

THE POPULARITY OF WARANGGANA TAYUB MALANG THROUGH BODY EXPLOITATION

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Abstract

Tayub is a *Ronggeng* type of dance performance. It is widely performed in Javanese regions. Originally, *Tayub* functioned as a fertility ritual; then it developed as entertainment. The growth of *Tayub* in Malang in the 1950s was intended for identity and the main dancer called *Tandak* was changed to *Waranggana*. As a result, there was a transformation in the form of the dancer's body: (1) exploring body-initiating identity, (2) manipulating the body through magical effect, and (3) body consumptive economization and love ruse. The qualitative method was used with an art phenomenological model in this study. The data were collected using interview and observation methods and was analyzed interpretatively. The result of the research was that female body interpretation is politicized to survive creatively, in order to maintain popularity and to support the lifestyle of the artist.

Keywords: body; creativity; exploitation; mask dance; *waranggana*

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INTRODUCTION

Professional dancers always have problems in their appearance, body, face, and dancing skill that can constantly fascinate their audiences. *Tayub* Malang puts the women (dancers) into primary characters. In the Malang area of East Java, a *Tayub* dancer is called *Waranggana*. Nancy (2009, p. 609) call the dancer as a glamorous women singer who appear ordinary in their everyday lives, but become exemplars of extraordinary femininity in performances where flirtatious interactions may occur between them and male musicians. Furthermore, the research states that through singing and silences, *Waranggana* preserve men's prestige and together with them participate in a social construction that usually keeps the peace at local levels.

In Blora regency, Indonesia, the dancer of *Tayub* is called *Ledek* (Ratih, 2005, p. 42).

Originally, *Tayub* functioned to cheer the grand harvest party and to respect the King (Holt, 2000). It was held on the edge of the farm. The dancer who danced (*ngibing*) first along with the *Ledhek* was the village elders. Such an event was called *Bedah bumi* (earth sectioning), the symbol of sexual relationship between *Pengibing* (ordinary people who dance) and the *Ledhek*. The sympathetic magical power of the symbol of "women impregnation" affected the farm soil fertility, so that *Tayub* party is called fertility ritual (Suharto, 1999). Nancy's research (2000, p. 607) shows that these "seduction scenarios" are ways in which women, through their attractive power, help men transform their exuberant power into constructive spiritual potency.

More superficially, men use these seduction scenarios to position themselves in a masculine prestige hierarchy.

Geertz perceives *Tayub* as an entertainment in which the *Waranggana* body spoils many men's eyes. Such the accusation is addressed to the *Waranggana* who sings erotic song lyric, with passionate dancing, thereby making the wives jealous. Many *Waranggana*'s had love affairs with other's husbands. The woman as a *Waranggana* was accused of being a "prostitute". Women organization in the 1960s, *Perwari* (*priyayi* women's association) disliked and resisted the *Tayub* performance (Geertz, 2013).

The *Tayub* association needed a dancer who can perform excellently with varied dancing movement, sweet voice, slim bright body, and beautiful face. Such these ideal criteria were difficult to meet with the women who had continuously chosen *Waranggana* as their profession. A variety of strategies were taken to make the *Waranggana* remain to be acceptable to the *Tayub* devotees. *Waranggana* grows over the years. Originally *Tayub* summoners presented only 2-3 *Waranggana*'s, but in 2000s, they presented at least 508 dances. Considering the *Waranggana* growth in Malang becomes an interesting study. On the one hand, the society dislikes because they are worried that their husbands will be fascinated by the *Waranggana*'s. On the other hand, the number of women performing persistently the *wrong* profession was increased. The prospect *Waranggana*'s were available to learn from the senior *Waranggana* for many years. In a research, Cahyono (2006, p. 19) shows that the inheritance pattern of *Tayub*, where they sing and dance, is done traditionally and naturally. In their community, they do this inheritance pattern through learning by doing.

This study aimed to learn the strategy to make a *Waranggana* remaining to be favoured by the society. The problems formulated are (1) What strategies are used to make the *Waranggana* popular? And (2) Why is that strategy taken by the *Waranggana* to be popular?

METHODS

This study employed qualitative approach, interpreting the data constituting the performer's actions and words explored directly from the object. The data were collected using an interview and observation techniques. The model of research used was art phenomenology using developmental theory. The key informants in *Karawitan Tayub* area were Sumantri (57 years), an artist of *Karawitan Tayub* who has been performing this art in 1950s, and Ruminingsih (60 years), a *Waranggana* and daughter of *Tayub* drummer from Jatiguwi. Data analysis employed descriptive interpretative technique.

Data Collection

Originally, *Tayub* functioned as a means of a fertility rite, and then it developed as entertainment. *Tayub* performance as entertainment still develops until today, particularly in the Javanese north coastal area. The presentation has been collaborated with *joged dangdut* (*dangdut* dance) movement element. In Malang Regency of East Java, *Tayub* performance has been known since 1920s. Generally, *Tayub* had Central Java style. In 1950s, typical Malang *Tayub* began to be explored in order to be different from Central Java's *Tayub*.

