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## Aesthetic criticism of dancers' costumes at *Jaranan Pegon*'s performance in Trenggalek

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### ABSTRACT

Aesthetic criticism serves as an evaluation of diverse forms of beauty perceived differently by individuals. Costumes worn by *Jaranan Pegon* dancers adhere to specific standards and regulations during performances, with the dancers donning *Wayang Wong* attire. This research aims to assess aesthetic criticism by investigating absolutism, anarchy, and relativism in the costumes of *Jaranan Pegon* dancers. The study employed a descriptive approach with a phenomenological method. The findings revealed that, in accordance with absolutism, *Jaranan Pegon* dancers' costumes must adhere to established standards or guidelines. From the perspective of anarchy, there is freedom in costume choices, allowing deviation from traditional rules. Relativism permits flexibility in attire, considering various presentation factors while still allowing departures from established guidelines. The significance of this research lies in exploring aesthetic criticism through the lenses of absolutism, anarchy, and relativism in the context of *Jaranan Pegon* dancers' costumes, shedding light on the varying standards and freedoms associated with costume choices in performances.



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## 1. Introduction

Costumes are integral components of artistic expression [1]–[3]. They serve as representatives of the artistic essence, enhancing the audience's aesthetic experience. Beyond their role as mere body coverings, costumes function as mediums of artistic expression that reinforce the visualization of dance movements, reflect cultural elements, and accentuate themes or narratives within a performance. Costumes embody an identity with meaningful significance in the realm of art [3]–[5]. Their importance in dance performances is underscored by the necessity for thoughtful design and creativity to align with the theme, movement style, and overall artistic expression. Dance costumes transcend mere clothing, serving as visual communication tools that amplify and convey messages during a performance [6]. They possess the transformative ability to turn an individual into a character distinct from their everyday selves, allowing for the visualization of alternative roles [7]. Reflecting cultural identity and aesthetic values, dance costumes also encapsulate the characters and emotions intended for audience reception. Aesthetic considerations, such as color, shape, and texture, play a pivotal role in costume design. Thoughtful color selection can effectively convey the desired mood or emotion. The shape and cut of dance costumes must be tailored to accommodate the specific dance movements, enabling dancers to move freely and expressively. Furthermore, motifs or patterns adorning dance costumes can serve to reinforce themes or illustrate the narrative unfolding in the performance.

Cultural context significantly influences the design of dance costumes [8]. Each culture possesses a distinctive style, symbols, and traditions that find expression in the attire worn during dance performances. Dance costumes serve to portray specific cultural identities, pay homage to cultural heritage, and blend traditional elements with contemporary design [9].

Within a cultural framework, dance costumes transcend being merely visual elements; they also function as symbols of diversity, cultural legacy, and group identity [10]. In essence, the design and creation of dance costumes involve a fusion of art, design, culture, and technology, aiming not only to enhance the visualization of dance movements but also to convey the deeper meaning of the performance to the audience [11]. In the realm of *Jaranan Pegon* art, costumes adhere to *pakem* or established rules. The distinctive feature of *Jaranan Pegon* lies prominently in the costumes worn by its dancers. Specifically, the attire worn by *Jaranan Pegon* dancers corresponds to *Wayang Wong* costumes. These costumes, closely associated with the Surakarta-style *Wayang Wong* performance, contribute to the unique identity of *Jaranan Pegon*.

The rapid evolution of society, accompanied by shifting community attitudes, has led to certain *Jaranan* groups in the Trenggalek area deviating from the use of appropriate costumes. Dancers who previously adorned *Wayang Wong* costumes now present themselves in simpler attire, not adhering to established standards. This phenomenon draws attention as it exemplifies the changes occurring in the development of *Jaranan Pegon*'s performances in Trenggalek. The research will concentrate on analyzing the costumes of *Jaranan Pegon*, considering the prevailing aesthetic criticisms. This study aims to examine how the costumes of *Jaranan Pegon* dancers in Trenggalek have changed based on aesthetic criticisms in the realm of art. The prevalent aesthetic critique will serve as a foundation for understanding whether these changes are perceived as progress or whether they come at the expense of traditional aesthetic values. The significance of this research lies in its potential to be utilized as a reference for art groups, communities, and individuals organizing *Jaranan Pegon* performances. It offers insights into adhering to established rules for the proper attire of dancers. The research is anticipated to contribute novel perspectives on adhering to standards or rules for dancer costumes.

