



# Value of Life in Benjang Mask Dance

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**Abstract.** *Benjang* Mask Dance is a form of traditional dance that depicts humans as distinguished from the character of the mask they wear. The masks used in *Benjang* include the Putri Mask, the Emban Mask, the Satria Mask, and the Ravana Mask which play out stories about everyday human life. The characters in each particular mask represent the nature of every human being, such as Putri who is kind, Emban has a funny character who can cheer everyone up, Satria is a brave character who can face many challenges and Ravana is an antagonist character. This study aims to determine the value of life contained in the Topeng *Benjang* dance. The method used in this research is descriptive method with qualitative research. Data collection techniques used in this study are observation, interviews, and documentation. The research subjects taken were studio actors, studio owners, and the surrounding community in Ujung Berung District. The results of the study show that judging from the presentation presented in the form of role playing; displays a variety of emotions from good, bad, honest, evil, cheerful, which are conveyed through the movements of the masked characters themselves, so that the life values contained in the dance “Topeng *Benjang*” at the Rengkek Katineung Art Studio, namely the values of kindness, honesty, and happiness. The Benjang Mask dance art at the Rengkek Katineung studio has a function as entertainment.

**Keywords:** Value of Life · *Benjang* Mask · Art Studio · *Rengkek Katineung*

## 1 Introduction

Value is an appreciation or quality of something that can be the basis for determining a person's behavior. Something is considered valuable to someone because something is pleasant (pleasant), satisfying (satisfying), interesting (interest), useful (useful), profitable (profitable) or is a belief (belief) [1] From this statement, values are the foundation for humans in living their lives. Of course, good values must be instilled in children from a young age so that it is time for adults to behave in the corridor of good values. Furthermore, Kuswarsantyo explains that there is a close relationship between what is valuable and what is good. Values are basically related to the goodness that is at the core of something. Thus, the value is the level of a positive relationship between something, and a certain person and values can be interrelated to form a system and are coherent with each other and affect aspects of human life. This opinion explains that value is a system that is always closely related in human life. The concept of value in society has actually

existed for a long time which has always been the basis for human contemporaries, even the concept of value is still used in humans after or in this day and age [2].

Bandung has various types of arts such as dance, for example, there are many dance arts in the Bandung area, one of which is Mask Dance in the Ujungberung area. Ujung Berung is one of the centers for the development of traditional arts in the city of Bandung, which has a lot of cultural wealth with various types of art. This is evidenced by the role of the community and art actors in Ujungberung, who are very concerned with the preservation of the area, especially the Art of Benjang. Cultural life development program. According to the Widjaya [3] in general “the art of benjang is divided into three parts, namely benjang helaran (the art of procession), benjang masks (dance art), and benjang wrestling/wrestling (martial arts)”.

Topeng Benjang is one of the traditional dance arts that developed in Ujungberung District, Bandung City, West Java Province. According to Dadang (2012) in Yovita [4] said that in 2011 the process of inheritance of the Benjang Mask art was carried out in Ujungberung. This inheritance process is the first step to promote the art of Benjang masks as an effort to preserve and develop regional cultural arts. With the inheritance of the benjang mask art or other traditional arts, it will affect the growth and development of the traditional art.

Topeng Benjang is a mask dance art that is held at the end of the Benjang Helaran performance, this dance is played by a dancer who is played by several people at once, namely the role of knight, giant, princess, and emban. The change in character is marked by the change in the mask worn by the dancer, entering the bobodoran/jokes scene this dance will turn into a theatrical art that is full of moral messages for the audience. From the movements and performances of the Benjang mask dance, the researchers see interesting values to study not only the movement and presentation, but also to explain certain values contained in the dance, its properties, and performances, for example from the form of movement and performance. The existence of the Benjang mask dance in the Ujungberung community is very important in people’s lives. The values that can be taken and applied in life in it become a distinctive feature in the performance of the Benjang Mask dance.

The value of life is a value that must be preserved by the next generation. Awareness of the importance of maintaining these values, especially in the art of the Benjang mask dance. There are many kinds of arts born in the Ujungberung area, such as the art of Benjang Helaran, Benjang Wrestling and Mask Benjang. In these arts, of course, there are values contained in them. As in the art of the Benjang Mask dance, if studied further in this dance, there are many meanings to instill the values of life. What I have to research is How is the life value of the Benjang Mask? What is the structure of the presentation of the Benjang Mask dance? The purpose of this article is to. Analyzing the life value of the Benjang Mask, and the second goal is to know the structure of the mask dance presentation.

