



# The Transformation of Karo Traditional Dance Movement in Modern Choreography Form Gegeh Gundala-Gundala

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**Abstract:** *This study aims to form a choreography rooted in the motive movement of the Karo traditional dance in the form of the modern choreography Gegeh Gundala-Gundala. The three basic motives of the Karo traditional dance, namely Ertimbang, Bunga tan kawes kemuhen kudas kuteruh, and Rakut Meteguh are used as the basis for the development of motion with the method of developing the elements of motion, using the constructive dance creation method popularized by Jacqueline Smith such as the process of exploration, improvisation, composition, and evaluation. This creation process has formed a modern choreography rooted in new traditional values such as the theory conveyed by Soedarsono that modern dance is freedom in expressing movement techniques on stage, such as the Gegeh Gundala-Gundala choreography. The method in this research is. While the method of this research uses qualitative methods, describing a narrative study of dance creation including literature study, observation, studio work, and documentation. From the process of creating the Gegeh Gundala-Gundala choreography, a new and unique form was obtained, the result of the creative process of exploration, improvisation, composition, and evaluation and supported by the process of developing motion by utilizing elements of motion such as energy, space and time. From these processes a modern choreography was formed, rooted in the traditional Karo dance entitled Gegeh Gundala-Gundala. Obtained a new and unique form, the result of the creative process of exploration, improvisation, composition, and evaluation and supported by the process of developing motion by utilizing elements of motion such as energy, space and time. From these processes a modern choreography was formed, rooted in the traditional Karo dance entitled Gegeh Gundala-Gundala. Obtained a new and unique form, the result of the creative process of exploration, improvisation, composition, and evaluation and supported by the process of developing motion by utilizing elements of motion such as energy, space and time. From these processes a modern choreography was formed, rooted in the traditional Karo dance entitled Gegeh Gundala-Gundala.*

**Keywords:** *choreography; gegeh gundala-gundala; modern*

## I. Introduction

The formation of a choreography can start from a simple idea, but has a broad value, so that it can be used as a dance theme, the theme of the work, and even become the main topic of work. Ideas can also originate from a social event, natural surroundings, inner conflict, or from an ancient or even primitive tradition. Traditions and customs in the community can be in the form of oral culture, artifacts, and historical relics, even traditions passed down from one people to the next as a symbol and identity. Stimulants of cultural events that develop in society and are presented in the form of a new choreography are defined as stimuli. By Jacqueline Smith, stimulation is something that can generate thinking or enthusiasm that drives activity (Jacqueline Smith, 1985: 20).

According to Febrianto (2020) Dance or dance is an expression of the soul of human art expressed through beautiful movements and rhythms that give satisfaction to others. The beautiful movements and rhythm are actually the radiance of the human soul and the soul is usually in the form of reason / ideas, will and emotions. Rahmah (2019) states traditional art as one of the material that must be studied, so far has been taught only by oral tradition, focusing on dance.

In creating dance, stimulation is a phase of creativity and it can be in the form of ideal stimulation or thought stimulation, kinesthetic stimulation, auditive stimulation, visual stimulation and tactile stimulation. Of the five creative stimuli, what often appears as a stimulant in dance creation is kinesthetic stimulation. This one stimulus, often becomes the main stimulus in the process of creating a dance work that gives birth to new forms and genres, different from the original form. Kinesthetic stimuli are creative stimuli that can start from seeing a form of motion, or it could be on the uniqueness of a particular movement technique. This stimulation can also originate from a genuine interest in one dance style or genre, such as a dance style from the Karo ethnic region that developed in the North Sumatra region.

According to Adlin (2020) traditional dance is the work of human creation and inventiveness which is passed on from one generation to the next. The creation of a new dance work that starts with a kinesthetic stimulation, will of course be faced with a choreography development process, especially the development of motion. The existing motion motives can be combined and processed through a creative development process through the basic elements of composition or also known as motion elements. Jacqueline Smith explained that the elements of motion or the basic elements of the composition are elements of energy, elements of space, and elements of time. Composition elements need to be lived and understood, and also the process or method of arranging and combining various elements must be studied and practiced (Jacqueline Smith, 1985: 3). A choreographer must really understand this element of motion, so that the development process to present new motifs will be more flexible.