## 2. Method

This research employs a phenomenological approach, which seeks to describe the essence or meaning based on the phenomena experienced by individuals. The study focuses on critiquing the '*pakem*' or rules governing the use of dancer costumes in *Jaranan Pegon* performances. In addition to literary sources, data is gathered from observing phenomena within the *Jaranan* community in the Trenggalek area, including groups such as *Turonggo Nogo Daruna*, *Wahyu Anom Budoyo*, *Manggolo Yudho*, *Karyo Budoyo*, and *Pawon Dance Studio*. Data collection utilizes various techniques, encompassing observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Indirect observation involves scrutinizing diverse *Jaranan Pegon* arts in Trenggalek, while direct observation entails attending live *Jaranan Pegon* performances. The research incorporates interviews with dancers, spectators, and the head of the *Jaranan Pegon* Art Association in Trenggalek to gain deeper insights into the background and reasons behind the observed costume changes. Information derived from these interviews enhances the comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon. The phenomenological data analysis is conducted in six steps [12].

First, fully describe the resource person's experience regarding *Jaranan Pegon* costumes in Trenggalek Regency. Second, compile a list of important statements horizontally to avoid repetition. Third, categorize information into larger units related to absolutism, anarchy, and relativism. Fourth, provide textual and structural descriptions of the obtained information. Fifth, integrate the results of textual and structural descriptions. Sixth, distill the essence or meaning from the combined descriptions. To ensure data validity, the study employs data triangulation, a technique that utilizes sources or methods beyond the primary data for cross-verification. Source triangulation involves interviewing multiple individuals, such as *Jaranan Pegon* artists, Surakarta Palace courtiers, and representatives from the tourism office, to incorporate diverse perspectives and enhance data validity. The study also observes multiple *Jaranan Pegon* groups in the Trenggalek region. Method triangulation is achieved by comparing observational data with interview data, reinforcing documentation, and aligning findings with relevant theoretical frameworks related to the research theme, namely the performance of *Jaranan Pegon*.

3. Results and Discussion

Costumes serve as a complement to a performance, functioning as material objects that adorn the performer's body and embody ideas shaped through a complex network of collaborations, creativity, and artistic endeavors [13]. Viewed as integral components of artistic expression, costumes are considered part of a work of art imbued with meaning. In *Jaranan Pegon*, costumes act as tangible manifestations of cultural identity and traditional values, see Fig. 1. The attire worn by dancers holds deep symbolic meanings, reflecting the historical narratives, myths, and beliefs inherent in the art form. Additionally, costumes play a crucial role in visually conveying the performance to the audience. *Jaranan* art is characterized by dynamic and energetic dance movements, and the attire worn by dancers enhances the expression of these movements, leaving a strong visual impression. The colors, motifs, and accessories adorning *Jaranan* costumes signify the distinctive characteristics of each *Jaranan Pegon* art, contributing to a unique artistic beauty. In this context, the dancer's costume serves as a means to preserve the authenticity and integrity of *Jaranan* culture.



Fig. 1. Dancer Costume *Pakem* in *Jaranan Pegon* Art

*Pakem*, or the rules governing costumes in *Jaranan Pegon*, also contribute to maintaining visual unity and consistency across various *Jaranan* groups. In the context of competitions or collaborative performances, well-defined costume rules ensure a standardized appearance for each group, facilitating clear differentiation, see Table 1. This is crucial for establishing a harmonious visual impression and unifying all elements of the *Jaranan* performance. In *Jaranan Pegon* art, male dancers don *Wayang Wong* costumes, adapting them to embody *Gatutkaca* characters.

