

***Mang-tèmang* the Traditional Event of the Madurese People as a Blessing Ceremony**

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to reveal the uniqueness of the mang-tèmang performance as a tradition of blessing ceremonies in the life of the Madurese people. The form of the performance is in the form of the activity of giving gifts in the form of money from relatives and attendees to a child during a reception celebration event. The ceremony takes place on a stage that look lively and accompanied by Madurese songs or repertoire. The way of giving the money is shown one piece at a time and is done as many times as the givers want. Some do it by squandering their money while dancing, and some string the money together to form a long necklace and then give it to a blessed child. The performance of mang-tèmang as a social event is always displayed in every celebration of Madurese community receptions in Madura Island. The performance of mang-tèmang as a tradition of a traditional blessing ceremony for a child does not only serve as a festive function, but can construct messages for the various interests of the community, and have an existence in its continuity.

Keywords: *Mang-tèmang, Traditional performance, Blessing ceremony, Madurese society*

1. INTRODUCTION

Madura is one of the island that become part of Jawa Timur province, located in the north of the eastern part of Jawa island. Madura Island, which stretches from west to east, is administratively divided into four districts, namely: 1) Bangkalan district, located at the tip of the western island, 2) Sampang district, 3) Pamekasan district, and at the easternmost tip is Sumenep district. Apart from the main island of Madura, there are also dozens of small islands around which are incorporated into the areas of the four districts.

Madura Island has a diversity of exotic cultural natural conditions, unique community characters, and cultural wealth that holds many local wisdom values as a reflection of people's lives. The diversity of culture that exist in the Madura island becomes a treasure trove of knowledge and knowledge to be introduced or disseminated to the public. Even though in this globalization era, the Madurese people in the four districts on Madura island in building their cultural image have used a lot of digital social media that are developing nowadays, yet many still have not been widely published.

Madurese citizen is also known as a religious people which is still strong in preserving their ancestral heritage, including the holding of traditional ceremonies called *rokat* (Indonesian: *ruwat*). *Rokat* is a ritual carried out to dispel or eliminate bad luck, or misfortune that befalls or threatens a person or group of people [1]. The *rokat-rokat* which is still often held by the Madurese people has the aim of maintaining the safety of life both individually and collectively. *Rokat* related to the interests of one's personal safety is usually associated with life crises or life cycle (initiation / transitional period), from birth to death [2]. Related to this, Koentjaraningrat [3] [4] explained that, in various cultures there is an assumption that the transition period from one phase to another is a time full of dangers, both real and magical. Therefore, humans perform rituals related to the transition period as a repellent for danger.

One kind of traditional ceremony related to initiation in the Madurese people includes manganese, which is a ceremonial tradition held aimed at giving blessings to children who are undergoing life cycle stages to adjust to the cosmic order in order to survive their lives. The events in the life cycle are carried out at the time: birth, entering adulthood (puberty), until marriage. It is interesting to discuss from the *mang-tèmang* in this article is a form of traditional ceremonial performance

which is now “trending” and very popular in the life of the Madurese people.

Mang-tèmang is a traditional ceremonial performance in the form of the activity of giving gifts of money from relatives or invited guests who are present at a celebration to a child who is being perceived. At every celebration such as wedding party, circumcision thanksgiving celebration, birthdays, or celebrations to celebrate thanksgiving for the birth of a child, usually *shohibul hajat* also presents a group of performing arts. Various kinds of performing arts that are now popular in the Madura region include the music of *hadrah*, *dangdut*, *tayub*, *lodrok (ketoprak Madura)*, *topèng dhâlâng*, and so on. These performing arts forms are presented as options to enliven the event of organizing a reception celebration. On the other hand, the choice of performing art forms that are presented is also used to support the implementation of the *mang-tèmang* ceremony tradition. Supporting elements of the performing art form, especially music and the existence of a performance stage, can be the main drivers for the implementation of the *mang-tèmang* ceremony tradition. For people who have a desire and are able to invite performing arts groups in any genre, they always hold a *mang-tèmang* ceremony.

2. METHOD

This paper was explored using qualitative methods, with a case study approach that aims to describe descriptively the phenomenon under study [5]. Yin [6] explained about the case study, “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident”. The data collection was carried out through field studies, namely, unstructured and in-depth interviews with informants including people who have desires, artists performing traditional Madurese performing arts, to obtain information about their views on the *mang-tèmang* tradition. Besides that, the researcher also made direct observations of several *mang-tèmang* performances that were held in Madura, especially in the Sumenep district area in the 2017-2019 period. The data analysis was carried out in three streams of activity simultaneously including data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions [7].

