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Choreography Exploration of Sekar Lodra Dance: Concept, Process, and Presentation Form at SMAN 8 Malang

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Abstract: This study aims to explore the choreography of the *Sekar Lodra* dance developed at SMAN 8 Malang, focusing on its concept, creation process, and presentation form in the 2017 Student Art Creation Week (*Pekan Cipta Seni Pelajar*). The research employs a qualitative descriptive method with data collection techniques including observation, interviews, and documentation. The results show that the concept of this dance was inspired by the values of discipline, resilience, and grace, reflecting the character of the students at SMAN 8 Malang. The choreography creation process was carried out collaboratively between art teachers and students through stages of movement exploration, improvisation, and composition. The presentation of the *Sekar Lodra* dance during the 2017 Student Art Creation Week adopted a dramatic structure with a dynamic storyline, symbolic costume and makeup, and spatial arrangements that highlighted unity and the spirit of togetherness. This research is expected to contribute by helping audiences learn about local folklore or legends from the Malang area and appreciate the uniqueness of local artistic traditions.

Keywords: choreography, Sekar Lodra, concept, process, presentation form

1. INTRODUCTION

Sekar Lodra is a manifestation of the heroic tale of Proboretno, a valiant female commander, portrayed through dance choreography that highlights her strength and grace. The story begins when the Mataram Sultanate, under Surontani's leadership, sought to expand eastward into Brang Wetan (East Java), successfully conquering regions such as Caruban and Ngrawa before facing fierce resistance from the Sengguruh Duchy. Led by Ronggo Toh Jiwo and his daughter Proboretno, a beautiful and powerful warrior skilled in martial arts, Sengguruh's forces repeatedly thwarted Mataram's advances. Her resilience in defending the territory gave rise to the name *Malang*, derived from *palang*, meaning "to block" or "to resist." Concerned for his daughter's future amidst a patriarchal Javanese culture, Ronggo Toh Jiwo held a contest: anyone who could defeat Proboretno in battle would become her husband. Many warriors and princes tried, yet only one, Panji Pulangjiwo succeeded. This story underscores Proboretno's love for her homeland and her defiance of societal norms, proving that a woman can stand as both a warrior and a leader. Her identity as a daughter, commander, and defender of her land is a legacy of pride that cannot be compromised.

Sekar Lodra is performed by seven female dancers who move in unison, symbolizing the strength and spirit of Proboretno. The dance opens with extended arm movements, portraying her agility, mystical power, and sharp reflexes. Energetic choreography draws from *Remo* and *Kaki Tanjak* dance styles, where dancers perform synchronized,



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bold movements representing Proboretno's valor and warrior spirit. The use of *njranthal* floor patterns enhances the dynamic and agile impression. Although portrayed as a war commander, Proboretno is also shown as a gentle, graceful princess. This duality is expressed through *jogethan* movements inspired by *Gading Alit* dance, along with subtle *gejog* and *ngrawit bawah* gestures, all tailored to suit the dance's concept. Following this delicate portrayal, the choreography transitions into strong movements, *njlumat*, *rampak*, *jengkeng*, and *kaki njranthal*, illustrating Proboretno's dedication to mastering martial arts and refining her skills as a warrior. While the piece emphasizes heroism, it also embodies aesthetic depth. A scene depicting Proboretno in prayer reflects her humility before the Creator. This moment is conveyed through soft, curved, serene gestures, an act of surrender, reminding that even with great power and loyal forces, true strength lies in divine devotion. A striking moment unfolds as the dancers pull hidden *cundrik* (daggers) from their hair buns, an unexpected yet well-crafted element that adds dramatic surprise, showcasing the choreographer's creativity. The narrative returns to a battle sequence where Proboretno leads her troops to defend honor and territory. In the final scene, one dancer is lifted by two others, while the remaining four kneel, brandishing their *cundrik* with fierce gaze. This powerful ending symbolizes that a woman, even within the bounds of her nature, can rise to fight for love and dignity.

