Ethnochoreology of Raksasa Dance Art in the Salamrejo Village, Blitar, East Java

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to describe the use of ethnochoreology of Raksasa dance art in Salamrejo village, Blitar, East Java. Raksasa is dance in performance annually at the village of Salamrejo when it has an old event called ‘Bersih Desa’. This dance art is still dense with cultural values and trust the people around the mystical things that a king figures. The position of raksasa in Bersih Desa ceremony in Salamrejo village is for a sacred in the ceremony. To describe the step of research is used the theory of imperative functionalism. This research is qualitative using ethnochoreology approach with ethnographic dance method which is written in descriptive analysis. Beginning with data collection through related literature studies about Raksasa art. The culmination of this stage is observation active-participation where data is collected directly as researchers involved in the process of in-depth observation. The results of this study are this Raksasa art show by describing the existence of traditional art in the people lives who were still alive. The outline contains the activities of norms that apply in social life and beliefs that can protect the village from all calamities.

Keywords: bersih desa ceremonies, ethnochoreology, raksasa, salamrejo

Introduction

Salamrejo Village has several artistic potentials and ceremonial traditions that are still alive and preserved among the community, namely Jaranan, Reog, Dayakan or Raksasa Art and Bersih Desa ceremonies. Art that is in Salamrejo Village, especially folk dance that still lives in the community, is inseparable from customs or the majority of religions. One of the ceremonies that is still being held in Salamrejo Village is the Bersih Desa ceremony. This ceremony contains Raksasa art dance which was displayed as a complement to the Bersih Desa ceremony which meant that it could not be carried out without the gigantic art performances. Like the Wali dance or sacred genre in Balinese art shows that are performed in religious ceremonies that have a communal function in the lives of Balinese people (Bandem, 1996, p. 9).

Raksasa dance art has been found around 1938, which was created by Unus. In the beginning the existence of art is only for the entertainment of the youths who are in Salamrejo Village, which is displayed at the carnival procession. This took place until a Bersih Desa ceremony was held which made the Raksasa art as a complement to the ceremony. The Raksasa Arts dance in Salamrejo Village is divided into two parts, which are presented in the form of a procession. The first part is the special ritual of calling spirits and what is done at the village hall. The second part of the dancers marched around Salamrejo Village. At the time of the procession all the dancers performed the main moves of the joged ukel and the queen's slime guided by the dance guide. The movements in this
simple dance refer to the Javanese style of *Timuran* by following the rhythm of the music that accompanies it and in its appearance does not require long preparation. This is in line with the opinion of Humardani that, folk dance does not require the movement of a distant medium, so it does not require preparation and long training for the realization, demonstration or natural behavior (Humardani, 1982, p.6).

Many interesting features of the *Raksasa* art, ranging from dancers, costumes and presentation and the selection of queen figures. In his appearance consisted of several dancers, queen dancers, *patih* figures, dance guides, female attendees, soldiers, and musicians. The costumes used are *butho* (ugly *Raksasa*) characters. The costume is the result of dancer's creativity created with used materials and leaves. The election of the queen figure was chosen directly by *Eyang Genderuwo Senin* with a supernatural whisper, through elders at Salamrejo. *Raksasa dance art* has until now been trusted by the public as a complement to the *Bersih Desa* ceremony in Salamrejo. This research uses a Ethnochoreology approach that was chosen because ethnochoreology is an interdisciplinary approach that was initiated by Soedarsono in an effort to uphold new disciplines of dance research. The ethnochoreology term was introduced by Gertrude Prokosh Kurath which revealed: "Ethnochoreography is synonymous with dance ethnology and is defined as a scientific study of ethnic dance in all cultural interests of the dance religious functions, or symbolism or social events" (Key Kaufman Shelemay ed in Pramutomo, 2011: 13). In short, the definition of ethnochoreography refers to study dance with multidiciplines such as music, anthropology etc.

