



The Geculan Bocah Dance Performance As A Creative Space for Children

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the creativity of children (dancers) in the Geculan Bocah dance performance and how the performance becomes a space to arouse creativity. The case study in this research was the phenomenon of the Geculan Bocah dance performance in Sanggar Tanuwiyoyo Semarang Regency. The method used is a qualitative research method through a phenomenological approach. Data collection was done by using the method of observation, interviews, and documentation. The data analysis test used the Miles and Hubberman model through data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Data validity used triangulation of sources, techniques, and methods. The results showed that Geculan Bocah dance performance consisted of 3 parts, namely the beginning, middle (core) and final (ending). Each part of the performance requires the creative role of the child as a dancer. Children's creative roles include individual creativity, collaborative creativity, and communal creativity. Individual creativity attempts every child to show good performance. Collaborative creativity can be seen in the cohesiveness and togetherness during the show. The communal creativity arises because it is influenced by the audience and the atmosphere of the performance. The Geculan Bocah dance performance is a creative product, a creative space/ process, and a driver for the development of children's creativity.

Keywords: dance, performance, children's creativity

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INTRODUCTION

As a medium of aesthetic expression, popular dance lives and develops among the supporting communities. One interesting phenomenon of folk dance to study is the presence of the Geculan Bocah Dance in several studios in the Telomoyo Slope and Mount Merapi Merbabu Slopes, such as in the Tanuwijoyo Studio in Semarang Regency and Warga Budaya Studio in Magelang Regency. Being viewed in terms of the performers, they have one aspect in

common, being danced by boys aged 4-12 years in groups. The basic idea originated from the Warok figure, but both have differences in the make-up and clothing they use.

The Geculan Bocah dance at the Tanuwijoyo Studio in Semarang Regency is usually held in an event of celebration, festival, and welcoming of tourists. The pattern of the show is usually adjusted to the interests of the show. The dynamics of dance performances for communal interests and tourism interests become the

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background of the author studying the Geculan Bocah dance performance at Tanuwijoyo Studio. Tanuwijoyo Studio is located in Tanon Hamlet, Ngrawan Village, Getasan Sub-District, Semarang Regency. Based on information from Trisno as the activator of folk art in Ngrawan Village, the performance of the Geculan Bocah Dance is always eagerly awaited by the surrounding community (interview with Trisno, February 14, 2018).

As an awaited performance, there surely are unique or unusual reasons. Simatupang states that if 'the ordinary' is understood as an everyday reality, the 'unusual' performance is an event that presents an everyday reality (Simatupang, 2013). The basic concept of the Geculan Bocah Dance is taken from the *warok* character with a fierce face and high *kanuragan* knowledge. The makeup and clothing of the Geculan Bocah dance adopts from *warok's* make-up and clothing as in the Reyog Ponorogo show. *Warok* comes from the word *wewarah* or *pitutur* (advice). In Javanese speech, it is explained that '*warok kuwi wong kang wis purna saka sakabehaning laku, lan wis menep ing rasa*', the meaning of *warok* is a person who is already perfect in his life behavior and is able to control his mind. It can be seen that the creative role of the actors represents *warok* figures. They present 'something unusual' about *Warok*. *Warok* in the minds of the general public is known as a figure of a man who is brave, fierce-faced and has a high *kanuragan* knowledge, apparently in this dance *warok* is played by children aged 4-12 years, so it is often called *Warok Bocah/Warok Kreasi*.

The children's movements that give the impression of being funny and adorable make the *Warok Bocah* dance also called the Geculan Bocah Dance. From the origin of the word, *Geculan Bocah* comes from the word *gecul* in Javanese which means funny and *bocah* which means children. The distinctive feature of the Geculan Bocah dance can be seen from the shape of the dancer's puffed cheeks (*mecucu*), while widening his eyes full of expression as if he challenges anyone in front of him. Per-

formance is more exciting when the scene fights or challenges alternately. The fighting scene requires a good inspiration and improvisation from the dancers to support the success of a performance.

The Geculan Bocah dance performance gives a space for the dancers to explore their creativity. Many people think that a good dance work is only seen from who the choreographer is, not by whom and how the role of the dancers (Farrer, 2014). Therefore, in this article the writer discusses further about how the creativity role of children (the Geculan Bocah dancers) in a performance is.

