

Inventing the Reinvention? Tradition and the Body of Dancing Women

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Abstract: The practice of dance has historically been associated with complex social and political functions. There is abundant evidence demonstrating dance's centrality in society, and it has become an integral part of the historical process. Concurrently, dance becomes an identity associated with women. In line with Hobsbawm's concept of the invention of tradition. This study investigates the *Jathilan Obyog* tradition in Ponorogo through the lens of Hobsbawm's notion of the invention of tradition, focusing on the dominant elite and the participation of *Jathil* women. The present study employs a qualitative approach, specifically utilizing ethnographic methodology. The data were collected through participant observation, interviews, and documentation that were tailored to the specific context and research objectives. The investigation employed the notion of the fabrication of tradition, initially introduced by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, as the focal point of examination. The result shows that in a hegemonic endeavor that attempts to 'discipline' the tradition, *Jathil* women have succeeded in determining the power to reinvent tradition in picturesque ways, primarily through the body and with massive media support to create the process of reconstructing social memory and imagination. This research brings positive views of women as cultural agents within society.

Keywords: *Jathilan*; body; invention of tradition; women

Abstrak: Praktek tari secara historis dikaitkan dengan fungsi sosial dan politik yang kompleks. Ada banyak bukti yang menunjukkan sentralitas tari dalam masyarakat, dan telah menjadi bagian integral dari proses sejarah. Bersamaan dengan itu, tari menjadi identitas yang diasosiasikan dengan perempuan. Sejalan dengan konsep Hobsbawm tentang penemuan tradisi. Kajian ini mengkaji tradisi *Jathilan Obyog* di Ponorogo melalui kacamata gagasan Hobsbawm tentang penemuan tradisi, berfokus pada elit dominan dan partisipasi perempuan *Jathil*. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif, khususnya menggunakan metodologi etnografi. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui observasi partisipan, wawancara, dan dokumentasi yang disesuaikan dengan konteks dan tujuan penelitian. Investigasi menggunakan gagasan pemalsuan tradisi, yang awalnya diperkenalkan oleh Eric Hobsbawm dan Terence Ranger, sebagai titik fokus pemeriksaan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa dalam upaya hegemonik yang berupaya 'mendisiplinkan' tradisi, perempuan *Jathil* berhasil menentukan kekuatan untuk menemukan kembali tradisi dengan cara-cara yang terlukis, terutama melalui tubuh dan dengan dukungan media yang masif untuk menciptakan proses rekonstruksi ingatan dan ingatan sosial. imajinasi. Penelitian ini membawa pandangan positif tentang perempuan sebagai agen budaya dalam masyarakat.

Kata Kunci: *Jathilan*; tubuh; penemuan tradisi; perempuan

A. Introduction

Throughout history, tradition has always been involved in two binary opposition models; little vs great, high art vs fine art, rural vs urban, or village vs court. Such a dichotomy has always implied a hierarchy, one showing as high and the other as low.¹ In the New Order social engineering project, this dichotomy has been used to suppress traditions in the context of performing arts considered 'threatening'. Traditions that did not conform to the nationalist discourse were classified as 'low' and, at the same time, disciplined to be 'high'. The more submissive a tradition is, the higher its value will be.

Meanwhile, women and dance are two things that are equally difficult to grasp as historical realities. Contrasting conditions with men who become architects who are always active in the political and social order, women are far powerless and invisible.² Dance requires the body in its realize,³ while the body is associated with the power mechanism.⁴ Individual bodies have become operational sites for various powers,⁵ where power does not only manifest in the form of authority but has spread in every web of relations.⁶ Dance has become an attractive and enchanting tool for women to introduce themselves in maintaining or removing desired boundaries.⁷ A vital transformation has occurred in the *Jathilan* dance tradition through the performative changes of the dancers who undertake to remove the long-time reputation and memory of the dancers and the *Jathilan (Obyog)* dance as a 'low' into a prestigious site. Women in surprising roles through dance discovered a power not previously captured as reality due to a constantly suppressed and controlled presence.

¹ R. Anderson Sutton, "The Crystallization of a Marginal Tradition: Music in Banyumas, West Central Java," *Yearbook for Traditional Music* 18 (1986): 115, <https://doi.org/10.2307/768524>.

² Lynn Matluck Brooks, ed., *Women's Work: Making Dance in Europe before 1800* (London, England: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2007), 3.

³ Judith Lynne Hanna, *Dance, Sex, and Gender: Signs of Identity, Dominance, Defiance, and Desire* (London: The University of Chicago Press, 1988), viii.

⁴ Michel Foucault, *Sejarah Seksualitas: Seks dan Kekuasaan*, trans. Rahayu S. Hidayat (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 1997).

⁵ Michel Foucault, *Disiplin Tubuh Bengkel Individu Modern*, trans. Petrus Sunu Hardiyanta (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 1997).

⁶ Muhammad Iqbal Birsyada, "Legitimasi Kekuasaan atas Sejarah Keruntuhan Kerajaan Majapahit dalam Wacana Foucault," *Walisongo: Jurnal Penelitian Sosial Keagamaan* 24, no. 2 (2016): 311-32, <https://doi.org/10.21580/ws.24.2.974>.

⁷ Brooks, *Women's Work: Making Dance in Europe before 1800*; Hanna, *Dance, Sex, and Gender: Signs of Identity, Dominance, Defiance, and Desire*.

There has been a lot of creative participation from previous scholars who have studied the *Jathil* dance from various points of view. If mapped, there are three main trends in this study. First, scholars who focus on the issue of gender transition (from *gemblak* [male] to *jathil* [female]), which Wasrinda claimed as a result of the feminine tendencies of male dancers,⁸ Putri Lestari viewed the issue of homosexuality as the main cause,⁹ both of which trigger the transition as a result of not being in line with the social and political norms of the New Order era. At the same time, Anis Mega contended it as the impact of internal (interest and motivation) and external (family, social, governance) factors.¹⁰ Second, they who concerned about the perspective of *Jathil's* role and image, in which Wardani has specifically explored the negative and positive image of *Jathil*,¹¹ while Ardiyana examines it from the community's point of view.¹² Third, others who examine the values and meanings of the *Jathil* dance, which has been studied a lot from various focuses, such as Wirabrata, who considered the meaning of *Jathilan* from the point of view of documentary film,¹³ or Nurwendah and Nugrawiyati from the point of view of the value of gender roles and peace education,¹⁴ and Pratiwi which explored the symbolic meaning of the presentation of the dance as a brave warrior.¹⁵ However, no research on *Jathil* has examined it from the invention concept. Thus, this paper offers a different approach not previously explored. Assigning the concept of the invention of tradition, which was first initiated by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger as the centre of analysis, with ethnography as an

⁸ Wasrinda Kanni Adelita, "Fenomena Peralihan Gender pada Penari Jathil dalam Kesenian Reog di Kabupaten Ponorogo," [Undergraduate Thesis] (Universitas Negeri Semarang, 2017).

