

Janger Performance: The Rite of Unification and (Re)construction of Cultural Identity of Banyuwangi, East Java

Pertunjukan Janger: Ritus Penyatuan dan (Re)konstruksi Identitas Budaya Banyuwangi, Jawa Timur

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Abstrak

Artikel ini membahas bagaimana masyarakat Banyuwangi, yang terdiri atas berbagai suku, menyatukan diri dan merekonstruksi identitas budaya mereka melalui seni pertunjukan Janger. Konstruksi identitas merupakan cara pandang atau makna identitas yang dikonstruksi oleh masyarakat. Mereka pernah mengalami keruntuhan identitas budaya ketika kalah total dalam perang besar melawan Belanda pada tahun 1772. Sebelum perang, mereka memiliki pemerintahan yang independen, tidak di bawah kendali pihak lain. Dalam beberapa dekade terakhir, ada upaya untuk merekonstruksi identitas budaya yang runtuh tersebut. Penelitian ini membutuhkan eksplorasi lapangan dengan memanfaatkan pendekatan etnografi. Pendekatan ini menggali data tentang berbagai aspek sosial budaya masyarakat Banyuwangi yang menjadi konteks seni pertunjukan Janger. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Janger Banyuwangi menjadi momentum vital untuk membangun dan merekonstruksi budaya baru Banyuwangi yang dapat diterima semua lapisan masyarakat.

Kata kunci: budaya baru Banyuwangi, identitas budaya, Janger Banyuwangi, pendekatan etnografi

Abstract

This article discusses how Banyuwangi people, made up of various ethnics, unite themselves and reconstruct their cultural identity through Janger performing art. The construction of the identity is a perspective or meaning of the identity constructed by the people. They had experienced the collapse of their cultural identity when they faced a complete defeat in the great war against the Dutch in 1772. Before the war, they had their independent government, not under the control of others. In the last few decades, there has been an attempt to reconstruct the collapsed cultural identity. This research required field exploration by utilizing an ethnographic approach and explored data on various socio-cultural aspects of Banyuwangi people, which were the context for Janger performing art. The results show that Janger Banyuwangi becomes a vital momentum for constructing and reconstructing a new Banyuwangi culture acceptable for all levels of society.

Keywords: cultural identity, ethnographic approach, Janger Banyuwangi, new Banyuwangi culture

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1. Introduction

During the increasing global cultural popularity trend today, discussions about cultural identity are essential (Wexler, 2009; Karjalainen, 2020). The practice of social life, especially among educated youth, seems increasingly shifting towards applying international quality standards; All aspects of life seem to be urged to conform to global

standards, from goods and services to daily lifestyles. Cultural identity, in a situation like this, urgently needs to be expressed.

Adolescents and developing adults are increasingly exposed to different cultures and the global world. As mentioned by Luyckx, Schwartz, Goossens, Beyers, & Missotten (2011), this is a consequence of the exposure of adolescents and adults who begin to deal with diverse cultures intensely. Therefore the development of cultural identity becomes a somewhat complex process.

The development of media technology has accelerated the transformation of values (Hartl & Hess, 2017). What comes from the outside is often dazzling and looks more exotic. This makes what is owned, which is in hand, becomes obsolete. Therefore, the traditional performing art artists, with the support of the Regency Government, carried out various revitalizations. It is unavoidable; slowly but surely, traditional arts are changing. The erosion of traditional values belonging to an ethnic group is a risk that must be accepted to achieve a shared cultural identity. Erosion is a necessity that cannot be avoided, but it is given up for the sake of mutual harmony.

This study reveals how Banyuwangi people, consisting of various ethnicities, unite themselves and reconstruct their cultural identity through Janger performing arts. In understanding the issue of cultural identity, we must first examine what identity is. The theory of identity that is quite popular is that stated by Stuart Hall. In his book *The Question of Identity*, Hall says that in modern times as it is today, a form of individualization has been built as a forum for new views on individual subjects and the way identity works (Hall, 2012). This means that humans in modern times are trying to break away from the traditions that have been considered to have shackled them. In discussing cultural identity, Hall (2012) offers a new perspective and way of thinking about identity by avoiding the trap of always depending on origins or truths that are transverse in time and space to validate the validity of identity in the present. According to Hall, humans continue to think with identity in an incomplete and changing form because identity is fluid, always in process, has no end, and is composed of representations.

