

Forms of Art Presentation Tari Kuda Lumping In the village Manunggal Karya Subdistrict Randangan, Pohuwato Regency

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Abstract.

This study aims to describe the presentation form and analyze the correlation between the elements that form the Kuda Lumping dance in Manunggal Karya Village, Randangan District, Pohuwato Regency. This research is motivated by the existence of traditional Javanese art that is still preserved and purely maintained by the transmigrant community since 1981, and functions as a cultural identity and unifier of society. The method used is descriptive qualitative with an ethnographic approach. Data collection was carried out through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies. Data analysis refers to the model of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results show that the presentation form of the Kuda Lumping dance is divided into two main acts, namely the opening act featuring seven structured movements, and the main act which is full of mystical nuances with the phenomenon of spirit possession. The elements that form the performance include movement, floor patterns, makeup and costumes, accompanying music, properties, and the performance venue which are closely correlated to form a unified meaning. The main uniqueness lies in the self-flagellation and the involvement of the audience, who are possessed by spirits. This art form carries philosophical meanings of spiritual strength, character building, and community unification. This art form is a clear demonstration of harmonious cultural acculturation, where Javanese culture remains preserved and fully accepted within the Gorontalo cultural context.

Keywords: Presentation form; Kuda Lumping; Cultural acculturation; Ethnography and Manunggal Karya.

I. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is known as an archipelago with a rich cultural diversity. Each region possesses distinctive artistic traditions that define its community. One example of this rich culture is the traditional arts brought by transmigrants from Java to Sulawesi, particularly in Manunggal Karya Village, Randangan District, Pohuwato Regency. Established in 1981, this village is a transmigration settlement, where the community still fully adheres to the lifestyle, customary laws, beliefs, and traditions brought from their homeland. One tradition that remains preserved and upheld to this day is the Kuda Lumping dance.

Kuda Lumping is a dance that emphasizes spirit and agile movements, and is synonymous with scenes of trance, or "ndadi" in local terms (Khasnah et al., 2024). This art form serves not only as entertainment but also has ritual, social, and educational functions. Performances are typically held for village anniversaries, weddings, blessings, circumcisions, Islamic holidays, and Independence Day celebrations. Performances vary in duration from 30 minutes to 3 hours, depending on the event.

Theoretically, the form of dance presentation is a concrete manifestation of a combination of various interrelated artistic elements, including movement, space, and time, which are then strengthened by supporting elements such as makeup, costumes, music, and properties (Hadi, 2007). Unlike the Kuda Lumping form in its original area in Java, the form of presentation in Manunggal Karya Village underwent a process of environmental adaptation but still maintained the purity of its structure, meaning, and philosophical value. This is interesting to study considering its position as a migrant art that lives and develops among the Gorontalo community.

Based on relevant studies that have been conducted previously, such as Jajilah's (2019) research that emphasizes the aesthetics of movement and Marzakina et al.'s (2017) research that examines the aspects of ritual and trance, it can be seen that there has been no research that specifically describes the complete presentation form and the correlation between its constituent elements in the Pohuwato area. Therefore, this study aims to describe in detail the presentation form of the Kuda Lumping dance and analyze the logical relationship between its constituent elements, so that it can document cultural wealth and become a basis for preserving intangible cultural heritage.

II. RESEARCH METHODS

Research Design

This research uses a qualitative approach with descriptive methods. This approach was chosen because it aims to systematically, factually, and accurately describe the facts, situations, and relationships between the phenomena being studied (Ratna, 2010). The method used is ethnography, which focuses on extracting cultural data from the community in a natural and real context.

Location and Time of Research

The research location was Manunggal Karya Village, Randangan District, Pohuwato Regency. Subjects were selected purposively, including art group leaders, shamans, senior dancers, musicians, and community leaders deemed to understand the history and meaning of the performance.

Data collection technique

Data collection techniques are carried out through three main stages: (1) Participatory observation, where researchers are directly involved in observing rehearsals and performances to record the form of movement, sequence of acts, and interactions that occur; (2) In-depth interviews, conducted to explore information regarding the history, symbolic meaning, and values contained in each element of the performance (Rohendi, 2011); and (3) Documentation studies, in the form of collecting visual data in the form of photos and videos, as well as written documents related to village history and art.