⁹ Siti Putri Lestari, "Hilangnya Jathil Laki-laki atau Gemblak dalam Kesenian Reog Ponorogo," [Undergraduate Thesis] (UIN Satu Tulungagung, 2021).

¹⁰ Anis Mega Dwi Lestari, "Perkembangan Penari Jathil dari Laki-laki menjadi Perempuan dalam Tari Reog Ponorogo," [Undergraduate Thesis] (Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, 2018).

¹¹ Hertina Ayu Kusuma Wardani, Kasnadi Kasnadi, and Hestri Hurustyanti, "Citra Jathil dalam Kesenian Reog Obyog Ponorogo," *Jurnal Bahasa dan Sastra* 7, no. 1 (2020): 24–31.

¹² Reni Ardiyana, "Persepsi Masyarakat terhadap Penari Jathil Obyog di Desa Tugu, Kecamatan Mlarak, Kabupaten Ponorogo," [Undergraduate Thesis] (Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, 2016).

¹³ Reza Nayaka Wirabrata, "Memaparkan Makna Gerakan Tari Jathilan Tradisional Yogyakarta melalui Film Dokumenter 'Prajurit Panji' dengan Genre Ilmu Pengetahuan," [Undergraduate Thesis] (Institut Seni Indonesia Yogyakarta, 2018).

¹⁴ Yusti Dwi dan Jepri Nugrawiyati Nurwendah, "Internalisasi Nilai Pendidikan Perdamaian melalui Pemahaman Perbedaan Peran Gender dalam Pertunjukan Kesenian Reog Ponorogo," *Palastren Jurnal Studi Gender* 14, no. 1 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.21043/palastren.v14i1.9925>.

¹⁵ Danis Novita Pratiwi, "Makna Simbolik Bentuk Penyajian Tari Jathilan dalam Kesenian Reog," [Undergraduate Thesis] (Universitas Negeri Malang, 2012).

approach, this paper attempts to examine the *Jathilan* dance tradition to investigate its relationship to the historical context and women in a broader sense.

B. Method

This research is a qualitative type of research. Qualitative research is naturalistic since it examines natural conditions, where the researcher acts as a key instrument.¹⁶ The results of this study are descriptive data in the form of written and spoken words from the object being observed.¹⁷ While the approach used is ethnographic. Ethnography refers to a set of qualitative research practices that include participant observation, interviews, and a variety of other techniques adapted to the context and needs of a particular research project. It involves direct and ongoing contact with human agents in the context of their life (culture) by observing what is happening, listening to what is being stated, asking questions, making written notes about the human experience being studied, and acknowledging the role of theory and the role of the researcher.¹⁸

This research takes place in Ponorogo, East Java. The data collection technique this research uses is observation: interviews, and documentation. Observation and participation are determined randomly, considering the tentative schedule of the *Jathilan* performances. The researcher attended and involved herself in the *Jathil Obyog* dance performance. It is used to directly observe the conditions and behavior of the *Jathil* dancers and all activities that occur during performances.

Meanwhile, interviews are used as the most basic technique of this research, both structured and unstructured. In this case, the researcher prepared questions and adjusted them to the circumstances and answers from the respondents. The informants were selected in the interviews based on competence and relevance to the topics raised in this study. With the snowball sampling technique, informants are selected in turns (the initial informant chooses the second informant, the second informant selected by the third informant, and so on) to find information saturation. Interviews were conducted using an in-depth interview model,¹⁹ meaning the researcher formulated

¹⁶ Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif dan R&D* (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2017), 8.

¹⁷ Lexy J. Moleong, *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif* (Bandung: Bandung: Rosda Karya, 2010), 4.

¹⁸ Sarah Pink, *Doing Sensory Ethnography*, 2nd ed. (London: SAGE Publications, 2015), 5.

¹⁹ Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif dan R&D*, 233.

fundamental questions, but the application was more open. The subjects of this study used the *Jathil Obyog* dancers selected based on their level of popularity, education, and *Jathil* dancers, both active and inactive in the Reog Ponorogo. In addition, researchers also reached out to the *Jathilan* audiences and the government, especially in this case, the Ponorogo tourism office. Finally, documentation is complementary research data, written and unwritten documents, photos, pictures, reports, or memorandums.²⁰ This study used documentation to collect printed and non-printed data on female *Jathil* dancers in Reog *Obyog*.

The technical data analysis applied in this study was the Miles and Huberman model, which includes three steps.²¹ First, data reduction is used to summarise and sort out primary data and trim unnecessary ones. Second, data presentation is intended to display data in descriptions to be organized into relationship patterns until the structure is understandable. Finally, drawing conclusions and verification, where the researcher searched for meaning based on the data obtained, interpreted it, and matched the evidence, reached a valid conclusion.

C. Results and Discussion

***Jathilan* Tradition: Fluctuations and Transitions**

Jathilan is a traditional dance practice as part of a series of Reog, which is danced by “*Jathil*” riding a braided *jaran*. In today’s tradition, *Jathilan* is played by 6-8 *Jathil* or more who dance with graceful movements to the music played by musicians with movements that are more focused on hip movements (*egolan*).²² The dance is loose, without a standard groove, and often without a braided horse (*jaran eblek*). *Jathil* women will wear thick makeup, tight kebaya tops, and black pants above knee length. The musical accompaniment varies from *Jaipongan*, *Campursari*, to contemporary *Dangdut* music.²³

²⁰ Suprpto, *Metodologi Penelitian Ilmu Pendidikan dan Ilmu-ilmu Pengetahuan.Sosial* (Jakarta: Buku Seru, 2013), 42.