Studies on the construction of cultural identity are often carried out everywhere because this issue is an essential issue for all groups of people worldwide. Tempelman, (1999), Lengel & Holdsworth (2015), Kupiainen (2016), and Escudero (2018), for example, identify a core dilemma in the debate about multiculturalism that stems from the construction of cultural identity. In Indonesia, this kind of topic is also asked quite often, considering Indonesia is a large country with a diverse population. Anshori (2016) and

Khotimah (2017), for example, examine how the construction of cultural identity takes place in the life of a society. However, studies on the construction of the cultural identity of Banyuwangi people have never been carried out, or at least they are still difficult to find.

The word 'construction,' in *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* (Fifth Edition), means 'the arrangement and relationship of words in a sentence or group of words.' One of the things that can be constructed is meaning (KBBI, 2016). Within the scope of cultural studies, it is emphasized that meaning is essential in the analysis or interpretation of culture. Meanings will continue to be produced and can be exchanged. Hall (2012) explains that "the issue of meaning arises in the process of identity construction." Hall's statement shows that one of the meanings that can be constructed is about identity.

The construction of the identity of Banyuwangi people is a perspective or meaning of Banyuwangi identity built by the society. In the daily life of a multiethnic society, as we can find in Banyuwangi, it is typical for identity construction to become an important and sensitive issue. Cultural values or norms in community groups grow within these groups, often built over a long period and transmitted from generation to generation. Values or norms are not easy to change, but that does not mean they cannot change. Each community group influences the others, competing for positions. Many factors are associated with changes in value. Through the media, various discourses of change are often shown to the public.

Banyuwangi people had experienced the collapse of their cultural identity when they faced a complete defeat in the great war against the Dutch in 1772. In the following eras, it seems that there was an attempt to reconstruct the collapsed cultural identity. In this context, identity is a marker that distinguishes a person from other people or a group of people with other community groups. Eriksen (1993) puts people with an identity in an established position, that "every social community or identity is exclusive in the sense that not everybody can participate. Groups and collectivities are always constituted with others". Meanwhile, according to Hall (2012) and Hongladarom (2019), humans continue to think with identity in an incomplete and changing form. Therefore identity is fluid, always in process, has no end, and is composed of representations.

Before the Great War, which was also known as Puputan Bayu, Banyuwangi people had their independent government, not under the control of a particular state/kingdom. The population of Banyuwangi is estimated to be no less than 80 thousand people, and after the war, only 8 thousand people remained. That is, 90% of the population of Banyuwangi died in the war or fled to other places outside the area. The population of Banyuwangi based on

the population census conducted by the British government in 1815 was 8,873 people (4,463 men, 4,410 women). Compare this with the population of Probolinggo, which consists of 104,359 people, Pasuruan 108,812 people, Surabaya 154,512 people, and Gresik 115,442 people (Raffles, 2008). Since the defeat, Banyuwangi people seem to have disappeared from the cultural map of the archipelago. After the Dutch decided to make Banyuwangi a plantation area in the 19th century, workers from outside the region began to be brought in, especially from Madura and Mataraman Java. The pulse of life in Banyuwangi started to be felt again (Ilham, 2015). The three existing ethnic groups, namely Using, Javanese, and Madurese, grew up together in a cultural space that inevitably had to be negotiated for the sake of their comfortable life together. Over time, inter-ethnic tensions sometimes occur for reasons and triggers that are not always the same. That is why inter-ethnic, as well as intra-ethnic, cultural negotiations continue to be carried out in Banyuwangi until now, both formally and informally, openly or privately. What happened in Banyuwangi is in line with what Abdullah (2006) said that the past is continuously reconstructed in the present.

Arps (2009) notes that there is a process of forming cultural identity in Banyuwangi. In 1983, when he started his research on language and performing arts in the area, speakers of the local language used to refer to themselves as *wong Jawa Using*, *wong Jawa Banyuwangi*, or simply *wong Jawa*. Not *wong Using*. Two and a half decades later, slowly but surely, Using replaced Jawa as the cultural identity of members of the local language-speaking community. Using seems to function as an imaginary bridge that connects Banyuwangi today with the Blambangan Kingdom in the past, which is considered a source or inspiration for indigenous forms of local tradition and culture.

