Back to Ritual: Virtual Indonesian Dance Performance on Social Media During Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract: The Coronavirus Disease 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic that hit Indonesia in early 2020 has become an important history in the life of dance in Indonesia. Restrictions on dance performance activities have become a major challenge for dance artists. Creative choreographers began exploring virtual spaces to find solutions so that they could continue to work. Dance performances have emerged on social media since March 2020. From the works that emerged at the beginning of the Covid-19 period, the dance function for ritual needs was strengthened. The purpose of this research is to examine how the Covid-19 event can restore the function of dance from performing arts and entertainment to rituals, how the pandemic influences the meaning of the dance cycle, and how the virtualization of dance is related to changes in the function and cycle of dance in Indonesia. This study uses a historical method with stages of heuristics, criticism, interpretation, and historiography. Heuristics is carried out by tracking dance works, especially those of famous Indonesian choreographers that are uploaded on social media, literature studies, and interviews. The data are selected, its validity and credibility are criticized, and then interpreted and ended with historiography, namely, writing the research results. The results of this study show that the Covid-19 pandemic has returned the cycle of dance functions from entertainment and performance to rituals. The pandemic has given important meaning to the virtualization of dance and the dance cycle. This is in line with Ibn Kaldun's cycle theory, which views social change as a repetitive, cyclical process. Likewise, Sorokin's opinion (2015) states that sociocultural history is a varied circle.

Keywords: Social Media, Ritual Dance, Dance Virtualization, COVID-19.

INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic that hit Indonesia in early 2020 had a significant impact on the dance community, and it can even be said that the dance world had lost its stage space. Stage spaces spread across various places had to be abandoned because of restrictions and even bans on outdoor activities. This is done for the sake of safety, health, and security. The Indonesian Government's policy of implementing social distancing or physical distancing as a strategy (Vrugt, Bickmann, and Wittkowski, 2020) in overcoming the spread of Covid-19 has disrupted the stability of art workers (Hidayat, *et al*., 2020). Dance performance spaces have been abandoned. This was quite a shock to the artists because all dance workers lost a place to express their work in front of an audience, where there is usually emotional contact between the audience and the performers on stage.

The loss of stage space is a major obstacle for artists, even to the point that performers lost income because various dance performance projects were canceled. When everyone is at home, the mainstay of carrying out activities is to use the Internet. The internet and social media are the most sought after and utilized media in carrying out various activities, including dance activities. Dance activities have shifted to virtual spaces. For virtual dance work, special skills are required to carry them out. The challenge is that dance artists must be able to adapt to the existing media. In this adaptation effort, dance artists need knowledge and skills to utilize the virtual space as a place to present dance works. Interestingly, dance works at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic in virtual spaces have restored the function of dance, which generally functions as entertainment, and performances have returned to having a ritual function.

Other researchers have found that the Covid-19 pandemic that occurred in 2020 has changed many habits in the dance world. With speed and adaptability, the dance world began to exist again, virtually carrying out its artistic activities. Many virtual dance events have been held which have succeeded in showing their existence on various social media platforms. The event is not only to fulfill artistic needs but also as a joint synergy to recover from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. All the elements of society involved in the dance world work together to create a virtual space. Starting from dance competitions, discussions, and performances. Government support is also present by providing programs that are held and cooperation with the organizers, to support the existence of dance in the midst of the pandemic situation (Saputri, *et al*., 2021: 90-99).

Nungki Kusumastuti discusses the issue of the November 2020 International Dance Festival during COVID-19 which is still held virtually. Although there are many challenges that must be faced because the participants have to make recordings that will later be virtually broadcast, it

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turns out that there is something unexpected. With the festival being virtually held, there are positive impacts, especially on the reach of a much larger audience. The opening of the IDF alone was watched by more than 39 thousand spectators, this has never happened when the IDF was held directly. The presence of a virtual IDF has apparently invited many spectators because there are no boundaries between space and time. During the COVID-19 period, various activities, especially those related to performances and activities related to dance, such as dance courses, seminars, and competitions, were carried out virtually. Virtual dance has become a trend during the COVID-19 pandemic. Virtual dance training has been conducted in several countries. The results are also shown together from different places, even far away. However, the virtualization of dance performances as a unique and interesting phenomenon has not been widely discussed in scientific studies. Therefore, further studies are required.

