

**NON-FORMAL EDUCATION AS CULTURE TRANSFORMATION AGENT TOWARDS
THE DEVELOPMENT OF CLASICAL COURT DANCE IN YOGYAKARTA, INDONESIA**

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Abstract

The discourse of arts inheritance is an authorization generated by the palace in Yogyakarta as the dominant part in society of Yogyakarta, Indonesia. As time pass by, the deployment strategy of Yogyakarta Classical Dance Style out of the palace generates an art that becomes a collective memory of the community to express its identity. The inheritance must be done even though there is pressure from other discourse that keeps growing in the community. In order to implement the inheritance of the artistic heritage of the Palace, the agents of cultural transformation plays a very important in the inheritance process. At present, the agent of cultural transformation in Yogyakarta is a non-formal educational institution that supports the palace by providing a very effective teaching and learning process outside the palace. This paper will discuss how the history of non-formal art education institutions began and the basic aspects of teaching and learning process that is governed by the agent.

Keywords: Non-Formal Education, Culture Transformation, Classical Dance of Yogyakarta Style, Indonesia

(1) Introduction

The term transformation means change in form, appearance, nature, or character. If the definition of "transformation" has a universal meaning in human life activity, hence the sense of transformation can be applied to the study of transformation of dance as art in Indonesia, which involves changes in form, appearance, situation and character (Hersapandi, 2005). The discussion about transformation in life's tradition poses various questions concerning the tradition values that are believed to be the truth. In life, custom or traditional arts it can be seen from two different perspectives. The first perspective, art is understood as an art tradition that exists and continuously presented as customs. In this case, tradition is the main thing, while art is the supporting tool or can be a tool to reinforce the tradition. The second perception, traditional art can be understood as forms of art that has a tradition in the sense of norms and rules of fixed arrangement. In this case, the art itself is the subject of, or a dance that has a tradition as an independent activity. Both perceptions of traditional dance take different logical consequence. For example, art tradition is developed as an art that can preserve tradition with the main purpose to create and encourage a sense of togetherness among the residents of a community. While traditional art that has a number of norms and rules are still aiming to develop sense of beauty by creating effective motion techniques.

Based on these two perspectives, the phenomenon of transformation agents' existence in the art of dance will be looked into. The dance created essentially according to the level of intellectual ability and creativity of the artists and supporters by considering the potential and quality of traditional values that evolves and reflects from time to time. These values carry a development that dance is a media of delivery that has philosophy and high moral teachings from a historical phenomenon (historical history). This problem may be traced back to the phenomenon of history itself, how the dance changed, why it changed, what or who was the agent of change (R.M. Soedarsono, 2000).

The presence of a dance art form is a medium to deliver the emotive human feeling which is closely related to the arrangement of aesthetic and symbolic expression. It's individual and collective characteristics relates to the importance of the community that supports it. The existence of art in Yogyakarta is undergoing a deployment process that appears in environmental and time conditions by taking into consideration the concept of main idea in the construction of the art works. This includes the learning aspects along with the overall refine results and the creation of the works by showing the relationship between the existences of the art with the aspects the influence the dissemination of an element of culture.

By understanding the learning aspects and for the purpose of analysis on the concept of culture, the elements of culture must be addressed universally as well as the contents of all the cultures that exist in the world, which are: (1) religious system and ritual ceremony, (2) systems and community organizations, (3) knowledge system, (4) language, (5) arts, (6) economic system, (7) technology system. The seven universal elements can be divided into its sub elements. This existed in the discussion about the culture of the classical dance art form in Java, especially Yogyakarta. The elements related to culture mentioned earlier such as education, the arts, communications, and commercial art as art products developed for tourism (in the context of the economy), and political

aspects that are absorbed in character building and national integration occur in the development of the art of Yogyakarta classical dance style.



Plate 1. Yogyakarta Classical Dance Style (photo by the author, October 2013)

By tracing the history of Javanese dance before independence, two dance traditions are identified, namely (1) classical dance and, (2) folk dance (Tati Narawati, 2009:70). The tradition of classical dance developed well in the Yogyakarta palace and Surakarta palace. In the historical aspect, the division of the Javanese palace culture has also divided the classical dance tradition into two styles, the Yogyakarta style and the Surakarta style. Both are separated since the Giyanti's agreement initiated in 1755 and has divided the kingdom into Kasunan Mataram Islam and the Sultanate of Surakarta Hadiningrat Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat (R.M. Soedarsono, 2000: 35).

