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## The Ganong Dancer of Java: A Changing Traditional Technique to Acrobatic

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### ABSTRACT

This article will describe a unique phenomenon that occurs in the area of traditional dance with acrobatic techniques. The focus of this article is on the dancer figure Ganong who is one of the main roles in Reyog dance. The dancer's full name is the role of Bujang Ganong. Bujang Ganong (Ganongan) or Pujangga Anom is one of the energetic figures in Reyog Ponorogo. Hilarious figure at the same time has more expertise in martial arts. So that in every Reyog Ponorogo show, the performance is always eagerly awaited by the audience especially among the children. Bujang Ganong portrays the figure of a young governor who is nimble, strong-willed, clever, witty and supernatural. Physically, Bujang Ganong is depicted as having a small body, short and ugly face, big nose, big round eyes, bulging teeth, long-toothed and long-haired dreadlocks. Bujang Ganong in the past obyog reyog art does not play much role. Bujangganong only became a complement and as a humorous figure entertaining the audience, to break the ice. Acting hilariously at will followed by gamelan, teasing reyog barong, teasing jathil and also interacting teasing the audience. Not many dances and acrobatic Bujang Ganong performed at that time. This article is a methodological exploration combined from an ethnocoreological approach and a gymnastic approach. Visually the influence of the gymnastic sport element is very strong in the form of movements that are outside the dance rhythm. For this reason, this article examines the elements of acrobatic techniques such as what currently appear to be the dominant style of performance in Ganong dance.

**Key Words:** Ganong dance, traditional technique, acrobatic technique.

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### 1. Introduction

Javanese Bujang Ganong dancer "Traditional techniques that turn into acrobatics". Bujang Ganong figure is almost always synonymous with Reyog performance art which is very famous in Ponorogo Regency, East Java. Bujang Ganong (Ganongan) or Pujangga Anom is one of the energetic figures in Reyog Ponorogo. Hilarious figure at the same time has more expertise in martial arts. So that in every Reyog Ponorogo show, the performance is always eagerly awaited by the audience especially

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among the children. Bujang Ganong portrays the figure of a young governor who is nimble, strong-willed, clever, witty and supernatural. Physically, Bujang Ganong is depicted as having a small body, short and ugly face, big nose, big round eyes, bulging teeth, long-toothed and long-haired dreadlocks. Bujang Ganong in the past obyog reyog art does not play much role. Bujangganong only became a complement and as a humorous figure entertaining the audience, to break the ice. Acting hilariously at will followed by gamelan, teasing reyog barong, teasing jathil and also interacting teasing the audience. Not many dances and acrobatic Bujang Ganong performed at that time.

And Reyog is nothing but a symbol of Ki Ageng Kutu's criticism of the Majapahit king (symbolized by the head of a tiger), who was subdued by the seduction of a woman or Princess Campa (symbolized by a peacock's chest). Ki Ageng Kutu's efforts to strengthen the Base in Ponorogo (Wengker) were considered a threat by the Majapahit authority and the Demak sultanate. Sunan Kalijaga, along with his student Kiai Muslim (or Ki Ageng Mirah) tried to investigate Ponorogo's situation, and looked at the most influential forces in Ponorogo. And they found Demang Kutu as the most influential ruler at that time. In the interest of expanding power and Islamization, the Demak ruler sent his best son who later became widely known as Bathara Katong with one of his students named Selo Aji and was followed by 40 other senior santri students. The Katong Raden finally arrived at the Wengker area, then chose a place who meet the requirements for settlement, namely in Plampitan Hamlet, Setono Village, Jenang District. When Bathara Katong came into Ponorogo, most people in Ponorogo were Hindus, Buddhists, animists and dynamists. After Bathara Katong entered Ponorogo, there was a battle between Bathara Katong and Ki Ageng Kutu. Amid the equally strong conditions, Bathara Katong lost his mind to subdue Ki Ageng Kutu. Then with his intelligent mind Bathara Katong tried to approach Ki Ageng Kutu's daughter named Niken Gandini, with the lure of being a wife. Niken Gandini used Bathara Katong to take the Koro Welang heirloom, an ultimate heirloom from Ki Ageng Kutu. The battle continued and Ki Ageng Kutu disappeared, on Friday Wage in a mountain in the Wringinom area of Sambit Ponorogo. The place where Ki Ageng Kutu disappeared was called Mount Bacin, located in the Bungkal area.

