

The Form of Culture in Songkro Dance

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Abstract— *Songkro dance is a new dance that blends traditional and contemporary motion art which is arranged in interesting and unique gestures. Songkro itself is the name of the tool used by sand miners on the banks of the Brantas River, Kediri, and East Java. Songkro is made of woven bamboo that is shaped like a tube that is used as a container to take sand from the Brantas riverbed. The purpose of this research is to find out the form of culture in Songkro Dance. This study uses a qualitative approach. The main informants are the creators of songkro dance and the community that involved in the sand mining process. The techniques of collecting data are interviews and library research. The results of the study show the form of culture in Songkro Dance; Songkro dance conveys moral values of always being hard work, tenaciousness, braveness and loyalty; movements or motions in Songkro dance represent the interactions and social conflicts of sand miners; Songkro dance itself as a physical form of culture or artifact.*

Keywords—*Songkro dance, moral values, social system, artifacts*

I. INTRODUCTION

The president of Indonesia, Joko Widodo has signed *UU No.5 tahun 2017*. The highlight of this rule is about cultural advancement. As the minister of education and culture, Muhadjir Effendy said that culture has been the root of our education, that's why this rule (read: cultural advancement) should be emphasized on protection, development, utilization and guidance so that Indonesian culture progressively grow up. In addition, the chief assembly of education, sport and history's sector said this rule give a big possibility for local culture ideas so they can pop up their ideas through oral, manuscript or even traditional sports.

It is commonly mentioned that culture coming from Sanskrit *buddhayah*, which is interpreted as a plural form of the concepts of *budhi* and *dhaya*. Humans are the owner of *budhi* and *dhaya*. Nowadays, it simplified to be mindfulness (intelligence or the ability to think and create) and power (ability or strength). Humans who have *cipta* are able to use their power, the power of other creatures to the power of nature - according to their needs.

Koentjaraningrat in his book *Introduction to Anthropology* [1], he argues that there are three theories of cultural theory, which were also introduced by Talcott Parsons and A.L. Kroeber. There are the system of ideas, a series of actions and forms of human-patterned activities. Koentjaraningrat also popularized the idea of J.J. Hoenigman's book *The World of Man* which distinguishes the existence of three cultural forms namely; ideas, activities and artifacts. Koentjaraningrat formulated these three cultural forms to be thus; the form of culture as a complex of ideas, values, norms, regulations; the form of culture as a complex of activities and patterned actions from humans in

society; the form of culture as objects created by humans. The three forms of culture are related to each other.

In their concept of definition, experts emphasize trust, knowledge, art, morals, law, habits, customs, patterns for living, ability to regulate life and so on. However, the most important thing is ability to build symbolism in his life [2]. It is caused by the fact that what we face in our daily lives is a series of symbols that we display to others or other people demonstrate to us. All three elements use symbols which are then understood by others.

The essence of culture is in *cipta* because the idea that we call *cipta* exists in the brains of individuals and cannot be seen or felt by others. As for the ideas that want to be portrayed or conveyed through dance, the meaning of symbols in each dance movement is the highest cultural value of a dance. In dance, the type, forms of dance and how to dance are the result of the human's *cipta*. Humans created it. And many people believe that the dance has a history of birth. For example, experiences from the lives of sand miners. However, if we ask what cultural values are contained in the dance, then we cannot necessarily answer. We must look, explore deeply the cultural values contained in the dance (as artifact or *karya*). What cultural values are contained in the dance movements, footwork, hand movements, head movements, eye movements, mouth and lip movements, body movements bent or supine, gently tilted to the right or left etc. We do not know its cultural value necessarily when we see the dance danced by someone or a group of people. That's a sign of cultural values which are a complex part of ideas or ideas are abstract.

The cultural form of idea creates something that concerns human patterned action in the form of human behavior or actions. The examples of *cipta* such as manners, politeness, customs, ways of walking, provisions that bind human life in relationships etc. So the cultural system is an operational form of cultural values.