**Explanation of Ethnochoreology of *Raksasa* Dance Art in the Salamrejo Village, Blitar, East Java**

Definition. The *Bersih Desa* ceremony in Salamrejo Village has been carried out since 2005, and is annually in the Selo month, in preparation for its implementation it has several important conditions that must be obeyed by the Salamrejo Village community. Equipment that must be prepared in a *Bersih Desa* event, including offerings in the form of cananga, funbo oil, and frankincense and the stage of the show. The implementation of the *Bersih Desa* ceremony was determined when the election was on August 28, 2016 *Kliwon* Sunday. The implementation of the *Bersih Desa* ceremony is: a) Cleaning up Danyangan's guest house, b) Village art entertainment, which is filled with art in Salamrejo Village. In 2016 this village entertainment was filled with *campursari* art from Kedungrejo Village. c) The procession. d) *Genduren* or *slametan* program conducted at Salamrejo Village Hall. e) The last event was the *ruwatan santri* which was presented at Salamrejo Village Hall.
Raksasa art is presented in a Bersih Desa ceremony in the form of a procession. Raksasa is because of the will and the one who is carrying out the village is Eyang Genderuwo Senin. The presentation of Raksasa art involves almost all village communities, for men as Raksasa dancers and women prepare packaged food which has become a quota of every house in Salamrejo Village. The Raksasa art dance has two sequences of offerings, the first is the ritual of summoning the spirit of Eyang Genderuwo Senin and the second part is the procession of permorming.

The Raksasa art dance consists of several figures including the queen figure, the queen figure is the main character of the Raksasa arts with a butho character who describes the figure of Eyang Genderuwo Senin. He is an assertive, responsible, strong and powerful leader. Then there are 120 dancers consisting of several players namely, musicians or panjak, shamans, warrior figures, queen figures, patih figures and temanten figures.

Raksasa art dance is presented in the form of dance at the Bersih Desa ceremony as part of the performance art that develops in the community that is closely related to the belief in its environment. Dance as a perfection of the ceremony is not solely to show its artistic needs but the strength that exists in the dance can affect culture in the community, in accordance with the function of the dance. According to Talcott Parsons, which was applied by Anthony Shay through 6 function categories related to the supportive community and the arts actors:

Art as a Reflection and Legitimacy of the Social Order

According to Shay aspects of social order are grouped based on sexuality, age, kinship, good relations, ethnic background, etc. Most people have a dance that is considered adequate for certain age and sexuality (2007: 85). From opinion above, Raksasa Art has no age or profession rules, it's just that Raksasa art performances are danced by men. The art is also a means of gathering members of the community consisting of various professions, religion, education. In a variety of social statuses, people gather and have the same goal of supporting the Raksasa’s artistic net. Support in the form of moral and material given by the community including figures who have legitimacy in the social strata of society. Moral support provided by the community in the form of community involvement in the performance of Raksasa arts.
Art As A Vehicle For Secular Or Religious Rite Expression.

Dance as a vehicle for rites according to Anthony Shay in both secular and religious categories, he categorizes ritual rites of status change (birth, maturity, marriage, death) and religious rites (2007: 86). From the above opinion, Raksasa art is classified as a religious rite. This activity has become a means to convey requests and show gratitude to God Almighty and ancestral spirits, for all the gifts that have been given.

Arts as social entertainment or recreational activities.

One of the most universal dance functions is that which provides entertainment or recreation. Events that are primarily social and recreational usually emphasize the participation of all present, with the additional requirement that they enjoy it (Shay in Anya, 2007: 86). Likewise, the Raksasa art in Salamrejo Village has a function to entertain the community. In general, entertainment dance will show the peculiarities seen from the costumes and accompanying musical instruments. The entertainment they get is not only during the performance by expressing making butho costumes, but during the Raksasa art training process that has its own appeal to socialize with other community members.

Art as a Channel or Releasing Psychology

According to Anthony Shay dance is classified as the most effective means of releasing the soul because the tool is the body of his own person. The feedback is something that is instantif and cathartic which is immediately there for the dancer and the audience (2007: 87). As explained above, in Raksasa Art when after the ritual of summoning spirits, the queen figure will feel different things in him. He will see the warrior dancer who looks small like a dwarf. The Godho he brought became very heavy. Motion performed by full queen Hayatan and penjiwaan figures that depict a leader’s strength and authority.

Art as a Reflection of Aesthetic Value or Aesthetic Activity

According to Shay the basic aesthetic assessment is a set of rules possessed in the object of dance, the ability to dance provides a culture that binds artistic activities (2007: 193). Creativity involves a knowledge of aesthetic experience in the person. The aesthetic value of dance movement is the ability of the movements performed by dancers to create an aesthetic experience. Every dance movement performed by Raksasa dancers has its own uniqueness. In addition to the concept of Anthony Shay, the concept of Talcott Parsons is also used. The essence of Parsons’ functionalism is the reciprocity between the performers of art and the Raksasa arts.

