

# Folklore-Based Creative Dance in West Java, Indonesia

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**Abstract**—People’s representation expressed an idea of unlimited dance creation. Creativity competitions or various dance festivals became the stimulus for the creators in making dance creativity. One of the inspirations in dance creation process was folklore. Folklore as the treasury of the Indonesians’ verbal culture was rich of local culture’s wisdom. The aim of this paper was to describe the creative process of creative dance which was based on the folklore in West Java entitled *Tangkuban Perahu*, with the dance title of “*Lara Sumbi*”. In order to analyze the problems stated in this research, a grounded theory related with choreography was used. The research method used was descriptive analysis method with the data collection methods of documentation and literature study. The results of the research were: 1) The folklore-based creative dance had *Gunung Tangkuban Parahu* as the basic idea and produced text analysis and creation context of dance creation in the form of gestures and pure movements; 2) The analysis depth was in the form of the movement elements of the folklore-based creative dance of *Gunung Tangkuban Parahu*. This research could be used as an inspiration of the process ground of dance creation.

**Keywords:** *creative dance, folklore, Gunung Tangkuban Parahu, Lara Sumbi*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Folklore-based creative dance was a new creative dance with the ground of traditional and modern dance movements inspired from folklores. Dance is an introductory media of cultural values providing insights, as well as an active participation through physical activities and empathizing with art activities. It contained a communication conveyed with movement art as the instrument. An increase in skill increased the ability to communicate, but in creative dance the statement came before the technique [1]. An idea would emerge by itself because the main source of creativity was built from the choreographer’s mind. The source of creative dance creation idea was free. Related to the richness of art and local culture treasury and or Indonesian art and culture, it gave “repertoire” learning strategy for the teachers. Thus, the teachers had the freedom to create and innovate in the subject they handle [2]. Folklore for the society was considered as something important for the people because it showed the cultural characteristics of particular people. Characteristics reflected an identity, which was also one of the cultural heritages which must be taught through education.

The ways of these concepts constructed the notion of authenticity, folk identity, and shared cultural consciousness, or, alternatively, lack thereof. In comparison, the concept of the folklores embraced ambiguity, hybridity, intertextuality, mixing, convergence, imitation, and multiplatform functionality as the constituent parts of contemporary cultural products that reinvented and exploited themes, motifs, characters, and images from traditional folklore [3]. This cultural product could also be called as contemporary product. It was a form of cultural transformation which historiographically referred us as the owner and inheritor of the folklores. Therefore, through the creative dance creation making inspirational sources of a dance with the source of folklore could contain the meaning and values of local cultural wisdom.

This article described the folklore-based creative dance by adopting West Java folklore of *Gunung Tangkuban Parahu*, entitled *Lara Sumbi* dance. This dance was performed in the competition of FLS2N SMK on July 28<sup>th</sup>, 2018 in West Java Province. This dance was a group dance based on the dance presentation. *Lara Sumbi* Dance was a type of modern dance modified with traditional elements. It was performed by 5 students of SMK 45 Lembang with Purwa Putri S.Pd and Wahyu, S.Pd. as the choreographers.

Based on the aforementioned explanations, this article focused on the problem formulation, namely how the creative process of the folklore-based creative dance movement creation was. The essence of folklore-based dance creation integrated the styles of literary art, fine art, movement art, and musical art which were combined in a unit of presentation. Particularly, this research reviewed: 1) the basic idea of whole dance analysis; 2) The creative process in dance creation.

## II. THEORETICAL REVIEW

The grounded theory used in this research was choreographic theory. In the creation process of creative process, it would form a presentation in the form of interesting, creative, and innovative dance. The dance creative process was about exploring, improvising, and creating multiple responses to stimuli and it was student-centered [4]. Each choreography always underwent several creative process, namely (1) The writing of dance manuscript consisting of a) idea finding; b) concept arrangement; c) presentation method decision and (II)

The process of creativity, exploration, improvisation, forming, and (III) Presentation [2].

Those elements were required to be comprehended, understood, and internalized by a choreographer in organizing his/her work into a whole unit in the idea making, process, and presentation. Basically, the creation process of dance was subjective. It depended on the knowledge, skill, and experience ability of the choreographer.

