

The Religiosity of the Banyumasan Lengger Dance: Tradition, Transformation, and Contemporary Practices

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Abstrak: Lengger Banyumasan dance is a traditional performing art that has been practiced in the Banyumas region, Central Java, for centuries. This dance is known for its distinctive style characterized by graceful and sensual movements of female dancers called "Lengger". Originating from the pre-Islamic era, this dance was originally closely related to the spiritual and religious beliefs of the Banyumas people. This study aims to explore the religious and traditional aspects of the Lengger Banyumasan dance, as well as the transformations that have occurred in its form and function over time. The method used in this study is a qualitative approach with a focus on analyzing the religious and traditional aspects of the Lengger Banyumasan dance. This study involved a literature review covering a variety of academic sources, reports, and cultural resources to gain a comprehensive understanding of the historical, cultural, and religious context of the Lengger dance. The results of this study indicate that the Lengger Banyumasan dance has strong roots in the religious and cultural traditions of the Banyumas people. This dance was originally performed as part of rituals and ceremonies aimed at promoting fertility, prosperity, and community well-being. Although the dance has undergone significant transformation, from being initially ritual-based to being more entertainment-oriented, it still maintains a strong connection to the religious beliefs of the Banyumas people. The conclusion of this study is that the Lengger Banyumasan dance is a rich and multifaceted performing art, rooted in the religious and cultural traditions of the Banyumas region. Despite changes over time, the dance remains an important part of the social and cultural fabric of the region and is increasingly recognized for its significance as a unique and valuable form of cultural expression. Conservation and promotion efforts for this dance are ongoing to ensure its sustainability as a valuable cultural heritage.

Keywords: *Lengger Banyumasan Dance, Religious traditions, Cultural transformation, Rituals and ceremonies, Cultural expressions*

Introduction

The performing arts in Indonesia have long been intertwined with the cultural and religious traditions of various ethnic groups. In Bali, for instance, dance performances such as the Baris Gede Télék and Baris Sumbu are deeply rooted in the island's Hindu-Balinese worldview (Kusuma et al., 2023;

Suryawati, 2017). These dances not only serve as a means of ritual and spiritual expression but also reflect the dualistic nature of the Balinese cosmological perspective (Suryawati, 2017; Kusuma et al., 2023). Similarly, the Tontila dance of the Saluan tribe in Central Sulawesi has traditionally been used for ritual purposes, highlighting the strong connection between the performing



arts and the beliefs and customs of the local community (Yatim et al., 2022).

The Lengger dance is a traditional performance art that has been practiced in the Banyumas region of Central Java for centuries (Utami & Sudarsana, 2022; Suryawati, 2017). The dance is known for its distinctive style, which is characterized by the graceful and sensual movements of the female dancers, known as "Lengger." The roots of the Lengger dance can be traced back to the pre-Islamic era, when it was closely tied to the spiritual and religious beliefs of the Banyumasan people (Turyati, 2020).

According to historical accounts, the Lengger dance was originally performed as part of rituals and ceremonies that were intended to promote fertility, prosperity, and community well-being. The dance was believed to have the power to invoke the blessings of the gods and spirits, and was often performed in sacred spaces such as temples and shrines.

Over time, the Lengger dance has undergone significant transformations, both in its form and function (Suryawati, 2017). As the region came under the influence of Islamic and colonial rule, the Lengger dance was forced to adapt to changing social and cultural conditions. One of the most notable changes was the shift from a primarily ritual-based performance to a more entertainment-oriented

one, with the dance being incorporated into various social and cultural events. Despite these changes, however, the Lengger dance has continued to maintain a strong connection to the religious and spiritual beliefs of the Banyumasan people.

As (Kusuma et al., 2023), the dancers of the Baris Gede Télék are often seen as chosen individuals who have been appointed by the divine to perform the dance. Similarly, the Baris Sumbu dance is closely tied to the Hindu-Balinese concept of *purusa* and *pradhana*, representing the "marriage" of the masculine and feminine principles of the universe. In this way, the religious and spiritual dimensions of these dances are deeply woven into their very form and structure. Today, the Lengger dance continues to be an important part of the cultural and social fabric of the Banyumas region. While the dance has evolved over time, it still retains many of its traditional elements and continues to be performed in a variety of contexts, from religious ceremonies to cultural festivals and tourism-related events.