²¹ Matthew B. Miles and A. Michael Huberman, *Analisis Data Kualitatif: Buku Sumber tentang Metode-metode Baru*, trans. Tjetjep Rohendi and Mulyarto Mulyarto (Jakarta: UI Press, 1992), 16.

²² R. M. Soedarsono, *Seni Pertunjukan Indonesia di Era Globalisasi* (Jakarta: Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 1999), 102.

²³ Wardani, Kasnadi, and Hurustyanti, “Citra *Jathil* dalam Kesenian Reog *Obyog* Ponorogo.”

This condition is different from the old version of *Jathilan*, played by two men paired with each other by playing the hussars of the royal guards training on horses.²⁴ In later versions, this male *Jathil* dancer is often referred to as *gemblak*, a handsome boy who was chosen and raised by *Warok* and deliberately groomed to become the *Jathil*. When these *gemblak* dancers were dancing, they were given a unique female property (*cross-dressing*). The dance moves are also adapted to the graceful dance moves of women. Their role is to tease *Pembarong* and provoke them to be more passionate and enthusiastic.

In the 1980s, male *Jathil* (*gemblak*) was primarily replaced by female *Jathil*. The development of the education sector is considered to have reduced boys' interest in becoming dancers and *gemblak*. This loss and lack of interest were then met with the government's need for *Jathil* dancers to follow the Jakarta Fair agenda. This pressure prompted the government to recruit and train female dancers from SMK (Vocational High School) or SMEA (Economic High School) students. By time and time, *gemblak* tradition disappeared, shifted by a new tradition by women.²⁵

In today's *Jathilan*, female *Jathil* dancers are a striking symbol of the Reog artistry. People may be more interested in attending a Reog when seeing *Jathil* poster displayed in good visuality and will be more excited about famous dancers whose popularity has been recognised. In a performance, *Jathil* will dance in two sessions; the first session will show the *Jathil* grip dance in unison, accompanied by the sound of *gamelan* and screams of *senggakan* (*hok'e*). Afterward, they will dance according to their abilities without standard movements. *Gamelan* beats will be played dynamically with contemporary viral *Dangdut Koplo* songs with the accompaniment of *senggakan*. The composing group of *pengrawit* (a group of *gamelan* musicians) will receive song requests from the audience or the event sponsors.

In this session, the hips and hand movements will dominate the dancers' movements. They continue to improvise as long as the song's rhythm provokes

²⁴ Pemerintah Kabupaten Daerah Tingkat II Ponorogo, *Pedoman Dasar Kesenian Reog Ponorogo dalam Pentas Budaya Bangsa* (Ponorogo: Dinas Perpustakaan dan Kearsipan Kabupaten Ponorogo, 1995), 66.

²⁵ Yusti Dwi Nurwendah, "Tubuh Perempuan Penari dalam Jaringan Patriarki (Studi atas Eksistensi Perempuan Penari *Jathil* Reog Obyog dalam Lanskap Masyarakat Muslim di Ponorogo)," [Master Thesis] (UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, 2021); Soemarto, *Menelusuri Perjalanan Reog Ponorogo* (Ponorogo: Kotareogmedia, 2014).

the audience's enthusiasm. In one scene, *Jathil* will perform an *edreg* movement. One by one will walk towards the *Pembarong* and tease him with nodding head movements. The dancers will be flirtatious and wiggle their hips in front of the half-sitting *Pembarong* (squatting); often, the hip sway hits the *Pembarong* in the face. Comedy elements are also included, including *Bujangganong* and *Jathil* as the actors. The theme highlighted in that comedy revolves the most around romance issues. Sometimes, they also show scenes full of intimacy covered with comedy to provoke audiences' laughter.

In another part, we will find *saweran* momentum. The women will dance to highlight their skills, and the audience will approach, vote, and give enough money to dance with *Jathil* if they want. At this moment, we know that the beautiful appearance of the dancer, the body, and the provocative movements are the most important elements that will determine the electability of *Jathil*. After being selected and given some money, the woman will dance with or offer a song to sing. The dancers will highlight each other's abilities more to hypnotize the audience.

However, I found no sources stating exactly where the *Jathil* dance came from. Sources released by the local government of Ponorogo district at the end of the 20th century stated that *Jathil* is the oldest type of dance on the island of Java.²⁶ In another source, it is noted that it is a horse braid dance originally from Ponorogo. However, *Jathil* Ponorogo looks different from most *Jathil* dances in other areas. In Yogyakarta, Central Java, as well as other areas of Java, is known as the *Kuda Lumping* or *Jaranan Kepang*. The striking difference is the presence of mystical elements in the *Jathil* dance, which requires the dancers to be involved in a 'possession' ritual that will perform extreme scenes such as eating leaves, flowers, or glass, to scenes of cutting body parts such as arms.²⁷ Meanwhile, these ritual elements do not participate in the contemporary *Jathilan* tradition in Ponorogo.

The New Order and Disciplined Traditions

The period of the 1980s seems to be an important marker for the turmoil and history of art in Java. I have noted and attempted to relate –in those years–

²⁶ Soemarto, *Menelusuri Perjalanan Reyog Ponorogo*, 47.

²⁷ "Kuda Lumping" [https://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kuda_lumping#:~:text=Kuda+lumping+adalah+seni+tari,sering+disebut+sebagai+jaran+kepang](https://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kuda_lumping#:~:text=Kuda+lumping+adalah+seni+tari,sering+disebut+sebagai+jaran+kepang;); Eva Rapoport, "Jathilan Horse Dance: Spirit Possession Beliefs and Practices in The Present-Day Java," *IKAT: The Indonesian Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 2, no. 1 (2018): 1–17, <https://doi.org/10.22146/ikatv2i1.37389>.

arts and especially traditional dance in many areas have experienced unusual symptoms but similar. Soemarto stated Reog in that year showed extraordinary significance for development, along with the many changes that occurred in the body of Reog. As seen, the figures of *Kelono Sewandono*, *Potro Tholo*, and *Potro Joyo* were abolished, and female *Jathil* shifted *Gemblak*.²⁸ As Lyslof reported during this period, the *Lengger* tradition in Banyumas Central Java experienced a serious revival as an implication of the official recognition of the state and the success of its commercialization. *Lengger's* music was revitalized with a combination of other musical genres being adapted, and performers of the *Lengger* underwent a major change. The 'new' *Lengger* body began to be recognized as a 'decent' tradition and art.²⁹

Connecting this period, what seems explicit is the undeniable correlation with the 1965s, when Indonesia was transitioning to the New Order. The political upheaval that occurred mainly after the G30S/PKI incident impacted the performing arts in the regions. The performance of Reog, for example, has experienced divisions caused by the contestation of party groups and religious groups who take it as a political instrument.³⁰ The concrete manifestation of the split is embodied in the costumes worn by *Jathil* dancers. They wear costumes aligned with the symbolic and identical colors of the party copes them. Symbols or images of political parties are often installed above the heads of the *Dhadhak Merak*.³¹ The ongoing discord and disintegration within Reog's body eventually stopped the show altogether.

