



## Manifestation of Character Education in Ponorogo Keling Dance and Its Relevance As Teaching Material

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**Abstract:** The study aims to identify character education values in the Ponorogo Keling Dance. The character education values identified were assessed for their relevance as teaching material for the Javanese language subject for secondary-level students. The approach used in this research was qualitative with a constructivist paradigm. The data collection techniques were observation, interviews, literature study, and documentation. The resource person in this research was Wiyoto, head of the Guno Joyo Studio, Keling Dance Association. Data in terms of symbols and meaning will be analyzed using the hypersemiotic theory. The data validity used triangulation of data sources. The results showed that the Keling dance had local wisdom values indicated in symbols. These symbols were visualized in the Keling dance choreography and characters. After employing hyper semiotic theory, the study found symbols in the Keling dance containing character education values. These values are tolerance, creativity, national spirit, love of the nation, and care for the environment. These values are relevant to teaching material for the Javanese language subject in terms of character education values, availability to be integrated with the Javanese language subject, and contextuality following local cultural characteristics. The use of the Keling Dance as teaching material for the Javanese language subject hopefully introduces native Ponorogo arts other than *reog*.

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## Introduction

Indonesia is a country with many traditional arts. Traditional arts are cultural and traditional products of society (Hidajat, 2022). These traditional arts are created from values, customs, and cultures in society. They are inherited from generation to generation (Dwihantoro, Susanti, Sukmasetya, & Faizah, 2023) However, proper attention to their preservation is needed due to globalization. Globalization has negative effects on them with the spread of foreign arts (Zhang, 2019). They are gradually abandoned and forgotten by society, so it is a challenge for cultural activists to keep up with developments to preserve them (Fang, 2023).

One example of the traditional arts still existing in some regions of Indonesia is dance. Dance is one of the traditional arts that need to be preserved so modern foreign cultures do not replace them (Rosmiati, Supriyanto, Budiwiyanto, Mulyadi, & Soemaryatmi, 2022). Traditional dances contain philosophical meanings inherited by ancestors. They are inseparable from local wisdom values, so that we can learn some lessons from them. Besides, they also have historical elements that need preservation for young generations (Rohayani, Kasmahidayat, Sekarningsih, & Budiman, 2021). They are created for various purposes in line with the development of human thought and life (Syafwan & Indrayuda, 2022). From the



expression, they possibly overcome symptoms of mental disorders (Murtono, Isnanta, & Agustina, 2022). Besides, they are also beneficial as a therapy for dementia (Yamada & Kawano, 2021) as well as strengthening physical and spiritual health for a bride (Octavianna, Sibarani, Situmorang, & Hasibuan, 2021).

One of the traditional dances is the Keling Dance. The Keling Dance is an original dance from Ponorogo, specifically from Mojo Sub-Village, Singgahan Village, Pulung District. It tells about the origin of Mojo Sub-Village. It was recognized by the Regional Government in 1992 as the only dance in Ponorogo, even in the world (Hilman, Dwijayanti, & Khoirruosyidin, 2020). Unfortunately, it is not well known among the people of Ponorogo. Several factors cause the Keling Dance to be less well known. The main factor is the popularity of Keling Dance compared to the Reog Ponorogo, the older and more popular art. Another factor is due to a mystical factor that the Keling Dance will be difficult to be well known other than in Mojo Sub-Village. These factors are certainly unfortunate because the Keling Dance has philosophical meanings in terms of character education values that are beneficial for young generations.

Character education is one of the programs initiated by the government to produce generations of intellectuals and characters of Indonesia. Character education plays an important role in shaping individual behavior and attitudes (Taufik & Nurhayati, 2023). Indoctrinating character education is currently important due to the shift in moral values in society. Character is needed in everyday life to prevent the moral crisis that has recently occurred, especially in Indonesia (Sakti, Rizka, Ayu, & Ariany, 2023). Today's society shows serious moral degradation, such as ignoring religious matters, indifference to ethical issues, and prioritizing physical material matters (Budhi, Subiyantoro, Wahida, & Sularso, 2023). It can be done in various ways, such as traditional arts (Pramudiyanto, Supana, & Rohmadi, 2018). However, the role and cooperation of various parties, including family, school, and environment, are needed (Sugiarti, Erlangga, Suhariadi, Winta, & Pribadi, 2022).