Table 1. Dancer Costumes in *Jaranan Pegon*

Dancers Costumes at <i>Jaranan Pegon</i> Performance	
Male Dancers	Female Dancers
<i>kuluk gelung</i>	<i>kuluk gelung</i>
<i>praba</i>	-
<i>Sumping</i>	<i>Sumping</i>
<i>Kalung kace</i>	<i>Kalung kace</i>
<i>Kalung ulur</i>	<i>Kalung ulur</i>
<i>Keris</i>	-
<i>Sabuk Cindhe</i>	<i>Sabuk Cindhe</i>
<i>Epek Baludiran</i>	<i>Epek Baludiran</i>
<i>Timang lerep</i>	<i>Timang lerep</i>
<i>Jarik</i>	<i>Jarik</i>
<i>Klat bahu</i>	<i>Klat bahu</i>
<i>Poles</i>	<i>Poles</i>
<i>Gongseng/klinthing</i>	<i>Gongseng/klinthing</i>
<i>sampur</i>	<i>sampur</i>

<sup>a</sup> Sample of a Table footnote. (Table footnote)

The costumes worn by male *Jaranan Pegon* dancers include *kuluk gelung*, *praba*, *sumping*, *kalung kace*, *kalung ulur*, *keris*, *sabuk cindhe*, *epek baludiran*, *timang lerep*, *jarik*, *klat bahu*, *poles*, *gongseng* and *sampur*. Female dancers in *Jaranan Pegon Art* adapt their costumes to represent Srikandi characters, utilizing *kuluk gelung*, *sumping*, *kalung kace*, *kalung ulur*, *sabuk cindhe*, *epek baludiran*, *timang lerep*, *jarik*, *klat bahu*, *poles*, *gongseng* and *sampur*. Traditions, preserved and passed down through generations, continually adapt to changing times, incorporating adjustments in implementation procedures, the introduction of new elements, or even complete replacement. While the core values of traditions may persist, surrounding changes, such as technological advancements and societal shifts, impact their expression and celebration. The evolving nature of traditions, influenced by the development of the times, results in ongoing innovation, signifying that traditions are inherently dynamic [14]. Thus, traditions, as dynamic entities, evolve over time while maintaining their interconnectedness with a changing society. Changes in traditions also extend to the utilization of dancer costumes in *Jaranan Pegon* art. While traditional *Jaranan* dancers typically wear *Wayang Wong* costumes during performances, the development of *Jaranan* umbrellas introduces makeshift costumes. This poses a challenge to preserving the distinctive costume style inherent in *Jaranan Pegon's* art. Emphasizing the importance of using *Wayang Wong* costumes for dancers contributes to the overall aesthetic integrity of the art form. The cohesiveness of the entire performance holds meaningful significance as each element complements and enhances the others [15]. Fig. 2 is *Jaranan Pegon's* dancer costume without using *pakem*.



Fig. 2. *Jaranan Pegon* dancer costume without using *pakem*

Art criticism involves the assessment and commentary on the strengths or shortcomings of a work of art, particularly concerning its aesthetic qualities. This process assumes the permissibility of critiquing a work. Aesthetic criticism and ethics are regarded as distinct dimensions of value, indicating that the separation between aesthetics and ethics, which is a cornerstone of contemporary discussions, emerged in the late eighteenth century [16]. Aesthetic criticism can be applied to evaluate the aesthetic aspects of a work of art. In the context at hand, aesthetic criticism is employed to assess the aesthetics of the costumes worn by dancers in *Jaranan Pegon* art. In evaluating the aesthetic critique of dance costumes, three commonly used aspects serve as reference points for assessing works of art, namely anarchy, absolutism, and relativism [17].

- Absolutism represents an assessment approach to a work of art characterized by absolute properties that are non-negotiable or contestable. This form of evaluation is grounded in convention or predetermined regulatory frameworks.
- Anarchy constitutes a second form of judgment rooted in subjective opinions from various perspectives, devoid of any need for accountability. While this anarchic assessment adheres to prevailing art rules, it is adapted to individual experiences and perspectives on art.
- Relativism, as the third aspect in aesthetics, embodies a form of judgment with a nature that is neither absolute nor subjective, maintaining an objective character. This implies that the assessment considers numerous factors within the framework of all applicable regulations.