The process of forming new movements from existing traditions such as dance from the Karo ethnic group, North Sumatra, is passed through various creative stages. Through these creative stages, a modern, dynamic and unique form of choreography has been created, different from the original form which is used as a kinesthetic stimulation entitled Gegeh Gundala-Gundala. The process of forming this modern choreography has gone through constructive, mutually constructive stages popularized by American dance figure Jacqueline Smith which is called the constructive creative method. Some of the constructive creative stages include the exploration stage, the improvisation stage, the composition stage, and the evaluation stage. These creative processes are carried out in an organized and structured manner, so that the choreographer can build imaginative power, especially in the formation of motion from one motive to another. So that it becomes a logical motion sentence and is arranged according to the theme and choreographic structure of Gegeh Gundala-Gundala. The process of creativity that has been passed has presented new unique and modern works, which are also combined through the development of elements of composition or elements of motion such as elements of energy, space and time.

When talking about modern forms in a choreography, of course it is related to the existence of new elements in choreography that are created, especially at the level of motion. But what needs to be understood is that the modern form in choreography does not mean

that it has to adopt western culture. But it can be rooted in one particular tradition, such as the formation of the modern choreography Gegeh Gundala-Gundala, which is kinesthetic rooted in traditional dances from the Karo region. The dance work that is said to be modern is not always identical with the imitation work from the west. All forms of motion whether they are extracted from the current situation or from the aspects of traditional culture can be used as a source of modern dance work.

## II. Review of Literatures

Creating a new dance form, of course, involves the method of creation and how to shape the work from the initial phase, the formation process, to the performance. Likewise, the formation of the modern dance work Gegeh Gunda-Gundala which originated from an idealistic idea as a form of dance theme about the ritual tradition of Gundala-Gundala in the Karo community. This tradition is used as a dance theme that focuses on this tradition and its relationship with the community as actors and cultural owners, which is entitled Gegeh Gundala-Gundala, which literally means the power of Gundala-Gundala. Furthermore, as an embryo for the development of movement in choreography formation, the creator uses traditional Karo dance such as the Ertimbang motif, Bunga tan kawes kemuhen kudas kuteruh, and Rakut Meteguh.

These three basic motives are the root of the choreographer to form the work of Gegeh Gundala-Gundala using the theory of motion development by Jacqueline Smith. He explained that the elements of motion or the basic elements of the composition are elements of energy, elements of space, and elements of time. Composition elements need to be lived and understood, and also the process or method of arranging and combining various elements must be studied and practiced (Jacqueline Smith, 1985: 3).

This theory is used as the basis for the development of motion and integrates with the method of constructive creation which was also popularized by Jacqueline Smith through the process of exploration, improvisation, composition and evaluation. He explained that the elements of motion or the basic elements of the composition are elements of energy, elements of space, and elements of time. Composition elements need to be lived and understood, and also the process or method of arranging and combining various elements must be studied and practiced (Jacqueline Smith, 1985: 3).

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After going through the process of developing motion, and the stages of construction, the Gegeh-Gegeh Gundala choreography became new value choreography with a modern style. Modern forms are contained through motion motifs that are structured in the Gegeh Gundala-Gundala choreography, musical accompaniment compositions, costumes, and

the form of the presentation of the work. This is in line with what Soedarsono said that the form of modern dance is freedom in expressing movement techniques on stage (Soedarsono, 1986: 96). Furthermore, Edi Sedyawati stated that modernization is characterized by the following characteristics: the excitement of creativity and skill development, the perceived interest in work and the ability to stand alone (Edi Sedyawati, 1986: 123). Similar to the creation of modern works of choreography Gegeh Gundala-Gundala,

### **III. Discussion**

The process of forming the Gegeh Gundala-Gundala choreography goes through several creative stages, using the constructive creation method popularized by the Amariika dance figure, Jacqueline Smith. The constructive stages include the creative stages of exploration, improvisation, composition, and evaluation. These stages are mutually synergistic and mutually building constructively, starting from the basic idea as the main foothold, to the process of forming motion, forming choreography, evaluation, and until the performance of works.

