



Preservation of the Klana Udeng Mask Dance at the Mulya Bhakti Studio in Indramayu

Yuremia^{✉1}, Dindin Heryadi^{✉2}, Rina Martiara^{✉3}

Dance Study Program, Faculty of Performing Arts, Institut Seni Indonesia Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

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Abstract

The Klana Udeng Mask Dance is a dance created by the development of the Babangan mask in Indramayu. This dance is one of the materials taught by Sanggar Mulya Bhakti led by Wangi Indriya for beginner dancers, both teenagers and children. This research will examine conservation with three main questions, namely who is preserving, what is being preserved, and how conservation is carried out. To answer this problem, Raymond Williams' Sociology-Culture theory is used which consists of three main components, namely institutions, content, and effect. Institutions (cultural institutions) ask who is involved in preserving the culture. Content (cultural content) asks what is produced and what values are expected, then effect (cultural norms) asks how preservation efforts are carried out. The research method used is a qualitative descriptive-analytical method, namely research whose aim is to describe and analyze the object being studied as it is, as well as provide systematic, factual, and accurate reasons regarding the facts of the object being studied so that it can be analyzed according to the circumstances. Cultural institutions are the Mulya Bhakti studio, the community, and the government. Cultural content produces tangible and intangible values, and cultural norms produce a cultural identity that is characteristic of the Klana Udeng Dance and other mask performances.

INTRODUCTION

Indramayu is a regency located on the north coast of West Java, which is the connecting route between Central Java and West Java. The regency is flanked by several other regencies, namely Subang, Cirebon, Majalengka, and Kuningan. Art and culture in Indramayu are acculturation of two cultures, namely the Javanese culture of Indramayu and the Sundanese of the northern region, making the form of cultural expression of the Indramayu people different.

Although Indramayu is geographically located in West Java, the people of Indramayu want to be called something other than Javanese or Sundanese. They refer to themselves as Wong Dermayu. This is supported by the language they speak, which is Javanese in the Dermayon dialect. In mixed areas, where both Sundanese and Javanese are spoken, there is a tendency for some families who use Sundanese not to refer to themselves as Sundanese but to call themselves, for example, Cirebon people, Indramayu people, and Banten people. (Koentjaraningrat, 2010).

One of the most famous arts in Indramayu is mask dance. The art of mask performance in Indramayu cannot be separated from the flow of great influence of mask culture in Cirebon, as the center of artistic and cultural development that long ago had a mask dance tradition and developed in Indramayu, Majalengka, and Kuningan. The folk dance grew and developed among agrarian societies, whose function was to perform ritual ceremonies and serve as a means of entertainment (Caturawati, 2007). This was explained by Wangi Indriya, a mask artist and head of Sanggar Mulya Bhakti, based on an interview on 19 January 2024:

“Topeng performances are found in village and palace environments. There is no difference in the style of dance between the people and the palace, because mask performances in the palace are performed by village artists, who are only occasionally called to the palace”.

Mask dance is a performance in which the dancer uses a mask (*kedok* and a head covering called a *sobrah*. According to Wangi Indriya, mask stands for *ketop-ketop gepeng* which is flat and round found on the headdress of the mask dancer, namely *sobra*. *Kedok* is part of the needs of mask dance performances and has an important role, especially in characterizing the characters of each dance. The mask used in mask dance contains aesthetic values, meanings, and symbols that support the character's needs (Heriyawati, 2016). The mask character is a typology of characterization of the human life process reflected in the mask.

Mask performances are divided into two, namely small masks and large masks. Small masks, namely *babakan* masks, have five characters: the Panji Mask Dance describes a patient and honest character; the Samba or Pamindo Mask Dance describes a lively and sweet character; the Rumyang Mask Dance describes a smooth and open character; the Tumenggung Mask Dance describes a dashing character, and fifthly Klana Mask Dance describes a wrathful character (Rosidi, 2000). The big mask, Wayang Topeng or Wayang Wong, is a performance played by people using a mask that covers the face in the puppet story.