The ideas in cultural value are realized in the social system or cultural system. This social system is used by humans in their daily lives, in achieving their ideals, desires and hopes. This social system also regulates social relations between people. This means that the social system is real, concrete in the sense of being seen, can be heard, can be felt. The *karsa/karya* or artifact contains values in accordance with the ideas of human's *cipta*. Like dance as the real/concrete form of human's *cipta*. Dance as the cultural artifact will give us information about the cultural values that symbolized by the motion or gestures and the social system against the background of this dance arrangement.

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and unique gestures. Songkro itself is the name of the tool used by sand miners on the banks of the Brantas River, Kediri, and East Java. Songkro is made of woven bamboo that is shaped like a tube that is used as a container to take sand from the Brantas riverbed.

The creator of this dance is Yolanda Putri Probosekar. She is a dancer from Kediri and has many experiences about traditional and contemporary dance art. Nowadays, she's able in Guntur Dance Company in Kediri City. Songkro dance has been performed in PSP (Pekan Seni Pelajar) which it becomes the first winner in that competition and they invited to perform in TMII (Taman Mini Indonesia Indah) to represent Kediri City in Cultural Festival.

This study aims to explore and study the moral values in Songkro dance so that it can be used as a gain for local cultural advancement. The goal is to embed moral values through the interpretation of its performance. In fact, it showed some moral values such as hardworking, tenacious, persistent, and brave and never give up. And it occurred the conflict in sand miner family, intensively because of the work they (read: the husband) took. This research has two main benefits. First, it teaches moral values to the audiences so that they become realize Kediri's local wisdom. Second, it makes the audiences more aware on social or environmental aspect that happen in everyday live.

II. RELATED WORKS

To our knowledge, some works on dance focused on the problem of community. For example, the Community approaches [3] this project used oral history contributed by community story-tellers as source material for choreographic work performed in the community. The oral histories focused on four major areas: arrival (migration), social life, spirituality, and segregation/civil rights. Our work addresses not only dance as society point of view but also the ideas or moral value in the dance motions.

Work in [4] presents Karen youth in urban areas of the United States that have been participating in traditional Karen dance, practicing and performing regularly. This study demonstrates that those forced to migrate to a foreign country may face challenges to their sense of identity and belonging when immersed in a society that is unfamiliar to them. This study's highlight on the resistance of cultural tradition belongs to the Karen community. However, our study is focused in local tradition of Kediri's people as well but we also focused on the dance that formed by the societal and environmental aspect.

The most similiar work with ours is the work in [5] in the sense that they also find the moral value of Great Mosque of Sumenep. The results found in the building of the Great Mosque of Sumenep contained religious values, honesty, tolerance, discipline, creativity, etc. Moreover, it focused on moral values as education material in art and culture lesson. In our work, we analyzed the moral values much deeper using social and environmental point of view so we have much wider insight of dance work.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

This is a qualitative research. The researcher gained the data through literature research and interview. This research

was preceded by formulating the problems to be studied from the Songkro dance, and then the researchers conducted a literature study to collect the necessary reference materials for research purposes. After that, the researcher continued to do interview. The main informants are Yolanda Putri Probosekar as the Songkro dance creator and the sand mining community. It is needed to analyze the dance motion from the creator of the dance itself so that researchers can explore moral values presented in it.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Songkro describes the lives of the sand miner and his wife. The sand miners do their work illegally and do not think of the negative effects of their actions. As the wife worried for her husband who chooses dangerous work, she advised her husband to stop mining sand with Songkro because it has adverse consequences for him and others. The wife was afraid and restless every time her husband excused himself to mine sand in the river. Countless times that the wife tried to give advice and forbid her husband to go to work. The wife was angry because the husband never listens to her advice and didn't want to heed her words. The time when the water in the river overflowed and there was a flood, something that was feared by his wife ensued. While the sand miners are working, they are swept away by the overflow of river flood.

