

## THE CREATION OF A CREATIVE DANCE COSTUME FOR CHILDREN BASED ON BATIK MOTIVES

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**Abstract:** This writing is based on the empirical fact that up to today, the creative dance costume for children that is created based on *batik* motive has not existed yet. In fact, the existence of this costume is important because in addition to its usage for the creative dance learning, it can also be a medium to introduce *batik* art and culture since early stage. Therefore, this writing will explain the concept of that costume creation from the perspective of ontology, epistemology, and axiology. From this perspective, it is expected that the costume creation process does not only prioritize intuition, but also the methods, as in scientific work. This is the basic thing to do because as an artwork for education, dance costume creation for children has to be done through scientific procedure, so that the result is harmonious with their characteristics.

**Keywords:** Costume, creative dance, *batik* motive.

### INTRODUCTION

Dance art is one kind of performing art, and therefore is a combination of various important aspects that support, such as characters, players, costume, background music, stage, and spectator (Soedarsono, 2001:5). Dance costume is an important aspect in a dance. Without costume, dance is not a dance art. Furthermore, study on dance will not be complete if we do not relate it with the costume. The same thing happens toward the dance costume, it will not be complete if we do not relate it with the dance concept. Comprehensive example about this case is the writing of Sestri Indah Pebrianti, "Symbolic Meaning of *Bedaya Tunggal Jiwa* Dance" (Harmonia, Volume 13, number 2 / December 2013: 120-131) and also the writing of Juniarto efendi and Eny Kusumastuti "Barongan Jogo Rogo Art in *Selapan Dino* Tradition in Gabus Village Pati Regency" (Art Dance Journal 1 (1) The State University of Semarang, 2012:1-10).

The unity of dance with its costume is because the dance creation process is along with the costume creation process. This happens in dance, either in the frame of traditional or contemporary art. Therefore, it can be understood if dance costume can only be used by one figure or one dance. Costume for Hanoman figure in Ramayana drama and dance art is impossible to be used by Rahwana. Costume for Dewi Sinta figure is impossible to be used by Dewi Trijatha figure. Costume for *Merak* dance is impossible to be used for *kelinci* dance, and so on. So that it can be concluded: one costume for one dance.

The above phenomenon happens because dance costume creation is based on the dance creation beforehand. A choreographer generally will create the costume

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after the dance has finished. He/she will delegate the realization of costume concept to artistic director or costume stylist (Giyartini, 2015: 1370). When Sri Sultan HB IX created *Menak* dance, it is based in the movement of *wayang golek menak*. So, the costume follows the dance, or dance costume creation process follows the process of dance creation itself.

Creative process of dance costume creation does not always have to be like the above pattern, though. A creator of dance costume has an opportunity to create dance costume from various inspirations as the job of a designer. Dance costume resulted from this process, even can be inspiration for choreographer to create a dance. For instance, a dance costume creator creates costume for *Belalang* dance because she or he is inspired the beauty of grasshopper. This costume attracts a choreographer's attention, so that he or she creates *Belalang* dance and performs his work with that costume.

Based on the explanation above, it is important that *batik* motive becomes an inspiration for children costume creation. Dance costume with *batik* motive basis then becomes a part of a choreographer's creative process in creating dance for children, which is inspired by *batik* motive in that costume. In fact, the existence of this costume also becomes a medium to introduce *batik* art and culture concretely since the early age.

The absence of dance costume for children that is based on *batik* motive is probably because of the very basic thing that *batik* motive is viewed to have certain philosophical meaning, so that the implementation should pay attention to that meaning. For instance, in Javanese society, there is *batik* motive with natural element containing mythology value (Robby Hidajat, 2004: 286-304). *Kaung* motive, for example, since long ago has only been allowed to be used by courtiers in Surakarta palace, and the artifacts can be seen from the costume of *panakawan purwa* puppet Surakarta (Sarwono, 2005: 1-14).

