



## The Representation of Human Inner Conflict in the Topeng Tarung Dance

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the background behind the creation of a dance work that represents the internal conflict of human beings, expressed through choreographic structure, makeup, costume, and musical accompaniment. The research adopts a qualitative paradigm with a descriptive method, using an ethnocoreological approach to analyze both the text and context of Tarung Mask Dance. Data collection methods include observation, interviews, and documentation studies, analyzed using triangulation techniques. The findings reveal that the Tarung Mask Dance is a dance creation rooted in Sundanese traditional patterns. The dance is inspired by the theme of "inner conflict" within the human self, depicting the human struggle against their own nature. The choreography consists of 25 movement variations, predominantly symbolic or meaningful gestures that reflect the inner conflict between two opposing human traits. The makeup used is corrective makeup, which emphasizes facial contours. The costume design is based on the traditional Topeng Priangan attire, preserving the noble elements with glamorous colors while maintaining an elegant appearance. The musical accompaniment uses traditional West Javanese external music, specifically a gamelan set tuned in the pelog scale. Each aspect of the performance illustrates how the conceptual idea of human inner conflict is depicted both textually and contextually.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Art is an element of culture that is inseparable from human life, art is also a reflection of the soul of society (Badaruddin and Masunah 2019; Ash 2021; Alfarez and Putra 2022). The unitary state of the Republic of Indonesia is one of the many countries that has various ethnic groups, and each ethnic group has a regional culture that contains noble cultural values (Taryana, Budiman, and Karyati 2022; Kurniati et al. 2023). This cultural diversity has given birth to various kinds of arts, including performing arts (dance, music, karawitan, puppetry, pencak silat and theater). These arts complement each other and are related to each other, and are included in performing arts (Badaruddin et al. 2024; Sena et al. 2024). One of the dance genres that has developed quite rapidly in West Java is the New Creation Dance. The creation stage of the New Creation Dance can be proven by the characteristics given by the choreographer (Sunaryo 2020; Putri, Nugraheni, and Masunah 2023; Ismunandar 2022).

Muhamad Aim Salim or often called Aim Salim is a leading dance artist in West Java who is productive and creative in creating dance works. Since 1950 Aim Salim along with Kodir Ilyas and Mustamil Purawinata led the Setialuyu Dance Center in Bandung. Then the Setialuyu Dance Center was continued until now by Aim Salim because of the death of Kodir Ilyas and Mustamil. The Topeng Tarung Dance is one of Muhammad Aim Salim's works which was created in 1989 (Rosilawati and Mulyani 2021; Rosilawati and Suherti 2022). The idea of this dance story is inspired by human personality and nature. This dance tells about "Human Inner Conflict", which depicts the events of human life who are at war with their inner self.

Tari Topeng Tarung is one of Muhammad Aim Salim's works that has never been studied in the research process. Previous research that has been done by Rachmawati et al (2022) with the main discussion of the Application of Benjang Mask Dance Teaching Materials for Students at the Sakata Studio in Bandung City, Akanfani et al (2022) with the main discussion of the Role of Women in Preserving the Art of Cirebon Mask Dance in the Slangit Style. However, the research carried out by the researcher shows new research with different main problems.

Narawati (2003) explains ethnochoreology is the science that analyzes the text and context of dance. Textual analysis includes movement, clothing, and makeup, while contextual analysis includes history, function (Badaruddin 2022; Alfarez and Putra 2022; Tati Narawati 2020). The ethnochoreology approach is useful for examining an ethnic dance with the aim of knowing the characteristics of the dance. Textually, the Topeng Tarung dance is analyzed through the form of choreography, make-up, costumes, and music. While contextually, the Topeng Tarung dance is analyzed through the background of its creation. According to Hawkins in Sunrise (2020) Choreography is generally defined as the process of creating a dance work through the stages of exploration, improvisation, and forming of choreography. In line with the opinion Hadi (2018) Choreography is defined as the planning process, then the selection process, and the process of forming dance movements with a specific purpose.

