

## Between Spirituality and Social Context: Unpacking 'Kidung Rumecko Ing Wengi' in Javanese Society

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*Received 9 May 2024; Received in revised form 13 July 2024; Accepted 16 July 2024*

### Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memperoleh pemahaman tentang bagaimana "Kidung Rumecko Ing Wengi" mempengaruhi dinamika sosial dan identitas masyarakat Jawa, serta bagaimana kidung tersebut beradaptasi dan mempengaruhi perubahan sosial dan budaya. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi kepustakaan. Melalui analisis literatur kuno yang relevan, artikel ini memberikan pemahaman mendalam tentang latar belakang budaya dari "Kidung Rumecko Ing Wengi" dan dampaknya terhadap masyarakat Jawa kontemporer. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa "Kidung Rumecko Ing Wengi" membawa kedamaian dan perlindungan serta memperkuat identitas kultural Jawa dalam menghadapi dunia modern. Adaptasi dan ketahanan budaya dari praktik "Kidung Rumecko Ing Wengi" menunjukkan fleksibilitas dan dinamisme tradisi Jawa serta perannya dalam memperkuat ikatan komunal. Penelitian ini meningkatkan pemahaman tentang bagaimana tradisi spiritual berakar dalam dan membentuk kehidupan sosial serta menawarkan wawasan penting tentang pentingnya mempertahankan dan memahami praktik budaya dalam menghadapi tantangan zaman sekarang.

**Kata kunci:** jawa, kidung rumecko ing wengi, spiritualitas, struktur sosial.

### Abstract

*This study aims to understand how "Kidung Rumecko Ing Wengi" influences the social dynamics and identity of Javanese society, as well as how the chant adapts to and affects social and cultural changes. The method used in this study is qualitative with a library research approach. Through the analysis of relevant ancient literature, this article provides a deep understanding of the cultural background of "Kidung Rumecko Ing Wengi" and its impact on contemporary Javanese society. The results show that "Kidung Rumecko Ing Wengi" brings peace and protection and strengthens Javanese cultural identity in the face of the modern world. The adaptation and cultural resilience of the "Kidung Rumecko Ing Wengi" practice demonstrate the flexibility and dynamism of Javanese traditions and their role in fostering communal ties. This research enhances the understanding of how deeply rooted spiritual traditions shape social life and offers important insights into the importance of maintaining and understanding cultural practices in the face of contemporary challenges.*

**Keywords:** java, kidung rumecko ing wengi, spirituality, social structure.

### INTRODUCTION

In social sciences and humanities research, the role of spiritual traditions in shaping the cultural and social identity of a community is considered significant. One notable example of this interaction can be found in the practice and understanding of "Kidungan," specifically "Kidung Rumecko

Ing Wengi," a distinctive Javanese spiritual song (Prasanto, 2019). This song is regarded as a charm with magical properties for protection and healing, illustrating its importance in the daily life of the Javanese people, especially at night. The theological and philosophical messages embedded in this song further

reinforce its cultural significance (Sidiq, 2016). This kidung serves not only as a tool for meditation or spiritual protection but also functions to strengthen social bonds and enhance the sense of solidarity and community within Javanese society.

"Kidung Rumecko Ing Wengi" has evolved with changing needs and social contexts. This reflects how the Javanese respond to modernity while maintaining their ancient traditions, showcasing their cultural dynamism and flexibility. The kidung propagates values such as peace, simplicity, and tranquility. It also serves as a reminder of the importance of maintaining fundamental life principles amidst social pressures and conflicts. The philosophical and theological messages in "Kidung Rumecko Ing Wengi" provide tranquility and simplicity in life while emphasizing peace and protection. According to Sidiq (Sidiq, 2016), these elements are crucial for maintaining spiritual and communal harmony in Javanese culture.

In Javanese culture, "Kidung Rumecko Ing Wengi" is typically recited or sung at night with the hope of bringing protection and peace. The kidung has been accepted in the modern world because it is integrated into various media, demonstrating how traditional values can be preserved and disseminated globally. This phenomenon is supported by the widespread use of social media platforms to spread the kidung, which

remains relevant and expands its audience (Jamil, 2021). The language and symbolism in this kidung are rich in meaning and address universal themes such as the universe, life, death, and harmony between humans and their Creator. This reflects the profound perspective of the Javanese people on the relationships in life.

