Virtual Exemplary of Balinese Ritual Dance
for Bongo Village Gorontalo

Riana Diah Sitharesmi[1] & Dian Restyani[2]
[1,2]Universitas Negeri Gorontalo;
Jalan Jenderal Sudirman 6 Kota Gorontalo, Gorontalo
E-mail: [1]rdsitharesmi@ung.ac.id

Abstract
Balinese ritual dance is important to present symbols, which embodies the sacred and values in completing worship ceremony. Yet, it is a delicate effort for Hindu-Balinese transmigrant in Bongo Village, Gorontalo to present the dance in their *piodalan*, due to the absence of dancing skill inheritance. Today, young generation of the community (*Pasraman*) is failing to meet the obligation to present the dance themselves in their rituals, which also affect to the thoroughness of *ngayah* and the worship itself. This research suggests virtual exemplary as a medium for ritual dances tutorial within today's situation of Covid-19. The imperative is how such virtual means allows members of *Pasraman* well absorb the entire dance material. I applied an experimental research method to feature the technical implementation of tutorial process. The research found that virtual exemplary must be applied side by side with the direct interaction, and it required the perceptible explanation upon the dance's substance. It is concluded that virtual exemplary could be an effective media to be used in a hybrid-type of ritual dance tutorial, through which remote communities similarly to Bongo Village will be able to rehearse on their own path.

Keywords: virtual exemplary, dance, balinese ritual

INTRODUCTION

Bongo Village is one of transmigrant areas in the highlands of Paguyaman Distric, Gorontalo, in which the Balinese Hindus are the majority. This community maintains the harmony of their lives with the natural environment, manifested in religious life by always carrying out rituals and *piodalan*. Rituals are practiced in everyday life as an expression of Hindu-Balinese beliefs in the meaning of worship. A ritual such as *piodalan* involves traditional ceremony that requires participation of the entire Hindu-Balinese community, as well as various art forms including sculpture, carving, painting, gamelan and dance. As Heriyawati (2016: 1) said that works of art are very important in their function to present symbols for ritual appreciation, dance as a medium of expression for Balinese become a sacred part that completes the ceremony. Presenting symbols related both Balinese

tradition and Hinduism, Rejang and Baris Pendet are amongst other ritual dances that be profoundly appreciated to confirm the essence of relationship between culture and religious.

Presenting ritual dances in piodalan is amongst other responsibilities of young Hindu-Balinese in Bongo Village incorporated in *Pasraman Vindu Vidya Dharma*. This is intended as a hereditary regeneration system, naturally preparing the offspring of each member to continue the tradition of working-worship typical of Hindu-Balinese called *ngayah*. *Ngayah* is applied as a thought of *karma marga* which is carried out in mutual cooperation with a sincere heart, both in Banjar (village) and in holy places or temples (Pitriani, 2020: 159-160). *Ngayah* is a unique tradition embodied to any kind of voluntarily activities, as the basic bond of each Hindu-Balinese in fostering a spiritual relationship with *Sang Hyang Widi Wasa*, while it also a praxis of individual responsibility upon social life. Therefore, *ngayah* has become an inherent principle in the practice of worship of the Hindu-Balinese community, which is mainly manifested in *Odalan*.

Living far away from cultural origin and Hindu Balinese tradition could emerge disanvantages for the community to meet the ideal execution of their traditional practice and worship. As for the members of *Pasraman*, it has been a delicate effort to fulfill their "obligations", namely to present sacred dances themselves for the perfect implementation of *piodalan*. Some of the community members who can dance are elderly, some have to work to fulfill their main needs, so there is not dance rehearsals in a regular basis. Such absence of inheritance of dancing skills makes it more difficult for the young members to hold practical dance routines in social and cultural environment where they live. Within today's situation, in the midst of the endless plight of Corona Virus Disease in which all artistic activities must be postponed or can only be done virtually, they are loosing the access in learning and practicing dance.

As Bongo village is remote, it is barely impossible to expect proper communication network, especially internet. Thus, the social distancing, self-isolation, and online learning are all the terms that seem unnecessary for the society, yet they have to comply with the restrictions. My students, as also part of young generation of Hindu-Balinese, are aware that they themselves be responsible for continuing and developing national traditions, culture, and spiritual values. With their program in community service funded by Indonesia Ministry of Education and Culture 2021, they went to the village and tried to solve the problems of dancing skill trhough sacred dance tutorial. Teaching dance repertoar was a fun thing as they mastered the knowledge. They are aware of

encountering the external aspects more than the substantial instead, including how to provide a proper dance tutorial that would accommodate the sense of creativity that can be accepted as technologically innovate.