## 2 Methodology

This research is research with a qualitative paradigm. The focus is a comprehensive description of the contents in human life which are based on patterns of human behavior, as proposed by Moleong [5] Qualitative approach is an approach that intends to

understand the phenomenon of what is experienced by research subjects such as behavior, perceptions, motivations, actions, etc., holistically, and by means of descriptions in the form of words and language, in a special context that naturally and by utilizing various natural methods. Qualitative research is very appropriate to be used in understanding a phenomenon whose research subject is not clearly defined in this case, namely, the values of local wisdom contained in the traditional art of Topeng Benjang in Ujungberung, and this qualitative research is very appropriate to examine certain things. Which are more in-depth and things that cannot be investigated using quantification analysis. Furthermore, Sugiyono [6] said about qualitative research as a method that is used especially on objects that are natural. Descriptive research is very appropriate to describe research questions in terms of disclosing the symptoms of a group. This method is used to describe the data in an actual, realistic, and systematic way in knowing the local wisdom that exists in the Benjang Mask Dance so that the results of this study are more easily exposed and well described in the results.

The research subjects taken were studio actors, studio owners, and the surrounding community in the Ujung Berung District. Data collection techniques used, namely observation, interviews, and documentation.

### **3 Results and Discussion**

#### **3.1 History of Benjang Mask Art**

The Ujung Berung Atas/tonggoh community, the place where the Benjang Mask art was born before independence, is an agrarian and religious society. They consist of natives and immigrants from the provinces of Central Java, East Java, Banten, Jakarta, as well as from various cities in the province of West Java itself. This plurality has enriched the development of the arts that live in the Ujung Berung area. The art of the Benjang Mask as a dance form is a development of the traditional Benjang wrestling art. These immigrants have taken part in developing the art of Mask Benjang in particular, and the art of Benjang in general. This Benjang Mask art is a combination of the art of mask dance and Benjang wrestling which also has its own characteristics. One of the characteristics of the Benjang Mask dance is in an accompaniment or dance similar to the motion of pencak silat, where the dancer's hands are clenched like they are about to hit. Inside the benjang mask, there are several scenes that occurred during the night's execution. The series of benjang performances started from benjang helaran, masks, and gelut. Benjang Helaran is a medium of information to the public that there will be an event. Followed by a mask full of magical nuances. This attraction is then closed by benjang wrestling (wrestling). The benjang players wrestled only on the ground. Dance plays more of a role in Benjang Mask. Along with the development of the performing arts of Benjang, the dance movements are also influenced by the elements of motion that exist in pencak silat dance and the art of benjang wrestling. This influence makes the art of benjang has a strengthening characteristic compared to other West Javanese dance arts.

### 3.2 Benjang Mask Art Performance Structure

The presentation structure in Benjang mask art is generally divided into four stages, including:

1. The Putri Mask Dance/Lenyepan Putri Mask Dance is the opening dance in the Benjang Mask show at Ujung Berung.
2. The Satria/Patih/Adipati Mask Dance Satria/Patih/Adipati Mask is one of the characters played in the Benjang Mask Dance performance, the dance character is dashing and energetic.
3. The Ravana Mask Dance/Ravana Mask Kelana is a dance that is performed with a strong character and depicts the figure of Ravana who has the nature of anger and anger.
4. Emban/Si Menson Mask Dance The order of presentation above is not standard.

### 3.3 The Value of Life in Benjang Mask Art

The value of kindness or a sense of mutual love must also be a culture that is ingrained in the life of our society because this is the key to the realization of a solidly united society. Cultivating a culture of mutual love must be done by building awareness of the meaning of unity and commonality of human values. The realization that humans cannot live without other humans, the awareness that every human being is born with the same needs and tendencies, the realization that peace can only be realized when humans are willing to be brothers and sisters, the awareness that enmity and division will only lead to misery and destruction, and various other similar awareness must grow so that this attitude of compassion can become an attitude that characterizes the daily life of our society. And if this attitude of life can be realized then we really will become a very, very strong society. The substance of compassion refers to the intrinsic quality that resides within a person. If compassion has resided in the heart of every human being, then class social relations will always be based on the vibration of the beauty of harmonious and harmonious human values, which leads to shared happiness as stated in the ancient text Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian (1518 AD) which reads “Ngertakeun earth lamba”, namely the welfare of the natural world [7] This value is found in the Putri Mask Dance/Lenyepan. The Putri Mask Dance is the opening dance in the Benjang Mask performance at Ujung Berung. The characteristic of the movement of the Putri Mask in this Benjang Mask is that it tends to be agile, or in classical Sundanese dance terms it is Putri Ladak. The character of the Putri Mask in the Benjang Mask is almost the same as the Pamindo or Samba Mask in the Cirebon Mask Dance. However, in Topeng Putri there is a significant characteristic that is accompanied by the Waditra Benjang. The movement of Topeng Putri generally looks abrag, but if examined carefully the dominant movement in this dance is the Soloyong movement. Soloyong movement is a walking motion where the right foot steps forward along with the right hand being pressed forward, then alternates with the left foot and left hand so this movement is often called walking dompo or ngarodon. Thus, it can simply be stated that moral goodness is the victory of the potential of the soul that directs humans to goodness, in the form of aql, qalb and bashirah to control their air and lust. Miskawih divides the faculty of the soul into three parts, namely: the faculty of thinking (al-quwwah al-nathiqah), the faculty