According to Suwandi in [Maysarah, et al. \(2016\)](#) Makeup is the process of beautifying the natural or original face to suit the role. According to [The Caturwati \(1994\)](#) In my opinion, the function of make-up is to paint, sharpen and emphasize facial lines, and vice versa, it can hide and remove facial lines by thinning, enlarging or covering them ([Mohamad Azman, Badaruddin, and Suariyoko 2023; Paranti, Jazuli, and Firdaus \(2021\)](#)). In giving color and polishing the face, it is necessary to use cosmetic tools including foundation, contour, powder, eyeshadow, eyebrow pencil, eyeliner, lipstick. According to [Jazuli \(1994\)](#) Costume design can support dance performances, can increase the appeal and charm of the audience. This dance costume has three roles: (1) to protect the body, (2) to make and look attractive, and (3) to express the character that will be displayed and emphasize the expression of movement. In line with the opinion [Maryono \(2015\)](#) According to him, the shape and color of the dancer's clothing have meaning as an aesthetic expression, role identity, and role characteristics. The shape and color of the dancer's clothing also have symbolic meaning. According to [The Soedarsono \(1975\)](#) Music in dancing is not just an accompaniment, but a companion that we should not leave behind when we dance. Agree with Jazuli in [Istiqomah and Lanjari \(2017\)](#) music and dance are elements that are difficult to separate. Both come from the same origin, namely motivation.

The Tarung Mask Dance has its own characteristics, the uniqueness of this dance is performed by two dancers with different mask colors. There are two masks used, namely the red mask and the white mask, the red mask used is the Kelana mask and the white mask used is the Panji mask. The red mask has a personality that symbolizes the evil and evil of humans, while the white mask has a personality that symbolizes the truth in humans. The expression of these characters is packaged into a dance that is visualized through 25 types of movements that already exist and are certain. The general purpose of this study is as a form of preservation of the Priangan Mask Dance and to increase the treasury of Sundanese dances so that it can provide an attraction for artists, students and the general public. The specific purpose of this study is to describe and identify the background of the creation, choreography structure, make-up, costumes and musical accompaniment of the Tarung Mask Dance.

## 2. METHODS

This study uses a qualitative paradigm, namely a descriptive analysis approach, which describes the data collected in general. According to [Moleong \(2010\)](#) Qualitative research aims to understand the phenomenon as a whole by describing it using the words and language of the research participants. In this study, ethnochoreology studies were used to examine the text and context of the Topeng Tarung dance that the researcher wanted to achieve ([Amirulloh et al. 2024; Putri, Nugraheni, and Munsan 2023](#)). Textual analysis includes movement, clothing, and make-up, while contextual analysis includes History. Participants or informants involved in this study were the head of the Setialuyu Dance Center in Bandung City as well as the choreographer of the Topeng Tarung dance with the aim of obtaining information and being able to describe the background of the creation and structure of the Topeng Tarung Dance choreography, then the dancers of the Topeng

Tarung Dance with the aim of being make-up models, and the costumes of the Topeng Tarung Dance in the research documentation. This research was conducted at the Setialuyu Dance Center in Bandung City located at the Rumentang Siang Building, Jl.

Data collection in this study through two methods, namely primary sources include observation, namely by observing the mask fighting dance practice process, seeing the make-up used, and listening to music in the Mask Fighting Dance, interviews, namely by asking questions about the background of its creation, choreography structure, and music used with the head of the Setiluyu Dance Center in Bandung City as well as the choreographer of the Mask Fighting Dance, then regarding make-up, fashion by asking questions to the dancers of the Mask Fighting Dance, and documentation, namely by taking pictures of supporting data about the structure of the choreography, make-up and fashion. While secondary sources include searching for information relevant to the research subject, namely by Literature study by collecting data through books, journals with similar topics.

This researcher uses three stages in the data analysis process, namely data reduction is used to focus on important things as needed, data presentation is done after the reduction stage is carried out, then arranged into a narrative text to be presented and conclusions are drawn to answer questions that have been formulated in the problem formulation. Furthermore, this study uses Triangulation to test the credibility of research data. According to [Wijaya, \(2018\)](#) "Filtering data from various sources at different times and methods is the meaning of data triangulation".

