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## Nusantara Art in the Verstehen Paradigm

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### ABSTRACT

The study of the diversity of nusantara (Indonesia) art is very complex, not only in terms of works such as signs, icons, and symbols, but also in terms of the social context of its society. This article offers how the possibility of applying various paradigms in studying nusantara art. Methodologically, scientific paradigm models are applied such as ethnography-constructivism, iconology, semiotics, genealogy, hermeneutics, phenomenology, ethnomethodology, autobiography-narrative which can be implemented as a multidisciplinary approach in the study of nusantara art. Studying nusantara art through a comprehensive paradigm will have an impact on the development of contextual art education and keep up with the times, including in the implementation of independent learning. The learning model provides more opportunities for students to explore learning as a form of stimulus to improve competence.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Innovation in English is a noun, the verb is innovate. Innovate means to find or use new ideas, methods, equipment, etc. (Macmillan English Dictionary, 2002: 739). Innovation means the process of new ideas, new methods, new equipment applied to solve various problems, in this case nusantara (Indonesia) arts education. Studies in English are often translated as plural nouns, for example cultural studies, in nusantara as *kajian budaya*. Studies (plural), has several meanings, namely: (1) work done while at college, (2) name of the subject matter/major studied: environmental studies, business studies, (3) research that explains a problem... (Macmillan English Dictionary, 2002: 1427).

The Merdeka Belajar program, which is currently a priority program of the Ministry of Education, aims to provide more flexibility and autonomy to students in managing their own learning. The paradigm of the approach focuses more on students' freedom to explore their own interests, talents, and abilities. The innovation of the study of nusantara arts education in the Merdeka Belajar program is thus the creativity to apply various new ideas, new research methods or those that have never been used in the world of school education, expansion of new paradigms, syntheses of theories and paradigms to solve learning models that free students in terms of their own interests, talents, and abilities.

Therefore, in this article we will limit ourselves to free creativity to create new ideas in the field of art, and nusantara art education, new paradigms of thinking in the field of art, new research methods, or those that are not yet known/not yet widely used in the field of art research, art education, nusantara art studies.

## 2. METHODS

In the development of scientific paradigm, The first is in the modern era around the 17th century was the emergence of the era of empirical philosophy, the core view that scientifically correct is to follow the basic rules: humans as a blank sheet, which can be formed by external influences, original knowledge with experience through observation and experimentation, science is not scientific when it cannot be observed (five senses), overall scientific law is a pattern of repeated experience, scientific law applies to universal phenomena, universal law can be used as a futuristic prediction, scientific objectivity lies in facts that can be tested, subjective justification of values is categorized as unscientific (Benton and Graib, 2001:14). This idea of empirical philosophy then became a reference in community research developed by August Comte, becoming positivism thinking in sociological science (Benton and Graib, 2001:14).

The positivism view is that a phenomenon becomes scientific when it can be observed through the five senses, sight, touch, smell, hearing. In addition, it can be categorized as scientific when there is empirical evidence, can be tested, and proof through quantification of numbers. The basis of this positivistic paradigm is deeply rooted in the scientific field, until figures emerged who criticized the weaknesses of positivism, which is called the post-positivistic era. One of the criticisms that emerged was from Dilthey who stated that science must be divided into two categories, namely social sciences as *Geisteswissenschaften*, while natural sciences as *Naturwissenschaften*. Social sciences are more about strengthening to understand while natural sciences as sciences that explain causal norms, mechanistic thinking uses quantitative patterns (Poespoprodjo, 2004: 37).

*Geisteswissenschaften*, as the sciences of understanding is intended to be a study of understanding the science of other cultures that are not one's own cultural traditions. Learning other cultural arts certainly does not use the way of thinking of one's own culture.