Toward the end of 1960s, some *Tandhak* (another name for *Waranggana*) wanted to raise local characteristic as their identity, because so far the *Tayub* style developing in Malang was Central Java style. If observed closely, the Malang-origin *Tandhaks'* effort seemed to be disturbed in by many other *Tandhaks* from Kediri, Blitar, and Tulungagung came to Malang.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Exploring Body-Initiating Identity

A *Tandhak* named Miskanah from Gadang Village initiated the innovation in *Gambyong* Dance (Central Java-style dance) appearance performed by Malang *Tandak* replaced with *Tari Remo* (*Remo* Dance).

Miskanah was used to be a *Bedayan* dancer in *Kethoprak* and *Remo* dance in *Ludruk*. Her effort was successful so that the *Tandhaks* coming from out of Malang area cannot copy Maskinah's appearance.

At the end of 1970s, Miskanah style dance had been popular among the *Tayub* devotees. The Miskanah dancing style was more dynamic, muscular, and energetic. The masculine movement pattern of *Remo* dance was modified with *Pencak Silat* (self-defense art) pattern. Because the performer was a female, her choreography felt to be aggressive, and her step and arm movement was always accompanied by a Malang drum pattern and sometimes at the end of the movement an emphasis was given to intense *Jidor Pencak* sound (Sumantri, interview on June 3, 2011).

Entering 1970s, *Tayub Malang* performing art organization attempted to change the morality image of the past *Tandhak* by popularizing the term *Waranggana*. This term derived from a predicate presenter in *Karawitan* or leather puppet ensemble. The term *Waranggana* for *Tayub* dancer felt to be elegant and had Javanese-bourgeois image. *Waranggana's* fashion originally wearing *Angkin* cloth as *Kemben* was changed into javanese *Kebayak*. *Waranggana's* appearance seemed to be more elegant. This attempt is considered as a smart way, a political strategy of interpreting body to maintain *Tayub* appearance among its devotees. *Waranggana* at least got a more respected social position.

In 1950s *Tandhak* was often despised in front of the public by her devotees. Sumantri (67 years) witnessed sexual abuses the *Tandhaks* experienced. Such unpleasant condition generally did not result in resistant reaction to that treatment. That treatment seemed to be ordinary. Generally, the devotees who were dare to do so have much money. At that time *Suwelan* (put the tips into the dancer's *Kemben* become a common habit (Sumantri, interview on June 3, 2011).

After the development of a Miskanah style of *Remo Tayub* dance that was dynamic and energetic, the *Tayub* devotees'

behavior changed. This change was at least because the *Waranggana's* more masculine appearance. Cakraningrat style of *Remo* dance's fashion was modified by adding a small vest, higher *sembong jarit*, inserting *cundrik* (dagger for women) on the left side. Male-style makeup with a thin mustache, hair bonded with *Udeng Kemplengan* (Headben) ala Madura young man was used (Suprihatin, 1997).

In 1980s, the development of *Tayub Malang* was increasingly popular. Its *Waranggana's* appearance and dancing showed the true Malang characteristic. Such the peculiarity became the obstacle for the Central Java style of *Tayub* dancer *Tayub Malang* dancer generation who carried such the typical style flourished in the beginning of 1970s. Entering 1980s, *Tayub* dancers from Malang flourished. *Tayub* summoners no longer presented 2 or 3 but 5-8 *Waranggana's* to cheer their party. The senior dancer performed *RemoTayub* with "Tembelan" attraction performance.

The development of *Remo Tayub Malang* dance included *Silat* (self-defense art) into its structure. The objective was to build an aggressive and dynamic characteristic; but in its development, the *Silat* movement appeared only as accentuation, with strong and opened hand movement. In young *Waranggana's* hand, the *Silat* element was faded by *jogged ndangdut* and *jaipongan* (Sundanese music) movements, particularly in *Tembelan* act. Attraction of giving tips was done by attaching the money onto the dance body. The objective was to be capable of dancing with *Gendhings* (Javanese music) chosen by *Pengibing* (javanese dancer). This *Tembelan* attraction occurred in the opening, *Nembel Tandhak Remo* dancer. The *Tembelan* phenomenon developed around 1980-1990 popularized by such *Waranggana's*as Sri Utami, Hani, Rumaningsih, Yayuk, Sri Mani, and other young *Waranggana's* (Rumaningsih, July 12, 2011).

The 'timberline' attraction has an artistic effect of *Tayub* dance. However, viewed from the devotees, this phenomenon made it difficult for them to get involved

in *Tayub* environment. It should be taken into account and rethought. They should spend much money for attending one performance. A devotee should spend money for contribution to the host of the event (*buwuh*), playing song, tips for *Waranggana* (the money was distributed evenly for all *Waranggana* on the stage), and *Tembelan tips*. Therefore, surely the *Tayub* devotees should not only *blater* (supple) but also have much money, and high position.

Body Manipulation through Magical Effect

The use of term *Pelandang* serving as Master of Ceremony (MC) was considered as having image less equal to the term *Waranggana*, so the term *pramugari* was used. This term was considered as more exclusive recalling that *pramugari* (stewardess) is the women who served the plane passengers. But some people attempted to use the term considered as more refined, *pranata beksa* (choreographer), meaning those serving to organize the ones dancing: *Waranggana* and *Pengibing*. At that time, the term *Pengibing* was not changed. *Tayub* devotees did not need image because they were those who have a position and money. So there was no designation for their prestige. They would be apparently strong when their wallet is thick.

