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Forms And Functions Of Traditional Folk Dance In Central Java

Malarsih ^{1*}, Usrek Tani Utina², Sestri Indah Pebrianti³

^{1,2,3}Universitas Negeri Semarang

Abstract: The arts and culture of traditional Javanese dance, both classical and folk, are still alive, especially in the life of the people of Central Java. Central Java society consists of people who live by upholding the cultural values of the palace with the lives of the general public who uphold the values of folklore. Both the cultural values of the palace and the local cultural values that exist in each region, at present seem to have merged into one local culture of Central Java which is upheld for its nobility.

As has been stated, for the life of traditional Javanese dance, both classical and folk dances are alive and well. Of course the development is in their respective dimensions because both have different roots of emergence (Mangoensong & Yanuartuti, 2020; Lestari et al., 2021; Astuti, 2010). Any existing embodiment is a reflection of the culture of the owner community. Classical traditional dance is a reflection of the life of the palace community which describes how the life of the palace in the past. Likewise, traditional folk dance, which of course also describes the socio-cultural life of the community where the art of dance appears, lives, and develops (Buckland, 2007).

The life of the world of dance in the general public and on campuses such as the conservation campus of *Universitas Negeri Semarang*, which is located in the capital city of Central Java, has become a strong pillar for the existence of every type of dance, or especially traditional dance in Central Java, to be well preserved. The types of dances for classical, folk, and even modern are need to be upheld for their noble values. In this regard, it is important to study the process of existing dance arts realization and preservation, whether traditional classical or traditional folk, even those that have developed into a modern traditional dance form. However, before examining complex issues, this paper only discusses a very basic problem, namely "the form and function of traditional folk dance in Central Java". It is hoped that in the future, by knowing how the form and how the people's traditional dance is functioned by the supporting community, it will also be possible to study other issues related to the existence of traditional populist dances that live in Central Java society in general.

Keywords: Traditional; folk; dance; aesthetic; expression

Corresponding Author:

malarsih@mail.unnes.ac.id

Author Biodata:

Universitas Negeri Semarang

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INTRODUCTION

The arts and culture of traditional Javanese dance, both classical and folk, are still alive, especially in the life of the people of Central Java. Central Java society consists of people who live by upholding the cultural values of the palace with the lives of the general public who uphold the values of folklore. Both the cultural values of the palace and the local cultural values that exist in each region, at present seem to have merged into one local culture of Central Java which is upheld for its nobility.

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Discussion

In this session, the form and function of the traditional dance of the people of Central Java are discussed by looking at the form side, which is then discussed about the function for the owner community.

1. Dance Form

There are several forms of traditional folk dance in Central Java: single, pair, group, and mass dance forms. What is seen as dance itself according to dance experts is a rhythmic movement in

which there are elements of *wirasa*, *wiraga*, *wirama* or taste, motion, and rhythm (Desmond, 1993; Soedarsono, 2000). Meanwhile, what is seen as a form of dance is related to the form of the dance in its presentation. There are forms of dance that can be seen as single dances, pair dances, group dances, and mass dances. Single Dance is a dance performed by one dancer. Paired dance is a dance that is presented or performed by two dancers and there are roles that are performed. Group dance is a dance that is performed or presented by more than two people and there are roles that are performed. Mass dance is a dance performed by many people, usually more than 5 people, which can be in the form of singles, couples, or groups.

Even though there are mass dances in pairs and groups, until now, mass dances tend to present the single dance which is presented by many people together. Examples of single traditional folk dances are the *Endel*, *Kuda Lumping*, and *Gambyong* dances. Even though this *Endel* dance is traditional folk, it emerged because it was deliberately created. Its creation raises the phenomenon of common girl life (Ratnaningrum, 2011; Handayani, Nugroho, & Rohidi, 2019). The *Kuda Lumping* dance has a slightly different creation process compared to the *Endel* dance creation process. In the past, the *Kuda Lumping* dance was a dance as a form of free expression for dancers, but now there are many in the form of creation (Kuswarsyanto, 2013; Pawestri, 2019). Likewise, *Gambyong* Dance was originally a dance with free movement which is usually presented at *Tayub* performances. Currently, the *Gambyong* dance has taken the form of classical dance or dance whose choreography has been standardized.