Data Types and Sources

The type of research used by the researcher is descriptive. This type of research is used to systematically and factually describe facts, situations, attitudes, ongoing processes, and the relationships between the phenomena being studied.

Primary data was obtained directly through observation, interviews and participation with the management of Sanggar Tri Manunggal Karya, dancers, and parties who understand the Kuda Lumping dance.

Secondary data was obtained from documentation, photos, videos, books, journals, and previous research related to the Kuda Lumping dance.

Data collection technique

The data collection techniques used in this research are observation, interviews, and documentation.

Observation Researchers participated in the Kuda Lumping Dance performance to directly understand the presentation process, dance movements, costumes, musical instruments, and supporting rituals.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data analysis used in this study is descriptive analysis, where the aim of this analysis is to describe systematically, factually and accurately the facts and relationships between the phenomena being investigated.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Overview of Location and History of the Art

Manunggal Karya Village is a transmigration village established in 1981. The name "Manunggal Karya" means unity in work and cooperation. The majority of its residents are Javanese, but they have lived side by side and acculturated with the indigenous Gorontalo people for over 40 years. The arts group that oversees Kuda Lumping is called "Trimanunggal," and to this day, it remains the primary preserver of the tradition.

The Kuda Lumping (horse dance) in this village retells the history of the horsemen's struggle, which is said to be related to the story of Prince Diponegoro. The presentation format cannot be altered or modified arbitrarily; its duration may only be reduced to suit the needs of the event. This demonstrates the existence of standard rules and the strict transmission of values from generation to

generation.

Tri Manunggal Karya Horse Dance Group

The Manunggal Karya Kuda Lumping Group is an arts group in Manunggal Karya Village, Randangan District. It was founded in the 1990s by Mr. Sutekno, a transmigrant from Banyuwangi, East Java, who lived in Manunggal Karya Village. Over the years, the group has been continuously operating, with residents willing to invite the group to perform at events organized by the local community. Not only from the village itself, but also from other villages who want the group to perform, the group is also ready to perform at events in their respective villages.

Presentation Form Structure

The presentation of the Kuda Lumping dance in Manunggal Karya Village is broadly divided into two main acts which are sequential and complement each other, namely the opening act and the main act.

First Act: Opening (Structured Movement)

This scene depicts the activities of a troop of cavalry preparing, training, and moving toward the battlefield. There are seven main movements performed sequentially and in an orderly manner:

Initial Formation: Dancers enter the arena and form neat lines, symbolizing the readiness of the troops.

Nyembah: A gesture of reverence as a form of gratitude and respect to God and ancestors.

Preparation Check: The troop leader checks the physical readiness and equipment of each soldier.

Check Number: Counting the number of troops to ensure completeness of members, Group Division: Troops are divided into two squads for battle strategy.

Departing for the Field: Agile and fast movements as if riding a horse to the battlefield.

Break: A calmer movement as a transition before entering the next round.

The movements in this section are realistic, clear, and follow the rhythm of the music with great precision. The floor patterns formed are straight lines, circles, and crosses, which have philosophical meanings of unity, cardinal directions, and vigilance (Hadi, 2007).

Second Act: Core / Mandem (Possessed by Spirits)

The second act is the culmination of the entire performance. After the incense burning and the shaman's chanting, the atmosphere transforms into a sacred and mystical one. The dancers, who were once human, transform into the embodiment of ancestral spirits or supernatural beings. Movements are no longer structured, but rather free, wild, and full of energy. This act showcases various magical feats, including dancers playing the barongan (barongan), portraying female characters, and even self-flagellation.

One of the most unique and captivating phenomena is the audience's involvement in being possessed by spirits. Amidst the accelerating rhythm of the music and the heightened atmosphere, the boundaries between dancer and audience disappear. Many spectators, both Javanese and Gorontaloan, are swept along by the energy current, entering the center of the arena, and moving as one with the dancers. They also experience an invulnerability and are unaware of what they are doing. This phenomenon is not merely entertainment, but a symbol that the blessings and power of ancestors envelop everyone in attendance, regardless of origin. This is clear evidence that this art form has become a shared asset and serves as a unifying medium for the socio-cultural fabric of the village.

