

Analyzing *Grimingan*: Seeking Form, Finding Process¹

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The music at the center of this study is called *grimmingan*. It is solo music played on a *gender*—a thirteen- or fourteen-key metallophone with pitched resonators—during Javanese *wayang kulit* performances in moments when the *dhalang* or puppeteer requires no accompaniment other than the sonic evocation of the general mood of the scene.² Much of the rest of the musical accompaniment in a *wayang* performance is provided by a full Javanese *gamelan*. Although it is always performed as a solo, *grimmingan* is rarely the primary aural or visual focus for anyone at a *wayang* event. It burbles and murmurs in the background, keeping the mode or *pathet* and its basic affect in the ear of the *dhalang* and the audience. In a traditional or classic-style *wayang*, *grimmingan* can be heard in as much as four of the eight hours of a full-length performance.

SOME BACKGROUND

Genderan—that which is played on the *gender* and of which *grimmingan* is one type—can be notated in a version of the cipher notation that was developed for notating

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² The word *gender* is pronounced with a hard ‘g’ like the ‘g’ in good.

gamelan music.³ All of the *grimangan* I will discuss here is in the pentatonic scale called *slendro*. A scale spanning two octaves in *slendro* would be notated in the following manner: 3̣, 5̣, 6̣, 1̣, 2̣, 3̣, 5̣, 6̣, 1̣, 2̣, 3̣ where dots below and above the ciphers indicate range. Notice the numerical gaps between 3 and 5 and 6 and 1. There is no fixed pitch in *gamelan* tuning. Each *gamelan* is tuned to itself, according to the tastes of the gong smith and the commissioner, although the advent of audio recording has had some standardizing effects over the course of the last fifty years. While some well-known *gamelan* do have larger sonic gaps between pitches 3 and 5 and pitches 6 and 1 as might be suggested by the skipping of numbers 4 and 7 when naming scale degrees, others do not have such distinctly larger gaps or may not have gaps in those same places. Nevertheless, musicians would still use the gapped scale 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 to represent *slendro* even on those ensembles where the gaps are located differently. Hence, one good strategy for listening and reading *gamelan* notation is to imagine the gaps between pitches in the *slendro* scale as pretty much equidistant, smaller than a major third and bigger than a major second. Additionally, Javanese *pathet* or modes do not function like Indian *raga* or Arab *maqam*, or even church modes of any sort. All of the *slendro* pitches are present in nearly every piece of music composed in *slendro*. The final tone of any Javanese piece functions simply as *one* possible home tone in the mode, not *the only* home tone. Further, most of the five *slendro* pitches can function as final tones in each of the three *slendro pathet*, a fact that regularly confounds students in my world music theories classes as

³ See Perlman (1991) for a discussion of *nut ranté* (chain notation) and other forms of notation that were tried before the general adoption of cipher notation in Central Java. See Sumarsam (1995) for further description of notation systems and extensive discussion of the cultural milieu of mutual exchange that engendered the development of Javanese notational systems.

they grapple with the task of trying to hear and understand *pathet*. Rather than using single pitches as anchors, Javanese mode is better understood by thinking about how notes are treated in particular contexts; that is, which notes occur simultaneously and which do not, or better, how particular melodic gestures are positioned in context, and how the pitches that function as phrase-enders at every structural level are treated.

I should point out that it is rare for *gender* players to use notation in any context. When they do write out *genderan*, what is usually presented is nothing more than a bare contour of the parts for the two hands in which the right-hand part is notated above a fixed line and the left hand below. Notes that occur simultaneously are vertically arranged so as to be positioned over one another. None of the rhythmic or melodic ornamentation that is characteristic of any style of *genderan* is indicated. Because I have never found significant segments of *grimingan* notated anywhere, I have developed my own system. In my notation, no steady pulse is assumed, although sections with a more rhythmically stable feel are indicated verbally. Because of the way *grimingan* phrasing proceeds, I have been inspired to use relative spacing both inside phrases and between them, using larger spaces for longer gaps in sonic activity. Reasonably strong and strong structural cadences are marked by gaps or spaces in the flow of the notation and may be indicated by a break in the central line. Occasionally, these conceptual breaks may not be marked by a significant sonic pause because some of the reasonably strong cadences are simply arrivals at goal notes on the way to other more significant ones. Once they have been sounded the performer is already moving on toward the next arrival notes. The ends of the larger more structural phrases will sound modally cadential for people who know

the modes. For those who do not, the beginnings of larger structural phrases are always marked by a letter as will be described below.

