

The Function Shift of *Tre'bang Randu Kentir* Dance from Ritual to Pseudoritual

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Abstract—Digitalisation is a sign that marks human life in the millennial era, also has a large contribution to the impact of changes in art especially Indonesia, one of them is Randu Kentir Indramayu dance. The aims of the study is to analyze the shift in the function of Randu Kentir dance caused by changes of the society character in the millennial era. This research uses a qualitative paradigm with a descriptive-analysis method. Data obtained through interviews, participant observation, and study documentation. The analytical work carried out combine's theory: anthropology and sociology as seen from a historical perspective. Research findings show that in the 1970s the Randu Kentir dance had a function as a media for *da'wah* (kind of missionary endeavor) and ritual for the Indramayu community. The development of the current era has an impact on the shift of the dance function in the life of the Indramayu community, that is the change in the function of the Randu kentir dance from ritual to pseudoritual. The aspects that influence the shift in the function of Randu Kentir dance are caused by social and economic factors.

Keywords: *Randu Kentir Indramayu dance, millennial era, function shift*

I. INTRODUCTION

Tradition became a part of society which kept on maintaining the uniqueness of human behaviour as culture behaviour. The traditionalism referred to psychological things of daily habit and faith in daily routine as a behaviour norm which could not be demanded [1]. Dynamically, the tradition kept on developing in a community. Human changed following the development of times, likewise the arts. The millennial era marked with the internet access in sharing information and culture, made the traditional arts had to fight in maintaining its existence. Sri Rustiyanti mentioned that there were two problems in revitalization traditional arts. First, there were traditional arts which could survive because they could adapt with the dynamics of society. Second, there were traditional arts which could not survive without help or change from outside [2]. There were some examples of Indonesian arts which could survive by following the dynamics of society development. It was *Tre'bang Randu Kentir* dance.

Tre'bang Randu Kentir dance was the traditional art of Losarang society, Indramayu which kept on synchronizing itself with the development of times. The study of this dance was carried out to understand the alteration function of *Tre'bang Randu Kentir* dance at the beginning of its

appearance until millennial era. Normally, *Tre'bang Randu Kentir* dance was performed in tradition ritual to express gratitude for the harvest. The development of society which started to leave the local tradition made the function of *Tre'bang Randu Kentir* dance shifted from ritual to pseudo-ritual. The writing of this article intended to explain the alteration function of *Tre'bang Randu Kentir* dance from ritual to pseudoritual.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Art lived and developed in society, playing an important role in life order. The functions of arts performance in ethnic environment were as follow: the hunter of magic power, the hunter of good spirits to frighten away the evil spirits, memorial to the ancestors, the complement of ceremony, and the realization of encouragement to reveal the beauty [2]. It was similar with dance categorized by Soedarsono into 3 functions, those were as ritual media, personal entertainment, and aesthetic presentation [3]. Dances categorized based on the function as ritual media of society had different characteristics. Arts performance which functioned as ritual media had characteristics as follow: a) requiring a sacral performance place, b) requiring a holy day selection, c) requiring the chosen performer, d) requiring *sesajen* (Some kinds of food devoted as offering), e) the purpose was more important than the aesthetic performance, and f) requiring particular clothes [3].

Edi Sedyawati mentioned that dance was one of human behaviours which was related to another behaviour [4]. Dance in a society was necessary to be discussed accurately because it was represented the structure of society, culture, and its role in society.

Dance in a society ordinarily had not only one function, it caused by the development of society. Therefore, the function of the dance was shifted and changed. Koentjaraningrat explained that the change that happened was something natural, the society always had unlimited necessities [5]. According to Royce, dance had two aspects which could be studied deeper that was related to the structure of the shape movement. Based on the function, that was the contribution of dance in society's life or culture continuously [6].

The development of dance in a society was influenced by some external factors, such as economy, social, and politic factors [2]. In this moment, a highly influential aspect except

the three factors above was the development of technology. Millennial era was marked by the internet access which simplified human in some aspects of life. The new hybrid appeared, human experiences were predicated on the incorporation of physic world and digital world. This period created digital process which was very embedded in daily life [7]. Digital technology significantly influenced the change of cultural heritage spreading [8]. Traditional arts as cultural heritage depended on human behaviour to maintain it or to abandon it. For the artists who wanted to maintain it, the traditional arts were demanded to adapt following the development of the times for 21st century that was centralized on the skill, for instance critical thinking skill [9]. The artists of traditional arts had to think critically in order to solve the challenges in millennial era.