However, technology utilisation should not be forced on those who does not posses yet. It has to be mastered gradually by the true competence and the sincere of humankind. Wang Miaoyang confirmed that 'Technology to the human is necessarily the same as that of a shell to its snail and of a web to its spider, that is, technology becomes part of our organism. Humankind still will be the master, however, for the web can be repaired by the spider' (Lim, 2008: 1). Furthermore, Don Ihde emphatically states that humans basically live on earth as inherently technological beings, which is why humans cannot live in a completely non-technological state. However, Jurgen Habermas also emphasized that there must be communicative rationality in the technological world system so that it does not threaten the nature of humanity in an open and intersubjective social life (2008: 20).

We compiled a specific tutorial model that would to solve the problems at Bongo Village. I applied a blended – hybrid learning method, which involved face-to-face tutorial and distance learning constructed within the national regulation of pandemic state of Covid-19. Face-to-face tutorial is an ideal direct method for teaching dance as a whole, and play an important role especially in the technical aspects (body posture, movement space, expression, and dynamics). We used a virtual exemplary in supporting the method of distance learning, which is used for teaching the aspects of understanding, memorizing motion, and floor patterns in a group composition. Our virtual exemplary is a learning material package containing a movement tutorial and a performance model in a context of ritual ceremony. It is a tutorial complement that is integral with the precedently direct learning for teaching and tutoring sacred dance at Bongo Village.

Virtual exemplary allowed the whole tutorial to be done within a limited time, while all members of Pasraman *Vindu Vidya Dharma* conveyed enaugh skills and understanding in Balinese ritual dances. Such training method might be very helpful for dance tutors to undertaking the phases of Balinese dance learning within the actual circumstance of Covid-19. However, the research expected the *Pasraman* to be able to disseminate and continue the learning process in a form of regular rehearsals. In that way, the Hindu-Balinese society at Bongo Village will maintain the tradition of *ngayah*, and performing ritual dances in accomplishing their religious ceremonies. The remaining question to be emergently discussed is

how far such virtual means allows members of *Pasraman* well absorb the entire dance material both physical and substantial.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

Our research materials are sacred dances required for religious rituals, which are usually served in the innermost courtyard of temple (*jeroan*), or sometimes in the middle part of the temple (*madya*), depend on the purpose of the ritual. We have chosen *Rejang* dance and *Baris Pendet* as they often be presented at *Odalan*, as symbolisation the presence of holy spirit in the ritual. The training prioritizes *Rejang Dewa*, *Baris Pendet*, and *Rejang Renteng* dances. These three sacred dances require dancers with certain conditions, so they also can represent the type of student being trained. *Baris Pendet* was thought to 10 boys on their 10 – 13 years old. *Rejang Dewa* was thought to 10 young girls, while *Rejang Renteng* was for 10 unmarried young women (Dibia & Ballinger, 2004: 56-57).

The tutorial design is based on repertoire learning or traditional dance practice, which includes the sequence of movements of Balinese dance. This is done so that the implementation of the tutorial can run smoothly and effectively, and in considering that the conditions of social restrictions during Covid-19 pandemic will be quite difficult. Such situation can also triggered unexpected impacts. Hence, I used an experimental research method as pedagogic approach and the application to media learning. In experimental study, the researcher manipulates at least one variable, controls other relevance variables, and observes the effect upon one or more dependent variables. Emzir explained that in experimental research, the independent variable is reffered to an experimental variable, a causative variabel or a treatment variable, which its character or activities are believed in making up the difference (2009: 64).

This research manipulated the learning method including the reinforcement, the training or tutorial environmental setting, and the size of learning group, to lead the tutorial implementation be more structured and showing liable results. It is too to emerge the application of media learning, in this case is virtual exemplary, as potential as creative arts. Such variaty of learning-teaching strategy, as cited from May and War that '… offers an exciting and often difference learning experience … It allows the exploration of the way ideas are generated, manipulated, presented and valuated and the material that we can use is all around us (2011: 82). Responding to the Covid-19 health protocol, the praxis of experimental research carried out in a hybrid-blended way was implemented in four stages

consisting of 1) conceptual preparation, 2) briefing and hearing, 3) technical implementation of tutorial process, and 4) mentoring.