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. The Development of the *Mang-tèmang* Tradition

The term *mang-tèmang* is also known as *tèmangan* Madura, *mang-nèmang (nèmang)* in Madurese can mean rocking, which is putting something in the palm of the hand and then lifting it up and down; '*Nèmang ana*' means cradling a child and *mang-nèmang* means rocking, which is carrying a child while being rocked and praised [8]. Historically, *mang-tèmang* as a form of traditional performance is still relatively new, which began to exist after the 2005s. Before being staged, *mang-tèmang* has become a tradition of the Madurese people ceremony called *capcap / nyapcap*, namely the ritual of blessing a child. The ritual is carried out by dripping water on the head of the *tèmang* child, namely a blessed child (as a symbol of purification and blessing) and accompanied by a modest gift of money. The *capcap / nyapcap* ritual is carried out by relatives, especially the *po-sèppo* and its implementation takes place in the yard in the morning. Then the tradition developed into a ceremonial performance that was carried on a stage called *mang-tèmang (tèmangan)*. Symptoms of the emergence of the *mang-tèmang* tradition are in line with the widespread use of Video Compact Disc (VCD) recording technology which is deliberately rented by *shohibul hajat* who want to capture the events of his celebration. Over time, the *mang-tèmang* tradition continues to develop into a form of traditional ceremonial performance that is popular in the life of the Madurese people.

Carlson argues that, in every culture there can be found a form of activity that is designed separately from other activities in terms of place, time, and attitude, or all three which can be referred to as "performances" [9]. Performance is characterized as something that is judged based on how it is performed, the relative skills of the presenter and the effectiveness of the exhibition, and is also marked as something available for enrichment of experiences through the enjoyment that is present as a result of the intrinsic quality of the act of expression itself [9]. Related to this, Sal Murgiyanto also has the view that performance events such as *mang-tèmang (tèmangan)* are more accurately referred to as "cultural performances", namely performances related to ritual customs carried out by the owner community [10]. During its development, *mang-tèmang* as a social event not only serves as a festive show of celebration, but more than that as a social event that has been

traditionally formed and has an existence in its continuity.

3.2. Ceremony Procedure of Mang-Tèmang

The procedure of *mang-tèmang* takes place on an artistic stage (performing arts), the time of implementation can be day or night depending on when the reception is held. *Tèmang* children or those who are perceived are dressed in traditional bridal clothing, and therefore in Madurese terms it is called "*tan-pengantanan*", that is, if the *tèmang* is still a small child (for example a circumcision child) or a real bride / bride who is carrying out wedding party. On the performance stage, the *tèmang* child sits in a chair accompanied by both parents or relatives and all of them also have a special appearance, that is, dressed up neatly in traditional dresses like those who attend a party or celebration. In addition, there are other supporters who also accompany them, namely people who are in charge of the implementation of *mang-tèmangan* and singers or *tokang kèjhung*. The leader of the *mang-tèmang* implementation is usually brought by a master of ceremony (MC), or it can also be brought by the leader of the performing arts group (such as a puppeteer / *wayang topèng* director or singer) who has the skills to host events at the celebration.

After all the *mang-tèmang* supporters were ready, all of them on stage, including the children and their parents, the MCs, and the singers, immediately the *mang-tèmang* implementation began which was marked by the presentation of the art of music as accompaniment. As an opening for the implementation of *mang-tèmang*, the MC delivered his opening greetings and introduced himself, then continued to introduce the identity of *shohibul hajat* and *tèmang* child as well as the goals and hopes of carrying out the reception and tradition of *mang-tèmang*. A moment later, close relatives and attendees joined the stage by lining up one by one to get their turn in giving gifts. Before going to the stage, usually each audience is ready to hold several banknotes to be given to the *tèmang* child. The bills given may consist of the smallest notes such as one thousand rupiahs to the largest one hundred thousand rupiahs, this depends on the ability and readiness of each audience.

In the *mang-tèmang* tradition, the activity of giving money as prizes is known as *ngèrèm*. Uniquely, everyone in giving money is not just once, but repeatedly, piece by piece until the money in his hand runs out. There are also those who *ngèrèm* by arranging

the notes in long strands and then draping them to the *tèmang* child. There are also times when a guest performs *ngèrèm* by dancing and rocking his hips and raising his hands up by waving his money, some even squander / scatter his money on stage with a happy expression as if he is showing off his abilities / material wealth.