The above point is true, but not all *batik* motives have philosophical meaning. As time goes by, *batik* motive is created not because of its usage, but only because of its ornamentation that leads to the physical beauty only. Regarding that case, this writing is specifically aimed at explaining the concept of dance costume creation for children with *batik* motive inspiration that is typical *batik* Tasikmalaya, scientifically. The choice of this *batik* is because its motives are mostly not related with the function, so that the costume creator can freely manage and use that *batik* fabric. This writing is expected to be the base for the dance costume creator in creating dance costume for children with *batik* motive basis which is representative, so that can be used as the inspiration for creative dance creation.

## METHOD

Ratna in her book *Teori, Metode, dan Teknik Penelitian Sastra* (2009) states that in a wider definition, method is techniques, strategies to solve a problem. As a

technique, method is procedural steps, which are steps in dance costume creation for children with *batik* motive basis in this case. These procedural steps cannot surely be generalized because artists' creative process is methodical as common artists; however there are also the intuitive ones. Nevertheless, according to Mujiono (2010:75), either intuitive or methodical, it is basically a scientific work. Both have undergone methodical procedures, starts from the determination of subject, object creation, theoretical base, empirical base, until the method creation which is supported by techniques and ways to realize it.

As an artwork, this dance costume creation process for children with *batik* motive basis is not far different from other artwork creation processes, such as exploration, experimentation, and formation (Hawkins in Gustami, 2004:13-15). Exploration is a process of digging up ideas (concepts) and dance costume for children from various sources, in which in this case is the *batik* motive typically from Tasikmalaya. This exploration results the chosen design which then is executed in the experiment step. In the experiment step, the chosen design is realized by using various materials or media. The result of this experimentation is the final manifestation which then is executed in the formation step. In the formation step, the experimentation result is realized into the real artwork.

Each art creator, including dance costume creator for children of course has his or her own method in producing his work, so that the methodical steps above can be applied with different content. For instance, in the exploration process might be not only the exploration of ideas and form, but also the exploration of materials that will be used. Experimentation step is not only the experiment of materials, but also the experiment of work realization technique. Therefore, the most crucial thing from the dance costume creation is the concept arrangement step. This is because a concept becomes a base for the whole steps of an artwork realization. Therefore, this writing will not specifically discuss the realization method, but more on the concept level.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Concept

Concept simply can be defined as a thought behind something. This definition is based on the definition of concept according to *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* which mentions that concept can be defined as plans, ideas, or definitions that are abstracted from concrete events (<http://kbbi.web.id/konsep>, downloaded in Desember 8, 2015).

In the context of artwork, concept becomes a fundamental thing in addition to the work itself. Concept is the content (essential) from form (work substance). Concept contains ideas. Those are values that are going to be delivered through the

physical “body” of the artwork. Form is the artists’ artistic choice to grow essential through certain art media and medium.

As an essence, concept in artwork at least has to be built through three philosophical questions: what values that are going to be delivered through artwork (ontology), how those values are embodied in the work (epistemology), and what for (why) those values are realized in certain artistic choice. This philosophical question is fundamental and relevant with the creation of creative dance costume for children in its capacity as an educational facility as philosophy is the base of all thoughts related to education (John Dewey in Imam Barnadib, 1993: 3).

Related to the above issue, the concept of creative dance costume creation for children is built from the main question: what is the nature of creative dance costume with *batik* motive basis for children, how to realize it, and what for the costume is created.

### **Ontology of Creative Dance Costume for Children with *Batik* Motive Basis**

Talking about what is it the creative dance costume for children with *batik* motive basis; we have to firstly understand what creative dance for children is, and what *batik* motive is.

*Batik* motive is motive or ornament that exists in *batik* fabric. Each area that produces *batik* has typical motive, coloring, and meaning, even though during its development, there is an assimilation of either the motive or color, so that it will result new meaning. *Batik* motive that is meant in this writing is *batik* motive typically from Tasikmalaya, in which its creation is not based on certain philosophical values.

Creative dance for children that is meant here is the dance created harmoniously with the children’s development, that is dance that does not only make them memorize the movement, but also grow their whole creative potentials (Giyartini, 2014a; 2014b; 2008; Suharno and Rosarina Giyartini, 2013). This dance will be better if it is created by the children themselves, so that the dance is from them, by them, and for them. The teachers’ function as a facilitator helps them to have creative ideas in making the dance (see Giyartini, 2002).

