

The Opportunity Space in Kinanti Sekar Rahina's *Mitoni* Dance: A Study of Sacrality Accyology in the *Mitoni* Ceremony

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Abstract—The *mitoni* dance by Kinanti Sekar Rahina develops from the *mitoni* procession. The *mitoni* is a part of the community's belief in the Javanese traditional and culture. This dance is a self-reflection of the creator as an expression of gratitude and efforts to maintain the balance of the cosmos. This is a qualitative research and will be interpret using Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutic study. The data in this study were obtained from observation techniques, interviews, documentation, and combination (triangulation). The *mitoni* dance in a *mitoni* ceremony presents the noble values of human life. *Mitoni* dance has two possible interpretations of the opportunity space in the community when watching the *mitoni* procession and dance. First, the audience captures the *mitoni* dance as a crystallization of the *mitoni* procession by Kinanti Sekar Rahina. Second, the *mitoni* dance is part of the gratitude ceremony procession conducted by Kinanti Sekar Rahina.

Keywords—*mitoni*, *mitoni* dance, opportunity space.

I. INTRODUCTION

Java known as a region enriched with unique traditions remains existent until now. One tradition that still exists today is *slametan*. *Slametan* is a form of social activity in the form of traditional ceremonies. *Slametan* is derived from the word *slamet* in Javanese which means to be safe. The *slametan* ceremony has a purpose of finding safety, tranquility, and preservation of the cosmos. The *slametan* tradition is presented in several events including *slametan* for the tradition of human life's cycle, the pilgrimage tradition, and nature [1].

Pregnancy is the first cycle of life; human life is present as a manifestation of God's grace. Prawirohardjo in Wijayanti [2] defines pregnancy as a fertilization (a unification). Spermatozoa and ovum are followed by oxidation or implantation. In a Javanese culture, this event is a ceremony that epitomizes the presence of a prospective baby, known as a life cycle ceremony. In the life cycle ceremony, the *slametan* procession is carried out. *Slametan* in the form of a pregnancy ceremony aims to eliminate disasters and to ask for safety so that prospective babies are born to the world safely [3]. This *slametan* ceremony is carried out in the first pregnancy. Until now, people believe that carrying out *slametan* ceremonies is important for women when they give birth to their first babies. The implementation of *slametan* is technically carried out by traditional healers or old people. The *slametan* ceremony is carried out in several stages, namely at the age of five

months (*nnglimani*), seven months (*mitoni*), and nine months (*procotan*).

Nnglimani is a ceremony performed when the fetus is five months old. *Nnglimani* in Javanese derived from the word five along with its prefix (*ng-*) and the suffix (*-i*) means to be completed into five pregnancy ceremonies [4]. The *nnglimani* ceremony must be based on the existing customary rules. This ceremony coincides with a mother's birthday. A good time to carry out this ceremony is in the afternoon between 16.00-17.00 local time [3]. While the *slametan* ceremony is carried out when the content is seven months old, known as *mitoni* or *tingkeban*. When the womb age turns nine months, a *procotan* ceremony is held [1]. Of the three *slametan* ceremonies in the pregnancy, *mitoni* becomes popular among Javanese people.

Etymologically *mitoni* is derived from the word '*pitu*' attached to the prefix (*am-*) and the suffix (*-i*) that means to point to the number seven. In the terminology, number seven for Javanese people has a very good and sacred meaning. The Javanese community also believes that seven is a perfect number that relates to the concept of seven days a week, seven layers of earth and sky, the belief in seven derivatives, and human perfection. In addition, number seven has seven phases trusted by Javanese people. Basically, concepts like this are often found in the daily lives of Javanese people.

According to a medical science, when reaching the age of seven months, the baby has become a perfect little human form. At this age, a mother can determine the sex of her prospective baby. Javanese people believe that the medical science supports a state in which the womb age of seven months means a prospective baby starts his/her life in the mother's womb. Therefore, the biggest *slametan* ceremony in the cycle of human life is commemorated in the form of a *mitoni* ceremony. The *mitoni* ceremony is a medium to pray for salvation, peace, and preservation of the cosmos. The *slametan* ceremony is also a form of pre-natal education carried out by the community as a symbolic form of familiarity in Javanese people's life, nature, and so forth [5].