A. Motion 1



Songkro dance depicted the life of an illegal sand miner with his wife. The wife never gave permission for her husband to do that dangerous work.

B. Motion 2



The two female (the wives) dancers described their worried every morning when their husbands took leave to mine sand in the river. On the other hand the husbands who had a hardworking attitude and did not care what the consequences of his work, they remains persistent and went to look for sand.

Motion 3.



In this section all dancers dance together tried to convey the tenacity of the sand miners. Songkro dance moves refer to Remo dance moves. *Tanjak* and head right and left with firm and sturdy body depicted the brave and tough sand miners in carrying out their work.

C. Motion 4



At first the wives tried to accept and support their husbands to become a sand miner. Pulled in by two female (the wives) dancers who raised songkro which was then given to male dancers (the husbands).

D. Motion 5



In this section the three male dancers carried songkro with up and down movements that had been beautifully distorted. It described how the sand miners dive to get sand with songkro and a strong pelvis

E. Motion 6



Sometimes the wives picked up their husbands because they always fell uneasy when waiting for their husbands to go to work to mine sand. Pulled in with a rotating head

motion and showing a troubled expression from a wives who was so worried about their husbands.

F. Motion 7



In this section there was a lifting body contact movement between male and female dancers. The dance creator tried to describe the anger of his wife who tried to advise her husband but never been heard. The sand miner also tried to convince his wife not to worry so much about her work..

G. Motion 8



The male dancer's movements when carried his wife, illustrate how the husband's efforts to convince his wife that nothing bad will happen

H. Motion 9



The dance creator tried to represent the river with a cloth stretched straight and moved by the waves. The male dancer who brought Songkro described a sand miner who was swimming and mined sand again even after advised by his wife.

I. Motion 10



In this section the effects of illegally mining sand began to appear. Depicted illegal sand mining raid by the local government. The floor pattern was made randomly to reflect a group of sand miners affected by the raids.

J. Motion 11



In the end of the Songkro dance, a sand miner who was exposed to flooding and the devastating effects of what his wife feared really happened. The bad prophecy of the wife in her husband was true. Many times the wife tried to advise the miners to put songkro and not mining sand again. As a result of this, the flood was depicted by a stretched black cloth and a male dancer covered in cloth became a sand miner who was swept away by the torrential flood. A female dancer here depicted a wife who sees her husband drifted away

Based on the results of interviews and literature study, the data obtained in which the moral values performed in Songkro dance are as follows;

First, hard work which is behaviors that show genuine efforts to overcome learning barriers and tasks, and complete tasks as well as possible. The hard work can be seen by the fact the husband who choose the sand miner as their primary work in motion 1. As we know that Brantas River provide an adequate source of water. The strongest evidence of an agricultural culture that is supported by the development of intensive irrigation (irrigation) infrastructure is found in the Kali Brantas watershed, through the Harinjing Inscription in Pare. It means that agriculture sector has raised very well that time. In another hand, there are some people who might have no lands to cultivate and have no choice but doing sand mining as lands is not necessary for them. Their decision to be sand miner is not only for themselves (husbands), but also their family. It is needed to fulfill their needs.

Dwi Susilo [6] argues the stages of relationship between human with their environment shows the whole cultural aspects and behaviour were affected and determined by the environment. Physics environment has a huge dominance in forming personality, morality, culture, politic and believe. They who live hot and dry environment has a hard, harsh and

tempramental liability, and they who live in cold or cool climate has a tendency to be gentle and soft personality.

As the three stages of developmental human intelligence by Auguste Comte [7], in theologist stage, the human living still determined dan dominated by something that supranatural. Human has no (full) control on the nature and environment. The next stage is metaphysics in which human consider that the universe is governed by the movements of change by natural laws and the last stage is positivism which consider the rasonality for

absolut, the nature and the objective of universe. In other words, all Comte's stage are the form of environment domination for human live. Environment and culture can't be seperated but mix product form by dialectical process. Both of them have a big role dan korelate. Environment might influence the culture and the human behaviou, but in the same time human will influence the enviromental changes.