Simatupang asserted that art is a counter presentation of general assumptions through the enchanting reality-creator that was compiled through the application of techniques outside of everyday techniques. The success or failure of the ideas offered by art is not only influenced by the logical or illogical ideas offered, but also influenced by the ability of the art media to evoke a charm effect (Simatupang, 2016). The body is the most important expression media in dance, therefore the presence and creativity role of the body of the dancers is very important in supporting the success of a dance performance.

Research on dance performance as a creative space is based on several previous studies. Giguere's research entitled "Dancing thoughts: an examination of children's cognition and creative process in dance" proves that dance influences children's cognitive development. The process of creating dance in groups can develop children's cognitive abilities maximally (Giguere, 2015). Cognitive ability can be seen from its ability to combine concepts (generative processes), and till they dare to try to find new concepts (exploratory processes). The Geculan Bocah dance performance provides wider opportunities for children to develop their thinking skills, because a performance has gone through a series of multi-layered creative processes. Starting from how the dance was created, how the dance was taught, until the dance was staged.

Related research was also conducted by Farrel entitled *The Creative Dancer* in 2014 which provided a reference to the creative role of dancers in the creation of dance work. This research is based on the assumption that the role of dancers is often overlooked in the creation of dance works, whereas good creative work between choreographers and dancers is the key to the success of a dance work (Farrell, 2014). Based on these references, there has been much discussion about the creative process in the creation of dance works (choreography), but writing is rarely found that discusses the phenomenon of dance performance as a creative space for children.

METHOD

This study uses qualitative research methods through a phenomenological approach. Phenomenology seeks to provide a description of human experience. It covers the entire range of human experience regarding science, technology, art, culture, which reveals how the phenomenon is a construct of humans (Sutiyono, 2011). The phenomenological approach can see the opportunity to what extent the dancer's creative role in the Geculan Bocah performance.

The research location is in the Tanuwijoyo Studio, Tanon Hamlet, Ngrawan Village, Getasan Sub-District, Semarang Regency. Tanon Hamlet is located under the foot of Mount Telomoyo which is inhabited by 37 family heads. The data collection techniques used are interview, observation, and documentation. The interviews used are structured and unstructured interviews. The informants chosen included the chairman of *Pokdarwis* (Trisno), the leader of the art group (Bardi), the dance coordinator (Yon) and the dancer (Tanu). Observations were made by the researcher during the Telomoyo 02 Festival to observe the phenomenon of the Geculan Bocah dance performance which includes the process of preparation, performance, and after a performance. The documentation

used includes the documentation of the researcher and research. The documentation is in the form of photos, videos, and electronic newspapers that contain the Geculan Bocah Dance. The data validity was tested using triangulation techniques. There are three forms of triangulation according to Sugiyono including source triangulation, method triangulation and theory triangulation (Sugiyono, 2008). This research used source and method triangulation. Data analysis techniques used Miles and Huberman model data analysis. Data analysis includes data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. A conclusion can be drawn after triangulation in order to obtain valid data.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Geculan Bocah Dancers

The Geculan Bocah dancer consists of boys aged around 4-12 years. The dancers are in the age range from kindergarten to elementary school. Based on the data, currently, there are 8 children who join to become the Geculan Bocah dancers, who 2 people still go to kindergarten and 6 people go to elementary school. This age is a golden period to hone creativity (Chappell, 2007). In *Garis-Garis Besar Program Kegiatan Belajar Kanak-Kanak 1994*, it is stated that the development of creative power is an activity that aims to make children be creative, smooth, flexible and original, in speaking, thinking, and doing hand and body exercise as fine motor and gross motor exercises (Rahmawati, 2010, p. 52). When being viewed from the characteristics of elementary school-age children, they like to play, actively move, do group activities, and like direct practice (Burhaein, 2017). Based on this, the energetic Geculan Bocah Dance which is danced by the group is very suitable for the characteristics of the child. Dance performances have the opportunity as a space to develop children's creativity.