The culture of other regions has its own ethics, aesthetics, norms, and institutions, so it is not appropriate with the cultural standards of the reviewer. In this case, as a researcher or reviewer who is a learner of other cultures, one must study the science of other cultures in depth. This is the meaning of the word *verstehen* to be able to master other cultures in all their aspects. In this case, there is a clear difference between the field of natural science and the field of social-humanistic science. The selection of paradigm theory must be appropriate, when to use *natur* and when to use *geiste*. Forcing the choice of paradigm will cause inaccuracy in solving problems. The tradition of paradigms that are longer and stronger since the 17th century until now often shackles the educational world. The ability to develop the post-positivistic era with all its scientific applications is still not widely used by educators.

*Verstehen* often translated as understanding is the keyword of the field of study of *Geisteswissenschaften* science. The character of the *naturwissenschaften* science is *erklären*, translated as explain, or explaining (Poespoprodjo, 2004: 38). The lapse of nusantara art studies is without understanding the other cultures yet it has already explains the problems of other cultures. Culture here is interpreted as a system of symbols, a system of thinking, and the results of human creative products. These three studies are also parts in the field of education and learning.

The steps to develop nusantara arts education culture must be through *verstehen* think of method first to mastering the material of other cultures then developed in the *erklären* way of thinking. For example, if *erklären* first, the case of the learning process of nusantara art teachers is not on making media for teaching but more to the poverty problem of honorary teachers, the background of students for example from drug-infested village, and so on until the gap between the schools paradigm still in the modern era while the society has entered the postmodern era, hyperreality-post truth. *Erklären* is the problem of nusantara art teachers while not at all *verstehen* are the problem of nusantara art teachers, for that the nusantara art education must *verstehen* first in the field of nusantara art material, the historical context of nusantara art, communication of the language of nusantara art, then the next step is *verstehen* for the development of nusantara art issues. Furthermore, what is important in the development of nusantara art education is the scientific method of the field of scientific *verstehen*.

In anthropology, there are two ways to research the theory of cultural studies, culture as patterns of behavior and culture as patterns for behavior (Suparlan, 1996: 193). Cultural studies are seen as patterns of behavior more as reasoning that uses *erklären*. Culture is seen as material in laboratory research. Researchers observe physical events in society then make patterns of what is observed. This research and studies of the old anthropological model, in the methodological paradigm of this anthropology group there is no attempt to find an answers to the question "why" a phenomenon exists (Suparlan, 1996: 194).

The second cultural study research is culture as patterns for behavior. The methodology used and developed uses ethnoscience. In the concept of the cultural paradigm, the appropriate model to use is the *verstehen* thinking paradigm. The forms of culture that emerge are seen as patterns for the behavior of its society. A researcher as an ethnoscientist is then able to explain why this behavior is carried out. The paradigm chosen is more on the emic paradigm, that is calculation, the view as the society carries out the cultural behavior. Research conducted with this paradigm then will be able to produce thick and in-depth research reports. This is then what becomes the sphere of the interpretive research. The development process of the field of interpretive social sciences

then in research produces various sub-research methods to answer the question of why society behaves as studied through ethnographic field studies.

### 3. Discussions.

#### Implementation Of Scientific Paradigms In Nusantara Arts Education

##### 3.1. Constructivist Ethnography

*Ethnography* is a combination of 2 words, namely the word ethnic and the word graphy. Ethnic means a group of people or tribe while graphy means writing. Simply put, it means writing about a particular group of people (society). (Pradoko, 2023: 118). Constructivist ethnography referred to in this method is a combination of the tradition of ethnographic research methods which are sharpened with the analysis of constructivist philosophical thought. Constructivism is one of the philosophical thoughts of knowledge that emphasizes that our knowledge is a construction of our own formation (Pradoko, 2023: 124; Suparno, 1997: 11).