RECORDING GRIMINGAN SAMPLES

The first *grimingan* selection I include here was recorded at the home of the performer in Surakarta. The name of the *gender* player is Ibu Pringga. At the time in 1990, she was among the busiest of female *gender* players, regularly asked to serve as accompanist by several *dhalang* and also performing as a *pasindhen* or female singer in other groups. The gendering of the performer and the style in which she plays is something that is at the heart of some of my work on this music, but will not be discussed in this essay.⁴

In the session where I recorded Example 1, I asked Ibu Pringga to imagine she was at a *wayang* performance playing *gender*, and to play all the different *grimingan* selections she would normally perform in a live show as the evening moved from the beginning of the story to the end; that is, from *Pathet Nem* through *Pathet Sanga* to *Pathet Manyura*. Not surprisingly, Ibu Pringga had no trouble doing what I requested.

According to Ibu Pringga, Example 1 is the music that she would perform during the first *jejer* or scene in a *wayang* performance. This is the moment after the introductory music has set the scene and after all the characters have been brought in for the first meeting, the moment when the *dhalang* presents a conversation or debate in which the initial problem of the story is laid out. This scene can take as few as seven or eight minutes or as many as twenty-five to thirty-five minutes.

⁴ See Weiss (2006) for full discussion of the gendering of *grimingan* styles and how it relates to *wayang* aesthetics.

Example 1. Ibu Pringga (December 12, 1990), *Grimingan* after *Ada-ada Girisa*, pathet nem, 3' 06"

A

3 i 3 i232i 6 3 2 3 5 5356 65 532 6i232i6 53 2 3 232i 666
 653 3 3 1 26 352 35 326 15 532 2 216 53 52 6 6

B

i6 2i32i 6 i2 i 6 3 2 1 2 123
 53 1 1 216 6 12 1235 26 53 52 321 23 3

2 3 53 635 3 5 3 56 5 356 2 6i2i6 56532 2 3 23 2i666
 65 32 3 5 32 3235 63 6 53565 3 3 532 2 16 53 52 6 6

D

i6 2i32i 3 2 i 6 23 2 i6 5 3 2 3565356 5 5 6i i 6 53 6 66 3 x 6i2
 53 1 1 3 1 1 23 61 653 23 35 15612 216 521 23 1 23 56 12 612 2

D

i56 6i26 3 23 2 i 2 6 i2 2i23 232i
 235 53523 211612 16 653 1 23 21

i2i 32i6 x 6i2 2i65 3 2 35 6 56 5 3 5 2 16 6 6 61232 3 2 3
 3123 52 1 23612363 23 35 15612 21615 6 653 3 5 235 5235 65352 3

6 666 6 6665 3 6 666 353 6532 3 56 5356 56 5 i653 2 6i2
 2 3 56 12612 6 35 56 1563 52 3 2 2356 15 6 2123 26 53 3 5 32 2

Example 1 (cont'd).

D¹

$\frac{i\bar{2}\bar{3}}{166} \quad \frac{\bar{2}\bar{3} \bar{2}i}{5\bar{3} \ 1 \ \bar{2}\bar{3} \ \bar{2}i}$ $\frac{i\bar{2}i \ \bar{3}\bar{2}i\bar{6}}{3123 \ 52 \ 1} \quad \frac{23 \ \bar{2} \ i \ \bar{6} \ 5}{2161 \ 6\bar{5}\bar{3} \ 6\bar{5}\bar{3} \ \bar{3} \ 5}$

$\frac{\bar{6} \ i\bar{6}i\bar{2} \ \bar{2} \ \bar{3}\bar{2}i\bar{6} \ 3 \ 3\bar{5}\bar{6} \ i\bar{6}5\bar{3}}{6 \ 1\bar{5}\bar{3}\bar{2} \ \bar{3}\bar{5} \ 5 \ 6 \ 2 \ 3\bar{2}16\bar{3}\bar{5}\bar{2} \ \bar{3}} \quad \frac{\bar{6} \ \bar{6}\bar{6}\bar{6} \ \bar{6} \ \bar{6}\bar{6}\bar{6} \ 5\bar{3}}{2 \ \bar{3} \ 5\bar{6} \ 5 \ \bar{2} \ 6 \ \bar{6}}$