The Lengger dance is also increasingly being recognized for its cultural and artistic significance, with efforts being made to preserve and promote this unique form of performance art. In Bali, for example, the Baris Gede Télék and Baris Sumbu dances continue to be performed in the context of religious ceremonies and festivals, such as the

Bali Arts Festival. These dances are not only a means of spiritual expression but also a way of reinforcing the cultural and religious identity of the Balinese people (Suryawati, 2017; Kusuma et al., 2023)

The Banyumasan Lengger dance is a rich and complex performance art that is deeply rooted in the religious and cultural traditions of the Banyumas region. Despite the transformations it has undergone over time, the Lengger dance continues to be an important part of the cultural and social fabric of the region, and is increasingly being recognized for its significance as a unique and valuable form of cultural expression.

In this research paper, we will explore the religious and traditional aspects of the Banyumasan Lengger dance, a unique form of dance that originates from the Banyumas region of Central Java, Indonesia.

Research Methods

The methodology used in this research is a qualitative approach, with a focus on analyzing the religious and traditional aspects of the Banyumasan Lengger dance (Subrata, 2016; Kusuma et al., 2023). A literature review was conducted, drawing on a range of sources, including academic articles, reports, and cultural resources, to gain a comprehensive understanding of the historical, cultural, and religious contexts of the Lengger dance

(Kusuma et al., 2023; Suryawati, 2017).

The analysis was conducted using a combination of descriptive and interpretive methods, with a focus on identifying the key themes and patterns that emerge from the literature.

Result

The Banyumasan Lengger dance is a rich and complex performance art that is deeply rooted in the religious and cultural traditions of the Banyumas region of Central Java, Indonesia (Subari & Widiyanto, 2020). The dance, which is characterized by the graceful and sensual movements of the female dancers known as "Lengger," has its origins in the pre-Islamic era, when it was closely tied to the spiritual and religious beliefs of the local people (Turyati, 2020; Suryawati, 2017).

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adapt to changing social and cultural conditions. One of the most notable changes was the shift from a primarily ritual-based performance to a more entertainment-oriented one, with the dance being incorporated into various social and cultural events.

Despite these changes, however, the Lengger dance has continued to maintain a strong connection to the religious and spiritual beliefs of the Banyumasan people. The dancers of the Baris Gede Télék and Baris Sumbu dances in Bali, for example, are often seen as chosen individuals who have been appointed by the divine to perform the dance. Similarly, the Baris Sumbu dance is closely tied to the Hindu-Balinese concept of *purusa* and *pradhana*, representing the "marriage" of the masculine and feminine principles of the universe.

Today, the Lengger dance continues to be an important part of the cultural and social fabric of the Banyumas region. While the dance has evolved over time, it still retains many of its traditional elements and continues to be performed in a variety of contexts, from religious ceremonies to cultural festivals and tourism-related events. The Lengger dance is also increasingly being recognized for its cultural and artistic significance, with efforts being made to preserve and promote this unique form of performance art.

In conclusion, the Banyumasan Lengger dance is a rich and

multifaceted performance art that is deeply rooted in the religious and cultural traditions of the Banyumas region. Despite the changes it has undergone over time, the Lengger dance continues to be an important part of the cultural and social fabric of the region, and is increasingly being recognized for its significance as a unique and valuable form of cultural expression.

The religiosity of the Banyumasan Lengger dance is visible from the beginning of this dance procession, starting with visiting places that are considered sacred. to obtain blessing from the *indang* (supernatural power) to be able to dance the lengger dance well, in this phase the dancer feels they have an obligation to maintain the trust of the *indang* in preserving the Banyumasan lengger dance, this shows that this dance is not just a performing art but something sacred, namely the encounter between a person who has limitations and supernatural powers, an encounter between the real world and the world of spirit. The dancers are also believed to be chosen individuals who have been appointed by the divine to perform the dance. This shows the deep connection between the Lengger dance and the religious beliefs of the Banyumasan people (Turyati, 2020; Suryawati, 2017; Kusuma et al., 2023).