#### **3.1 Exploration**

The creative step taken by the choreographer in this one process is to explore the movement of the Karo ethnic tradition which is used as a source of movement development. The exploration carried out is in the endek movement technique, which is the main characteristic of the Karo ethnic dance. Endek is a motion motive that is concentrated on the feet, where the body looks like it is rising and falling due to the alternating motion of the knees of the legs. This motif is explored and explored by the choreographer, so that the maximum form is found, especially the technique, shape and thickness of the motion. Apart from that the choreographer also explores the bodywork for the Karo community which is termed a teaser, and the hand gesture is termed with a tan flower.

Vocabulari movement of the Karo ethnic group basically consists of three types of movements, namely Ertimbang, Bunga tan kawes kemuhen kudas kuteruh, and Rakut Meteguh. These three motives are the main motives in traditional Karo dance. Furthermore, this motif becomes the basis for the choreographer to be processed into new motifs to form the Gegeh Gundala-Gundala choreography. In the creative exploration stage, the choreographer dissects these three motifs, so that technically they find the actual content and design of the motion. Until the choreographer feels confident in the development of movement carried out, especially at the next stage, such as the creative composition stage as the movement development stage, the work formation stage, the training process stage with dancers as expression carriers.

#### **3.2 Improvisation**

The process of improvisation is a process of searching for motion by using imaginative abilities, in presenting forms of motion according to the needs of the choreography, especially in translating dance themes as the main topic. The choreographer will be faced with a phase where he has to think about and translate the theme of the dance into a structured form of motion. This improvisation process is also called the process of creativity by moving spontaneously. The improvisation process carried out in producing motion and the experience of forming the modern choreography of Gegeh Gundala-Gundala is through creative improvisation in the open that involves all dancers as carriers of expression.



*Figure 1. Joint Improvisation in the Open, Builds Motion Spontaneously, Resulting in Unique and Dynamic Motives. Documentation: Martozet (2020)*

In addition to improvisation being carried out in groups for all dancers, this creative process is also carried out in pairs, resulting in an experience of motion that is complementary, mutually binding, and can also form movement levels such as high and low levels. From the development of this improvisation process in the open air, new styles have been obtained, according to the theme in the choreography of Gegeh Gundala-Gundala. Apart from presenting a unique spontaneous movement experience, the creative process of improvisation that dancers go through in the open serves to sharpen their appreciation of motion and choreographic themes. In addition, this activity also serves to unite the emotions of all dancers, so that it has an impact on visual forms and aesthetic values.



**Figure 2. Pair Improvisation Leads to Complementary Motion Designs and at Different Levels**  
Documentation: Martozet (2020)

### **3.3 Composition**

After going through the exploration and improvisation stages, the choreographer arrives at the work formation stage. Included in this is the process of developing motion through elements of motion such as energy, space, and time to become motion motifs which are arranged based on the choreographic structure of Gegeh Gundala-Gundala. The movements are developed based on the needs of the work and the theme of the dance, so that the arrangement of motives is arranged systematically and logically. The process of

developing the movement that was passed in the formation of the Gegeh Gundala-Gundala choreography is as follows:

### **3.4 Floating Through Energy Elements**

As stated above, the traditional Karo dance is a dance with a limited number of movements, and with a soft and flowing character. If we read it from the perspective of the power element, the motives of the Karo ethnic group have a moderate charge in the use of energy in almost every movement. However, it should be understood that, although a dance movement may appear soft, it does appear to be solid, as is the case with Karo dance, it looks soft and flowing, but it seems firm. In the process of developing motion through the element of energy in the formation of the Gegeh Gundala-Gundala choreography, it has experienced a distorted form that is far different from the original form. Unconsciously the development of motion through the power element has produced a different character from its basic form. As an example of the lempir tan motif, developed with an open volume, then followed by a fast rhythm with full energy, and coupled with the rotation action, has given birth to a unique and sweet form and character of motion so that it has a modern style. It is so different from the original motif that it deserves to be called a choreography with a modern form.