The Role of Kuda Lumping Dance in Social and Cultural Relations of the Manunggal Karya Village Community

The Kuda Lumping dance is not merely an artistic performance, but plays a central role in building and strengthening social relations and preserving the culture of the Manunggal Karya Village community. Within the context of social relations, this dance acts as a catalyst that strengthens the bonds of friendship between villagers. The preparation process aims, from the dancers' makeup and props to setting up the performance area, to create a moment where the community helps one another regardless of their backgrounds. Furthermore, special performances such as weddings, village anniversaries, and transmigration anniversaries serve as gatherings that unite the residents of Manunggal Karya Village and even surrounding villages, strengthening a sense of togetherness and

community solidarity. Furthermore, the existence of this dance also strengthens inter-ethnic relations between the Javanese transmigrant community and the indigenous Gorontalo people, who have established kinship and cooperation through various cultural activities including the Kuda Lumping performance.

In the cultural aspect, the Kuda Lumping dance acts as a vessel preserving the cultural heritage brought from the island of Java and passed down from generation to generation. Through this performance, the younger generation can learn about their ancestors' cultural roots and understand the values they embody, such as mutual cooperation, hard work, unity, respect for nature, and respect for supernatural powers. Furthermore, this dance also plays a role in maintaining the cultural identity of Manunggal Karya as a transmigrant village that maintains its distinctive Javanese cultural characteristics, thus becoming an integral part of the local community's identity.

IV. DISCUSSION

Analysis of the Elements that Form Presentation

The Kuda Lumping performance is formed from a combination of closely interrelated artistic elements. Based on field analysis and presentation theory (Hadi, 2007), the details of these elements are as follows:

1. Movement

Movement is a fundamental element in dance, and it is also the most fundamental physical aspect of human life. According to Dibia et al. (2006:146), dance movement is the primary element of dance. When watching a dance performance, we see a variety of colors and patterns of movement. We can identify these movements from the perspective of everyday life. The meaning of the movements in Kuda Lumping Tri Manunggal Karya is depicted as a kingdom, with a commander leading the war. The Kuda Lumping dance is performed in two acts: the first act and the second act.

The first round has 7 types of movement, namely forming the initial formation, *worship*, check the soldiers' preparation, check the number of soldiers, the soldiers are divided into 2 groups, the soldiers leave for the war, and the soldiers have a rest break. Forming the initial formation, this movement motif is intended to honor the spirit and courage of the heroes, especially those who fought against invaders and defended their territory. Nyembah (worship) Meanwhile, the second act is the core of the Kuda Lumping performance, called mendem (prayer). In the second act, the movements are no longer regular and only see the spirits and music entering the dancers' bodies. Music becomes very vital in the second act.



Fig. 1 Movement (dancer performs worship movements)
(Doc. Gilang, Manunggal Karya 2025)

Worship The dance begins with the left leg bent and the right foot touching the ground, the right and left palms together, and the body is positioned facing one of the cardinal directions. Afterward, the dancer stands and does the same in the other direction. This movement symbolizes respect for the four cardinal directions and asks for permission and protection from God. The following is a picture of a dancer performing a worship movement.

Second Half

The second act is where the dancers are possessed by spirits in the Kuda Lumping (ebeg) dance, often referred to as the janturan or mandem act. The second act is the core of the Kuda Lumping (ebeg) dance and is the most anticipated by the audience due to its mystical nuances. In the

second act, the dancers will faint or immediately behave strangely after the handler or performer recites a mantra and burns incense. The spirits that enter are believed to be ancestral spirits or spirits called (endang).

When possessed (mendem), the dancers' gaze becomes sharp and empty, and their movements no longer follow a regular choreography, but move according to the spirit that possesses them and the accompanying music. In this condition, dancers often do things that are beyond the control of normal humans, such as eating beling (broken glass), peeling coconuts with their teeth, eating offerings (such as rosebuds, incense, or live chickens), and asking for coffee.

The shaman's presence is crucial in this act, ensuring the dancers don't endanger themselves or the audience, and also to return the spirits to their natural realm. This act also symbolizes the connection between humans and the supernatural, as well as the spiritual powers passed down through generations.



Fig. 2 Movement (horse dance player playing barongan)
(You Tube Document, Tri Manunggal Karya Studio)

The body faces left, and the hands play the barongan. In the Kuda Lumping dance, the barongan also serves as a medium to convey moral values and life lessons to the audience through the story or storyline of the performance. For example, a possessed Kuda Lumping dancer plays the barongan with great skill. This occurs because the performer is possessed by an ancestral spirit. While possessed, the Kuda Lumping dancer dances to the accompaniment. Music with a body condition that is already covered with barongan.