While the Lengger dance has evolved over time, it still retains many of its traditional elements and

continues to be performed in a variety of contexts, from religious ceremonies to cultural festivals and tourism-related events (Suharti & Sari, 2023). The Lengger dance is also increasingly being recognized for its cultural and artistic significance, with efforts being made to preserve and promote this unique form of performance art (Suharti & Sari, 2023; Suryawati, 2017).

Discussion

The Banyumasan Lengger dance is a rich and complex performance art that is deeply rooted in the religious and cultural traditions of the Banyumas region. While the dance has undergone significant changes over time, it still maintains a strong connection to the spiritual and religious beliefs of the local people.

One of the key aspects of the Lengger dance is its close ties to the concept of the divine and the supernatural. The dancers of the Baris Gede Télék and Baris Sumbu dances in Bali, for example, are often seen as chosen individuals who have been appointed by the divine to perform the dance (Kusuma et al., 2023). Similarly, the Baris Sumbu dance is closely tied to the Hindu-Balinese concept of purusa and pradhana, representing the "marriage" of the masculine and feminine principles of the universe.

The religiosity of the Banyumasan Lengger dance is also evident in the rituals and ceremonies

that are performed before and after the dance. The dancers must undergo a process of consecration and blessing before they are able to perform the dance, and the dance itself is often seen as a way to invoke the blessings of the gods and spirits.

In this context, the lengger dancer must accept the fate that he must completely resemble himself as a woman, both psychologically and in behavior. The dancer must be able to control his emotions, gestures, and body movements to resemble a woman. This shows the deep connection between the Lengger dance and the religious beliefs of the Banyumasan people.

Despite the changes that the Lengger dance has undergone over time, it still remains an important part of the cultural and social fabric of the Banyumas region. The dance is increasingly being recognized for its cultural and artistic significance, and efforts are being made to preserve and promote this unique form of performance art.

Overall, the Banyumasan Lengger dance is a rich and multifaceted performance art that is deeply rooted in the religious and cultural traditions of the region. Its continued relevance and significance in the lives of the Banyumasan people is a testament to the enduring power of cultural and artistic expression.

Historical Roots: Fertility and Rice Goddess

Lengger is believed to have originated in pre-Islamic Java, deeply connected to agricultural cycles and the worship of Dewi Sri, the rice goddess. The dance was likely part of rituals to ensure fertility, bountiful harvests, and community well-being. This sacred dance was likely an integral part of the rituals and practices aimed at ensuring fertility, bountiful harvests, and the overall well-being of the community (Lisdiati et al., 2014).

The connection between Lengger and the veneration of Dewi Sri is well-documented. The Litany of "The World's Beginning," a Hindu-Javanese purification text, provides insights into the religious traditions of the Tengger people, who are considered to have preserved ancient Javanese beliefs. While the Tengger are unique in maintaining these non-Islamic practices, the text suggests that the religious foundations of Lengger likely date back to the era of the great Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms of Java. The dance's association with the rice goddess Dewi Sri is further reinforced by the Gandrung Sewu Festivals in Banyuwangi, where the performance is considered a ritual of gratitude and joy to the deity after a successful harvest (Suharti & Sari, 2023; Smith-Hefner, 1990).

The sacral nature of Lengger is also reflected in the ritual preparations and the dancers' beliefs. In the Baris Gede Télék dance at the

Pura Dalem Kedewatan temple in Sanur, the performers are viewed as chosen by the divine, with the dance itself considered a manifestation of the dualistic worldview of the Balinese people, where the sacred and the profane coexist (Kusuma et al., 2023).

Similarly, the Manduda dance of the Simalungun community in North Sumatra, while not directly related to Lengger, shares a common theme of celebrating the agricultural cycle and the joy of a successful harvest. The dancers' movements are closely linked to the daily activities of farmers, with the dance properties, such as the dagger or scarf, symbolizing the very place where the paddy is harvested (Nugrahaningsih, 2020).

Through these diverse examples, it becomes evident that the historical roots of Lengger are firmly embedded in the agricultural and spiritual traditions of pre-Islamic Java, where the dance served as a means to honor the rice goddess Dewi Sri and ensure the prosperity and well-being of the community.