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1 The idea behind the creation of the Topeng Tarung Dance

The Topeng Tarung Dance is a dance that is characteristic of the Setialuyu Dance Center which is in the New Creation genre, but its movements still have the rules of Traditional Dance. According to the interview results, Aim Salim only changed the form of the presentation and the movements he developed were inseparable from the classical dance movement pattern and still used classical dance music accompaniment. The Topeng Tarung Dance is a dance work that tells the story of "Inner Conflict Within Humans" which depicts the events of human life in fighting themselves. According to the interview results with Aim Salim as stated "Ceuk in Sundanese mah "sabil" means an inner conflict between us and ourselves. So in our hearts we want to remain in one truth but sometimes external influences appear" (Aim Salim, Interview May 5, 2024). So the depiction of this mask dance comes from someone who is fighting himself with what happened or destiny.

The uniqueness of the Topeng Tarung Dance, in terms of the visible image, this Topeng Tarung dance is performed by two dancers. Initially, this Topeng Tarung dance was depicted by one person but was divided into two people wearing masks with different colors. As explained by Aim Salim "About this, it is also distinguished by the color of the mask, one is white and the other is red. Well, that is a depiction of the essence of the human self, the white color depicts truth and the red one depicts lust" (Aim Salim, Interview May 5, 2024). The two masks used are the White Mask using the Panji mask as the embodiment of human truth and the Red Mask using the Kelana mask as the

embodiment of evil or evil. According to Aim Salim, the Topeng Tarung Dance should be distinguished, namely with male dancers playing the red mask and female dancers playing the white mask, because according to him the depiction of their characters will be visible. Based on the analysis, the red color depicts bravery, the turmoil of lust is danced by male dancers and the white color depicts gentleness, sometimes danced by female dancers depicting truth. But in this case, Aim Salim does not require the dancers to be of different sexes, it is also permissible to have the same sex, either male dancers with male dancers or female dancers with female dancers.

### 3.2 Choreography Structure of the Mask Fighting Dance

Specifically, the Topeng Tarung Dance has 25 types of movements that already exist and are definite, the following are the movements that can be mentioned, namely the pasang sirig mungkur movement, gedig galayar movement, calik sembahan movement, adeg-adeg Capangan 1 movement, selut slamming hand movement, adeg-adeg Capangan 2 movement, jangkung ilo sontengan movement, since laras movement, ulin rawis movement, gedig galayar movement, sirig mungkur movement, pasang kedok movement, pakbang nyawang movement, gedut movement, perang sampur movement, mincid ulin soder movement, mincid sembada movement, nyabut keris movement, ngalaga ulin keris movement, sirig movement, perang keris/perang jaten movement, Awor or saluluh movement, calik sembahan movement, sirig movement and bebek loyor movement. From the explanation above, it can be seen in detail 25 types of movements of the Topeng Tarung Dance with the data presented being data obtained from the results of observations, interviews, and documentation studies. The variety of movements is divided into three categories of movement, namely Pure Movement (pure movement), Locomotion (movement of moving places) and Gesture (meaningful movement). From the variety of movements, the researcher will then examine the three categories in the following table.

**Table 1.** Category of Fighting Mask Dance Movement

No	Motion Category	Movement Name
1	Pure Movement (Pure Motion)	1. Adeg-Adeg Capangan 1 2. Selut BantingTangan 3. Adeg-AdegCapangan 2 4. Jangkung IloSontengan 5. Gedut 6. Mincid Ulin Soder Mincid Sembada
2	Gesture (Meaningful Movement)	1. Adeg-adeg pasangsirig mungkur 2. Calik Sembahan 3. Sesar Ulin Rawis 4. Pasang Kedok 5. Pakbang Nyawang 6. Perang Sampur/Soder 7. Nyabut Keris 8. Ngalaga Ulin Keris