Based on the explanation above, this study examined the character education values in the Keling Dance. It employed semiotic theory as proposed by Pilliang. Semiotics or semiology is the science of symbols and how they are applied, how to produce meaning, and how to convey meaning (Masrukhi, 2019). The semiotics perspective shows how culture and reality are recognized through signs (Hindwan & Rosita, 2022). Besides, the study examined the relevance of character education values in the Keling Dance as teaching material for junior high school. The subject was the Javanese language since it not only studied academic materials but also preserved regional culture, especially Javanese culture. School as a formal educational institution is a medium for the acculturation process (Parhanuddin, Nurdin, Budimasyah, & Ruyadi, 2023). The study was purposely to introduce the Keling Dance to the younger generation through teaching. It also simultaneously attempted to preserve the Keling Dance as the original traditional art from Ponorogo.

The researchers determined six studies on recognizing the novelty of the Keling dances. The first study was the form of presentation and function of the Keling Art (Novit, 2014). It showed that the Keling Dance has two forms of presentation, namely performance on stage and in the field. Besides, it also explained that the Keling Dance, which originally functioned as a ritual, changed to become a means of performance. The second study was the history of the Keling Dance and efforts to preserve It (Prasetiyo & Wasito, 2014). It showed that the Keling Dance was initiated by Khasan Ngali and Mojo Sub-Village people to entertain people who had no money during Eid al-Fitr. The third study was the function of the Keling dance in Eid Al-Fitr celebrations (Trichayningsih, 2015). It revealed that the Keling



Dance has two functions, namely celebrating community activities and conducting communication with ancestors as a form of solidarity with the people of Mojo Sub-Village. The fourth study was the existence of the Keling Guno Joyo Dance (Jayanti & Herawati, 2018). It indicated that the Keling dance still exists despite good and bad periods. The fifth study was the cultural communication of the Keling Guno Joyo Dance arts (Nafiah, 2019). It found messages communicated verbally and non-verbally through candra, songs, and gamelan musical instruments. The last study was the choreography of the Keling Gunojoyo dance (Mutiaraningrum, 2020). It represented that the choreography contained not only movements but also aspects of space and time.

Referring to the results of similar studies, two novelties are recognized. First, there is no study on the Keling dance that employs hypersemiotic studies. Second, no study links the Keling Dance with learning. This study examined the relevance of the Keling dance as teaching material that contains character education values. The subject to which teaching materials were applied was the Javanese language. The expectation of this research is can introduce the Keling dance to students and related parties in the sector of education, as well as an effort to preserve the Keling Dance.

### **Research Method**

This study was qualitative research with a constructivist paradigm. In the constructivist paradigm, reality is formed and constructed by the researcher's experiences, preferences, education, and social environment. The constructivist paradigm followed a qualitative approach with a more flexible design, in which the context and researchers' involvement in the research process are considered as research assets (Ataro, 2020). The data were divided into two, namely the symbols and meanings of the Keling Dance and their relevance to the value of character education in the Keling Dance as teaching material. The sources of primary data were interviews and literature studies, and the secondary one was the latest curriculum regulations.

The data collection techniques were observation, interviews, literature study, and documentation. The observation was carried out through video recordings of the Keling Dance. The resource person was Wiyoto, the head of the Guno Joyo studio, Keling Dance Association. The documentation techniques were used to record data collection activities in terms of photos, videos, or notes. The literature study was used to explore more in-depth information based on research or writings about the Keling Dance. The data in terms of symbols and meaning will be analyzed using the hypersemiotic theory. Validity of the data employed data source triangulation techniques. It was used to verify data with several different data sources (Jia, Wang, Liu, & Jiang, 2021).

### **Results and Discussion**

The results are divided into two, namely the character education values in the Keling Dance and the relevance of the Keling Dance as teaching material for the Javanese language subject. First, the study recognizes five values of character education, namely tolerance, love of the country, national spirit, creativity, and care for the environment. These values were based on the analysis results of the symbols and meanings of each character in the Keling Dance. The characters are soldiers, poets/*Warok*, *abdi kinasih* (beloved servant), and dancers. Second, the study finds out the relevance of character education values in the Keling Dance as teaching material for the Javanese language subject. IT was carried out by examining the



Keling Dance and the character education in the Keling dance with regulations set by the government. These results are presented in the following sub-chapters.