Masculinity and Femininity

The Lengger dancer, typically a man, takes on a feminine persona and dress, blurring gender boundaries. This highlights the fluidity of gender identities and the cultural importance of crossing gender lines in traditional Indonesian performance arts. The

traditional Indonesian dance form of Lengger offers a fascinating glimpse into the cultural significance of gender fluidity and the crossing of gender boundaries. Typically, the Lengger dancer is a man who takes on a distinctly feminine persona and dress, blurring the lines between masculinity and femininity (Sariguna & Kennedy, 2018).

This phenomenon highlights the deeply rooted acceptance and celebration of gender diversity in traditional Indonesian performance arts. The Lengger dancer's ability to seamlessly embody both feminine and masculine qualities reflects the fluidity of gender identities that are embraced within this cultural context.

Scholars have examined the symbolic significance of dance movements in traditional Indonesian arts, noting that they often serve as a reflection of the values and norms held by the community (Sekarningsih, 2019). In the case of the Lengger dance, the graceful, subdued, and authoritative movements performed by the male dancer mirror the ideals of Sundanese femininity, shaping the audience's perception of gender and its cultural relevance (Sekarningsih, 2019; Sariguna & Kennedy, 2018).

Furthermore, the distinctive dress and ornamentation of the Lengger dancer, with its Balinese influences, further accentuates the blending of gender boundaries (Suharti & Sari, 2023). The flowing,

velvet garments and golden adornments transform the male performer into a vivid embodiment of feminine beauty and elegance, challenging traditional notions of gender expression.

The cultural significance of the Lengger dance extends beyond the stage, serving as a powerful symbol of the fluidity of gender identities within traditional Indonesian society. The dance's ability to captivate audiences through the seamless integration of masculine and feminine elements underscores the deep-rooted acceptance of gender diversity in this cultural context, offering a unique perspective on the multifaceted nature of gender expression (Ningrum, 2021; Sariguna & Kennedy, 2018).

Religious Beliefs and Spirituality

The Lengger dance is deeply tied to the spiritual beliefs of the Banyumas people, involving rituals, consecration of dancers, and a belief that the dancers are chosen by the divine to perform the dance. The Lengger dance of the Banyumas region in Indonesia is deeply intertwined with the spiritual beliefs and practices of the local community. The dance is believed to be a divine calling, with the performers seen as chosen by the supernatural realm to embody and channel powerful spiritual energies through their movements.

Prior to a Lengger performance, intricate rituals are conducted to consecrate the dancers and the stage, invoking the blessings of the divine. This reflects the community's worldview that the physical and spiritual realms are inextricably linked, with the dancers serving as conduits between the two.

The trance-like states that dancers often experience during the performances are viewed as evidence of this sacred connection, where the dancers become vehicles for higher spiritual forces (Kusuma et al., 2023). The belief that the dancers are specially selected by supernatural entities to perform the Lengger further emphasizes its deep roots in the region's religious and spiritual traditions (Kusuma et al., 2023).

Similar connections between ritual, spirituality, and performative arts can be seen in other Southeast Asian cultures, such as the berasik rituals of the Bajaw/Sama people in Malaysia (Rahman, 2018) and the ngalai healing performances of the same ethnic group (Rahman et al., 2018; Rahman, 2018). In these cases, the traditional dances and music are intimately tied to the communities' animistic belief systems and perceived interactions with the spirit world.

The representation of these spiritual elements in cultural festivals, such as the Bali Arts Festival, also demonstrates how the arts serve as a medium for expressing and preserving the

religious and metaphysical worldviews of local populations. The Lengger dance of the Banyumas people is thus a powerful example of how performative traditions can embody and perpetuate the deep-seated spiritual beliefs of a community.

Cultural Preservation and Evolution

While the Lengger dance has evolved over time, particularly with the rise of tourism, it still retains its core traditional elements and continues to be an important part of the cultural fabric of the Banyumas region. The Lengger dance is a cherished cultural tradition in the Banyumas region of Indonesia, with a rich history that spans centuries. Despite the evolving nature of the dance, particularly in response to the rise of tourism, it continues to retain its core traditional elements, making it an integral part of the region's cultural fabric.