of syawiyah lust is called the faculty of animals, and the faculty of anger (al-quwwah alghadhabiyyah) is called the faculty of wild animals [8].

The value of honesty or a culture of reciprocity must grow strongly in our social life. The values of honesty in the Qur'an are honesty in attitude, which include: 1) Honest in saying. 2) Honest in heart. 3) Not treacherous. The opposite of being honest is: 1) Telling lies. 2) Breaking a promise. 3) Negligence in carrying out the mandate [9]. The realization of an intelligent society is a prerequisite for the formation of a strong social order. Honesty in the practice of our daily lives is done by reminding each other, teaching each other and sharing knowledge and knowledge that is useful to each other. Honesty is a process of activity between various parties, there are those who act as givers and recipients of knowledge. The value of honesty is almost the same as the value of penance, meaning having a vision and mission, self-control, a barometer in achieving goals, demands patience, requires openness, has an orderly system, the ability to manage, is innovative, proactive, good at communicating and synergizing [7]. This value is found in the Satria/Patih/Adipati Mask Dance. The Satria/Patih/Adipati Mask Dance is one of the characters played in the Benjang Mask Dance performance, the dance character is dashing and energetic. This mask depicts the figure of a valiant leader, like a duke. The Adipati character who is played usually takes the puppet character Gatutkaca or Agung Mandura. In general, the movement of the Satria Mask dance is almost the same as the Ravana dance, except that in this dance the intensity of the movement is slightly different, not as loud as the Rahwana mask.

In terms, there are several views of experts regarding the notion of morality, Ibn Miskawih said that morality is an attitude that is embedded in the soul that encourages to do actions without the need for thought and consideration. This state or attitude of the soul is divided into two, namely those that come from character (peramen) and those that come from habits and practice. In other words, human behavior contains elements of instinctual character and elements of effort through habit and practice. Al-Ghazali defines morality as an attitude that is rooted in the soul from which various actions are born easily and easily, without the need for thoughts and considerations. If from that attitude good and commendable deeds are born, both in terms of reason and syara, then it is called good morals; and if what is born of it is a disgraceful act, then that attitude is called bad morals [8]. The despicable character informed by the Qur'an illustrates that this behavior is a triumph of human bad character. As has been explained in the previous explanation, basically the human tendency to evil is influenced by the air and lust. Therefore, it is natural that the Qur'an explains that following one's desires is a despicable character. Disgraceful morals also describe stupidity, arrogance, greed and other traits that indicate humans are controlled by their desires. This value is found in the Ravana Mask Dance/Kelana. Ravana's mask is a dance that is performed with a strong character and depicts the figure of Rahwana who has a furious nature. The character of this hard movement is widely adapted from the movements of Benjang Wrestling and Bangbarongan in Benjang Helaran and of course also combined with the Kelana Mask movement in the Cirebon Mask dance.

The value of Happiness is in the Emban/Si Menson Mask Dance. The order of presentation above is not standard. The Topeng Putri dance can be played again at the end

of the show, along with the Emban/Si Menon Dance at the last stage of the folk theater performance. The form of presentation is very funny so that the audience is carried away by a happy atmosphere. Ibn Miskawih stated that the goodness of humans lies in “thinking.” According to him happiness will only occur if perfect behavior is born which is unique to his own nature, and that humans will be happy. If it arises from him all proper behavior is based on thought. Therefore, human happiness is stratified by the type of thinking and what he thinks [8]. Basically, happiness is a natural human nature or innate. That is, it is something that is inherent in humans. Happiness should be owned by every human being, because according to their nature, humans are created with various advantages and perfection. Humans are the best and most perfect creatures compared to other creatures. Kabir Helminski, a Sufi successor to the tradition of Jalaluddin Rumi, writes about the perfect human in his book, *The Knowing Heart: A Sufi Path of Transformation*. According to this figure, perfect human nature is a reflection of God’s attributes which are partly reflected in the 99 names of Allah (al-Asma’ul Husna). Human perfection is an innate human destiny, which requires a harmonious relationship between self-awareness and Divine grace. That is the true achievement of happiness [10].