The body in virtual space becomes an important part of expressing sadness, confusion, resignation at that time, and hopes for God Almighty so that humans are given strength and patience in facing the COVID-19 pandemic. We hope that this pandemic will soon disappear. The birth of the first works during the COVID era such as Mantra Tubuh: Ritual in Distance by Riyanto and Munajat Tubuh from many Indonesian dancers and choreographers initiated by Alfiyanto. The body is used as an expression of prayer, which consciously or unconsciously has brought back the function of ritual dance, as in the beginning of the presence of dance in this world.

This event is an important part of the journey of dance history in Indonesia because a cycle occurred that returned the function of dance from entertainment and performance to rituals. However, there are some problems that need to be discussed. (1) What was the form of the virtual dance performance at the beginning of the Covid-19 event in Indonesia?(2) How can the COVID-19 event return the function of dance from entertainment and performance art to a ritual function? How does the pandemic affect the meaning of dance cycles? To find the answer to this problem, the concept of Sorokin's social change theory is used, which states that history is a swing between sociocultural suprasystems. Kaldun's cycle theory views social change as a repetitive and cyclical process (Kaldun, 2014).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research uses cycle theory to examine the virtual dance performance event at the beginning of the COVID-19 era, which was able to restore the function of dance from entertainment and performance back to rituals. This event cannot be separated from social changes in society. Changes in society in the view of adherents of cycle theory generally state that an increase or decrease in life is only one phase of a circle that eventually reverses itself for the next transition. In addition, adherents of cycle theory also believe that the process of social change does not shift to a perfect final stage, but the cycle rotates back to the initial stage for the next transition. Pitirim A. Sorokin (1889-1969) a Russian sociologist has seen various circles in the historical process. He wrote extensively about social mobility, sociological theory, and sociocultural changes. According to him, sociocultural history is a circle that varies between the three supersystems, namely ideational culture, sensory culture (idealistic), and mixed culture. The three supersystems are cultures that reflect a slightly homogeneous culture. Sorokin's thinking shows that these changes are cyclical. Sorokin offers an imaginative theory of social change, supported by a large amount of data. Sorokin also states that history is a swing between sociocultural suprasystems. In addition, Sorokin (2015) showed the usefulness of history in the study of social change. Likewise, this study uses the historical method by borrowing the theory of social change to reveal an event that had a major impact on dance life in Indonesia at the beginning of the COVID-19 era. In line with Sorokin's cycle theory, another cycle theorist, Ibn Kaldun, also stated that social change is a repetitive and cyclical process (Kaldun, 2014). Ibn Kaldun focused on the cycle of conquest in Arab civilization. While Toynbee sees the cycle theory in the development and decline of world civilization, Pitirim Sorokin focuses more on the back-and-forth movement of sociocultural patterns in human history. These cycle theorists examine and identify changes at different levels and places, but all of these changes are used to show their focus on the cyclical changes of the entire civilization (Ranjabar, 2015). The cycle theory expressed by experts can be used to observe the changes that have occurred in the journey of dance life in Indonesia, especially those that occurred at the beginning of the COVID-19 period. The shift in performance media from live to virtual has restored the function of entertainment and performance dance to its ritual function. The role of rituals in dance is an

important part of this world. The presence of dance is due to the need for safety, welfare, peace, etc., which are carried out by performing rituals in which there are dances.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses historical methods. Historical methods lead someone not to draw conclusions before conducting careful research. Ignoring the method results in erroneous statements (Madjid & Wahyudhi, 2014:80). Diachronic thinking is necessary, namely, the arrangement of events chronologically, according to the actual sequence of events. How to describe the COVID-19 pandemic event that can restore the function of dance from entertainment and performances presented in virtual spaces back to the ritual function. This can be seen from data searches on social media uploaded by leading choreographers in Indonesia. In addition, a synchronic way of thinking is also needed to describe the various social aspects of the chronology that occurred during the Covid-19 era. History is based on human life experience.