1) Conceptual Preparation

This was the preparation stage that undertook the conceptual exploration in adapting the media curriculum to a more suitable and appropriate treatment of tutorial. In this way, researcher would not be false to posit her insight in an emic manner, responding the subject requirements in term of vulnerable matters, the sacredness of the dances, and the natural setting of Bongo Village. Activities done in this phase was:

a. Developing a tutorial implementation plan;
b. Creating video tutorials and arrange them with other documents into digital bundled of DVD format, namely virtual exemplary;
c. Coordinating with *Pasraman Vindu Vidya Dharma* regarding the provision of venues, training facilities, and participant readiness.
d. Compiling and setting a tutorial schedule;
e. Providing tutorial equipment including dance costumes and props for the subject participants.

2) Briefings and Hearings

At this stage, with my team that were students who held the program of community service, we made the direct contact with the *Pasraman* in coordinating more closely the research implementation in Bongo Village. Things to do at this stage were as follows:

a. Discussing the technical details of implementing the program that had been previously designed with representatives of *Pasraman* and Banjar stakeholders;
b. Identifying and intoducing members of participants who would receive the dance training. The target for the training participants was 30 people, and can be reviewed by adjusting the conditions at Bongo Village during the pandemic.
c. Further exploration upon specific matters related to community habits, taboos and obligations, social ethics, and other norms, to be fulfilled during our stays in the village.

3) Technical Implementation of Tutorial Process: Sacred Balinese Dance Training Using Virtual Exemplary.

The direct learning (face-to-face tutorial) was completed in 4 (four) days to package 7 (seven) meetings. Learning dance repertoire required certain conditions to be able to convey the material thoroughly, including when we had to adapt to

health protocols the Covid-19. These conditions were shown in the tutorial implementation process as follows:

a. Participants received dance material by imitating the movements demonstrated and instructed by the tutor;

b. The tutor needed to direct and correct the body postures and movements made by the participants so that they could feel the better understood the true technique according to what was taught. In this case, the tutor needed to interact longer with a sufficient distance to touch the participant's body. After that, the tutor would have clean his hands and arms with the hand sanitizer provided on site;

c. Medical masks must be worn by tutors, other team members, and participants while at the tutorial location;

d. At the time of giving the material, demonstration of movements, and verbal instructions, the tutor removed the mask so that the voice can be heard clearly and not too gasp when demonstrating the movement (the use of a face shield could be added);

e. Likewise, participants were allowed to take off their masks while moving and sweating, so they do not catch their breath.

The operational realization of the material delivery described as follows:

- Day 1: 2 meetings x 2 hours/dance; the material of the meaning of dance, body postures when dancing, and the dance motifs in the *pepeson* (opening) section. Stationery, board and markers are required. Likewise handycams to record the tutorial process so that it can be evaluated at the end of the session.

- Day 2: 2 meetings x 2 hours/dance; stabilization of the correct posture and body pose, dance motifs of *pengawak* (the middle part of dance). Stationery, board, markers, handycam, and speakers are needed.

- Day 3: 2 meetings x 2 hours/dance; a dance motif for the transition and *Pekaad* (closing) sections. Handycam and speakers are required.

- Day 4: forming the structure of the management of the studio (determining the chairman, secretary, treasurer and people in charge of the dance), and discussing its management; submit dance costumes and accessories to serve as the studio's first inventory. Stationery, board and markers are required.

- Submission of material online with virtual exemplary is carried out for 5 (five) days for 5 meetings of 2 (two) hours each. The dance material delivery within a distance learning. Laptops and internet quota for a stable internet network are needed. virtual exemplary had played a vital role as a continuation of the training process in terms of strengthening movement

sequences, motion forms and floor patterns in group composition. The virtual exemplary contains video tutorials for each dance, step-by-step by each tutor, a complete repertoire video with music accompaniment by each tutor, and a video presentation of each dance in the context of a piodalan ceremony downloaded from youtube (references included).

4) Mentoring
   a. Strengthening to understand the contents of virtual exemplary and video tutorials. Internet quota for a stable internet network is required.
   b. Assistance online and offline to prepare performances at the piodalan ceremony, as well as an evaluation of the success of the program after all dance materials are delivered. Costumes, make-up, hairdo, handycam, and speakers are needed.