Makeup and Fashion

Cosmetic

The makeup worn by Kuda Lumping dancers has its own distinctive characteristics, namely thick, striking makeup, and adapting to the character of the spirit (endang) that is believed to possess the dancer. Unlike dance makeup in general which is prepared before the performance, the makeup in this dance is basic, namely using white face powder, bright red lipstick, and thick and sharp eye shadow. This makeup is intended so that when the dancer experiences a state of being possessed by the spirit, the dancer's facial expression looks more alive, strong, and able to reflect the character being played, be it the character of a gallant warrior, or the character of a gentle woman. Philosophically, thick facial makeup is also interpreted as a form of communication with the supernatural, so that the dancer's true form is covered and replaced by the form of the character of the spirit that enters.

Fashion

The Kuda Lumping dancers' costumes in Manunggal Karya Village have a standard and uniformity that has been passed down since the group's inception. The costumes consist of several pieces, each with red and green as the primary colors, complete with complementary accessories. The following is a breakdown of the costume's parts and their meanings:

In the Kuda Lumping dance, the colors green and red have symbolic meanings closely linked to Javanese cultural and spiritual values. In Javanese culture, green symbolizes fertility, peace, harmony with nature, and protection from supernatural forces. This color also reflects spiritual balance and the relationship between humans and the creator. Several areas in Pohuwato Regency use green as part of the dance costumes, such as Manunggal Karya Village in Randangan and Taluditi

Districts. Furthermore, green can be interpreted as spiritual balance and protection, reflecting the relationship between humans and nature and the supernatural forces believed to protect the performance.



Fig. 3 (Green dance costume) (Doc. Gilang, Manunggal 2025)

Wearing red shorts or trousers tied up below the knees. Red symbolizes courage, fighting spirit, strength, and life energy. This color perfectly depicts the character of a brave warrior, such as Prince Diponegoro. Spiritually, red also symbolizes life energy and spiritual power, which are believed to enter the dancer's body during a trance.



Fig. 4 (Red dance costume) (Doc. Gilang, Manunggal 2025)

Dance Properties

The props used have a dual function: as movement aids and as symbols of philosophical meaning. The main props include:

Kuda Kepang: Made from woven bamboo, it symbolizes the spirit of life, simplicity, and strength. It is the main identity of this dance.



Fig. 5 (Imitation Horse dance properties) (Doc. Gilang, Manunggal 2025)

Whip: This prop is the main attraction in the main act. The dancer whips herself with this instrument, fiercely, without injuring herself. Meaningfully, the whip symbolizes education, self-discipline, courage in the face of trials, and cleansing oneself of negative traits. This invulnerability is believed to be evidence of the protection of ancestral spirits.



Fig. 6 (Properties of the Pecut dance) (Doc. Gilang, Manunggal 2025)

Barongan is a replica of an animal resembling a large lion or tiger. This prop is played in the second act by a dancer possessed by a certain spirit. The dancer's movements become agile and powerful while playing it. Barongan symbolizes the power of nature, a protector, and the embodiment of ancestral spirits who take the form of wild animals but guard and protect the community. Its presence is believed to bring good luck and ward off disaster. Barongan is played by two people: one dancer and the other holding a cloth to prevent the dancer from stepping on it. Barongan has symbolic meaning, especially in the village of Manunggal Karya, the Kuda Lumping Tri Manunggal group, where the barongan is considered a symbol of elders called endang.



Fig. 7 (Barongan dance properties) (Doc. Gilang, Manunggal 2025)

The shawl and keris: Each symbolizes the power of nature, gentleness, and honor. Their use is tailored to the character of the spirit that enters.



