

# Study of Symbolic Meaning in Tuban Traditional Art *Sandur Ronggo Budoyo*

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**Abstract.** Traditional theatrical performance art is a valuable cultural asset in every region. Various performances of modern art have eroded traditional art into blurred and even invisible. The current globalization makes the existence of traditional art lose its true symbolic meaning because artists or artists prefer to follow the market in the process of cultivation. The traditional art of *Sandur* that still survives by prioritizing grip and symbolic things is the art of *Sandur Ronggo Budoyo* hamlet, Randu Pokak village, Prungahan Kulon district, and Semanding Tuban district. The author is interested in researching this because some aesthetic things are studied from the symbolic study of the art of *Sandur Ronggo Budoyo*. This research uses a qualitative method with a case study approach—descriptive data analysis techniques with data reduction stages, data presentation, and inference. The informants in this study were government, community leaders, traditional art practitioners, and *Sandur* artists.

**Keywords:** *traditional art, symbolism, Sandur Ronggo Budoyo*

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## 1 Introduction

In Javanese belief, nature is defined as a power that determines safety or destruction, while society is a source of security, so that the basis of mutual view colour their lives. This is characterized by the belief in the spirit of ancestors so that there is a series of ceremonies of homage to the spirit of ancestors in the form of rituals and offering ceremonies. The culture rooted for hundreds of years from ancestors to generations still lives amid modern society.

Culture can become inn functioning if its supporting society no longer supports its symbols and norms. The development of a culture is divided into the same area or scope, both physical and non-physical, to have cultural similarities. The cultural result is depicted through certain symbols mutually agreed upon by the community as a cultural identity. A work of art is the expression or embodiment of something formed through various elements or elements, where each element is arranged in such a way through a series of interconnected structures to form a visually visible embodiment framework. Art is one of the seven elements of culture that has beauty and value

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contained in it. The form of art itself is diverse with its own characteristics and uniqueness. Traditional art, a form of regional art, is one part of the national culture that must be preserved. *Sandur* performing arts is one of the regional arts that has been maintained by the supporting community until now, even though the art is on the verge of extinction. The existence of *Sandur* art which is a heritage art of the ancestors and parents of the past is now its existence has begun to be abandoned.

Along with the rapid development of the times, especially the emergence of more attractive forms of modern art, people always want change. Art wealth forms such as *Sandur* art, which is the legacy of past generations, are displaced because it cannot survive. Even the younger generation in Tuban Regency today does not know *Sandur* performing arts have never even seen the performance.

*Sandur* performance art is considered to have been unable to provide economic value to meet the needs of life for the perpetrators; this is due to the shifting of traditional art globally. *Sandur* is a traditional performing art in the form of traditional theatre. As a form of traditional theatre, *Sandur* has the same characteristics as other traditional regional theatres with a simple nature in their presentation but more identical to human life and agriculture stories.

*Sandur* art had experienced a golden age in 1960 with a large number of *Sandur* groups. At that time, almost every sub-district in Tuban regency had *Sandur* group. *Sandur* is a folk performing arts that live and develop in Tuban regency. The tradition of *Sandur* performance is held after the harvest period as an expression of gratitude of the farmers for the harvest that has been in the can and the hope of the harvest in the coming growing season even better.

This paper examined the development of *Sandur Ronggo Budoyo* art group in Randu Pokak Sub-village, Prunggahan Kulon Village, Semanding District, Tuban Regency *Sandur* art until now amid globalization. The author of research on Art *Sandur Ronggo Budoyo* aims to invite people and the young generation to know and preserve the region's culture that is currently experiencing a decline amid the current globalization.

## 2 Method

The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative. This research approach began with diagnosing the issue by interviewing subject research, following the event or performance, and combining the data with literature references. The findings of this study shed light on the position of symbolism in the structure of the show *Sandur Ronggo Budoyo*

the data are in the form of words obtained through various sources. The data that has been accumulated then analyzed through the phase of qualitative data analysis, the results are presented

in a descriptive qualitative manner. A qualitative approach is a research procedure that produces data in the form of written or spoken words from the speakers and behaviours that are observed and directed to the background as a whole.

The word qualitative implies an emphasis on processes and meanings that are not closely studied or have not been measured (if measured) in terms of their quantity, intensity or frequency. Qualitative researchers emphasize the socially constructed nature of reality, the researcher and the subject under study, and the pressure of situations that shape the investigation. Such researchers attach great importance to the value-required nature of the inquiry. They seek answers to questions that highlight the way in which social experiences arise and how they derive meaning. In contrast, quantitative research focuses on measuring and analyzing causal relationships between various variables, not the process. The investigation is considered to be in a value-free framework.

### 3 Result and Discussion

The problem of the art group *Sandur Ronggo Budoyo* is one of the groups that try to maintain the results of art wealth, namely the art of *Sandur Tuban*, who experienced adversity in the era of globalization, and the absence of more serious efforts from the government and society to preserve and revive as a performing art. As a result of modernization, *Sandur Ronggo Budoyo* still has to face changes to survive even though it is rarely requested to perform.