The speciality of *Tayub*'s dance is actually in “*ngibing*”, which is a spontaneous dance movement from non-dancers who are involved in the dance or people who join the dance. The dance used for *ngibing* is classified as a paired dance. So it is clear that the paired dance in *Tayub* is not a *Gambyong* dance even though both are present in *Tayub*'s performances. *Gambyongan* is used for the opening of the show, while *ngibingan* is done after the show begins with the *tayub* dancers giving the audience the opportunity to be involved in dancing together. In contrast to the solo dance and the pair dance, it is a group dance. Group dances in traditional folk dance are not found but in classical traditional dances are found, for example the *Srimpi* dance. *Srimpi* dance is usually danced by four dancers. The essence of *Srimpi* dance is that people must be cooperative in life (Cohen, 2010; Prihatini, 2017).

Nowadays, it is difficult to find a truly original traditional folk dance in its performance. According to Shay (2002), the life of traditional folk dance for now is because it is given a touch of artistic or aesthetic aspect as a dance that is performed. Why is this happening because traditional folk art was originally just a spontaneous movement to express what is heard from a sound which is actually music. Music is simply a rhythmic sound (Jamalus, 1988). Rhythmic sound provokes rhythmic movement as well from the responder. There is also the emergence of the movement from the sound of the dancer's own voice. Yes, this is a form of dancer's imagination whose dance itself naturally arises because of the sound and rhythm. The rhythmic sound is generated from the voice of the dancer or the dancer carrying the instrument played by the dancer himself which can also be accompanied by other people.

It can be seen that today's traditional folk art appears to be a new kind of dance. The novelty is based on the existing foothold of the existed traditional folk dance. What is seen as such in the creation of a work of art is usually called a hypogram. The definition of a hypogram

specifically borrows from the term literary world related to works of art which can also be objects, events, society, history, nature, life, and others that are used as the background of creation (Allen, 2000). This includes the transmission of traditions as well as traditional populist dances that live and develop as the continuation of traditional arts belonging to local communities.

Currently, all types of traditional folk dances in Central Java are developed by working in the form of creative dances. What is seen as a creative dance because it changes from the aspect of the composition of the motion as well as all the supporters of the presentation of motion (Jazuli & Alam, 2020). The composition of movements related to the attitude and technique of footwork, body, hands, and head are all changed. Supporters of the presentation of dance moves such as presentation patterns, floor patterns, accompaniment, as well as makeup, and clothing are all changed in a new form. This novelty clearly makes something that comes from spontaneous motion into something that is artistically arranged. So it also involves supporters of the presentation of dance moves, all of which have also changed.

2. Dance Function

Traditional folk dance in Central Java is still alive and well because it is preserved. The reason why this traditional folk dance preserved is because its existence is seen as functional for the life of the supporting community. The functions that stand out in this traditional populist dance in Central Java are basically put forward 4 main points, namely: (1) symbolic means that contain magical powers, (2) self-declaration, (3) integrative and educational, (4) relaxing entertainment or pleasure.

2.1 Functions of Symbolic Means Containing Magical Power

For example, the existence of traditional folk dances, especially in the people of Central Java, cannot be separated from the history of the existence of traditional community beliefs related to what is seen as something supernatural. Here, for example, is the *Tayub* dance. *Tayub* dance was originally a fertility dance. Most of the agrarian communities in Java have a belief that there is a magical power that can help the harvest at any time become abundant. That can happen if worship is done by carrying out fertility ceremonies. Fertility ceremonies in people who know "high culture" are usually carried out in a very symbolic way, however, for other communities, fertility ceremonies are also carried out in a vulgar way.

Whatever method is used, they actually both want to bring about simplistic magic for future harvests in order to get abundant results. In explanations or explanations from many other sources, it is stated that in essence *Tayub* is part of a series of religious ceremonies that aim to ask God for salvation and give thanks. The development of the current function of *Tayub* dance is not only related to the sacred, but also as a means of romantic association with sometimes to erotic. In short, starting from the beginning whose purpose is related to religion, it

changes the purpose of pleasure. *Tayub* is usually danced by men and women in pairs, which here is a form of social dance that sometimes gives rise to eroticism.

2.2 Statement of Identity

Buckland (1983) stated that art that lives in society as traditional folk dance is actually an expression of the culture of the people who own it. What appears and is expressed in the form of dance cannot be separated from what is felt, known, and thought by the owner community which is expressed in the form of dance. The presentation of the dance and or the use of the dance in various public interests is a form of social expression that he uses as a means of art. When this form of art changes in a new form, in fact the change in form describes a change in the socio-cultural phenomenon of the supporting community when the art in the new form is received. Art composers are individuals or groups who basically in their daily life cannot be separated from the cultural system and social system of their society.

In this regard, it doesn't feel strange when there is a change in art and people accept it. It is accepted by the owner's community, of course, because his creation is an art embodiment that represents the aesthetic tastes of the community he is a member of. In fact, from the form of change, it is considered more in line with the current aesthetic taste, which of course the development of this taste will continue to follow the phenomenon of changes in the socio-cultural life of the community. When the socio-cultural life of the community develops, the form of cultural expression is certain to also develop. This is in the sense that if he does not want his cultural arts to be swallowed up by the changing times.

