

Conservation and Development Model of Mamaca in Pamekasan Madura

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ABSTRACT

Mamaca traditional performing art is an essential intangible asset for the people of Madura and Indonesia. *Mamaca* in Madurese language means reading. Contextually, it means reading verses from particular texts. Its diversity and uniqueness are not only known by Indonesian, but also worldwide people. Its paramount role in the life of *Mamaca*-supporting community is undeniable as the songs and notations generated while performing is not only functioned as performing, but also efforts to establish Madurese moral values. Unfortunately, the local people, especially younger generation currently have started to abandon this traditional art. It leads to a worrisome position of *Mamaca* existing in Pamekasan Regency, Madura Island. Considering that this traditional performing art emphasizes the nobility of values and norms in its form and implementation and its capability of strengthening the Indonesian character and the harmony of social life, *Mamaca* is urgently required to be preserved and developed in accordance to the fervor of nowadays era. The performers take turns reading and singing the verses containing some epics of Mahabharata, Ramayana, stories of Islamic Prophets, and values of benevolence regarding wisdom teachings. This research is a model for the conservation and development of noble cultural values that involves active supporting elements of *Mamaca*, relevant government, academics, industries or sponsors, and the role of the media.

Keywords: conservation model; development; *Mamaca*; Pamekasan Madura

ABSTRAK

Model Konservasi dan Pengembangan *Mamaca* di Pamekasan Madura. Seni pertunjukan tradisi *Mamaca* merupakan aset non bendawi yang penting bagi masyarakat di Madura dan bangsa Indonesia. *Mamaca* dalam bahasa Madura berarti membaca. Dalam penelitian ini, *Mamaca* yang dimaksud adalah tradisi membaca syair-syair dari naskah tertentu. Keanekaragaman dan keunikannya tidak hanya dikenal oleh bangsa Indonesia sendiri, tetapi juga sudah secara luas. Peran pentingnya *Mamaca* di dalam kehidupan masyarakat penyelenggaranya tidak dapat terbantahkan karena lagu-lagu yang dilantunkan serta notasi yang dimainkan tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai hiburan, namun sebuah upaya untuk menanamkan nilai moral. Sayangnya, *Mamaca* kini mulai ditinggalkan, terutama oleh generasi muda setempat. Oleh karena itu, seni *Mamaca* yang hidup di wilayah Kabupaten Pamekasan Pulau Madura dipandang penting dilestarikan dan dikembangkan sesuai zamannya. Mengingat bahwa seni pertunjukan tradisi yang berdasarkan pada pemanfaatan musik internal ini mengutamakan keluhuran nilai dan norma di dalam wujud dan penyelenggaraannya, *Mamaca* dipandang mampu menguatkan karakter bangsa dan harmoni kehidupan sosial. Para pelakunya secara bergantian membaca dan melagukan syair-syair yang memuat sebagian wiracarita Mahabharata, Ramayana, dan kisah para Nabi dalam agama Islam serta menyampaikan norma dan nilai kebaikan mengenai ajaran kebijaksanaan. Kajian ini merupakan model pelestarian dan pengembangan nilai-nilai budaya adiluhur yang melibatkan unsur penyangga aktif *Mamaca*, pemerintah terkait, akademisi, pihak industri atau sponsor, dan peran media.

Kata kunci: model konservasi; pengembangan; *Mamaca*; Pamekasan Madura

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Introduction

Mamaca in Madurese language means reading. Reading and singing verses from particular texts are undertaken by the readers alternately. The manuscript is in Javanese, handwritten in *Pégon* Arabic script – modified Arabic script used to write Javanese language. The script readers are called *pamaos*. One of the performers acts as *panegghes*, a person who has the ability to reveal and explain the verse meanings read by *pamaos* (Akhyat et al., 2010).

