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The Style Of The Celengan Dance In The Jaranan Art Performance In Kediri

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Abstract: This research explores the style of Celengan dance within Jaranan performances in Kediri, East Java. Celengan dance represents the wild boar character, traditionally performed by male dancers with vigorous and aggressive movements. This study aims to describe the form, symbolic meaning, and role of Celengan dance in the context of Jaranan. Using a qualitative approach, data were collected through field observations, in-depth interviews with dancers, leaders of Jaranan groups, and literature review. The findings reveal that Piggy bank dance incorporates low postures, dynamic gestures, and expressive facial movements, representing characteristics of cunning, greed, and spontaneity. In contemporary performances, female dancers have also begun performing this role, contributing to a new interpretation of the Celengan character. This study highlights how the Piggy Bank dance not only serves as entertainment but also as a medium for symbolic expression and cultural preservation.

Keywords: Celengan dance, Jaranan, Kediri, traditional performance, symbolic meaning

1. INTRODUCTION

Jaranan is a traditional art form that thrives throughout East Java, including Kediri Regency. This art form combines dance, gamelan music, and elements of trance rituals, creating both an aesthetic and spiritual experience for the audience. As a form of folk performing art, Jaranan serves not only as entertainment but also as a medium for expressing cultural values, a means of conveying moral messages, and a symbol of the collective identity of its supporting community (Sutarto, 2012). In this context, Jaranan reflects the dynamics of local culture that continue to thrive and evolve with changing times.

One important element of Jaranan performances is the Celengan dance. Literally, "celeng" means wild boar, and in Jaranan performances, this character is embodied through dance that depicts wild, aggressive, and lustful traits. The Celengan dance is typically performed by men due to its dynamic, jerky movements, requiring physical strength and humorous improvisation. Traditionally, the Celengan is often positioned as a disruptive, testing character, and a symbol of human greed that must be controlled (Hadi, 2016). Her presence adds a different color to the Jaranan performance, providing both entertainment and a philosophical message.

Current developments have had a significant impact on traditional arts, including Jaranan. One interesting phenomenon is the involvement of female dancers in performing the role of Celengan, previously dominated by men. This shift not only broadens gender participation in the arts but also enriches the artistic interpretation of the Celengan character (Purnomo, 2018). Some female dancers, such as Erina from Kediri, have successfully developed a distinctive Celengan dance style, combining the power of traditional movements with a unique feminine touch. This demonstrates that traditional arts have room for innovation without losing their original values.



This research focuses on answering the question: How is the Celengan dance style presented in Jaranan performances in Kediri? Using a descriptive qualitative approach, this study seeks to uncover the movement characteristics, symbolic meanings, and role of the Celengan dance in enriching the dynamics of Jaranan performances. This study is expected to contribute to the development of traditional performing arts studies and serve as a reference in efforts to preserve local arts rich in cultural values.

2. METHOD

2.1 Research Approach

This study uses a qualitative approach with descriptive methods, which aims to describe in depth the Celengan dance style in the Jaranan performance in Kediri. This approach was chosen because it is appropriate for studying complex socio-cultural phenomena, where the interaction between the artist, the audience, and the symbolic meaning of the performance is the main focus (Koentjaraningrat, 2009). With this approach, researchers can understand the phenomenon from the perspective of the cultural actors, as well as interpret the values contained in the performance.

2.2 Research Location and Subjects

The research was conducted in Kediri Regency, East Java, known as one of the centers of Jaranan art development. The location was chosen purposively because it has many active Jaranan groups and frequently performs the Celengan dance, including groups that showcase innovations such as the presence of female dancers in the Celengan role.

2.3 Data collection technique

Data was collected using several techniques, namely:

2.3.1 Participatory Observation

The researcher conducted direct observations at several Jaranan performances in Kediri, recording details of the Celengan dance movements, costumes, accompanying music, interactions with the audience, and the performance atmosphere. Observations were conducted in a participatory manner, with the researcher engaging with the artists to gain a deeper understanding.