Bujang Ganong or familiarly called Ganong is very famous as a figure in Reyog's performing arts. Andi Farid Hidayanto in JOURNAL OF EKSIS Vol.8 No.1, Mar 2012: described the figure of Bujang Ganong as a regent of the Bantarangin kingdom. This figure is depicted with a red face mask, big eyes bulging, and a thick mustache with long hair. Bujang Ganong's character is nimble, energetic and agile. In reog performances are often exhibited by young children, because it is full of acrobatic scenes that require flexible boned players (Hidayanto; 2012: 201-211). It was also interesting to follow Hendro Martono's article in the article entitled 'Reyog Obyogan as a Profession' in Journal of JOGED Volume 3 No. May 1, 2012. This article does not specifically address dancers of Ganong, but it is mentioned that the role of Bujang Ganong is sometimes played by children, while Klana Sewandono and Warok are omitted. So that the choreography is very different from Reog known by the wider community (Martono; 2012; 36-48). It was clearly mentioned the role of children for Gang figures as an alternative choice.

Another article titled 'Symbolism in Jaranan Art' by Salamun Kaulam in Journal of URNA Volume 1 Number 2, 2017, states that in Ponorogo, braid horse art or a kind of dance or also jathilan dance is played with peacock, Bujang Ganong, and King dance Klana Sewandana (Kaulam; 2017: 127-140). 'Reyog Obyogan in a Photo Essay' written by Oki Cahyo Nugroho, Deny Wahyu Trisana is also very interesting to follow. In the paper stated the success of Reyog Obyogan as a visual communication delivery model for the younger generation. There is no specific study on the role of the Ganong dance, but it is mentioned that the presence of the Ganong dancer remains a part that is related to the presentation of Reyog Obyogan (<https://ik.umy.ac.id/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/materi-jcc.pdf>).

For this reason, this study of Ganong dancers becomes urgent to focus on. The fact that the role of the dancer Ganong has always been a special dance power for Reyog performances. This article specifically looks at the role of the dancer Ganong who always follows the development of the needs of the performing arts. An interesting phenomenon is that Ganong dancers are now using new techniques that are adapted to acrobatic standards of public and attractive entertainment.

## 2. Method

This article is a methodological exploration combined from an ethnocoreological approach and a gymnastic approach. The ethnochoreological approach is used because the form of the Ganong dish is a form of dance that originates from the Reyog Ponorogo dance tradition in East Java, Indonesia. Ethnocoreology is an interdisciplinary discipline for the study of non-Western dance culture. Meanwhile, the gymnastic approach is used to see the development of the Ganong dance performance style, which acrobatically features tricks adopted from gymnastic sports. Visually the influence of the gymnastic sport element is very strong in the form of movements that are outside the dance rhythm. For this reason, the two approaches are combined as a way to expose the analysis of data presentations that has empirically proven the existence of gymnastic sport techniques that have been carried out by Ganong dancers at this time. Dancers of the Ganong are not only required to be sensitive to auditive elements through musical rhythms, but they must also be able to flip forward, backward flip, stand with both hands as a buffer, walk with both hands, and jump followed by roll forward or roll backward. Some examples of these techniques for Ganong dancers are still considered traditional techniques that are believed to be able to meet the audience's tastes and artistic needs.

## 3. Results

Acrobatics is one of the branches of Sports which in many implementations uses the movement of jumping, jumping, rolling, and requires strength and flexibility (: 60) Symptoms called dance, like other symptoms, can be approached from various directions. In each of these majors, there can also be various ways of seeing (Edi Sedyawati, 1979: 7). Acrobatics and dance can be interconnected and related because they both use one main element, the body. The body is also an element that is able to express a sense to be understood by anyone who sees it. The body is a place where the most local and micro social practices (most minutes) link themselves to circulation on a large scale (Seno Joko S. 2002: 530). The body cannot be separated by the dancer, with the dancer's body every motive and model of dance moves are manifested in every part of the dancer's body.

Ganong Dancers are dancers found in one of the Reog Ponorogo Performances, called Bujang Ganong. Bujang Ganong's appearance makes a different atmosphere. In the end, this article tries to identify some of the movements of the Dancers of Ganong in the present which are a combination of artistic technical qualifications and gymnastic sport technical qualifications. The Bujang Ganong Dance is included in the Surakarta Traditional Son of the Gallant Style, so that the patterns of motion use the now Surakarta Son of the Gallic Style Dance which has been developed.

The following will present some of the results of the identification of the forms of the Ganong Dancers' movements originating from the original movements and several ganong dance movements that have satisfied the audience's tastes for acrobatic entertainment and attractions. The dish referred to is the Bujang Ganong show with a duration of 5:30 the number of dancers two Gilang (22 Years) and Trianto (22 Years);

Table 1.