The scripts contain the epic of Mahabharata, Ramayana, and stories of the Prophets. It is the event organizer who usually determines the reading source of the story script to be read. However, it is possible that *Mamaca* group who selects the story (Maghfiroh, 2017). Occasionally, the family holding the event invokes the *po seppo* (Madurese language of an elder and respected person) to determine the story to be read at the specific event. *Po seppo* in the community feels respected thanks to such request. Whoever picks the story, the content is always associated with the activities being carried out (Kusmayanti & Sayuti, 2014).

Local wisdom embodying norms, values of kindness, and wisdom is echoed when *Mamaca* is held. Islamic prayer acts as the main activity both in the beginning and the ending of the event. Even though the scripts depict the epic of Ramayana or Mahabharata, Islamic values are embedded. What Madurese people do in *Mamaca* is basically correlated to a notion that *Mamaca* is a form of performing arts originated from moral didactic texts implicitly depicting Islamic culture (Kusmayanti & Sayuti, 2014).

Mamaca was performed by approximately ten adult men. They wear everyday clothes, sitting in cross-leg facing each other in a circle on the floor. The verses are sung alternately either with or without musical instruments. *Mamaca* is usually performed in life-cycle feasts, such as wedding, circumcision, *Rokat* – Madurese ritual, and *Nadar* – Madurese thanksgiving ritual. In addition, *Mamaca* also enlivens the commemoration of religious and national holidays (Dana & Kusmayati, 2018).

The previous explanation shows that *Mamaca* tradition is an important intangible asset for Indonesia (Wahyudi, 2017). Its uniqueness has been fame not only in Indonesia, but also worldwide. Its paramount role in the life of Madurese society is undeniable since the scripts contain life values of Madurese people. They do respect local wisdom, religion, work ethic and heroic things (Rifai, 2007). Since *Mamaca* has existed for such a long time and the number of its performer is gradually decreasing, it is highly necessary to investigate why children and youth are not interested in *Mamaca* is and what strategy to revive their interest in *Mamaca*. To cope with this issue, the researchers provide a solution in the form of a model that corresponds to the local generation, so that *Mamaca* remains sustainable and attracts today young generation's attention.

Nevertheless, before discussing about the conservation model, it is highly essential to formerly talk about the norms and values of local wisdom in *Mamaca*. The local wisdom incorporated in *Mamaca* consists of several song themes which are *Artate*, *Kasmaran*, *Durma*, *Selangit*, *Pangkur*, and *Sinom*. Those themes are transformed into the basic concept of *Mamaca* called traditional *macapat* and popular *macapat*. Each region emerges the varied basic concept, depending on the preservation of each *Mamaca* tradition. Then, what being discussed next is the formulation of *Mamaca*'s strengthening, development, and distribution strategy in the form of designing a 'new' nuance so in order to be much attractive and able to compete with other performing arts that are widely performed in this era (Rifa'i, 2021).

A notion stated by Bouvier (2002) reveals that young generation is not eager to preserve and develop *Mamaca* despite its noble values and teachings. Therefore, it is likely impossible that *Mamaca* is interested or even studied by people outside Madura (Bouvier, 2002). Bouvier's explanation is certainly like a slap in the face and at the same time, a motivation for *Mamaca* community to rise up in the midst of today's 'entertainment' arts. Some local literary works disclose the noble values of Madurese culture whose textual compositions consist of *Macapat* (Sastra, 2014).

The book whose examples incorporate *Mamaca* values such as *pangkor* is intended for elementary school students in which it implicitly teaches local wisdom accompanied by music notation (Supadma & Dana, 2021). Furthermore, the incorporation of *Mamaca* in school activities could be an important step in sharpening *Mamaca* conservation and development model in Pamekasan, Madura. As the text is read traditionally, it indirectly can also be used as a guide to strengthen *Mamaca* conservation model in Pamekasan, Madura (Sastrodiwirjo, 2008).