The following is a flowchart of the constructivist research method:

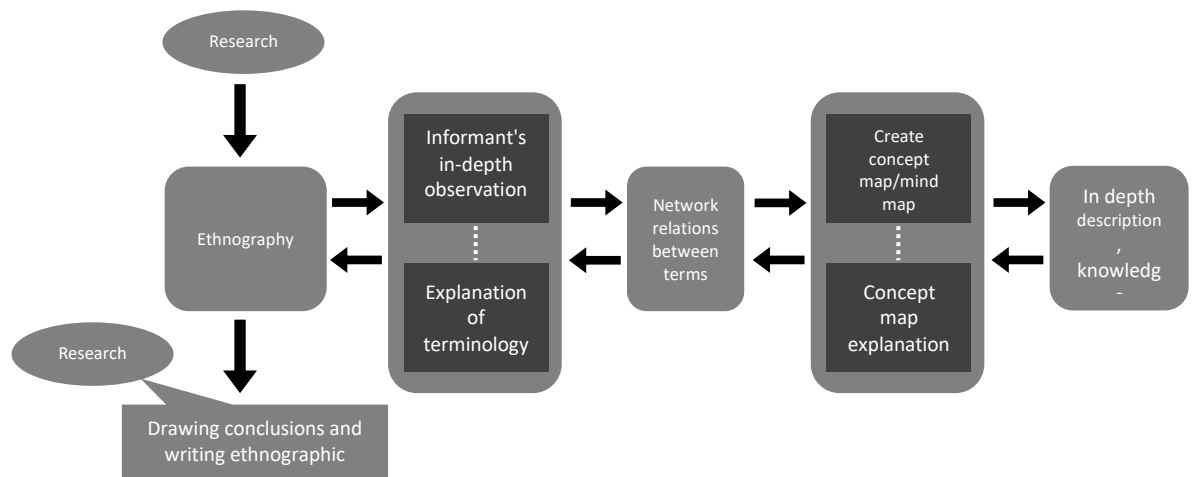


Figure 1. Constructivist Ethnography Chart.

The results of the analysis after conducting the research process on the Sekaten gong can be described as follows:




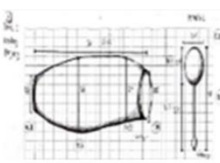

Figure 2. Knowledge Construction of Gong Sekaten.

From the chart emerges a complex contextual network only from the case of the gong in the sekaten gamelan. This is what Clifford Geertz meant by thick and in-depth research.

### 3.2. Iconography

Iconology is the science of icons. An icon is a form of image or material cultural object that has similarities between what is manifested and the object it represents (Pradoko, 2021: 75). Panofsky revealed three stages of expression, namely pre-iconography, iconography and the last is iconology (Panofsky, 1955: 31 - 36). At the pre-iconography stage, the object of interpretation is called the primary/natural meaning (factual meaning and expressional meaning), which refers textually to the artistic world. The interpretation is obtained through practical experiences, namely through familiarity with such objects and events. The corrective principle is by referring to the history of style (Panofsky, 1955: 40-41, Sitinjak, 2017: 183). At the iconography stage, the object of interpretation is called the secondary/conventional meaning, which refers to the world of images, emblems and symbols. The interpretation is obtained through knowledge of literary sources, namely through familiarity with specific themes and concepts. The corrective principle is by referring to the history of types (Panofsky, 1955:40-41; Sitinjak 2017: 183; Pradoko, 2021:76). Examples of applied research:

The research process on musical instruments at Prambanan Temple has been carried out byAMSusilo Pradoko et al., in 2020, on the Identification of Musical Instruments at Prambanan Temple. Furthermore, in the same year, it was continued with the production of revitalization based on the musical reliefs at Prambanan Temple (Pradoko, 2023:80).

Pre-Iconography		Iconography	
Material	Identification	construction	construction revitalization
 <p>Panel 1 Balustrade of Shiva Prambanan Temple</p>	<p>Panel 1 there are the following musical instruments: 4. Long membrane drum musical instrument</p>		

**Figure 3. Example of Using Iconography Method in the Research Process of Prambanan Temple Musical Instruments.**

This research is based on reliefs that embody the iconography of drums, but has not yet reached iconology, namely its function in contemporary music.