Court Dance, also known as "adi luhung" art was initially enjoyed by the aristocrats, then, evolved outside of the palace so that the public can also enjoy and learn it. Sultan Hamengku Buwono VII permitted people outside the palace to learn the palace dance, but these activities were conducted outside the palace. In 1918, the Krida Beksa Wirama dance organization was established and pioneered by two princes, named Pengeran Tedjokusuma and Pengeran Suryodinigrat (Fred Wibowo, 1982). During the war of independence, the arts activities in the Yogyakarta palace came to a halt. In order to develop the palace art, the Sultan relocated the art activities to Ndalem Purwadiningratan in 1951. This is to enable dance and kerawitan enthusiasts outside the palace to learn the art.

(2) The Existence of Non-formal Education in Sanggar Tari (Dance studio/Community)

Non-formal education in Yogyakarta is always associated to the development of a sanggar tari (dance studio) or dance organization. Sanggar means a group of dancers gathering as a unit to execute or organize an agenda, or arts events such as dance training, performance or other art events. Dance studios that still exist in Yogyakarta include: Irama Tjitra established in (1949), Panguyuban Siswa Among Beksan established in (1952), Mardawa Budaya established in (1962)

and Pemulangan Beksan Ngayogyakarta established in (1976), then in 1992 both the latter organizations merged to become Yayasan Pemulangan Beksas Sasmita Mardawa (YBPSM) dan Paguyuban Kesenian Surya Kencana (1979). However, there are only five that are still acknowledged by the Department of Culture of Yogyakarta and they are: (1) Yayasan Beksas Sasmita Mardawa led by Mother Sutiyah, S. Sn., (2) Yayasan Siswa Among Beksas, led by Mr. RM Dinusatomo, BA (KRT Pujaningrat), (3) Panguyuban Kesenian Surya Kencana led by Mr. RM Yuanjono, (4) Irama Tjitra, led by Drs . Sunardi, and (5) Retno Aji Mataram led by Mr Sunaryadi, S.ST. , M.Sn. ,

Considering the time of establishment for all of the sanggar (dance studios), it can be said that the sanggar are old and still exist until now. This shows that the presence of the functional value from various interests must be continued in the preservation of Yogyakarta classical dance style from one generation to another generation or can be classified in the form of dance inheritance. We can also see how Yogyakarta classical dance style has undergone a transition from a performance only to be enjoyed by the royalties to dance teaching and activities outside the palace walls when Sultan Hamengku Buwono VII has given permission to the public to learn court dance. This is a political strategy done by the ruler in order for the public to enjoy classical dance forms.

This form of inheritance refers to the mechanisms of cultural transformation agent that can be seen in internal and external conditions of the community and practitioners to impart their passion for dance to the next generation. The term inheritance is supported by the ability of the human resources of both parties (educators) or students (the next generation) to form a future generation in understanding the art whilst helping future generations to appreciate the art that is about to be inherited.

The concept of inheritance has one conclusion and that is the process of acceptance from one stage to the next. This process is considered as a cultural identity of or art that has been handed down from one generation to another generation supported in various forms. A dance form can be inherited through oral tradition, materials, education or documentation process conducted by the heir of the guardians of the tradition in order to ensure the aspirations of the art of dance withstand time.

Therefore the educational process is interrelated to the transformation agent towards the development of Yogyakarta classical dance style which is this case, a non-formal educational institutions is the dance organization that develops outside the palace through dance studios located throughout Yogyakarta. The non-formal educational institution aims to provide arts education by bringing the students nearer to the beautiful characteristics in human life, for in the culture of the arts, human life is the highest form of living things as compared to any living creature. (Titik Putraningsih, 2007). The arts education gained benefits from formal education institutions by producing individuals who have confidence and good character.

The efforts to sustain the Yogyakarta classical dance style has all this while been done by an expert in the field of Yogyakarta classical dance style named K.R.T Sasmintadipura or more commonly known as Rama Sas (Titik Putraningsih, 2007). He is creative and productive is his effort to ensure that the society will always be interested in the Yogyakarta classical dance style.

Ram Sas is known as a renewal figure in the development of the art of Yogyakarta classical dance styles for taking risks in the performance by making the dance form in a shorter duration just to avoid boredom amongst the audience and to make an interesting non-dramatic choreography, *beksan pethilan* and Ramayana Ballet Performance specially for a tourist package. However, the dance forms that do not leave out the *paugeran* (border) or norm in Yogyakarta classical dance styles. Besides that, the Yayasan Siswa Among Beksa has also provided benefits to students with audio-visual learning such as learning the *Golek Clunthang*, the Batik dance, the Beksan Heroine Larasati dance, the Beksan Heroine Bhishma dance, the Srimpi Pandelori dance, the Srimpi Gambirsawit dance, the Bedhaya Sangupati dance, and so on.

The Yogyakarta classical dance style can be used as a source of inspiration for movement that can be explored to become a piece of dance work. The students are not only expected to gain benefits merely on the dance technique skills. After receiving guidance from a reliable resource, the students are expected to acquire educational knowledge about cultural values and insights in a broader sense from the dance lessons that they have taken.

