATION: AN EXPLORATION OF PADHANG-ULIHAN ....

<u>. . 3 3</u>	<u>2̇.7.</u>	<u>7.72̇</u>	<u>6767</u>	<u>2̇3̇2̇7</u>
<i>½ gt 2, ½ Ayy</i>	.2.5	32..	..65	3523
<u>5 6 5 3</u>	<u>2̇73̇2̇</u>	<u>6532</u>	<u>5657</u>	<u>5653</u>
<i>Kcy</i>	2732	6535	.2.7	.2.3̇
<u>. 5 7 6</u>	<u>6676</u>	<u>7672̇</u>	<u>3̇.2̇3̇</u>	<u>.2̇76</u>
<i>Ddk alit</i>	6...	7672	3.23	.276
<u>. . 6 .</u>	<u>6.5.</u>	<u>5.56</u>	<u>72̇73̇</u>	<u>72̇76</u>
<i>½ gt 6, ½ kkp</i>	.6.2	76..	.767	2352
<u>6 5 6 7</u>	<u>2̇72̇6</u>	<u>2̇3̇2̇7</u>	<u>6562̇</u>	<u>6567</u>
<i>Dll alit</i>	.72.	5323	.727.	327.
<u>5 6 7 6</u>	<u>6567</u>	<u>5672̇</u>	<u>3̇.2̇3̇</u>	<u>.2̇76</u>
<i>Ddk alit</i>	.263	2352	3.23	.276
<u>. 2 2 .</u>	<u>2.7.</u>	<u>7.72̇</u>	<u>72̇73̇</u>	<u>72̇76</u>
<i>gt 2 kpy</i>	.2.5	32..	.767	2352
<u>2 3 5 6</u>	<u>6567</u>	<u>5672̇</u>	<u>3̇.2̇3̇</u>	<u>.2̇76</u>
<i>Ddk alit</i>	.263	2352	3.23	.276
<u>. 5 . 2</u>	<u>72̇76</u>	<u>72̇73̇</u>	<u>72̇73̇</u>	<u>72̇76</u>
<i>Kkp</i>	..72	3.3.	.767	2352

. 5 . (3)	<u>2732</u>	<u>6532</u>	<u>567.</u>	<u>7653</u>
<i>Kcy</i>	2732	6535	.2.7	.2.3

Musical notation written in Table 1 and 2 are the partiture of the songs that will be main focus in this research which are “*Ladrang Mugi Rahayu*” and “*Gending Tunggul Kawung kethuk 2 kerep minggah Ladrang Pacul Gowang*”. Just like the western ansamble orchestra, it is not uncommon for Javanese *gamelan* orchestra’s partiture to be classified by instruments, which in this case is the partiture of *gender*, a Javanese musical instrument played with both hands made from bronze, meanwhile the “*balungan/cengkok*” on the left column are played with instrument called *balungan*, percussion musical instruments consist of *saron, demung, peking*. As could be seen in Table 2, there are very minimum to none of using the (5) tone comparing the use of other tones. In those *genderan* partiture of these two *gendings*, the dominant tone that appeared is the *nem* tone (6), with variations of notes (2), (3), and (1) (or 7 in *pelog*) according to the *grambyangan gending* principle.<sup>5</sup> Gender is one of the instruments that has the functions to work on songs in *Karawitan*, thus to unravel a *pathet* in a piece of music, one must know the *genderan* play ((Sunyata, 2017). Not much different from *Ladrang Mugi Rahayu*, *Gending Tunggul Kawung* goes with the same *pathet* having a dominant tone of (6) and *seleh gending* on (3) and (2) because both have the goods and manyura *pathet* that use the same *grambyangan*.

Tone *nem* (6), which becomes *dong*<sup>6</sup>, is a symbol of human’s feeling and the lower point of the navel of the human body, the point which is the center of microcosmic energy in the micro-macrocosm relationship between humans and nature and thus is the most transcendent point in the human material body, by the information provided by the informant form Keraton

<sup>5</sup> *Grambyangan* means musicians method for determining the scales or chords they want to use when playing a song.

<sup>6</sup> *Dong* means “dominant presence” in *Karawitan* terms

Yogyakarta. Further he stated that this also has something to do with the all-night puppet show which places the *pathet* manyura in the last third of the night, the time that is considered the most efficacious for chanting prayers and establishing tahajud because of the many angels who descend to earth at that time.

According to the informant from ISI Yogyakarta, playing style of *gending* through *pathet* will produce imaginary chakra rotation which could be drawn in Figure 2.

