

**JARAN BODHAG DANCE:
PRESERVING LOCAL CULTURE IN PROBOLINGGO EAST JAVA**

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Abstract: Indonesia, an archipelago country, has diverse local art and culture which enriches national culture. Every area has its distinguished culture – showing local identity - which is different from other areas. Dance, for instance, is one of the art expressions in which every movement has certain and intended meaning, purpose, and function. One of the characteristics of dance is the combination among dance movement, musical instruments, and song. *Jaran Bodhag*, traditional dance which is originally from Probolinggo, is still being preserved by its local society. In this dance, the dancers used horse replica which form is like a block so that the dancers can get into the replica as if riding the horse. Moreover, it is quite unique since the horse replica seems to dance along following the dancers' movements. This dance, furthermore, is aimed merely as the entertainment. In the society, this dance is usually functioned to accompany the *temanten khitan* (the one who just had circumcision) as its history which is related to the *khitan* ceremony. Recently, this dance still exists in society with broader functions, such as entertainment function, social function, cultural function, and economic function. This dance, however, mainly is for entertainment which can raise up solidarity among audiences. Furthermore, it also gives economic benefits for the vendors and parking attendants around the performance area.

Key Words: function, *Jaran Bodhag* dance, preserving local culture

Introduction

The diversity of Indonesian art and culture is a valuable asset. It shows Indonesian local as well as national identity so that its existence should be preserved. If it is not, it will fade away or disappear or be shifted by foreign culture which sometimes does not reflect our national identity. Thus, the efforts to maintain the existence of local culture is fully needed. Sutrisno (2013:38) states that art work is one of the culture's form which is representing the process of human being along with other subjects to arrange life in harmony referring to some values, such

as humanity, enlightenment, civilization applied in daily and led to the changing process of mental, behavior, and thought about life itself. The way human thinks about creating an artwork which is supported by other subjects will result communal belonging. An artwork from particular region can be possessed collectively based on collectivism norm. One of the communal arts in Probolinggo is a dance which is called *Jaran Bodhag*. The efforts for preserving it as the local culture is by real performance in community. This dance performance, at first, is merely held for an event - *khitanan* ceremony. However, since it has its unique appeal, the performance of *Jaran Bodhag* is not only for *khitanan* ceremony but also for art festival. This dance has originally developed in Probolinggo since 1978. It combines dance movement, music instrument, and song accompanying the instruments which is called *tembang*.

Jaran Bodhag, to be more specific, used horse replica which form is like a block so that the dancer can get into it. The dancer's movement will stimulate and lead the movement of the replica as if the horse is dancing along with the dancers. Furthermore, *Jaran Bodhag* dance reaches all range of age, it can be danced by children as well as adults. There is no difference on the children's or adults' movement. Song used for accompanying the dance is named *kenong telok*. The dance performance usually also includes the festive carnival. The audience brings their own instrument, such as trumpet, *kendang* (music instrument which look like drum), and gong for the dance instrument. Furthermore, some people also dance along using random movement based on the music at the back row of the carnival line. There is no mystical things in *Jaran Bodhag* as occurred in *Jaran Keping*. The first is purely intended for entertainment purpose. The village which still maintains this dance is Besuk village in Bantar district Probolinggo East Java. It proves that society in that particular area is in the process of maintaining and preserving the local content and introducing it to the broader surrounding. The introduction of local culture should be introduced and taught by the older to the younger (from generation to generation). Moreover, the story of *Jaran Bodhag* dance is known by youth.

The original story of *Jaran Bodhag* comes from the folklore which belongs to the local society from generation to generation. Danandjaja (2002:2) says that folklore is a part of collective cultures spreaded among society in the form of spoken along with gesture or mnemonic device. The original story of *Jaran Bodhag* is categorized as legend – a kind of prose which is assumed to be happened without any mystical values. Later, Danandjaja (2002:50) also states that the characters in the legend can be human who sometimes blessed with great

attribution or even non-human (magnificent creatures). Brunvand (in Danandjaja, 2002:67) categorized legend into four, which are religious legends, supernatural legends, personal legends, local legends. Based on the explanation of Brunvand, *Jaran Bodhag* story is in the form of *personal legend* which tells about particular individual. It is, further, considered and believed that the story truly had happened (Danandjaja, 2002:73). Finally, the characters in the story of *Jaran Bodhag* dance are the ordinary human.

Discussion

Jaran Bodhag dance which is as the communal artwork in Probolinggo is still known and preserved so that it can increase local culture asset. It also reflect the local wisdom of that particular region. The local art in each area is the pivotal part which builds Indonesian valuable assets. Thus, it should be preserved in order to keep it from the disappearance. It is a very great heritage from the ancestor to the next generation which has particular purposes and functions. In this current paper, the writer will elaborate the history of *Jaran Bodhag*, the presence of *Jaran Bodhag*, and its functions.