#### 3.2.1. Semiotics

Roland Barthes' semiotics can clearly describe that the same sign object can be interpreted differently, experiencing changes from denotative meaning to connotative meaning and meta language or synonymous meaning. Signs in the primary system are basic signs that are absorbed for the first time or denotative meaning. Development in the secondary system can develop into two models, namely development of the expression sign (E) is called metalanguage development, development of its content (C) is called

connotative development (Hoed, 2014:97). Barthes in his book *Mythologies* reveals two levels of signification, the first level is language and the second level, is myth or ideology. At the language level, the unity between the signifier and the signified forms a sign. Furthermore, the myth level of the sign at the first level forms a new signifier, which through its unity with the signified forms a sign (Piliang, 2012:336; Pradoko, 2023:102-103).

The application of analysis using Roland Barthes' semiotics can be carried out on the Sekaten gamelan phenomenon with the following primary and secondary system diagram:

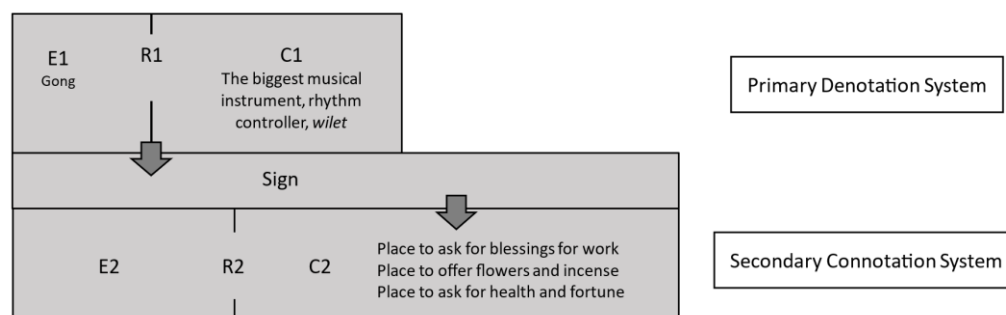


Chart of Denotation and Connotation Meaning of the Gong Gamelan Sekaten

Legend:

- E1: Expression of the primary systems      E2: Expression of the secondary systems
- R1: Relationship of the primary systems    R2: Relationship of the secondary systems
- C1: Content of the primary systems        C2: Content of the secondary systems

The development of meaning only occurs in the content while the expression remains unchanged

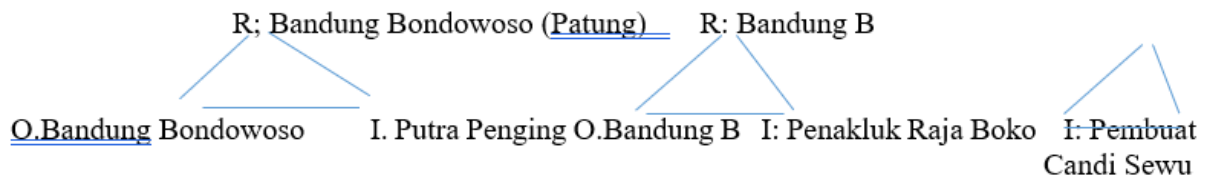
**Figure 4. Chart of Denotation and Connotation Meaning of the Gong Gamelan Sekaten.**

In the primary system, the gong is the largest musical instrument that plays a role in regulating rhythm. While in the secondary system, it is a place to ask for blessings on various things, work, and fortune.

The first trichotomy is the term representation, object and interpretant. In analyzing, three things always appear that interact with each other. Representation is something (picture, object, item) that represents something or someone or is called a sign vehicle media. Object is a reference indicating the relationship with the expression of its representation. Interpretant is the meaning of the sign due to the rationalization of the contextual relationship of the conditions of the event of interaction between expressions, objects and discourses formed by the event (Noth, 1990: 42). Representation still consists of three parts, the relationship with the object is also still three parts, and interpretant is still grouped into 3 parts too. For this article, only representation, object and interpretant are described.