#### 3.1 Background of The History of *Sandur* Art in Tuban Regency

*Sandur* art is a traditional performing art in the form of traditional theatre. *Sandur* performing arts can be said as typical and unique folk performances because the spread is found in certain areas in Tuban district, and the unique form of the complex consists of elements of theater, humor, dance, and simple musical accompaniment. The form of theatre in *Sandur* art performance is a play that combines elements of dance, drama, fine arts and music. *Sandur* art that develops in Tuban Regency is folk art in folk theatre that is simple, spontaneous, and integrated with people's lives.



**Figure 1.** Performance of *Sandur* Tuban ( Doc. Mochammad dhikyta)

*Sandur* term to refer to the show; according to the local community, there are several language terms with different meanings that can mean it; namely the first one comes from *beksa ngedhur*. The word *beksa* (Javanese) means to dance, and *ngedhur* refers to the time span done during the night. Second, *Sandur* comes from the word *San* (Javanese), which has the meaning of finish (*isan*), and the word *Dur* which means *tandur* if combined, has the terminology *isane tandur*, which means in Indonesian after planting. While the third, derived from *beksane* retreat, this word is based on dance moves presented by certain figures from some of the scenes in the show that are performed while walking backwards. Presumably, the second word is that *beksane* retreat is preferred because it is considered relevant to the messages conveyed in the show itself. *Sandur* art in Tuban regency grew as folk art as a visualization of the symbolic meaning of human life. The birth of *Sandur* art started from the children of shepherds who were herding their livestock in fields or rice fields. In between herding the herds, the shepherd children played (*dolanan*) and danced while waiting for the farm animals to feed themselves. In their *dolanan* (game), each child plays a character that plays the character of the rich and the character of the poor. The scene that the shepherd children played in the game (*dolanan*).

### 3.2 Supporting Elements of *Sandur* Art

As one of the performing arts, *Sandur* art also requires supporting facilities and infrastructure in the show. In *Sandur* art performance, there are 44 *Sandur* players, consisting of (1) 4 *Sandur* dancers: *tanning*, *kandhut*, *upet*, *oncor*, *sajen*; and (2) 35 *panjak hore*. Dancer *Sandur* is a boy of four consisting of *Balong*, *Pethak*, *Cawik*, and *Tangsil*. *Panjak hore* consists of adult men who number approximately 35 people and masing each served such as (a) play the role of *panjak gong*, (b) *panjak kendang*, and (c) *panjak suara*. (2) *Sandur* music, the type of musical accompaniment in the performance of *Sandur* art using two pieces, namely *Kendang* and *Gong Bumbung*. *Kendang* and *Gong Bumbung* become a must-use tool because *Kendang* and *Gong Bumbung* as the main musical instruments that accompany the purpose of *Sandur* art. (3) *Bandhulan* is two pillars made of bamboo sticks that are approximately fifteen meters high, which are stuck in the middle of the west and east sides. (4) *Gagar mayang* is an ornamental decoration that creates a festive and interesting impression because of its colorful color. (5) Makeup and fashion used to give an impression that depicts the character of each dancer *Sandur* to express the character of each character. (6) The staging arena (*kalangan*) is used to display *Sandur* art attractions played by *Sandur* dancers to the audience.



Figure 2. Character of *Sandur* ( Doc. Mochammad Dhikyta)

### 3.3 Symbolic Meaning of *Sandur Ronggo Budoyo* Art Performance Requirement

*Sandur Ronggo Budoyo* has requirements that need to be prepared for sacred purposes. These requirements are not only needs that must be met, but each of the materials prepared has a meaning that the community should know. The meanings of each of the conditions for the performance of *Sandur Ronggo Budoyo* art include:

#### a) *Sandingan* (offerings)

Every performance of *Sandur Ronggo Budoyo* art is prepared by *sandingan*, which is an offering that is interpreted for safety. Safety for everyone, both families who have *hajat* (intent), players, and spectators from all obstacles that disturb. *Cok bakal* is one type of offerings that are commonly used at the time of rice harvest.

#### b) Performance equipment

The performance equipment used during the performance is mats, fans, combs, grate, *cobek*, *gayung*, *ulek-ulek*, *jebor*, *irus*, lawe rope, *janur kuning*, *srimpi* oil, *entong*, *kendhi*, etc.