In this one process, development is concentrated on the rhythm of movement or the study of the energy used in movement. There are ways and experiments carried out on this development are:

- Move with great force
- Move with a flowing and gentle force
- Move with strong force, and on the count make a jump, then give a stomp on the leg
- Moving with a force that is patterned violently and suddenly subtly and from a subtle force is followed by the use of strong force

Various possible movements are performed with different energies, to get motion motifs that are laid out in the choreographic structure of Gegeh Gundala-Gundala. Development studies through the power element give birth to various kinds of motion characters. This is in accordance with the form and character of modern dance movements in general, which tend to have a movement structure with various and varied energies, so that it can create a dramatic impression. Very much different from traditional dances that seem simple and tend to be monotonous.

### **3.5 Development through Space Elements**

Karo dance in general has a gentle and regular character, especially in their traditional dances. The motion appears to flow with a characteristic endek and the movement is concentrated a lot in the hand. However, in popular dances or types of social dance, the movement character is different from traditional dance, where the rhythm of the movement is more dynamic and seems vibrant. Like the dance that is displayed at a fruit party, which is a place for young people to express themselves and get acquainted while dancing. Below is an example of developing motion through the elements of space.

**Table 1.** Example of Developing Motion through the Elements of Space:

No.	Basic Motive (Traditional Motion)	Motifs that have undergone a development process through elements of space
1	 <p data-bbox="338 882 906 949">Lempir Tan motif, the hands form parallel in front of the chest.</p>	 <p data-bbox="944 882 1449 1061">The basic motif of Lempir Tan, was developed through the elements of space, by increasing the volume of motion in the hand, and supported by a wide upward vertical view.</p>  <p data-bbox="954 1469 1442 1612">In this section, the lempir tan motif is developed in the same way, namely widening the volume of motion and varying it using a low level.</p>
2		

	<p>Tan Ertimbang or Dawan Cibet flower motifs</p>	<p>The development of Ertimbang or Dawan Cibet movements, from small volumes to large volume motifs.</p>  <p>The development of motion becomes more open, coupled with the development of the legs as a wide and open support.</p>  <p>In this section the motion is developed with a different character. In the beginning, hand motifs with different designs were developed into motifs that appear to be balanced with motion designs that are almost the same between left and right.</p>
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### 3.6 Development of Motion through the Elements of Time

The element of time is a unique element in motion. Basically it is almost the same or very close to the meaning of the power element. However, the difference between these two elements can still be clearly felt. If the power element is closely related to the strength or energy used by a dancer in moving. Meanwhile, this one element is related to the duration of time used by the dancer when performing a movement. As explained above in the development of motion through the element of power, choreographers can do various experiments on movements with various powers, even though they are very close to the use of tempo in moving. The difference is that in the development of motion using the element of time, it is more emphasized in the duration of time used in performing the motion.

- Moving at a very slow tempo or flowing for a long time
- Moving slowly, but at a certain count puts pressure on motion with a fast duration
- Move with a very fast tempo, then give a beat or accent at a certain count and return to flowing motion with a constant duration of time

This experiment in developing motion through the elements of time has also produced unique motifs with different characters. These types of motifs are used at the beginning of the Gegeh Gundala-Gundala choreography. Where the dancer moves slowly, as an opening for the choreography. The character moves with fast tempo or tight duration of time, starting at the middle of the choreography to the end as the climax. Meanwhile, the closing part of the choreography Gegeh Gundala-Gundala is closed again with a movement that flows slowly towards a peaceful and calm atmosphere.

This stage is also the process of forming a choreographic structure, starting from the beginning as the opening, the middle as the content, and the closing as the climax. Through body attitude can be explained the basic patterns of supporting culture (Nugrahaningsih, 2020). This creative process is carried out in the studio on a scheduled basis with dancers as carriers of expression. The choreographer has carefully considered the arrangement of motion motifs according to the needs of the Gegeh Gundala-Gundala choreography. The movement integration is made and arranged based on the composition of the movement towards group choreography, because the Gegeh Gundala-Gundala work is danced by five dancers, including three male dancers and two female dancers. At the stage of the composition process, the choreographer considers the combination of movements displayed by the dancer, such as motion motives that are performed simultaneously, alternately, complement each other, sequentially, differ from one another, contrast.