**Table 1. Character Education Values in Keling Dance**

Character Education	Manifestation
Tolerance	Unity of all the characters in the Keling dance
Love of the country	Character of oldiers and poets
National spirit	Story line of Ponorogo Keling Dance
Creativity	Choreography and properties used in the Keling dance performance
Care for the environment	Process after the Keling dance performance and the properties used

**Tabel 2. Relevance of Keling Dance as Teaching Material**

Relevance
Containing character education values
Being integrated with subjects, namely the Javanese language subject
Being contextual according to local cultural characteristics

**Ponorogo Keling Dance**

The Ponorogo Keling Dance is an original dance from the Ponorogo Regency. It originates from Mojo Sub-Village, Singgahan Village, Pulung District, Ponorogo Regency. It has historical elements contained in the Babad Tanah Jawi (Babad Tanah Jawi is a literature of traditional Javanese poetry containing the Javanese history) (Wiyoto, 2023). Based on the interview, Wiyoto said that the Keling Dance has existed since 1922 (Wiyoto, 2023). It experienced a period of hiatus during the Dutch Colonial. However, it is still handed down from generation to generation by descendants in Singgahan Village. It reappeared again in 1942 with the figure, namely Pardamus, to provide cheap entertainment amidst the poverty. Since then, art activists have always kept the Keling dance existing despite all limitations.

The Keling Dance tells the story of two *Warok* who lead the Keling tribe warriors to open new land for a village. They asked for help from the Keling tribe soldiers and their trusted people because the land was still *wingit* (*wingit* means holy or sacred). The story of opening new land, or the *babad alas*, is visualized in the Keling dance movement (Wiyoto, 2023). The movements represent the movements of Lambas Keling soldiers (Lambas Keling refers to a kingdom) going to war (Mutiaraningrum, 2020). The term “going to war” is used because the soldiers do not fight against anyone. Their presence becomes a precaution if enemies or rebels are attacking while carrying out the mission. In general, the Keling dance is divided into four scenes (Jayanti & Herawati, 2018). The first is two poets carrying *kerun* (*kerun* refers to a miniature of a gate) into the dance area; the second is all characters entering the dance area and waiting their turn to perform; the third is that the soldier characters dance as if they are fighting, and the fourth is that *emban/abdi kinasih* (beloved servants) being played by female dancers, join and dance in dance area (Wiyoto, 2023). There are a total of twenty two dancers involved in the Keling Dance, consisting of four characters, namely two poets/*warok*, twelve Keling soldiers, two *emban/abdi kinasih*, and six dancers.

The first character is the poet/*warok*. It is a representation of the *Warok* Ponorogo (*Warok* Ponorogo deals with public figures and art activists in Ponorogo) wearing complete *Penadon* cloth (*Penadon* cloth is the traditional cloth and one of the symbols of Ponorogo). *Warok*, in Ponorogo, people’s view relates to a respected, strong, and powerful person (Hilman, Dwijayanti, & Khoirrurosyidin, 2020). The *Penadon* is a loose black cloth, with long sleeves and trousers. Additional accessories for the *Penadon* are the



Ponoragan *udeng* (head covering), the Ponoragan belt (a belt that resembles a mine and is usually white), and *jarik* (*jarik* is the Javanese word for a cloth with batik and various patterns) used on the upper part of the trousers. The second characters are soldiers, as many as 12. They are visualized as blind/giant figures with dark skin. Their faces are red. They also have whiskers and fangs. They wear head accessories made of chicken feathers. The only cloth used is tassel trousers made from coconut leaves. Other accessories are *kencringan* (things that make a sound when being shaken), used on the left leg, and weapons such as arrows, spears, swords, and *kenthes* (sticks like a security guard's baton). The third character is *Abdi Kinasih*. Two older women present it. They use *kebaya* (a traditional blouse-dress combination), *jarik*, scarf, and head covering. An *emban/abdi kinasih* in Javanese society is an image of the common people, but they can be taken into account since they often provide important input into the government (Pramudiyanto, Supana, & Rohmadi, 2018). The last characters are six dancers represented by young women. They wear a vest-like shirt made of wood. At the bottom, they use brown cloth. On the head, they use an accessory made of colored chicken feathers.

### ***Identification of Character Education Values in Keling Dance***

Identification of character education values in the Keling dance is carried out by analyzing the symbols in the Keling dance characters using hyper semiotic theory, according to Piliang. Hypersemiotics is a theory of signs that goes beyond and is the result of criticism of conventional semiotics (especially structural semiotics, which are closely related to structuralism) (Ginting, 2021). The study of hypersemiotics has six typologies of signs, namely true, pseudo, false signs, recycle, artificial, and superlative signs (Nugraha & Saidi, 2022). Each typology has its concept to reveal the meaning behind signs or symbols.