In this section, we will give a few examples in the context of the ceremony. Garebeg Sekaten in Yogyakarta, with Peirce's trichotomy model. (1) The representation is the sound of the Sekaten gamelan playing, (2) the object is the Abdi Dalem Keraton people who play the Sekaten gamelan, (3) the interpretation is that there will be an additional blessing from the palace.

Processsemiosis of meaning can continue to develop, for example, the Interpretant gets the blessing of becoming a new Representamen, namely the sales turnover of street vendors and yellow rice sellers increases, new objects for yellow rice sellers and street vendors, new Interpretants, rupiah circulation transactions increase around the palace square, and so on, there is a development of meaning through semiosis, if the process is described it becomes as follows:



**Figure 5. Examples of Semiosis Process.**

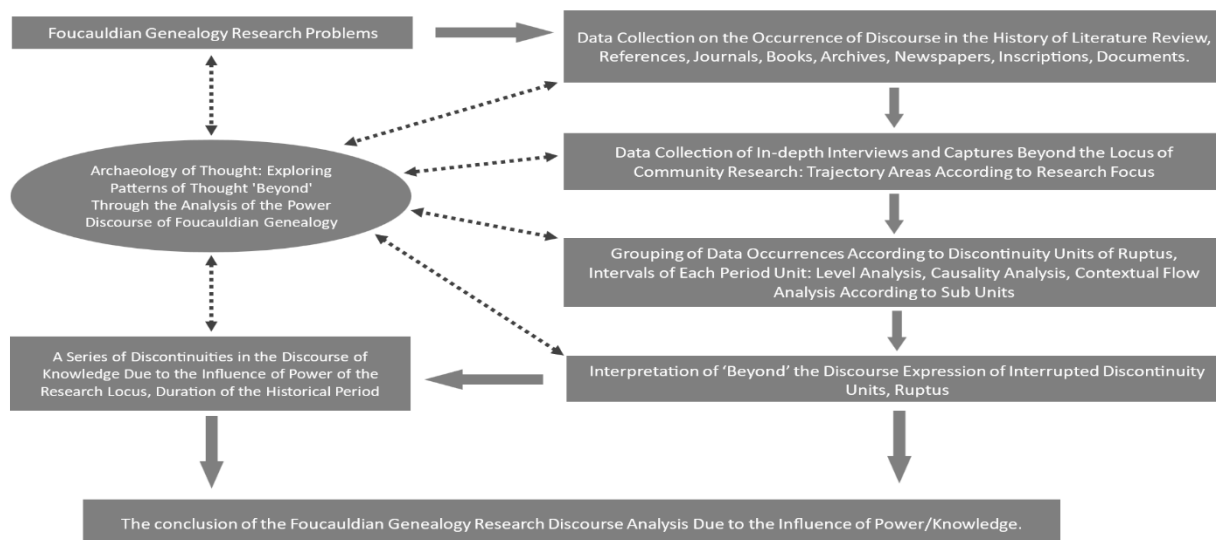
Pierce's semiotics is able to analyze semiosis, the end of a sign becoming a law, Legisign.

### 3.2.2. Foucauldian Genealogy

Foucault's genealogy is a kind of history that describes the formation of various kinds of knowledge, discourse, and its objects. This history does not hunt for meaning based on causal continuity that leads to a telos. Genealogy is actually a rupture of historical continuity, which Gadamer calls *wirkungsgeschichte* (effective history). History for Foucault is history without a historical subject, namely the historian or the community of his memory, the severance, the elimination of the subject itself because subjectivity only leads to domination (Hardiman, 2003:186; Kali, 2013:39). Genealogy as a search for origins, genealogy of knowledge, genealogy seeks to explore the depths of episteme and tries as much as possible to lay the foundation of truth in each episteme in every era (Kali, 2013:39; Pradoko, 2019:69).