FINDINGS/RESULTS

Both the research and the student program has carried out the entire training process which is carried out offline and online accompanied by virtual exemplary for the delivery of dance material. This program gives *Pasraman Vindu Vidya Dharma* the skills to dance *Rejang Dewa*, *Baris Pendet*, and *Rejang Renteng*. The limited time available for the delivering the dance materials does have an impact on mastering dance skills that are not yet optimal. However, the subject have got the basic principles of dancing and the dance repertoire as a whole, so they will be more confident in presenting *Wali* (sacred) dances in their ritual ceremonies. Mastering dance techniques was also demonstrated by several participants who showed promising results for the sustainability of the training independently.

Virtual Exemplary is an essential element that shows the implementation of hybrid-blended learning. Virtual exemplary maximizes the training process, and provides a reference for tutorial participants to be able to self-correct their mistakes when practicing independently. Although the virtual exemplary can be used alone, it is highly recommended that there is face-to-face assistance, so that sacred dance material is conveyed without violating ethics or special provisions.

The virtual exemplary bundle contains:
   a. Video tutorials; This section describes general information about the *Rejang Dewa*, *Baris Pendet*, and *Rejang Renteng*, the structure of the dance, the variety of movements and their meanings. The tutorials were demonstrated by each member of the community service team: I Nyoman Mullya Purwati (*Rejang Dewa*), I Dewa Ginada Darma (*Baris Pendet*),

and Dian Restyani (*Rejang Renteng*). The virtual presence of tutors is expected to create a sense of confidence in the participants, as well as establish a bond of friendship between tutors and participants.

b. Full dance repertoire videos with accompaniment; This section serves as a complete presentation of the dance repertoire in the form of a solo (single) accompanied by dance accompaniment, as a guide for participants to self-correct the accuracy of their movements with the tempo and rhythm of the music. This section also shows details of gestures and facial expressions that can only be practiced directly in dance accompaniment.

c. Video presentation model in the context of *Odalan* ceremony; This section is a reference for tutors and participants regarding the contextual presentation of the *Rejang Dewa*, *Baris Pendet*, and *Rejang Renteng* in the real ritual ceremony. Videos are downloaded from files of YouTube after selection and comparison are made, and have given the subscribe to sources' site, in additional to identify the sources in the reference list inside the virtual exemplary bundle.
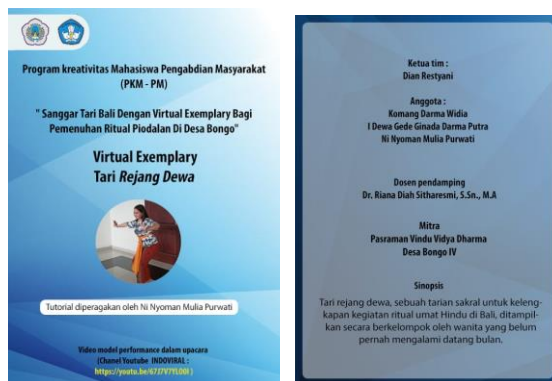
Figure1.
Virtual exemplary of *Rejang Dewa*
Source: Doc. Restyani, 2021

Figure 2.
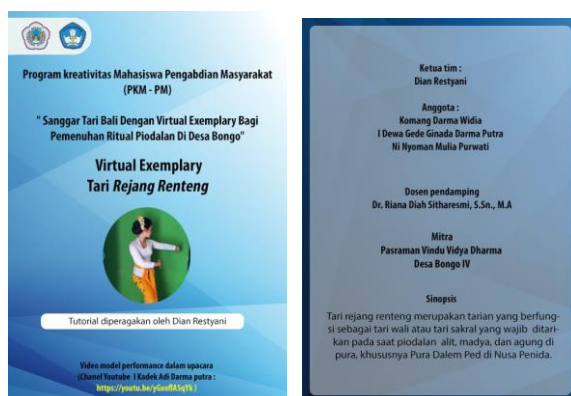*Virtual exemplary* of *Baris Pendet*
Source: Doc. Restyani, 2021

Figure 3.
Virtual exemplary of *Rejang Renteng*
Source: Doc. Restyani, 2021

Figure 4. The Presentation of *Rejang Dewa* (upper), *Baris Pendet* (left), and
Rejang Renteng (right) as an output of tutorials, during *Odalan Purnama Karo*
at Pure Puseh, Bongo Village, July 24th 2021
Source: Doc. Sitharesmi, 2021

DISCUSSION

Both research and the program in community service is requested to be made by involving all regulations for controlling Covid-19, which is what a troublesome thing for us to fulfill. Even though virtual exemplary has finally materialized as a medium for dance training that can be effective, the journey from preparing to implementing it at the practical level is full of thistles. My student Dian Restyani, one of the team member of the program, is a dance students who is not prepared to

have knowledge of digital technology; she has been using laptops in a limited basis to writing reports and conventional lecture assignments. Her team partners are not far different. They have to collaborate with colleagues who mastered the digital audio-visual techniques, which in Gorontalo are still a few.