$\frac{5\bar{3} \ 3 \ 3\bar{5}\bar{6} \ 5\bar{2}\bar{3} \ 3\bar{6}\bar{5}\bar{6}i\bar{6} \ 5 \ 5 \ \bar{6}\bar{5} \ 3 \ 3 \ \bar{6}\bar{5} \ 3\bar{5}\bar{3} \ \bar{6}\bar{5}\bar{3} \ 2 \ \bar{6} \ \bar{6}\bar{6}\bar{6} \ 3 \ 5 \ 3\bar{5} \ \bar{6}}{21612 \ 612 \ 23 \ 2\bar{3} \ 2 \ 21612 \ 26 \ 5\bar{3} \ \bar{3} \ 5 \ 5\bar{3}\bar{2} \ \bar{2}\bar{3} \ 5 \ 1\bar{6}\bar{5} \ 6}$

D final

$\frac{5 \ 5 \ i \ \bar{6} \ 5 \ 3}{212612 \ 6\bar{5}\bar{3}\bar{5}\bar{2} \ \bar{3}} \quad \frac{1 \ \bar{x} \ 1}{3\bar{5}\bar{6} \ \bar{3} \ \bar{1}} \quad \frac{5\bar{6} \ \bar{6}\bar{5}\bar{3}\bar{2}}{6\bar{1} \ \bar{1} \ \bar{2} \ \bar{3}\bar{2}\bar{1}} \quad \frac{1 \ 5\bar{6}i}{\bar{1}}$

$\frac{\bar{2} \ i\bar{2}\bar{3} \ \bar{2} \ \bar{2} \ \bar{3}\bar{2}i}{216 \ \bar{3} \ 5 \ 6\bar{5}\bar{3}\bar{5}\bar{6} \ 1}$

$\frac{\bar{6}\bar{5} \ \bar{6} \ 3 \ 1 \ 3\bar{5}\bar{3}\bar{2} \ \bar{2}i\bar{6}}{1612 \ 6 \ \bar{3}\bar{5}\bar{6}12 \ 16 \ 6}$

E

$\frac{5 \ \bar{6} \ 3 \ 5 \ 3 \ 2 \ 5 \ \bar{6} \ i\bar{2} \ \bar{2} \ \bar{3}\bar{2}i\bar{6}}{5\bar{3}\bar{5}\bar{2}\bar{3}\bar{5} \ 61\bar{5}\bar{3}\bar{2}\bar{5}\bar{3}\bar{2} \ 5 \ 3\bar{2}\bar{5}\bar{3}\bar{2} \ 6 \ \bar{2}i\bar{6}} \quad \frac{5 \ 3 \ 5\bar{6} \ 2 \ \bar{6}i\bar{2} \ \bar{3}\bar{2}i\bar{6} \ 5\bar{6}}{1\bar{5} \ 6\bar{3} \ 6 \ 5\bar{3}\bar{2} \ \bar{2} \ \bar{2}}$

Audio Example 1

When Ibu Pringga finished playing her three minutes of music, I asked her what she would do to fill in the rest of the time in which *grimmingan* was required during the scene. She said that she would just continue to repeat the melody over and over again. This seemed like a simple solution to an analytical problem that had been teasing me for some time. This was at the beginning of my time in the field and I was still confused in general and in particular with respect to what I was hearing. Whenever I had heard *grimmingan*, the music made intrinsic sense to me but I could not explain why. I could not discern if there was any form or pattern in what the performers played as they laid down phrase after elegant phrase, occasionally coordinating what they were playing directly with the action on the screen, but with no apparent disruption to their own musical flow. “I just keep repeating the same melody” was an analytic idea that I could test. So I began collecting and transcribing in a systematic way—recording *grimmingan* in the context of *wayang* performance and also in controlled recording sessions where I would ask the players to simulate playing their way through a *wayang*.