The duration of the *mang-tèmang* performance is around 30 minutes to one hour or more, depending on the situation and conditions, namely the number of relatives and guests who stay. This *mang-tèmang* performance is accompanied by typical Madurese songs or *gending*. In the area of Sumenep district, for example, if the holding of a celebration by presenting traditional performing arts such as *topèng dhâlâng*, *lodrok*, or *tayub* which places the musical music as supporting music for the performance, then the implementation of *mang-tèmang* is always accompanied by *Gèndhing Anglèng Ten* and accompanied by *kèjhungan*. The lyrics of *kèjhungan* sung by a *pengèjhung* contain advice, affection, or praise to the child or bride, as well as words of gratitude or praise and adulation to the guests, especially for honorable guests who *ngèrèm*. *Gèndhing Anglèng Ten* was chosen as the accompaniment of the *mang-tèmang* show because it has a melodious and romantic character or character and has the flexibility to be developed melodically. Especially if the *pengèjhung* has the ability of creativity and sensibility in reading the situation or can recognize the social background of the guests who are *ngèrèm*, then they can create *kèjhungan* lyrics that contain praise and adulation to the audience who *ngèrèm* so that they can build the desired atmosphere in the *mang-tèmang* show.

The core of the *mang-tèmang* performance is not just a mere gift-giving event, but more meaningful as the giving of advice, praise, and prayers to a *tèmang* child or a couple as a provision to navigate the ark of the next life accompanied by gifts of money. The advice is conveyed through song lyrics sung by singers or *pengèjhung*. Because of his services, he was also a *pengèjhung* and organizer of the implementation of the *mang-tèmang*, so the audience also *ngèrèm* to him who was also handed over on the stage of the performance. This *mang-tèmang* event became a distinctive and interesting performance, which seemed to imply a lot of meaning and importance both for those who had a desire and for the attendees involved, including for the audience who watched it. The uniqueness of the *mang-tèmang* show is the way of *ngèrèm* to the *tèmang* children as if deliberately shown to the audience in celebration or the audience.

3.3. Mang-Tèmang Performance in the Local Madurese View

Revealing the performance of *mang-tèmang* as a ceremony performance event is a representation of the values of the cultural life of the supporting community, namely the Madurese community. Culture is something that cannot be avoided by human life. *Mang-tèmang* as a cultural performance has an important role in the social life of the community, one of which is the formation of the character and characteristics of the Madurese community. *Mang-tèmang* as a cultural product appears to be embodied in the supporting community and is carried out continuously without conditionality by the followers of the community so that it becomes a tradition that is not even easily eliminated. In this case, culture is understood as a way of life that develops and is shared by a group of humans and is passed down from generation to generation. Culture is the result of human action to respond to the surrounding life. Koentjaraningrat [11] explained that culture is a whole system of ideas, actions, and the work of humans in community life which is made the property of humans by learning.

To understand the event of the *mang-tèmang* tradition as a symptom of cultural performances, it is not enough to pay attention to the problem of the form of the show through its appearance structure. The most defining difference between the various forms of performance is the technique used to characterize their formation. It is the use of performance techniques that provide reasons and meaning for the changes. *Mang-tèmang* as a performance phenomenon is a cultural product that cannot be separated from the influence of social change in society. The *mang-tèmang* event, which used to be a ritual of purification and blessing called *capcap / nyapcap* with the dominant activity of dripping water on the head of the *tèmang* child, has now developed into a performance event on a stage dominated by the activity of giving gifts of money or *ngèrèm*. The emergence of *ngèrèm* events carried out on the stage of art performances performed by relatives or attendees has become a new technique and has provided a new color in giving gifts or how to *ngèrèm*. These changes are thought to have resulted from changes and developments in the intellectuality of the supporting communities, especially those related to the economic activities of the community, resulting in a shift in meaning.

If viewed from the origin and development of its form, there is a relationship with the social aspect that

the cultural practice of reciprocity is still valid in the life of the Madurese community. This tradition is closely related to food and beverage, which is usually called the principle of reciprocity [12]. The tradition of giving in celebratory events as also applies to the life of the Madurese people, especially in the Sumenep district area, is known as *ngèrèm*. In celebratory activities, relatives will perform *ngèrèm*, which is a tradition as a complementary form of celebration. Contributive relationships that are deliberately made in the kinship system aim to maintain a mutual friendship with one another, and so that their kinship is closer and maintained.

In ancient society, the form of interaction in society was in the form of exchanging gifts that involved groups and societies as a whole. This system of exchange involves every element of the position or property of the people involved in it and applies to every member of the community concerned [13]. Mauss [13] also explained that the activity of exchanging achievements or giving gifts has the following characteristics: (1) the return of objects is not done at the same time as the giving; (2) the return of gifts received is not in the form of the same goods, but has the same or even higher value; (3) things given or received are not seen as their literal value, but as achievements or rewards. The system of gift-giving as expressed by Mauss [13] is not limited only to the incidence of marriage, but this system also appears in the events of the birth of a baby, circumcision, illness, teenage girls or puberty, the burial of the dead, and trafficking.