A tradition exists because something is considered and believed to bring forth good things to people. Just like a *mitoni* ceremony that certainly has noble values for the societies. These values are expressed in the *mitoni* dance by Kinanti Sekar Rahina. As a Javanese woman who adheres to traditions, customs and ancestral beliefs, Kinanti Sekar Rahina, a dance artist from Yogyakarta, attempts to present

a *mitoni* ceremony procession for her first pregnancy in a performance art package. *Mitoni* dance becomes part of a sacred sequence of the *mitoni* ceremony procession.

This certainly becomes something new in the *mitoni* ritual that has long existed. Some questions arise, for example, why should a *mitoni* ceremony exist? Why does *mitoni* dance present a *slametan* procession?

The rest of this paper is organized as follows: Section II describes the methodology of this research. Section III presents the obtained results and following by discussion. Finally Section V concludes this work.

II. METHODOLOGY

This is a qualitative research using the Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutic study. Hermeneutics is defined as a process of understanding an unknown situation [6]. In this sense, hermeneutics is interpreted as a science of interpretation. Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics interprets and understands the text as a complete truth related to the totality of human experience in the world [7]. Art becomes an object that can be explored in the context of philosophical hermeneutics. An aesthetic analysis and historicality become the focus of philosophical hermeneutic studies.

In this qualitative research, the research instrument is the researchers themselves. Researchers are key to the validity of data obtained in the field. The data in this study were collected by observing and seeing the facts in the field. Data were collected from various settings, ways and sources [8]. In this study the data were obtained by using observations, interviews, documentation and combination techniques (triangulation).

The interviews were conducted with the main informant, Kinanti Sekar Rahina as the choreographer of *mitoni* dance. Observations were made during the research, starting from the implementation of the process of Kinanti Sekar Rahina's *mitoni* dance at Omah Petroek Karangkalaman Sleman where researchers undertook documentation observations and interviews.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the obtained result and following by discussion.

A. Tradition of Slametan Ceremony (Why Mitoni Is Available?)

The relationship between trust and human activities results in a tradition called ceremony. Birth, death, and marriage ceremonies are a form of ceremony that is trusted by the community as a form of respect, love, even fear of something unseen [3].

One form of ceremonies carried out and trusted by the Javanese community is commonly called *slametan*. *Slametan* is a myth of trust in the form of important societal activities to obtain safety, pleasure, and the balance of the cosmos. This term is known as a Javanese cosmology that strengthens a relationship between the universe and all its contents [5]. A cosmological balance is related to the

balance between the microcosm and the macrocosm. Macrocosm is God, supernatural beings, or the upper world. The macrocosm includes a system of harmony and regularity of the universe as a whole along with its parts. Microcosm is a smaller scope such as human relations or the underworld. Microcosm is a system that exists in every individual.

Geertz emphasizes that *slametan* is an attempt to harmonize relations between Javanese and *danyang* (ancestral spirits) that control the village [1]. *Slametan* maintains the relationship among humans, God and supernatural beings. In the Nitisasatra literary work written by the poet Yasadipura, *slametan* is defined as a form of gratitude to the Almighty God for all the goodness and distress they receive [1].

The *slametan* tradition is usually carried out in the form of pilgrimage traditions, natural traditions, and traditions of the human life cycle. *Slametan* carried out in the tradition of human life is a form of ritual to glorify important events in Javanese life. These events include pregnancy, birth, *supitan*, droplets, wedding, and death referred to as the beginning of human life, so that it is necessary to maintain *slametan* as a form of prayers to ask for God's mercy and ancestors' guidance for goodness as a macrocosm.

In Javanese culture, a woman who is pregnant for her first baby must perform a series of *slametan* rituals consisting of *slametan nglimani*, *mitoni slametan*, and *procotan slametan*. *Slametan nglimani* is done when the fetus is five months old using five types of offerings such as *jenang*, *rujak*, *sambal*, *tumpeng*, and *eggs*.