A proper sign is a sign that has a relatively similar or symmetrical relationship with the concept represented in reality (Piliang, 2010). It is a representation based on applicable social conventions (Ginting, 2021). A pseudo sign is an inauthentic, imitation, pretending, fake sign, containing a kind of reduction of reality through the reduction of signifier and signified (Piliang, 2010). A pseudo sign is not a real sign; it is imitated, faked, and pretended, in which there is no complicated reduction of reality, but there are several hidden masks of reality (Masrukhi, 2019). A false sign is a sign using a wrong marker, so the concept explained by the sign is also wrong (Wibowo, 2019). It is made to obscure a meaning with a specific purpose. A recycle sign is a sign that was used in the past in a specific context of space, time, and place but is now used to explain current events in a different context (Nugraha & Saidi, 2022). An artificial sign is a sign fabricated with the latest imaging technology (digital technology, computer graphics, and simulation) without references (Ginting, 2021). It is created to represent itself (Masrukhi, 2019). A superlative sign is a sign that represents a simple sign in the world of reality. However, in reality, it appears in a special sign, so it gives an extreme or hyperbolic impression beyond the limits of its reality representation (Nugraha & Saidi, 2022). It is made to represent simple signs in the real world, even though it appears as a special sign with many additional effects (audio or visual) that give an extreme impression (Masrukhi, 2019).

The first character education value in the Keling dance is tolerance. Tolerance is related to mutually respectful behavior and bridging gaps to build harmonious interactions (Aryani & Wilyanita, 2022). The value of tolerance is reflected in uniting all the characters in the Keling dance. The characters of poet/*warok*, soldier, *emban/abdi kinasih*, and dancer symbolize social status in life. The poet/*warok* represents the leader or noble person. The



soldier represents the middle class or working class. The *emban/abdi kinasih* represents the royal advisor. The dancer is a representation of ordinary people. The Keling dance performance shows that despite all differences in social status, ethnicity, skin color, age, and gender, the characters are still united in a harmonious dance. The choreography among these characters shows an attitude of tolerance. Tolerance is interpreted as a willingness to accept the presence of different people (Amri, Musafir, Mosiba, & Bin-Tahir, 2020). The application of tolerance values is done by multicultural education in schools through local culture (Saputra & Syah, 2020).

The second character education value in the Keling dance is love of the country. It reflects a sense of pride and loyalty as well as concern and high appreciation for language, culture, economy, and politics so that a person with this character does not easily accept offers from other countries that are harmful to his country (Nuryani, Hutagalung, Purwaningsih, & Mustadi, 2020). Soldiers and poets show this character. The soldiers are reinforcements from the Keling tribe whom the poet delegated to open up a new land. They remain loyal to their kingdom by wearing royal clothing, although they are on duty to help another kingdom. Likewise, the poets use *Penadon* as a form of pride in the local customs and culture. The character of the love of the country is indicated when someone feels proud to apply or use existing culture (Mahanani, Wijaya, Akbar, & Nuraisyah, 2019).

The third character education value in the Keling dance is national spirit. It is a way of thinking, acting, and having insight into the interests of the nation and state above the interests of oneself and one's group (Ritonga, Hasibuan, Rohana, & Siregar, 2020). It is conceptually interpreted as a condition that shows awareness of surrendering the highest loyalty of each individual to the state and nation (Saleh, 2021). It is found in the storyline. The Keling Dance storyline tells about efforts to open new lands known to be haunted and dangerous. All the characters remain enthusiastic and carry out their duties wholeheartedly. This attitude is a manifestation of the national spirit in which the figures prioritize the interests of the kingdom/state over personal interests, even though their lives are at stake.

The fourth character education value in the Keling dance is creativity. It is related to the skill of applying a new approach to solve a problem and becoming innovative (Supena, Darmuki, & Hariyadi, 2021). It is obtained from the choreography and properties used in the Keling dance performance. The choreography contains a creative value by telling the historical elements of the foundation of Mojo Sub-Village with an aesthetic dance. Conveying history to future generations through dance is certainly a challenging matter since many components need to be considered in creating a dance, for example, the accompanying music, the choreography, and the dancers, as well as other properties used. Besides, the properties also contain a creative value in terms of cheap properties. Most of the properties in the Keling dance are possibly obtained at a relatively low cost. If we refer to the history of the Keling dance, it was created during difficult times. At that time, a low-cost performance was conceived to entertain the public in difficult times (Wiyoto, 2023). The history of the Keling dance gives a lesson of creative value in how to use objects around us to create new things useful for ourselves and others.