On the other hand, the tradition of *ngèrèm* as a gift is based on a system of rights and obligations that must be carried out. Every gift is part of a system of exchange that balances the honor of the giver and the recipient involved in it. In the system of exchange, each gift must be returned in a special way which results in an endless cycle of activity from one generation to another. The value of returned goods must be balanced with the value of goods received because together with the gift is the honor value of the group concerned. The return event that is carried out by the organizer to the relative who is *ngèrèm* generally has a higher nominal value than the amount of the gift given. This treatment was carried out to respect the organizer of the celebration, even though there were differences in the length of time when it was given and returned.

Regarding the activity of *ngèrèm* in the performance of *mang-tèmang*, the audience showed the ways or styles of giving money to *tèmang* children on stage.

This method is to use banknotes and how to give it one sheet at a time gradually and repeatedly as many times as you like or according to your ability. Many spectators also performed *ngèrèm* repeatedly by going up and down the stage and dominating the performance during the *mang-tèmang* event. The act of *ngèrèm* in the *mang-tèmang* event lies in the attitude (culture) of a person in giving gifts, which can then be described in certain techniques and meanings. Meaning arises based on a culture that has become a tradition, or individual desires that have a purpose beyond that, namely indicating that there has been a change in its function, namely from "sacred ritual" to "secular social performance". This confirms that in the *mang-tèmang* performance there has been a shift in purpose and meaning, from the blessing ritual to a means of interaction and self-actualization for the community of actors and their supporters. The *mang-tèmang* event is no longer a means of 'laku' (activity) rituals with formal and strict forms, rules, and performance requirements, but is more of a 'space' and a way for people to actualize themselves personally and communally / collectively in performances at on the stage. *Mang-tèmang* events and *ngèrèm* activities have become a form of expression and identity of the middle and upper-class social class to obtain certain "social attributes or recognition".

The *mang-tèmang* tradition is a "cultural performance", namely as a cultural manifestation of prestige for the Madurese people. The *mang-tèmang* show that is displayed through *ngèrèm's* behavior and actions in it can bring together groups of people with various interests. There is social interaction between the owner of the party, the actors of the art, namely the puppeteers, *pengrawit*, *pengèjhung*, and audience members, and performance supporters including sound system engineers, video shooting, and others. Each element involved in the *mang-tèmang* performance has a motivation according to their respective social interests. Thus in the *mang-tèmang* event, there is also social transaction activity that is interconnected as a "symbiotic mutualism" relationship between the interests of celebration rituals, artistic performances, economic interests, and social actualization.

The relationship between the existence of the art group, namely the presenter (MC), the musicians, singers / *pengèjhung*, and others as part of the complementary performance of the *mang-tèmang* show cannot be separated from the process of searching for a personal style that was deliberately created. Through the construction of the performance values, *mang-tèmang* becomes an attribute that can strengthen its existence.

The phenomenon of the attraction and uniqueness of the *mang-tèmang* event is a form of performance that can give meaning to social transactions, social legitimacy, as well as festive entertainment in organizing a celebration. Thus it can be seen that the cultural context behind the activity of *ngèrèm* on the performance stage includes, among others, patterns of economic activity, social transactions, entertainment, prestige or hedonic life, and other meanings.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the above discussion, it can be concluded that *mang-tèmang* is a popular term in the Madura region which is an event of a blessing ceremony which is packaged in the form of a performance carried out on a performing arts stage. *Mang-tèmang* as a traditional ceremonial performance is a form of cultural expression that represents the socio-cultural values of the Madurese people as its supporters. The form of the *mang-tèmang* show is constructed based on the cultural elements of the supporting community, including through the *Ngèrèm* behavior of the Madurese ethnic culture. In performing the performance on stage, it is fully controlled by a leader, namely the MC who is supported through the chanting of song lyrics or *kèjhung* containing advice, adulation, and praise, as well as prayers and hopes, all of which are summarized in events that are meaningful blessings. *Mang-tèmang* as a product of cultural performances has become an integral part of the life of its supporting community, namely the Madurese community, which exists as a cultural show that is very popular and full of meaning. *Mang-tèmang* is a product of oral tradition which has a unique value of Madurese cultural values and contains moral messages and educational values so that it can continue to live from generation to generation.

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