2.3.2 In-depth Interviews

Interviews were conducted with dancers, group leaders, and art elders using a semi-structured interview guide. This technique allowed for the extraction of information about:

2.3.2.1 The philosophical meaning of the Celengan dance.

2.3.2.2 The creative process in creating the movements and costumes.

2.3.2.3 Changes that occurred, including the involvement of female dancers.

2.3.2 Documentation Study

Supporting data was collected through documents in the form of photographs, performance videos, rehearsal notes, and archives of Jaranan group performances. Additionally, a literature review was conducted of books, journals, and previous research related to the Celengan dance and Jaranan art.

2.4 Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was conducted using the interactive model of Miles & Huberman (1994), which includes:

2.4.1 Data Reduction: Sorting relevant data related to the Celengan dance style from observation notes, interviews, and documentation.

2.4.2 Data Presentation: Organizing data in the form of descriptive narratives, movement analysis tables, and interview excerpts.

2.4.3 2.4.3 Conclusion Drawing: Interpreting the form, meaning, and role of the Celengan dance in Jaranan performances.

2.5 Data Validity Test

To maintain data validity, this study used triangulation of sources and techniques, namely comparing the results of observations, interviews, and documentation. In addition, member checking was conducted by requesting confirmation from informants regarding the accuracy of the interview results.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Form and Characteristics of the Celengan Dance

The Celengan Dance, performed in the Jaranan performance in Kediri, features distinctive movement styles that distinguish it from other dance segments. These movements include a low body position with a sturdy stance, dynamic arm and leg movements, and humorous improvisation to bring the wild boar (celeng) character to life. Dancers typically employ powerful foot stomps, rapid, shifting steps, sudden turns, and hand gestures that mimic the aggressive movements of wild animals. These movements are combined with caricature facial expressions, such as angry, intimidating, or even teasing, to create a direct interaction with the audience.

The costumes worn by Celengan dancers are also distinctive. Dancers generally wear black trousers, patterned sarongs, and simple, ornate vests or belts. However, the most striking element is the celeng mask or heavy facial makeup to resemble a wild boar. In Kediri, several Jaranan groups have added variations in the form of accessories such as large necklaces or brightly colored fabrics to distinguish their style. These changes demonstrate how traditional art remains open to innovation without losing the fundamental characteristics of the Celengan dance.

Furthermore, the tempo of the gamelan music accompanying the Celengan segment is typically faster than the other sections, creating a boisterous atmosphere that complements the character's wild character. Improvisation is also a key element in the Celengan dance. Dancers are given the freedom to add spontaneous movements, including interactions with the audience, such as suddenly approaching or making humorous gestures, thus providing a surprising effect and adding to the performance's appeal.

3.2 Symbolic Meaning

Philosophically, the Celengan dance holds profound symbolic meaning. The celeng (wild and greedy creature) represents the dark side of humankind: greed, uncontrollable lust, and cunning. In the Javanese cultural context, this figure is often used as a moral warning to audiences about the importance of self-control. The Celengan dancers represent a "destructive force" that must be tamed through the harmony of music, dance, and ritual.

In several interviews with Jaranan dancers in Kediri, they stated that the Celengan's role is not only entertainment but also spiritually uplifting. A Jaranan group leader stated: "The Celengan depicts humans when they cannot control their lust. So when we see it on stage, it's like a mirror to ourselves." This demonstrates that audiences not only enjoy the spectacle aesthetically but also embrace the moral message it conveys.

Modern developments have also influenced the Celengan's symbolic meaning. The involvement of female dancers in this role has brought new interpretations. Female dancers, like Erina, present a more flexible nuance, balancing the strength of aggressive characters with subtle yet assertive bodily expressions. This transformation broadens the

meaning of Celengan, making it not only a symbol of destructive lust but also a representation of female strength, courage, and creativity in the realm of traditional art.