As we enter an increasingly modern era, dance as a form of aesthetic expression has undergone significant shifts in its roles and functions. In the past, traditional dances were closely tied to ritualistic and religious purposes, such as land-clearing ceremonies *bedah bhumih* or spiritual offerings *ngalap berkah*, as a means to connect with the divine or nature. Today, however, the role of dance has expanded. According to Kassing (2010), dance in the modern context has become a medium for education, self-expression, cultural preservation, and entertainment. It is no longer confined to sacred spaces but has entered educational institutions and public performances as a form of cultural literacy. Similarly, H'Doubler (as cited in Risner, 2009) emphasizes that dance education should cultivate creativity, emotional intelligence, and cultural awareness in students.

In this context, the choreographer seeks to integrate these functions into a new creation titled *Sekar Lodra*, inspired by a local folktale from the Malang region. This work emerges as a creative response to the demand for innovative choreography that is not only aesthetically pleasing but also rich in educational and historical value. As Butterworth (2012) asserts, choreography is a reflective practice that involves critical thinking and cultural interpretation. *Sekar Lodra* embodies an effort to elevate the values of local heroism, reinforce cultural identity, and uphold the image of women as both strong and graceful within a unified artistic narrative.

Through this performance, the choreographer hopes to introduce audiences, especially students, to the richness of local legend and the uniqueness of regional performing arts. Furthermore, the moral message embedded in this piece, perseverance and the spirit of struggle, aligns with the values promoted in character education. As posited by Alter (2009), integrating dance into education supports the development of empathy, resilience, and collaborative learning. Ultimately, this work aspires to foster a spirit of collaboration between teachers and students in exploring, preserving, and transforming local culture through the performing arts.

2. METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative method aimed at thoroughly describing and analyzing the concept, creative process, and presentation form of the *Sekar Lodra* dance at SMAN 8 Malang. This method was chosen because it is suitable for exploring artistic phenomena in a contextual and natural setting through direct interaction between the researcher and the subjects (Creswell, 2015). According to Sugiyono (2017), a descriptive qualitative approach is used to study natural conditions of objects, with the researcher acting as the primary instrument. Data in this study were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation, in line with the recommendations of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2016), who emphasize the importance of triangulation for ensuring data validity in qualitative research. Data analysis was conducted through data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions using an inductive approach.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Result

Title of dance work	: Sekar Lodra
Screen writer	: Dyah Masita Rini, S. Pd., M. Pd.
Choreographer	: Ika Pratiwi, S. Pd.
Music arranger	: Cahyo Kartiko
Artistic Director	: Dyah Masita Rini, S. Pd., M. Pd.
Duration	: 7 minutes
Presentation form	: Representative
Number of dancers	: 7 People
Source of ideas to work on	: Taken from the dance movements of <i>Remo, Beskalan, Topeng Malangan</i> , and the development of dance movements today.
Source of music	: Taken from traditional <i>Malangan</i> , which is developed according to the needs of dance and creative music that still displays local culture.
Story idea	: The story of Proboretno defending her government territory and her dignity as a woman when she completed with Panji Pulangjiwo.
Dance theme	: Heroism
Presentation stage	: Proscenium stage
Make up	: Bold realist
Costume	: Symbolic realism
Synopsis	:

Sekar Lodra

Proboretno is the daughter of the Duke of *Malang* who is persistent in defending the *Kanjuruhan* area. The proboretno is gentle in behavior, sharp in determination. Always persistent in practicing the science of *kanuragan*. Her fighting spirit is an obligation that must be done. Trying not to give up. In order to maintain the dignity of a government area.

3.1.1. Concept Idea Work Choreography of the Sekar Lodra dance developed at SMAN 8 Malang in the 2017 Student Art Creation Week (Pekan Cipta Seni Pelajar).