The experience is recorded in documents, and from these facts are found. Furthermore, these facts are interpreted so that they become historical stories (Madjid & Wahyudhi, 2014:75). According to Louis Gottschalk (1975:32), the historical method critically examines and analyzes the records and relics of the past. The imaginative reconstruction of the past based on the data obtained through this process is called historiography. The stages of the historical method include heuristics, criticism, interpretation, and historiography. The aim is to try to reconstruct events in the past (Garraghan, 1946: 33-69; Gottschalk, 1975: 17-19; Sjamsuddin, 2007: 85-87; Herlina, 2008: 15-60). The heuristic stage is carried out by searching for written sources, popular writings in print or online media, national and international journal articles, as well as books and research results. In addition, tracking is performed using audiovisual sources, including photos, audio, and videos uploaded to various social media. Among these are Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube channels from Didik Nini Thowok, Eko Pece, Rianto, and Alfiyanto Wajiwa. In addition, interviews were conducted with actors who created work during the pandemic, both directly and indirectly. The sources were chosen because they are Indonesian choreographers who are popular in Indonesia and some have gone global. In addition, they are prominent

choreographers both in Indonesia and abroad. An example is Eko Supriyanto (Forter. id, 2022). Didik Nini Thowok, whose real name is Didik Hadiprayitno (CNNIndonesia 2020). Riyanto Lengger Lanang and Alfiyanto Wajiwa.

The second stage involved conducting source criticism. Sources are not always credible and accountable; therefore, source criticism is required. Being a historical researcher must have a distrustful attitude towards the sources obtained to check their authenticity and credibility. Researchers are in line with the truth (truth), where they must be able to distinguish between what is true and what is false (Suhartono, 2014:35); criticism is done in two ways: internal criticism to see the content of the sources obtained and external criticism related to the outside of the content. Criticism is given to sort out the sources obtained so that they become facts by validating and also seeing the authenticity and credibility of video data, interview results, and written data obtained to further convince its truth. The level of curiosity continues to be built when criticism is carried out by asking continuous questions until curiosity is answered and confidence in the facts is gained.

The third stage was interpretation. At this stage, the author interprets chronology based on historical evidence. "Historical facts that have been successfully collected must be compiled because there are not many stories; these facts are compiled and combined with each other to form a story of historical events' (Madjid, 2014:225). Dance videos uploaded on various social media, especially Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube channels, are read using Ibn Kaldun's cycle theory as a form of social change in society that, at any time, an event will repeat itself. Change and social interaction are symptoms of change from a certain social condition to another social condition, as Ibn Kaldun's cycle theory explains, that "there are a number of transitional stages but the transition is not the end of the perfect change process, but the transition process will return to the original stage to experience transition again (Kaldun in Kandiri, 2014).

The fourth stage is historiography, namely, writing down all research results after going through the previous three stages. The facts that are believed to have occurred are arranged and written into a story by connecting the facts and what has become a reality of the event (Ali, 2005:37). The stages of

historiography pour into writing diachronically and synchronically until it becomes a narrated event.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Loss of Dance Performance Space

In mid-March 2020, human activities were restricted to outside the home, and the impact was greatly felt by artists. Performance programs that had been planned for 2022 must be canceled for safety and security. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on dance communities, and it can even be said that the dance world has lost its stage space. The characteristics of performing arts are identical to "stage space" whether in a closed building or closed theater with a proscenium stage model, an open building or open theater, in studios, or in the field, as well as other alternative spaces. However, in mid-March 2020, the stage spaces spread across various places that had been facilitated by the government, and the private sector had to be abandoned so that the stage space became deserted and died instantly. Not only did they lose their stage space but artists, especially dancers, also lost the income that had supported them before the pandemic.

The creative industry in the performing arts sector, which is growing and vibrant, has to experience a severe shock with the COVID-19 pandemic due to the loss of stage space. It was recorded that 40,081 artists had to swallow bitter pills due to the cancellation of performance events and festivals. Those in the epicenter areas of DKI Jakarta, West Java, East Java, Central Java, and Yogyakarta (Safriana 2020). Not only those areas felt it, but there were also those that were badly affected, namely, Bali and other areas throughout Indonesia. The loss of dance performance space has also had an impact on the tourism world, which is the mainstay of several areas, one of which is Bali. Dance performances that are routinely presented daily for the needs of tourists have killed the tourism industry. For example, the Kecak dance performance in Uluwatu, which could reap profits from the audience of approximately 1500 (one thousand five hundred people) in one performance with a ticket of IDR 150,000 (one hundred and fifty thousand rupiah), had to disappear because the stage space was lost due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The turnover of the creative industry in the performing arts sector has sharply decreased. Therefore, art workers, especially dancers, who rely only on dance to support their lives, experience severe economic pressure (Hidajat, *et al.*, 2020).