Mitoni slametan is performed when the fetus turns seven months old. The *mitoni slametan* ceremony has some meanings, and one of them is a form of pre-natal education. Education for children in the Javanese community has started since the children were in their wombs. The education is carried out indirectly through the mother. Ban and recommendations during pregnancy are part of pre-natal education. During pregnancy a mother will do good things in the hope that her child has good qualities. In addition, a mother will avoid bad words, certain foods, killing animals and so forth, so that born babies are protected from bad things or bad behaviors [5]. Prospective babies were introduced early to keep the relationship between Javanese people, the environment, and their fellow human beings through existing traditional ceremonies [5].

The *mitoni* ceremony aims to uphold the values in societies, so that it can be realized as the role model and culture for the community. In the Javanese belief, a seven-month-old fetus is considered a process of *pangriptane manungsa* or the initial process of human life. *Mitoni slametan* is good to celebrate on Monday and Friday afternoon or night or this ceremony will be better if it is undertaken before the full moon (*purnamasidhi*).

The *mitoni* ceremony has a longer series of ceremonies than the *nglimani*. The *mitoni* ceremony is complemented by offerings of various types and shapes, such as food (*sego* and *jenang*), *cengkir gadhing*, *tropong* or looms, *lotrok*

wood, lawe yarn, sugar cane leaves, mori cloth, and cloth (jarik) in seven motifs [5]. These symbolic meaningful objects are used in the *mitoni* procession series. The ceremonial series consist of siraman that includes putting eggs in a cloth, changing clothes seven times, brojolan (a birth procession) by inserting a young ivory coconut depicted by a puppet of Bethara Kamajaya and Bethari Kamaratih, deciding the twine of coconut fiber, breaking the pan, and *kendhuri* [9].

The implementation of *mitoni* ceremony procession in each region is different, as is the case in Tulungagung. The *mitoni* tradition in region is done inside and outside the house. In the house various kinds of dishes are provided such as *sambung tuwuh* that means to strengthen a bond between a mother and a prospective baby, so that the baby can be born safely. *Jemukan* is a term in Javanese derived from a compound word meaning to find, a meeting between an egg cell and a sperm that becomes a fetus in the mother's womb. Next is the rice cake; expectations of values both physically and mentally. *Jenang sengkala* is part of the dish served in the *mitoni* ceremony procession. *Jenang sengkala* aims to avoid obstacles until a mother gives birth. *Jenang procot* is a must-have dish because it has a philosophy of ease in the delivery process. Meanwhile, dishes outside the home are more varied and varied [3].

The last stage in the pregnancy ceremony called *procotan slametan* is held when the fetus is nine months old. *Procotan* is derived from the word *procot* that means giving birth to a baby easily. In some Indonesia regions, *procotan* is guided by traditional healers. Shamans shouted the term 'rats' while running holding broom sticks like they were chasing mice. Mice are known as agile animals and easily escape from narrow and small places. Therefore, in the process of *procotan* ceremony, the shaman uses the term 'rats' with the hope that baby is born easily and smoothly [3].

The *mitoni* tradition is a legacy of ancestral belief in the existence of living things in a mother's womb that cannot be seen, but it can be felt. This tradition exists as a form of Javanese society's obedience to God. Obedience is expressed in a sacred ritual such as prayers and good wishes. Aside from being a form of obedience to God, a *mitoni* ceremony exists because of the community's compliance to maintain the balance of the cosmos. Javanese people consistently maintain the traditions that have lived and developed for centuries. The *mitoni* ceremony is the fruit of a belief that has hitherto been strong in Javanese people's life.

B. Mitoni Dance

Purwatiningsih [10] mentions that dance is an art form that uses the body as an expression of soul through rhythmic and beautiful movements. The definition of this dance is in line with what BPH Suryodiningrat states that dance is

"Inggang kawastanan beksa inggih punika ebahing sadaya saranduning badan, kesarengan ungeling gangsa, katata pika tuk wiramaning gendhing, jumbuhing pasemon kalihan pikajenging jogged. This

utterance means that dance is the motion of the whole body accompanied by the rhythm of music which is harmonized with the expression of the dance" [11].