### 3.1. The Absolutivism Paradigm in the Aesthetic Criticism of Dancer Costumes

The use of dance costumes that deviate from the standards set by their creator, from the perspective of absolutism, signifies a form of artistic judgment characterized by absolute properties based on predetermined regulations. *Jaranan Pegon* dancer costumes that adhere to these rules may enhance the beauty of a performance. This alignment with the concept of absolutism underscores the insistence on the absolute nature of adhering to the standards of dance costume usage. *Jaranan Pegon* dancer costumes feature unique motifs, predominantly in gold. Wearing dance costumes that do not conform to the historical rules, from the absolutist viewpoint, implies a violation of the form of judgment for a work of art characterized by an absolute nature based on predetermined rules. In the context of *Jaranan Pegon* dancer costumes, deviating from these predetermined regulations can diminish the beauty of a performance. The concept of absolutism highlights the significance of respecting and adhering to established rules to ensure the existence of a work of art that aligns with specific standards [18]. Considering the unique motif of *Jaranan Pegon*'s dancer costumes, which incorporates *Wayang Wong* attire, any deviation from the established rules may diminish the charm and visual allure anticipated in the performance. Therefore, maintaining the conformity of costumes to established standards becomes a pivotal aspect in preserving the integrity of dance art and ensuring its beauty resonates strongly with the audience.

### 3.2. The Anarchy Paradigm in the Aesthetic Criticism of Dancer Costumes

Moreover, there is the concept of anarchy, which is grounded in individual opinions and characterized by its subjective nature, devoid of any need for accountability. Within this concept, there exists no definitive right or wrong. The use of costumes reflects the subjectivity of dancers and their individual freedom to create. This concept upholds the liberty of individuals to express their imagination, even within the established tradition of *Jaranan Pegon* dancer costumes. The view of anarchy promotes a dancer's freedom to collaboratively engage with art using their creativity, ensuring that the use of *Jaranan Pegon* dancer costumes does not pose a significant problem. According to Cohn's perspective, art should be evaluated based on how it (A) dialectically negates hierarchy and domination and (B) indicates egalitarian autonomy and free cooperation as positive alternatives [19]. The concept of anarchy, in the context of using dance costumes, advocates for each individual's freedom to express themselves and create costumes according to their preferences. Within the framework of anarchy, there is no absolute right or wrong, and no accountability is required for the use of costumes. Concerning *Jaranan Pegon*'s costumes, the concept of anarchy grants dancers subjective freedom to interpret and adapt costumes based on their imagination. In the realm of dance performance, the perspective of anarchy empowers dancers to explore their creativity without being confined by predefined boundaries or standards. This allows dancers to blend art with their personal beliefs, resulting in unique and memorable collaborations. From the viewpoint of anarchy, the utilization of *Jaranan Pegon* dancer costumes is not a significant problem, as the freedom of individuals to express themselves and realize their imagination takes precedence.

### 3.3. The Relativism Paradigm in the Aesthetic Criticism of Dancer Costumes

The concept of relativism represents a form of judgment characterized by its non-absolute nature. This implies that the assessment takes into consideration various factors within the framework of all applicable regulations. This concept serves as a blend of aesthetics and societal values. The use of dancer costumes that do not adhere to established standards may be justified when groups lack the financial means to purchase *Wayang Wong* costumes, which are relatively expensive for art practitioners whose livelihoods largely depend on *Jaranan* performances. Despite the need for cost considerations, the use of costumes must still align with aesthetic principles, including appropriate color choices. In terms of costumes, *Jaranan Pegon* dancers have the option to rent or use makeshift costumes based on community conditions. Even when deviating from costume standards, there is an attempt to uphold existing aesthetic norms. The concept of relativism provides a non-absolute approach to judgment, considering various factors and applicable rules. Relativism reveals aesthetic experiences while proposing laws of invariance derived from the affective and cognitive positions of individuals experiencing specific types of objects (aesthetic values) within phenomenological reflection [20]. In the context of dance costumes, this concept harmonizes aesthetic elements with the social context

of society. In the realm of *Wayang Wong* costumes, the use of alternative costumes can be considered if the dance group lacks sufficient financial resources to acquire costumes that meet established standards. *Wayang Wong* costumes often entail a relatively high cost, particularly for artists who rely on *Jaranan Pegon* performances as their primary source of income. However, it is crucial to still consider aesthetic aspects, including the use of appropriate colors. In the context of *Jaranan Pegon* dancer costumes, the use of rented or improvised costumes that align with community conditions can be a viable solution. While not fully adhering to costume standards, this approach reflects an effort to respect and preserve existing aesthetics. It demonstrates an acknowledgment of limitations and social realities while maintaining an appreciation for aesthetic value in dance performance.

