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The Role of Female *Pembarong* and Humanistic Values in the Barongan Samin Edan Performance in Semarang

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Abstrack

Barongan dancers (*Pembarong*) are selected based on the level of the individual's movement technique ability and their popularity as *pembarong* (Slamet, 2003, p. 27). *Pembarong* is generally performed by men considering the size of the mask and the character that must be performed, which depicts tigers with strong, ferocious, savage, agile, and mighty characters. Therefore, it has a small chance to be performed by women. However, there is something different about the Samin Edan Semarang barongan performance, which shows female *pembarong*. The performance is packaged in such a way so that it raises various questions about the role of female *pembarong* based on gender requirements. Accordingly, the researchers are interested in examining these problems related to humanistic values in the Samin Edan Semarang barongan performance. This research used an interdisciplinary approach. Two data collection steps were used in this study, namely the field and the literature data collection. The field data was conducted through observation, interviews, and document studies. Data analysis techniques in this study used interactive data analysis, according to Miles and Huberman to analyze the position and role of female *pembarong* in the Samin Edan Group Barongan performance in Semarang and the humanistic values reflected in it. The study's results show the role of women and humanistic values in the Samin Edan Barongan performance. In conclusion, the open opportunities for women in the creative process in the Samin Edan Barongan performance show that there are no restrictions on social territory structurally, nor are there any attempts to differentiate the roles of men and women through different dance types, forms, material, or structure. Humanistic values are reflected in the creative process of Barongan Samin Edan. The implication gives space for free expression to all dancers to be the key to the creative process of Barongan Samin Edan. It is because the dance manifests the choreographer's hopes always to offer a liberating artistic experience. It is important to reposition the creative process that forms an individual's humanist character and the idea that education through art is actually the basis for the formation of a humanist character.

Keywords: barongan, role, humanistic values.

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INTRODUCTION

Barongan dancers (*Pembarong*) are selected based on the level of individuals' movement technique ability and their popularity as *pembarong* (Slamet, 2003, p. 27). *Pembarong* is generally performed by men considering the size of the mask and the character that must be played, which depicts tigers that we are already aware that the nature or character of this animal is strong, ferocious, savage, agile, and mighty. Therefore, it has a small chance to be performed by a woman.

Likewise, the female *Pembarong* in the Barongan Samin Edan performance certainly has a quite complex role. According to Sarwono (2012) and in theatrical performances, the role is a person's position in a drama or theater where he has to play as a certain character or figure and behave according to the character. The position of an actor in theater or drama is analogous to that of a person in society, both of which have similar positions.

Women, if further understood, have an important role in the survival of life. When they act as mothers, it shows that they are the first place of learning for the next generation (children). Therefore, they are often seen as a benchmark that the good or bad of children depends on their mother's education. The family as the smallest sub-system of society has a strategic function in instilling the values of equality and educational values in every activity and pattern of relations between families. It is because the family has a structured role and function.

The structural-functional theory stated that humans are a social system consisting of interrelated parts (Wadiyo, 2008). Just as in a complete family consisting of father, mother, and children who have their respective roles, if one is damaged, it will affect the structure of functions and other roles. For example, when a father dies in a family, the mother becomes a single parent, meaning the mother acts as both mother and father.

Similar to the structure in society, a performance also has its structure, function, and role. The structure of performance consists of aspects that concern the entire work of art to realize the performance of the work of art. According to Jazuli (1994, p. 45), structure in works of art is a state that is interrelated to one another in an organism and has the same purpose. For example, research by Wiratini (Wiratini, 2007) explained that there would be an increase in the participation and interest of women in the city of Denpasar to engage in Balinese performing arts to maintain the sustainability of performing arts that grow and develop in Bali.

Women often have an important role in a show or performance as we know they are beautiful creatures. The beauty of a woman is often used as an excuse for artists to attract the audience's attention.

The female *pembarong* in the Samin Edan Barongan Group has certainly given a distinct impression compared to the male *pembarong*. Masculinity, movement techniques, and appreciation of the role performed by the female *pembarong* do not have an alienating effect on the audience; instead, the audience is fascinated by her cross-gender performance. The innovation of the transition between the male *pembarong* to female *pembarong* is the difference, and according to Tunner in Simatupang (2013: 173), during the liminal (threshold) stage, 'unusual events take place and which he calls anti-structural. The cross-gender that occurs in female *pembarong* in the Barongan Samin Edan Group performance seems to convey an implicit message about the existence of gender equality and the values of humanism.