The fact that "Kidung Rumecko Ing Wengi" has evolved and remains popular among the Javanese and other regions in Indonesia demonstrates the significant influence of Javanese culture on Indonesia's cultural diversity. This is because the kidung is not only sung for religious purposes but also plays a role in various rituals and celebrations, often used to seek protection, health, and peace. This shows how religious and cultural elements are harmoniously intertwined in the practices of Javanese society (Prasanto, 2019).

The practice of reciting or singing "Kidung Rumecko Ing Wengi" has significant psychological benefits for individuals within Javanese society. By engaging in this spiritual practice, individuals can experience a sense of calm and reassurance that helps alleviate stress and anxiety. This psychological comfort is derived from the belief in the protective and healing powers of the kidung, which provides a mental sanctuary for those who partake in it. The ritual of recitation itself can be meditative, allowing individuals to

focus their minds and find solace in the familiar and rhythmic verses. This reinforces the notion that spiritual traditions are not only culturally significant but also play a crucial role in maintaining mental health and well-being (WAHYUNI, 2018).

"Kidung Rumecko Ing Wengi" plays a vital role in the transmission and preservation of Javanese culture across generations. The song is a conduit for passing down traditional values, beliefs, and practices from one generation to the next. By teaching and performing the kidung, elders instill a sense of cultural identity and continuity in younger members of the community. This intergenerational transmission ensures that the rich heritage of the Javanese people is not lost amid the rapid changes brought about by globalization and modernization. Additionally, the adaptability of the kidung, as it finds new expressions through various media platforms, highlights the dynamic nature of Javanese culture and its resilience in the face of external influences (Fathurahman, 2015).

The communal aspect of "Kidung Rumecko Ing Wengi" significantly contributes to social cohesion within Javanese society. The practice of gathering to recite or sing the kidung fosters a sense of unity and collective identity among participants. It serves as a social glue that binds individuals together,

creating a supportive network that can navigate societal challenges collectively. This communal practice not only strengthens social bonds but also reinforces shared values and mutual respect within the community. In times of crisis or social unrest, such spiritual practices can provide a sense of stability and continuity, helping the community to maintain cohesion and resilience (Kawangmani, 2022).

The integration of "Kidung Rumecko Ing Wengi" with modern media has expanded its reach and relevance in contemporary society. Platforms such as social media, YouTube, and various digital music services have allowed the kidung to transcend geographical and generational boundaries. This digital presence ensures that the kidung remains a living tradition, accessible to a global audience while retaining its cultural essence. The ability to adapt and thrive in the digital age demonstrates the flexibility and enduring appeal of Javanese cultural practices. Furthermore, the modern dissemination of the kidung has sparked interest and curiosity among younger generations, encouraging them to explore and embrace their cultural heritage in new and innovative ways (Jamil, 2021).

These paragraphs provide a comprehensive support to the introduction, elaborating on the psychological benefits, cultural transmission, social cohesion, and

integration with modern media of "Kidung Rumecko Ing Wengi."

## **METHOD**

The method used in this study is a qualitative methodology and library research (Sugiono, 2020). This research aims to gain a deep understanding of the text "Kidung Rumecko Ing Wengi" and its social and spiritual context within Javanese society. Through library research, researchers can analyze various sources of textual meaning and how these texts relate to Javanese social values and practices. Data collection is conducted through a review of primary literature involving the text of "Kidung Rumecko Ing Wengi," as well as secondary literature relevant to the research topic.

Library research allows researchers to explore and analyze the text within its historical, cultural, and spiritual context, providing insights into the values and messages conveyed through Javanese literary works. To achieve this goal, the texts will be interpreted using relevant cultural and social theories (Geertz, 1973); (Turner, 1974). Additionally, content analysis will be employed to identify key themes in the text and the relationship between spirituality and social structure in Javanese society (Krippendorff, 2013).

The researchers will also refer to literature discussing the importance of spirituality in Javanese life (Frans Magnis

Suseno, 1997) (Mulder, 2005) as well as previous studies examining kidung and its impact on Javanese culture and spirituality (Prasanto, 2019) (Sidiq, 2016). Thus, this research will provide a comprehensive contribution to understanding the role of "Kidung Rumecko Ing Wengi" in strengthening the cultural and social identity of Javanese society.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

"Kidung Rumecko Ing Wengi" is a notable example of Javanese literature rich in spiritual messages and cultural values. Generally, this kidung is used as a medium for meditation or self-reflection at night before sleep to create an atmosphere of inner peace and tranquility. Below is the text of "Kidung Rumecko Ing Wengi," a collection from the National Library of the Republic of Indonesia, with code BR 18. The purpose of this study is to comprehensively understand and interpret "Kidung Rumecko Ing Wengi" through literature review with a philological approach. Literature review allows us to explore and analyze the text within its historical, cultural, and spiritual context, providing insights into the values and messages conveyed through Javanese literary works.