Sacred dances for the purposes of Hindu-Balinese ceremonies do have a variety of simple and formal movements, compared to classical Balinese dance types and new creations which are very complex in detail in their movement techniques and expressions. However, sacred dances such as *Rejang* have a very distinctive authority and elegance because of their meaningful sphere; *Rejang* dancers are representations of angels from heaven, and are very likely to be possessed by the spirits of the gods (Bandem & deBoer, 2004: 22). So any teaching upon them requires special treatments. It is precisely because of the simplicity and formality of the movement that symbols and meanings speak more. As Dibia & Ballinger cited, that '…what makes them more "sacred" is that there is little or no rehearsal of the forms; they are performed for the deities and it is not the compactness of the form that takes precedence in the ritual, but the actual presence of the form' (2004: 56).

The phrase "the actual presence of the form" means 'the presence of the dancer as a whole' in the highest aesthetic level beyond the technical aspect. This aesthetic area is not easy to teach even in face-to-face training model. Teacher-student interaction is not enough to be on the surface – as is the case in modern-day academic-capitalist teaching, after the lesson ends the interaction – , but rather an observational interaction, in which the whole learning process is a community event. Dibia & Ballinger confirmed that in Bali, dance learning takes a more active form: every student learns by watching and imitating the teacher (traditionally without mirrors). Once she has memorised the basic patterns of movement, her theacher will move behind, making a totally body contact and manipulate her limbs, arms, legs, and head, so she will feel the movement as supposed to be. In this way, the teacher molds the student's body until she can feel and found her own to absorb every nuance of the style (2004: 14 -15).

The results obtained from the sacred Balinese dance tutorial service program supported by virtual exemplary are expected to have promising potential in a sustainable manner, including:
1. The Balinese dance tutorial method with virtual exemplary can be applied, modified, and adapted for traditional dance tutorials in the context of communities with similar characteristics to partners and different communities.

2. Can be a form of effort to preserve traditional dance, maintain and develop the traditional and cultural values it contains so that it becomes a worthy legacy to be continued by future generations.

3. Changes in partner behavior patterns, especially the children of the Vindu Vidya Dharma Pasraman, become more concerned with the meaning and presence of sacred Balinese dance and practice it directly as part of the ngayah tradition.

CONCLUSION

Preparing and implementing a perfect *Piodalan* (*Odalan*) is a priority for the process of appreciation of the essence of the spiritual and cultural meaning of the Hindu-Balinese community. In addition to Bali and other cities in Indonesia with a sizable number of Hindu-Balinese communities, Hindu-Balinese communities such as Sarawati in Yogyakarta, for example, can organize traditional art studios complete with proper practicing space/showrooms and a set of gamelan and other properties. This cannot be imitated in Gorontalo within its social environment in its ideals of authority as a province embodying Islamic character. Gorontalonese motto *Daluo Limo Lo Pohalaa*, which means 'the earth of the portico of Medina', makes communities from other cultural backgrounds having less access to flourish. But at least, the existence of Balinese dances as well as other Baliense arts form, no matter how small, in the Hindu-Balinese transmigrant society, can function essentially, especially to support activities that are traditional and for religious rituals.

Despite the shortcomings faced, the results obtained from the sacred Balinese dance tutorial with virtual exemplary are expected to have promising potential in a sustainable manner. The Balinese dance tutorial method with virtual exemplary can be applied, modified, and adapted for traditional dance tutorials in the context of communities with similar characteristics to partners and different communities. Virtual exemplary within the blended learning process can be a form of effort to preserve traditional dance, maintain and develop the traditional and cultural values, so that it becomes a worthy legacy to be continued by future generations. The changes in behavior patterns, both for the members *Pasraman Vindu Vidya Dharma* and my students to become more concerned with the meaning and presence of sacred Balinese dance and practice, indirectly a worthwhile invenstment for the future of our culture, art and education in contemporary world.