Basically there is no art that lives statically when society develops. Individuals and or groups of people express their identity through the art they create. What he created was using an existing artistic foothold or art that he had used for generations. We can see this as an objective tool that is free from various social barriers, allowing someone to express their personality more freely through their art. Usually, people don't need to be shy about expressing their identity by wearing their artworks, and they can easily use artworks to express their feelings and thoughts that reflect their personality boldly so that they gain public recognition and even become idols.

2.3 Integrative and Education

Traditional folk art as a reflection or expression of community culture always shows the emotional bond of all members of the community who feel they are supporters. For this reason, the community feels a common cultural bond (Meinal & Rahmawati, 2016). Existing forms and styles may very well be developed in new forms, which may be deemed more suitable to the current situation. Values in social and cultural life are always evolving, which demands that all aspects of life including the existence of art also change, both in terms of form and or style. It is very possible that what used to be considered good, now the criteria for good have changed or changed. What used to be considered appropriate, may now be considered inappropriate. What they used to think was good, is now considered ugly.

If we may borrow our perspective in looking at fashion, it seems that it is very easy to understand how we see change or see people's perspectives to see the value, appropriateness, and or what we often understand as good and bad for something, including in we see and or view the life of art in society. We will look at the fashion of clothing such as trousers worn by teenagers. In the past, we saw trousers that were considered valuable, appropriate, and seen as beautiful to wear, were trousers that seemed to expand on the thighs so that the thighs were not disturbed. The development then that is seen as good and appropriate is the model of the trousers whose thighs are tight so that the curves of the wearer's thighs appear. Likewise, in the past what was seen as good and attractive was if the pants were wide, for now, trousers with wide ends are considered inappropriate.

Likewise with the art of dance even though it is a traditional folk art. Initially, the traditional folk dance was seen from the side of its function related to ritual and free expression of ritual actors. The aesthetic aspect can be said to be completely ignored. For now, because the ritual aspect is not the most important and the expression of ritual art is considered more important, then the ritual art is worked on in a more aesthetic form (Brown & Dissanayake, 2018). It is clear to see from the side of the function that is different from the beginning of the traditional folk art that appears and lives in a society with current conditions which place more importance on the world of the profanity or worldliness. Therefore, the traditional folk art that is still alive today is a traditional art that has been cultivated to bring out novelty according to the tastes of the supporting community.

2.4 Casual Entertainment or Fun

In general, people who live in society need entertainment, need to relax, need pleasure, and need artistic expression to express what is in their heart, what is in their mind or thoughts, what they want, and or what is expected (Stuckey, 2010). They express their art using any arts, including dance as a medium. The dance media does not have to be for them to dance, but a lot of them are enough to just watch the dance. By just watching, they can quite enjoy. It feels so touched by the beauty of the dance. His imagination also awakened. There is a sense of it as an embodiment of the cultural values it supports. Therefore, people can feel relaxed and grow there is a sense of pleasure in the context of aesthetic expression. It didn't matter how much they enjoyed when what he saw was something he was familiar with but in a new form. Likewise for the creators or dance developers. Not satisfied if what is there is not realized as something new to be enjoyed more aesthetically. So that dance by some people, dance is also considered to be a medium of leisure and fun entertainment (McCleary, Weaver, & Meng, 2005).

CONCLUSION

Based on the issues raised and the discussion from the aspect of its form and function, it can be concluded as follows.

1. There are forms of traditional folk dances in single, pair, group, and mass forms. What is seen as a singular form is the development of a free dance form without standard rules which then worked on the composition of movements, accompaniment, as well as makeup and clothing.

Paired dances in traditional folk dance contexts tend to be free to express themselves in movements that do not use standardized works. Even though there is a traditional group dance, the tendency has developed into a standardized dance form. Traditional folk dance which was originally characterized by spontaneous movement, for now tends to be less emphatic because it is influenced by an organized dance life. Mass dance is a single dance but performed by many people with a relative number. It still thrives in Central Java.

2. The function of traditional folk dance for now is not only for purposes related to magic or rituals, but is also used for identity statements, integration and education, as well as leisure and fun entertainment. The ritual function still exists but the profane or worldly aspect is more prominent. The statement of identity, is more used as a form of cultural expression and social expression. Integrative and education are related to togetherness and art preservation. Relaxed entertainment and fun, more used for aesthetic dining and or releasing tension to be more relaxed.

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