Based on this understanding, Kinanti Sekar Rahina, the Yogyakarta-based dance artist expresses her soul for her first pregnancy in the form of a dance entitled *mitoni* dance. It is adopted from the Javanese cultural roots of the *mitoni slametan* ritual. This dance is a work that departs from the moment of pregnancy and is then visualized in the ritual of the *mitoni slametan*.

The *mitoni* dance was created in 2017 when Kinanti Sekar Rahina was being pregnant for her first child. *Mitoni* dance is packed as a show in the *mitoni slametan* ritual. Through this work, Kinanti Sekar Rahina wants to introduce how a *mitoni* procession is necessary for ordinary people who do not know its importance. In the process, the *mitoni* dance was performed by seven dancers. Each dancer wears a different color of dance costume as an illustration of the color of life. These colors include red, blue, green, purple, orange, black and yellow. These colors mean strength in the Javanese philosophy (an interview with Mbak Sekar, 9 January 2018 at 21.08 PM).

Besides the meaning of motion, a *mitoni* dance also conveys philosophical values of a ritual in the form of clothing or dance costumes. Each color is a depiction of the values of life that the dancer wants to convey through the *mitoni* dance.

Red is a symbol of energy, courage, and the power of desire; blue is a symbol of love, intelligence, tenderness, creativity, and self-strength; green shows success, endurance, balance, and friendship; purple is a picture of spiritual strength, knowledge, empathy and enlightenment; orange is a symbol of warmth, justice, joy and active; black symbolizes deep protection, strength, self-esteem and feeling; yellow shows strong memories, imagination, cooperation, happiness, loyalty, wisdom, and social energy. In addition, dancers with different costumes depict the cloth-changing procession carried out by the mother who is pregnant in the *mitoni slametan* ritual (an interview with Ms. Sekar, January 9, 2018 at 9.08 PM).

In general, a *mitoni* dance is an expression of gratitude for the blessings of pregnancy given by God. This dance also illustrates how a mother's prudence and sincerity might contribute to her future baby. The *mitoni* dance also contains prayers for mothers and babies to survive during the birth procession. In addition, Kinanti Sekar hopes that her child will have a smooth and good path in his or her life.

C. Axiology Study of Mitoni Dance in the Mitoni Ceremony

Axiology is a branch of philosophy that talks about the orientation or value of a life. Axiology as a branch of the philosophy of science questions how humans use their knowledge [12]. Axiology aims to achieve the nature and the benefits of knowledge. The axiology is derived from the Greek word *axion* which means 'value' and *logos* that means 'theory', in this sense the theory of values or examination of a thing [13]

Sunaryadi [13] states that points out that values cannot be separated from the conditions that surround them, such as

(1) objects that give values; (2) objects that are rated; (3) decision makers; and (4) values added with assessments. Philosophers understand values in some points of views; (1) value is an empirical quality that cannot be defined; (2) value as an object of interest; (3) value as a result of a perceived value; (4) value as essence [13].

Axiology has two fundamental components, namely ethics (morality) and aesthetics (beauty). Ethics is a branch of axiological philosophy that discusses moral issues (goodness and badness). Ethics studies focus more on behaviors, norms, and customs in certain communities. Meanwhile, aesthetics is a study of the value of beauty. Beauty implies that within everything, elements are ordered in a harmonious manner in a single unified relationship. Aesthetics relates to artistic creations and art experiences. Bahrum [14], mentions three interpretations of the nature of art, namely (1) art as redemption (penetration) of reality in addition to experience; (2) as a means of pleasure, not related to knowledge but manipulating nature for pleasure; (3) as a genuine expression of experience.