The preservation of traditional art forms like the Lengger dance is a critical aspect of maintaining cultural heritage. As discussed in research on the Anjun dance in Cirebon, Indonesia, the commercialization of traditional performances can lead to shifts in their form and function, often moving them from sacred to profane contexts (Turyati, 2020). However, this transition can also contribute to the livelihood of the local community, while still

preserving and adding value to the cultural art form (Turyati, 2020).

Similarly, the research on the preservation of Calung Banyumasan music in Banyumas highlights the importance of incorporating traditional arts into vocational education as a means of conservation (Suharto & Indriyanto, 2018). By engaging the younger generation in the study and practice of these traditional forms, the research suggests that the art can be safeguarded for future generations.

The Lengger dance, with its distinctive style and deep roots in the Banyumas region, faces similar challenges in preserving its cultural significance amidst the forces of globalization and modernization. As the younger generation may not always embrace their ancestors' traditions, as observed in the study of the Angklung buncis in the Cireundeu community, it is crucial to find ways to promote the dance's continued relevance and appeal (Agatha et al., 2022).

In the case of the Lengger dance, the evolution of the performance in response to tourism may be a double-edged sword. While the increased exposure and commercialization of the dance can generate income and awareness for the local community, it also carries the risk of diluting or altering the traditional elements that make the Lengger dance so culturally significant (Agatha et al., 2022).

Nonetheless, the research on the preservation of Gambuh, a classical Balinese dance-drama, offers a hopeful perspective. The study suggests that the contact between local and foreign cultures can positively contribute to the richness of a particular culture, as long as the core traditional elements are maintained (Laksana, 2016). This model of cultural diffusion and adaptation may provide a blueprint for the Lengger dance's continued evolution while preserving its essence.

By integrating the Lengger dance into educational curricula, promoting community engagement, and finding ways to balance tradition with commercial viability, the Banyumas region can ensure that this cultural treasure continues to thrive and evolve, remaining an integral part of the region's cultural identity for generations to come.

Animistic Beliefs

Early forms of Lengger may have also incorporated elements of animism, seeking harmony with spirits and the natural world. The trance-like states some dancers enter could be linked to these ancient practices. The Lengger dance is a cherished cultural tradition in the Banyumas region of Indonesia, with a rich history that spans centuries. Despite the evolving nature of the dance, particularly in response to the rise of tourism, it continues to retain

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Syncretism with Islam

1. Adaptation and Transformation

As Islam gradually permeated the island of Java, the rich tapestry of traditional art forms, including the captivating dance known as Lengger, underwent a transformative process to align with the new religious landscape. While certain ritualistic aspects of Lengger may have been toned down or reinterpreted to fit the Islamic ethos, the dance itself was not eradicated, but rather adapted to thrive within the evolving cultural milieu (Barowi, 2017).

The meeting of Javanese culture and Islamic teachings gave rise to a unique synthesis, often referred to as "Javanese Islam," which is the result of a continuous dialogue and negotiation between the two (Maryam, 2018). This interplay between the local and the foreign elements has allowed Javanese culture, with its deep-rooted Hindu-Buddhist and animistic traditions, to coexist and even incorporate aspects of Islamic teachings (Kurniaawati, 2021).

The slametan ritual, a prominent feature of Javanese Islam, serves as a prime example of this cultural synthesis. This ritual, which blends Javanese traditions with Islamic values, demonstrates the fluidity and adaptability of Javanese culture in the face of new religious influences (Kurniaawati, 2021).

Similarly, the Wali Songo, a group of influential Islamic scholars who played a crucial role in the spread of Islam in Java, recognized the importance of preserving local wisdom and avoiding the imposition of a "naked Islam" that would disrupt the existing cultural fabric (Rumbay et al., 2023).

2. Moral and Ethical Dimensions

While the dance's traditional depictions often centered around mythological figures and deities, a fascinating shift in focus has emerged, wherein Lengger's themes have increasingly emphasized moral stories, local legends, and social messages that resonate with Islamic values.

This evolution reflects a nuanced interplay between the dance's inherent artistry and the evolving sociocultural landscape of Indonesia. Rather than directly portraying deities, Lengger choreographers have sought to weave narratives that explore the moral and ethical dimensions of human experience, drawing inspiration from Islamic teachings and local folklore (Yatim et al., 2022).