A dance presentation or performance was one of the ways to communicate ideas through aesthetic activities. The communication in dance which could be in the form of movements through a message having meanings. Communication stated matters related to signs. Therefore, the science of signs or semiotics kept developing and along with the science of choreography.

**III. RESEARCH METHODS**

The paradigm used in this research was qualitative with the methodology of descriptive analysis. The interpretation of science approach used was choreography which was qualitative interpretative. Qualitative research was a research using natural background with the aim of interpreting the phenomenon occurring and it was conducted by involving several existing methods [5]. This research examined a data source in the form of movement, shape, space, make-up, and clothing. Therefore, a deep analysis from the problem formulation included in this research would be produced.

The research location was SMK 45 Lembang and the competition venue of FLS2N at Pesona Bambu Hotel. The subject of the research was Lara Sumbi Dance describing the character of Dayang Sumbi which creating structure was adapted from a folklore. The data collection techniques used were documentation and observation which were conducted personally during the practice and performance process. In the process of data analysing, the researcher conducted data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and data verification [6].

**IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Choreography theory as stated previously was used in this research as the basis of revealing the creativity process of Lara Sumbi Dance. The representation of the creative process from the folklore-based creative dance creation was divided into two parts, namely:

**A. Basic Idea of the Whole Dance Work Analysis**

The analysis of work idea was adopted from the folklore of Gunung Tangkuban Parahu with the characters of Sangkuriang and Dayang Sumbi. The myth of this lore occurred around the era of Sunda mount in Sundanese tradition, namely the northern area of Bandung, in Lembang sub district which was bordered between West Bandung and Subang to be precise. It was known in the people of West Java up to this point, the folklore well-known as Sangkuriang [7].

The name Lara Sumbi made as a dance originated from the word Lara and Sumbi. Lara had the meaning of sad or hurt in

Javanese and Sumbi was taken from the name Dayang Sumbi. This dance revealed the sadness of Dayang Sumbi. Therefore, sadistic meanings were communicated non-verbally and demonstrated with various gestures and pure movements.

**B. Creative Process in Dance Creation**

This dance creation had the aim to be performed as a dance in a competition. The choreographer chose a theme taken from several historical context or legends existing in West Java. The creative movement exploration surely realized or not was found inside, experienced from several process of adding ideas (story plot), feeling, imagining, realizing, and forming movements. It was a fact that the ability to improve was a key element of a good dancer.

However, this should by no means lead us to the conclusion that dancers can improvise to follow certain patterns that are different from (place) to place, and dancers have to take this seriously into consideration [8]. Improvisation was built from the character of the dancer. In creative process, the choreographer must have knowledge and interpretation of the story so the dancers were able to live up the role of the dance. The complex thing in this process was that this creative process could not be separated from text and context, in terms of history, physical, and psychology of the roles in the story. It was based on the analysis process of a series of the story’s scenes.

The following are the stages of creative analysis done in the creation of *Lara Sumbi* dance:

TABLE I. THE PROCESS OF SYNOPSIS ANALYSIS

Scene	Analysis		
	Movements	Atmosphere	Property
1	2	3	4
Dayang Sumbi was walking	Trisi, aneka selut, right left lontang, drifting hands with tiptoeing point	tense	-
Dayang sumbi was spinning yarn	Ukel hand movement, kept the sampur on the arms, pushed it (repeated in two beats)	calm	Sampur
Dayang sumbi was searching for tumang	sitting sembada, ukel, nyawang and hand pointing to the front	Restless, angry	
Dayang sumbi was falling in love	The movements of sembada, sidakep, sirig, capang, turned around to any direction, keupat	happy	
Dayang sumbi was praying	Sembah, ukel, opening hand with sampur	tense	Sampur

Choreographic structure of the folklore based creation dance entitled *Lara Sumbi* was divided into 5 parts, those are beginning part, middle part, and final part which are further explained as follows:

1) *The beginning part: Bubuka aneka selut, lontang, trisi, ukel*, right left *lontang*, drifting hands with tiptoeing point, *tepek* and *lontang kembar*. This movement was included in the symmetric space. The design of symmetric movement was found in *lontang kembar* movement with kaki *adeg-adeg kembar* giving the impression of robustness, modesty, honesty, and calmness.