TRANSCRIBING *GRIMINGAN* AND FINDING SOME JAVANESE
COMPARISONS

Even after transcribing just a handful of *grimmingan* segments, it was immediately obvious that players did not simply repeat the same melody over and over again until the *dhalang* made another musical request. It required the transcription of many hours of *grimmingan* to finally get a handle on what I gradually realized was better understood as a process than any kind of form. Form is a strong term in the discourse on Javanese

gamelan music, at least the discourse on this music outside of Java. Javanese cyclic forms are usually one of the first things that non-Javanese encounter when they start to engage with the various musical genres that are played on *gamelan*. We learn about and teach cycles, and the subdivision of those cycles into twos and fours, eights and sixteens. We think about those cycles connecting to other cycles to build larger pieces and suites. Cyclic form seems a firm concept on which it is possible to build an understanding of Javanese music. By comparison, *grimingan* is relatively formless.

People who are familiar with Javanese *gamelan* will know that there are several common genres of Javanese music with significantly less well-determined musical structures than those constructed in more predictable cyclic structures. I will just briefly mention two of these. *Palaran* involves the recitation of Javanese poetry in a pulsed metrical context in which the singer is accompanied by the *gender*, the wooden *gambang*, the *suling* flute and the plucked *siter*. In conjunction with the gongs and *kendhang* or drum, they create a kind of vamping pattern that is interrupted and then driven forward to an arrival pitch as the singer approaches the last two syllables of each poetic phrase. In addition to the beauty of the poetic verse melodies, the pleasure in performing *palaran* is the successful coordination of the arrival to a cadence simultaneously by all performers. The element which makes *palaran* similar to *grimingan* is the flexibility in the structures of the phrases. Like *grimingan* players, singers can take all the time in the world to spin out their phrases. If they want to sing more slowly or quickly than others normally do or in a more ornamented fashion, they can take those liberties. The accompanying musicians will simply wait, vamping on their instruments until the singer reaches the point in the line that signals the drummer to begin the cadential phrase. Unlike a *grimingan* player,

however, the *palaran* singer is restricted to some degree by the poetic and melodic form of the verse. Within the contexts of their respective phrases, however, the *palaran* singer and the *grimmingan* performer each control the duration and improvisatory development of their phrases

A second non-cyclic form is *sulukan* or mood pieces (*pathetan* and *sendhon*). These are sung by the *dhalang* and performed before and after more structured cyclic pieces in *wayang* performances and also in music-only events called *klenengan* where there is not usually a *dhalang* singing and where the *rebab* leads the progress through the melody. Like *palaran*, *sulukan* are actually linear melodies without cyclic architecture. Instead, they are built around modal gestures organized in varying sequences that become increasingly predictable as the end of the *suluk* approaches. With the melody performed by either the voice or the *rebab*, *pathetan* are an exercise in negotiated group dynamics. The melody is accompanied heterophonically and idiomatically by performers on the *gender*, the *gambang*, and *suling*. As in *palaran*, the pacing of the melody is the element that is negotiated throughout. The melody, or at least the pattern of strong arrival tones, is reasonably well-determined with customary proportions for individual segments of the melody. These serve as a guide to help people perform together, but of course there are always individuals who vary the practice beyond the customary norms. Many *dhalang* sing and some *rebab* players perform their own versions of various *pathetan*. Musicians who regularly perform with them know the variations, but guest musicians may not. Nevertheless, guest musicians would likely be able to follow the variations because of the delayed nature of the heterophony that accompanies the singer. So as in *grimmingan*, in *sulukan* and *pathetan* there is the possibility for flexibility of duration as well as melodic

fillings-in and more infrequent melodic detours. Neither *sulukan* or *palaran* is as underdetermined as *grimingan*. That said, all three genres do share certain conceptual ideas, albeit in differing degrees, related to performer choice in melodic and durational development.

DISCOVERING PROCESS WHILE SEARCHING FOR FORM

Even if performers do not simply ‘repeat the melody’ over and over again as they perform *grimingan*, what they do play is largely derived from what I have come to call their version of *grimingan* in its most compact, albeit notional, form. What I mean by ‘most compact form’ is that which performers played for me when I asked them to play *grimingan* out of the context of a *wayang* structure. In my data-collecting phase I worked with nine performers, recording their *grimingan* in live performance, in mock performance structure, and in interviews where one of the things I asked them to do was to play what they identified as the core or essence of *grimingan* in each of the three *slendro pathet*.