Dance Virtualization

Virtualization is a concept that allows computers to be divided into several environments simultaneously. These environments can be either interconnected or unconnected. An environment may or may not be aware that it is running in the virtual environment. This environment is commonly referred to as a virtual machine. The term virtualization has been used since the 1960s, which in its development used the terms virtual machine and virtual memory (Umar, 2013). Recently, the term virtualization, especially during COVID-19, has also been used to describe the need to use virtual space for various activities, including dance performances. The term virtualization during the COVID-19 pandemic has become increasingly popular, including one researcher and artist Marie Fol, who created a book as a guide to virtual dance where in making dance for virtual needs, a lot of knowledge needs to be mastered, especially in the field of film. This book provides basic instructions that in Europe, as a result of Covid-19, stakeholders in the field of dance are carrying out various handling with restrictions on various dance activities, including practice, learning, and performance. This is handled urgently by the government to support the arts community so that they can maintain the relationship between the audience and artists. To help artists deal with unprecedented events (Marie Fol 2021).

The use of this technology is important when artists must adapt to the situations and conditions during a pandemic. Rugh (2022) conducted a search for dance films and video dances that have historically occurred since 1980. Dances and technology are not new. Animation is used to explore and capture movements. It is a fact that technology has become a virtual medium in documenting and analyzing choreography. Even its historical roots have been in the 19th century, where the convergence between dance and technology is a creative tool. Video dance is a composite medium, and choreography is used as a frame editor. The demand for cinematography from living movement patterns motivates choreographers to reframe dance aesthetics. Like Rugh, the phenomenon of choreographer creativity in response to activity restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic occurred among dance choreographers in Indonesia in 2020-2021. Unlimited creativity is evidenced by the emergence of various virtual dance works that have unknowingly become spaces for returning

dance to its ritual function. The use of digital media has become familiar and provides an opportunity to explore creativity in order to continue creating choreography to realize virtual dance. Birringer (2004) placed virtual dance as a medium for mental health therapy. The implementation of restrictions on outdoor activities during the COVID-19 pandemic has become a way to create online dances that can help reduce the effects on mental health and feelings of social isolation experienced by individuals during the COVID-19 pandemic. The use of technology brings geographically diverse audiences closer together through online dancing platforms. Likewise, dancers have a creative opportunity to practice dance at home with their own scheduled training schedules by virtually adapting to dance formsy.

Dance and Social Media
The use of media to present dance has been known since the end of the 17th century and the beginning of the 18th century, especially contemporary dances. Screen-based dance is used in television shows and dance films. Films that contain dances, such as dance (Bench, 2010:184). For a long time, people have enjoyed dance performances through the screen media. The most famous are the Indian films. This is proof that the screen media platform has actually been used for art presentations, especially dance. This is proof of the development of the technology. Technological developments have continued to roll over time. During the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, technological developments occurred in the era of disruption or the era of industrial technology 4.0, where many human jobs were replaced by machines. The impact of this technological development includes the field of dance. In the midst of the changes in the era of industrial technology 4.0, the Covid-19 pandemic disaster came, which was so surprising that it limited various life activities, including the arts. They were even not allowed to leave the house. At that time, human activities used social media to communicate with each other, share, learn, seminars, meetings, and others using the Internet.

Social media that already existed attracted public attention because it provided a very diverse platform and could be used by the public for any need. The public easily chose which media to use in channeling and devoting attention to. In activities at home, much attention has been paid to social media. This gave rise to ideas for artists to adapt to situations and conditions. In other words,

utilizing social media to maintain the resilience of dance art and creative choreographers. Dance artists began to work on individual works made in their respective homes and then uploaded them to various social media platforms that were trending in society as a result of the advancement of sophisticated technology. Both on IG (Instagram), FB (Facebook), and YouTube channels. Social media has become a new place to consider in the presentation of dance works. The ease of communication through social media and the COVID-19 event also strengthened and expanded networks/networking. This is because of the mutual appreciation between dancers at the local, national, and international levels. In addition, the relationship between dance artists is increasingly harmonious, with mutual responses to individual works, even when increasing communication occurs with the merging of individual works into a series of joint presentations. This event also strengthens collaboration between dancers at home and abroad.