A large number of female participants in the arts significantly impact the development of art in Indonesia, especially in Central Java. It is marked by the increasing dominance of women's role in artistic activities, one of which is the performing arts. It can be proven by the many scientific works discussing art that lives and develops in society. For example, previous

scientific work discussing the Barongan Samin Edan Group has already been conducted by Monika (2018), whose study discusses the criteria for being a female *pembarong*. Another previous research discussing gender equality has also been widely discussed, one of which is a research by Wiratini (Wiratini, 2007) entitled "The Role of Women in Balinese Performing Arts Performances in Denpasar City," which discussed the increasingly dominant role of women in Balinese performing arts.

This research also discusses the role of women in the performing arts of dance. However, the discussion regarding the role of female *pembarong* in the Barongan Samin Edan Group performance in Semarang City has yet to be conducted in-depth so it gives the researchers the opportunity to focus on discussing the role of women and humanistic values in it. To explore the research on the Barongan Samin Edan Group, the researchers have tried to formulate several problems, namely; (1) What is the position and role of female *pembarong* in the Samin Edan Group Barongan performance in Semarang?; (2) How is the humanistic value reflected in the Samin Edan Group Barongan performance?

This research is expected to be useful in providing insight to those who wish to study the research object of the Barongan Samin Edan Group in Semarang. The results of this study can be used as a reference as well as a means of developing knowledge about art, society, and education both formally and non-formally.

METHOD

This research used an interdisciplinary approach, namely the approach obtained, whether in the form of art, dance, sound, or other phenomena that occur must be reviewed to find the deepest meaning (Tjetjep Rohendi Rohidi, 2011, p. 219). Two data collection techniques were used in this study, namely, the field and the library. Observation,

interviews, and document studies were carried out during the field data collection.

Observations in this research were conducted by directly observing the performance of the Barongan Samin Edan Semarang Group, which aims to obtain accurate data about the form of the performance. The researchers conducted free observations to get comprehensive and objective data about Barongan Samin Edan in terms of the form of the performance, the role of female barongan performers, and the humanistic values contained in the performance.

The interview is a data collection technique in which verbal communication occurs between the interviewer and the interview subject (Moleong: 2002). The conversation in the form of verbal communication was carried out by the researcher (interviewer), who asked several informants who initiated the Barongan Samin Edan Group, dancers, musicians, and the local community. The purpose of the interview is to obtain information about events that researchers cannot directly observe by themselves because the actions or events observed occurred in the past or due to other factors (Tjetjep Rohendi Rohidi, 2011).

Document studies carried out by researchers were in the form of collecting and studying documents related to the form of Barongan performances, especially regarding the role of female *pembarong* and the value of humanism. The documents obtained from informants included photos, sound recordings, and videos of Barongan performances. The document studies were conducted to obtain information from various parties to gain more information related to research problems.

The researchers used a triangulation technique as the data validation technique. The source triangulation technique was chosen to achieve the criteria for the degree of trust so that readers can understand it and be proven by the people involved who provide information during the research (Sumaryanto, 2007).

The source triangulation technique, namely the process of testing trustworthiness, can be carried out by examining and matching the data from various sources obtained during the research. Its implementation was done through direct observation at the research location and interviews with the creators of the Barongan Samin Edan Group, dancers, musicians, and the local community.

The data analysis techniques in this study used interactive data analysis according to Miles and Huberman in Rohidi (2011) to analyze the position and role of women pembarong and the humanistic values reflected in the Samin Edan Group Barongan performance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Position and Role of Female Pembarong

Barongan is a form of performance whose form is divided into two: presentation without trance or means possessed by spirits accompanied by presentation in trance (Slamet: 1999). We explore it starting from the performance which consists of pre-performance, comedy, barongan, reogan, main stories, Balinese dance attractions, and Gandariya dance. The performance with trance includes the pre-performance, the battle between Barongan and Pujangga Anom, which Barongan wins, the arrival of Jaka Lodra with Nayantaka and Untub to defeat Barongan, the cavalry release, and the trance scene led by a handler.

According to (Slamet: 2003), pembarong (performers or people who perform barongan performances) is appointed based on their ability in terms of movement technique. In general, the Barongan is played by a man because dancing requires much energy. Furthermore, Barongan itself weighs approximately 30 kg for the large size. However, pembarong can also be performed by a woman. The phenomenon of female pembarong can be found in the Barongan Samin Edan group.