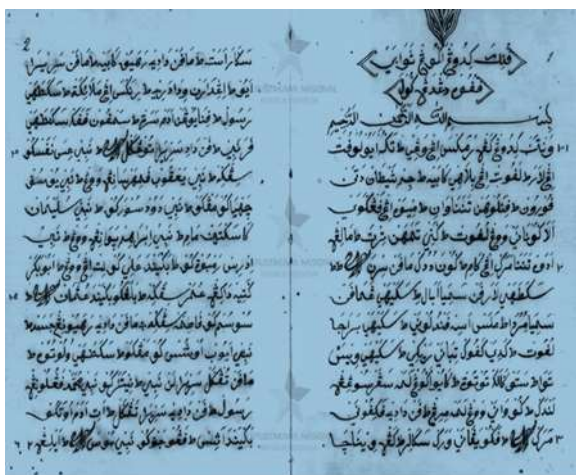


Figure 1. Manuscript of Kidung Rumekso Ing Wengi Code BR 18

*Ana kidung rumekso ing wengi  
Teguh hayu luputa ing lara  
Luputa bilahi kabeh  
Jim setan datan purun  
Paneluhan tan ana wani  
Miwah panggawe ala  
Gunaning wong luput  
Geni atemahan tirta  
Maling adoh tan ana ngarah ing  
mami  
Guna duduk pan sirna*

Several spiritual messages and values contained in it, as well as its role in conveying moral, ethical, and spiritual messages to society:

### 1. Awareness of the Existence of the Almighty:

The value of Awareness of the Existence of the Almighty taught by "Kidung Rumekso Ing Wengi" refers to the deep awareness that transcendent forces influence and surround us in this life, which goes beyond ordinary human understanding. In many spiritual traditions and religions, this is a very important concept. This includes Javanese culture, where the relationship between humans and the

Creator is highly emphasized. In "Kidung Rumekso Ing Wengi," the phrase "Teguh hayu luputa ing ara" has a strong spiritual dimension and can be associated with awareness of the existence of the Almighty. This analysis can encompass several elements: First, this phrase shows the importance of having steadfastness and trust in higher powers. Steadfastness is often associated with belief in God or divine power in a spiritual context. This indicates that there is a greater power that oversees and protects us from unseen threats.

Second, "Luputa ing ara," which means escaping or being free from danger, shows that this protection is the result of both divine intervention and human efforts. This emphasizes the idea that humans need assistance and protection from the Almighty when they are weak and vulnerable. Third, the invocation of the Divine shows spiritual awareness and recognition that humans have limitations and need to rely on higher powers. In facing forces beyond human control, this is a form of humility and surrender. Many spiritual traditions, including Javanese beliefs, believe that the interaction between humans and divine forces is essential to maintaining harmonious and balanced life. This kidung shows the need for divine assistance and the reciprocal

relationship between humans and divinity. "Kidung Rumecko Ing Wengi" is not just a prayer or mantra to protect the night but also a profound expression of spiritual awareness that acknowledges and respects higher powers. The phrase "Teguh hayu luputa ing ara" indicates that human life is within a broader cosmic structure. To remain safe and peaceful, people must remain steadfast and trust in the Almighty. This kidung shows the importance of the relationship between the Creator and humans; this relationship provides security and guides humans toward a harmonious and balanced life.

Therefore, this work offers a rich view of the profound and universal spiritual values present in Javanese culture, teaching us about the importance of faith, steadfastness, and humility in facing forces beyond ordinary human understanding. The concept of awareness of the existence of the Almighty in "Kidung Rumecko Ing Wengi" encompasses the protection provided and the role of humans in the cosmos. Viewed as spiritual beings, humans are tasked with maintaining the balance of the universe (Kristiyanto, 2015).