2) *The second part: Spinning yarn* (sitting, the hands' movement was spinning yarn assisted by the property of *sampur* as the yarn with the diagonal floor pattern). The dance movement of spinning was the movement representing the activity of yarn spinning. It was done by *dayang sumbi* in the story. This movement was included in the symmetric space (*ukel* hand movement, kept the *sampur*, and pushed (repeated in two beats). Flat design with the movement of *ukel* spinning yarn gave the constructive impression that is calm, honest, and accepting. This movement was included in the meaningful movement.

3) *Third part: Representing the restlessness of dayang sumbi*. The created dance movements were sitting *sembada*, *ukel*, *nyawang* and pointing hand. It was when *dayang sumbi* started to feel worried searching for tumang. *Nyawang* movement was asymmetric design expressing to observe something from a far (searching for something). Other assisting material movements were designs that developed material movements of vertical and horizontal design such as *sembada* movement with the pattern of 3 people forming a triangle in which one of them rode on other's back. This design gave the impression of self-strength, firmness, and divine strength.

In this part, there was a single movement that was the central figure of the story. The movements consisted of *ukel sembada* movements with the gaze of looking down position giving the message of disappointment that was expressed by a shout with the opened hands at the lower level position.

The movement of a thousand hands with the straight floor pattern was moving the hands with various space positions giving the impression of the unity of self-strength. Static design with the continuous movement, like the movement of a thousand hands, had static but varied impression.

4) *Four part: The movement of sembada, sidakep, sirig, capang* was turning around to any directions. *Keupat* movement represented the encounter of *dayang sumbi* with a man that made her fall in love again. Therefore, the created movements in this part expressed the excitement, beauty, elegance, etc.

5) *The final part: The final part of the choreography of Lara Sumbu* dance was firstly *sembah* movement intending to beg for miracle guidance from *Shyang Hyang Widi*. The design of dance was also determined by the gaze direction. It showed a strong and meaningful emotional contact as a

symbolic interaction, for instance the piercing gaze expressing hope.

Secondly, in the movement of *boeh rang-rang*, the opened right hand reach out above the shorter left hand by canon movement as if it was done several times assisted with the property of *sampur* and performing locomotion movement simultaneously (floor pattern changed to the movement). The design of this movement was asymmetric form. This movement was about *dayang sumbi* releasing the ultimate amulet, *boeh rang-rang*, to cast out *bala guriang* who helped Sangkuriang make the lake.

The analysis process of performing dance consisted of theme developed into sub-themes which were interpreted into a series of meaningful movements. These movements were then combined with the authentic movements which were standard and available in the developed Sundanese classical dance movements. Narrative concept of *dayang sumbi* storyline did not generally show its narrative aspect.

However, the presentation was called a series of non-representative presentation through symbolic movements. A series of movements was produced from a creative process in the form of excitement (ideational story text, auditive, visual, touch, or kinetic). The analysis of scripts in the form of story lines connoted from spoken into motion languages.

Then, it could concluded that *Lara Sumbi* dominantly had asymmetrical, symmetrical, and locomotion movements, by producing a range of motion including:

- *Bubuka langkah*
- *Seribu tangan*
- *jalan*
- *Sembada*
- *Ukel*
- *Nyawang*
- *Selut*
- *Sidakep*
- *Melayang*
- *Nyisir rambut*
- *Aneka lontang*
- *Capang*
- *Memintal*
- *Berputar*
- *Trisi*
- *Langkah tegas*
- *Berputar*
- *Keupat*
- *Calik ningkat*
- *Gerak tunggal*
- *Cross Galeong*

Note:

- Asymmetric was the building space or pattern of motion that did not consist of the left and right parts of symmetric. Asymmetric had more characteristics that stimulated the sense of humans' feeling. The asymmetrical movement pattern was needed when you wanted to present an active, dynamic, cheerful, and tense feeling.
- Symmetric was a form of spatial which observed from the front or back of the left side or structurally is a form of mirror image from the right side. By balancing,

symmetrical shape was able to present a sturdy, strong, and unshaken feeling.