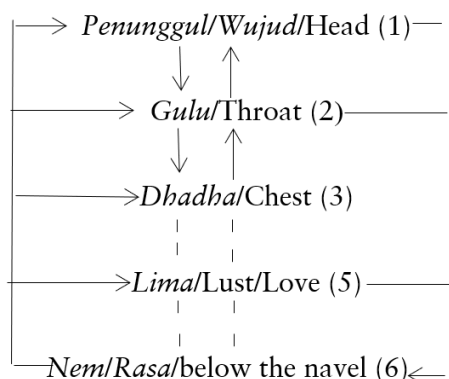


Figure 2

Diagram of the Chakra Rotation Cycle when Playing *Karawitan*

Expanding on the previous explanation about Keraton Yogyakarta, the author illustrates how *Karawitan* songs are structured, performed, and conceptualized. Specifically, the philosophy of “coming near death,” represented in the *pathet* manyura mode, evokes the transcendental realm. The melody forms a system resembling the rotation of chakras, with the final focus below the stomach - believed to be the area of greatest chakra concentration in the body. If one can control this area, it is thought the doors to the transcendental realm will open.

When the chakra continuously rotates around that point as the main (symbolizes by the playing of dominant tunes in a composition), then at one

moment there will be imaginary thread connects human with the realm “above” them. In this moment the connection between human as immanent being in material world and the God as transcendental being in immaterial world being created. Chakra rotation as illustrated above can only be created by the *pathet slendro manyura* and *pelog barang*. This is because both of them emphasize the use of tones with the meaning that if played it will produce a rotation like the diagram, namely *gulu*, *dhadha*, *parunggul*, and *rasa (nem)* (6)) below the navel by avoiding *lima* (5). This is reinforced by the idea of *padhang-ulihan* model as an imaginary dialogue between human and God.

Both of the informants from ISI Yogyakarta and Keraton Yogyakarta agreed and stated that, this is also the reason why *lima* (5) tunes become the most avoided tunes in playing *pathet manyura* and *barang*. The use of *lima* (5) tunes are limited in *pathet* plays, and never become the main tunes, also would never become the final part at the end of the songs. The reason why *lima* (5) not being used in *pathet manyura* and *barang* are because *lima* (5) means lust and love. Meanwhile in many culture and religion lust and materialistic love (which are sensed by the five/*lima* receptory senses) considered as the things should be avoided when someone wants to be closer to the God. To reach the higher spiritual level where God belongs, human are asked to avoid and leave the world behind as could as they can. Even though formally this fact does not really concerns the musicians and composers, but in reality majority of the songs that being used as bridge and materialization of people’s transcendental idea/concept between human and God use *pathet* which avoiding *lima* (5) tunes, just like these “*Ladrang Mugi Rahayu*” and “*Gending Tunggul Kawung kethuk 2 kerep minggah Ladrang Pacul Gowang*”.

### ***Padhang-ulihan***

The *pathet* and *padhang-ulihan* structures have a major role in shaping and conveying the Javanese people's conceptual understanding of God in *Karawitan*. *Padhang-ulihan* refers to the sentence structure within a composition. *Padhang* denotes sentences that do not yet convey a feeling of

*seleh*, while *ulihan* refers to sentences that do impart a *seleh* feeling. Just as the *pathet* structure does, the *padhang-ulihan* structure is instrumental in organizing and expressing the Javanese conceptualization of the divine in *Karawitan* music (Martopangrawit, 1975). *Seleh* here refers to feeling and/or sensation of relieved. The feeling of *seleh* itself consists of two kinds, which are *seleh enteng* (light) placed in every playing part of *kenong*, a Javanese bronze instrument which have protruding part, and *seleh anteb* (heavy) placed when the play of *gong*, another instrument like *kenong* in *gamelan* ansamble, comes. It is seen in “Ladrang Mugi Rahayu” even in every sentence (*gatra*) there is a *padhang* and one *ulihan*, but there is also another perpective that the first three sentencces could be regarded as *padhang*, and finally in the fourth sentence there is *ulihan* (which could be seen in partitures below. Different things applicated in “*Gending Tunggul Kawung kethuk 2 kerep minggah Ladrang Pacul Gowang*”, which uses *pedoman setengah kenongan* (half of *kenongan* rules), which means in every single sentences there is one *padhang* and one *ulihan*. The model of *padhang* and *ulihan* operation in *Karawitan*’s composition can be seen at Figure 3.