I first transcribed the core melodies of several of the performers. I began my analysis by focusing on the mid-level arrivals to which my ear was drawn, both because they were significant based on what I already knew about the different modes and because the flow of the music often paused at those arrivals.⁵ By ignoring differences in surface detail

⁵ By arrivals I am referring to moments that are sonic cadences of varying degrees of finality. Javanese traditional musics are best understood and heard as being organized around series of arrivals. This is rhythmically and melodically true for Javanese music with meter in which the arrivals fall predominantly on consecutive beats four and where phrases are also simultaneously organized into groups of two, four, eight, sixteen, etc. beats. *Grimingan* and *sulukan* are organized into series of non-metered, melodic arrivals, articulated and made audible by the coalescing of the various simultaneously performed melodic lines on one pitch in *sulukan*, and by the pausing of melodic action on the *gender* in *grimingan*.

generated by personalized styles of melodic elaboration and paying attention to the mid-level arrivals to which my ear was drawn, I was able to find patterns that recurred at deeper structural levels in the multiple performances of *grimmingan* by the same person and by different performers, even those who did not come from the same family tradition. I should point out that the entirely aural nature of *grimmingan* transmission has the effect of creating musical lineages such that the *grimmingan* of related people, or at least those who learned from the same teacher, is more closely related than that of people from different lineages or different geographic locations in Central Java. This was also once true of *gamelan* and *wayang* repertoire in the past but the advent of music conservatories, radio broadcasts, and the sale and exchange of music recordings has dulled the geographic differences to some extent while enhancing access to the unique interpretive styles associated with particular groups and individuals.

How do individual performers expand their *grimmingan* melodies to create twenty minutes of music from three? It turns out that there is a lot of variation in approach to this task. By focusing on mid-level arrival points, I began to see deeper level patterns emerge. Randomly, I chose letters to identify the phrases since numbering the phrases would have been confusing given the cipher notation I was using. Figure 1 outlines the underlying pattern of deep-level arrivals that I have found in *Grimingan Nem* with the usual affect⁶ in *pathet slendro nem*. These basic *slendro nem* phrases have been distilled or reduced and averaged from the performances of nine different *gender* players. I should mention

⁶ Performers identify at least two kinds of *grimmingan* in each *pathet*: *grimmingan* with the usual affect, *grimmingan biasa*, and *grimmingan ada-ada*. The latter shares only some melodic material of *grimmingan biasa* but the texture is more agitated as in the *suluk ada-ada*. *Gender* players use *grimmingan ada-ada* in moments of elevated tension—anger, fear, elation—and in moments of battle or extreme action. The melodies of *grimmingan ada-ada* do not usually map directly onto the various melodies of the *ada-ada* sung by the *dhalang* but they are related.

Figure 1. Underlying structure of *Grimingan Nem Biasa*

A Phrase: The beginning of a *grimingan nem* segment is usually the same as or related to the individual performer's cadential descent pattern or her *grambyangan* specific to *pathet nem*. *Gender* players use this same pattern at the end of nearly every *pathetan* in the *pathet*. In *grimingan nem* the phrase is usually some variation on the following series of arrival points:

5̣ 6̣ 5̣ (3) 2̣.

This phrase is called A in my analyses of *pathet nem grimingan*. (Parentheses indicate that the arrival is not always present but occurs frequently enough to be identified as common.)

B and D Phrases: These phrases generally have several variations within each person's performance(s). They usually track the following pattern:

6̣ 1̣ (5) 3̣ (2) 2̣

An individual may repeat this B phrase several times in a similar fashion or may continue to develop the idea into something that is different enough to be called D. While D and B are not always radically different on every level, significant arrival at five en route down to low two is more common in D. More significant for identification of a D phrase is a pattern marked by the repetition of pitch six in the right hand,

6̣ 6̣ 6̣ 6̣

that may occur one or several times accompanied by some kind of an alternation between low two and low three followed by a leap to middle six in the left hand, leading to an arrival on the *kempyung* three/six in the middle of the *gender*. This section of the D phrase is often marked by a momentary feeling of a steady pulse.