Babakan mask is the development of *wayang wongor topeng dalang* which is a drama performed in acts and plays the stories of Ramayana, Mahabarata, Panji, Damarwulan, and others. Sudjana Arja, a Cirebon mask puppeteer, interpreted mask performances from three perspectives. (1) human physical growth from infancy to adulthood, (2) Mysticism, which leads to human senses that have important functions in social relations and (3) Religion is likened to human nature and behavior, such as in the Panji character, which is a picture of a newborn baby, still pure and without sins, embodied in a lurch character mask. The baby symbolizes the human heart that never lies, embodied in a *luruh* character mask. Pamindo is likened to children beginning to see life, depicted in a *lanyup* or agile character. Rumyang depicts humans who are already teenagers and start looking for a life partner, depicted in a lively character. Patih or Tumenggung is an image of an adult human with a position described in the *kepatihan* character. Klana is symbolized as an ear with the behavior of always listening to other countries as if they want to be controlled (greedy), has a *branyak* or hard character, describing humans with a selfish nature (Masunah, 2000).

Mask dance performances in Indramayu are still often performed in community celebrations and village events. This mask dance performance uses the *babakan* mask type because it is short-lived and only requires a few dancers and a *nayaga*. Each mask dance has a different mask shape, movements, music, characters, and storylines. In Indramayu, dancers who perform mask dance are often called *dalang* and are performed by one dancer, but over time, many dancers dance in groups.

Klana Udeng Mask Dance is the development of *Klana Gandrung* Mask Dance. The movements of *the Klana Udeng* Mask Dance are more active and depict a selfish nature. The difference that can be seen between *Klana Gandrung* and *Klana Udeng* mask dancers is that *Klana Gandrung* mask dancers wear *tekesor sobrah*, while *Klana Udeng* mask dancers wear headbands (*udeng*). *Klana Udeng* Mask Dance is performed in the last sequence and is very popular with children. The number of children interested in learning *Klana Udeng* Mask dance is because the movements are simple and agile, similar to children's movement patterns. Unlike the *Topeng Panji* dance, which is performed slowly and calmly and requires sense processing, the movement pattern of *the Klana Udeng* mask tends to be attractive. Therefore, *Klana Udeng* Mask Dance is mostly danced by children and has become material for those new to mask dance to learn.

This research will analyze the preservation of *Klana Udeng* Mask in Sanggar Mulya Bhakti, led by Wangi Indriya. The dance is taught by trainers in the studio by applying four learning methods: lecture, demonstration, imitative, and practice. The focus of this study discusses preservation with Raymond Williams' Sociology-Culture theory, which focuses on three main components, namely institutions, content, and effects. Institutions ask who produces, who controls, and how control is exercised. Cultural content asks what is produced and what values are pursued, and effects or cultural norms ask what consequences are expected from the presence of the culture.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research method used in this writing was descriptive-analytical in a qualitative way, which is research whose purpose was to describe and analyze the object under study as it is and provide reasons systematically, factually, and accurately regarding the facts of the object under study so that it can be analyzed following the state of events as it should be.

The data collection stage was the earliest step in a study. Qualitative research data can be observation results, interviews, documentation, and literature studies. Interviews were conducted by a direct question-and-answer process with sources that provided accurate information about the object being studied. The research was conducted at Sanggar Mulya Bhakti, located in Indramayu Regency. The researcher had the opportunity to interact directly with the management and studio members. With the opportunity to interact, it can be understood how the environmental and cultural conditions of the surrounding community were, and the material object in this study can be understood better. Some interviewees were Wangi Indria (62 years old), an Indramayu mask artist, and the head of Sanggar Mulya Bhakti. Aries Sutanto (43 years old), a trainer and administrator of Mulya Bhakti studio, was also Wangi Indriya's first son. Dwiky Sekartaji (23 years old) and Wiranti (17 years old) were students and trainers at Sanggar Mulya Bhakti.