According to Yon as the dance coordinator, there are no special requirements to become a dancer, the main thing is the

willingness to practice (interview with Yon, dated February 12, 2019). They have some basic skills possessed by a dancer. Basic abilities that need to be possessed by a dancer consist of 3 things, namely *wiraga*, *wirama* and *wirasa* (Haryono, 2012). *Wiraga* means the ability to move the body in accordance with the intended dance motion, *wirama* means the ability to feel the accompaniment and adjust the motion to the accompaniment, *wirasa* means the ability to express dance movements. The Geculan Bocah Dancers can possess these three abilities because they practice intently. The most junior dancer named Tanu who aged 4 years old said that he was accustomed to watching the Geculan Bocah exercise since childhood (interview with Tanu on 12 February 2019). Since childhood, children are allowed to see dance performances that are held in the village and out of the village, so they are familiar with community art activities.

“Community support ranging from parents, community leaders, and the art supporters are very important. The majority of parents have been supporting their children in art activities. The value of education to introduce children to arts has been implanted since childhood by inviting their children to watch art performances”(Paranti & Putra, 2019)

Support from parents and the surrounding community towards children in carrying out artistic activities is important for the realization of high motivation. Children become more enthusiastic about practicing and feel more confident.

Geculan Bocah Dance Performance

An event has gone through a series of multi-layered creative processes. It started from how the work An event has gone through a series of multi-layered creative processes. Simatupang said that there are three characteristics of performance; 1) intent to perform; 2) presenting something unusual; 3) an event that brings the presenter's intention to hold something unusual in the hope that the audience will experience something unusual (Simatu-

pang, 2013). Even though the Geculan Bocah Dance has been repeatedly held, there is always something 'unusual'. This unusual thing is actually a gap for the presence of Geculan Bocah dance performers.

An anthropologist called Victor Turner stated that 'unusual' events occur in rituals, social drama, or theatrical drama. Borrowing and developing Arnold van Gennep's opinion about the structure of the ceremony, Turner discovered the structure of the ritual process into the stages of separation, liminal, and post-liminal. In the liminal phase, 'unusual' things occur in conventional everyday structures (Turner, 1982, p. 24). In line with Turner's opinion, there is also a liminal phase in the performance of the Geculan Bocah dance. The liminal phase appears when child dancers start to play the role of *warok*. *Warok* in the minds of the general public is known as a figure of a man who is brave, fierce and has high *kanuragan* knowledge. Apparently, in this dance *warok* is played by children.

The character of the Geculan Bocah dance movement is lively and energetic. The typical movement is *mecucu* while opening wide their eyes. This movement is rarely used by people in everyday life. This is in line with what was formulated by Barba regarding an "extra daily technique" which became an allure in performances (Simatupang, 2013). Similarly, A.Gell said that the technology built-in art aims to foster enchantment (Gell, 2005).

The Geculan Bocah Dance is categorized in folk art which has the characteristics of: 1) simple movement patterns; 2) lots of repetition; 3) focusing on compactness/togetherness. The Geculan Bocah dance pattern can be said to be simple because there is not much variation. Each range of motion can be done repeatedly. This is what makes this art able to last up to 30 minutes. If it is presented for tourism purposes, it can be cut to 15-20 minutes by minimizing repetition in each range of motion.

The Geculan Bocah dance structure is generally divided into 3 parts: the beginning, the middle (core), and the final part. The beginning part contains various ways

of respect as a symbol of respect for the audience. The core section contains 12 types of motion and 1 type of connector. Each range of motion is followed by a linking motion that serves as a marker of change from one variety to the next, namely the movement of *kuda-kuda menthul*. The final part is filled with respectful gestures and waving as a symbol of final respect for the audience.

Geculan Bocah Dance Performance as a Creative Space for Children

Arnold said that dance is a form of self-aesthetic expression in which creativity is needed (Arnold, 1986). Creativity is the ability to make new combinations based on data, information, or existing elements. People usually interpret creativity as creative power, the ability to create new things. In fact, what is created does not have to be anything new, but it is a combination of things that already existed before. Creativity in general can be viewed from 4 things; in terms of products, processes, personal, and booster (Soefandi & Pramudya, 2009). In terms of products, creativity is defined as the ability to create new and different products. If in terms of the process, creativity is seen as a busy activity that is effective. Being viewed from the personal side, creativity can be interpreted as the characteristics of creative personality in a person. Then, in terms of booster, it means that creativity can be as a booster both in the form of internal and external.