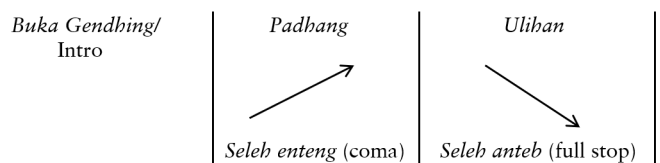


Figure 3

Model of *Padhang* and *Ulihan* Operation in *Karawitan*’s Composition

Figure 3 are the description of *padhang-ulihan* technical approach as written by Martopangrawit and Supanggah who stated that *padhang-ulihan* is a cycle of ask-answer analogy in *Karawitan* terms (Martopangrawit, 1975; Supanggah, 2009) and confirmed by the informants from ISI Yogyakarta who conclude and make analogy that *padhang-ulihan* is a materialization of interaction between human and God. Basically, it could be

said that *padhang-ulihan* construct the feeling of imaginary dialogue between material beings with the God when human giving their thoughts and then imaginarily answered by God by giving the answer in *seleh anteb* (*gong*). This is also why the *padhang-ulihan* could not partially analyzed. It has to be analyzed by including the *pathet* plays, because as described before, the *pathet* contains tones selection, which tones should and should not be played in a song and performance. Only after attaching meanings to its tones with *pathet*, then the play of *gamelan* ansamble could be structured as a dialogue between God and human by using *padhang-ulihan*.

Shown in Figure 4, 5, and 6 is the application of *padhang-ulihan* in the pieces “*Ladrang Mugi Rahayu*” in the *slendro* scale and *pathet manyura* mode, as well as “*Gending Tunggul Kawung kethuk 2 kerep minggah Ladrang Pacul Gowang*” in the *pelog* scale and *pathet barang* mode. These are the notated melodies for the *balungan* instruments of *demung*, *saron*, and *peking*, which are bronze percussion instruments played by striking them with wooden mallets. The text has been paraphrased while retaining the original meaning and structure. *Balungan* in Javanese terms literally means “the skeleton”, so the instruments included in *balungan* categorization usually played as the main structure of a song, just as how a human skeleton and bones structures keeps a human’s body shape.

The *balungan* music sheet in Figure 4, 5, and 6 are written then interpreted by the informants from ISI Yogyakarta themselves. A song, or *gendhing*, can be analyzed by dividing it into sections, and for *padhang-ulihan* songs, it can be divided as illustrated above. Both songs are split into at least two parts, *padhang* and *ulihan*. This segmentation is based on the “*rasa*”, or musical feeling and expression conveyed by the performer when interpreting the music notation. *Padhang* parts are part of the sheet music that has the feeling of “going to the top, building the atmosphere before the main conflict”, while the “*rasa*” or musical feelings for conflict resolution are categorized as *ulihan* (Tan et al., 2021). From the picture above, it can also be seen that the division of *padhang-ulihan* can be done in two ways, namely first by looking at one song as a complete unit and then breaking it down,



and secondly by looking at the song as a paragraph composed of sentences, then the sentences each of them is described and broken down into its elements.

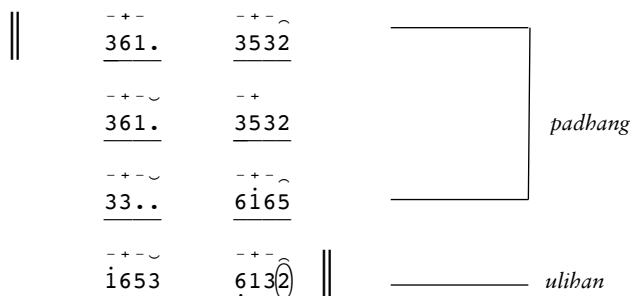


Figure 4  
Musical Notation of *Ladrang Mugi Rahayu Laras Slendro Pathet Manyura* divided into *padhang* and *ulihan* parts by sentences in paragraph

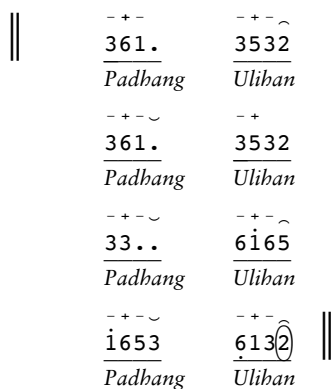


Figure 5  
Musical Notation of *Ladrang Mugi Rahayu Laras Slendro Pathet Manyura* divided into *padhang* and *ulihan* parts by phrases in sentences

$\frac{.5.7^+}{\text{Padhang}}$	$\frac{.5.6}{\text{Ulihan}}$	$\frac{.5.2^+}{\text{Padhang}}$	$\frac{.5.3^{\wedge}}{\text{Ulihan}}$
$\frac{.5.7^+}{\text{Padhang}}$	$\frac{.5.6^{\smile}}{\text{Ulihan}}$	$\frac{.5.2^+}{\text{Padhang}}$	$\frac{.5.3^{\wedge}}{\text{Ulihan}}$
$\frac{.5.7^+}{\text{Padhang}}$	$\frac{.5.6^{\smile}}{\text{Ulihan}}$	$\frac{.5.7^+}{\text{Padhang}}$	$\frac{.5.6^{\wedge}}{\text{Ulihan}}$
$\frac{.22.^+}{\text{Padhang}}$	$\frac{2356^{\smile}}{\text{Ulihan}}$	$\frac{.5.2^+}{\text{Padhang}}$	$\frac{.5.(\hat{3})}{\text{Ulihan}}$