2̣ 3̣ 6̣ 3/6

D Final Phrase: In a performance of a complete statement of her/his *grimingan nem* melody, a *gender* player will usually play a phrase that is related to D in which there is also one or several arrivals at 1 in the middle and/or at the end of the phrase. I have labelled this D final as it often signals the end of the selection and it is usually only played once, unlike other D phrases. Frequently in the live performances, the *grimingan* segment did not last long enough for the player to reach this section of the melody or they misjudged the timing of the scene such that they were still working on variations of B and D when the next musical item was called for by the *dhalang*. Some *gender* players pride themselves on reaching the end of their expansion of the *grimingan* melody playing the D Final phrase just as the *dhalang* winds up the scene and calls for a new piece, usually *Pathetan Nem Jugag* or another of the languorous *suluk* heard the *Pathet Nem* section of the *wayang*.

E Phrase: Usually falls from six to low two, passing through five followed by a return to some kind of A phrase which functions as the connector between *grimingan* and other sonic textures.

6̣ 5̣ 2̣

that the analytical point I am demonstrating in this article is the practice of melodic elaboration in examples from one performer in the context of these more generalized patterns.⁷

If the basic compact order of phrases flows from A to B to D to D-Final, to E, most performers develop their expanded version of *grimmingan* by alternating between B-type phrases and D-type phrases. Some *gender* players pride themselves on reaching the end of their expansion of the *grimmingan* melody playing the D-Final phrase just as the *dhalang* winds up the scene and calls for a new piece, either a *sulukan* or some kind of piece requiring all the musicians to play. Figure 2 shows the phrase structure of Ibu Pringga's compact, three-minute version of *Grimingan Nem* (as transcribed in Example 1) compared with that of a ten-minute segment she played about six months later. The B and D phrases are nearly never played in exactly the same way, even in iterations of the compact version of the melody by the same person. It is clear that part of the pleasure of the *grimmingan* process is in the endless surface elaborations.

An emphasis on variation and elaboration over a predictable substructure is a common aesthetic for Javanese traditional music and theatre performance in general. Hence, it is not surprising to find that preference operating here. The difference here is that the elaborations—expansions, contractions, alternate routes, new ideas—are more prominent and central to the shape of the performance, contributing not only to the surface level activity, but also occasionally altering the mid-level arrival pattern within the larger phrases and, hence, altering the “form.”

⁷ Although I have not included the performances of *gender* players other than Ibu Pringga in this article, there are copious examples to be found in the CD ROM included in Weiss (2006). I am also in the beginning stages of creating a website that will contain all of the transcriptions I have made of *grimmingan* and my analyses.

Figure 2. Ibu Pringga's *Grimingan Nem Biasa* Deep-level Phrase Order

Compact Version from Recording Session:

A, B, D, D, D1, D-Final, E

Pringga, 12 December 1990 – 3' 06"

Expanded from Live Performance:

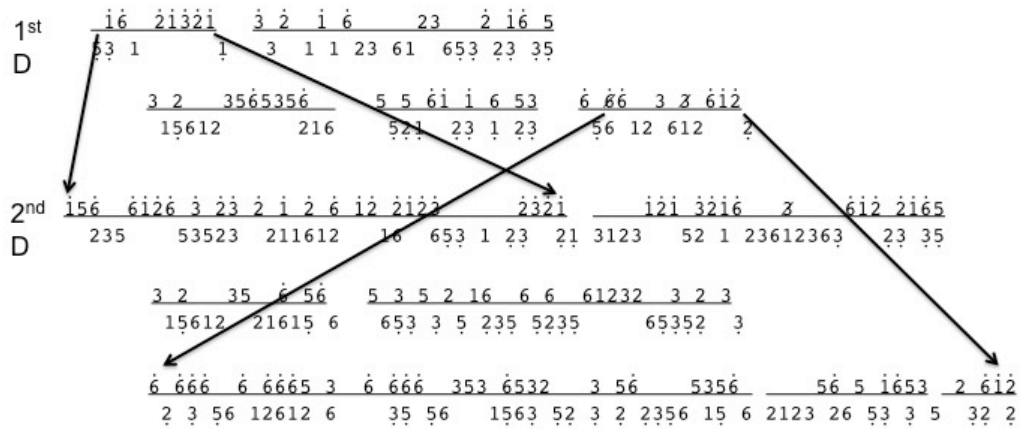
A, B, B, B, B, B, D, D, D-Final, E, A, B (cut off to begin *Pathetan Slendro Nem Jugag*)

Pringga, 26 May 1991 – 10' 20"

To get a better idea of how this idea of expansion works, I have excerpted two D phrases from one of Ibu Pringga's *Grimingan Nem* performances as Figure 3. I have chosen to use an example from a recording session rather than a live performance primarily because it is easier to hear on the recording. The phrases map onto one another in terms of mid-level arrival tones but it is clear that the second phrase is actually a greatly expanded version of the first.