Form of Virtual Dance Presentation on Social Media at the Beginning of the Covid-19 Period
Since March 2020, professional and nonprofessional choreographers who care about the sustainability of the dance world have uploaded their work and dancing activities through social media. These choreographers and dancers changed their dance and work activities by exploring digital spaces and tools. The trend of using digital media has existed before, particularly with the development of dance films. In Indonesia, dance films began to be known in 2005, with the existence of dance film festivals. Although not routinely, the festival was held in 2012, 2016, 2017, and 2019 (Ardiyanto 2020:112). This means that the connection between dance and the media already exists, but only a handful of people understand the phenomenon. In general, dance filmmakers use sophisticated cameras, such as in shooting films. However, during the Covid period came, choreographers used only limited equipment in their homes. With the existence of simple cellphones and cameras, these dancers maximize their efforts to create works that are important for maintaining the existence of dance life. The striking difference between dance films previously made in Indonesia and dances made digitally during the pandemic is in form, purpose, and production. Dancers consciously upload their dance works on social media as proof that the artist's creativity is unlimited, regardless of the circumstances in which they continue to work. The

use of social media has also become a new space for presenting their work. The works of the first choreographers uploaded on social media, including Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube channels, are in the form of solo dances. Not a single choreographer presents a pair dance or even a rampak dance. This is a result of restrictions on interactions with other people or the physical distancing required by the government. The choreographer who was observed dance at the beginning of the pandemic was Eko Supriyanto (Eko Pece). Eko Supriyanto is a lecturer at ISI Surakarta who has become an international class dancer and choreographer. Even made hundreds on March 29, 2020, with the title "Happy at Home" which was uploaded on the Budaya Saya YouTube channel in the Masterclass Dance program. The form of dance is single. Eko dances show energetic movements with their uniqueness in processing the body from the head to the toe. What is interesting about Eko's presentation is that there is already an awareness of shooting techniques. The focus of each movement was highlighted according to its needs. There are even those who specifically move the muscles of the hands or the body. Likewise, facial expressions are sometimes focused upon by the camera. The eyes, gazes, glances, and sharp glances are recorded by the details of the camera that understand the intent and purpose of the dance. This means that Eko took his pictures into account, especially in terms of aesthetics.

Second, the Alfiyanto Wajiwa. The form presented by the solo dance is the same as that in the works of other choreographers. However, what makes it different from the others is the presentation of solo dances from different dancers in one presentation frame. The difference between one frame and another demonstrates its uniqueness. The title of the first dance launched was entitled "Munajat Tubuh, " which is a dance that contains the prayer for Corona to disappear from the face of the earth. The body and dance are again used for ritual needs, such as the initial function of the birth of dance on Earth. Each dancer expresses their hopes and prayers. The technique used by Alfiyanto collects the works of dancers that are arranged in one presentation. Their appearance on the media screen alternates, and sometimes simultaneously. In this work, the depth of movement generally appears for each dancer who expresses sadness and hope. As the purpose expressed, the dancers were asked to create their own dances in between 3-5 minutes and were given the same music. Alfiyanto edited this manuscript in a unique presentation.

The results of his work were uploaded to the Wajiwa Dance Center YouTube channel on April 13, 2020. Alfiyanto, who is familiar with using social media such as FB, IG, and YouTube, finally gave birth to the idea of a crowded presentation in one frame. Not satisfied with that work, Alfiyanto also created another work with another title, namely the title of the work "We Fight With Love." In the show there are dancers/choreographers Alfiyanto, Miroto, Maria Darmangsih, Nungki Kusumastuti, Eko Pece, Endang Caturwati, and others. Alfiyanto's idea of creating the work because Alfiyanto has used the three media since 2012. Therefore, adapting to the Covid-19 pandemic is not an obstacle to continuing work, even with different techniques. Alfiyanto's habit of packaging dance films was the capital to adapt during the corona period. Therefore, Alfiyanto's works related to prayer and corona are often made and uploaded on YouTube. Endang Caturwati, a choreographer and Professor of ISBI Bandung, did not miss out on creating virtual space on her YouTube channel with several works at the beginning of the Covid period. The first dances launched were the "Pari Sukma" and "Munajat Tubuh" dances.