This shift is not merely aesthetic; it speaks to a deeper understanding of the role that traditional dance can play in shaping individual and community values. As studies have shown, the movements and symbolism of Lengger dance can serve as a powerful medium for internalizing virtues such as

politeness, subtlety, and authoritativeness (Sekarningsih, 2019; Marsim et al., 2021). By infusing their work with these moral and ethical underpinnings, Lengger artists have effectively transformed the dance into a vehicle for cultural preservation and character education.

The resonance of these themes with Islamic values is particularly noteworthy, reflecting the dance's ability to adapt to the evolving sociocultural landscape of Indonesia. As traditional art forms like Lengger continue to evolve, their capacity to communicate moral and ethical messages becomes increasingly vital, serving as a bridge between the past and the present, and shaping the values of future generations (Nugrahaningsih et al., 2020; Sekarningsih, 2019).

3. Co-existence of Belief Systems

The enduring presence of Lengger demonstrates the ability of traditional Indonesian cultures to adapt and integrate new belief systems, creating a syncretic tapestry of spiritual and artistic practices.

The co-existence of belief systems in Indonesia is exemplified by the enduring presence of the Lengger, a traditional performance art that has adapted and integrated new spiritual and artistic practices over time. Indonesia's vast archipelago is home to a diverse array of cultures, languages, and religious traditions, creating a rich

and complex social tapestry (Reed, 2000). As globalization has accelerated, traditional practices like the Lengger have demonstrated the ability of local cultures to selectively adopt and syncretize external influences, resulting in a distinctive and resilient expression of Indonesian identity (Az-Zahroh et al., 2019).

The Lengger, a form of ritual dance-drama from Central Java, embodies this syncretic process. Historically, the Lengger was closely tied to Javanese animistic and Hindu-Buddhist beliefs, with the dance-drama serving as a vehicle for spiritual expression and community ritual. (Adiprasetya, 2013) However, the introduction of Islam in the 15th century did not lead to the abandonment of the Lengger; rather, the performance integrated Islamic elements, resulting in a syncretic blend of traditional and introduced belief systems. This capacity for adaptation is a hallmark of Javanese culture, which has long demonstrated the ability to incorporate foreign influences while preserving its core identity (Wang, 2022).

The Lengger's enduring presence reflects the flexibility and hybridity that characterize many traditional Indonesian cultural practices. As Javanese society has navigated the influx of new belief systems, it has demonstrated a pluralistic orientation, selectively adopting elements that resonate

while maintaining the fundamental tenets of its ancestral traditions (Wang, 2022; Kurniaawati, 2021). This process of selective integration has allowed the Lengger to continue evolving, with contemporary performances often incorporating modern elements while preserving its essential spiritual and artistic core.

The co-existence of belief systems in Indonesia is not a passive acceptance of external influences, but an active process of negotiation and synthesis. As the Lengger and other traditional practices demonstrate, Indonesian cultures have a remarkable capacity to adapt and thrive in the face of social and religious change (Wisnawa, 2021; Andayani & Karmila, 2022). This dynamic interplay between the enduring and the emergent, the local and the global, is a hallmark of the country's rich cultural heritage.

By examining the Lengger and similar syncretic practices, we gain insight into the resilience and adaptability of traditional Indonesian cultures, which have historically demonstrated a remarkable ability to integrate new belief systems while preserving their distinct identities.

4. Representation of Regional Identity

Lengger remains an important marker of Banyumas cultural identity, transcending religious boundaries and serving as a unifying force for the community (Subrata,

2016; Kusuma et al., 2023; Sekarningsih, 2019).

One of the most prominent cultural markers of this region is the Lengger dance, a traditional performance art that has become an integral part of the local identity (Morrison, 1978).

Lengger dance is a unique form of artistic expression that blends elements of dance, music, and storytelling, reflecting the vibrant cultural tapestry of the Banyumas people. The dance is a dynamic and captivating performance that often incorporates mythological themes, moral values, and a sense of community, making it a powerful symbol of regional identity.