According to Arps (2009), the formation of this cultural identity is carried out through what he calls discursive ambiance. Using identity is spread through an atmosphere that is deliberately created among the people. An essential role in forming identity in this way is held by the media, which act as the mediator of the idea of local identity as self-identification of the Banyuwangi people, which is carried out continuously. The creation of songs with lyrics in Using language and a radio program that explicitly plays Banyuwangi folk songs accompanied by an interactive space for listeners by Arps is considered a practical step in creating an atmosphere of Using in public areas. In addition, the Banyuwangi Regency Government's policy to change the names of buildings and the establishment of regional-themed statues also plays an important role.

The holding of entertainment stages for the people every weekend in several places in the Banyuwangi Regency area since 2012, by presenting various typical Banyuwangi performing arts, has become a new spark for artistic enthusiasm among the community. Likewise, the various large-scale annual events organized by the Banyuwangi Regency Government, such as BEC (Banyuwangi Ethno Carnival), *Gandrung Sewu* (A Thousand Gandrung Dancers), *Konser Jazz Pantai* (Beach Jazz Concert), *Konser Jazz Gunung* (Mountain Jazz Concert), and so on, also enlivened the excitement. However, the direction of cultural identity exploration that tends to lead to the Using ethnicity is not without problems because it creates jealousy among artists and culturalists from other ethnicities.

2. Research Methods

This study deals with three main variables that must be explained, namely (1) the subject variable of the performing art, which includes the history of development, the artists and audiences who support the performance; (2) cultural identity variable; and (3) performance context variable. Therefore, to answer the problems and achieve the research objectives, it is necessary to conduct field research, namely a study whose analysis is based on various data obtained through exploration.

This research requires field exploration by utilizing an ethnographic approach; This approach is used to explore data on various socio-cultural aspects of the Banyuwangi community (its folk aspects), which are the context for Janger's performing art. According to Ben-Amos (1992) and Dwyer, Gill, & Seetaram (2012), the ethnographic method has three main elements: storyteller, performance, and context. Research on the oral traditions of a community helps know the community's social order and its ability to actualize thoughts about the life they lead.

Creswell (2013) defines ethnography as a description and interpretation of a culture or social group. Using this method means that a researcher must make observations on a particular group and study the group's behavior patterns, habits, and way of life. In addition, the ethnographic approach used in this study refers to the emic approach model (Pelto & Pelto, 1978) namely an approach that views socio-cultural phenomena (Janger performances and their context) from the point of view of the community (folk) who are the object of research, namely Banyuwangi people. In other words, the ethnographic approach used in this study is holistic-integrative, namely an approach model that aims to obtain data based on a native's point of view (Spradley, 1997). According to Spradley (1997: 5), ethnography must be concerned with the nature of culture, namely acquired

knowledge, which people use to interpret experiences and produce social behavior. That is why ethnography will reveal all socio-cultural behavior through a holistic description. At the heart of the ethnographic method is its reflectivity; all social research will be based on the human ability to make participant observations and reflect on those observations.

To understand Janger's orality as an integral part of the performance process, this study will refer to the opinion of Pavis (1992) that performance analysis has two main functions: reporting and reconstruction. Reporting analysis is carried out during the performance. Therefore the researcher must record the impressions and emotions generated by the performance, when and how these emotions arise, and how they affect meaning and perception. Meanwhile, reconstruction analysis tends to store and preserve documents and preserve historical monuments (in some ways similar to reconstructing the history of past productions). The practice is always post-festum: the analysis is done by gathering clues, relying on the performance documents and artist statements written during the preparation of the show, and all mechanical recordings from all angles and in all possible forms.

Spradley (1997) states that the new ethnography focuses on discovering how various societies organize their culture in their minds and then use that culture in their lives. The essence of ethnography is a careful effort to pay attention to the meaning of the actions of a community or group of people that we are trying to understand through their culture. In conducting fieldwork, ethnographers conclude human culture based on three sources: (1) from what people say, (2) from the way people act, (3) from various artifacts that people use. Furthermore, regarding the concept that forms the foundation for this ethnographic research method, Spradley emphasizes the importance of (1) Language, both in conducting the research process and when writing the results – in verbal form. Learning the local language is considered necessary, but Spradley offers a way, namely by asking ethnographic questions. For Spradley, ethnographic interviews are considered more capable of exploring the mindset of the people being observed; (2) Informants, because ethnographers work together with informants to produce a description of culture. Informants are sources of information; literally, they become teachers to the ethnographer.