No	.The Original Movement	Development of the Movement
1.	<i>Lumaksana</i> Exercise.	<i>Lumaksana Tranjalan</i> walk into the stage one step at a time and then go through two taps in one step.
2.	<i>Sembahan</i> Worship pay homage to a half-sitting or crouching, <i>jengkeng</i> .	Do a tiger jump and <i>sembahan</i> or worship.
3.	<i>Sabetan</i> the interlocking vocabulary of movement.	<i>Sabetan variasi</i> Variation of the <i>sabetan</i> , performs the movement of the <i>sabetan</i> which has been developed by adding the sideways movement with the body position to the side.
4.	<i>Sekaran ukel</i> , Surround the barrel, position the right elbows, then the legs move two steps then two steps left, the arms position form an angle 90 'or <i>kambeng</i> .	The same Movement curb plus the front roll further the back roll.

5.	Rhythm walking with arm position up.	Rhythm walking with arm position as a buffer.
6.	Walk while jumping right and left.	Walking forward and backward.
7.	Walk by sliding your feet to the right and to the left rhythmically.	Move the roll back and forth.
8.	Improvisation gestures, movements performed by the dancers by performing acrobatic gestures with simple techniques such as front roll back roll, flirting, and hand stand.	Improvisation gestures, gestures performed by dancers by showing acrobatic movements with complex techniques such as Edges or gestures Helicopter prop, makako or back flip, pair or front roll motion.
9.	<i>Mundur beksan</i> Move backwards, move left of the stage Backstage.	Variant <i>mundur beksan</i> move out of the stage with funny gestures and then flick to the back of the screen.

#### 4. Discussion

The results of the identification of the following analysis will use the choreographic analysis model by referring to the gymnastic form analysis. Some understanding of the form of gymnastic can be described as follows. According to Mahendra (2000: 7) the purpose of gymnastics is to increase endurance, strength, flexibility, agility, coordination, and body control. According to Mahendra (2000: 20-22) the ability to exercise is always built on the basis of locomotor, non-locomotor and manipulative movements. The basis of the motion is described in several sections, the attainment of forms and patterns through the stages in each process of motion. Technical understanding is very necessary in doing acrobatic movements, also mastery of motion in order to produce perfect form in a limited time.

##### 1. Locomotor movement

Locomotor is defined as movement to move places, such as: road, run, jump, and jump, in gymnastics the movement is very important and commonly used, because in essence, almost all gymnastic movements are locomotor movements such as hand spring, flic-flac, propeller or wheel. The Lokomotor Movement in the Bujang Ganong Dance consists of several patterns of motion, including: Lumaksana Motion, Hand Stand Motion, Meroda, Salto, and Ferris wheel. This motion requires endurance and strong stamina, because all locomotor movements in the Bujang Ganong Dance rely on the strength of the hands, feet, and torso, so that almost all parts of the dancer's body require good and proper coordination. The Lokomotor Movement aims to fill the floor pattern and interact between reog players and between the audience. The interaction gave rise to an attractive atmosphere, making the show more enjoyable.

##### 2. Non Locomotor movement

Non-locomotor motion is a non-moving motion, which relies on different body joints to form different body positions while staying in one point. Examples of non-locomotor movements are bending, bending, bending and so on. Non-locomotor movements are widely used in kalestenic movements, especially in relation to the development of flexibility. Non-Lokomotor Movements in Ganong Singles Dance are available in Performing, Head Stand, and Edokan. The movement is centered on the strength of the limb, the foot, and the head while holding a load at a limited concentration of space. Non-Lokomotor moves will set the tone for the show and begin to drive the players' adrenaline to the audience. These movements require the concentration of a balance sheet to avoid anything that may harm the dancer.

##### 3. Manipulative movement

Manipulative movement is defined as the ability to manipulate certain objects with limbs, hands, feet, or head. These objects can be in the form of balls, clubs and so on. The skills that are included include catching, throwing, hitting, kicking, dribbling and so on. The Manipulative Movement requires accuracy and strength in manipulating an object, because the objects are inanimate objects which must be moved as if they were alive.

In connection with the analytical model in gymnastic, gymnastics itself in the original language is an absorption of the Greek word, *gymnos*, which means naked. The word *gymnastiek* is used to indicate physical activities that require freedom of movement so they need to be done naked or half-naked. This is common because the technology of making clothing materials is not as advanced as now

so it is not possible to make clothes that are flexible to follow the user's movements. The definition of exercise according to Peter H. Werner in Mahendra (2000: 9) gymnastics can be interpreted as a form of body exercises on the floor that are designed to increase endurance, strength, flexibility, agility, coordination, and body control. On the basis of this gymnastic approach model this article tries to analyze various technical changes that are often made by the Ganong dancers to meet market tastes.