The data analysis stage was one of the important steps in a study. Data analysis is searching and compiling data from observations, interviews, and literature studies. The data analysis stage was carried out after all the data was complete and collected. The stages of data analysis were: a) Understanding the

elements that exist in the preservation of Klana Udeng Mask Dance in Sanggar Mulya Bhakti. b) Dividing the parts carried out by several cultural institutions to preserve Klana Udeng Masked Dance. Wangi Indriya used cultural experience and cultural knowledge to determine the preservation method. c) Describe the cultural content and analyze the values preserved in the Klana Udeng Mask Dance, which consists of tangible and intangible values.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Cultural Institutions (Institutions)

According to Raymond Williams' Sociology-Culture theory, cultural institutions ask who produces culture, who controls it, and how it is controlled (Hadi, 2007). In this study, the cultural institution that produced Klana Udeng Masked Dance in Indramayu was Sanggar Mulya Bhakti, which is currently led by *Mamih* Wangi Indriya. Preservation activities, of course, need to involve several parties and benefit them. Sanggar Mulya Bhakti, the community, and the government are participating in this preservation.

Mulya Bhakti Art Studio

Sanggar or art studio is a space or facility used by individuals or communities who want to do an activity. The studio can cover the whole process from the beginning to the end of the learning and creation process. Sanggar Mulya Bhakti was established on 1 June 1983 by *Mama* Taham, the father of Wangi Indriya. *Mama* Taham was a farm laborer and artist in the field of Wayang Kulit Purwa, who was quite famous in Indramayu at that time. Mulya Bhakti means 'working selflessly,' which also contains four firmly held in establishing the studio: 1. True, which means now

must uphold noble values. 2. *Eling*, which means acting with emotional and spiritual intelligence. 3. Patience means not giving up quickly in the face of obstacles.

4. *Ikhlas*, which means all good intentions and the work's purpose is Allah's pleasure. In the beginning, Cirebon mask dance consisted of three mask puppeteer artists dividing it into styles. The first style, the Losari style, was introduced by mask puppeteer Sawitri; the second style, the Slangit style, was introduced by mask puppeteer Surjana Arja; and finally, the Indramayu style, which mask puppeteer *Mimi* Rasinah introduced.

Dalang topeng was a term used by the community to indicate that he was a mask artist. The call dalang topeng was addressed to mask artists with creativity and expertise who were skillful in creating and dancing masks. In Indramayu, artists introduced mask dance; one of them was *Mimi* Rasinah. Klana Udeng Mask Dance was a cultural product of the Indramayu area. In 1975, when Wangi Indriya was in the second year of junior high school, his father and grandfather brought a mask puppeteer to train Wangi Indriya and his siblings. The first mask dance taught was the Pamindo Mask Dance, which still needs to be completed. Finally, his father and grandfather invited back mask puppeteers from Sukagumiwang, namely Nargi, Tomo, and Tarip. Nargi and Tomo taught Pamindo and Klana Mask Dance, but Wangi still needs to finish learning these two dances. With the masked puppeteer Tarip, Wangi Indriya was able to learn the five mask dance characters to completion, so Wangi Indria was often invited to perform by Nargi and Tarip on various celebration stages in the Indramayu area.

Before she knew *Mimi* Rasinah, Wangi Indriya often saw *Mama* Carpan dancing the Klana Udeng Mask Dance at

ngarot ceremonies. According to Wangi Indriya, the Klana Udeng Mask Dance was very challenging and scary. There was a desire to learn from the uniqueness of her movements, but Wangi Indriya felt sad to learn, especially at her age.

Wangi Indriya got to know *Mimi* Rasinah in the 1980s, not as a masked dancer but as a karawitan and Sundanese dance teacher for women PKK dharma wanita at the Indramayu Regency Hall. In 1994, Wangi Indriya was invited by *Mimi* Rasinah's brother to dance the mask. It was also Wangi Indriya who first saw *Mimi* Rasinah dance a mask. Seeing *Mimi* Rasinah dance Klana Udeng Mask Dance, like the Rudat Dance, Wangi Indriya felt more interested in learning. It felt easy and comfortable to see *Mimi* Rasinah's style of dancing, Klana Udeng Masked Dance, compared to seeing *Mama* Carpan's style, which caused more fear.