Benjang is a traditional art originating from Tatar Sunda, which consists of Benjang Helaran, Benjang Mask, and Benjang Wrestling. At first the art of Benjang started from Benjang Wrestling. Benjang Helaran was then held to provide information to the public that Benjang Wrestling would be held. However, because there was a time void between Benjang Helaran and Benjang Wrestling, the Benjang Mask was held.

The Benjang mask consists of 4 characters, namely Putri, Emban (syon), Satria, and Ravana. The characters on this mask represent every human trait, such as Putri who has a kind nature, Emban who has a funny and entertaining character, Satria who has a valiant character, and Rahwana who has an antagonistic nature [11] (Fig. 1).



**Fig. 1.** Benjang Mask.

The following is an explanation of the mask character above:

- Putri Mask Dance/Lenyapan Putri Mask Dance is the opening dance in the Benjang Mask performance at Ujung Berung.
- The Satria/Patih/Adipati Mask Dance is one of the characters played in the Benjang Mask Dance, the dance character is dashing and energetic.
- The Ravana/Kelana Mask Dance is a dance that is performed with a strong movement character and depicts the figure of Ravana who has an angry nature.
- Emban/Si Menson Mask Dance The order of presentation above is not standard and is performed at the end of the event

At first Topeng Benjang was played by one man who played all the characters. Over time, the Benjang Mask can be performed by women, and the four Benjang Mask characters can also be performed by different people, although there are still those who bring 4 characters directly by one person. In the Benjang performed by one person, the performer will wear costumes stacked, and the accessories on the head do not use a bun, only covered by cloth to make it easier to change characters. When performed by different people, the color of the costume is more considered and adjusted to each character, such as Putri wearing a white costume, Emban in red, Satria is more dominant in green, and Ravana in red.

Shifts also occur in the duration of the dance. In the past, this dance lasted for about 2 h, where each character of the Benjang Mask was changed every 25 min. Currently, the Benjang Mask on each character has a duration of about 3–4 min. Benjang mask has a characteristic. In the movement there are bumps, winds, and there is what is called a benjang mincid. In the characters of Satria and Ravana there is a pencak silat movement which is intended to tell that after the Benjang Mask there is a Wrestling Benjang. In Emban's character there is also a pencak silat movement, but it is made to be playful because Emban's own character is meant to entertain. Another characteristic of the Benjang Mask dance is that the hands are always clenched in almost every dance movement. The shape of the fist in the Benjang Mask dance is a form of strength or might of a man.

The Benjang Mask is a dance product, therefore it can also be called the Benjang Mask Dance. Therefore, if separated, it consists of: (1) Dance, (2) Mask, and (3) Benjang. 1. Dance Dance is the embodiment and expression of feelings, the outpouring of the heart of an artist or creator through rhythmic and beautiful movements. 2. Masks According to the Indonesian Dance Encyclopedia, there are several types of masks, including: a. Topeng means tapel, mask (in Sundanese), cover the face, and make up. b. The mask comes from the vein; ping, peng, pung which means to cling to something (to stick or stick) c. In Riau, the mask is a dance to celebrate the harvest of the Bibis fishing. While in Jakarta, the meaning of mask is the same as ronggeng, so in both cases the dancer does not have to wear a face or a mask/mask. 3. Benjang Benjang is a traditional martial art of the Ujung Berung community which is the development of the art of flying which is rooted in Islamic culture. So, the Benjang Mask dance is a form of dance that uses a mask/mask/tapel accompanied by a waditra Benjang. This art is the result of the development of the traditional art of wrestling Benjang 15].

## 4 Conclusion

The art of benjang is a typical art form of the Ujung Berung sub-district which started from the art of flying which developed into the form of martial arts, procession and stage performances which were presented as a series of performances and held for almost 24 h. In general, the art of Benjang is divided into three parts: 1. Benjang Helaran or also called the art of procession is a processional art form which is usually used to parade children's circumcision events; 2. This dance is a picture of a dancer who can play several roles at one time which is only marked by changing masks. In addition, at the end of the Benjang Mask scene, a comedic scene is presented in the form of a theater and serves to convey moral messages; 3. Benjang Gelut or martial arts is a form of martial art that is usually carried out with competitive matches with sportsmanship values in order to create good relationships and increase intimacy between fellow communities in the pesantren. From a series of Benjang art performances, there is a part of the performance that can create intimacy between the audience and performers, namely at the end of the Benjang Mask which is called the comedy scene.

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