In fact there is a big influence when the body of the dance technique is replaced by the body of the gymnastic technique which has an impact on the production of acrobatic movements. Bujang Ganong dance was originally a simple performance as a complement in the Reog performance, but over time Bujang Ganong developed in motion patterns and the quality of the shows. These developments made the Bujang Ganong Dance become increasingly popular and liked by the wider community. Bujang Ganong motion techniques display extraordinary acrobatic attractions, the attraction is able to make the audience chuckle in amazement and is able to make the audience's adrenaline stimulated. Some Ganong dancers learn the acrobatic movements themselves, and not too long.

Ganong Dancers learn each other acrobatic techniques from senior dancers then practice repeatedly until they can really master the movement. Some dancers can master the technique in two to three weeks, with practice every day. The exercise utilizes an open space with a contour that is not too hard, such as in the grassy land and the yard near the plantation. Gilang, 22 Years old, Ponorogo, one of the speakers, learned acrobatic techniques since sitting in elementary school. Gilang was very interested in the Ganong dancer, almost every week he saw the Bujang Ganong show in his place. That interest makes Gilang want to be a Ganong dancer. Gilang practiced diligently and routinely until now he has become the best dancer of Bujang Ganong in his area, almost all the acrobatic techniques in the Bujang Ganong show have been mastered.

The stages in learning the technique of Ganong Dancers with good performance achievement such as Schechner's explanation in the book *Performance Studies An Introduction*, said that the performance process in a time-space sequence consists of three steps of performance, four steps of performance, and after three steps. This three-phase sequence may be further divided into ten parts: Training, Workshop, rehearsal, warm-up, public performance, events/contexts sustaining the cooldown, critical responses, archives, and memories (Schechner, 2002: 191). These stages are used in the performance process of Bujang Ganong, so that the show can find new breakthroughs that can make the Bujang Ganong show grow.

Acrobatics in the Bujang Ganong dance have their own difficulty level, because in the performance the Ganong Dancer uses a mask that covers all of the faces and only a small hole is left in the Eye. The small hole makes the vision range of the dancer limited, and arrangements in breathing are very important so that the dancer does not run out of breath in the show. Some acrobatic movements in Bujang Ganong have been developed and given variations and names that are only understood by certain circles in each group. Some acrobatic movements in the Bujang Ganong Dance include:

#### 1. Wheeled

A wheel is to move to the right or to the left by rolling with your hands as a support, then your feet are spread wide open to make a pattern like a spinning wheel. This movement requires proper coordination and endurance of the arms as well as the accuracy of the legs in order to produce good movements. The meroda in the Bujang Ganong dance is usually done at the beginning of the acrobatic session, because the technique is not too complicated so it is warmed up by the meroda. The technique of the wheels is, the upright body position of the feet is opened shoulder width apart, both hands are wide open to the right and left, then the body to the right side, both feet jerking, then the hands become the support of both feet above to form the letter "V" then the hand jerks, feet return to the bottom and return to its original position.



Figure 1



Figure 2

### 2. Front and rear somersault

Somtault or front somersault is a movement to roll in the air without the help of a hand, somersault can be done forwards ie rolling forward or vice versa. The technique of doing somersault is by standing upright, legs are shoulder-width apart, then one of the legs is twisted or refused to air, then the abdomen, body and head, after rolling will return to standing upright again. The somersault requires the stomping strength of the legs and abdomen, as well as the flexibility of the body to rotate in the air. The somersault rotation reaches 380 degrees, the rotation must be carried out perfectly so that nothing happens that can injure the dancer. There are several types of salto in acrobatic gymnastics one of them Salto in the Bujang Ganong Dance is done with the position of the beginning of the squat, then legs shaking, body rolling, hands help hold when the body rolled, then back to the squatting position again. The somersault in the Bujang Ganong dance is the same as a somersault which requires arm strength, leg strength and flexibility. Salto in the Bujang Ganong show is done more than once and repeatedly with a quick turn. There are also rounds that are paired or performed by two dancers simultaneously in opposite, opposite, and simultaneous positions. This attraction is done by following the rhythm of the drums which makes the show more attractive the faster the drums will be the faster the lap in the flip.