For ten years, Sanggar Mulya Bhakti and *Mimi* Rasinah worked together. Wangi Indriya coordinated the *nayaga* during *Mimi* Rasinah's rehearsals and performances. Within ten years of seeing *Mimi* Rasinah's process when rehearsing and performing different movements, Wangi Indriya realized that every mask puppeteer has the creativity to create an identity in dance. This becomes a real expression of the mask puppeteer's self to possess and captivate the audience in watching the mask dance performance.

Finally, in 2005, Wangi Indriya tried to move to the sound of music and felt how silat movements meant by making simple, simple, and energy-efficient movements that still looked dashing. Wangi Indriya's movements are storytelling and expressive. The shape of the leg must be bent slightly forward with the right leg. Every movement must be emphasized and detailed.

Indramayu Regency has three mask puppeteer artists with different characteristics and styles, including the mask dance style of the late *Mimi Rasinah* in Pekandangan Village, *Mama Carpan* in Cibereng Village, and *Mamih Wangi Indriya* in Tambi Village. Of the three mask puppeteer artists, the one who still exists to dance and preserve was *Mamih Wangi Indriya* at Sanggar Mulya Bhakti. These mask dance styles have been preserved until now because of each mask puppeteer's inheritance and preservation efforts so that mask dance does not become extinct, both horizontal and vertical inheritance (Narawati, 2003).

Visually, the mask dances in Indramayu had the same mask shapes and characters, but the dance styles and movements differed. The artist can only understand the difference between the gamelan's order and the movements' arrangement. The difference lies in the creativity of the mask puppeteers.

Sanggar Mulya Bhakti preserves Klana Udeng Mask Dance through training, performances, and workshops. Not only that, Sanggar Mulya Bhakti also collaborates with several agencies to preserve the Klana Udeng Mask Dance and other local arts. Wangi Indriya carried out efforts to preserve the Klana Udeng Masked Dance in two ways: cultural experience and knowledge. This method can be used in the community, especially the younger generation, to support the preservation of the Klana Udeng Mask Dance.

Communities

The Indramayu community still preserves ceremonies related to the ritual life of the community. The ceremony is a series of activities per existing customary and religious rules. The characteristic of a ritual ceremony was the embodiment of

symbolic objects. Although it appears to be just a symbol, the community has a purpose in realizing it (Heriyawati, 2016). The ritual ceremony performed by the Indramayu community, such as the one that always presents a mask performance, was the *ngarot* ceremony.



Figure 1: Ngarot Ceremony (Source: Wiranti, 2023)

Ngarot came from *ngaruat*, which means "deliverance from sin" (Heriyawati, 2016). The traditional tradition of *ngarot* had a meaning as an expression of gratitude for several farmers to the Almighty for the abundance of rice they had harvested. As well as welcoming the arrival of the new planting season, it was hoped that agricultural products would be abundant and kept away from problems and disasters. The *ngarot* ceremony was held in the third week of December and on a Wednesday because it was considered sacred.

The meaning of fertility in the *ngarot* ceremony was expressed by two art types: *topeng* and *ronggeng ketuk*. In these two arts, there were couples (male and female). In the *topeng* performance, there was a requirement that the dancers must be male, and those who watched the mask performance were young women who were decorated like a bride-to-be with glamour (luxury). Meanwhile, the young men (*kasinoman men*) were invited to the *ronggeng tap* troupe where the dancers were women (Heriyawati, 2016).

In this context, the *ngarot* ritual was not only related to fertility but also an

initiation ritual, which is a ceremony for the journey or growth of a child into adulthood. This tradition was only followed by young men and women who were still virgins and virgins. The *ngarot* tradition intends to gather young men and women who will be given the task of farming. The point was for the young men and women to work together and cooperate in cultivating the rice fields. The *ngarot* tradition aims to foster healthy relationships, get to know each other, adjust attitudes, tolerate, and behave well in accordance with the customs and culture of Indramayu. Community involvement was not only as spectators but also as dancers of the Klana Udeng Mask Dance itself.