The term archaeology used by Michel Foucault in his book *The Archaeology of Knowledge* or in French *L'Archeology du Savoir* does not refer to the science of material objects of past societies and cultures. This term is used by Foucault only to indicate the process of excavation, the excavation is not the excavation of material cultural objects of past societies but the excavation of science, so Michel Foucault chose a combination of the words archaeology of knowledge. The excavation of science through traces of the past, the excavation of traces is intended to reveal the background of past discourses and discourses that have circulated in society (Pradoko, 2019:65).

Michel Foucault's thought process is summarized and described in the flow as follows to make it easier to use as a reference for research methods:



**Figure 6. Foucauldian Genealogy Research Method Flowchart.**

The research process is carried out by exploring discourses in society until epistemological gaps in the thinking of the case or society being studied are found. Examples of applications can be seen in the following YouTube link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I0hO2GU9uxs&t=180s>

### 3.3. Cognitive Archaeology

August Comte in the year explained the stages of human culture into three stages, namely the theological stage, followed by the metaphysical stage, and the last stage is the positive stage. In the theological stage, humans seek the final causes behind natural events and find them in superhuman powers. These powers, whether called gods or Allah, are imagined to have a will or reason beyond humans (Hardiman, 2019: 200).

At the metaphysical stage, superhuman powers are transformed into metaphysical abstractions, for example: concepts.ether, causa, and so on. The concept of the superhuman is transformed into the concept of nature as a whole. Finally, humans reach their mental maturity in a positive stage. In this era, humans no longer explain causes beyond observed facts (Hardiman, 2019: 201).

At the stage of the positive paradigm which has a basis in empirical philosophy, it can be summarized as follows: (1) humans as white paper, (2) original knowledge can be tested through observation and experimentation, (3) knowledge that cannot be observed is not knowledge, (4) scientific laws are recurring patterns, (5) scientific laws cover scientific explanations, (6) general legal logic can be used to predict events, (7) tested objectivity ignores subjective values (Benton and Ian Graib, 2001: 14). While the positivistic paradigm is applying this empirical philosophy paradigm, applied to humans, then August Comte calls it social physics. The positivistic idea is as follows: (1) all considerations of empirical natural science are accepted as law, (2) natural science (science) is recognized as the highest science, original science, (3) scientific methods are empirically applied in social science disciplines, (4) analogous to natural science (science) social problems can be solved by social engineering (Benton and Ian Graib, 2001: 23).

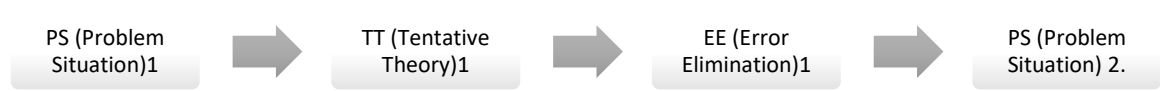


The laws Empirical-Positivism contains many weaknesses, this is what is criticized by the post-positivistic group. The figures who criticize the shortcomings in the positivistic paradigm include Dilthey, Karl Popper, Habermas, and others. In essence, these figures do not reject the positivistic paradigm, but positivism alone is not strong enough to answer the phenomenon of human culture. Soerjanto Poespowardjo and Alexander Seran wrote ten criticisms of this view as follows:

- Conclusions drawn through sampling are not necessarily correct, due to the limitations of sensory experience, so they are not universal as positivists always say, that truth applies universally.
- Sensory experiences must be verified through logical analysis, because they do not necessarily state universal truths; a stick that appears bent in water does not mean that the stick is indeed bent.
- Deductive theory testing must be done as a method of critical theory testing, not just empirically. In other words, from a number of conclusions drawn, it must be checked which conclusions are new and logical knowledge, because a scientific theory can add to various developments in science. In other words, whether the theory is in accordance with practical needs and can be applied. It becomes clear that theory testing is deductive and for further predictions are concluded based on a theory, especially predictions that can be tested and applied.
- Positivists always see the problem of demarcation from a naturalistic point of view, and consider metaphysical statements as a problem of science. Thus they try to eliminate metaphysics from scientific discourse as an illusion that is nonsense or meaningless, they have said more about values (meaning) than facts (empirical). In other words, statements about facts that are considered genuine by positivists are viewed from the point of view of logical justification regarding universal statements about reality, in fact, they are not about genuine facts, but about values. So the problem is not demarcation, but rather an agreement on which statements are empirical science and which are metaphysical statements. Only with this can the problem of science be placed in its correct proportion as a rational effort to solve problems. Here it is important to reveal logical rigorism and metaphysical dogmatism as two extreme types of approaches that refute each other. This is where the importance of methodology is that is able to show the dynamics of the ability of each approach to explain scientific problems in a historical perspective.
- Experience as a method has the weakness that it emphasizes that empirical science can only state one world, namely the real world as the world of experience, without introducing pluralism of methods.
- Falsifiability as a demarcation criterion must replace verifiability as a demarcation criterion to show that meaningful statements can be chosen because they are true and refutable. That is, verification and falsification are two ways to ensure truth. So, induction alone is not enough. A statement is scientific if it can be refuted.
- The basic empirical problem concerns singular statements that serve as premises, how to test the relationship between perception and singular statements remains vague and unexplained. Here, we must separate the psychological aspect from the logical and methodological aspects. Psychologism says that a statement can be justified not only through statements, but also through perception.

According to Popper, the proof of the truth of a statement is never based on concrete perception, but on something universal.

- Scientific objectivity and conventional subjectivity are two opposing concepts. Science is objective, meaning it can be justified regardless of personal will. Scientific theories cannot be justified or fully explained but their objectivity can be tested through intersubjective relationships.
- In Popper's view, the development of science is an evolutionary process marked by the formula:



**Figure 7. Popper Evolutionary Process.**

This means that when faced with a problem situation, a number of predictions or tentative theories are falsified to eliminate errors. Error elimination applies the same as natural selection in biological evolution. A theory that survives rejection does not mean that the theory is true, but rather that the theory is more appropriate, in other words, the theory is more applicable to solving existing problems.

- In *The Open Society and Its Enemies* and *The Poverty of Historicism*, Popper presents a critical view of history and his defense of the Open Society towards a goal. This is a view that assumes the principles of authoritarianism and totalitarianism. He argues that historicism is built on false assumptions associated with the laws and predictions of science. If the development of knowledge is a causal factor and the evolution of human history, and if no society can scientifically predict its future, it means that no science can predict human history. Although Popper is known as a fighter for the idea of tolerance, he rejects that we must always accept if others continue to be intolerant. Because if tolerance allows intolerance to continue, then tolerance itself is in danger (Poespowardojo and Alexander Seran, 2015: 73-80, Pradoko, 2017: 34).

Nowadays, the scientific laws of the positivistic era are not enough to be applied, there are still many weaknesses that must be explained with explanations of things that are not visible. While this study is not appropriate for humans, because humans have the power of thought, the power of reason, in their power of reason there are ethics, aesthetics, and norms in their society including artistic thinking in the context of their society. The power of reason in the human cognitive system is not directly visible like natural materials. This power of thought must be explored in various ways so that the invisible power of ethnosciens can finally be understood. In order to reveal the power of reason in the hidden human brain system, the right term is the era of the stages of the cognitive archeology paradigm.

Cognitive archaeology is a paradigm for exploring human cultural systems through the cognitive reasoning power that exists in the human brain. individuals and communities. Material culture made by humans is empirically visible, but the material products cannot say anything. The material culture of human products is able to narrate a lot when the meanings in the material products can be expressed.