The History of *Jaran Bodhag* Dance

At first, the dance of *Jaran Bodhag* appeared due to inability of local people to have the performance using the real horses which are dancing (in Javanese it is called as *ngencak*). It is very expensive for a *Jaran Kencak* performance so that *Jaran Kencak* is only performed in *Khitanan* party. In order to compensate inability to have *Jaran Kencak* performance, the middle and low economic people made the replica of *Jaran Kencak* which can dance as well as the real horse, which later is called as *Jaran Bodhag* which has meaning as horse with a block shape. The story on how the dance of *Jaran Bodhag* appears is anonymous. The history of *Jaran Bodhag* will be detailed explained as the following:

In a village namely *Kareng* village, there lived the old man and his little son. His wife has died some years ago. In order to support their living, he and his son looked for woods and sell it. The son had local *jaran* (*jaran* = horse) with which he played everyday. They were like best friend. The little boy also considered the horse as his family. One day, the little boy trained

the horse to dance while he was producing the oral music which sounds like "Nuk... nung... gung..."

In the age 7 years old, the little boy asked for khitanan (in Javanese it is called as *sunat*). However, his father could not hold khitanan party for his only son due to his economic problems. The father had an idea to put make up on his son and horse and asked them to walk around the city. Along the road, they were dancing. Their dancing attracted people's attention so that they gave money as the compensation for watching them. Then, they came to the city principal who was wonder toward the dancing horse. Finally, the city principal asked the horse to dance all the time (in Javanese, it is called as '*menanggap*'). The city principal had some traditional instruments: *kenong telok*, *kendang* (it is like drum), and *gong*. The horse danced and it attracted people's attention around the city to watch the performance. The old man and his little boy, then, got a lot of money from the performance.

During the *khitanan*, the old man invited three of his family to play music as the instrument while the horse was dancing. Since its dancing ability, the horse was asked to dance all the time for earning money. The horse, finally, died due to over fatigue. The old man and his little boy, of course, were so sad since the horse had helped to support their financial condition.

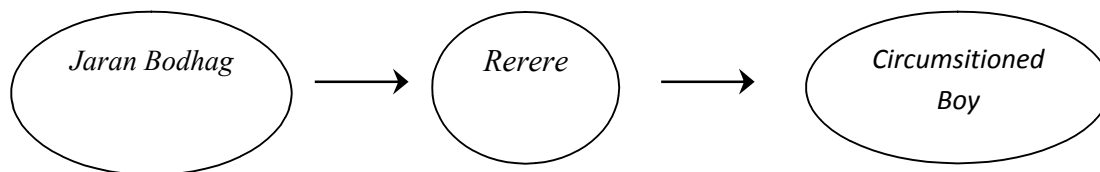
One day, the little boy had an idea to create a horse replica from *bodhag*. He tried to get onto the replica and imitate how his previous real horse danced. However, the boy felt that the replica was not comfortable yet. Then, the boy thought and created the more appropriate horse replica and finally found the best form as expected. When he got onto the replica, it was like he got onto the real horse. After that, he walked around the city to have performance using his horse replica. Recently, it is called as *Jaran Bodhag*.

The Presence of *Jaran Bodhag* Dance

Jaran Bodhag dance is one of local artworks in Probolinggo. Its existence at the present time is due group of people who know, perform, and maintain it. Besides, a dance training center called as *sanggar* named "Bayu Angga" introduced this dance to its students as the young generation - the one who will keep it going in the future. The introduction of *Jaran Bodhag* dance to the youth is due to the awareness of local people to always maintain and preserve it as the local wisdom and great heritage. The government and local people need to support this dance

as one of the efforts in preserving local culture in each region. It is aimed at keeping the national identity so that it will not shifted by the foreign cultures.

The first *Jaran Bodhag* is intended for *khitanan* party. As the time goes by, *Jaran Bodhag* is also performed in the dance festival. In the *khitanan* party, *Jaran Bodhag* dance will be accompanied by crowded and festive carnivals. It will be followed by *rerere* as well. *Rerere* is a woman dance which is danced by men using women's movements. The performance of *Jaran Bodhag* in the *khitanan* party has the sequence as the following:



Jaran Bodhag is in the beginning, then it is followed by *rerere* in the middle and the circumsitioned boy. The people in the carnival usually also bring music instruments like trumpet, *kendang* (drum), and *gong* for accompanying the performance and carnival.

The Functions of *Jaran Bodhag* Dance

The performance art namely *Jaran Bodhag* is one of the local wisdom which still exists in its surrounding with some functions. According to David Kaplan and Albert Manners (in Brata, 2007), function, seen from the theoretical perspective in anthropology, is based on the organism analogy. It means that social-and-cultural system is analogized as the organism systems which parts or elements are interconnected as well as give role in its maintenance, stability, integrity, and the organism continuity. This analogy lead to the concept that cultural system has functional requirement or cultural system which has social function that has to be fulfilled so that the system of social-culture can always exist. If the needs cannot be fulfilled, social-culture will be disintegrated and fade away or change into other different systems.