The Pari Sukma dance was danced by a woman, and Munajat Tubuh was danced by Endang Caturwati. Endang's awareness in creating a work is quite serious. She arranged the stairs of her house on a stage equipped with lighting. The properties of the paper and cloth hanging on the walls and stairs gave a very aesthetic artistic impression. Endang revealed that at that time when the awareness was present to create. So, as much as possible, what was in her house became something that could complement her staircase stage. Endang also felt prayer through the body (Interview, Caturwati, 2022 in Bandung). Endang's efforts were sufficient and there were quite a lot of calculations even though the shooting was still only from one direction. Another choreographer is Riyanto, a Lengger Lanang maestro who lives in Tokyo. When the pandemic came, all his scheduled activities in various countries were canceled. So he stayed at home and started working on a solo dance entitled "Mantra Tubuh: Ritual in distance" which was broadcast on his YouTube channel on May 3, 2020. The dance was presented as a prayer for the community, health workers, and people who handle Covid-19 which was poured into his body movements. According to him, work was created as a means of healing the mind and feelings that were under pressure due to

the pandemic. He could also reflect on the body to be more down to earth to feel each other, respect, and pray for each other. This idea emerged in creating a dance as a body mantra (Riyanto, Interview, September 2, 2022, online). The movements expressed contain the characteristics of a dance that functions as a ritual with repetitive movements with more power inward; the position of the movement forms a circle; and the music is also monotonous so that it looks like he is possessed. He danced in his studio room with circular lighting. In addition to creating solo dances during the pandemic, Riyanto also conducted online dance training, especially in the Lengger Lanang dance course.

The famous maestro Didik Nini Thowok also became the object of observation. Didik admitted that the arrival of the pandemic did not complain but instead challenged him to remain creative. Since 2008, Didik Nini Thowok has used YouTube to upload and provide information about his performance activities and other artistic activities. It has been realized that YouTube is a place to publish his work so that the world community knows about his profession. The promotion of his YouTube channel was considered appropriate and important. Didik started using the YouTube channel in December 2007 and started uploading his artistic activities on January 1, 2008, by presenting the Topeng dance "Walang Kekek." As is typical, the dance shows changes in character using various masks/face coverings. The shooting technique was also well calculated. Using a camera with various techniques at various angles. Almost every activity document is immediately uploaded to the channel. To date, 202 videos have aired in October 2022 (Interview, Didik, August 2022 in Yogyakarta). As an entertainer and entrepreneur, Didik is aware that social media can be used to promote his skills to a wider audience. His characteristic comedy dances color all the videos uploaded on the YouTube channel so that this becomes an interesting watch. At that time, Didik had already created videos with scenario plans because his video shows were intended for promotion and publication. This means that Didik is very aware of technological advances that can be utilized to show his works to the public through social media. Not only the documentation of performances, but also travel events, dressing up, and so on are made into videos and then uploaded to the YouTube channel so that almost all activities related to art are documented on the YouTube channel. The benefits are very much felt

by Didik to the point that offers performance flows from various places in Indonesia. Thus, offers to be performed in various places both at home and abroad continue to flow. When the Covid-19 pandemic came to Indonesia, with all restrictions on activities rolled out by the government, Didik Nini Thowok was not too burdened, with all the equipment in his studio he began to be creative by making content according to his characteristics. He made his first work during the Covid pandemic, namely making a content "Lathi Challenge Version of Grandma Didik Nini Thowok" The content shows a dance using various mask characters that he has. The video was uploaded in early June 2020 when everyone was not allowed to leave the house. Therefore, Didik made a single presentation content in it showing masks, very varied facial makeup, combined with dance movements that were shot in a silhouette model that depicted a message of surrender and prayers, and even seemed to be in a strange place. This impression is strengthened by the use of smoke guns so that the atmosphere feels more transcendent. There seems to be energy that connects humans with God.