Several studies related to *Mamaca* and Madurese culture have been conducted by some authors. A socio-religion approach study on *Mamaca* focused on the moral value expressed by Madurese people through *Mamaca* (Amrullah & Imayah, 2022). The same study has been conducted in Pamekasan by other researchers. In conducting research, the authors identify the form and function of *Mamaca* related to ritual ceremony (Rifqi, 2018). Besides, another study reveals that some elements such customs and beliefs do encourage the existence of *Mamaca* in Bangkalan village (Khoiriyah & Syarif, 2019). The similar research has also been conducted in Sumenep regency in which *Mamaca* tradition is not only functioned as tradition, but also a process of self-reflection as God worshiper (Hidayatullah, 2020).

Besides, studies related to conservation have been conducted during the decades. Some researchers have conducted cultural conservation in Yogyakarta through tourism (Soeroso & Susilo, 2008). Next, cultural conservation can also be implemented through tourism of particular event (Supriono, 2020). Another conservation studies has conducted in Borobudur Area in which varieties of performing arts are still well-managed to preserve the cultural heritage of local people around Borobudur (Marimin et al., 2017). The government also take control of this issue in which Art and Culture Center is proven to be influential in art and culture preservation in certain area (Amalia, 2022). Nevertheless, all of those studies have not been focused on the conservation model of *Mamaca* even though the authors explored a lot about *Mamaca* tradition in several regions of

Madura. Therefore, the authors of this study are intended to conduct conservation and development model of *Mamaca*.

Research Method

To embody *Mamaca* conservation and development model in Pamekasan, Madura, the researchers implemented two types of interrelated methods – qualitative-analytic and case study and field research. Qualitative-analytic research was applied to analyze, select, classify, reduce qualitative data, and eventually describe the results of the analysis. Qualitative approach was used since the authors collected the data in open-ended questions interview, field observation, even documentation (Creswell, 2003). This type of research is considered appropriate to observe and analyze the socio-cultural phenomena occurring in society. In this case, performing arts and the people's behavior are the qualitative data analyzed based on social fact observation.

Moreover, case study and field research was implemented since the purpose of this research is comprehensively observe the current situation of the way Madurese people preserve *Mamaca* in chosen sampling area. This activity was the basis of deeply elaborating *Mamaca*'s form in particular social unit (Suryana, 2010). In determining the sampling, the authors implemented purposive sampling, in which the authors had determined which area and population to be observed before doing field research. The authors had also intended to interview the population involving in *Mamaca* activities (Kothari, 2009). The area of this research is specified in Pamekasan Regency. The initial survey indicated that the continuity of this performing art was less than encouraging. As a result, a research and resurgence action of *Mamaca* definitely need to be conducted. The researchers' choice of location also took into account the geographical location of Pamekasan which is surrounded by the three regencies – Sumenep, Sampang, and Bangkalan. This kind of strategy was intended to affect the surrounding areas that they also obtained positive influences and impacts from the treatment applied to Pamekasan.

Since the sampling technique was purposive, the informants were selected according to the research needs and adjusted to the competence of the informants (Ary et al., 2010). To collect the data related to the presentation of *Mamaca* with its various aspects, the researchers asked several *Mamaca* supporters to become the informants. Supporters in this context were the actors, organizers or funders, and audiences. In accordance with the field survey, community information, and reference content, the main informants selected by the researchers were H. Sastra (70 years old), Saleh Muchsin (55 years old), and Suparno (67 years old). They were picked as they know about various important events correlated to *Mamaca* performing arts. All of them have watched *Mamaca*, carried it out themselves as the artists, and at the same time managed *Mamaca*'s existence in Pamekasan, Madura. It was from the informants that the researchers obtained a number of key information and explanation of *Mamaca* conservation and development model that has been implemented. They were agile people both as performing artists and active performers of *Mamaca* in Pamekasan in various events in spite of the inability to encourage the younger generation to save *Mamaca* from extinction.

In conducting field observation, the researchers were integrated into people's lives, particularly when performing arts and simultaneously interviewing the informants. In-depth interview was the appropriate technique or a way of thorough and broad investigation of the authentic data from the informants. The data obtained was used to elaborate and compare the data from other sources. As interview is a method implemented in art research, especially performing arts, the researchers conducted both structured and unstructured interview, depending on the condition and the situation of the informants when mingling with *Mamaca* performers.