The female pembarong, in the storyline performed by Barongan Samin Edan, plays the role of a Barongan character or totem animal which is the incarnation of Gembong Amijaya. The people of Blora believe that the existence of a tiger animal spirit can drive away evil spirits that can harm the local community's safety. Durkheim reinforces that totemism is not individual but always related to community values. The belief in certain totem animals exists since these animals symbolize unity among the members of their community. Therefore, (Durkheim, 2003: 208) stated that the values contained in the totem animal are believed to be good and reflected as well as used as a guide to moral values in living together.

According to Levy Strauss, totemism is a form of incarnation of nature in a moral order. The problem in totemism is the system of relations between nature and humans, further formulated as a systematized relation between culture (humans) and nature (Baal, 1988, p. 140). Strauss provided an explanation that can be used as a link to understand the concept of the Blora community's understanding of the presence of the totem animal spirit, namely the tiger. Barongan, which weighs approximately 30 kg, is performed with the power of its bite and neck muscles. The female pembarong's ability is trained by tough training and spiritual training.

Prihartini (2007: 123) stated that barongan dancers are the actors in an activity that pays attention to the number, gender, and character of the dance performed. In this case, the dancers convey the meaning of the dance with the movements and characters they perform.

The barongan figure in a legend believed by the people of Blora Regency has magical powers, which were lifted from the story of Malat Panji, who wanted to propose to Dewi Sekar Taji. The story is based on a story that developed in the people of Blora Regency. The story is about Panji Asmara Bangun in the performance version of

Barongan Samin Edan. It began with Patih Bujangganom/Pujangga Anom, ordered by the Duchy of Bantarangin, namely Prabu Klana Sewandana from the Kingdom of Kediri, to propose to Dewi Sekartaji. On the other hand, it turned out that Raden Panji Asmara Bangun from the Kingdom of Jenggala also sent Lurah Nayantaka and Gainah to propose to Dewi Sekartaji. Furthermore, the Wengker Forest was inhabited and guarded by Singobarong or Barongan, the incarnation of Gembong Amijaya. Therefore, Nayantaka and Gainah asked Joko Lodra and his cavalry (jathil) to help defeat Barongan.

The view of gender in our society is a social construction through which they objectify. As mentioned by Berger & Luckmann (1991: 121), a context is formed based on the construction of shared meaning regarding the role concept. They call it a form of reification, namely understanding the products of human activity as if they were not human products. Reification implies that humans can forget that they have produced the human world and that the dialectic between humans, who produce, and whose products has been lost in consciousness.

The understanding of gender roles in society, called nature or destiny, is a form of human objectification itself. Berger & Luckmann (Berger, P.L., & Luckmann, 1991) also emphasized that once an objective social world is created, there will be a strong possibility of reification. The objectivity of the social world means that humans face it as something outside themselves. Through reification, the world of institutions merges with the world of nature. It becomes a necessity and destiny and is lived as such with joy or sorrow, depending on the circumstances. It is in line with one of the beliefs of liberal feminists that inequality between men and women is socially constructed, and has no basis in "nature" or "god's will" (Ritzer, G., & Goodman, 2010, p. 421). It is likewise with the gender roles in a culture or society.

The role of women in the Barongan Samin Edan performance, apart from being a *pembarong*, also plays the role of cavalry dancers (*jathil*) and *gainah*. The *Jathil* dance movements created by choreographer Barongan Samin Edan are in the Surakarta style combined with several *Jathil* movements from three regions: Blora, Wonosobo, and Ponorogo. In the Barongan Samin Edan group, *Jathil* dance moves are slightly more feminine, agile, and sophisticated. However, it still does not leave the side of firmness/soldiership. In this case, the problem of gender stereotypes can be seen in the characterizations above. Even though men should perform Barongan, it is performed by women in the Barongan Samin Edan performance bringing out the novelty and unique impression.

The domination of the role and participation of women as arts performers has a strong impact on the form and content of the performing arts being staged. It is due to the fact that the performing arts repertoire played by Barongan Samin Edan, which is even though a work created by Endik Guntaris with male gender, its artistic values consist of male and female artistic expressions, have been integrated. However, the participation of women has changed the appearance of the performing arts, which implies that this art no longer belongs only to men now.

The performance art of Barongan Samin Edan performed by women has a quite complex meaning from cultural, social, and welfare aspects. Its cultural meaning concerns the defense, revitalization, and development of local cultural traditions. Its social meaning is related to the increased sense of togetherness among activists and the opening of space for artistic creativity to take place for women. The meaning of well-being relates to increased prosperity, including spiritual and material satisfaction obtained from artistic activities.