The arrows show connections between two small sub-phrases that are significantly expanded in the second D phrase: the opening gesture to pitch one and the characteristic melodic gesture of D phrases, the pulsed repetition of pitch six in the right hand. The phrase to pitch one in the first D phrase consists primarily of the leap from three up to one and then down an octave to low one in the left hand. The right hand has a cadential-esque pattern that weaves a serpentine pattern around the arrival note, pitch one. In the second D phrase the left hand takes its time, rising up to middle three, meandering down to low three, finally jumping up to middle one and then falling down to low one. The last bit of the phrase should be recognizable as the last bit of the first D phrase. In this particular case, the right hand follows the left.

Figure 3. Two D-Phrases from Ibu Pringga Compared to Demonstrate Expansion Techniques Employed in *Grimingan* Performance



Audio Example 2

The second phrase I want to focus on is the one that ultimately determines whether the phrase is going to be a B phrase or a D phrase—the sub-phrase that features the repeating-six pattern. In the first D phrase you can see that the six in the right hand is only repeated three times as the phrase moves to the cadence on pitch two. In the second D phrase, the repeating-six pattern is, itself, repeated twice after which the two hands share a single melody that explores the rising pattern from low three to middle six and then cadences on two with a brief arrival at three just before.⁸ Similar things have been done to each sub-phrase in this second D phrase and can be found throughout the entirety of these expanded *grimingan* segments in any mode.

⁸ An arrival at two can always be expanded by adding an arrival at three en route in *Grimingan Nem*.

SOME CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

So what do we take away from this brief analysis of Javanese *grimmingan*? First of all, we should not dismiss the simple pleasure of figuring out what is going on in the performance of *grimmingan*, something that is known to those who perform it (whether they choose to articulate it or not), but which has bewildered and interested many others both in and outside of Java. Beyond that, however, we have gleaned a bit of knowledge about the nature of melodic and modal imagination and development in one Javanese genre that may have productive comparative relationships with other genres.

Additionally, the idea of expansion and contraction, so essential to the process of creating *grimmingan*, functions in multiple ways in other Javanese genres ranging from changing *irama* or temporal expansion and contraction to some of the melodic relationships found between a *merong* and *inggah* or a *ladrang* and its *ciblon* section.⁹ Melodic expansion and ornamentation is something that singers engage in when they perform *palaran*. Every poetic meter has several basic melodies but performers never sing the basic contour of the melodies. Like the performers of *grimmingan*, they take their time exploring and developing the melody. The accompanying musicians vamp idiomatically, engaging in their own form of temporal and melodic expansion, until the moment when the singer decides to aim toward the cadence.

There are also connections to be made between *grimmingan* and the *gender* accompaniment for a *pathetan*. The group negotiation of *pathetan* performance hinges on

⁹ *Merong* and *inggah* refer to the first and second sections of large-scale pieces in the Javanese gamelan repertoire, pieces known as *gendhing*. *Ladrang* is a smaller form consisting of thirty-two melodic beats. The *ciblon* section of a *ladrang* is usually twice as long, with a melody that has been derived in one of several possible ways of expanding the original *ladrang* melody, and accompanied by a lively, dance-style drumming on the *ciblon* drum, hence the name of the second section.

the accompaniment of a melody as performed by a voice or *rebab*. In *grimmingan*, however, the melody is in the mind of the *gender* player and she does not have to negotiate with any other musician except the *dhalang* who may occasionally invite the *gender* player to interrupt her melodic flow to comment musically on something he may do—make a warrior character laugh or invoke a remembered moment of tension between the characters. The only other musician who may intersect with the *grimmingan* player is, occasionally, the gong player who may mark the ends of her phrases with gong strokes on the same pitches.