Moreover, the researchers scrutinized insistently the presentation of *Mamaca* and its audio-visual aspects were scrutinized. Thus, the observation of the required data could be more accurate. Data analysis on aspects of performance was conducted from both ethic and emic point of view.

When analyzing data related to traditions, norms, and values beyond the physical figures, both ethic and emic point of view have to be used simultaneously. The point of view of the supporting community as the basis of the emic approach is highly indispensable and should not be abandoned to account for the explanation of the various norms and values implied by the expression of physical figures.

According to Saleh Muchsin (50 years old), to design a 'new' model as a conservation and development model of *Mamaca*, there are several things to be considered, including the interest of local generation, family support, and local culture. Nowadays, the way young generation learns *Mamaca* is through the local subject provided by Elementary Schools. As a result, a teacher who has adequate skill of performing *Mamaca* is needed. Meanwhile, there are children or students who are eager to learn *Mamaca* but their family do not support them owing to a strong cultural paradigm or 'fanaticism' which presumes all related-to-*Mamaca* activities are 'taboo' (Interview, 16th October 2019).

Result and Discussion

In Pamekasan, those who are responsible for performing *Mamaca* are adult men. Madurese society in Pamekasan believe that song and music produced by men are more powerful than those produced by woman. Adult men who share common interest in traditional *Mamaca* performing arts form an association. They establish particular to assemble, then do routine rehearsals or prepare a performance. Celebrations accompanied by *Mamaca* performances include wedding, circumcision, *Rokat*, and *Nadar* (*Rokat* and *Nadar* are Madurese traditional ritual). Apart from them, *Mamaca* show also appears in substantial Islamic religious events such as Isra' Mi'raj, Maulud Nabi as well as public events like celebration of Pamekasan Regency's Jubilee and Independence Day of Republic of Indonesia.

Mamaca as a form of performing art is a didactic morality that attains robust influence of Islamic culture which has noble aim - managing

the harmony of social life (Kusmayanti & Sayuti, 2014). The guidance, canon, and spectacle in *Mamaca* present knowledge about human life cycle from birth, childhood, adulthood, until finally death. The story script is taken from some of the epic Mahabharata, Ramayana, and the stories of the Prophets in Islam. Manuscripts in the form of poems are specifically read and sung in the pattern of *Sinom*, *Mijil*, *Pangkur*, *Salangit*, *Maskumambang*, *Artate*, *Gambuh*, *Megatruh*, *Pucung*, *Durma*, and *Kasmaran* – Javanese traditional poems. It means that no *Mamaca* is performed in other forms of songs, but *Macapat*.

To maintain the sustainability of *Mamaca* traditional art, a conservation and development strategy is highly required, so that it remains in demand by the local children and today young generation. Advanced technology such as smartphones where applications like YouTube, WhatsApp, Google, Zoom and others are installed can be media to optimize the record of *Mamaca* learning process. The presentation is made in a group choreography model according to the interest of those young age and introduced through the sophistication of social media as well as *Mamaca* groups in Pamekasan, Madura. What the authors noticed is that the movement produced by the performers generate notations and rhythms which are interconnected to each other during performance. This encourages the youth to deeply enjoy their performance while indirectly they take action to accepting the values taught in each verse of the songs.

Mapping *Mamaca* Group

In Pamekasan, Madura, the researchers found several *Mamaca* groups including: Blumbungan Village, Larangan District; Jalmak Village, Pamekasan District; Murtajih Village, Pademawu District; Bunter Village, Pademawu District; Sumedangan Village, Pademawu District; Ceguk Village, Tlanakan District; Tlesa Village, Tlanakan District; and Larangan Tokol Village, Tlanakan District. Of the groups listed, the active group having routine activity is “Rukun Sampurna” *Mamaca* art group, Jalmak Village, Pamekasan

District. This group holds regular meetings once a month. Rehearsals are held alternately every Saturday night at the homes of *Mamaca* group members. The members of “Rukun Sampurna” *Mamaca* art are H. Sastra (70 years old), Saleh Muchsin (55 years old), and Suparno (67 years old), Robby (25 years old), Bur Nurdin (52 years old), Wahyudi (50 years old), Suparno (68 years old), Asmarah (70 years old), Abdul Rahmat (45 years old), Asari (74 years old), Sakur (57 years old). In addition to carrying out regular rehearsal, this group is also often invited to enliven various events such as birth, marriage, religious holiday, regency jubilee, and Independence day of Indonesia.