The non-formal educational institutions in Yogyakarta played an important role by contributing a very large part to the transformation of Yogyakarta classical dance styles. The education system in Indonesia clearly states that the national education aims to improve the quality of Indonesians and that is the man who is faithful to the Almighty God, virtuous, has good character, independent, advanced, powerful, intelligent, creative, skilled, disciplined, has work ethic, responsible, professional, and productive, as well as physical and spiritual (Suwardi Endraswara, 2006). Referring to the aims of the national education, it is agreed that art education is to be a part of the school's curriculum. The art education particularly dance revives and expands under the non-formal educational institutions. After experiencing a fairly rapid growth and benefits the lives of people, it then developed in formal educational institutions.

The benefit of arts education in non-formal educational institutions is for the profession and self-improvement. Education through art is very beneficial to character building in accordance with the national education goals that is to be achieved by the people of Indonesia. Character education and attitude need not be acquired through formal education (Suwardi Endraswara, 2006). Through the arts, especially from the dance lessons, ethics and attitude useful for daily life can also be learnt. Dance Organization or studios that still exist in Yogyakarta are: Yayasan Pamulangan Beksa Sasmita Mardawa, Yayasan Siswa Among Beksa, Panguyuban Kesenian Surya Kencana, Sanggar Kesenian Irama Tjitra, and Paguyuban Retno Aji Mataram provide education program that contains educational Javanese cultural values. Through organizations such as these, basic educational and spiritual knowledge particularly in the palace of Yogyakarta can be taught or learnt.

Education is associated with attitude or manner in human relationships. During the course of the dance study, the student is given a set of *paugeran* (rules) of motion that is trained systematically and performed in tune with the rhythm of accompaniment. When this is mastered then their daily interactions, behavior and attitude will be seen as pleasant, organized and do not pose a rigid and awkward character that can raise ill feelings in the society. The *paugeran* in the Yogyakarta classical dance style, is prepared based on research of character of a human body that

can execute a *luwes* (flexible) and beautiful motion system; that it will affect the daily life. In a long and continuous learning process, the character will develop towards a good behaviour (Joan Suyenaga, 1999).

After participating in educational programs such as dance training (courses), students are expected to be skilful and *luwes* (flexible) while dancing appropriately with the music accompaniment and the dance character played. Moreover, students are expected to develop, both as a dancer or dance teacher. The educational program is divided into a number of classes that can be classified into a male dance and a female dance. The dance lessons are conducted within a three year course that consist stage as follows; (1) the basic phase, (2) skilled stage, and (3) advanced stages.

(3) Learning and Teaching Aspect Through Dance Studio

1. Imitation Aspects

Imitation is the most effective preservation method of the Yogyakarta Classical Dance Style in inheritance. This is because imitation is easy to do and it does not give additional physical and cognitive load for students through explicit teaching. It is not surprising that imitation is the most traditional method that has been used in the palace for a long time and also commonly used in non-formal institutions. Formal institutions such as the Art Institute of Indonesia also rely on imitation methods for teaching together with theoretical explanations to increase understanding. Imitation, however, was only possible when practicing the the Yogyakarta classical dance style, not on the philosophy of the Yogyakarta classical dance style. This is because both have the different cognitive and social mechanisms. The case is equivalent to the case of learning to say the words against the case to understand the meaning of the words. However in the aspects of imitation, there might be a problem with the existence of an imitator. A person who imitates will not be equal or get better recognition than the person who is being imitated. On the other hand, the imitation method needs resources because the actual imitator must align themselves with the character that is being imitated, rather than using the existing resources to produce a new work. Therefore, the Yogyakarta classical dance style will not be sustainable if it only relies on imitation. The imitator will feel the existence gradually disappearing and ends up being demotivated to do the imitation.

2. Feeling Aspects

The feeling aspects or the philosophy of the Yogyakarta classical dance style is inherited formally and dialectically. The Formal Inheritance is done directly through the teaching of philosophical values of the Yogyakarta classical dance style. This is generally done in formal institutions. Inheritance occurs dialectically through a dialogue between students and teachers. Interesting enough, this inheritance is done specifically in non-formal institutions. There are two possible explanations over these findings. First, the feeling aspects are not taught in non-formal institutions until there is a need from the student to question the matter. This is in contrast with the formal institutions that already have a curriculum for it until the students have sufficient references from the existing text. Second, students in formal institutions are pressured by the academician's

responsibility to ensure that the students complete the study with good grades in order to suppress critical thinking. Traditionally, critical thinking skills are often associated with disobedience and thereby decrease or destroy the achievements. This is even worse if the teacher is sensitive towards criticism and sees that critical thinking is an attempt to question his authority.