Figure 3



Figure 4

### 3. Edokan

Edokan is a term in the Bujang Ganong community which means the movement of turning the right foot clockwise with a squatting position and the left foot as a pedestal. When the right foot meets the left foot, the left foot will jump over the right foot. Edokan motion in breakdance dance technique, called coffe grinder which is the most basic movement towards more complicated movements or also called helicopter propellers. The shape of the motion is similar to the shape of a helicopter propeller that rotates rapidly in a clockwise direction. In acrobatics, the type of motion entered in the strength of the arm and hand agility in moving. The technique of moving starts from the squatting position, right foot straight, left leg bent, both hands beside the right-left, as a pedestal, then the right leg is rotated clockwise, when the right foot approaches the left foot, quickly the left foot jumps over the right leg, move it it is repeated with a faster tempo.



Figure 5



Figure 6

### 4. Hand stand

Handstand is the position of both hands into a body with the feet are straight above. Handstand is done as a prefix before the headstand, the handstand is more focused on the strength of the arms and the balance of the body which rests on both hands. Bujang Ganong in doing a handstand starts with the body position upright, then immediately turns the body with the head down, then the hands touch the ground, legs perpendicular. After a perfect position, will be added to moving places using hands to walk.

### 5. Headstand

Headstand is a position where the head becomes the body of the body with the legs are straight above. Headstand is done with a more complicated technique than the handstand because the headstand position is more focused on the strength of the neck and the balance of the body that rests on the head. Bujang Ganong in conducting a headstand starts with the body standing upright, then immediately turns the body with the head down. To be more perfect, both hands help by holding the neck so that the position of the feet can be upright.



Figure 7

Headstand position is usually done with time that is not too long, like a handstand because this position is a bit risky for dancers if too long, the dancer may experience neck injury or loss of consciousness.

#### 6. Tiger Jump and Roll Back

Tiger jump or tiger sprong is a combination of forward somersault motion with the front roll forward roll then land in a perfect standing position. The initial jump, if the height will be farther away in making the jump pattern, the jump can make it look more interesting. Bujang Ganong dancers perform the tiger jump with the initial position standing straight then jumping forward high then rolling on the ground roll forward then stomping forward back to a sitting position or continued roll back. The movement requires the strength of the abdominal muscles to be able to produce perfect motion. Rear roll or usually done after a tiger jump, after rolling on the ground the front roll immediately followed by the rear roll, with a squat position and then drop the buttocks, followed by the back of the body, back of the neck back of the head followed by the head, then squat and then stand up.



Figure 8



Figure 9



Figure 10

#### 7. Ferris wheel

Ferris wheel is a designation for a pair of front roll motion, called a Ferris wheel because the shape of the motion resembles one of the games that are usually found in a vehicle with a shape like a giant wheel. The giant wheelwheels spinning boxes shaped like a birdcage filled with passengers, sometimes it can be above or below. Starting from this idea the ganong bachelor dancers tried it in pairs, with each other facing each other, the one in the supine position then the one above it in an upside down position, each dancer holding the ankles with both hands and then rolling around alternately. This move focuses on the front roll technique and the strength of the hand in holding the weight of the partner's body, the hand must be precise in holding the partner's ankles. The rounds are made to rotate with a slow tempo and then increase to be fast, so it does not follow the rhythm of the music or musical dance. The spin will be faster with the cheers of the audience getting louder. This move is the culmination of a Bujang Ganong performance and the completion of acrobatic attractions.



Figure 11



Figure 12

## 5. Conclusion

Conclusions based on research and discussion of acrobatics on Ganong dancers' dance shows patterns of traditional movements developed with acrobatic movements. These developments form a dish that combines several elements of the tradition in acrobatic movements then at the peak of the show. Acrobatic movements that look simple but turn out to have stages are also extraordinary techniques so as to produce an unusual form. Bujang Ganong who is identical with his own eccentric style can be arranged well by a Ganong Dancer. The ability possessed by Dancers Ganong can express an extraordinary form of Dancers. Acrobatic motion in the form of wheels, front and back salto, handstand, headstand, tiger jumping, and Ferris wheel is a movement that is able to realize other forms of Bujang Ganong Dancers.

Bujang Ganong dancers or more popular with Ganong dancers are dancers with special character types. Ganong dancers' character specifications are the identity of the dancers individually. This is due to the ability to change traditional techniques into acrobatics due to individual reasons. Dancers of Ganong will realize the acrobatic pattern as their own needs to be noticed by the audience. This kind of awareness is individual consciousness. In the end this paper came to the opinion, that the Ganong dancer is currently more attractive because of his ability to adapt an acrobatic patterns as a technical ability.

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