Preserving social-culture system in the society is very important to maintain local culture. One of the ways to preserve the dance of *Jaran Bodhag* is by seeing its function as the performance art. The function is intended to digging up the correlation between local culture and cultural behavior in its surrounding. The dance of *Jaran Bodhag* categorized as local culture is held in *khitanan* party and cultural festival. In the performance, of course, there will be a player

and audiences. During the performance, there are a lot of people who want to see it directly so that there will be interaction among individuals. It shows the functions of *Jaran Bodhag* for social aspects. Particularly in this current paper, the writer concerns on entertainment function, social function, cultural function, and economic function.

Entertainment Function

The performance is mainly aimed at entertaining human being. Specifically, the main function of *Jaran Bodhag* is also for entertainment. At first, it is held only in *khitanan* party which then it is also held in dance festival or annual carnival. The movement and equipment in the dance are unique compared to other dances. The color of costume worn by the dancer and the horse are very light for attracting audiences' attention. Sometimes, it is also accompanied by carnival and *rerere*, which make the atmosphere more festive and entertaining.

Social Function

Society is group of human who interact based on particular custom which is continual and bounded with the communal identity (*Kontjaraaningrat*, 1989:146). A group of people who live in a particular areas will usually have identical culture. This definition supports the social function of particular society toward the art performance. The dance of *Jaran Bodhag*, of course, has the social function since individual with similar identity will interact one among another. The social function in *Jaran Bodhag* performance can be seen by the number of audiences who directly see the performance. The audiences who have not get along each other, yet they are present at the during the performance will interact one another, it can be in the form of person to person, or person to community. It will develop the intimacy among individuals. Even though the two people are acquaintance, they possibly will talk each other during the performance about the costume, dancer, movement, or the horse replica used in the performance. The dance show has social function so that it will build the intimacy among the audiences.

Cultural Function

Culture is the product of human's idea or thought. The presence of local culture is supported by the social environment in a particular region. Geertz (in Abdullah, 2006:1) strengthens that the culture is a system about heritage conceptions which are in the form of

symbol so that human can communicate, maintain, and develop knowledge and behavior. If it is seen from the formal culture, it is defined as the knowledge and experience which are expressed into cultural form based on the ideas as well as belief underlying behavior to understand values and meaning, hierarchy, roles, and relation between space and nature got from group of people from generation to generation through individual as well as group efforts. The beginning of *Jaran Bodhag* comes from the idea of a little boy whose horse was died so that he made its replica from what so called as *Bodhag* or block. He tried to get onto the horse replica while dancing - imitating how the horse dances. The replica is human made based on the idea so that horse replica can be used to dance *Jaran Bodhag*. It is as the result of cultural form which belongs to Probolinggo society as the local identity. It is strengthened by Koentjaraningrat (1990:186), the cultural form is the complex combination among ideas, concepts, values, norms, regulations, and so forth. Besides, the form of culture could be in the form of complex activities and patterned behavior of the society. The dance of *Jaran Bodhag*, moreover, is human activity which in the form of social environment interaction. The dance is continuously preserved through performing it in a number of events.

Economic Function

The performance which has many audiences cannot be separated from the vendors or parking attendant. This phenomenon can be seen on *Jaran Bodhag* dance performances as we can see in other communal events. It will indirectly bring economic profits to the community. During the show, the vendors walk around to sell food, drinks, and children's toys around the dance venue. These activities certainly bring economic benefits for vendors. They certainly benefited from selling in crowded places. For audiences who bring a vehicle, of course, they need a parking lot where they park their bike, motorcycle, or car. To compensate the service given, they have to pay some amount of money as the charges/retribution. It certainly bring benefits to the parking attendants during the show.

Conclusion

The presence of *Jaran Bodhag* dance as the local folk art in Probolinggo is still existed till present time. Local communities strive to maintain and preserve it despite of the changing of

era. It is usually performed in the circumcision ceremony. In its development, *Jaran Bodhag* is also performed at various events art exhibition to show local-cultural identity. It is very essential to have governmental as well as society support in order to maintain the local culture of every region so that it will not be shifted by foreign culture

The functions of *Jaran Bodhag* dance are divided into: (1) entertainment functions, (2) social functions, (3) cultural functions, and (4) economic functions. First, entertainment functions in this performance is clearly seen by its main purpose which is to entertain as well as amuse the audiences. Second, social function in this dance is indicated by the interaction between the individual to individual, and individual to the group that led to solidarity and intimacy among one to another. Cultural function, then, can be seen from the idea to create a horse replica. As we know that the horse replica used in this dance performance is the result of man's work on the basis of self-man's idea or concepts. Further, this artwork is in the form of culture that belongs to the people of Probolinggo as local cultural identity. Finally, the economic function is indicated by the presence of the vendors and parking attendants who aim to earn money during the show.

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BIODATA



Dwi Sulistyorini, S.S., M.Hum was born in Tulungagung East Java on November 12, 1973. She got her S.S. and M.Hum. from Diponegoro University Semarang. She works as a lecturer in Indonesian Department State University of Malang starting from 1998 till present. Her expertise fields are Literature and Spoken Literature. It is shown by her researches, book, articles published in journals, and paper presented in the national as well as international seminars which concern on the topic of literature and spoken literature.

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