The effects may be worsening if the teacher does not know how to explain when requested by the student. This Psychological distress does not appear amongst students in the studio. They pay their fees and do not have a deadline for when to finish studying. As long as they pay their fees, the studio will provide any needs related to the Yogyakarta classical dance style. This allows the students to question the faculty members regarding the philosophical aspects of the Yogyakarta classical dance style at the studio. This often happens especially if the teachers who teach at the studio have a great reputation as a court dancer. The emergence of philosophical values of the Yogyakarta classical dance style in the studio indicates a positive thing for there is a mechanism such as institutions that emphasize on the practical aspects of the Yogyakarta classical dance style also allows the philosophical aspects to emerge and evolve.

4. Aspects of Cultural Identity

As described in the model of the Yogyakarta classical dance style developed by the author, the important aspect of inheritance for the Yogyakarta classical dance style is its' sense of belonging. It is due to this aspect a good model of inheritance should also encourage the inheritance agents' to experience positive growth in this sense of belonging. A sense of belonging relates to a broader entity and that is cultural identity. Cultural identity is the way in which individuals expressed him/her in relation to the group where he/she is in. In other words, cultural identity relates to how far a person can be considered as a Javanese. This identification is not unlimited. Individuals can identify themselves as long as it is within the possible norms made agreeable by the group. If the group assesses that the individual norms do not conform to the norms of the group, although the individuals identify themselves as members of a group, it is not acceptable and their identity remain as a non-member of the group. This cultural identity can be seen in an individual's collectivism spirit (whether horizontal or vertical), interdependency with society, orientation on cultural practices, familiarity, ethnic identity exploration, and ethnic identity affirmation. There are four types of cultural identity; subtractive identity, additive identity, affirmative identity, and intercultural identity. Subtractive identity is an individual whose cultural identity is gradually decaying. Additive identity in contrast, is an individual whose experience in cultural identity is gradually increasing. Affirmative identity is the identity of an individual who is unique and this individual feels that cultural identity is he/she and does not belong to any group. Intercultural identity refers to an individual whose identity is so great that he sees himself as a world citizen, and not a member of a particular culture. Subtractive and additive identity is a plural identity because the individual may have both identities at once or one might emerge when the other is dormant.

To achieve a certain cultural identity, an individual goes through five stages of identity development that is the conformity stage, the stage of dissonance, resistance and immersion stage, the stage of introspection, and the integration phase. These stages require the development of an

identity crisis condition in which a person doubts his/her membership in a society and finally decides on whether to let go or strengthen the bond with a new awareness. The study reveals that if an individual has high cultural identity and shows signs of inheritance, this individual tends to have higher academic achievement than the individual student who does not have the awareness of the inheritance.

The Yogyakarta classical dance style as an indicator of cultural identity has a clear rule and therefore it is easy to see whether or not the individual is dancing the Yogyakarta classical dance style. The Institutions must stick to the standard rule in order to identify themselves as part of the Yogyakarta classical dance style. The presence of formal institutions and certain non-formal in the palace are evidence that these institutions have a cultural identity that is attached to the royal institution.

However, the stature of cultural identity of the dancers of the Yogyakarta classical dance style may vary from each other. There are many personal reasons to dance the Yogyakarta classical dance style but these reasons are not based on cultural identity but rather on individual interest or at least on affirmative identity. This kind of identity can be regarded as a subtractive identity for the dancers from Yogyakarta while it becomes additive identity for the Yogyakarta classical dance style dancers who come from outside Yogyakarta. It is hoped that this is a temporary condition for the Yogyakarta classical dance style dancers for it is still in the dissonance process. Eventually, one day a few of them may reach the stage of introspection and integration and finally become dancers of the Yogyakarta classical dance style who has the Yogyakarta classical dance style as cultural identity for them. As discovered in the earlier part of this research, matters such as this encourages the individual's learning performance, at least when learning intercultural outside Yogyakarta.

(4) Conclusion

The Non-formal education as an agent of cultural transformation for the development of the Yogyakarta classical dance style is a continuous change as part of the Yogyakarta classical dance style preservation process that is also the actual embodiment of a preservation agent. The preservation agent is a changing machine that always gives encouragement and motivation to run cultural shows and performances. A community of art preservation agents believes that the arts will continue to live on and is meaningful to the society in each generation of its era.

As a result of socio-cultural change, the agent and transformation channel for the Yogyakarta classical dance style is very determined by internal and external influences. This change in direction is very determined by intellectual competency in understanding how important it is to uphold and preserve the art of classical dance. It is through this framework, each generation will try to preserve the identity of arts and culture including the Yogyakarta classical dance style. The agents who play an important role as non-formal Education Institutions become advocates in making the Yogyakarta classical dance style well-known amongst the public. These agencies provide channels through the aspects of dance, dance lessons, dance performances and promotion that depicts a preservation process requires the assistance of these agencies especially to ensure that the

inheritance strategy of the Yogyakarta classical dance style occurs within the surrounding communities.

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