Hefner's notes which focus on the art of *Tayuban* in East Java, also seem to underline the same period. He found *Tayuban's* 'unique' fluctuations. *Tayuban*, identified as an offering ritual involving women's dances that are 'abusive and sexual', has been fiercely opposed by many political and religious organizations since the beginning of the independence period. The PNI (Partai Nasional Indonesia) and PKI (Partai Komunis Indonesia) criticized *Tayuban* mainly because of the cost and the freedom of its sexuality. Urban Muslim reformers,

²⁸ Soemarto, *Menelusuri Perjalanan Reyog Ponorogo*, 19–20.

²⁹ Rene T A Lysloff, "Rural Javanese 'Tradition' and Erotic Subversion: Female Dance Performance in Banyumas (Central Java)," *Asian Music* 33, no. 1 (2001): 1–24, <https://doi.org/10.2307/834230>.

³⁰ Pemerintah Kabupaten Daerah Tingkat II Ponorogo, *Pedoman Dasar Kesenian Reog Ponorogo dalam Pentas Budaya Bangsa*, 5.

³¹ Soemarto, *Menelusuri Perjalanan Reyog Ponorogo*, 19.

such as Muhammadiyah and Masyumi, were vehemently against it and banned the performance altogether because it was seen as merely exposing false sacredness, indecency, and an act of extravagance. These efforts have been successfully implemented in urban areas but have not been successful enough to be implemented in rural areas. NU (Nahdlatul Ulama) is a bit problematic because, on the one hand, its top officials respond critically, but at the same time, NU leaders in rural areas tolerate it. However, in the 1970s, NU officials finally participated in intensive efforts to abolish *Tayuban* and succeeded in bringing it into decline. The divisions between reformists and traditionalists were eventually quelled.³²

However, in the 1980s, the New Order regime made a seemingly controversial stance. They support traditional arts and positively defend *Tayuban*, which is claimed as a regional and national identity while recognizing its potential as a good tourism object. Golkar officials even criticized the intervention of Muslim reformers because they were considered to have attacked established traditions. However, a few years later (around 1985), Hefner reported that many officials had begun to support the call to abolish *Tayuban* and confirm the Muslim argument. In the same year, *Tayuban* was called upon to be abolished or allowed if only by banning alcohol consumption or specific restrictions. Sponsors also decreased drastically.³³ *Tayuban*, usually held for 3 nights, was cut down to one, while the other was filled up with competitions of reciting the Quran.³⁴ Regardless, Hefner explains this attitude change was influenced by the Islamic orthodoxy developing in East Java and not based on the product of Golkar's strategy.³⁵

Hefner's final argument, however, seems ambiguous. Suppose the turmoil in *Tayuban*, as Hefner views, is the effect of increasing Islamic orthodoxy and not an implication of the New Order regime's strategy. In that case, we need to examine his claim that the increasing belief in Islamic orthodoxy among Muslims results from Golkar's suppression through education, media, and government

³² Robert W. Hefner, "The Politics of Popular Art: Tayuban Dance and Culture Change in East Java," *Indonesia* 43, no. 43 (1987): 90–97, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3351211>.

³³ Hefner, 92.

³⁴ Robert W. Hefner, "Islamizing Java? Religion and Politics in Rural East Java," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 46, no. 3 (1987): 547, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2056898>.

³⁵ Hefner, "The Politics of Popular Art: Tayuban Dance and Culture Change in East Java," 92.

which encourages people to take religion more seriously. A generation of village youth then welcomed the religious promotion with a crisis of faith, which seemed to be getting restless with their old traditions and beliefs.³⁶ If so, it is undeniable that the change in *Tayuban* dance represents a network of relationships linking traditional art activities with New Order politics.

Larasati elaborated on the issue of the relationship between the New Order and changes in traditional arts cases. She reported the New Order regime under Suharto was the most responsible for the disappearance, suppression, and imprisonment of the bodies of female dancers and their families. Larasati openly stated that the bodies of female dancers that cannot be controlled would be eliminated and replaced with new bodies that have been indoctrinated and trained. Old Order practiced by those who were eliminated, innovations were made and perfected according to the country's targets.³⁷ Sunardi's notes seem to relate. She highlighted cross-gender dance performances in East Java and emphasized that Suharto and his military regime –especially from 1965-1966– had a great influence on the state of performing arts, including musicians and dancers. Various terrors of murder or imprisonment imposed on artists automatically threaten the show's stability, almost extinction. Women's political organizations and activities were denounced and forced to submit to state control. Dancing women considered a threat to the New Order's ideology will be tortured, imprisoned, or killed. However –again– like most art sustainability in Java, in the 1970s to 1990s, a new generation began to initiate the revival of performing arts with a more cautious approach.³⁸

What the period lines manifest seems to lead to a parallel argument. The New Order regime was involved in a massive process involving changes in the body of performing arts in Java. A power to impose discipline on traditions that are 'considered potentially endanger' the government stability. While Sutton has gone so far as to define it as a process of crystallization, where art is objectified and formalized through a transformation process that involves the creation of

³⁶ Hefner, 92.

³⁷ Rachmi Diyah Larasati, *The Dance that Makes You Vanish: Cultural Reconstruction in Post-Genocide Indonesia* (London: University of Minnesota Press, 2013); Toni Shapiro-Phim and Rachmi Diyah Larasati, "Reviewed Work: The Dance That Makes You Vanish: Cultural Reconstruction in Post-Genocide Indonesia by Rachmi Diyah Larasati," *Indonesia*, no. 98 (2014): 163, <https://doi.org/10.5728/indonesia.98.0163>.

