The Changing Formation of Guel Dance in Gayo, Aceh, Indonesia

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Abstract—Guel dance is one of the dance performances that comes from the Gayo tribe of Central Aceh. The purpose of this study is to documenting in written text about the transformation of the Guel dance performance to the Munalo Dance. This research departs from the interest of researchers in making Guel Dance as the focus of research because it is considered unique and different from the dance performances that exist among Acehnese people. The background that became the idea of Guel Dance, as the identity of the glorious memories of Gayo people of the Linge Empire, is different from others dance performances in Aceh, which in general aims to preach Islamic teachings such as Seudati Dance and Laweut Dance. Researchers emphasize the analysis of Guel Dance performances on the changes in its form and structure of its presentation, both in textual and contextual form. The paradigm used is qualitative with descriptive method of analysis and multidisciplinary approach using Ethnocoreology Theory as grand theory. The results of this study show that the form of Guel dance performance is a paired dance that changed into Munalo Dance with a form of group dance. Guel dance develops among Gayo people in nobility category called elite culture and Dance Munalo develops among other Acehnese society called popular art.

Keywords—dance; Guel; Gayo tribe

I. INTRODUCTION

Culture can be seen as a characteristics of a movement environment that function to channel or constrain its development and that defines what behaviors are legitimate and acceptable [1]. Culture is defined as a communities action which has uniqueness and perhaps will not be found in other communities. The existence of dancing is more work on ritual context which connects human and the Creator. The ritual is not only from the forms, but also it is looked from the emotional believe or the people belief system, such as the belief system of people in Aceh province.

States that Aceh province is populated by different race and live in harmony, peace and unite in Islam [2]. As mentioned in Guel’s tradition norms, as stated in Gayonese Language, “Agama urum edet lagu zet urum sipet”; “Edet ken peger agama ken seremuw”; “turun edet ari Pettowe merhum, turun agama ari Cik Serule” which means Islam and Gayo’s tradition seems like a substance and the nature. Gayo’s tradition as a hedge while Islam as a plant, the culture things are coordinated under governments and the religion things are coordinated under priests [3].

Guel in Gayo language knows as “sound” defines as one of Gayo’s tradition heritage which must be developed, preserved, and cared. Guel dance was born from a history about Kerajaan Linge in Gayo predicted occurred in the 15th century. Sengeda history and bener Meria happened in Nagroo Aceh Darussalam Kingdom under the command of the 12th Sultan Alaidin Ri’ayat Syah al-Qalhar (945-979 H or 1539/1571 M) [4]. The white elephant is reincarnation of a man named Bener Meria.

A local actor, Ibrahim Kadir states that the development of Guel dancing since 1903-2013 or started from 1903 until 1945, Guel dancing is a local dancing which means the socialization for the Gayonese people around is through the formal ceremony, such as a king coronation, a headman coronation, and becomes an obligation ceremony in wedding for the king family [5]. Further, in 1950-2013 continue until 2016, Guel dancing is coming into art performance such as welcoming ceremony for official guess and become part of marriage culture ceremony for Gayonese.

The change of forms, the movements and the music used in 1980s for marriage ceremony in Gayonese, Guel dancing changes the name which taken from one of marriage culture part of Gayonese, known as Munalo. Munalo is taking a groom to the decided place [6].

II. METHOD

The paradigm used in this study is qualitative paradigm with descriptive analysis method. The problems for qualitative research is temporary, tentative, and will be developing after the researcher is in the field [7]. Descriptive methods are a method by describing and analyzing go together [8]. This study uses descriptive method because the process of collecting data are from the verbal interaction, action and meaning from the dancing which was watched and seen.
III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. The Guel Dancing for Gayonese

Guel is a dancing comes from the folklore in Gayo. The history is about Sengeda and Bener Meria. In 1980s, the Guel is started by developing the story of the folklore and the Guel is created based on the theme, Sengeda and Bener Meria legend. Peteriana Kobat (as the interview result in 2018, 6th April) says that the first changing was done by Muchlis Gayo. He is a studio choreographer Buntul Kubu in Jakarta for opening ceremony in Taman Mini Indonesia Indah (TMII) in 1980s. The significant changes have been done by Cultural Department of the Middle Aceh Government when performed Guel dancing in PKA III in 1988 by decreasing the Sengeda dancer and added a few female dancers.