The Return of the Function of Ritual Dance at the Beginning of the COVID-19 Pandemic

The atmosphere presented by choreographers and dancers at the beginning of the pandemic was closely related to societal conditions at that time. People can only surrender and pray for the safety of themselves, their families, their communities, and their nation. Many people strongly believe that the corona virus is God's way of reminding humans to think and act correctly. This virus makes even strong people prostrate because it has stopped the world (Roy in Maqin *et al.*, 2020:57). This statement is evident in dance works at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, which generally have the theme of "prayer and hope," even though many pious prostrating movements are carried out and accompanied by narratives that appear with a request for forgiveness from God. Amid terrible despair, there is nothing worse than returning to normality (Roy in Maqin et al., 2020:57). Returning to normal is not easy, so new normal or new habits emerge as adaptations in art. This new habit is reflected in works that are present in the virtual spaces of social media. From the results of the study of dance works expressed at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, as previously discussed, many of the movements expressed by the dancers have the meaning of anxiety, resignation, and requests for forgiveness

of sins, and there are even movements that convey the message of warding off disease (laku tolak bala). Either by using properties such as brooms, scarves, incense, masks, and hanjuang leaves (believed to be able to ward off disease) as well as bows and arrows.

Judging from movement patterns in general, improvisational movements appear without prior arrangements. The dancers move according to their hearts, feelings, and bodies, which continue to bring the dancer to transcendental images as if moving subconsciously. Slow movements, jerking, repetition, and meaningful deep power. The music also does not have much variation; it is monotonous. This is accompanied by the beating of a drum or the accompaniment of the splashing water. The costumes used are simple without glamorous arrangements, like contemporary dance costumes that seem glamorous in live performances. Some male dancers were bare-chested. The female dancers wore everyday clothes. None of the supporting elements have pre-made concepts, and everything is natural. More importantly, the purpose of the dance presentation was to ask for protection, safety, security, and welfare. as depicted in primitive dances that prioritize goals for certain desires. (Anggareni: 2016). The characteristics in question or the identity of a dance that functions as a ritual. Ritual dance is an expression of the human soul, which is manifested through the medium of movement as a means of connecting the human person and supernatural powers through ritual ceremonies (Bisri, 2007). Since prehistoric times, it has been known that the birth of dance has been based on the needs of society. In primitive societies, dance is a means or medium to achieve a need. They strongly believe that what they want will be achieved. Ceremonial dance is a medium of offering and worship to a higher power with the intention of obtaining protection for the safety, happiness, and welfare of the community. Thus, ceremonial dance is also called a ritual dance. (Bisri, 2007). Lynne (1988) argues that the roots of ritual dance lie in the exploration of the body and brain, and their relevance to the socio-cultural tradition environment. In this context, ritual dance can also be a form of symbolic expression of resistance or rebellion against environmental situations. In this case, it was associated with the pandemic. The body in dance becomes the simplest human power that can reflect the development of action in the context of secular dance, or evolve in the context of ritual dance.

This happened during the presentation of dance works at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in the virtual space of social media. Choreographers and dancers believe that by dancing, they perform rituals by conveying prayers through their bodies by expressing requests and hopes. It turns out that the COVID-19 pandemic event was able to restore the function of dance, which was originally as entertainment and performance, back to the ritual function whose purpose was to ask for safety. Here, there is a cycle that makes history repeat itself but in different spaces, times, eras, and forms of innovation.

This event is in accordance with Ibn Kaldun's concept of social change using cycle theory, which views social change as a repetitive and cyclical process (Kaldun, 2014). Change and social interaction are symptoms of change from a certain social state to another social state, as Ibn Kaldun's cycle theory states that "there are a number of transitional stages but the transition is not the end of the perfect change process, but the transition process will return to the original stage to experience another transition (Kaldun in Kandiri, 2014). This is reinforced by Vilfredo Pareto's opinion that society in culture has stages of development in which a certain stage can be passed through repeatedly (Setiadi and Kolip, 2011). This is similar to the dance history journey in Indonesia. 2020 became the starting point for the shift in dance performance spaces, which were usually held in public spaces directly and immediately changed completely to virtual performances using digital social media platforms. At that time, virtual dance became positive through digital engineering. From this event, dancers and choreographers realized and interpreted the COVID-19 pandemic as the return of humans to God. Without God's help, humans have nothing. Cleanliness of the heart, sincerity in prayer, surrender of the body to the Almighty. This means that everything returned to Almighty. The function of dance as a ritual practice is felt by dancers, who can help calm their feelings of anxiety and fear. In addition to the COVID-19 event being able to restore the function of dance to ritual dance, the works of choreographers in the virtual space also apparently restore the function of dance as propaganda. In their work, narratives emerged that helped the government socialize the appeal to carry out activities from home and practice social distancing.

