

IDEOLOGICAL CHANGE OF *ULU AMBEK* DANCE IN *PARIAMAN* COMMUNITY, WEST SUMATRA

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ABSTRACT

This present study discussed the ideological change of *ulum ambek* (UA) dance resulting from the impact of globalization. This is indicated by the fact that the young generation is getting less interested in performing UA dance in Pariaman. This study, in which qualitative, critical, holistic, and emancipatoric approaches were used, analyzed the form of, the factor contributing to, the meaning and the impact of the ideological change of UA dance in Pariaman community. The relevant theories used are the theory of ideology, the theory of hegemony, and the theory of semiotics. The data were collected using observation, interview, and documentary techniques, and were qualitatively and interpretatively analyzed.

The results of the study showed that the form of the ideological change of UA dance performed in Pariaman was related to the ideology of what is referred to as *penghulu* (Muslim leader). The values of life such as the learning of good manners or better known as *batarik* (regulations for conduct) were expressed through UA dance. The meanings of UA dance included knowledge, values, and the belief adhered to in the Pariaman culture. The impact of the ideological change of UA dance was related to the people's welfare, solidarity, and the balance between human and the nature. The value of *tageh* constituted the aesthetic meaning of UA dance and the value of creativity constituted the value of creative development and the value of ideological development. Theoretically, this present study revealed that the ideological meaning of UA dance in Pariaman West Sumatra included the aesthetic value referred to as *tageh* which was related to the aesthetics of UA dance performance and the *bataratik* value was related to the ideology of the Pariaman community, apart from the appearance of creativity related to the development of UA dance.

Keywords: ideology, *Ulu Ambek* dance, *Pariaman*

INTRODUCTION

UA dance is part of a set of traditional ceremonies performed in Pariaman. It is performed when the ceremony indicating that a *penghulu* in Pariaman is appointed is carried out. It is also performed when what is called *alek nagari* (the people's party) in Pariaman is carried out. At present the condition of UA dance in Pariaman is tragic as the young generation is getting less interested in performing it. Globalization has been responsible for this and has caused the people's ideology to change.

The ideological change of UA in Pariaman in the process of globalization is a cultural phenomenon which is highly important to observe. This phenomenon implies that the people's ideology in Pariaman, West Sumatra, has changed or shifted. On one hand, the local people complain that UA dance has been so tragic that it is difficult to survive. Globalization has caused the young generation to prefer modern arts. On the other hand, the development of UA dance depends on the people's condition in Pariaman.

This present study was intended to identify the form of, the factor contributing to, the meaning and impact of the ideological change of UA dance performed in Pariaman, West Sumatra.

The significances of the present study are (a) the theoretical finding of the ideology related to the concrete steps in relation to the aesthetic and ethic values of UA dance, (b) the theoretical finding of the ideology related to the social ideology addressed to the people's behavior reflected by UA dance, and (c) the findings would give contribution to the local people such as the local government, teachers, the society's leaders) in general and the traditional artists in particular. In addition, it was also expected that the findings of the present study would contribute to the development and maintenance of the values of cultural art in general and UA dance in particular.

RESEARCH METHOD

This present study was conducted using qualitative method and technique. The qualitative method and technique were used to obtain descriptive data and information on the meaning, action, and the events related to the UA dance performance in the Pariaman community. The research method used was adjusted to cultural studies, as stated by Mariyah (2011: 4-5) that, epistemologically, cultural studies also have their own approach and method which are different from the other disciplines.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Althuser (2010: 189) states that arts make us see, perceive and feel (something which is not in the form of knowing); actually, an art is created from an ideology; an art wallows in an ideology; an art keeps a distance from what it refers to. Furthermore, he states that when we talk about an ideology, it inserts itself in every human activity that it is identical with life experience of the human existence.

The form of the ideology of UA dance in Pariaman community, West Sumatra, is underlay by the moral, ethic, and aesthetic values it contains. It does not only contain one form of the local people's activities with its problems, but also contains cultural values. The form of the ideological change of UA dance which is related to how the performers perceive the artist's creative process is highly sensitive and varies. The UA dance artists have been able to treat themselves within the context of modern life. The form of the ideological change of UA in Pariaman, West Sumatra, has changed as can be seen from how it is performed. It used to be performed starting from noon to evening. Now it may be performed in the evening.

Globalization has caused the Pariaman culture and ideology to change. The social status of UA dance performed in Pariaman has changed. As a result, it has been marginalized from the local people's culture and it may be stated that it has been a strange dance in the region where it was created. In fact, it contains the things which can be used as guidance to the local people's behavior. However, the procession during which it is performed has not changed. The initial procession implies that the existence of a *pengulu* (Muslim leader) is obligatory as UA dance is his, meaning that he is fully responsible for its performance. Such a condition has not changed until now.