Before that, in the Gayonese marriage ceremonial, there is a Munalo process, the process is about finding out the groom and the bride and the Guel is performed. The performance involves the male dancers named Guru didong. While beberu (young lady) who are accompanying a bride and a groom wearing the traditional costumes, namely Kerawang to celebrate the wedding ceremony. Guel happen perhaps can be seen from the Munalo process in the marriage ceremony in Gayo. So the Munalo is a developing from Guel performance.

B. The Forms and Structures of Guel and Munalo Dancing Performance

The duet dancing represent interaction patterns and it makes this dancing commonly represents a strong relation among the dancers [9]. The relation between Sengeda and Bener Meria is a relationship between the sister and the died brother.

The movements from the Guel dance are simple and repetition. For example, when the hand moves as ukel in the front parallel to the shoulder, the head is parallel in front of the body. Then, the hand movements are still as ukel, however make it beautified because Munalo dance is added male and female dancers which causes the movements are generalized as female dancers did. Basically the special movements are a shoulder moving in each Munatap movements. The performance of Munalo dancing is still on the shoulders movements, but it separated in several dancing, not only in Munatap. In Runcang movements, gaduk, and Ketibung using shoulders as characteristics movements from Guel dance. The composition aspect has been combined by coordination from many patterns and continuity.

The movements in Guel dance appear nature as a source of movements and using Elephant as a main of story because nature gives inspiration for Gayonese in exploring their creativity. There are the old classic Gayonese proverb which says about the dancing, “kepur nunguk tari nuwo (kepurii unguk tarini wo)” [10]. The proverb implies the two bird’s movements which becomes the basic movements for Gayo dances. Gayonese believes there is a connection between human and animal live. The bird’s movements in Guel dance can be seen in various of sengker Kalang movements and Kepur Nunguk such looking for something. It has a tradition values for Gayonese living.

The Guel dancers have no makeup because the dancers are male. Gayonese though that make up is not suit to the male because it can break their self-esteem. As mentioned by Gayo’s tradition has one main value, named as Mukemel, which means self-esteem [3]. Mukemel is a main value because it is about the self-esteem which determines the life.

Gayonese ban the contradiction between values and religious norms, and culture, which means sumang (taboo). The taboo (sumang) in Gayo’s tradition are four types, are sumang perceraken (talking), sumang kenuwulun (sitting), sumang peralanen/pelangkaken (journey) dan sumang penengonen (seeing) [11]. The make up for male is sumang penengonen means the thing is forbidden. Therefore, Guel dance do not give make up as a primary feature of the dancers because it breaks the dancers’ self-esteem (mumble) as male and claimed as sumang.

The make up for Munalo dance performance are in female dancers and it uses collective make up to strengthen the face because it will be watched by the audience from away. The Guel dance costumes can be said as a simple costume as drawn in the figure 1 below.

Fig. 1. The dancing costume sketch at the beginning.

Ponok is armaments had by Gayonese such as rencong owned by Acehnese. Ponok which has a handle on its head is wore as accessories and placed in the left waist. Ponok represents Gayonese when they are coming into the forest and bring the armaments (interview Kadir, 2018, 19st March).

The costumes wear in Munalo dance consists of female and male dancer’s costumes. For male, they do not use Ponok as accessories, at beginning, ponok is used to represent Gayonese habitual in forest adventure and use ponok as protection tools from wild animals. It links to the Guel dance theme which look for white elephant in the forest. Ponok is rarely find and therefore it does not used further for Guel dance accessories. The costumes show in figure 2 and 3.
are the connoisseurs. If the connoisseurs come from the spirit, then the function is for the ritual. If the connoisseurs are the actors, the performance is for entertain themselves, and if the connoisseurs must be paid, the performance is for esthetics presentation.

The gayonese belief that The Guel dance in marriage ceremony can carry the blessing for the bridegroom and the people in the ceremony. The Guel dance in Gayonese was danced by one people as Sengeda and called as Guru Didong and white elephant was danced by the groom and called as aman mayak. Department of Education and Culture in Aceh Guru didong and munatap movements ask the groom to stand and joint dancing. The Guel performance in Gayonese needs to ask permission to Reje and each mistakes will be paid. The mistake refers to sumang or taboo things, in this case is four things, sumang perceraken (speaking), sumang kenunulen (sitting), sumang peralanen (journey) dan sumang penengonen [11].