Figure 1. Female Pembreng of Barongan Samin Edan

The dancer is a presenter in the performing arts of dance. The dancers in the Barongan character are performed as 4 (four) dancers, 3 (three) of whom are male dancers and 1 (one) female dancer. This barongan dance is a single dance, but 4 (four) dancers dance it. The barongan dancers of the Barongan Samin Edan group, both genders, have no difference in their performance roles. The movements and characters are still the same, namely strong, agile, and brave, even though one of the dancers is a woman.

Jathil dancers in Barongan Samin Edan have a sassy, cool, agile, and energetic character. In this case, the Jathil dancers in Barongan Samin Edan are women, totaling 8 (eight) dancers. It is a single dance danced in groups with an average age of 20 to 24 years. The number of Jathil dancers amounts to 8 (eight) dancers because it aims to make Jathil movements look sleek and build a lively atmosphere.

The Jathil dancers in Barongan Samin Edan depict beautiful and brave female warriors on horseback. These dancers ride braid horses or jaranan (rocking horses made of woven bamboo). The expression or greget of a dancer shows dexterity and expertise in fighting on a horse. In the performance, the jathil dancers pair up with each other.

Gender, as a biological and social identification associated with the behavior of men and women, is a social construction that refers to existing value systems and ideologies. Along with existing social changes, these values and ideologies will differ from time to time so that the determination of the positions, roles, and behavior of women and men, which

will then create the existing division of labor, will, in turn, differentiate jobs that are only deemed appropriately performed by women or men.

Until now, the patriarchal ideology that places the position of men above the position of women and gender stereotypes that give certain labeling or marking to men and women are still deeply rooted and pervasive in various aspects of people's lives. However, in the context of this study, data shows that the existence of art groups was able to act as an agent of socialization and change in constructing the roles of men and women.

The existence of opportunities and chances for women's involvement in the process of dance creations in Barongan Samin Edan, which is used as a setting in this study, shows that structurally, there are no social boundaries between men and women. In the Barongan Samin Edan group, there are also no efforts to differentiate the roles of men and women through different types, forms, materials, or dance movement structures.

This condition is a form of gender resistance in Barongan Samin Edan. It can be seen by looking at the attitude of openness in providing wider chances/opportunities to create dances for women. The forms and types of works, in the context of gender stereotypes, are identified as elements of dance movements that are suitable and usually performed by men. However, it is followed and in demand by many female dancers.

In addition to this gender resistance, female dancers carry out gender adaptation measures. These actions, in particular, can be seen from the way he is dressed in various daily activities, for example: always wearing trousers (usually tend to be jeans). However, some of them are also still hooded (Muslim dress).

The difference between the strength of objective reality experienced by dancers in the role construction process that occurs in the social environment of the family and society provides evidence that in our society, there are still strong pervasive attitudes, views, values,

and behaviors that cause differences in social areas between male and female dancers.

Women in various existing social contexts still have limitations in carrying out various social interactions, while men with various attitudes, views, values, and behaviors of our society have more opportunities to carry out social interactions with the existing objective reality.

The dominant number of female dancers in Barongan Samin Edan, on the one hand, is evidence that shows an increase in women's participation in the public sphere. However, based on data obtained by researchers in certain cases provides information that the involvement of women in art groups is only an attempt by each individual to find their social space.

The Barongan Samin Edan performance does not have strict rules and tends to be more free and unbounded by conventions. The scene shown can be incomplete or structured. The music played is also given a touch of working on new music and added with improvisation following the dancers' movements. The Barongan Samin Edan performance is often shown on an open and closed stage, with the audience mingling directly with the performance.

The form of dance presentation is the overall form of a performance in which some main aspects or elements are arranged in such a way as to have aesthetic value. Like the Barongan Samin Edan, the form of the performance is arranged to become an interesting performance. The elements in it form the form performance itself. These elements are inseparable units because they have functions that support each other. It follows the opinion of Suzanne K. Langer regarding the notion of form; namely, form is an overall unitary result of a relationship of interrelated elements (Langer, 2006, p. 15).

Humanistic Values

Humanism is a characteristic or something important or useful for humanity that can perfect humans following their

complete human nature (Firdaus & Mariyat, 2017). According to Sunarto (2014: 18), value theory refers to values that have various forms and forms in human behavior.