		9. <i>Perang Keris</i>
		10. <i>Awor atau Saluluh Calik Sembahan</i>
3	<i>Locomotion</i> (Movement to Change Place)	1. <i>Sirig Mungkur</i>
		2. <i>Gedig Galayar</i>
		3. <i>Sirig Mungkur</i>
		4. <i>Sejak Laras</i>
		5. <i>Sirig</i>
		6. <i>Sirig akhir</i>
		7. <i>Bebek Loyor</i>



From the table above, it can be seen that the categorization of movements in the Topeng Tarung Dance based on ethnochoreological studies, namely that there are 7 types of movements that are included in the Pure Movement category, namely: Adeg-Adeg Capangan 1 Movement, Selut Banting Tangan Movement, Adeg-Adeg Capangan 2 Movement, Jangkung Ilo Sontengan Movement, Gedut Movement, Mincid Ulin Soder Movement and Mincid Sembada Movement. Then there are 11 types of movements that are included in the Gesture movement category (Meaningful Movement/Meaningful Movement), namely: Adeg-adeg pasang sirig mungkur Movement, Calik Sembahan Awal Movement, Seser Ulin Rawis Movement, Pasang Kedok Movement, Pakbang Nyawang Movement, Perang Sampur/Soder Movement, Nyabut Keris Movement, Ngalaga Ulin Keris Movement, Perang Keris Movement, Awor or Saluluh Movement, Calik Sembahan Akhir Movement. Next, there are 7 types of movements that are included in the category of Locomotion (Movement Movement/Movement to Change Place), namely: Sirig Mungkur Movement, Since Laras Movement, Gedig Galayar Movement, Sirig Mungkur Movement, Sirik Movement, Sirik Akhir Movement, and Bebek Loyor Movement.

### 3.3 Makeup and Costume for the Masked Fighting Dance

Makeup or Make Up is the most important component in a performance. In addition to being an added aesthetic value, makeup also functions to cover up facial flaws to strengthen its role in a performance. The makeup used in the Topeng Tarung Dance is corrective makeup, which is makeup that emphasizes lines on the face and does not form character so it is often called beautiful makeup. The makeup of the Topeng Tarung dance does not form character because the character in the mask dance is shown in the expression of the mask itself, which can be expressed in the color of the mask, the shape of the mask, the attitude and movements in dancing. So the corrective makeup used uses basic colors that can emphasize the face only, namely gold and brown. Cosmetics used in the Topeng Tarung dance include: (foundation) base powder, contour, loose powder, pencil, eyeshadow, eyeliner, blush on, mascara and lipstick with a slightly dark red color. For more details, the makeup used in the Topeng Tarung dance will be shown in the picture below.





**Figure 1.**Masked Fighting Dance Makeup

Makeup in the Topeng Tarung Dance actually does not have a fixed rule in terms of the use of cosmetics or colors. The tools and selection of cosmetic colors can be adjusted, the most important thing is that the dancer's face looks beautiful and not pale when dancing.

Dance costumes are generally often associated with traditional costumes because they have different characteristics in each region. However, not all traditional clothes can be worn for dancing. Because dance costumes have special clothes that are adjusted to the content and theme of the dance. Dance costumes are one of the very important supporting elements. In addition to functioning as a body cover, dance costumes provide beauty and as an identity for the dance. The costumes used in the Topeng Tarung dance have certain rules that are guided by the rules of Priangan mask dance clothes in general do not change their original clothes. The clothes worn include sobrah / tekes, kutung clothes, sontog pants, sinjang or sisi dodot with a slope ageung pattern, kace or chest cover, mongkrong, kewer, belt, soder or sampur, mask, keris, shoulder lightning, ules / mask cover, wristbands, anklets. Furthermore, the Topeng Tarung dance costume can be seen in the picture below



**Figure 2.**Costume Design for the Fighting Mask Dance

It can be seen from the picture above that in terms of the costumes or clothing of the two dancers, the male and female clothing do not differ. Both still use standard clothing that is based on the mask clothing in Priangan.