The motion patterns that have been arranged and structured in the Gegeh Gundala-Gundala choreography must also be supported by other elements, such as floor patterns. Floor patterns are design patterns formed by dancers when they are on stage. The floor pattern that is formed in the Gegeh Gundala-Gundala choreography tends to be a-symmetric floor pattern, which commonly appears in modern-style choreography. This form is very different from the patterns in traditional dances which have a symmetrical style, such as one-line, two-line, circle, semicircular patterns, and vertical patterns that create a simple impression. Meanwhile, the a-symmetric pattern produces a dynamic impression because there are several focus points or it visually creates its own aesthetic effect on the stage and / or produces certain emotional effects that are different from the appeal of traditional choreographic floor patterns.

Three male dancers move with different designs and forms of motion, in different stage zones such as in the dead center and down right areas. Meanwhile, at the same moment, two female dancers move simultaneously in the up right area, which is an example of a floor pattern with an a-symmetrical style that appears in the modern-style Gegeh Gundala-Gundala choreography. in different stage zones such as in the dead center and down right areas. Meanwhile, at the same moment, two female dancers move simultaneously in the up right area, which is an example of a floor pattern with an a-symmetrical style that appears in the modern-style Gegeh Gundala-Gundala choreography. in different stage zones such as in the dead center and down right areas. Meanwhile, at the same time, two female dancers move simultaneously in the up right area, which is an example of a floor pattern in an a-symmetrical style that appears frequently in the modern-style Gegeh Gundala-Gundala choreography.

The composition process is the stage where the choreography is formed systematically and completely in accordance with the dance theme. Dancers are able to demonstrate movements according to the composition of the motion from the beginning to the end of the choreography, the created motion patterns and floor patterns, as well as other visual effects. To create unity in each sequence of movements in the Gegeh Gundala-Gundala choreography, the choreographer also pays attention to and considers construction elements. These elements include motives, repetition, variation and contrast, climax and accentuation, proportion and balance, transition, logical development, and unity (Jacqueline Smith, 1985: 68).

### **3.7 Evaluation**

The evaluation stage is the stage of correcting all important parts that are felt to have not been achieved in the Gegeh Gundala-Gundala choreography. The choreographer evaluates and considers carefully whether the structure of the motion is in accordance with the theme of the dance, whether the dancer is able to demonstrate the movements properly and correctly, whether the dramatic value has been achieved, whether other visual effects have been formed properly. Evaluation is also carried out on other important elements that support the choreography, such as the accompanying music in this choreography. Where there are several changes in the composition of the music to achieve the appropriate tempo in motion, emphasizing dramatic elements through sound composition, and other dramatic effects.

Because the creation of this choreography is a collective creative work involving various parties, evaluation is also carried out on other parts, such as the fashion stylist, make-up artist, stage designer. So that the Gegeh Gundala-Gundala choreography is ready to be performed on stage, and deserves to be appreciated by the audience as a new choreography that is modern in shape, rooted in traditional Karo movements and has gone through several creative stages known as constructive methods.

## **IV. Conclusion**

In the formation of the Gegeh Gundala-Gundala choreography, there are several creative stages, including the process of developing motion through elements of motion such as energy, space and time. Apart from that, in producing modern choreography with a new style, choreographers use constructive creative methods that are carried out in a structured manner step by step so that they are mutually constructive and synergistic. It is concluded that the process of forming a modern style choreography Gegeh Gundala\_Gundala provides a structured creative experience, while simultaneously training and enhancing creativity in creating.

Through this creativity, a very sharp difference is obtained between modern choreography and traditional dance. Modern choreography tends to use varied forms and patterns of motion, tempo and rhythm of motion which are also patterned in waves to produce dramatic values. Furthermore, in modern dance, movements with unique forms often appear, even acrobatic elements appear as a result of the study of the development of motion through elements of composition or motion elements such as energy, space and time. Meanwhile, the traditional patterned dance is simply patterned with a simple movement structure, and symbolizes a certain ethnicity as well as an identity. Through kinesthetic stimulation,

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