3.3 Celengan Dance in the Narrative Structure of Jaranan

In the Jaranan performance, the Celengan dance acts as an opening act to the lively atmosphere or as a transition to more ritually intense segments, such as trance (ndadi). The Celengan dance is often positioned to entertain the audience through humorous improvisation before entering the more sacred parts of the performance. Thus, this segment serves a dual function: to lighten the mood while also reinforcing the dramatic flow of the performance.

For audiences, the Celengan dance is one of the most anticipated moments. The elements of humor, surprise, and direct engagement with the audience make this segment a popular entertainment that enhances the overall appeal of the performance. Some Jaranan groups even add theatrical elements to this segment, such as chase scenes or special interactions with other characters, to add variety to the story.

3.4 Gender Dynamics and Innovation in Celengan Dance

One of the most interesting findings of this research is the involvement of female dancers in the role of Celengan. In Kediri, this phenomenon has become increasingly prevalent in recent years. The presence of female dancers creates a new movement form, combining the strength of aggressive movements with the softness of feminine ones, creating an aesthetic balance.

This innovation received a positive response from the audience. Female dancers were seen as providing a fresh perspective on the Celengan character without losing its original character. This also demonstrates that Jaranan is an art form that adapts to social change, including expanding gender participation.

3.5 Cultural Sustainability Through Innovation

Research shows that innovations, such as changes in the Celengan dance style and the involvement of women, actually strengthen the sustainability of Jaranan art. Traditional art will survive if it can adapt to the tastes and needs of modern society. Artists' creativity, whether through movement improvisation, costume modifications, or character interpretations, is the key to Jaranan's preservation. A Jaranan elder in Kediri asserted:

"If we only maintain the old, young people will eventually lose interest. But if we give it a new touch, they will feel this is also theirs." This statement demonstrates the importance of balancing traditional practices and innovation to ensure the art remains relevant across generations.

4. CONCLUSION

The Celengan dance in the Jaranan performance in Kediri plays a crucial role in preserving the richness of East Java's traditional arts. The Celengan character, embodied through agile, low, and improvisational dance movements, symbolizes human traits such as greed, cunning, and spontaneity. Through this embodiment, Jaranan serves not only as a form of entertainment but also as a medium for conveying social criticism and moral values to the community. In other words, the Celengan dance has a dual function: aesthetic and educational.

Research shows that the Celengan dance style in Kediri has unique characteristics that continue to transform, both in terms of movement, interpretation, and costume. The movements are not only aggressive, like the traditional form, but also accommodate new elements, especially when performed by female dancers. The presence of female dancers in the Celengan role demonstrates a shift in social construction within the world of traditional

performing arts. This change is not merely an adaptation to the times, but also an effort to broaden the meaning and relevance of Jaranan art in modern society.

The involvement of female dancers has had a positive impact on the development of Jaranan in Kediri. Audiences gain a more diverse aesthetic experience, while performers gain space for creativity and self-expression. This innovation also enriches the traditional performing arts, which previously tended to be static. However, these changes still adhere to the core principles that characterize Jaranan, ensuring the preservation of local cultural essence.

This research also emphasizes that the preservation of traditional arts is inseparable from the process of innovation. If traditional arts cease to adapt, they will lose their appeal to the younger generation. The emergence of new Celengan styles, particularly through the interpretations of dancers like Erina and others, is clear evidence that traditions can live on creatively without losing their cultural roots.

Thus, it can be concluded that the Celengan dance in Jaranan performances in Kediri is not merely entertainment but also part of a dynamic cultural value system. This art form plays a strategic role in maintaining local identity, strengthening social solidarity, and opening up dialogue between tradition and modernity. This research is expected to provide a foundation for further studies on the transformation of traditional arts, particularly in the context of changing gender roles and artistic innovation.

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