Based on the axiology study, the *mitoni slametan* tradition contains very complex values of ethics (morality). The complexity in the *mitoni slametan* can be seen from the strong relationship between the microcosm and the macrocosm. In relation to humans, the *mitoni slametan* is a form of self-satisfaction. The *mitoni slametan* is a means of obedience, and belief in the power of God. Besides, the *mitoni slametan* is a symbol of trust in ancestors who were believed to guard them. In various perspectives, the *mitoni slametan* tradition has a good effect on humans who believe it in Javanese cultural traditions and customs. For Javanese people this tradition is a life cycle ceremony expected to provide pre-natal education. Early on, prospective babies have been introduced to the tradition of the community. The closeness of the Javanese relationship with the surrounding environment, ancestors, and their neighbors has been introduced since the baby was in the womb.

In an aesthetic view, *mitoni* is a beauty of the Javanese tradition. The *mitoni* procession describes the initial process of new human life. In the *mitoni slametan* series might begin with the *siraman* procession. *Siraman* aims to keep things that are not good from mothers and prospective babies, the spray is done by using holy water from seven different spring sources and a mixture of bunches of flowers. *Toya suci perwita* or holy water from seven different spring sources symbolizes the expectant mother's pregnancy. After making the *siraman*, the ceremony proceeds with *brojolan* as a prayer request, so that the baby is born easily and smoothly. *Brojolan* birth symbols are visualized through the young ivory coconut carved with the puppet figures, Brthara Kamajaya and Bethari Kamaratih. The philosophical value that arises is the hope for the born baby that he or she will be as beautiful and handsome as the character.

After finishing the *brojolan* ritual, the next step is to sideline or change the cloth (*jarik*) seven times. The fingerlings generally use *Sidomukti*, *Truntum*, *Parang Kusuma*, *Sidoluhur*, *Semen Rama*, *Udan Liris*, and Chicken Claws motifs. Each *jarik* has its own meaning, like *Truntum* which means sincere, eternal love; *Sidoluhur* means

nobility; *Sidomukti* contains the meaning of prosperity symbolized by the nobility of mind, speech, and action to achieve its prosperity; *Udan Liris* has the meaning of fortitude and survival of life; *Semen Rama* is derived from the word *semi* which means the growth of plant parts; *Parang Kusuma* has the meaning that life must be based on the struggle to find happiness [15]. The meaning of the cloth or *jarik* used in the *nyamping* ritual is a form of prayers and hope from parents for their children. In the *nyamping* procession, the thread turns as a symbol of breaking the bad things that hinder the birth of a baby. After that *kendhuren* is held, which means eating together as a symbol of gratitude for pregnancy and asking for prayers for the birth processes.

The long procession of *mitoni slametan* ritual has many Javanese philosophical meanings and values that are good for human life. The values of the *mitoni slametan* ritual are used as a basis for Kinanti Sekar Rahina in creating the *mitoni* dance.

Aesthetics and artwork are two inseparable things. When looking at artwork, people will judge the aesthetics of the work, just as when creating a work of art, one will consider the aesthetic values that are right for the work. *Mitoni* dance in the *mitoni* ceremony is a form of expression of happiness for the events and experiences of the first pregnancy for a woman. The *mitoni* dance describes how the *mitoni* procession takes place. The dance stylist wants to convey a message to the community that the *mitoni* procession is delivered through a dance. Thus, a *mitoni* dance is part of the *mitoni* ceremony created by Kinanti Sekar Rahina.

The *mitoni* dance was created as a means of expressing gratitude to God Almighty. Some good values in the *mitoni* dance performances include (1) Divine values, expressions of gratitude as manifestations of divine values, a sense of belief in God and a form of obedience to God; (2) The value of humanity that consists of ethical values, moral values, and norms. In the *mitoni* dance the value appears in a series of movements, in a broad outline of *mitoni* dance describing the process of beginning a new life for humans. This dance is a manifestation of Javanese norms, customs and traditions in welcoming the presence of the first child; (3) Value of life, including courage and sacrifice. *Mitoni* dance is a picture of a new life process for humans, the process of prospective babies struggling in the womb, the struggle and courage of prospective mothers during pregnancy. The sacrifice of the prospective mother is portrayed through the movement of *mitoni* dance, as well as the struggle and courage of the prospective baby to start life as a human; (4) Value of enjoyment, in the *mitoni* dance the happiness of the prospective mother in enjoying pregnancy that becomes part of expressions of happiness. This dance is not just entertainmen, but also a guide for those who want to better understand *mitoni*.