This reflects the principle of *Tata Tentrem Karta Raharja*, which means maintaining peace and prosperity through harmonious and balanced

actions, in Javanese culture. Due to this awareness, people become more intelligent and appreciate their position as part of a larger system, where every action has an impact on the whole. In the lyrics of the kidung, there is also a transcendental relationship between humans and their God, which cannot be denied or ignored. Humans, as creations of God, realize their weakness and greatly need God's help to save or avoid difficulties in life.

## **2. Reducing Stress and Anxiety**

"Kidung Rumecko Ing Wengi" teaches the importance of inner peace, which is a crucial component that helps a person live a more harmonious and balanced life. In Javanese culture, seeking inner peace and mental calm is considered a way to enhance one's quality of life. Reducing stress and anxiety, calming the mind, can be achieved by maintaining mental calm, which is very important in a world often filled with noise and chaos. The spiritual messages in "Kidung Rumecko Ing Wengi" help calm the mind and body. For example, the phrase "Luputa Illahi Jim setan datan purun" means "divine protection from evil spirits that do not dare to approach." This shows the belief that protection from divine forces can prevent evil and spirit disturbances, which is essential for creating and maintaining inner peace.

"Aneluhan tan ana wani" means avoiding reckless bravery. This can be interpreted as advice to avoid rash actions or rebellion without a clear purpose. Achieving inner peace can be accomplished through careful consideration and wisdom, as taught in this message. Through "Kidung Rumecko Ing Wengi," it is taught that a life filled with consideration, wisdom, and awareness of divine protection can lead to inner peace and spiritual protection. Maintaining internal balance between emotional and spiritual forces and controlling physical and moral actions are two different ways to achieve this tranquility. With all its symbolism, this kidung teaches us how to live more harmoniously and protected from physical and spiritual disturbances. Moreover, inner peace allows a person to enhance focus and awareness of the present moment, or presence.

A calm mind helps a person pay better attention to life's details, enjoy each moment more fully, and make wiser decisions. In Javanese culture and the message in "Kidung Rumecko Ing Wengi," inner peace is often seen as a result of a strong connection with spirituality. Meditation, prayer, and self-reflection are ways to achieve and maintain this state of mind. Not only is it a physical condition, but inner peace is also considered a spiritual state. It is

achieved through the purification of the soul and a deeper understanding of what we do in the universe and how we exist within it. This allows a person to live more relaxed and reduce the impact of daily stress and anxiety, enabling them to function better in all aspects of their life. Additionally, "Kidung Rumecko Ing Wengi" shows that inner peace is not just about avoiding anxiety but also about finding better ways to face challenges.

Having inner peace in a culture that values wisdom and resilience allows a person to act wisely and not rush when making decisions. The lyrics in the kidung "Rumecko Ing Wengi" are a series of prayers composed by Sunan Kalijaga, which can be interpreted as healing prayers. For the prayer to be fulfilled, a person needs to purify themselves and their soul from all forms of lust.

This is aimed at elevating the soul's rank before God, who has the power to grant prayers. In spirituality studies, it has been found that good individual spirituality leads to improved mental condition (WAHYUNI, 2018). Increased spirituality in individuals leads to lower levels of anxiety (Jamil, 2021) (and reduced stress levels (Vanchapo et al., 2019) in various contexts of human life.

### **3. Enhancing Relationship with Nature and the Universe**

"Kidung Rumecko Ing Wengi" not only addresses the relationship between humans and the Almighty but also highlights the importance of the relationship between humans, nature, and the universe.

"Kidung Rumecko Ing Wengi" shows that nature and the universe are living entities that interact with humans, not merely a backdrop or resource to be exploited. This understanding encourages humans to acknowledge and respect the existence of nature and their role as part of a larger cosmos, of which humans are a part.

"Nadyan arca myang segara asat, Temahan rahayu" - This phrase can be translated as "even though statues and the sea are gone, well-being will still be achieved." This indicates a message that when elements of nature (such as statues representing human creations and the sea as a symbol of nature) are gone, well-being can still be achieved. This can be interpreted as a recognition of the impermanence of material things but the existence of something greater, namely spiritual tranquility or harmony with the cosmos, which is more important.

This kidung teaches ecological responsibility by emphasizing that nature needs to be valued and

preserved. This is not just about conservation as intended by preservation, but also about building better and peaceful relationships with nature. It teaches us to see ourselves as part of an interdependent chain of life, not as rulers over nature (Kawangmani, 2022).