In addition, this research requires fieldwork in several sub-districts in the Banyuwangi Regency, which is the basis for the existence of Janger performing art. It is essential to get information and direct experience from people who are or have been involved and know the history and development of Janger. Before understanding how Banyuwangi people construct and reconstruct their cultural identity, it is necessary to examine how they carry out the rite of unification through the Janger performances.

Therefore, observations on the performance and some interviews with Janger artists must be carried out. The primary data sources in this study are taken from five Janger performances in the first half of 2020, before the Banyuwangi Regional Government banned the implementation of performing arts to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

3. Result and Discussion

The growth of performing arts in Indonesia since independence, although marked by diversity, in general, can be said to have undergone several processes: gradual change through reinvention, recreation, re-actualization, or dismantling towards a new national culture. Especially during the New Order, another school of thought emerged, consisting of intellectual currents such as modernist and postmodernist ideas in literary and artistic criticism. The arguments put forward by the new generation of intellectuals have had new influences, including tendencies that had not yet emerged in the early nationalist phase. Individual or communal art has been partially replaced by new official bodies such as art institutions, schools, and cultural centers. These new developments have also influenced the idea of what it means to be a nation (Parani, 2003).

The strengthening of ethnicity in various parts of Indonesia is not motivated by the same reason but by two different reasons. First, ethnicity in several regions has strengthened to resist central domination. Second, ethnicity in several other areas strengthened after the issue of nationalism was resolved (Suparlan, 2005). The ethnicity of Banyuwangi people, especially Using, belongs to the second category. That is, the people of Banyuwangi no longer have a crucial problem in terms of nationalism. They have no problem with its existence as an integral part of the Republic of Indonesia. So, the strengthening of the ethnicity they are constructing is to advance their cultural values.

In a general sense, what is meant by cultural identity is the details of the characteristics of a culture that is owned by a group of people whose boundaries are known when compared to the features of other cultures (Liliweri, 2002). Identity is constructed by society to give meaning to their lives (Mubah, 2011). According to Ting-Toomey (1999), cultural identity is a person's feeling (emotional significance) to have a sense of belonging or affiliation with a particular culture. People who are divided into groups then carry out cultural identification, namely each person considers themselves a representation of a particular culture.

Banyuwangi people have long been known to have an open characteristic. This openness provides opportunities for other cultural products of the community to be present,

mingle, and color the daily life of Banyuwangi people. Especially when those who come to Banyuwangi are not only cultural products but the people who produce the culture. A clear example of this is the arrival of the Javanese and Madurese to Banyuwangi. In the past, such arrival meant permanent displacement.

From villages and plantation areas in Banyuwangi, Javanese and Madurese migrants periodically, but continuously and in the long term, communicate with the local community. At this point, there was a clash between Using, Madurese, and Javanese cultures, thus encouraging the formation of a new culture of Pandalungan. In the city area, this cultural gathering is enriched by other ethnic groups, such as Balinese, Mandar, Chinese, and Arabs.

Using, Javanese, and Madurese ethnics generally have different characteristics. However, the differences between them become the basis for complementing each other without excluding one or the other. Each of them maintains their own culture while slowly absorbing each other to produce a new cultural product, whether in the form of works of art, rituals, culinary, architecture, or language. One of the artistic products born from the womb of the cultural encounter is the Janger Banyuwangi performing art. What's remarkable is that this hybrid performance art is still relatively easy to find and can be seen by anyone who wants to watch it¹

In terms of Janger Banyuwangi, this traditional performing art can be carried out because of three interrelated elements: the presence of the players, the audience, and the responder (the party who has the intention). These three related elements are equally driven to realize the implementation of Janger that they can use as a representation of identity. Keep in mind that Banyuwangi people are not monocultures. There are three different cultures, namely Using, Javanese, and Madurese, although essentially they are based on the same common platform (Ilham, 2015). In the Janger show, they communicate with each other, bringing their differences together in an agreement. Thus, Janger performing art has been consciously constructed as a medium to reinforce the identity of Banyuwangi people. Both the District Government and the people do this, and it can be said that the effort to construct Banyuwangi cultural identity through Janger performing art is quite successful. The combination of Javanese and Balinese elements becomes the foundation to create the characteristics of Banyuwangi. Then the elements of Java, Bali, and Banyuwangi move dynamically and dialectically in the Janger show. To illustrate these two assumptions, it will look like the chart below.