Both *palaran* and *pathetan* have reasonably predictable melodies and moderately fixed forms but tend not to be metrically rigid, albeit in their different ways. If *palaran* and *pathetan* are genres that can be said to be more closely related to *grimmingan* than other Javanese genres, they are both still definable through formal characteristics, although those forms are not the cyclic, metered ones common to Javanese full-*gamelan* repertoire.

But is it true to say that *grimmingan* does not have form? Through the transcription of many hours of *grimmingan* I have been able to discern the process of *grimmingan*, demonstrated here in a performance by Ibu Pringga. The analysis of Ibu Pringga's *grimmingan* is informed by the description of the various phrases that make up the underlying structure of *Grimingan Nem* as found in Figure 1 and derived by comparing multiple performances of nine different musicians (Weiss CD ROM 2006). Additionally, all the musicians I was able to meet with for a recording session played a “compact form” of each of the *grimmingan* melodies and then stopped. It was only when I asked them to continue as they would if they were playing in a live performance, that they began

expanding their two- to four-minute examples into the seven- to twenty-minute performances commonly heard in *wayang* performances.¹⁰ Taken together, these two facts suggest that *Grimingan Nem* does have a form but that it is much less defined than any other Javanese genre I know of.¹¹ As is somewhat true, although to a lesser degree, for *palaran* and *pathetan*, the form of *grimmingan* is realized and elaborated in performance as the *gender* player draws from a collection of malleable, modally based musical patterns that form the substructure *grimmingan*.

I must admit that I am not terribly surprised to discover that these structural patterns could be discerned in the *grimmingan* of different, even non-related, musicians as they performed in the same *pathet*. I say not surprised because it is logical that there had to be pattern at some level, since there is pattern in every other traditional Javanese musical and performance genre. *Grimingan* does have form, despite attestations to the contrary and statements from many that *grimmingan* can be composed of whatever you want as long as it is in the correct mode. The form is located at the deepest level—more than unordered modal gesture, but less than a predictable series of mid-level arrivals. From this perspective, the really interesting thing about the structure of *grimmingan* is its highly personalized nature, especially given the importance of group effort in Javanese culture (evident even before the advent of Suharto’s New Order and its efforts to make

¹⁰ One anonymous reader for this journal wondered what *dhalang* think about my ideas on *grimmingan* process. I concur that this is an excellent question. I did not understand enough about *grimmingan* while I was in the field to actually test the ideas with *dhalang*. Now that I can talk about the process, I plan to engage in a follow-up project in the future to find out what *dhalang* and others think about these analytical ideas. If they are practitioners of old or classic styles of *wayang*, I suspect they will find that my ideas are obvious, and the *grimmingan* performers themselves will likely say, “that’s what I told you when I said ‘it just keeps repeating.’” See Weiss (2006, 66-68) for a discussion of differing notions of ‘sameness’ or repetition in Javanese culture.

¹¹ A gendered argument as to why *grimmingan* has not been codified formally could be made. I make some of that argument in the last chapter of Weiss (2006).

Indonesians eschew individuality). Even performers who have direct lineages from grandmother, to mother, to daughter, demonstrate significant differences in their mid-level phrase ordering and their surface elaborations, but the underlying arc of the phrases remains similar.¹² As most of the *gender* players with whom I worked were located in the greater Surakarta area including Klaten, Wonogiri, and Boyolali, research with performers of *grimingan* from outside this area is needed to determine if *grimingan* traditions in those places have similar underlying melodic structures. It would also be interesting to find out if the *grimingan* played in areas outside Surakarta is similarly process-based or if the melodies are more or even less defined. It is reasonable to imagine that there are different basic *grimingan* melodies current in different areas just as some similarly named *gendhing* from different areas manifest significant differences when compared. Finally, this kind of personalized expansion process in the context of an unarticulated but large-scale deep structure is an idea that may well be found in other music performance cultures, and hence, may serve as a fulcrum through which to compare improvisational musics. Sami Abu Shumays has suggested that he is finding similar kinds of processes in his analyses of performances of classical Arab *maqam*.¹³ And, although he has not articulated it in the same way, Robert Morris's analyses of South Indian improvisations in this issue provide much material for comparison with *grimingan* process.

¹² See Weiss (2006), in particular, the analyses in the CD ROM for more detailed discussion of all of these topics.

¹³ Personal communication at the First AAWM conference at the University of Massachusetts Amherst in February 2010.

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