Government

The efforts made by the government in the Indramayu Regency to preserve the Klana Udeng Topeng dance were to hold festivals, competitions, performances, workshops, exercises, and routine exercises that have been carried out by the institutions involved so that the preservation process remains beneficial for everyone involved, both artists and the community.

Cultural Content

According to Raymond Williams' theory, cultural content or content asks what was produced and what values were sought (Hadi, 2007). In essence, culture is the work of an individual or group of people that will be passed down from generation to generation. In general, culture can be divided into two characteristics, namely physical (tangible) and non-physical (intangible) (Pariwisata, 2004). The physical (tangible) culture was something that we could see the real shape and form. What was meant by a non-physical

(intangible) culture was something that could not be seen physically but could only be lived by the community. Non-physical culture usually consists of mindsets, values, norms, and customs within the community.

Tangible Value of Klana Udeng Mask Dance

Klana Udeng Mask Dance was developed or continued from the Klana Gandrung Mask Dance. The movements of the Klana Udeng Mask Dance are more active because they describe the nature of selfish and drunkard human beings. Klana Gandrung Mask Dance dancers wear *tekes* or *sobrah*, while Klana Udeng Mask Dance dancers wear headbands.

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Figure 2: Complete Dress of Klana Udeng Mask Dance (Source. Yuremia, 2024).

In the Klana Udeng Mask Dance, the headgear was made of cloth wrapped around the head directly, forming an *udeng* model with a Klana *drodos* model guise (Hastuti, 2013). *Udeng* was a piece of cloth wrapped around the head. The cloth symbolizes a king about to carry out a task to achieve what he wants. The *drodo's* mask was the shape of a long nose, and it looked up, depicting the character of a king who was uncontrolled and greedy.



Figure 3: Klana Udeng Mask (Source Wiranti, 2024)

Intangible Value of Klana Udeng Mask Dance

Intangible value in the form of culture can be understood as something

non-physical, meaning that it cannot be held or touched and can be classified as abstract (Pariwisata, 2004) Almost all types of folk art have elements or values in them. The values contained in the Klana Udeng Topeng Dance include cultural values such as the identity of the Indramayu people and ethical values.

Klana Udeng Mask Dance was an art that acted as a value system, norm system, belief system, and social system of Indramayu society. It was a dance that came from the people of Indramayu. Therefore, mask dance, especially Klana Udeng Mask Dance, was an identity or icon of Indramayu Regency art. With the identity of a region, it can build a peaceful, prosperous, and cooperative community life to maintain the traditional arts.

The ethical value of Klana Udeng Mask Dance can be seen in the story, which describes the nature of an ambitious king who could not control his anger. The role played by Klana Udeng Mask Dance dancers was antagonistic or evil. Although it has an evil role, Klana Udeng Mask Dance teaches humans to try to get happiness and a good life.

Cultural Effects

The definition of effects or cultural norms in Raymond Williams' Sociology-Culture theory asks what consequences are expected through the cultural process (Hadi, 2007). This study will describe the efforts and results of preserving Klana Udeng's Masked Dance.

Efforts to Preserve Klana Udeng Mask Dance

In the Indonesian Dictionary, preservation was the process, method, act, or activity of preserving, protecting from extinction or damage, preservation, or conservation. It can be understood that preservation was a way or effort to protect and develop something to avoid extinction

and dynamic damage, where, in this case, what was meant was culture.

To preserve the Klana Udeng Mask Dance, Sanggar Mulya Bhakti carried it out through cultural experience and cultural knowledge. Cultural experience was a preservation effort that was carried out by going directly. Therefore, Wangi Indriya opened a learning platform to maintain and preserve the Klana Udeng Mask Dance. Wangi Indriya used four learning methods in the cultural experience. The learning method starts with lecture, demonstration, imitative, and practice.