The last character education value in the Keling Dance is care for the environment. It refers to an attitude of a person improving and managing the environment correctly and sustainably so that the environment has sustainable benefits (Sitorus & Lasso, 2021). It is recognized from the process after the Keling dance performance and the properties used. After the performance, all tools and materials must be brought back to Mojo Sub-Village. This action has become one of the standard requirements for performing the Keling dance.



For a long time, there has been a myth that if tools, materials, and rubbish (except the charcoal used on the bodies of soldier dancers) from the Keling dance performance are not brought back to Mojo Sub-Village, it will cause mystical things (Wiyoto, 2023). This myth is still used to this day, so after the Keling dance performance, there is no rubbish left behind. The next form of care for the environment is that the properties in the Keling Dance use environmentally friendly materials. As previously mentioned, the properties in Keling dance have a relatively low price. Besides, the materials are also widely found in nature and easy to develop. For example, the soldier dancers use tassels made of coconut leaves, while the black color on their bodies uses oil mixed with charcoal. These two attitudes of care for the environment are also relevant to Javanese advice *hamemayu hayuning Bawana*, dealing with helping to maintain and preserve the balance of the earth. Maintaining a clean environment and using nature wisely are examples of applying the character education value of care for the environment in everyday life (Ahmadi, Ardianti, & Pratiwi, 2021).

### ***Relevance of Keling Dance as Teaching Material***

Based on the results of identifying character education values, there are five character education values in the Keling dance, namely: tolerance, love of the country, national spirit, creativity, and care for the environment. These values are in accordance with the ones in the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture (PERMENDIKBUD) of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 in 2018 concerning Strengthening Character Education in Formal Education Units. Article 2, paragraph 1 states that Pancasila values in character education include being religious, honest, tolerance, disciplined, hard-working, creative, independent, democratic, curiosity, national spirit, love of the country, respectful of achievement, communicative, peace-loving, fond of reading, care about the environment, care of the society, and being responsible (KEMDIKBUD, 2018). The relevance of the Keling dance as a teaching material also reinforces the general guidelines for the exploration and realization of noble morals in the section on character education strengthening published by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The guidebook explains that the implantation of noble morals has three criteria: 1) it is integrated with subjects; 2) empowering various potential learning resources and community involvement must be contextual concerning local cultural characteristics; 3) It is continuous from lower to high levels of education (Winataputra & Setiono, 2017). Based on the analysis, the relevances of the Keling dance as teaching material for the Javanese language subjects are namely 1) containing character education values; 2) being integrated with subjects, namely the Javanese language subject; and 3) being contextual according to local cultural characteristics.

The results of this research show that there are several implications both conceptually and practically. The conceptual implication of this research is the Keling dance has characters education values. Through this research hoped can be developed arts and culture research in relation to education. The practical implication of this research is the Keling Dance can be used as teaching material especially for Javanese language subjects, as an effort to preserve local art.

### **Conclusion**

The results showed that the Keling dance had local wisdom values indicated in symbols. These symbols were visualized in the Keling dance choreography and characters. After employing hyper semiotic theory, the study found symbols in the Keling dance containing character education values. These values were tolerance, creativity, national spirit,



love of the nation, and care for the environment. These values are relevant to teaching material for the Javanese language subject in terms of character education values, availability to be integrated with the Javanese language subject, and contextuality following local cultural characteristics. The use of the Keling Dance as teaching material for the Javanese language subject hopefully introduces native Ponorogo arts other than *reog*.

### **Recommendation**

Research on the Ponorogo Keling Dance has so far only been viewed from an artistic perspective. In this research, Keling Dance is reviewed from an educational perspective. Researchers hope that there will be more research on the Ponorogo Keling Dance that examines it from an educational perspective. It is important to do as an effort to preserve the Keling Dance through schools. The hope is that by involving students in schools, the Keling Dance can be better known and continue to be preserved by the younger generation. Our recommendation regarding this research for teachers is to create learning tools based on local culture, especially the Keling Dance. Meanwhile, recommendations for school principals are expected to introduce Keling Dance through events held at school or outside school. The final recommendation is for policy makers regarding this research. Policymakers are expected to be able to create regulations that require teachers to create learning tools based on local culture in their respective cities, not from other regions. We consider some of these recommendations important to introduce Keling Dance.

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