Culture, according to research studies, is divided into material culture, physical culture, and cultural culture.symbol, and culture of human cognitive systems. Both culture as material, culture as symbol, and culture as cognitive system, all are contextualized with human thoughts. Symbol culture means cultural studies that are seen primarily as empirical symbols that appear and then reveal the thoughts behind the symbols. Material culture is cultural studies that analyze the material first and then contextualize the meaning for its society. Culture as a human cognitive system means that what is revealed is the system of thinking that exists in its society and then narrates the system of thinking of its society. These three aspects of study require a thick and in-depth narrative of the problem of the concept of thinking of a society to become behavior. For that, the excavation of the system of thinking of material culture, symbolic culture and culture viewed as cognition is summarized into a paradigm of cognitive archeology. This is an example of research on the verstehen archeology of the thinking of the Prambanan Temple statues which was then developed into a podcast about the following myths:

[https://youtu.be/3UIaoDZ3le0?si=Jrplah6BW1S60\\_La](https://youtu.be/3UIaoDZ3le0?si=Jrplah6BW1S60_La).

Not only podcasts, the research results have also become a Durga dance drama for tourism packaging, currently the recording process for the show is underway.

### 3.4. Verstehen study towards erklaren

After we have studied the material on arts in the archipelago in depth, verstehen throughout nusantara we just developed into science with the latest technology gradually. The first learning experience (verstehen) of angklung music in Serambu Angklung, Mr. Sumitro's place, Kokap Kulon Progo, then also learned how to make angklung from Saung Udjo, and learned from the angklung maker, a lecturer in ethnomusicology at ISI Yogyakarta. This is what I mean by deepening the material first, then developing the art and culture of the archipelago in an erklaren manner. Development in an arrangement and erklaren technology can be done like the following examples of creativity:

- Angklung music was developed into a SATB choir set, see the following YouTube link: <https://youtu.be/FjTbMo-2uog?si=K1X5M9pSKR9Hx1ok>
- Angklung is driven by an electric motor  
link: [https://youtu.be/lw9qYs8ikQc?si=w\\_eNYA7kmltBAFDw](https://youtu.be/lw9qYs8ikQc?si=w_eNYA7kmltBAFDw)
- Electromagnetic angklung



**Figure 8. Electromagnetic angklung**

The magnetic field hits the angklung with an on and off electric current.

- Angklung orchestral arrangement theory system  
<https://youtu.be/KBqaEKxloEg?si=D0eLZ5bhkldfy5pe>  
Combined with the Gejok Lesung by the Ladies of Glondong Village, Kalasan, Yogyakarta:



**Figure 9. Angklung Combined with the Gejok Lesung by the Ladies of Glondong Village, Kalasan, Yogyakarta:**

- Angklung combined with Arduino robotic thinker



**Figure 10. Angklung Combined with Arduino Robotic Thinker.**

- Piano from kentongan with notes



**Figure 11. Piano from kentongan with notes.**

- Creativity in mastering left and right hand signs:  
<https://youtu.be/YqInG0ZHkLc?si=54NVCyeszBHn44xz>

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The empirical positivistic paradigm is a paradigm of natural science whose philosophical basis is objectivation, humans are also thought of as objects (experiments). While the humanities and arts are sciences that are full of meaning, symbols, and values that exist in humans. These three things are not immediately apparent empirically, they must be explored through cognitive archaeology. This cognitive archaeology excavation is through interpretive sciences to penetrate the *verstehen* of nusantara art and culture. *Verstehen* to express human thought power consisting of material works, signs, icons, and symbols through at least five ways: ethnography-constructivism, iconology, R. Barthes' semiotics, C.S. Peirce's semiotics, Foucauldian Genealogy, and there are still many that must be explored as methods such as hermeneutics, phenomenology, ethnomethodology, autobiography-narrative, and others. If the world of nusantara art education only teaches quantitative positivistic methods, *quo vadis*? It is predictable that this objectivist science will only create learning products in the classroom. This will be increasingly left behind by the world of society. Society is already in the post-modern, post-positivistic era, while the world of nusantara art education still maintains the status quo of modern positivistic thinking. If this is still the case, the distance between school science and science for deepening the culture of society will be even further. For this reason, the world of nusantara art education must apply many social humanities *verstehen* sciences with the paradigm of cognitive archeology.

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