- Locomotion was a movement move. Hence, this space had the meaning of active, dynamic, cheerful, and tense motion. Moreover, the motion of this form was mostly done by moving.

*Lara Sumbi* dance was presented in the form of group dance. Although in character traits, the characters were drawn just from one character, namely *Dayang Sumbi*. It was related to the need of dance composition without eliminating its figure. *Lara Sumbi* dance genre was Dance Creation. New dance creation was an expression of dance that was not based on tradition, but rather a new claim that was not based on existing standards. Folklore-based dance creations were also called as themed dances. In working on themed dances, anything could be used as a theme. For examples, daily lives, simple life experiences, animal behaviours, heroic stories, legends, ceremonies, and etc. [9].

Makeup as supporting choreography was important, because it had a visual meaning. Visual communication in the show was also determined on the theme raised through text analysis and story context. It can be manifested or communicated visually through movement, dressing, and makeup. *Lara Sumbi* dance is a character of Princess *Ladak*. Depicted in the soul and content of a dance that expresses a woman's tenacity and willingness to sacrifice for beloved children. *Dayang Sumbi* was *Ladak* character who was depicted with the shape of *Ladak's* eyebrows that were firm, brave, and firm in her stance. *Lara Sumbi Dance* makeup picture was attached on the photo.



Fig. 1. Purwa Putri.

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The character of *Ladak* was depicted with the shape of eyebrows: *ladak* was a shape of eyebrows of a brave and agile princess, depicting a valiant, honest, uplifting, hardworking and persistent character. Shape of the Bun: Sundanese bun with long waving bun, with jasmine stranded in the long hair. The shape of the eye line: *mamanis soca*, an illustration of *someah hade kasemah*, meaning to respect others provided that the *semah* behave well. The form of red cheek makeup was an illustration of a guarded worldly lust so that Sundanese women did not fall into a materialistic life that far from spiritual transcendental matters.

The dance costume had an important part in giving the role of the dancers to support the dance. Generally, this costume could describe or express meaning, both in terms of content and its performance. See the above attachment. These costumes consisted of accessories, *sanggul*, *kebaya*, *samping dodot*, *sondog* trousers, belt, and ankle bracelet. The nuances of black and gold were chosen by the stylist for the dance. The meaning of each colour in the *Tari Lara Sumbi* costume was:

- Gold: reflected prestige (position), health, safety, wisdom, value, the purpose of searching, depth of day, mystical power, science, feelings, awe, and concentration.
- Black symbolized the majesty of prosperity, self-confidence, strong, masculine, dramatic and firmness.
- White: symbolized purity, honesty, and submission.

Conclusively, the costume used in the *Tari Lara Sumbi* reflected a woman who was considered to be an honest, soft-hearted woman who had determination, high, strong, and bold character, highly responsible, and brave.

The accompaniment of this dance was obtained from the existing dance music, the *Biang Waruga Pati* dance (ISBI Bandung's recital dance), whilst the music was downloaded from a video belonging to Romi Jayasaputra's account. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NEFpfMQwZEK>).

## V. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this research, it was concluded that the creative process of folklore-based dance creation in the choreographic structure of *Tari Lara Sumbi* as the basic idea of arable analysis which was taken from the Mount *Tangkuban Parahu* folklore has a high local cultural value. The analysis for the creative process of *Tari Lara Sumbi* consisted of:

- Exploring the context of the *Dayang Sumbi* story from its storyline.
- Interpreting the character of *Dayang Sumbi*.
- Interpreting the motions of the storyline, like spinning, looking for *tumang*, praying, etc.
- Exploring motion with the rhythmic combination, tempo, dynamics of space and time in the unity of the meaning of the main motion.
- Interpreting the motion of the character with clothing and makeup elements as the character traits of the *Dayang Sumbi* figure.

The characterization of the *Dayang Sumbi* character had influenced the formation of characteristics of the dancers. With regard to this case, the *Tari Lara Sumbi* choreography was included in the genre of dance creation by raising gender issues. This dance depicts a woman who was brave, agile, honest, uplifting, hardworking, and persistent. This research was an original research that contributed to the field of arts (dance) so that it could be beneficial for dance teachers, dance trainers, and so forth.

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