Nature is not merely a resource to be exploited; it is a living entity that needs to be valued and preserved. Valuing nature means recognizing that every part of the earth, from rivers to mountains, from the smallest plants to the largest animals, has a function and value for maintaining natural balance. This encourages us to see nature as a living partner, not as an object to be exploited. In such a situation, humans are asked to revise how we interact with nature, encouraging more sustainable and moral practices, such as wise resource use, waste reduction, and habitat preservation. This provides a sense of purpose, peace, and interconnectedness, which are crucial for our spiritual well-being and that of our planet.

Furthermore, this message emphasizes the concept of interconnectedness—teaching that actions have ripple effects that extend, affecting not only our immediate environment but also the universe. It stresses the importance of considering and reflecting on every

decision we make, whether in terms of consumption, disposal, or interaction with the natural world. When we take responsible actions towards nature, we also strengthen our relationship with the universe, that is, we take responsible actions.

#### 4. Developing Compassion and Empathy for Others:

One of the important messages in "Kidung Rumecko Ing Wengi" is the importance of developing compassion and empathy for others. This kidung shows that the ability to feel and understand the suffering of others and the desire to help alleviate their suffering is the key to a harmonious social life. This kidung also invites us to reflect on what is important for a society that is increasingly individualistic, where values such as personal success and material wealth often outweigh collective good. Compassion and empathy require real actions to understand and help others; it is not just passive or distant acts. It is a call to acknowledge that everyone has different stories, difficulties, and needs.

In practice, fostering compassion and empathy can manifest in various forms. This can include small acts like carefully listening to someone talk about their problems to bigger actions like participating in social initiatives or providing assistance to those in need.

Moreover, the message of "Kidung Rumecko Ing Wengi" instills compassion and empathy, countering apathy and social isolation. Developing compassion and empathy also has a broader impact on individual character building as it promotes personal growth and emotional maturity, demanding individuals to be more aware and understanding of others' experiences and perspectives. Therefore, this not only changes how society interacts with others but also provides society with an understanding of who we are and where we are in the world. It teaches us values such as patience, humility, and appreciation for the diversity of human experiences. It enhances our view of what it means to live well and affirms that we can build a more harmonious and fulfilling society for all its members through compassion and empathy.

The values of empathy and compassion emphasized in "Kidung Rumecko Ing Wengi," such as "Kadi kapuk tinaning wesi," which means "like cotton in iron," can be seen as a representation of hidden softness and strength within power. This shows, in the context of empathy and compassion, how genuine empathy and care can be powerful forces, even though they may not always be visible from the outside.

"Sakehing wisa tawa" (All poisons become medicine) shows the ability to turn something potentially harmful into something beneficial. In a social context, this can mean having the empathy to transform problematic or negative situations into opportunities for reconciliation and understanding.

Not only emphasizing the importance of spiritual and physical protection but also teaching the importance of empathy and compassion as main pillars in building and maintaining a harmonious society. This message encourages us to be closer to our community, showing that acts of kindness and understanding can bring about significant and positive changes in society, strengthening social support networks, and promoting individual and collective growth. This kidung, in a poetic and symbolic way, asserts that we all have a role in helping and understanding each other, which builds the foundation for a more friendly and inclusive society.

Empathy can be defined as the feeling that arises felt by others as well as feelings felt towards others (Yaqin, 2021). Empathy can also be defined as an active reaction of individuals who can place themselves in the position of others, obtained from the ability to understand others, so that an individual can also

understand what others expect and at the same time understand their own feelings about these things (Xiao et al., 2021).

When someone has good empathy, it will encourage that individual to engage in altruistic behavior. This is facilitated by the willingness to take the perspective of others, involving deep concern. Starting from one's observation of others, then fostering care and motivating positive helping behavior towards others (Xiao et al., 2021).

Empathy together with spirituality can positively encourage the formation of healthy individual mental conditions. Conversely, if a person cannot empathize and has low spirituality, it will lead to poor mental conditions (Aggarwal et al., 2023). Spirituality can give rise to wise and just attitudes and behaviors in efforts to solve problems and various crises in life (Aggarwal et al., 2023).

##### **5. Finding Balance in Life**

The final value of "Kidung Rumecko Ing Wengi" is the importance of finding balance in life. This kidung emphasizes that achieving a balance between physical, emotional, and spiritual needs is essential for a meaningful life. This means allocating time for work, family, social activities, and spiritual activities or meditation. By finding this balance, a person can lead

a fuller and more satisfying life, where there is harmony between physical and spiritual existence.