In this work, the choreographer was inspired by a folktale found in the *Babad Malang*, which tells the heroic story of a female figure, Dyah Ayu Dewi Proboretno, the Princess Regent of *Malang*. The story begins when the Sultanate of *Mataram*, under the leadership of *Surontani*, sought to expand its influence to the *Brang Wetan* or eastern Java region. Territories such as *Caruban (Madiun)*, *Ngrawa (Tulungagung)*, and the surrounding areas were successfully conquered. However, on the way to *Surabaya*, *Mataram's* troops encountered heavy resistance from the Duchy of *Sengguruh*, which triggered a fierce battle between the two forces.

Ronggo Toh Jiwo, the leader of Sengguruh, recognized the formidable advance of Mataram's army. He commanded a powerful force, which was led directly by his own daughter, Proboretno, a beautiful, powerful woman well-versed in martial arts and mystical knowledge.

Although a woman, Proboretno was a distinguished warrior and commander. With her exceptional martial abilities, she repeatedly defeated Mataram's troops, leaving them in disarray and crushing defeat. Every movement of Mataram's army was halted by Proboretno's resistance. This fragment of the story eventually became the origin of the name Malang, derived from the word palang, meaning to block or obstruct.

Following Mataram's repeated failures, they sent even larger troops. This raised growing concern in Ronggo Toh Jiwo's heart, both as a leader and as a father. In the context of Javanese culture, which tends to be patriarchal, Ronggo Toh Jiwo believed that Proboretno's destiny as a woman would eventually require her to have a companion.

A woman, he thought, needed a partner to accompany her in life and support her in defending their land against Mataram. Thus, a competition was declared: any man who could defeat Proboretno in combat would be chosen as her husband. Princes and warriors from across the land gathered with hopes of winning her hand.

Yet Proboretno's strength seemed unrivaled. The more warriors arrived, the more fell in defeat. Only one warrior could match and ultimately defeat her, Panji Pulangjiwo. In the battle against Panji, Proboretno was eventually cornered and fled into a cave, where she was ultimately defeated. However, this defeat marked not the end, but the beginning of her greater triumph.

This excerpt reflects that every battle Proboretno fought was an expression of her deep love for her homeland. Her identity as a woman was not a limitation but a declaration, that women need not always stand behind men. Her pride as a woman, warrior, commander, and daughter of a sovereign leader was a non-negotiable truth worth fighting for. Proboretno's defeat became a symbolic victory

3.2 Discussion

3.2.1. Source of Motion and It's Development Choreography of the Sekar Lodra dance developed at SMAN 8 Malang in the 2017 Student Art Creation Week (Pekan Cipta Seni Pelajar).

The movement sources used in this work include several Remo dance and *Malangan Putri* movements that have been developed and stylized to meet aesthetic needs. Additionally, movements are also drawn from traditional *Malangan* dance, such as *tanjak*, *penthangan*, *ngrawit*, *ngguriso*, and *ukel suweng*. For example, the *jogethan* movement is taken from the *Gading Alit* dance, which portrays a princess character with a gentle and refined demeanor. Other movement sources are derived from physical exercises, such as backbends (*kayang*), back rolls, cartwheels, and several modern dance elements, including leaps and turns. Specific accents or emphases, as well as variations in movement tempo (fast or slow), are deliberately incorporated by the choreographer in certain sections of the piece. The development of movement is based on musical interpretation and the dancer's bodily exploration.

Spatial use in this choreography utilizes seven spatial divisions. However, in performance, the application is not always explicitly visible, as the floor patterns often require dancers to continuously move from one area to another.

Levels in this choreography apply all three divisions: low, medium, and high. Low levels are often combined with medium or high levels to avoid a monotonous impression.

Movement volume is divided into two categories by the choreographer:

1. Small volume used in scenes of sadness solemnity, or calmness.
2. Large volume, used in cheerful or energetic scenes.

In relation to dynamics, the choreographer aims to express variations through movement, space, level, and volume to reduce monotony and create a more vibrant and varied presentation.

3.2.2. Form of Cultivation Choreography of the Sekar Lodra dance developed at SMAN 8 Malang in the 2017 Student Art Creation Week (Pekan Cipta Seni Pelajar).