III. METHODS

The research method which used was descriptive-analysis with qualitative research paradigm. The paradigm of qualitative research based on Creswell focused on the phenomena (concept and idea) which selected. Afterwards, it was studied to be understood, analysed, and explored [10]. This research was conducted at the Asem Gede Losarang Indramayu art gallery, Indonesia to find out the shift in the function of the Tre'bang Randu Kentir dance from ritual to pseudo-ritual. Data collection is done by interview, documentation study and literature study. The speakers involved were Dede Jaelani as the owner of the Asem Gede art gallery and Siti Khotijah as the Tre'bang Randu Kentir dancer.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Tre'bang Randu Kentir Dance

Tre'bang Randu Kentir dance was one of typical arts of Indramayu society. Initially, Tre'bang Randu Kentir dance was originated from Tre'bang art, the two unified words were the word 'Trep' meaning appropriate and the word 'Bang' meaning song. The word Tre'bang meant appropriate at the song (convenient to the rhythm of the music or song). In 1970, Sarwa, the leader of Randu Kentir could make Tre'bang art popular among the local society. This art with full of Islamic value gathered the society interest as ritual media to express gratitude to the God for the plentiful nature. Furthermore, this dance was also believed as a media to summon rain. At the time, it was the big time of Tre'bang dance which belonged to Randu Kentir group. The name of Tre'bang art started to be embedded with the group which belonged to Sarwa into Tre'bang Randu Kentir dance.

The naming of Randu Kentir described the silk-cotton tree (randu) which was washed away by the flow of Cimanuk river. One of big rivers in West Java, whose headwater was in the mountain Mandalgiri (Garutu) flew to the east and emptied in Java Sea in Indramayu regency [11]. The story behind the creation of Tre'bang Randu Kentir dance was to honour the story of Ki Dariwan in Cimanuk river. In 1987, there was a couple, Ki Dariwan and Nyi Dariwan who lived in Cimanuk riverside. Until one day, when the stream of Cimanuk river was strong, there was in incident where Nyi Dariwan attempted to take the branch of a silk-cotton tree (Randu) and fell into the

river. In commemorating that tragedy, the dance of Randu Kentir was created.

Since Tre'bang Randu Kentir dance was a dance popular in the society, the movement structure possessed was originally simple and spontaneous following the music. The kinds of movement formed were usually in the form of imitation and movements existing in nature.

In 2015, it was then revived by Dede Jaelani. Tre'bang Randu Kentir dance started to be popular again with rearranged movement structure. Furthermore, in 2010 there was a movement revitalization of Tre'bang Randu Kentir dance in order to make it more appealing to be presented as an entertainment art. The kinds of movement of Tre'bang Randu Kentir could be elaborated as follows.

- The first part was salu-salu (opening), consisting of *kibuana, lontang bolak-balik, pasang dalung, bolak balik tumpi, cantel, manji* and *joged* miring movement.
- The second part was *sinjang wulung*, consisting of *Kibuana, lontang, tunggak kebanjiran, Urang Unggut, and Dederan* movement.
- The third part consisted of *serogan, randa ngawe, bebek ngoyor, olah sumping, depok, and sembahan* (closing).

Make-up and costume worn on Tre'bang Randu Kentir dance were simple. It was due to the fact that folk art performance was far simpler than other dances existing in the kingdom. The clothes worn in Tre'bang Randu Kentir were:

- *Iket wulung* which had pink colour with *Kembang Jeruk* batik pattern from Paoman batik
- *Rawis* which had pink, blue, and yellow colour
- *Kutung* shirt which had pink colour (Paoman batik)
- *Tie* or *Ombyok* which had red colour
- *Sampur/Shawl*
- *Sinjang Lereng Paoman* which had pink colour
- *Mongkrong* which had pink colour.



Fig. 1. Manji motion (documentation of asem gede gallery art).

B. Function Shift

There was no boundary in exchanging information even the art and culture in the millennial era. WoongJo Chang and Shin Eui Park conducted a research related to the impact of digitalization on the formation of an online-based tribe named Fandom Hallyu (a fan community of Korean Idol). The result showed that the technology utilized to promote local art (a case study of a Korean idol group, BTS) influenced the social order where the tribe was formed, an international-scale fan community having influence political, economic, and cultural aspects [12].