Based on the above explanation, the creative dance costume for children with *batik* motive basis is dance costume that is made with the inspiration of typical *Batik* from Tasikmalaya to the performance of creative dance that is in accordance with the children’s development.

### **Epistemology of Creative Dance Costume for Children with *Batik* Motive Basis Approach**

A good dance costume is comfortable to be used by the dancers and is able to reflect the performance’s beauty, differentiate one dancer from another, describe the

figure's characteristics that are performed, give movement effect for the dancers, and give dramatic effect (see Santosa, 2008). To achieve this goal, ergonomic approach is surely needed in its creation process, so that it does not only fulfill the dance needs, but also make the students feel safe and comfortable when they dance. The main key is that the costume materials (fabric and accessories) do not make burden for the children (not heavy). Besides, the design should not be complicated, but still appropriate with the dance theme performed by the children. These two things are important in designing dance costume, we should pay attention to the form and function, and know the values related to the dance topic, such as aesthetics, history, religion, and so on. Therefore, the use of materials that contain motive should pay attention to the meaning in that motive, do not bring the opposite side of the dance, or the dancer's characteristics that uses the costume. This will make the dance costume does not lose the culture's identity as its background (Giyartini, 2015).

### ***Batik* Motive Choice**

Children world is a world that is full of bright colors. Therefore, the choice of *batik* motive and color becomes an important thing in creative dance costume creation for children. Motive that can be used is the motive that is still harmonious with their world. For *batik* typical from Tasikmalaya, the motives such as butterfly motive, umbrella motive, flower motive, drizzle motive, sky object motive (moon, star, sun) and so on.

The above *batik* motive can be an inspiration for the costume creation of butterfly dance, umbrella dance, flower dance, star dance, and so on. If the dance has not been created yet, the costume can even inspire a dance trainer or whoever to create a dance based on the theme of that costume (Giyartini, 2015).

### **Creation Process**

Similar to the work of other artwork creation processes, this creative dance costume with *batik* motive basis is surely started from the concept arrangement and ended with the concept execution. Concept arrangement is a step to define the essence (what, why, how, what for) dance costume is created. Concept execution is an intuitive and methodical step that starts from form exploration until the art embodiment. There is no standard formulation and the best one regarding this process because no matter how sophisticated the scientific procedure is arranged, an artist's intuition in creating an artwork can go beyond that procedural stuff.

### **Axiology**

What for is the children dance costume with *batik* motive base is created? The answer is to be used by the child dancers. The next question will be why should use *batik* motive basis?

*Batik* has been recognized by UNESCO as cultural heritage. This recognition is based on the consideration that *batik* has become a part of this country, as in either sacred or profane occasion in which all the things are related with the motives. Another consideration is that this country is able to show an effort on *batik* art conservation and revitalization. One day, this recognition will be repealed if this country cannot preserve it.

Therefore, this children dance costume creation is one effort to preserve the *batik* existence, specifically typical *batik* from Tasikmalaya. Furthermore, even though each *batik* motive does not have deep philosophical meaning such as cosmology, mythology, and so on, it still has meaning that is related to human life. Butterfly motive, for instance, can be interpreted as a motive that teaches the children to love God's creation. As for other *batik* motives, it can surely be interpreted, depending on the interpreter's knowledge in relating *batik* motive with the real context, specifically the children life.

If in the early age they have understood the meaning of *batik* motive based on their capacity, they will recognize that *batik* is mine, is also this country's. This awareness is really needed for the sake of *batik* preservation, especially typical *batik* from Tasikmalaya.

## CONCLUSION

Creative dance costume creation for children with *batik* motive basis is meant to be one of the media to introduce *batik* since the early age to the children, in addition to its main function, that is to be used by the children when dancing. This costume creation can be intuitive or methodical, and the most important thing is the creation concept, that is as one of *batik* conservation and revitalization media in the early age. Through this costume, children do not only learn to dance, but also to understand as early as possible, if they are the cultural heirs of *batik* who have to preserve it. Awareness since early age will surely give a big impact later on.

*Notes:*

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