The *Sekar Lodra* dance work choreographed in this piece is a form of thematic dance with a dramatic type. Its mode of presentation is a group dance, in which the choreographer features five female dancers and two male dancers.

Similar to *bedhaya* compositions, characterization in this work is not the main element. If certain scenes highlight one or more dancers, it is only meant to represent a specific character symbolically. This approach is intended to enhance the clarity of the dramatic structure in the choreography.

3.2.3. Make Up and Costume Choreography of the Sekar Lodra dance developed at SMAN 8 Malang in the 2017 Student Art Creation Week (Pekan Cipta Seni Pelajar).

The costume and makeup concept in this dance work is articulated as follows and is supported by relevant scholarly perspectives:

a. Makeup

The makeup design adopts a bold realism approach, in which facial features are strategically accentuated to heighten the expressiveness and stage presence of each dancer. This stylization enhances visual clarity under theatrical lighting and reinforces character identity through visual emphasis. For instance, the contouring of the eyes and cheekbones projects strength, confidence, and determination, which are essential to portraying the warrior archetype of Dyah Ayu Dewi Proboretno.

This approach aligns with Nurhadi (2016), who states that makeup in performance is not merely cosmetic but a semiotic tool that conveys emotional tone, psychological depth, and cultural identity. He emphasizes that facial embellishment can reinforce the symbolism of gender, class, and character within traditional and contemporary narratives.

b. Costume

The costume design is deeply embedded with symbolic meaning. The use of red represents passion, resistance, and bravery, while gold signifies triumph, nobility, and elegance. Jasmine flowers, often associated with purity and virtue in Javanese culture, are added to elevate the dancer's symbolic role as both a noblewoman and a heroic figure.

According to Putri & Hapsari (2017), color and accessory choices in traditional costume are more than visual decoration—they communicate cultural values, emotional states, and narrative functions. The careful curation of color and ornament in Sekar Lodra reflects this function, where visual elements become an extension of the dancer's message and the choreography's thematic core.

c. Properties (Props)

Props such as the cundrik (ceremonial dagger) and spear are used not just as physical tools but as narrative devices. These items embody power, defiance, and readiness to defend. In scenes of conflict and transition, they become visual metaphors for struggle and transformation. The addition of trap-like settings on stage further anchors the space and enhances the visual storytelling.

This concept is supported by Sari & Anwar (2018), who assert that props in traditional performance are not ornamental but carry semiotic and dramaturgical roles, helping dancers transform abstract emotions into tangible stage actions. Meanwhile, Widyastuti (2020) stresses the importance of spatial props and visual staging to construct layered meanings and emphasize dramaturgical shifts in contemporary choreography.

3.2.4. Accompaniment Concept Choreography of the Sekar Lodra dance developed at SMAN 8 Malang in the 2017 Student Art Creation Week (Pekan Cipta Seni Pelajar).

The musical accompaniment in this dance work utilizes gamelan in the pelog scale, with arrangements adapted to the aesthetic and dramatic needs of the choreography. The structure includes rhythmic and melodic patterns, dynamic use of tempo, emphasis on particular instruments, and the integration of *tembang* (traditional singing) to enhance expressive qualities. According to Sumarsam (2015), *gamelan* is not only a musical instrument ensemble but also a cultural expression that functions symbolically and spiritually in performance. It plays an essential role in shaping the mood, supporting the narrative, and guiding the dancers' movements. Additionally, Sutton (2014) emphasizes that in Javanese performing arts, music is not merely an accompaniment but a "co-creator of meaning," where the interaction between sound and movement constructs the dramatic experience. In this choreography, the music thus serves both as a rhythmic guide and a narrative force, helping to articulate emotion, character, and transitions throughout *Sekar Lodra*.

3.2.5. Stage Design Concept Choreography of the Sekar Lodra dance developed at SMAN 8 Malang in the 2017 Student Art Creation Week (Pekan Cipta Seni Pelajar).