D. Opportunity Space in the Mitoni Dance

Opportunity space is the power of expressing the human mind in interpreting something, in this case, a work of art. The concept of space and time in the creation of works of art can bring the space of possibilities to the audience's interpretation. Understanding of space and time depends on the context of the conversation. Space and time are relative,

where space is the relationship between objects measured in a particular way. If measurements are carried out in different ways, eating will produce different results, as well as time. When the audience watches the *mitoni* dance in a different space, he or she will produce different interpretations. Conversely, if the audience watches the *mitoni* dance at the same time when the dance is held, the perception of *mitoni* dance in the time dimension will be different

The interpretation of artwork will create a variety of interpretations. Hermeneutics becomes one of the knives to dissect the interpretation of the meaning of a text. At the end of the 20th century, Paul Ricoeur renewed the discussion of hermeneutics. In essence, hermeneutics is understood as a theoretical theory of interpretation or reflection on interpretation activities. An interpretation becomes something good if it is able to deliver messages to its interpreter to understand philosophy more deeply. The interpretation in question is a way of interpreting the text in a wider aspect such as text books, symbols, and myths to understand the reality behind the existence of a text.

Opportunity space is present as a distance of thinking between humans and work. In this case, the work of *mitoni* dance does not allow viewers to interpret dance not as a dance but as part of a ritual. This is seen from the series of *mitoni slametan* ceremonies which are held from the beginning to the end; the audience interprets dance as part of the ritual due to the invisible form of a series of *mitoni slametan* ceremonies which are expressed in the form of *mitoni* dance by Kinanti Sekar Rahina. However, for some viewers it is very possible to assume that this dance is a complete depiction of the *mitoni slametan* ceremony procession as viewed from the presentation of the dance performed by Kinanti Sekar Rahina and other dancers. How is the series of *mitoni* processions outlined in the cultivation of this dance work? The procession is clearly visible in every dance movement performed.

These two possibilities naturally occur in the perception and interpretation of the audience. Opportunity space owned by the audiences leads to an interpretation of an artwork that they watch.

IV. CONCLUSION

Mitoni is a result of Javanese culture that has remained alive until today. Trust in the ancestral heritage means keeping the *mitoni* alive through Javanese traditions in Javanese societies. As a form of culture, many good values can be found in the *mitoni* ceremony as a series of gratitude to celebrate the gestational age of the seventh month. *Mitoni slametan* is used as a means of expressing gratitude for the grace of God, the expression of happiness, and the responsibility to maintain the balance of the cosmos.

This tradition of *mitoni* dance seeks to visualize a series of *mitoni* processions in the packaging of performing arts, so that the people who do not understand *mitoni* realize a long process of traditional rituals possessed by Javanese ancestors. In the *mitoni* dance, there are good values for life including the value of divinity, the value of life, the value of humanity, and the value of enjoyment. The dance stylist tries to convey such values through a simple but meaningful series of movements.

Mitoni dance in the *mitoni* ceremony tries to revive the forgotten arts, traditions, and customs. This work includes the sacred work, because it is apart from being a performance of the *mitoni* dance, and it becomes a procession of the *mitoni* ceremony for the first pregnancy. As a whole, *mitoni* dance in this *mitoni* ceremony is a form of gratitude for the blessings of the Almighty God and love of Javanese traditions. The effort to maintain the local wisdom of the Javanese community is also the mission of Kinanti Sekar Rahina as the choreographer of *mitoni* dance.

In a dance work, there is a difference in interpretation is a natural thing. This difference is due to the difference in the opportunity space within individuals in interpreting an artwork that they see and observe. In the *mitoni* dance, people can learn the likelihood of interpretations about the opportunity space in the community. The first possibility is that the audience can grasp that *mitoni* dance is a crystallization of the *mitoni* procession performed by Kinanti Sekar Rahina. However, it does not rule out the possibility that the audience will see this dance only as part of the *mitoni slametan* ceremony procession conducted by Kinanti Sekar Rahina.

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