³⁸ Christina Sunardi, "Pushing at the Boundaries of the Body: Cultural Politics and Cross-Gender Dance in East Java," *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land- En Volkenkunde / Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences of Southeast Asia* 165, no. 4 (2009): 470, <https://doi.org/10.1163/22134379-90003629>.

authoritative texts, Lysloff defines this as the creative process of reinvention by referring to Hobsbawm and Ranger. However, I—in this case—trail Lysloff engaging the concept of reinvention to describe the series of symptoms as the focus of this research.

The Reinvention of Tradition and Hegemonic Potential in *Jathilan* Tradition

In the discussion of tradition, the term invention has been widely involved and has become a dominant presence in related studies. The term was first introduced by Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983), who claim that traditions that are often thought of as ancient heritage are, in fact, new and sometimes '*invented*'. The invention of tradition is defined as a set of practices, usually governed by rules that are accepted openly or tacitly and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to instill specific values and norms of behavior through repetition, automatically implying continuity with the past.³⁹ Continuity is often fabricated by absorbing references to 'old' situations to respond to 'new' concerns or constructing the past by imposing repetition.⁴⁰ In short, it includes performance practices that take on ancient attributes to meet new goals.

In revealing tradition, Hobsbawm rejects the modernization theory, which states modern society is discontinuation of tradition. Instead, he found that tradition still has a place in modern society and is not limited to traditional societies. According to him, the main characteristic of traditionality in modernity manifests in the discovery of traditions deliberately created to fulfill various social and political interests.⁴¹ The emergence of movements that maintain or revive tradition indicates discontinuation with the original. The old tradition does not need to be revived or re-created when it is still alive.⁴² It can be seen here that the concept of finding tradition is related to a specific 'purpose or use'.

Scholars from various disciplines have applied Hobsbawm's concept of invention tradition through varied perspectives. From a religious point of view, for example, Lewis and Hammer (2007) examined historical phenomena and religious traditions created in specific contexts and are understood as deliberate

³⁹ Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1.

⁴⁰ Hobsbawm and Ranger, 2.

⁴¹ Hobsbawm and Ranger, 5.

⁴² Hobsbawm and Ranger, 8.

falsifications.⁴³ Palmisano and Pannofino claimed a paradoxical relationship between religion and contemporary traditions involving the creative process of rearranging religious texts produced and interpreted by the experience of religious reformers, which they then legitimized from God's guidance.⁴⁴ Oberholtzer has exemplified a more extreme point of view regarding trust and marketing, capturing the reality of dream catcher products being re-adopted and marketed expansively as icons of belief and spirituality.⁴⁵

Perhaps the more specific, including the relationship between dance and invention, was explored by Firenzi, who found the use of dance in the African Zulu community as a mechanism used by the authorities for the sake of order (an instrument of political and social control).⁴⁶ In the same context of national dance set in Iran, conditions in which women's dances are ideally created as a 'high art form' for the concern of realising the ideas, aesthetics, and ethics of nationalism and at the same time modernity in Iran through the creation of historical imagination, literary texts, folk culture, and ancient symbols.⁴⁷ Meanwhile, Gilman revealed an equally exciting finding about women's political dances in Malawi, which have an effect on the hegemonic potential of the political elite. Gilman succeeded in tracing women's dances which were initially used by government authorities for power consolidation, in the later period, becoming a fundamental element in Malawi's political culture. A political practice that is traditionalized and applied through repetition is finally accepted as a normative practice and, at the same time, an 'inherited tradition'.⁴⁸

Although the concept of Hobsbawm's invention is phenomenal and has become a source of open interpretation, it has not escaped criticism and debate.

⁴³ James R Lewis and Olav Hammer, *The Invention of Sacred Tradition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

⁴⁴ Stefania dan Nicola Pannofino Palmisano, *Invention of Tradition and Syncretism in Contemporary Religions: Sacred Creativity* (Sydney, Australia: Palgrave Studies in New Religions and Alternative Spiritualities, 2017).

⁴⁵ Cath Oberholtzer, "The Re-Invention of Tradition and the Marketing of Cultural Values," *Anthropologica* 37, no. 2 (1995): 141–53, <https://doi.org/10.2307/25605807>.

⁴⁶ Tara Firenzi, "The Changing Functions of Traditional Dance in Zulu Society: 1830–Present," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 45, no. 3 (2012): 403–425.

⁴⁷ Ida Meftahi, "The Invention of an Ideal Female National Dancer in Twentieth-Century Iran," in *Gender and Dance in Modern Iran* (Oxfordshire: Routledge, 2016), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315753294-2>.

⁴⁸ Lisa Gilman, "The Traditionalization of Women's Dancing, Hegemony, and Politics in Malawi," *Journal of Folklore Research* 41, no. 1 (2004): 33–60.

Post for example, revealed that the idea of discovering tradition has a lot of ambiguity which has the potential to accept a rather 'demeaning' context regarding the practice of historical falsification or manipulation.⁴⁹ Plant also mentions a similar note that the concept has created ambiguities that are often misunderstood, such as the emergence of false connotations if a traditional invention is found to have no clear historical source. There is a clear gap in the approach to historical sources due to the limitations of past sources; therefore, the ability to trace genealogies and historical continuity is a problem itself.⁵⁰

The main characteristic of the invented tradition is the existence of discontinuity and ritualization process that operates in a vacuum.⁵¹ He underlined the invention of traditions often involves an intentional element; when old ways are rediscovered, the reason is not that they are no longer available but are deliberately not adopted.⁵² However, as Paul Post noted, it would be too shallow to use the concept of 'invention to merely trace the alleged authenticity or manipulation of traditions from the past.'⁵³ In connection with Linnekin's argument that all traditions and customs are created and constructed symbolically for contemporary purposes, not just passively left behind. Assessing the authenticity of tradition is such a dilemmatic act.⁵⁴ Instead, this concept is essential to critically question how to deal with history, why the need for change arose, and what patterns were involved.⁵⁵ I, therefore, involved, as suggested by Hobsbawm, that the investigation of the discovery of tradition becomes a bridge to see the symptoms of a more complex and broader historical shift.