Art as a Pattern of Economic Activity as a Support for Life, or Economic Activity in Himself

In general, Salamrejo villagers consider art to be a call to the soul and a spiritual calling. But there are some general people who consider art to be a commercial activity. They rented some costume for Raksasa dancer to make a combination with their own costume. The reciprocal processes that occur according to Parsons functionalism are 6, namely:

Actors who are individual individuals. An artist is a person who is diligently willing to collect impressions or impressions. He is a person who is very sensitive and highly trained in seeing and listening to events and surrounding objects, which are often overlooked for many people (Murgiyanto, 1986: 45). Such reactions are influenced by the level of personal sensitivity and absorption based on the background of experience gained, as well as the level of inspiration about the character played.

Actors are looking for goals to be achieved. In his book entitled Talcott Imperative Functionalism explains the term Goal Attainment, which is a system that is required to purify individual thinking to form the personality of individuals who can achieve the goals of the system itself. This also happens
in this *Raksasa* art, each individual has a specific goal that is well organized both in groups and independently. The goal in art in the *Raksasa* art is to preserve culture and keep the art from becoming extinct. The final result in a performance art is the level of satisfaction from the performers of art, the audience, and the audience.

**Actors have ways to achieve goals.** Artists will try to keep the art alive. In the form of art presented in groups such as the *Raksasa* art which involved hundreds of dancers in their presentation. To achieve a common goal *Raksasa* art performances cannot be dominated by individuals, despite the presence of the main character who stands out from other dancers, but must still follow the rules that have been mutually agreed upon.

**The perpetrator is faced with various situational conditions.** There are several factors that cause changes in aspects of life such as natural conditions, technology, economics and biology. To understand this, individuals can adjust to changes in their environment. All these changes function if they have a positive impact on themselves and the community. The existence of *Raksasa* art as an art that lives in the Salamrejo Village community that still exists today, has a role to control social changes that affect the patterns of community life. The existence of this art strives to make a positive contribution to the community through its performances which open up generally to anyone who is willing to take part in the *Raksasa* arts and become a part of the *Raksasa* art dancers.

**Actors are dominated by values, rules, and other ideas that influence the setting of goals and the selection of ways to achieve goals.** In Parsons’ perspective, systemically must give birth to a human person who has a cultural system, with spiritual beliefs, knowledge, obedience to the norm, and commitment to social values. Through *Raksasa* art performances presented by various dancers from many circles, ages, and regions. Functioning as adding friendship and solidarity to others, because art is basically related to the mind, feeling and psychology of a person who maintains human survival must act well and socialize well in order to adapt, control, and control the environment.

**Action includes subjective decision making by actors to choose ways to find goals, which are limited by various ideas and situational conditions.** Parsons explained that social systems are systems that consist of various individual actors who interact with each other in situations that have at least physical or environmental aspects. Action covers individual decision making to achieve certain goals. Cultural values will animate the personality system and influence the behavior of the actors to determine roles in the social system. The role of the influence change actions and the way to achieve the goals, they must behave like other warrior dancers who have strong character, and follow a series of gigantic art processions to the event finished.
Conclusion

Raksasa art in Bersih Desa ceremonies is an important event that must be carried out every month to cleanse the village of all calamities and disturbances from spirits. If the Raksasa art is not presented in the Bersih Desa ceremony, the ceremony that takes place will not be perfect, and the village will experience disaster. The Bersih Desa ceremony in Salamrejo Village, Blitar, East Java has 5 stages, namely cleaning the pesanggrahan, village entertainment, the Raksasa art procession, gendurenan, and ruwatan Santri. There are offerings that must be prepared at the Bersih Desa ceremony in the form of kenanga flowers, incense, and funbo oil. Raksasa art dance is still needed by the supporting community, it is such an evident that the business of Salamrejo Village community to present the Raksasa art dance in the Bersih Desa ceremony provides many positive functions. The function is divided into six which includes, means of social legitimacy, means of expression of secular and religious rituals, means of recreational and entertainment activities, means of psychic release, means of aesthetic expression, and means of economic activity patterns. Then the next function is the reciprocal relationship between artistic actors as members of community organizations that support the six Raksasa art functions. Of the six functions, the community continues to carry out the regulations in the Raksasa arts so that the Raksasa’s art remains alive today.

References


Biography

Rifa Fitriana 1st was born in Blitar on March 12th, 1995. She is currently being continue her education at Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta in Art study graduate program. The author got a schoralship from LPDP (Lembaga Pengelolaan Dana Pendidikan) for her post graduate. The author obtained a bachelor's degree in Dance at Indonesia Institute of the Art Surakarta (ISI Surakarta) in 2017.

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