Figure 3. Equipment Performance ( Doc. Mochammad Dhikyta)

Here is an explanation of the meaning of equipment in the form of daily equipment in the offerings can be seen below:

1. Mats: Man must be one goal based on the belief
2. *Ilir* / fan: Human self-cleaning. Human nature must be clean do not be like *ilir* that is easily swayed udder by the wind
3. *Suri* / Comb: Man must be able to improve the light of self or maintain personality, both bad nature and human character, by himself
4. Grate: Human beings have many thoughts, have different opinions, then man must unite opinions and choose the best one from each opinion
5. *Cobek, Layah, ulek-ulek*: Everything in this world is good, and bad must be put together in order for everything to be good
6. *Gayung* (jug): Man must have a *wening* heart or a clean heart
7. *Irus*: This life we must share. If we have more food, we should share it with others
8. *Tali Lawe*: Tying brotherhood, expected in the life of human society can take care of each other and strengthening the fraternity rope
9. *Janur Kuning* (yellow coconut leaf): The symbol of bright light to always get a straight path and pleasure from God.

#### c) *Menyan madu*

*Menyan madu* is frankincense from straw whose function is to be burned. *Menyan madu* has the meaning that in this life, man should keep the fragrant name in the eyes of the people and in the eyes of God. In this case, it is depicted when the *Menyan* is burned, and the smoke goes up to it; it is a picture of man's relationship with God.

#### d) The Symbolic meaning of *Gagar Mayang (Rontek)*

*Gagar mayang* is an ornate decoration that creates a festive and interesting impression because of its colour. The colour is a triangular flag consisting of four colors: white, red, yellow, green, and balanced. in *Sandur Ronggo's* show. *Gagar mayang* was established in the middle of *bandhulan* or *kalongan*, which means the center of life on earth is only centered on God.

#### e) The Symbolic meaning of circles

People have the meaning as this world has a boundary between the unseen and the real and centered on a point that is The One True God. In line with *gagar mayang* in these circles, two bamboo sticks are about the height of approximately.

f) The symbolic meaning of *Sandur* art scene

The Art of *Sandur Ronggo Budoyo* is not just scenes without the meaning contained in them. The movements in the art of *Sandur Ronggo Budoyo* show a meaning to live life. The meaning of *Sandur Ronggo Budoyo* art scenes include:

1. Cover *kudung*

In the cover scene, the dancers *Sandur Ronggo Budoyo balong*, *Pethak*, *Cawik*, and *Tangsil* enter the circles with their faces covered with cloth. The scene symbolizes a human being while still in the womb or womb of a mother.

2. Open *kudung*

After the cover scene, the opening scene was done, when the dancers *Sandur Ronggo Budoyo* consisted of *Balong*, *Pethak*, *Cawik* and *Tangsil* when the cloth began to be opened covering their faces *panjak hore*. The opening scene means that a human being has been born into the world from a mother's womb.

3. *Golek ngengeran*

Tells of *Pethak* traveling to go looking for work. Finally got a job as a farm labourer to help cultivate *balong* rice fields. The *golek ngengeran* scene symbolises that human beings need each other in a harmonious, peaceful, safe, and peaceful society. The meaning of the scene of *golek ngengeran* is that human beings will not suffer anything else until hunger if the human being is willing to work diligently and willing to try.

4. *Bancik endog*

*Bancik endog* is a scene standing on eggs, and a round egg symbolizes the world or the earth. *Bancik endog* scene contains the meaning of ruler of the world, environmental or worldly. Living things appear on earth in three ways: born (baby), tukul (growing), and from eggs (hatching).

5. *Bancik kendhi*

The scene stands on *kendhi*. *Kendhi* is a place of drinking water containing clear water made of clay. *Bancik kendhi* contains the meaning of looking for a *wening* or clear heart to get the meaning of life or life that is spiritual.

#### 6. *Bancik dengkul*

*Bancik dengkul* is standing on the knee, which means his position is higher than before to see further and wider from the top. This scene symbolizes the man leaving the world and things that are worldly and closer to God.

#### 7. *Bancik pundak*

The scene of the *bancik pundak* is a dancer *Sandur Ronggo Budoyo* standing on the shoulders of *panjak hore*. This scene has the meaning of the highest spiritual achievement or describes human life after death will get an even higher place.

### 4 Conclusion

*Sandur* art in Tuban Regency is a traditional art of ancestral heritage to express gratitude to God almighty held at the time after the harvest season arrives. *Sandur* art develops naturally in the community, starting from the needs of ancestors who used to be a form of worship and ritual ceremonies after the harvest in the form of performances. The birth of Seni *Sandur* started from the children of shepherds who were herding their livestock in the rice fields. In between herding times, the children of *dolanan* shepherds (playing) and dancing backward. Each child plays a character who describes the daily life of *Sandur*. *Sandur* art is now preserved for public entertainment facilities.

Its people do not create a culture without the meaning, and moral value contained and beneficial to human life in the world. Like *Sandur Ronggo Budoyo* art, it has meaning and moral value in every scene presented in the form of symbolic meaning. A series of scenes in the art of *Sandur Ronggo Budoyo* displayed is a manifestation of gratitude for the harvest obtained and hope in next year's harvest season the results are better than the previous harvest. Symbolic values contained in the art of *Sandur Ronggo Budoyo* can be used as a demand for the community in living life, including the value of beauty, the value of togetherness, the value of beliefs, religious values, and moral values.



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