"Kidung Rumecko Ing Wengi" presents a deep perspective on the world where balance and harmony are the main principles in the lives of the Javanese people. The explanation of the importance of seeking balance in life—physically, emotionally, and spiritually—offers valuable guidance for navigating the difficulties accompanying human existence. This kidung shows that material achievements or social status are not measures of a meaningful life; more important is how a person can integrate various aspects of their existence to create harmony.

In "Kidung Rumecko Ing Wengi," the phrase "Lan tangi wektu subuh, Lan den sabar sukuring ati, Insy Allah tinekan akarsanireku, umrap sanak rakyatira saking sawabing ngelmu pangiket mami, Duk aneng Kalijaga" enhances our understanding of how to find balance in our lives through spiritual practice, patience, and dedication to the community.

Waking up at dawn: This term refers to waking up early for worship or meditation, which is considered to have high spiritual energy in many traditions, including Islam. This shows the importance of doing something calming and strengthening the spiritual

relationship, which will provide a strong foundation for the rest of the day. Additionally, "Lan den sabar sukuring ati" underscores the importance of remaining calm and patient in the heart while living daily life. Maintaining patience, which allows individuals to act from a calm and centered place, is key to dealing with stress and conflict in the context of life balance.

In the prayer for well-being, "Insy Allah tinekan akarsanireku, umrap sanak rakyatira saking sawabing ngelmu pangiket mami" is meant to ensure that all planned things can be achieved and benefit the family and society as a whole. This shows that in achieving life balance, a person does not only concentrate on personal interests but also on communal well-being; this demonstrates the importance of living in harmony with others.

The kidung emphasizes that seeking balance in life does not only depend on individual achievements but also on building strong spiritual relationships, patience in every test, and dedication to communal and spiritual well-being. This shows that true balance encompasses various aspects of life, including personal, social, and spiritual, and affirms that recognizing and respecting natural cycles and our relationships with

others and the wider world is the best way to achieve this balance. It is not just about managing time; it is also about managing our energy and intentions in everything we do so that we can live a life that is not only productive but also meaningful and satisfying.

The importance of balance in "Kidung Rumecko Ing Wengi" shows an awareness of the diverse and often conflicting needs humans have. On the one hand, there is a need to achieve and grow personally, often associated with work and personal goals. On the other hand, there is a need for relationships, such as friendships, family, or other social connections, which provide a sense of belonging and warmth. Additionally, there is a spiritual need or deeper search for meaning, found through spiritual practice, meditation, and reflection. This kidung reminds us that neglecting any of these elements can lead to imbalance, which will disrupt our happiness and well-being.

Furthermore, balance in "Kidung Rumecko Ing Wengi" indicates that human life depends on cycles. There is a time for introspection, socializing, and working hard. Respecting these natural rhythms involves arranging daily routines as well as recognizing and adapting to the broader phases of life. This is often linked to the

understanding in Javanese society that everyone goes through various life stages, from infancy to adulthood, and that each stage requires different ways to balance physical, emotional, and spiritual needs.

## **CONCLUSION**

In Javanese society, "Kidung Rumecko Ing Wengi" addresses the relationship between beliefs and social structures. The analysis conducted has yielded several important findings that answer the initial research questions. First, for the Javanese people, "Kidung Rumecko Ing Wengi" serves as an essential source of spiritual tranquility and protection. The recitation or singing of this kidung is not only a religious ceremony but also provides emotional and mental support, helping people face the pressures of modern life. This shows the importance of engaging in spiritual activities to enhance one's mental well-being. Second, "Kidung Rumecko Ing Wengi" plays a crucial role in strengthening Javanese social and cultural identity. Through lyrics and melodies containing cultural values, this kidung helps preserve and maintain Javanese cultural heritage and fosters a sense of community. This demonstrates how tradition can be used as a tool to combat cultural erosion and maintain identity amidst the tides of globalization. Third, "Kidung Rumecko Ing Wengi" demonstrates the cultural adaptation and resilience

shown by Javanese society. This practice remains relevant and useful despite facing the challenges of modernity and globalization, showcasing the flexibility and resilience of Javanese culture in preserving its traditions. Additionally, "Kidung Rumeksa Ing Wengi" highlights the importance of collective tradition in Javanese society. This tradition unites people, strengthens social networks, and promotes solidarity, which is increasingly important in an era of rising individualism

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