CONCLUSION

This research During the Covid-19 pandemic in the Indonesian archipelago, artists felt its extraordinary impact because all activities had to stop completely. However, several choreographers in Indonesia who were observed were able to adapt by creating dance works that were presented virtually on social media. Technological advances with the internet that provide virtual spaces in the form of digital platforms make it easier for dance creators to present their work even in very limited circumstances. Virtual space has become a new place to channel and present the works of choreographers who continue to be creative and innovative. Virtualization also occurred simultaneously on various social media, including Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. The works that emerged at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic were full of prayers expressed through the body. Sadness, anxiety, fear, and hopes were conveyed to God through the presentation of body mantras, body prayers, and others. The improvised movements of the dancers, although expressed with beautiful body movement quality, were simply revealed without prior planning or arrangement. The body movements flow according to the will of the senses with the depth of meaning in its purpose to ask for help from the Almighty. From here it can be read that the COVID-19 event was able to restore the function of dance as a means of ritual. Like the beginning of the birth of dance in this world, although in different spaces, times and forms.

In addition, the function of dance as propaganda that has not existed for a long time has re-emerged into a propaganda function because many narratives are conveyed in the work that help the government socialize the rules not to do activities outside the home and also to do social distancing. Another thing that has emerged is that the networking of dance artists is getting stronger. They respond to each other's work, even increasing communication occurs with the merging of individual works into a series of joint presentations that rely on shooting and editing skills. In the sense that there is new knowledge that must be mastered by artists, especially mastery of technology and film knowledge. Autodidactically, many dancers then seek out these sciences through the internet, until many dance film works emerge. At that time, changes in form occurred, especially the form of colossal dance performances disappeared immediately because there had to be social distancing so that what emerged were solo dances. The performance venues are not on stage but in living rooms, bedrooms, stairs, gardens, yards, studios, forests, and so on. Over time, this condition gave rise to new ideas by packaging dance performances to be interesting by utilizing technology, especially knowledge of shooting techniques where dance is made virtually. One thing that is missing from virtual dance presentations is the loss of feeling.

During the Covid-19 pandemic in the Indonesian archipelago, artists felt its extraordinary impact because all activities had to be stopped completely. However, several observed choreographers in Indonesia were able to adapt by creating dance works that were presented virtually on social media. Technological advances with the Internet that provide virtual spaces in the form of digital platforms make it easier for dance creators to present their work, even in very limited circumstances. Virtual space has become a new place to channel and present the works of choreographers, who continue to be creative and innovative. Virtualization has also occurred simultaneously on various social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. The work that emerged at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic was full of prayers expressed throughout the body. Sadness, anxiety, fear, and hope were conveyed to God through the presentation of body mantras, body prayers, and others. The improvised movements of the dancers, although expressed with beautiful body movement quality, were revealed without prior planning or arrangement. The body movements flow according to the will of the senses with the depth of meaning in its purpose of asking for help from the Almighty. From this, it can be seen that the COVID-19 event was able to restore the function of dance as a means of ritual. Like the beginning of the birth of dance in this world, though in different spaces, times, and forms. In addition, the function of dance as propaganda that has not existed for a long time has re-emerged into a propaganda function because many narratives are conveyed in the work that helps the government socialize the rules not to engage in activities outside the home and also to engage in social distancing. Another aspect that has emerged is that the networking of dance artists is becoming stronger. They respond to each other's work, and increasing communication occurs with the merging of individual works into a series of joint presentations that rely on shooting and editing skills.

There is new knowledge that must be mastered by artists, especially the mastery of technology and film knowledge. Autodidactically, many dancers then seek these sciences through the Internet until many dance film works emerge. At that time, changes in form occurred, especially the form of colossal dance performances that disappeared immediately because there had to be social distancing so that what emerged were solo dances. The performance venues are not on stage but in living rooms, bedrooms, stairs, gardens, yards, studios, forests, etc.. Over time, this gave rise to new ideas by packaging dance performances to be interesting by utilizing technology, especially knowledge of shooting techniques where dance is made virtually. One aspect that is missing from virtual dance presentations is the loss of feeling. Many things still need to be revealed from the mysteries of dance virtualization during COVID-19. Therefore, further research is needed to explore and understand the development of dance virtualization through unique social media platforms that are increasingly interesting to study. The authors would like to thank ISBI Bandung for facilitating this research until it became a published scientific article.

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