Gambar 8 (*Properti Tari Keris dan Selendang*)

(Dok. Gilang, Manunggal 2025)

Accompanying Music

The accompanying music in the Kuda Lumping dance in Manunggal Karya Village plays a vital role and is inseparable from the dance movements. According to Dibia (2006:178), music is not merely a complement, but rather an element that regulates the tempo, builds the atmosphere, and guides the dancers' movements. In the researcher's observation, the function of music here is far more than that; it becomes the primary controller of the performance, especially in the second act when the dancers begin to be possessed by spirits. The musical instruments used are simple gamelan typical of Javanese culture, which consist of:

Gongs are made of metal or brass. It is round and large and is hung on wood. How to play: hit using wood. The gong functions as a marker for changing parts, rounds, or as a rhythm reinforcer. The sound of a heavy and large gong has the magical power to open or close the atmosphere of a performance.



Fig. 9 (Gong musical instrument) (Doc. Gilang, Manunggal 2025)

The drum acts as the rhythm leader. It controls the tempo of the dance. A slow to fast beat signals the increasing energy of the dance, while a slow beat is used to calm the dancers or end the session. The drum is a percussion instrument. It is made of wood and has a tubular shape covered with animal skin on both sides, such as cow or buffalo hide, which is used to produce low notes, and goat skin on the other side, which is used to produce high notes. The drum functions as a rhythmic control for the song.



Fig. 10 (Drum musical instrument) (Doc. Gilang, Manunggal 2025)

The bonang is a percussion instrument. It is struck with a wooden mallet covered with rubber. It provides a complex rhythm and is a key instrument in the overall musical accompaniment of the Kuda Lumping dance. It consists of a collection of small gongs, called kendang or pots, placed horizontally on a dance stage and a wooden frame (rencak). It is typically made of cold-forged copper or a combination of metals. The bonang fills the melody and enhances the rhythm, creating a distinctively Javanese mystical and sacred atmosphere.



Fig. 11 (Bonang musical instrument) (Doc. Gilang, Manunggal 2025)

The saron is a gamelan instrument that often accompanies the kuda lumping dance. Made of metal bars (bronze or iron) arranged horizontally on a hollow wooden platform (rancak), it typically has 6-9 bars of varying lengths to produce specific tones.



Fig. 12 (Saron musical instrument)(Doc. Gilang, Manunggal 2025)

Performance Venue

Performances take place in open spaces such as village squares or courtyards, without a dedicated stage. This reflects the intimate and open nature of folk art. The arena's layout is an imaginary circle, symbolizing unity. The open space allows the energy and mystical atmosphere to spread widely, and allows the audience to become directly involved in the performance.



Fig. 13 (Show venue) (Doc. Gilang, Manunggal 2025)

Correlation Between Cultural Elements and Values

Based on the discussion above, it is clear that no single element stands alone. There is a strong logical correlation between the elements that form the presentation: The Relationship of Movement, Music, Floor Pattern: Music sets the tempo of the movement, and the floor pattern is formed according to the rhythm and meaning of the story. The Relationship of Makeup, Costume, Properties: All three work together to build character and strengthen the symbolic meaning that is intended to be conveyed.

Relationship of All Elements to Space: The open stage form allows for audience interaction, which then strengthens the value of togetherness.

Behind this form of presentation, there are cultural values that live in society, namely: Religious Values: Seen from the opening ritual, respect for ancestors, and belief in supernatural powers. Social and Togetherness Values: The performance cannot be done alone, it requires solid teamwork and support from the wider community. Adaptation and Unity Values: The existence of this art in Pohuwato is proof that Javanese culture is able to survive, adapt, and blend with the local culture of Gorontalo without losing its identity.

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research and discussion, it can be concluded that the presentation form of the Kuda Lumping dance in Manunggal Karya Village has a complete and standard structure, divided into two main acts: the opening act which displays seven structured movements, and the main act which is full of mystical nuances with the phenomenon of spirit possession. The elements that form the performance include movement, floor patterns, make-up and costumes, accompanying music, properties, and the performance venue, all of which are closely correlated, support each other, and form a complete unity of meaning.

The main uniqueness found is in the self-flagellation attraction which has the meaning of education and spiritual power, as well as the phenomenon of the audience being possessed by spirits, which proves the disappearance of the boundary between dancer and audience and functions strongly as a unifying medium for culture. The existence of this art is a clear proof of harmonious cultural acculturation, where the Javanese transmigrant community has succeeded in preserving their ancestral heritage while making it a shared cultural identity in the Pohuwato Regency area. The results of this study are expected to be scientific documentation, material for the development of dance learning materials based on local wisdom, and encouragement for the community to continue to maintain and preserve the noble values contained therein.

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