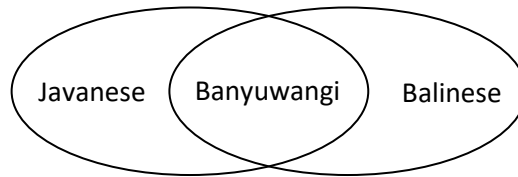


Figure 1 Banyuwangi as a product of a mixture of Javanese and Balinese cultures²

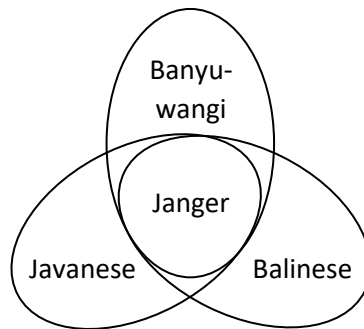


Figure 2 Janger as a product of a mixed culture of Banyuwangi, Java, and Bali

The two charts above illustrate that cultural contact is common among adjacent areas. These contacts can influence various aspects of people's lives in a certain period, including the arts. The more intense the intersection of the regions, the greater the influence of both parties, both the degree of influence and the aspects of life that are affected. In everyday life, the nature and behavior of Banyuwangi people, in general, tend to be open to various things, for example, to changes and influences from outside. They are also egalitarian, compromising, dynamic, and easy to adapt to the times. The openness to change and outside influences allow them to experiment creatively in art. Janger Banyuwangi is one product that can be associated with the condition. The egalitarian characteristics are evidenced by using language that does not recognize *undha-usuk* (language levels). The existence of the *mlayoake*³ custom evidences the compromising characteristics.

Janger performing art, like other products of traditional art, has a close relationship with its supporting community. This is what makes Janger considered worthy of a position as the cultural identity of Banyuwangi people. The construction and reconstruction of ethnicity continue, and Janger has become a medium of representation that is still considered relevant today. Besides being staged at cultural events in Banyuwangi, which the Banyuwangi Regency Government usually organizes, Janger is also often sent as Banyuwangi cultural ambassador to hold performances in various regions. In June 2013, for example, Janger Karisma Dewata group performed in Surabaya, and in August 2013,

Janger Langgeng Eko Budoyo group held a performance in Malang. The East Java Cultural Center organized both events. The delivery of Janger as an ambassador for Banyuwangi culture continued in the following years, alternating with various other Banyuwangi performing arts.

Although the language used in the Janger show is Javanese, the portion of the involvement of Using and Balinese art elements is quite dominant. This happens because among the pillars that support the continuity of art in Banyuwangi are Using and Balinese people. In addition to absorbing elements of clothing, make-up, various dance movements, and Balinese music, Janger Banyuwangi also absorbs elements of Javanese performing arts. The absorption process does not take place immediately but gradually. The absorption process is followed by a development process so that the results are distinctive and authentic. Thus, through Janger, Banyuwangi people have set an example of how the absorption of culture from outside is carried out without degrading the dignity of their own culture.

The absorption of cultural elements, of course, does not only occur in the arts but also takes place in the daily life of Banyuwangi people. The social interactions of various ethnicities have been going on for hundreds of years, long before the Republic of Indonesia became independent and Banyuwangi District Government existed.

Orr (1997), in his *Questions of Cultural Identity*, asks who needs cultural identity? Do we still need to investigate, even identify, the culture of a person or group of people? It seems that we still need it, primarily when we communicate with those from other cultures; we need explicit knowledge of their identity. Besides, in this life, are we enough with only one identity? In addition to identities, such as religion or gender, or age, hair color, dress size, and so on, we also still need other identities, especially cultural identities which cannot be considered as absolutely more critical, depending on the situation and the conditions that require it to enrich our identity.

Orr (1997) also emphasized that knowing another person's identity--at the beginning of communication--is the most challenging question, especially if we want to know the authentic culture of that person. This means that human beings generally do not like to know one's identity only in pieces because cultural identity is a cultural totalization. Besides, the totality of culture is not always visible; it always hides behind a multicultural context. As a result, in a simple way, people construct characteristics (body, hair color, facial appearance, physical appearance of the body, clothing model, and food), boundaries,

the main determining factors of culture. The next question is, where are the boundaries of intercultural identity located?