Focusing on the *Jathilan* in Reog, I intend to describe how the show underwent a process of rediscovery after being in a coma due to political turmoil. Some practices that are removed, replaced, or interpreted in a new way – as stated by Hobsbawm – indicate discontinuation with the old chain of traditions.

⁴⁹ Paul Post, "Rituals and the Function of the Past: Rereading Eric Hobsbawm," *Journal of Ritual Studies* 10, no. 2 (1996): 85–107.

⁵⁰ Byron King Plant, "Secret, Powerful, and the Stuff of Legends: Revisiting Theories of Invented Tradition," *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies* XXVIII, no. 1 (2008): 175–94.

⁵¹ Hobsbawm and Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*.

⁵² Post, "Rituals and the Function of the Past: Rereading Eric Hobsbawm."

⁵³ Post, 97.

⁵⁴ Jocelyn Linnekin, "Cultural Invention and the Dilemma of Authenticity," *American Anthropologist* 93, no. 2 (1991): 446, <https://doi.org/10.1525/aa.1991.93.2.02a00120>.

⁵⁵ Post, "Rituals and the Function of the Past: Rereading Eric Hobsbawm," 99.

It involves creating, remodelling, and rearranging past patterns and images. The model of formation, symptoms, and goals of the situation becomes the focus of this discussion.

As I mentioned earlier, the 'original' *Jathilan* characters of the past were danced by the male, which the female later replaced. The implementation of the dislocation spread widely discontent boys to become *gemblak* as a consequence of the expansion of the educational sector in rural Ponorogo. While going beyond this view, I will go far to involve the political and religious conditions around the practice.

Since the 1950s, Reog's body, especially its Warok, has been recruiting communist and nationalist parties. Reog, which can attract the masses on a large scale, is a perfect political vehicle. But under the New Order, those suspected of being affiliated with communist groups would suffer expulsion and massacres. Somehow, many Reog and *Warok* artists managed to escape the 1965 massacre. However, the New Order regime continuously tried to eliminate Warok's role, especially as a sinister political force.⁵⁶

Warok is known to have a kind of spiritual knowledge that requires him to stay away from sexual relations with women. This made him raise a *gemblak* to serve his daily needs and, at the same time, train him to become a dancer. Regardless, their relationship was problematic in line with the ongoing issues of homosexuality. Reformist groups and Kyai of pesantren urged the government to bring Reog in line with the orthodoxy of religious teachings. The government even claimed that the relationship between the two was not following the nation's moral standards, which was unacceptable.⁵⁷ Education under the state also played an active role in disseminating *gemblakan* as a negative and ancient

⁵⁶ Warok "used to be" a character in the Reog who had high spiritual strength and magic with invulnerability (it was even believed that they could escape the 1965 attack because of their invulnerability). Warok had a vital influence on the political conditions of the Ponorogo people and was respected by both the rulers and the villagers for his authority, so he became the link of power between higher and lower authorities. However, Warok is often considered a threat to the stability of power because it has mysticism and dangerous magical potential. Ian Douglas Wilson, "Reog Ponorogo: Spirituality, Sexuality, and Power in a Javanese Performance Tradition," *Intersections: Gender and Sexuality in Asia and the Pacific*, no. 2 (1999).

⁵⁷ Sunardi, "Pushing at the Boundaries of the Body: Cultural Politics and Cross-Gender Dance in East Java."

culture.⁵⁸ This situation may explain the change in the attitude of boys who are reluctant to be *gemblak* and prefer to go to school.

Commonly, the distinctive characteristic of the New Order government was to create order. As is the case with most traditions in Indonesia, Reog and *Warok* must be rediscovered to be recognized as traditional cultures. In this ambitious New Order project, the East Java Education and Culture Office recruited Reog as the official art of the Ponorogo district. Since then, the government and the religious organization NU have worked together to rid Reog's body of subversive elements, both politically and sexually. Elements of sacredness related to communication and worship of ancestral spirits were abolished, *gemblak* was prohibited and recommended female dancers instead. Reog performances are standardized to become high art with an effort to associate it with the legends of kingdoms such as the palace in Central Java. It is supported by the government's steps in finding the Wengker royal site in Ponorogo as a legitimacy for the reform actions carried out while increasing the prestige of the city of Ponorogo as belonging to the 'aristocratic' class.⁵⁹

Thus, the conversion of male to female can be categorized as one of the New Order government's efforts to subdue *Warok* as a docile servant of the state and to eliminate *Warok's* image as a spiritual leader or a threatening rebel. The emphasis of the New Order was quite successful; *Warok* was rediscovered by imitating the 'original *Warok*' movement without presenting spiritual power and magical elements. The New Order's seizure of Reog's body became a cultural machine to produce a 'clean' version. This authoritarian project succeeded in overthrowing *gemblak* tradition, which continued in the *Jathil* dancer's body adapted to the New Order's political discourse; it is done by being shifted by the female.

Jathilan, which has always taken place in open places such as fields, streets, or courtyards (known as *Obyog*), was standardized in such a way by the local government in 1992 and represented in a new form as Festival performances on stages. It is great to show that combines dance and drama with a standard motion and storyline. Standardization aims to produce uniform performances with high values and images as dances in Keraton. However, this did not enact it

⁵⁸ Wilson, "Reog Ponorogo: Spirituality, Sexuality, and Power in a Javanese Performance Tradition."

⁵⁹ Wilson.

to disappear altogether. The artists held it cautiously to avoid conflict with the government's ideology. This situation creates a striking gap and has implications for giving a dichotomous picture of festival as high art and *Obyog* as rural art.

The New Order's cultural pattern emphasizes the idealization of women's dances as 'high and noble' as in Keraton culture, where elements of sexuality and humor are abolished.⁶⁰ Hughes-Freeland identified it as 'Javanese cultural brokering' dignified (high).⁶¹ Instead of maintaining a high status in Festivals, most female *Jathil* chooses to remain involved in *Obyog*, which is the reason behind the decision. However, this situation cannot be used to judge the failure of the New Order project. The reason is that although women do not leave *Obyog* and its sexual representations, they avoid elements that contrast with the government order, such as abandoning elements of spirit worship and drinking alcohol. *Obyog*, although unlike the festival, which has been officially standardized, also continues to experience rediscovery that pivots on the New Order cultural model.