The humanistic values in the Barongan Samin Edan performance can be seen from a process in the form of hominization or human formation and humanization or the practice of humanity, through the stages of the process, as follows: 1) from planning to determining rehearsals and performances, 2) repeated joint rehearsals, 3) performing on stage following the concept of work that the choreographer, 4, has conceptualized) collaboration between dancers, choreographers, and musicians in the performance.

The process that takes quite a long time to produce a work on the barongan performance in a creative process contains aspects that accompany the journey to form humanistic values. In other words, there are complex things in the creative process through the stages discussed earlier.

Humanists put the liberation and development of the individual personality as the main thing. Individuals in the Barongan Samin Edan Art are always allowed to actualize themselves to become artists with autonomy and integrity fully. They are allowed to explore their styles in responding to various dance styles. Behavioral psychology (behaviorism) is not used as a basis because it is too mechanistic and is seen as inadequate in dealing with affective matters in human life.

Maslow (2013) stated that learning is about oneself who is looking at the responses to the "peak experiences" experienced that generate feelings of love, hate, anxiety, depression, and excitement. Through this special experience, a person will realize their potential and limitations. According to Maslow, the peak experience of fear, awe, and mystery is both the end and the beginning of learning.

This peak experience can be built with environmental challenges given to artists according to their competence. The peak experience will not be achieved if the

environmental challenge is not interesting and too heavy, so that it will cause anxiety or vice versa. It is not challenging and interesting, so it is boring. A distinctive personality will be fully developed through the peak experience that makes the Barongan Samin Edan performers no longer distinguish between themselves and what they are doing. For this reason, the choreographer, in this case, the choreographer Barongan Samin Edan, needs to provide a warm and friendly atmosphere for their dancers while preparing themselves to become a reliable candidates for the next barongan choreographer.

With the characteristics of humanist artists, the creative process obtains more attention. The process is more important for humanist artists than the result (product). If a creative activity has provided a peak experience for artists, it has met their expectations. It is because such activities can awaken artists to their various potentials.

The peak experience allows their emotions to be naturally involved because works of art can influence feelings such as anxiety, anger, and joy. The intellectual aspect of the Barongan Samin Edan dancers is also involved in the aesthetic experience because, throughout the intensive creative process with symptoms of beauty, they perform analysis, synthesis, abstraction, and evaluation. The aesthetic experience gives a physical effect, such as beating the heart or causing a reflex movement for the dancers. Therefore, Knieter (1982) emphasizes that the aesthetic experience provided in the creative process should be directed, structured, and not spontaneous.

The aspects of the creative process described above are in line with expressionism in art, which places the main emphasis on the process of creation. Not surprisingly, expressionism has a major place in providing humanistic-based aesthetic experiences (art education). Art as an expression of the inner soul soon becomes an inseparable part of humanistic creative activities. By allowing each Barongan Samin Edan dancer to express

themselves honestly and personally, they are allowed to grow and develop in a healthy, creative, and complete manner. Providing space for free expression to all dancers is key in the creative process of Barongan Samin Edan because it is a manifestation of the choreographer's hopes, namely to always offer a liberating artistic experience.

It is important to reposition the creative process that forms an individual's humanist character. Furthermore, education through art is the basis for forming a humanist character. In a sense, if the realm of the creative process only focuses on the dancers' ability to master the work or technically given by the choreographer to achieve proficiency without discussing the ethical values of life, it is a loss in terms of a goal of education through art.

If viewed humanistically from Barongan Samin Edan, the social aspects already involve directly both inside and outside the academic sphere. Inside the academic sphere, socialization, such as cooperating with each other, is formal. However, outside of academics, the social aspect has far more content than the academic sphere. For example, carrying out exercises outside the academic scope at night. This exercise is a form of independent learning and is effective in the creative process. The more exercises we take, the deeper we learn the motion material given by the choreographer.

The creative process is not just a transfer of knowledge from and to the artist but rather the transfer of values. Therefore, when viewed from Barongan Samin Edan, it has shown a creative process with great potential for choreographic knowledge and the values of human life directly. The transfer of knowledge and values to artists naturally occurs during the creative process.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, by looking at the elements of being in progress in the stage of cultivation, there are some adjustments in terms of the elements and performances of

Barongan Samin Edan, especially in the Barong (macanan) dancers. After observing this process in detail by a choreographer who can be said to be a professional, it ultimately leads to a women's Barongan performance like Barongan danced by men in general. However, there are slight differences in terms of power, volume, the intensity of movement, and achievement of movements.

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