The stage design for the *Sekar Lodra* dance work utilizes a standard proscenium stage, adapted to the existing stage layout provided by the venue. The spatial composition focuses on the center-rear level of the stage, which serves as a visual anchor to create depth and support the formation dynamics of the choreography. This placement aims to enhance the dramatic effect while allowing smooth transitions across different spatial levels and directions.

Lighting in this work employs a general lighting type, which provides even illumination across the entire stage area without spotlighting. This type of lighting was selected to maintain clarity of movement and ensure that all formations and dynamics of the dancers are clearly visible to the audience. According to Sofyan (2017), lighting in performing arts is not merely for illumination but also functions as an aesthetic and atmospheric enhancer that shapes the audience's perception of meaning within a performance. Similarly, Bellman (2015) emphasizes that stage lighting carries both narrative and dramaturgical functions, as it directs focus, creates mood, and reinforces the structure of each scene.

Through this approach to stage and lighting design, the choreographer aims to unify movement, space, and visual elements so that the *Sekar Lodra* performance can be experienced both aesthetically and dramatically by the audience.

3.2.6 Creative Process Choreography of the Sekar Lodra dance developed at SMAN 8 Malang in the 2017 Student Art Creation Week (Pekan Cipta Seni Pelajar).

Storyline			
No.	Stages	Story Content	Atmosphere/ Mood
1.	Intro	A symbol of the spirit and struggle of the commander	Valiant, agile, and swift
2.	Scene 1	The portrayal of Proboretno's gentle character is constructed through the graceful jogethan movements.	Joyful and gentle
3.	Scene 3	Her consistency in practicing martial arts and sharpening her combat skills is also illustrated.	Energetic/ spirited
4.	Scene 4	A prayer is offered to <i>Sang Murbeng Dumadi</i> , the Creator of Life.	Reverent/ solemn
5.	Scene 5	The resistance against <i>Panji Pulang Jiwo</i> , which leads to her being trapped inside a cave, is vividly depicted.	Tense
6.	Ending/ climax	This also reflects the idea that a woman is capable of taking an active role, despite her nature and limitations, in the pursuit of love and self-respect.	Reverent/ solemn (repeated)

4. CONCLUSION

The Sekar Lodra dance is a choreographic exploration that highlights local values, historical narratives, and the heroic character of women through a dramatic presentation. The concept is inspired by the folktale Babad Malang, which tells the story of Dyah Ayu Dewi Proboretno, a resilient female figure who defended her homeland against the expansion of the Mataram Sultanate. The choreographic process was carried out through a collaborative approach involving the choreographer, arts teachers, and students, moving through stages of movement exploration, improvisation, and composition.

The movement vocabulary is developed from traditional Malangan dance and modern dance elements, enriched by bodywork techniques and musical interpretation, resulting in dynamic and diverse choreographic forms. The accompaniment uses gamelan in pelog scale, arranged contextually to align with each scene and enhance dramatic atmosphere. Makeup and costume are designed with symbolic elements that emphasize character traits, the spirit of struggle, and stage aesthetics. Props such as cundrik (dagger) and spears support the narrative of resistance and the strength of the protagonist.

The stage design adopts a proscenium format, with the use of space, levels, volume, and general lighting intended to create a cohesive and expressive visual composition. These artistic elements reflect the principles of contemporary performance aesthetics. As emphasized by scholars such as Creswell (2015), Miles et al. (2016), Sumarsam (2015), Sutton (2014), and Bellman (2015), movement, music, light, and space in modern performance function as narrative and dramaturgical tools that interconnect to deliver meaning and emotional depth.

Overall, Sekar Lodra serves not only as an artistic expression but also as an educational medium that promotes character building, fosters creativity, and introduces the richness of local culture to the younger generation, particularly within the educational environment of SMAN 8 Malang.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Both authors are involved in compiling this article so that there is a division of tasks that are arranged in order to be able to compile the article according to the discussion and needs that the author wants to convey. The two authors are divided into two tasks, namely Andri Muhammad Rehan as a researcher and Dra. Jajuk Dwi Sasanadjati, M. Hum. as a research supervisor to compile the article.

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