In the Topeng Tarung dance, external musical accompaniment is used by using a set of pelog-tuned gamelan. Gamelan is a set of West Javanese traditional musical

instruments that have certain characteristics, especially in the waditra kendang in the musical accompaniment of the Topeng Tarung Dance, which is the dominant sound so that the function of the sinden is not prioritized. With the help of music, dancers can express and feel every movement to movement with the intention that the theme in the dance can be conveyed. The following is the musical intonation in the Topeng Tarung dance, the basic beat of which is still based on the accompaniment of Sundanese classical music.

**Tari Topeng Tarung**  
Transkriptor : Satrio Mandala Putra

**Pangkat :**

NG

. 4 4 4 4 3 2 1 1 1 5 2 3 ④

NG

| 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 ④ |

**Pangjadi :**

NG

. 2 2 2 2 2 3 4 5 5 3 5 4 3 1 3 ②

NG

| 1 | ② | 1 | 4 |


NG

| 1 | 4 | 1 | ② |

**Lagu bendrong irama kering :**

NG

| 2 | 4 | 4 | ② |



**Figure 3.** Musical Accompaniment Notation and Music Recording

In its creation, in addition to being a choreographer, Aim Salim is also the arranger of the Topeng Tarung dance music accompaniment. The basic musical accompaniment of the Topeng Tarung Dance is still based on the accompaniment of classical Sundanese dance music, but what distinguishes the musical accompaniment of the Topeng Tarung Dance during naekeun 2 is the keris war cymbals. The musical instruments used in the Topeng Tarung dance performance include: Kendang, Saron, Panerus, Peking, Rincik, Kenong, Bonang, Rebab, Goong and Kecrek. The gending at the beginning uses the gurudugan gending, to the bendrong rhythm kering song, down the Rumiang song then naekeun to the bendrong kering (the war cymbals until the end).

### 3.4 Discussion

The Topeng Tarung Dance at the Setialuyu Dance Center in Bandung City is a new creative dance that still maintains the values of traditional dance traditions, which was created in 1989. This Topeng Tarung Dance is based on the Topeng dance in Priangan, but there are developments that make this dance distinctive. The mask used in the Topeng Tarung dance is a mandatory thing for the dancers to wear. In the Topeng Tarung dance,



two different mask colors are used, which have different characters. The two masks used are the White Mask using the Panji mask as the embodiment of human truth and the Red Mask using the Kelana mask as the embodiment of evil or crime. This is in accordance with the expression [The Untamed \(2003\)](#) that the "Topeng" dance is a term that has two meanings: "mask performance" and "mask dancer". This understanding applies throughout Java, Bali, and Madura, not only in Cirebon". With this theory, it can be concluded that the mask is a face covering that must be used in the mask fighting dance, as well as an important supporting element in the mask fighting dance performance.

The Topeng Tarung Dance has a choreography structure that is almost the same as the Topeng Dance in Priangan in general. Visually, the Topeng Tarung Dance uses a standard mask, but was developed by Aim Salim as the creator of the choreography with the aim of attracting students. This is in accordance with the choreography theory according to [Hadi \(2014\)](#) Choreography is defined as the planning process, then the selection process, and the process of forming dance movements with a specific purpose. The Topeng Tarung Dance has 25 types of movements that are divided into three parts of movement in its choreography structure consisting of 7 types of movements that are included in the Pure Movement category, 11 types of movements that are included in the Gesture category (Meaningful/meaningful), 7 types of movements that are included in the Locomotion category (Moving from Place to Place). This is in accordance with the theory of ethnochoreology studies, movement is divided into four in ethnochoreology studies, namely: Locomotion (movement to move from place), Pure Movement (pure movement), Gesture (meaningful movement) and Button Signal (movement to enhance expression) ([Narawati, 2013](#)).

From this theory, it can be seen that the choreographic structure of the Topeng Tarung Dance includes three of the four categories mentioned in the theory, namely locomotion (movement from place to place), pure movement (pure movement), and gesture (meaningful movement). The Topeng Tarung Dance uses more gesture movements (meaningful/meaningful) according to [Sunrise \(2020\)](#) which says that meaningful movement does not only imitate real movement, but this movement is abstract. Dance is actually the result of forming a form into something valuable and beautiful. In the masked fighting dance, make-up is needed for a performance and has several important aspects that function as a strengthener of the dancer's facial expression and cover up the shortcomings of the facial lines by using cosmetic materials and tools.