Figure 6  
Musical Notation of *Ladrang Pacul Gowang Laras Pelog Pathet Barang*  
divided into *padhang* and *ulihan* parts by phrases in sentences

The (+), (-), and (( )) symbols are the markings for instruments called *kethuk*, *kenong*, *kempul*, and *gong*, all of them are rounded-shape instruments usually placed parallel with the musicians or hung on a wooden stand. The use of *kethuk*, *kenong*, *kempul*, and *gong* instruments in *Karawitan* holds comparable importance as commas and full stops do in ordinary sentences. Their presence represents people's efforts to symbolize their spiritual connection with God. This has transitioned from an abstract conceptual interaction between humans and the divine to a more materialistic manifestation. According to an informant from ISI Yogyakarta, this is where we can draw parallels between the melodic phrases (*gending*) in *Karawitan*, with their own *padhang-ulihan*, and the verses (surah) in the Holy Qur'an. Just as reading the Qur'an evokes pious feelings in devotees when they encounter commas and full stops while reciting, the instrumentation elicits a similar emotional response (*seleh*) in the listener. The text structure and flow have been preserved in this paraphrased version. Whether it is temporary *seleh* ones (,) or the final *seleh* (.), like *izhār*, *idghām*, and *ikhfā'*. When the feeling of the final *seleh* comes, then it would feel like being relieved, giving they once and all to the God. The informant also said the same kind of things, just like people reciting al-Fātiḥah, if it is recited

with the utmost sincerity, then ones could feel the *seleh* sentence per sentence, and feel relieved while finishing it with “*āmīn*” (especially when it comes to *jama’ah* and the sentence *āmīn* being said together out loud similar to enclosing *gending* with *gong* instrument. That feels *anteb* and has the character of bass/deep). In al-Fātihah, people giving thanks to Allah The Almighty (*al-ḥamdu lillāhi rabbi al-‘ālamīn*) and giving themselves into a full consciousness asking for guidance (*iyyāka na’budu wa iyyāka nasta’in, ihdina al-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm*), before finalise it with the hope that Allah hears their prayers (*āmīn*).

The use of music such as *Karawitan* on several sacred occasions is considered capable of bringing people in ongoing ritual events to a transcendent consciousness (Setiawan, 2022; Soedarsono, 1999). The goal of *Karawitan* is to guide people to understand entities that are greater than themselves. This is accomplished through the selection of *pathet* as the central chord and the organization of *padhang-ulihan* as the arrangement of musical phrases within a section, similar to sentences within a paragraph. These elements come together to form the narrative that the entire composition aims to communicate. Taking tones in the process of creating a piece which is then classified into a particular *pathet* and arranged in such a way as *padhang-ulihan* is a form of human awareness to materialize, bring closer the spiritual world which previously felt far away, invisible and so abstract (Coleman, 2002; Simatupang, 2013)

## Conclusion

Humans understand that certain bridges are necessary to link human existence in the world we experience with the existence of God and supernatural beings in the transcendent realm, which are then represented by certain symbols in society. Humans then formulate notions of human existence and supernatural powers/God by developing scales and interpreting them.

Starting with how humans assign meaning to the *gamelan* scales with their bodies, then arranging these in music to form their own “language”,

these symbols, without the creators realizing, make a “*chakra cycle*” to connect with supernatural identities. By playing with certain rules so that God, who cannot be sensed, can be felt closer and more tangible, seems very real.

“*Ladrang Mugi Rahayu*” and “*Gending Tunggul Kawung kethuk 2 minggah Ladrang Pacul Gowang*”, the author chose these material objects because both have the purpose and value of appealing to God Almighty. This is shown through analyzing the *pathet* and *padhang-ulihan* model. When *pathet* tries to construct the meaning of these two pieces, *padhang-ulihan* can model the interaction between humans and God. From the *pathet* and *padhang-ulihan* approaches, it's visible how each note in *Karawitan*, especially “*Ladrang Mugi Rahayu*” and “*Ladrang Gending Tunggul Kawung kethuk 2 kerep minggah Ladrang Pacul Gowang*”, has meaning, so they are arranged to form a song and relate to each other to create a spiritual atmosphere. This satisfies the spiritual needs of the musicians and listeners, making the previously distant and hard to reach existence of God feel closer and more intimate.[w]

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