The main movements in Guel are munatap, Redep/dep, Kettingbang and Cincang Nangka movements are a part of marriage ritual ceremony in Gayonese. The movements can fulfill the need of spiritual and emotional that belief can created a strong marriage relationship.

According to several researchers, the existence of Guel dance or Munalo dance has a long journey and fulfill of assumptions from Gayonese about munalo dance. In 1980s, the Munalo dancing is developing and it shifts The Guel existence in the marriage ceremony among Gayonese. Since it, the Guel dance is no longer as marriage ceremonial among Gayonese. The Guel performance in marriage ceremony is just for entertaining people and guess.

The munalo dance shows as welcoming dance, in the marriage ceremonial or festival. The performance needs dancers, costumes, make up, music’s which make munalo dance as esthetics presentation. The art performance which use to esthetic presentation is a dancing performance needs dancers, costumes, make up, music, stage, and so on [12]. Therefore, the munalo performance as esthetic performance is shown to welcoming guess or marriage ceremonial among Gayonese who are able to pay it.

D. The Influencing Factors of Forms Changes and Structure Performance in Guel Dance

This is happening in Guel dancing performance which caused by two factors, are intern and extern.

1) Intern: the intern factor is the inside changes, means that the adaptation happens naturally. Years by years, the views of human are changing. For Gayonese, the nature changing relates to the Guel dance performance in the ceremonial for nobility and ceremonial of king coronation or named as elite culture. Now. The Guel dance is performing in public without race or social class and also following in festival, hence the Guel dance is mostly known and become popular as artworks among Gayonese and Aceh at all. That an art is a citizen product. If the norm of people changes then the art will be changing [13].

C. The Function of Guel and Munalo Dance

The art patterns into two, are primary and secondary [12]. The primary is specified into three categories based on “who”...
2) Extern: the extern factor is the change happens because of the interaction between choreographer of Guel dance, Ibrahim Kadir. The change of performance is caused by influencing the creativity of artists who are involved in art activities, even as an actor or connoisseur. The composition process of dance depends on the dancers and it does not allow deciding the rules or methods for achieving the improvements for the permanent regulation which guarantee to the success [14]. If the choreographer a part of one institution, it causes the influence that force him by considering imaginative and intuitive, knowledge of movements, knowledge of construction method, and knowledge of shaping through experience from people artworks [14]. Ibrahim Kadir as Guel dance choreographer in PKA II, which has experienced in Institute Kesenian Jakarta year 1971-1973. The influence of his education effects to the creativity, which causes the changes of Guel performance.

The supporters are government which lead under Sport and Tourism becomes an influencing factor in politics field. The policy benefits to both sides, that the government and the artist.

E. The change of Social and Tradition

The changes happen is natural, because the people has unlimited needs. The social changing is a part of tradition changing such as the change of tradition meaning which includes the changes of knowledge, social organization, the occupation, technology, religious, language, and art systems [15]. The changes occur based on the requirements and people needs.

The Gayonese tradition in 1950s in belief of Sarak Opat (for Gayonese Communities) as people role, are reje (king), Imem (Priest), Petue (oldest figure), and Rayat (citizen) among Gayonese. In 1980s the tradition had eroded in the belief of Sarak Opat for Gayonese. Because of Sarak Opat, the show of Guel dancing must have permission by the king, as aimed by Kadir (interview result in 2018, 19th march) that in the past, Guel must have permission from Reje for avoid the taboo.

Therefore, the main factor occurs the changes of Guel dance is the artist has their own important in economic, existence, creativity, and expression needs. Through Guel dance, the artist shows their existence who are creative and innovative with the changes grow based on people needs or called as popular art. For the connoisseur, the Guel as a solidarity by increasing the status of one art community among citizen, especially for the race and unity important in the social context.

IV. CONCLUSION

The research result shows that the Guel has been changed textually and contextually because of the different influencing from the connoisseur of Guel performance. At first, the Guel was developing among elite culture by classic style as identity of Gayonese kingdom in history of Sengeda and Bener Meria in Linge kingdom and Munalo dance was developing among popular art by using classic style which still developing nowadays around Gayonese. The Munalo dance developing is not only in Gayo but also in the littoral area around Aceh province as connoisseur of munalo dance. The changing occurs between Guel and munalo dance are caused the Gayonese have sociology change and it becomes the changing factors in Guel performance. The Guel dance which shows purposively in marriage ceremonial and coronation of king in Gayo. Moreover, the munalo dance performance is claimed as esthetics presentation.

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