In addition, the form which has been maintained can also be seen from the instruments used. As an illustration, what is called *laga-laga*, the place where it is performed, still contains the things indicating the existence of a *pengulu* in the community. *Tabia, candai, siriah dalam carano* and so forth indicate that tradition plays an important role in the existence of UA dance.

An ideology is frequently used as the basis for freeing human beings. In this case, an ideology is defined as a group of views used as guidance to a group of human beings as to how to behave in order to achieve a particular objective (Takwin, 2009: 5). It is referred to by human beings when they do their activities including when they perform UA dance in Pariaman.

However, the ideology referred to in UA dance performed in Pariaman has changed as a result of globalization which cannot be avoided by the local people. There are several factors which have been responsible for this, one of which has been the social dynamics of the local people. The social condition of the local people has changed and developed; as a result, the ideology they adhere to has changed and developed as well.

The social dynamics taking place in the maternal culture should be able to face the changeable condition. In line with the development of the community, the system of values in the social structure should be adaptive to the condition of space and time (Sanderson, 1993: 32). Otherwise, a new system of values will replace it or, at least, it will change as it tends to evolve. The ideology of UA dance, which is already established, as it has been in existence for a long time, should be the value which can endure.

Education is one of the important elements which contributes to the ideology of UA dance in Pariaman. Education is not only intended to form human beings who are intelligent and skillful in what they are supposed to do, but also to form human beings who have cultural values so they will love their culture.

The factor of ritual, which is, in this case, Islam as the religion adhered to by the local people in Pariaman, has also caused the ideology of UA dance to grow in Pariaman. According to Gazalba (1989: 2 and Salad, 2000: 74), a religion constitutes the experience which transcends a number of events of daily existence involving a belief in and an opinion about what is beyond what can be reached by human beings.

The impact of the ideological change of UA dance, as far as the pure aesthetic meaning is concerned, has something to do with one's aesthetic experience in his/her relation to everything he/she is interested in visually, audibly and intellectually (Sachari, 2002: 45). UA dance is not only beautiful if it is visually digested; its meaning should also be listened to and understood intellectually.

UA dance exists with the form and value imitating the human mind, as can be seen from how it is performed. It makes human beings close to the nature religiously and socially. The greatness of the nature and UA dance are so satisfying that it echoes to the inner art.

Its smallest symbolic but concrete meaning is the message reception. A message is related to its source, target, social context, and objective. The orientation is the symbolic process, that is, the social process which causes a meaning to be formed and mutually communicated in a discourse termed as a planned meaning. It is this which is in existence in UA dance; something which is implied is read. The offering made by *ninik mamak* is full of symbolic expressions which are meaningful from semiotic point of view. The ceremony performed to appoint a *penghulu* is full of symbols. The only semiotics can reveal such signs. Apart from language, the signs in the entire structure of UA dance are also revealed.

Solidarity in regard to the other form of change is that taking pictures (using photograph camera and video camera) is also allowed. Taking pictures used to be prohibited as it could disturb the players' concentration in showing the movements of self defense 'gerakan-gerakan silat'. The introduction of the culture of recording technology is utilized by the UA dance artists as part of the culture of documentation which should be used to introduce it to wider audiences. This is solidarity towards the other culture which is introduced later. The value of communication between the two cultures highly determines whether one of them will become damaged or not.

UA dance has three philosophical values which are highly basic as far as the one which is performed in Pariaman is concerned; they are *tageh*, *batarik*, and *creativity*. The philosophical value of *tageh* is the philosophical value taken from the Pariaman cultural feasibility which cannot be separated from the aesthetic values. The philosophical value of *batarik* which is directed towards the social and ideological values is related to the community's behavior as reflected through UA dance. The value of *creativity* is directed towards the change of UA dance in form, function, and orientation as an attempt made to create a cultured and civilized community.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The conclusions which can be drawn from this present study are as follows. The form of the ideological change of UA dance in the Pariaman community was related to the elements of movement, dress, and so forth. The form which was still maintained and the form which had been changed allowed UA dance to develop. The factors which contributed to the ideological change of UA dance were social dynamics, education and politics of the government. The meaning the ideological change of UA dance in the Pariaman community was that it symbolized the spiritual struggle made by human (*penghulu*) in the competition between the good struggle and bad struggle in human life in general. It affected the people's welfare, solidarity and the balance between the nature and human beings.

The novelties of the present study, which had not been completely analyzed before, were the value of *tageh*, that is, the value which was related to the aesthetics of UA dance performance; the value of *batarik*, that is, the regulations for conduct which were related to the attitude of being highly polite, and the value of creativity, meaning that UA dance was made to have two forms with different functions; first the "original" UA dance and second the "developed" UA dance.

As the attempts made to maintain UA dance in the era when the culture of the Pariaman community changes, it is suggested that the traditional arts should be able to maintain the high moral values by preserving them and bequeathing them to the young generation in Pariaman; that the common people should encourage the traditional artists to maintain the values of UA dance and introduce it to the public; that the artists who develop UA dance should neglect the great values it contains.

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