This is in accordance with the theory of make-up according to [The Caturwati \(1994\)](#) argues that the function of makeup is to paint, sharpen and emphasize facial lines, and vice versa, can hide and eliminate facial lines by thinning, enlarging or covering them. In giving color and polishing the face, it is necessary to use cosmetics including foundation, contour, powder, eyeshadow, eyebrow pencil, eyeliner, lipstick. The makeup used in the Topeng Tarung dance uses Straight Make up or commonly called Corrective Make up, which does not show the character of the character. Because the character in this dance is shown in the color of the shape of the mask face itself and the attitude of the dance

movements (Amirulloh et al. 2024; Mohammad Azman, Badaruddin, and Suhariyoko 2023; Nurdin 2019).

In the masked fighting dance performance, attention is also paid to the costumes used. The dance costumes function as the identity of the dance and can beautify a dancer to attract the audience on stage. This is in accordance with the opinion Jazuli (1994) Costume design can support dance performances, can increase the appeal and charm of the audience. This dance costume has three roles: (1) to protect the body, (2) to make and look attractive, and (3) to express the character to be displayed and emphasize the expression of movement. The costume design for the Topeng Tarung Dance that is used has certain rules that are based on the Priangan Mask clothing rules.

The Topeng Tarung Dance combines primary colors (red) with gold accents. Red depicts bravery and gold symbolizes luxury. The costumes worn in the Topeng Tarung Dance include a kutung shirt, sontog pants, sinjang or sisi dodot with a slope ageung pattern, kace or chest cover, mongkrong, kewer, belt, soder or sampur, mask, keris, ules/mask cover, sobrah/tekes, shoulder lightning, wristbands, anklets.

In dance performances, especially the Tarung Mask Dance, musical accompaniment is something that cannot be left out, especially in dance performances. This is in accordance with music theory according to Soedarsono (1986) Music in dancing is not just an accompaniment, but a companion that we should not leave behind when we dance. The basic musical accompaniment of the Topeng Tarung Dance is still based on the accompaniment of classical Sundanese dance music (Rosilawati 2020; Arum 2014). The tempo of the musical accompaniment in the Topeng Tarung Dance tends to be at a moderate tempo, but in certain movements there is a fast tempo, this is adjusted to the movements and patterns of the scene depiction to support the delivery of the story in this dance.

#### 4 CONCLUSION

The Topeng Tarung Dance tells about "Inner Conflict Within Humans" as a depiction of the manifestation of human life events in fighting themselves. The Topeng Tarung Dance was developed into two main dancers who use two different mask colors and have two different characters. The white mask as a symbol of truth within humans and the red mask as a symbol of evil or wickedness within humans. There are 25 types of movements divided into three parts, namely 7 types of Pure Movement movements, 11 types of Gesture movements (Meaningful Movements/Meaningful Movements), and 7 types of Locomotion movements (Moving Places). Gesture movements (Meaningful/Meaningful) in this dance are more dominant because in the movements of the Topeng Tarung Dance, it emphasizes the form of imitation movements as a depiction of inner conflict. The make-up used in the Topeng Tarung dance uses Straight Make-up or commonly called Corrective Make-up. The dress code for the Topeng Tarung Dance is based on the Priangan Mask clothing standards, including kutung clothes, sontog pants, sinjang or sisi dodot with a slope ageung pattern, kc or chest cover, mongkrong, kewer, belt, soder or sampur, mask, keris, ules/mask cover, sobrah/tekes, shoulder lightning, wristbands, anklets. The musical

accompaniment of the Topeng Tarung Dance uses typical Javanese external music. West, namely pelog-tuned gamelan. The music in the beginning uses gurudugan music, to the dry rhythm bendrong song, down to the Rumiang song then back to the dry bendrong (war fighting disc until the end).

## 5 AUTHORES'NOTE

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. Authors confirmed that the paper was free of plagiarism.

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