Aesthetics is grounded in the concept of binary opposition, asserting that everything is constructed in opposing pairs to complement each other [21]. This concept posits that contrasts, such as dark and light or large and small, are crucial elements in creating intricate beauty. The interaction between these opposing elements allows aesthetics to achieve visual harmony. Binary opposition infuses dynamism into the aesthetics of costumes, resulting in something interesting and evocative. In our daily lives, understanding and applying the concept of binary opposition in aesthetics can assist us in appreciating beauty in diversity, finding the balance between contrasts, and simultaneously valuing different aspects. Therefore, the concept of binary opposition serves as a fundamental aspect in comprehending and appreciating aesthetics. Costumes in dance carry symbolic meanings, representing ideas or thoughts from an artist. The presentation style in art reflects the creative thought process of an artist [22]. These ideas are translated into the form of costumes, adapting them to the meaning of movement and the ongoing narrative. Adding or altering costumes during a performance equates to a change in the essence and meaning of the artistic expression. This holds particularly true when the arts adhere to established standards or rules regarding the use of dancer costumes.

*Jaranan Pegon*'s art serves both spiritual and entertainment functions, having grown and developed within the context of peasant communities. Throughout its evolution, variations in costume usage have emerged, deviating from established norms or *pakem*. Folk art, as it evolves, may present contradictions with standards or *pakem*. The rapid shift in cultural values or cultural changes appears to impact various aspects of life, including the performing arts, necessitating a life philosophy for the supporting community [23]. In the pursuit of art appreciation, conforming to the rules of *Jaranan Pegon* art in costume usage is encouraged. This is done to honor the background that led to the adoption of specific costumes and to appreciate the essence of costumes, representing ideas or thoughts that have been passed down through generations. Beyond aesthetics, this practice imparts lessons in tolerance and respect for the art that has been cultivated. Despite the diversity in art, adherence to existing costume norms remains essential. Traditional art is intricately linked to its spirit, encompassing movement, costumes, accompaniment, and props. *Pakem* or rules are imperative as a foundation for the use of dance costumes [24]. Adhering to these rules signifies an appreciation for the aesthetic value inherent in the dance itself, and altering the rules contradicts aesthetic principles [25]. While there may be instances where costume modifications or adaptations are necessary to make *Jaranan* art more appealing to the younger generation, it is crucial for *Jaranan* artists to remain mindful of the core and essence of *Jaranan* art during any innovative changes to costumes.

Overall, a comprehensive analysis of costume rules in *Jaranan* art reveals the crucial role these rules play in maintaining authenticity. This stands in contrast to an economic perspective, where the *Jaranan* community, unable to afford *Wayang Wong* costumes due to their high cost, resorts to makeshift alternatives. However, from an aesthetic standpoint, the tradition of costumes is still upheld as a reference, as costumes carry an essence derived from the creator's ideas. In conclusion, it is imperative for art enthusiasts to comprehend the various aesthetic paradigms of dance costumes and judiciously consider their use in crafting an enticing and meaningful work of art. Flexibility, freedom, and an awareness of existing rules and aesthetic values can harmoniously coexist to create an extraordinary dance experience aligned with the visions of the artist, dancer, and audience expectations. These diverse perspectives are presented to enable the selection of an approach that aligns with the context and artistic vision, ultimately yielding a gratifying art experience for the audience while enriching the world of dance.

#### 4. Conclusion

In evaluating the aesthetics of *Jaranan Pegon* dancers' costumes, three concepts come into play: absolutism, anarchy, and relativism. Absolutism dictates that the use of *Jaranan Pegon* dancers' costumes must adhere strictly to existing standards, emphasizing the importance of complying with established rules in order to maintain the optimal beauty of a performance. The perspective of anarchy, on the other hand, advocates for freedom in costume selection, allowing deviations from standards. Anarchy underscores the individual's freedom to express themselves and create costumes based on personal preferences and imaginations without strict adherence to absolute rules. In the context of relativism, wearing costumes outside the norm is permissible, taking into account various factors such as aesthetic considerations and the social context in assessing the use of *Jaranan Pegon* dancer costumes. While not fully conforming to established standards, this approach still respects existing aesthetics and accommodates the situation and conditions of the community.

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