The Geculan Bocah dance performance is a creative product because it has gone through a series of creative processes from creation, training, to staging. Performance is also a creative process because the performance requires the creative role of children as dancers. Observations on the creative role of children can be seen through an analysis of the structure of the Geculan Bocah dance performance. The structure and creative role of the dancer can be seen in the Table 1.

Based on the Table 1, creative roles can be divided into 3 types, namely individual creativity, collaboration creativity and communal creativity (Chappell, 2009). Individual creativity is creativity that arises in everyone. Collaborative creativity is creativity that arises due to the influence of friends in a group (dance partner) so as to foster ideas that are mutually agreed upon. As explained by Luczink as follows:

“They acknowledge that creativity takes place over time, and most of the creativity occurs while doing the work. Working with the medium is also an essential part of creative process and the creators often get ideas while working with their materials. In this framework however, creativity happens purely in the mind of the creator who only interacts with the external world. On the other hand, a more sociocultural approach describes the conditions required for creativity at the level of culture, society or group showing the positive impact of diversity over group, trust and positive climate for experimentation” (Łuczniak, 2015).

Tabel 1. The Structure of Performance and The Dancer Creative Role

Structure	Description	Dancer Creative Role
The beginning	Contains a gesture of respect as a symbol of respect to the audience	Individual and collaborative creativity
The core section	Contains a variety of motions such as <i>trecet, nglayang, nggantung, adu, mendem, jingkrak, kiprah, perang gendhong, mlaku, gogok, njenthit</i> , and <i>gejlig mubeng</i> . The motions of <i>adu, mendem, jingkrak, kiprah, perang gendhong, mlaku, gogok, njenthit</i> , and <i>gejlig mubeng</i> is improvised motions where dancers may develop motion in accordance with their creativity	Individual, collaborative, and communal creativity
The end	Contains a gesture of respect and waving hands as a final tribute to the audience	Individual and collaborative creativity

Creativity often arises when working together or socializing. The communal creativity is creativity that arises due to the influence of outside parties such as the family environment, the surrounding community environment, schools, and cultural environment. Communal creativity in performance events also involves the audience in the performance. If it is related to the concept that folk art is an art that arises from the people, by the people, and for the people, then it is possible for the audience to be involved in the performance.

Ahead of the performance event, the children first go through the liminal phase, where this phase is a transition phase between the pre-performance phase towards the performance. At this stage, the children must prepare physically and mentally. The liminal phase is the starting point for children playing the role of *warok bocah* with a fierce but funny face. This is where the child's imagination is needed. The liminal phase requires high imagination and concentration for dancers. They are no longer themselves but play the role of *warok bocah*. In order for children to be able to demonstrate and express *warok*, they have gone through the earliest stages of the creative process, namely imagination. Janice Besty (cited in Rahmawati, 2010, p. 56) states that for children the imagination is the ability to respond or do the fantasy they make. Most children under 7 years old do a lot of that. Child specialists now know that imagination is one of the most effective things for developing intellectual abilities, social language, and especially children's creativity. Imagination can develop the power of thought and creativity, without being limited by everyday reality. He is free to think according to his experience and imagination. Imagination will help the ability to think fluently, flexibility, and originality in children.

Dancers try to play the intended expression in the Geculan Bocah dance. Expressions are collections of one's experiences that are framed and articulated. The children imagined what a *warok* would look like through a senior dancer story (generative process) so that they would be able to express the *warok* character with a fierce face that was integrated into the Geculan Bocah dance motions. This is where the creativity of each individual appears.

After going through the liminal phase, children enter the early part of the show. They exited the stage in a respectful gesture. This motion is a form of respect for the audience. Motion and floor patterns are the results of ag-

reements made when they practice. They try to compact one another. When the dancer enters the beginning of the show to the core, each movement of the motion range is marked by the linking motion of *kuda-kuda menthul*, making it easier for children to remember the order of the various motions. Their memory regarding the sequence of movements and dancing position (floor pattern) is trying to be optimized. It is required the ability to follow the accompaniment of music and express through gestures and facial expressions. In addition, it is also needed cohesiveness/togetherness as a characteristic of folk art. It was a funny creation when junior dancers moved ahead of other friends' movements and tried to readjust immediately. The audience laughed spontaneously because of their innocent facial expressions when they forgot, but tried to show cohesiveness and togetherness. In this section, children enter into the development of complex creativity (collaborative creativity).

