

Social Criticism in Arok - Dedes Play at UGM

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Insinuations are raised on Indonesian politicians during the performance of Javanese traditional play, *ketoprak*, to celebrate UGM anniversary on Friday (22/12) at PKKH UGM.

Titled *Arok-Dedes*, the play was a way selected by UGM academic community to deliver criticism and message related to social and political issues that had become talks of the nation recently.

“The performance of *ketoprak* this time is filled with humour and social criticism on recent issues. Insinuations are directed to politicians who have used many ways to get power,” said Dr. Cahyaningrum Dewojati, director of the play.

The humorous play was adapted from classical works, *Serat Pararaton*, written in the 15-16th centuries on the story of Ken Arok who is gods incarnation, cast by Ken Endog, later cared for by Lembong, eventually falling in love with Ken Dedes who is the wife of Ametung.

Social and political issues such as corruption, intolerance, and power fights were seen in the



dialogue between the players who were students, lecturers, staff, even rectors and deans. The play relates to the story of Arok-Dedes which is a bloodshed event due to egoism and want of power. The play delivers the message that Indonesia, especially leaders, have to prioritise noble values that will bring peace and prosperity to the citizens.

“The play becomes a reminder and lesson for the young generation that greed of power, enmity, deceit, and bloodshed will only cause destruction of a nation. Indonesian people have to learn that the past has to be learned for the future,” said Cahyaningrum.

The concept of the play was a parodical ketoprak, accompanied by contemporary gamelan music orchestra. It involved over 100 players, dancers, and musicians, who presented a performance that not just entertained people but also delivered a social message.

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