Similar to the Janger dance of Klungkung regency in Bali, which serves as a representation of the local culture and draws upon mythology and chronicles (Subrata, 2016), the Lengger dance of Banyumas also serves as a reflection of the community's values and belief systems. As noted in the study of the Lenyepan dance in the Sundanese region, dance can be a medium for internalizing and transmitting the good values of a community (Sekarningsih, 2019). Likewise, the Lengger dance of Banyumas serves as a vessel for preserving and conveying the cultural identity of the region.

Furthermore, the Lengger dance holds a unifying power that transcends religious boundaries,

much like the Lonto Leok culture of the Manggarai people in Indonesia, which has the ability to unite diverse views and produce constructive decisions for the common good (Japa, 2023). The Lengger dance, with its inclusive nature and ability to bring together individuals from different religious backgrounds, serves as a powerful symbol of unity and harmony within the Banyumas community.

In conclusion, the Lengger dance is a vibrant and enduring aspect of the Banyumas cultural identity, serving as a unifying force that transcends religious boundaries and preserves the region's rich heritage. Through its ability to convey moral values, mythological themes, and a sense of community, the Lengger dance has become a cornerstone of the Banyumas identity, connecting the people and their traditions in a meaningful and enduring way.

The Lengger dance is deeply rooted in the religious and cultural traditions of the Banyumas region, with strong connections to the concept of the divine and the supernatural. The dancers of the Baris Gede Télék and Baris Sumbu dances in Bali, for example, are often seen as chosen individuals who have been appointed by the divine to perform the dance (Kusuma et al., 2023; Suryawati, 2017). Similarly, the Baris Sumbu dance is closely tied to the Hindu-Balinese concept of *purusa* and *pradhana*, representing

the "marriage" of the masculine and feminine principles of the universe (Suryawati, 2017).

The religiosity of the Banyumasan Lengger dance is also evident in the rituals and ceremonies that are performed before and after the dance. The dancers must undergo a process of consecration and blessing before they are able to perform the dance, and the dance itself is often seen as a way to invoke the blessings of the gods and spirits (Subrata, 2016; Kusuma et al., 2023; Suryawati, 2017)

In this context, the lengger dancer must accept the fate that he must completely resemble himself as a woman, both psychologically and in behavior. The dancer must be able to control his emotions, gestures, and body movements to resemble a woman (Kusuma et al., 2023). This shows the deep connection between the Lengger dance and the religious beliefs of the Banyumasan people.

Despite the changes that the Lengger dance has undergone over time, it still remains an important part of the cultural and social fabric of the Banyumas region. The dance is increasingly being recognized for its cultural and artistic significance, and efforts are being made to preserve and promote this unique form of performance art.

Overall, the Banyumasan Lengger dance is a rich and multifaceted performance art that is deeply rooted in the religious and

cultural traditions of the region. Its continued relevance and significance in the lives of the Banyumasan people is a testament to the enduring power of cultural and artistic expression (Suryawati, 2017; Subrata, 2016; Turyati, 2020; Kusuma et al., 2023; Sekarningsih, 2019).

Conclusion

Lengger is deeply rooted in the religious and cultural traditions of the Banyumas region in Java, Indonesia. It is intimately connected to the spiritual beliefs and worldview of the Banyumas people, who see the dance as a way to invoke divine blessings and maintain harmony with the supernatural realm.

The religiosity of the Lengger dance is manifested in various ways, including the ritual consecration and blessing of the dancers before they are able to perform, the belief that certain dancers have been divinely appointed to embody the dance, and

the dance's symbolic representation of fundamental cosmic principles such as the union of masculine and feminine energies. These religious and ritual aspects are deeply intertwined with the Lengger dance's role in invoking blessings from the divine and maintaining harmony with the supernatural realm for the Banyumasan people.

In the context of increasing globalization and international attention, the study of the Lengger dance provides opportunities to explore cross-cultural dialogues and the universal language of dance and spirituality. In summary, the Lengger Lanang dance of the Banyumas region is a rich and multifaceted performance art that is deeply rooted in the religious and cultural traditions of the local community. Its continued relevance and significance in the lives of the Banyumasan people is a testament to the enduring power of cultural and artistic expression.

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