The number of dancers is managed to be an even number because in this dance there are scenes of fighting or challenges. The highlight of the Geculan Bocah dance core is fighting. Fighting or challenge is an improvisational motion, where each pair alternately has a fight. When one couple collides, the other dancer sits in the back doing an improvised motion that intends to provide support to the dancers who compete. The improvisation of the dancers is also influenced by the atmosphere of the performance that was built by the audience. If the audience cheers and gives applause, then the children become more confident. The dancers must be fully aware of their role here. Although outside the stage they have planned concepts, but the reality on the stage is often different from practicing. According to Rahmawati, one of the efforts to develop children's creativity is through imagination and exploration (Rahmawati, 2010). The writer sees the different results of creativity in each child. There are children who are brave, energetic, and explore their characters well but some are still shy and tend to follow the movements of their friends. Nevertheless, the writer considers that their creative process is more important than the outcome. It is in this process that their self-development occurs.

The last part of the performance is filled with respectful walking. In this section, it appears to be individual and collaborative creativity. Each dancer expressed her joy because the show was almost over. They give their gree-

tings with respect and gestures. Although each dancer is free to express, but they are bound to the group agreement regarding the pattern of the floor into entering the stage. They collaborate to form a floor pattern arrangement that attracts the attention of the audience.

After being involved in the performance of the Geculan Bocah dance, the children feel happy and proud because they can display the traditional arts that have been abandoned by many younger generations today. Children feel that they have unusual experiences. Every performance event has a story and there is good learning to be learned. The process that occurs in the Geculan Bocah dance performance can increase children's creative power. The characteristics of creative children include: 1) have a desire to change things around them, 2) have sensitivity or responsiveness to something, 3) have a high curiosity (Soefandi & Pramudya, 2009). Their parents felt a positive change after their children joined to become the Geculan Bocah dancers. According to Trisno as the parent of one of the dancers, their children feel more confident to appear in front of many people, are more compact with friends, and dare to be creative (interview with Trisno on 12 February 2019).

They finally have the understanding and experience to condition themselves (physically and mentally) to really be ready to dance. Their bodies are fully used as a medium to express the Geculan Bocah dance. The individual creativity of each dancer is different, but overall there is a development of creativity in each child. The collaborative and communal creativity also occurs simultaneously. Here the role of dancers, trainers, and parents' support is very influential in creating individual and communal creativity.

The Geculan Bocah dance performance is a creative product, a creative space/process, and a booster for the development of children's creativity. The Geculan Bocah Dance Performance can be said as a space to develop children's creativity because: 1) Performance opens opportunities for children to imagine because imagination is the first step of creativity; 2) The structure of the Geculan Bocah dance, especially the fighting scenes, requires creativity and a good appreciation for the dancers; 3) Performances provide space for dancers to show their abilities as well as a place to express themselves.

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that the Geculan Bocah dance performance is a creative product, a creative process, and encourages children's creativity. It is seen as a creative product because performance has gone through a series of creative processes from creation, training, to performance, as a creative process because in a performance the dancer's creative role appears, and as a motivator for children's creativity, because after involving in performances children feel confident, have the courage to express their ideas, and are more sensitive to the environment.

The creative role of dancers in the Geculan Bocah dance performance at the Tanuwijoyo Studio is going well because art performers have a high motivation to learn, even though they learn art by themselves but they have the ability to absorb and try to express the Geculan Bocah Dance in accordance with their abilities. The creative role of dancers in the Geculan Bocah dance performance consists of 3 types, namely individual, communal, and collaborative creativity.

It is undeniable that creativity based only on experience without knowledge can lead to chaos, that is, incompatibility with the grip and cultural background. The performers still need to explore the possibility of different motions to hone the body's abilities and creativity. Therefore, the writer suggests dancers increase appreciation, practice, and continue to maintain cohesiveness.

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