Figure 4: Klana Udeng Mask Dance Routine Practice at Sanggar Mulya Bhakti (Source:Yuremia, 2023).

Cultural knowledge was a preservation effort, and an information center about each culture was created so everyone could easily find information about regional culture. In this way, Wangi Indriya also utilizes technology as an easy alternative to preserve the Klana Udeng Mask Dance.

The form efforts made by the people of Indramayu in helping the preservation of Klana Udeng Masked Dance by inviting Sanggar Mulya Bhakti the event of village traditional ceremonies, weddings, circumcisions, and other events featuring Klana Udeng Masked Dance. Furthermore, the efforts of the Indramayu Regency government to preserve the Klana Udeng Masked Dance are coaching, providing facilities, and support. The government's role in supporting Mulya Bhakti Studio was to involve the studio in certain activities and

festivals. One of them is inviting Mulya Bhakti Studio to the Indramayu Regency Anniversary event held almost every year.

Several institutions have carried out preservation efforts for protection, development, and utilization. Sanggar Mulya Bhakti was the main cultural institution in the form of protection of the Klana Udeng Mask Dance. All this is done to protect and maintain the existence of the Klana Udeng Mask Dance from extinction. In the form of development, Wangi Indriya, as the head and trainer of the studio, developed the duration and choreography of the Klana Udeng Masked Dance. Development is a form of effort to perfect the work without changing its original value. Initially, the Klana Udeng Mask Dance was 1 hour long, but it finally became 7.49 minutes long. This method is done to shorten the performance time so that the audience is energized and relaxed when watching a long performance.

Furthermore, the form of utilization carried out by Sanggar Mulya Bhakti was divided into two, namely utilization in education and utilization in tourism. The utilization in the field of education carried out by Mulya Bhakti Studio was that the Klana Udeng Mask Dance was used as the initial material for students learning mask dance. In addition, the utilisation was also carried out by Wangi Indriya when invited as a workshop presenter, who provided and explained the Klana Udeng Mask Dance as a basis for learning mask dance. Furthermore, the form of utilization in the field of tourism carried out by Sanggar Mulya Bhakti was by holding routine midhang afternoon events every three months, participating in Indramayu Regency Anniversary activities, and cultural travelling.

Results of Klana Udeng Mask Dance Preservation Efforts

The result of preservation efforts was obtained from the efforts of several parties. All parties hope to get good results in accordance with the efforts that have been made. The efforts aim to increase the younger generation's and the surrounding community's awareness of learning, maintaining, and preserving local culture.

The preservation of the Klana Udeng Mask Dance has been tried as much as possible by several institutions, both from Sanggar Mulya Bhakti, the community, and the government. The efforts made have had a significant effect on maintaining the progress and preservation of the Klana Udeng Mask Dance. However, the results were still in the process of obtaining maximum achievement. The preservation process of the Klana Udeng Mask Dance was a social function in establishing family relations between institutions and the community. The Indramayu community responded well to the activities or programs carried out by Sanggar Mulya Bhakti. This preservation process is a form of solidarity and communication media.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion obtained in the preservation of Klana Udeng Topeng Dance was that the role of Sanggar Mulya Bhakti led by Wangi Indriya was the centre of preservation supported by the people of Indramayu, who responded well to the efforts made by Sanggar Mulya Bhakti. The preservation of the Klana Udeng Mask Dance by Wangi Indriya was done in two ways: cultural experience and knowledge. Wangi Indriya was able to maintain its existence through hereditary

inheritance. For Wangi Indriya, maintaining and defending traditional arts such as mask dance was not a burden but a noble obligation to preserve culture as a legacy from her ancestors. The process of inheriting the traditional art of Wangi Indriya-style mask dance takes place through the 'Upright Inheritance' system or genetic mechanisms, namely the system of cultural inheritance from parents to children and grandchildren. One of the reasons behind the generation's jump in the inheritance of the Dermayon Style Mask Dance is the motivation factor within the artist as the perpetrator. Preservation that is done.

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