Composing and implementing this research integrated with the program of community service, is a reflection for I as a dance lecturer-researcher, and my

students as fellow young generations, to strive for sustainability and development of the nation's traditions, culture, and spiritual values. Furthermore, the research output can be used as a reference for implementing similar service programs, especially in the operation of the blended learning method to training-learning traditional dance for transmigrant in Gorontalo Province and other provinces throughout Indonesia. Virtual exemplary bundles are material products that must exist as the main support for the implementation of the program, especially with social distancing conditions such as Covid-19 pandemic today. Virtual exemplary is then equipped with the manual to allow its clarity in application. The manual is also one of the elements that complete the research report, as a form of evaluation for completing the program.

The development of technology and science is a continuum that always brings changes in all aspects of life. A world without technology is impossible. We can run sprint, marathon, or even just having a brisk, to keep up with the fast pace of technology. Only we have to bear in mind that whatever it takes, we cannot loose our humanity. Within the technology and contemporary state of our world today, dance as well as other form of arts, whether it is traditional or new work, should not loose the sense of aesthetics that are always connect to the history of culture and the community itself.

REFERENCES

Bandem, I Madé & Fredrik Eugene deBoer. 2004. "*Kaja dan Kelod: Tarian Bali dalam Transisi.*" Yogyakarta: Badan Penerbit ISI Yogyakarta.

Campbell, Peter. 2019. "*Persistent Creativity: Making the Case for Art, Culture and the Creative Industries.*" Liverpool: Palgrave Macmillan.

Dibia, I.W and Rucina Ballinger. 2004. "*Balinese Dance, Drama & Music.*" Tuttle Publishing. Singapore.

Emzir, 2009. "*Metodologi Penelitian Pendidikan: Kuantitatif dan Kualitatif.*" Jakarta: PT RajaGrafindo Persada.

Heriyawati, Y. 2016. "*Seni Pertunjukan dan Ritual.*" Penerbit Ombak. Yogyakarta.

Pitriani, N.R.V. 2020. "Tradisi "*Ngayah*" sebagai Wadah Komunikasi Masyarakat Hindu Perspektif Pendidikan Humanis-Religius". *Widya Duta Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Agama dan Ilmu Sosial Budaya*, Vol. 15, No.2. Sekolah Tinggi Agama Hindu Negeri Mpu Kuturan. Singaraja:157-169.

Smith, Hazel & Roger T. Dean. 2009. "*Practice – Led Research, Research – Led Practice in the Creative Arts.*" Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd.

Lim, Francis. 2008. "*Filsafat Teknologi: Don Ihde tentang Manusia dan Alat.*" Yogyakarta: Kanisius.

Vines, Kim & John McCormick. 2010. "Touching Space: Using Motion Capture and Stereo Projection to Create a Virtual Haptics of dance". *Leonardo* Vol. 43 No. 4. The MIT Press.

Yeoh, Francis. 2012. "The Choreographic Trust: Preserving Dance Legacies". *Dance Chronicle* Vol. 35 no.2. Taylor & Francis Ltd, pp. 224 – 229.

Brooks, Lynn Matluck. 2011. "Preserving the Ephemeral". *Dance Chronicle, 2011*, Vol. 34 no. 1 *Preserving Dance as a Living Legacy.* Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group. pp. 1 – 5.

Bandem, Prof. Dr. I Made. 1996. "*Etnologi Tari Bali.*" Yogyakarta: Kanisius.

Langer, Susanne K. 1953. "*Feeling and Form: A Theory of Art.*" New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

_____. 1957. "*Problems of Art: Ten Philosophical Lectures.*" New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

_____. 1979. "Expressiveness". In W.E. Kennick (ed.) *Art and Philosophy: Readings in Aesthetics.* New York: St. Martin's Press (pp. 74 – 81).

_____. 2006. "*Problematika Seni*" (Terj. F.X Widaryanto). Bandung: Sunan Ambu Press STSI Bandung.

Murgiyanto, Sal. 2004. "*Tradisi dan Inovasi.*" Jakarta Selatan: Penerbit Wedatama Widya Sastra.

_____. 2016. "*Kritik Pertunjukan dan Pengalaman Keindahan.*" Jakarta: Penerbit Pascasarjana – IKJ.

Thorne, Kaye. 2003. "*Blended Learning: How to Integrate Online and Traitional Learning*". London & Sterling: Kogan Page Limited.

Anetta, Leonard A., et.al. 2010. "*V-Learning: Distance Education in the 21st Century Through 3D Virtual Learning Environments.*" London & New York: Springer.