Millennial era enabled art to attract the interest of society in order to keep living and developing its popularity even more. This phenomenon made people realize that there were many traditional arts in Indonesia which started to spread in the technology world in exhibiting their arts. The efforts conducted to preserve the traditional arts were providing a documentation easily accessed by anyone and preserving the arts so that they would be known by the world society. The same thing was conducted by the art of Tre'bang Randu Kentir dance, particularly the art studio Asem Gede Losarang. This studio made a special blog to share information about Tre'bang Randu Kentir dance. Besides, the availability of Tre'bang Randu Kentir dance video intentionally uploaded in Youtube platform became of the promotion efforts in order to show the existence of the dance in order to make it more popular among young generation or millennial generation.

The origin of Tre'bang Randu Kentir dance had the function as a ritual media in preserving the earth, including in summoning rain. The ritual could be considered as a series of symbolic acts which had been set, often marked with formality and repetition not having any direct instrumental purpose [13]. Based on Soedarsono [3], the characteristics of art as a ritual media were appropriate with the characteristics of Tre'bang Randu Kentir dance as follows: a) Tre'bang Randu Kentir dance had a sacred performance timing, particularly after the harvest time, b) there were special purposes related to belief or religious values, c) the movement forms were unstructured because they did not prioritize aesthetic values, d) the dancers chosen had particular criteria, and e) the existence of *sesajen* (offering) to the universe in the form of harvest products as the show condition so that the traditional activity would run well. This dance was usually performed in several traditional rites, for instance *sedekah bumi*, *mapag sri* and *ngunjung* (a kind of rite to express gratitude to God for his blessing of harvest which had been acquired).

The development of Indramayu people who started to acquaint the technology shifted the function of Tre'bang Randu Kentir dance from ritual to pseudo-ritual. It meant that on one time, the dance could be categorized as a ritual media and on the other time it did not function as one. The function shift started to spread into an entertainment media for the people of Losarang. Besides, the scope of the spread utilizing internet technology shifted the function of Tre'bang Randu Kentir dance as an education media, aiming to act as the information means related to Indramayu local arts. It was performed in particular events and starting to lose its sacred values in the society. The people holding the event could invite Tre'bang

Randu Kentir dancers to perform. Tracked back, this phenomenon often occur in other traditional folk arts toward the 19th century due to the economic problem of a Chinese businessman named Gan Kam who established a performance of Wayang Wong which could be watched by purchasing a ticket [14]. The emergence of commercial values caused the function shift in the society causing Tre'bang Randu Kentir dance to be dreary or less interesting. People started to think from the economic side, it costed a lot to invite Tre'bang Randu Kentir dancers.

The function shift occurred in Tre'bang Randu Kentir dance was caused by the change of mindset and behaviour of the people related to both social and economic factors. The economic factor described around the commercial value existing in the traditional dance performance which was considered overly expensive. The existence of digital music such as mp3 and mp4 was considered more economical and practical than inviting the local art group. The modal of several kinds of art functioning as ritual sourced from the society [3]. Accustomed to appreciating art with togetherness and voluntariness caused the minimum appreciation of the people on traditional art, particularly if it was related to commercial values.

For the people of Indramayu who had competitive characteristics, they would not want to be left behind on the current art trend. Based on Sumardjo, the characteristics of farmers and sailors were having high pride and competitive attitude due to the fact that competition was a common thing occurring in collecting the harvest in the land and in the sea [15]. The geographic condition of Indramayu which was rich of farms and sea caused the character of the people to be dynamic to follow the development of world art.

The competitive spirit on the artists of Indramayu caused them to be persistent in competing to preserve the traditional art possessed. The innovation to survive by following the stream of society demand caused several function existing in Tre'bang Randu Kentir dance to be shifted. It became the choice of the society to keep passing down the art tradition or not. Even though Tre'bang Randu Kentir dance underwent function shift in the society, it still had the values contained namely religious values-oneness of God.

V. CONCLUSION

Tre'bang Randu Kentir dance was a special art product of the people of Losarang, Indramayu. The people of Indramayu used Tre'bang Randu Kentir dance as a ritual of gratitude for the blessing of the universe. Besides, this dance was also used as a da'wah of Islam. The era change which was millennial was marked with the penetration of internet connection causing the change of people's mindset and behaviour and it influenced the local art. The millennial era caused the shift of Tre'bang Randu Kentir dance function from ritual media to pseudo-ritual media. The factors influencing the shift of Tre'bang Randu Kentir dance function were social, economic, and technological factor. Based on the function shift caused by the millennial era caused Tre'bang Randu Kentir dance to spread as an education media to preserve local art. The advancement of technology would keep developing along with the changes occurring in the

society. However, traditional arts would keep existing as humans keep passing them down on their next generation.

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