Furthermore, one of the sand miner's character that represent in Songkro dance is influenced by the environment. The Brantas river give a big oportunity for the people of Kediri to take the benefit from it. The water can be the source of irrigation, cooking, cleaning, washing etc. The fish can be consumed or even the sand that can be mined. The nature or environment give what they have with

no hard feeling but in particular points human take it too much. As we can se e nowadays, the water bank of Brantas river is fluctuative. It becomes deccreas in specific number in dry season, and it becomes flood in wet season.

Even the sand miners, might be think that what they do won't harm anyone or anything – consider that they just doing it little by little. It will not happen if they realize the effect of sand miners activitys such as abbration and flood.

Second, tenacious means a tendency to never give up on its goals. Successness might be followed by the tenacious that can faced the barriers or problems. It shows a lot in motion 3, motion 7 and motion 10. Motion 3 portray how their work need a lot of perceiving as Songkro dance moves refer to Remo dance moves. Tanjak and head right and left with firm and sturdy body depicts the brave and tough sand miners in carrying out their work. Motion 7 describes how their wives tried to advice and even forbid their husband to go to work (sand mining). Motion 10 depicts the goverment's raid to order the ilegal sand miners in Brantas river. It shows us that the sand miners have a lot of barriers or obstacles in their work. It comes from their wife and the goverment. However, they still continue to wok as sand miners in Brantas river.

Third, brave which means having a steady heart and great confidence in facing danger, difficulties and so on. We can see it in motion 5, motion 9 and motion 11. The three motions reflect the brave of sand miners as they have to dive in Brantas river with no supporting tools. After that they have to carry out the sand they get from the river with songkro.

Fourth, loyalty. It means holding fast (on promises, convictions, etc) or persistent and resolute (in something). It shows a lot in how the wives advice the husbands countless time to stop their work in sand mining. It reflected in motion 4 when they try to believe on their husband's decision to be sand miner even they worry, ultimately about their husband's safety. It imply the social system dominated by the patriarchy system that time.

Murdoct and Provost [8] try to identify the most consistence “masculine” and “feminine” work in whole word. Parker and Parker consistenly, the masculine activity need more physic’s power, high risk, more dangerous, going outside and team management needed. Otherwise, female activity relatively less dangerous, repetition, relatively no need high concentration. Especially in javanese ethnic as agrarian society, economic and politic problems strictly organized by the control of man, and woman set aside in domestic area. In other word, woman has a down grade in agrarian society because they considered as immature and dependent.

A sand miner who has a hardworking nature but chooses job that is detrimental to the environment, namely mining sand with songkro without government permission. So that the impact will cause erosion and flood and endanger the miners themselves, because they work manually by swimming and diving to take sand with songkro. Not only bring a bad impact to nature, but also endanger for the miners because there is a possibility for them to be sinking and being carried away by river.

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research that has been described above, it can be concluded that hard work, tenacious, brave and loyalty are the moral value of Songkro dance. The nature or environment aspect that has a big role in this value’s form is the existence of Brantas river, meanwhile it also create the society that has agrarian culture.

The research produces the moral values contained in Songkro dance as Koentjaraningrat mention it as *cipta* and Hoenigman refer to *idea*. Songkro dance is the real or concrete form of hard work, tenacious, brave and loyalty that symbolized by the motion or gestures and the agrarian and patriarchy society as the background of this dance arrangement.

Songkro dance become the artifact (in form of culture) that represent the local wisdom of Kediri’s nature or environment and society. In addition, this dance will increase the audience’s consciousness about social or environmental issues that happen in everyday life as the inseparable part of culture.

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