There are some cultural identity characteristics, namely (1) cultural identity is the center of our personality appearance. We become more aware of our own cultural identity when we live in another culture, interacting with people from different cultures; (2) our cultural identity can sometimes survive in an ever-changing social context; (3) cultural identity is something that has many faces. The more cultural differences we face, the more cultural identities of other people we meet, so that we are more confident in comparing our cultural identities with other people's cultures (Liliweri, 2002).

Multiculturalism refers to the notion that cultural diversity should be recognized as a permanent and valuable part of political society (Tempelman, 1999). According to Eisenstadt and Giesen (in Tempelman, 1999), collective identity formation is not produced naturally but is the product of a continuous process of social construction. This process involves –whether intentional or not– drawing the boundaries that mark the area of existence of a collective entity, as well as determining who and what is included and who and what is not. In other words, the distinction of cultural identity inevitably requires a process of inclusion and exclusion.

Proponents of Janger construct their cultural identity by standing between the "present" and the "past"; while the left foot is in the present situation, the right foot is on things that are considered facts or past ideals. All of this is done to maintain traditional values, transfer knowledge, and understand and give meaning to the world.

The stories shown in the Janger stage are not just stories of consolation that do not contain positive values and messages. This stage also inserts essential things in people's daily lives, such as various socio-economic difficulties, shifts in socio-cultural norms, the desire to obtain justice and prosperity, or the longing for a leader who is honest and protects his people. Thus, although the stories staged are old stories (all Janger performances are based on old stories), some parts are novelties. These aspects that are constantly being updated are one of the attractions of this performing art. The sensitivity of the Janger performers in recording various public thoughts and knowledge, then creatively reflecting them through certain parts of the performance, makes this performing art both the property and identity of its supporting community. The higher the ability of a performing art group to record the main ideas and knowledge of the people and then to be reflected in its performance, the higher the cultural authority that the community gives to the group.

The stories about *Minak Jinggo* and various stories and legends of other Banyuwangi people who were brought to the stage for Janger performances helped construct and reconstruct the identity of Banyuwangi people⁴. This identity construction process does not stagnate but continues to move dynamically along with the development of the people. Various influences of various mindsets and lifestyles come from outside through the mass media and direct contact with other communities and the impact of the increasing mobility of global society. It is undeniable that the position of Banyuwangi as a bridge connecting the islands of Java and Bali has triggered the acceleration of changes in the perspective and thinking of the local community. Thus, the various standardization efforts made cannot be interpreted as preventing Janger performing art from changing. Expecting Janger as a window to see Banyuwangi frozen in the past is an impossibility. That is why the story of *Minak Jinggo*, which describes the glory of the Blambangan kingdom, is no longer the only main story chosen by the people. The stories used as the basis for Janger performances are increasingly varied. One of the most famous plays is *Mendung Langit Kedawung*, or *Prabu Tawangalun*, *Ampak-ampak Bayu*⁵. By telling stories based on history (*Tawangalun*) or as if based on history (*Minak Jinggo*, *Sedah Merah*, *Sritanjung*), Janger is considered to be reconstructing history.

The pride in Using identity is also reconstructed through the nuances of heroism extracted from the historical repertoire of community resistance to domination or colonization by outsiders. So folk songs were created with lyrics in Using language, telling stories about various heroic struggles and struggles. The song *Isun Lare Using*, for example, tells the story of the Using people who never give up, even with an arduous struggle, to win independence. The song *Umbul-umbul Blambangan*, through the symbol of *Minak Jinggo*, underlines the people's pride in their cultural identity (Using) as well as their opposition to the dominance of West Palace (Majapahit/Java). At present, cultural identity is fostered through various activities carried out by the community across religions and ethnicities. For example, Hindus and Muslims in Rogojampi village each Maulid month jointly organize an *endog-endogan* ritual, namely the anniversary of the Prophet Muhammad's birth. All residents jointly fund the event. In addition, the members of the Janger Dharma Kencana group in the village are a mixture of Muslims and Hindus, with Javanese, Using, and Balinese cultural backgrounds. Cultural identity, therefore, is not taken for granted; it does not attach itself to the people that own the identity but must be created, attached, maintained, and is always in the process. Therefore, cultural identity is always historical, constructive, and relative.