The next question is mainly related to electing females to replace male *gemblak*. It contradicts the prevailing practice in other areas in Java, where female dancers are suppressed and restricted. As Jasper's report in Hefner reveals that the revitalization of religion in Java made women's dances considered obscene because of the view that good women would not dance in public.⁶² However, the New Order's insistence on recruiting women as *Jathil* dancers to replace the *gemblak* tradition does not seem to run without reason. Women in this period were more easily subdued, and much evidence shows that Javanese women have a more refined nature and better self-control than men.⁶³ This pattern aligns with the New Order's promotion of the idealization of domesticated women and reduced to limited roles as wives and mothers. The practice of glorification is perpetuated for women who are 'obedient' to their husbands, are not involved in politics, and focus on taking care of the household. As Hughes-Freeland notes, the role of women is reproduced in emphasizing

⁶⁰ Felicia Hughes-Freeland, "Gender, Representation, Experience: The Case of Village Performers in Java," *Dance Research* 26, no. 2 (2008): 143.

⁶¹ Felicia Hughes-Freeland, "Performers and Professionalization in Java: Between Leisure and Livelihood," *South East Asia Research* 9, no. 2 (2001): 214, <https://doi.org/10.5367/000000001101297388>.

⁶² Hefner, "The Politics of Popular Art: Tayuban Dance and Culture Change in East Java," 90.

⁶³ Hughes-Freeland, "Gender, Representation, Experience: The Case of Village Performers in Java," 142.

silence and silence as a sign of subordination, where women can only act as wives, not themselves.⁶⁴ The more women can be tamed, the more they will be considered to have a high social class hierarchy.

Such a situation can then manifest in women's status as dancers. The female palace dancers, who are polite and obedient, do not emphasize sexuality and are materially oriented, representing women's 'high' value. On the other hand, female dancers who contrasted with the criteria for Keraton dancers were identified as 'fringe, rough, or inferior'. This unique depiction of 'high' or 'bottom' can be seen in the representation of female *Jathil* dancers. The female *Jathil* dancer's failure to maintain a high position as a festival dancer has caused her to get the title of a lowly and cheap woman. The predicate dichotomy seems to have been successfully traditionalized and continuously inherited in women's dance culture.

In this case, I am describing that the New Order has imposed the tradition of performing *Jathilan* to be rediscovered with 'new' models following the state's ideology. In such a scheme, I perceive that the appointment of women as a substitute for *gemblak* is not solely based on the consideration that women are easily subdued but involves another, more basic goal related to eliminating Warok's authority as the most influential and, at the same time the most potentially 'disruptive' figure. The plan, which is framed in such a way, aims to support the New Order's social and cultural engineering projects and provide a submission model to the community.

Beyond the Dancing Women Body: Reinventing the Tradition?

The invention of tradition concept becomes a valuable starting point for tracing a series of phenomena that occur and are interrelated. In the process of discovery, especially discussions about history, aspects related to memory or 'remembering and forgetting' occupy a central and complicated position.⁶⁵ It is a very effective process for re-practice consideration of old elements for new contexts.⁶⁶ It involves ways in which the traditions are alive today and is a chain resulting from the ongoing transformation in their historical course. The conversions that usually occur and are realized slowly are often poorly

⁶⁴ Hughes-Freeland, 142.

⁶⁵ Post, "Rituals and the Function of the Past: Rereading Eric Hobsbawm," 98.

⁶⁶ Dietrich Boschung, Alexandra Wilhelmine Busch, and Miguel John Versluys, eds., *Reinventing "The Invention of Tradition"? Indigenous Pasts and the Roman Present* (Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink, 2015), 252.

documented and even forgotten.⁶⁷ The absence of sources may definitively explain the past, which raises what is assumed as historical amnesia.⁶⁸

In the last few periods, through massive interventions, including technology media, the tourism industry, and film, the transformation of traditional performances has become very prominent. Discovering tradition – unexpectedly– involves a combination of spontaneous generation and the documented past. In the discourse of the *Jathil* dancer's body rediscovery with a high form to display the national ideals and image of the New Order era (created as a virtuous character in nationalist discourse), the dance artists do not necessarily leave the past regarding streets dance (*Obyog*). *Obyog* provides greater opportunities for women in terms of economy, although at the same time 'negative image'. However, this situation seems to have undergone important changes and transformations in the body of twenty-first-century female *Jathil*. There is an attempt to rediscover the tradition that seems to be more creatively applied in the spirit of memory reconstruction and social imagery.

Ayu,⁶⁹ a *Jathil* dancer whose beauty has become a source of admiration for many eyes, perhaps represents the image of a *Jathil* dancer who has succeeded in removing herself from the old image and reputation as a 'twopenny' or (extremely) 'whore'. In a site where a women's agency is suppressed and men control her sexuality entirely, she is not trapped and keeps on struggling with herself in the dangerous autonomy contest. In her dancing practice, she carefully takes advantage of her body and sexuality to challenge the old female dancer's representation pattern, which is always perceived as the 'inferior', subordinated, exploited, and only able to survive since the 'help' of male agencies.

Ayu began her career as a *Jathil* Festival dancer on big stages and then expanded to *Obyog*. At that time, various obstacles emerged, such as families' rejection, seniors' contempt, to audiences' disparagement due to her professional commitment. She challenged the norms and views of life –in general– society, particularly the dancing women. She refuses to be involved in the common tradition of female dancers ensnared in negative stigmatization.

⁶⁷ Rustom Bharucha, "Notes on the Invention of Tradition," *Economic and Political Weekly* 24, no. 33 (1989): 1908.

⁶⁸ Boschung, Busch, and Versluys, *Reinventing "The Invention of Tradition"? Indigenous Pasts and the Roman Present*, 12.

⁶⁹ The name of a *Jathil* dancer in disguise.