Such the condition became a heavy challenge, particularly in the competition to get attention and the attempt of maintaining self-image, despite the change of their profession designation. They no longer get discretion to show their erotic attraction off on the stage. The name *Waranggana* is required to improve the quality of performance, particularly her vocal quality. Meanwhile, the change of term *pelandang* into *pramugari* did not bring about burden. The *pelandang* still has discretion to organize those who enter *kalangan* (stage). Despite the common etiquette still prevailing, the first *sampur* (sash) will fall down to the host of event, and then to local functionaries such as *Lurah* (chief of village) or *Camat* (chief of sub-district). There after it will fall down to the devotees. The condi-

tion of *Waranggana's* improved self-image weakened their mentality. Over time they looked for protection and maintained the market image in order to get sympathy from their devotees.

Young *Waranggana's* were less established viewed from their vocal technical quality and dancing basic skill. Some of them often used shaman, as a shortcut, to manipulate their body by installing *susuk* (implant). Particular metal with a half of needle size is implanted into the middle of the brow, the encounter between the two eyebrows, cheek, or the tip of lips. The use of beauty implant is no longer a secret. Individual *Waranggana's* exchange information each other about the efficacy of implant installer. The lovely, beautiful and shining face is the strategy of attracting the devotees. Some of *Tandhaks* who have strong bravery come to a holy place (graves of ancestors) to ask for magic power called *Stren*. This magical effect made the *Waranggana* performing beyond her potential. *Waranggana Stren* has certain abstinence and is available to provide *tumbal* (something used to prevent misfortune) (Sumantri, interview on August 5, 2011). This shortcut is taken because of the *Waranggana's* very low education level, generally elementary school. Until 1990s, only one *Waranggana* studied at Junior High School (SMP), Rumaningsih.

Body Economization and Love Ruse

1990s was the golden age for *Tayub* Malang development. The *Tayub* presentation activity was not only due to the host of the event's request. But, it had been organized in such a way that all devotees got the opportunity of holding *Tayub* presentation consecutively. This system was called *Arisan*. The presentation list has been arranged for a year (it stopped for a while in Ramadhan month). During Ramadhan month, it stopped from performing for a month. Such condition became a distinctive problem to the *Waranggana*. It ceased their income. Meanwhile, they had no alternative skill to earn their life. Most of *Waranggana's* were village females

with agrarian background. When they became *Waranggana*, they stopped from doing activities as the farmers. They also rarely socialized with their neighbors. Such condition forced the *Waranggana* to look for self-salvaging strategy. The *Waranggana's*, whose main income from their husbands was not high, took shortcut by the opportunity of throwing the love ruse out to local functionaries such as *Lurah* (chief of the village), *Camat* (chief of sub-district) and a rich merchant. This conventional strategy was like what Geertz reported in 1960s (Geertz, 2013).

The strategy of throwing the love ruse out was not vulgar and without background. *Waranggana's* who were able to throw the love ruse out had appearance potentials, including fascinating body, beautiful face and sensitive-emotional-communicative kinesthetic. Thus, the physical symbols can conquer all men's heart. The politicization for body consumptive economisation aimed to make the devotees feeling the need for consuming the dancer's body. *Waranggana's* could make their devotees happy, imagining, and feeling as if they were dancing with the fairies. This sensation is a social ecstasy. Such imaginary impression would not really be felt unless it is followed by liquor. The economic role of the liquor seller also contributed to Strengthening the *Waranggana's* strategy.

The effect of love ruse resulted in the marriage-divorce phenomenon. It was strongly assumed that such phenomenon resulted from the *Waranggana's* need for supporting their lifestyle as artists (Suwito, interview on August 15, 2011). Suwito's information was also reported by Raffles in *The History of Java*. The *Ronggengs* decided to divorce and have a new husband. Having lived peacefully for some time in the village, they might decide to divorce and to get back into their original profession as *Ronggeng* (Raffles, 2008).

For the *Waranggana's* who had been established economically, despite their status as the second wife, they focused on solidifying their status and they wanted to

keep enjoying their world development. Some of them became dancing and vocal instructors, and some others became *dukun susuk* (medicaster).

CONCLUSION

The result of research on *Tayub Malang* during 1950-1990 showed that the original period in 1950 was called as the era of searching identity and creativity, 1960s as the growth and the popularity era of *Tayub Malang*, and 1980s as (women) body consumptive commercialization politicized to survive in the terms of creativity, popularity and to support lifestyle as an artist.

However, it is undeniable that economic factors also determine the choice of them to become a *Waranggana*. This situation is supported by the needs of the devotees to express their passion for the art of dance and the desire to show their existence as one who are able to pay through *saweran* or even on other chance. This situation is, then, used by the *Waranggana* to perform a variety of ways to increase the popularity by beautifying themselves, including by inserting the implant to their bodies so that the devotees interested in them.

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