4. Conclusions

Various ethnic groups who have traditionally been residents of Banyuwangi still show their ethnic characteristics. Both Using, Javanese, Madurese, Mandar, Balinese, Chinese, and Arab ethnic groups still maintain the traditions they inherited from their ancestors. The differences that exist do not prevent them from uniting their identity as Banyuwangi residents. Janger performing art is a medium that accommodates it.

For Banyuwangi people, every single performance of Janger Banyuwangi is a critical momentum for constructing and reconstructing a new Banyuwangi culture that all levels of society can accept. During the performance, the audience is harmonized; past and present, different ethnic groups, various products of different cultures, harmoniously united on the stage. Janger Banyuwangi shows become the point of intersection of differences. All are combined harmoniously to meet the ideal future of the people. They carry out unification through Janger performances in order to construct cultural identity. They do it creatively and artistically.

On the other hand, Janger Banyuwangi performance is also presented as a form of recognition and support of the people for the continuous efforts done by the Banyuwangi Regency Government to knit the different cultural elements in Banyuwangi so that it becomes a distinctive, unique, and authentic Banyuwangi cultural wealth. This recognition and support of the people are essential as the basis for strengthening local identity. If society takes an active role in cultural preservation efforts, then new cultural efforts can be realized.

Interestingly, Banyuwangi people, who have a dark history concerning outsiders, are fully aware that upholding cultural dignity cannot be achieved through self-closure. Their willingness to accept various external influences, to then be processed into a typical Banyuwangi, indicates that they have matured in cultural life. Janger performing art reflects the openness of Banyuwangi society. Elements of Javanese, Using, and Balinese culture are quite easy to find, but they have all changed artistically.

The atmosphere of openness that develops in Banyuwangi makes this area fertile ground for breeding various ethnic cultures. This kind of harmonization has been fostered in Banyuwangi and the surrounding areas, known as Pandalungan cultural area, since hundreds of years ago. Janger performing art, which can develop alongside various other performing arts, emphasizes that harmonious intercultural and interethnic spaces are lived and respected

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Endnote

1. On Thursday, October 12, 2020, from 11 pm until early morning, no less than 500 people gathered to watch the Janger show at Rajegwesi Beach located in Sarongan Village, Pesanggaran District, Banyuwangi. From the beginning to the end of the show, the number of spectators did not change much because the location of the show was quite remote. This show takes place in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Banyuwangi Local Government has imposed a ban on performances, but in some places, especially in remote places, a number of performances continue to take place by implementing strict health protocols.
2. According to Appadurai (2013), when the local community in a specific place becomes more and more multi-ethnic and multicultural, and its physical areas are increasingly intersecting and accepting more

and more temporary groups, such as tourists, its identity is that of that community will be increasingly fragmented.

3. *Mlayoake* is the custom of taking people's daughter to marry.
4. *The Anthropology of Landscape: perspectives on place and space* by Hirsch and O'Hanlon (eds., 1995) and *The Anthropology of Space and Place: locating culture* by Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga (eds., 2006) provide some examples of how societies relate to strong ties to the place and environment in which they live. People's perceptions of their location and environment are reflected in the stories they have.
5. This play tells Snepo Handoyo Kusumo, who gave his greatness crown sincerely to his younger brother, Wilobroto. Then he chose to leave the palace along with 40 courtiers to Bujuk Bayu Lor. For this incident, Snepo Handoyo Kusumo was nicknamed Prabu Mas Tawang Alun. However, the community felt pressured and oppressed by the leadership of Prabu Mas Wilobroto, and left their village to follow Tawang Alun. This made Wilobroto furious and ordered his younger brother, Ayu Tunjungsari, and his own son, Wilotaruno, to attack Tawang Alun. However, they died at the hands of Tawang Alun soldiers. Furthermore, Wilobroto led his own troops to attack Bujuk Bayu Lor, but he also lost and died. After imprisoned, Tawang Alun received a *wisik* (dream) to follow the direction of the white tiger he met and had to establish a new royal center where the white tiger stopped. At the location where the white tiger disappeared, Tawang Alun founded the White Tiger Kingdom.