The image of female dancers, generally portrayed gloomily, is brushed aside in a not easy but consistent way. In the climax, when she had a lot of appearances and the media started highlighting her name, people began to see her differently. Moreover, she became the first *Jathil Obyog* to complete higher education while most *Jathil* dancers were women who had dropped out of school. It can be seen from an interview, she stated:

“So, it was a challenge at first, in Reog *Obyog*, to take to the streets; people looked down on me. The challenge is how to maintain fame. There I tried to keep my attitude and care for everything so that people’s mindsets changed. And Alhamdulillah, that’s slowly changing. I don’t know how people look at me, but I feel like I have played a role and fought there. Because I also don’t want to be a hypocrite if the seniors used to be like what people say, many cases of *Jathil* get pregnant out of wedlock, drop out of school, and being taken everywhere with men; many are drunk the alcohol. So, it’s true what people say about the image of *Jathil*; actually, it’s like it’s gloomy, it’s wrong to be someone’s mistress, and there were lots of them. That’s why I always thought, “Wow, this is a tough task”, but the important thing is that I don’t want to continue my seniors’ tradition; I’m a professional dancer, I get paid, I’m done.” (NS 1/150920)

What distinguishes Ayu from previous *Jathil* dancers may be seen in her efforts to control her own body. In her dance moves, she is no less provocative than other dancers. Ayu did not hesitate to improvise her hip movements with totality during the performance. She wears tight clothes which reveal her curves, and her face is beautiful as most *Jathil* dancers. It shows that Ayu is also a female dancer who takes advantage of her sexuality. Sexuality in dance has functioned as a driving force of art, so dancers automatically project a sexual image while dancing.⁷⁰ However, she never allowed ‘others’ to control her body. For her, people are free to see her dancing body but are never free to act on her body. She stated:

“In the past, people often called me “the stingy”, because I didn’t want to be touched by men like most of my senior dancers. I refuse to be taken anywhere after dancing or have my body poked carelessly. My principle is that I’m not a trashy dancer; I’m a professional and working. That’s why I always take my mother with me to shows. If I’m twopenny too, then there’s no point in me going to college.” (NS 1/150920)

Ayu may not be the only beautiful *Jathil* dancer who emphasizes sexuality, but she was the first to escape the snare of Javanese patriarchal society. The hierarchical view of gender relations represents women in depicting the wife as

⁷⁰ Hanna, *Dance, Sex, and Gender: Signs of Identity, Dominance, Defiance, and Desire*, 5–6.

kanca wingking. Even when she was married and had a child, her popularity didn't wane and skyrocketed. She is in the spotlight of many media, plays in films, becomes a celebrity and model, and has a business in the culinary and beauty fields. This life and situation indubitably contrast with the lives of most *Jathil* dancers in the past while after this success, as an educated *Jathil* dancer and able to control her own body, other *Jathil* dancers have emerged who share the same principles; dancing but able to take control of their bodies. As an informant stated:

"In the past, the majority of the audience was drunk (drinking alcohol), so when they give some money (*saweran*), they sometimes ask to dance together with the dancers and be close. For me, I always use the strategy of keeping my distance. Because I believe the only one who can care for my body is myself. And Alhamdulillah, there is now a ban on drunkenness during performances. In the past, it was really bad; many dared to touch dancers' buttocks, and now it's gone, it's safe." (NS 2/150920)

When Ayu tried to rediscover the female *Jathil* identity as a professional, we will be shown by the large role of the media in engendering a new category of 'dancer' in the *Jathilan* tradition.⁷¹ With such massive media support, Ayu gained her struggle's recognition for identity and, simultaneously, succeeded in locking up the young generation's memories of *Jathilan's* image, which is 'overreaching' and tends to be 'underestimated'. As a result, the young who had started to leave this tradition began to put new hope in it over again. In line with Dewall's argument, the notion of tradition in local, regional, or national contexts can be reshaped based on how and which historical events are remembered.⁷² Memory fluctuations inherent in generations can undoubtedly experience changes in conception, so when different generations construct different meanings, it will lead to submerged or forgotten reformulations. In that process of forgetting, the rediscovery of tradition takes place.

In her dancing body, she has at least given the image of being a 'high' without being like a palace dancer. She dismisses the general and old status of female dancers who are limited as sexual objects and male fantasies by

⁷¹ I don't mention commercialization in this case, because after all long before Ayu entered it, the *Jathilan* obyog performance had long been commercially successful – even though it was seen as having a negative reputation in some circles – but never really lost its fans, especially among the elderly and rural.

⁷² Jeremy DeWaal, "The Reinvention of Tradition: Form, Meaning, and Local Identity in Modern Cologne Carnival," *Central European History* 46, no. 3 (2013): 495, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0008938913000976>.

representing the image of modern women as dancers who are professional, prestigious, popular, educated, and, at the same time, successful. Her figure has become popular among various groups, urban or rural, elite or proletariat, and the old or young, even among academics and Islamic boarding schools. After her success, many other women emerged as educated and 'professional' dancers. She has become a symbol of modern Javanese female dancers who reject forms of marginalization perpetuated on female dancers without losing the opportunity to street dance and be involved in public spaces. What Ayu represents at once (perhaps) undermines Wilson's prediction regarding the politicized *Warok* tradition and will always be a vital force in the political and social cycle of the Ponorogo community.⁷³ In practice, *Jathil* dancer has taken over this power through his body and massive support from the media.

D. Conclusion

Jathilan tradition -instead of other traditional dances in Java- has been forged by the dominant elite authority to submit to national ideology. This situation forces this tradition to reinvent itself as a 'pure' tradition with a 'high' art form that can represent the nation's identity. However, in a hegemonic endeavor that attempts to 'discipline' the tradition, women *Jathil* dancer with her body has succeeded in determining the power to reinvent tradition in 'unique' and 'unexpected' ways. Instead of interpreting it as a site of struggle or contestation or the artist's efforts to preserve the art. I interpret it more as women's ways to redefine their imagery and role in *Jathilan* tradition. In a situation where women's bodies are controlled in memory of 'high traditional forms' and the value of obedience, women dancers continuously reinvent themselves till they identify as 'own ones' and not as 'others'. *Jathil* women have succeeded in determining the power to reinvent tradition in picturesque ways, especially through the body and massive support of media to reconstruct social memory and imagination.

However, dance can be eye-opening and, at the same time, increase understanding as a mechanism used by certain authorities in efforts to control. Although in the end, women's bodies as subjects who dance enact it as a tool to reveal voices that have been silenced for a long time. What is emerged from the phenomenon above is the existence of a hegemonic discourse to reinvent

⁷³ Wilson, "Reog Ponorogo: Spirituality, Sexuality, and Power in a Javanese Performance Tradition."

traditions that are competed by other forces which continuously rediscover them in unique and creative ways. However, further investigation is needed into this issue.

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