H. Sastra is a prominent figure, preserver, and activist of *Mamaca* art in Pamekasan. His activities in *Mamaca* are carried out in earnest based on understanding the meaning revealed through *Mamaca*'s verses. This traditional performing art highlights the nobility of values and norms in which its form and implementation is regarded of strengthening the character of the nation and the harmony of social life. Social values, life, and ethical education are revealed through the language of the verses sung aesthetically by the presenter of the song, then the meaning is emphasized by someone in charge of interpreting 'freely'. H. Sastra is highly motivated to continue fighting for *Mamaca* art group “Rukun Sampurna” to maintain *Mamaca*'s presence in Pamekasan in the era of rapidly developing technology-based art in which today youth is exceptionally attached.

Development Strategy of *Mamaca*

The fact indicates that the generations of children and adults in Pamekasan, Madura, seem to have a gap to learn *Mamaca*. H. Sastra as one of *Mamaca*'s preservers and activists through the group “Rukun Sampurna” continues to try to introduce *Mamaca* in various ways, so that it can survive and develop Pamekasan community.

At the appointed time, H. Sastra invites and trains *Mamaca* to Mohammad Faiq Fikri (12 years old), Indra Radi Sutrisno (13 years old), Noval Dwi Ramadhan (14 years old), Fadly Ibroizin (14 years old), and Sri Utami (9 years old). These

five adolescents are expected to be the successors of *Mamaca* art introduced by H. Sastra through his group. H. Sastra continuously foster them in improving their skill in performing *Mamaca* in order to make this traditional art thrive in Pamekasan, Madura. This method was built by H. Sastra as the basis on his amour to regenerate *Mamaca* art in earnest, starting with the introduction to the basics of reading *Kepatihan* notation – notation created by the ancient noble men. He implements this method in order to encourage *Mamaca* learners to awaken their curiosity, then the activity is recorded on a cellphone to be studied and listened at any time for reinforcing the learners' sense of love and belonging to *Mamaca*.

Indeed, to get to the 'capable' stage of singing *Mamaca*, it is prominent to have perpetual training. However, H. Sastra and H. Suparno stated that not all of the children now have time to immensely undergo the learning process, specifically *Mamaca* art. It appears that there are distinguished hinders in the way of developing and regenerating *Mamaca* art in Pamekasan, Madura. The foremost obstacles are regarding of the youth interest – lack of curiosity and learning about *Mamaca* in Pamekasan.

The generations of *Mamaca* performers that have existed up to the present time, are indeed in such a way according to the heredity talent from parents to their posterity from generation to generation. As stated by Mariamah (45 years old), she knows *Mamaca* art because she is usually invited to be a *waranggono* or *sinden* - a female traditional dancer and singer - by her grandfather, Artam,



Figure 1: H. Sastra is presenting *Mamaca* basic teaching instructions applying *Kepatihan* notation method.

who studied with Marshum (interview, 10 August 2019). Listening to diverse information as well as interviews, and witnessing *Mamaca* training process directly, the researchers noticed that *Mamaca* learning process has not taken place consciously and seriously. In addition, local young people are not aware of learning *Mamaca* merit. Thus, it takes time and an apropos strategy or effort involving varied elements regarding of the potential of *Mamaca*-loving community, the local government, art colleges, and sponsors or industries.

Mamaca conservation and development model in this era is inevitably integrated to sophisticated digital and information technology, such as

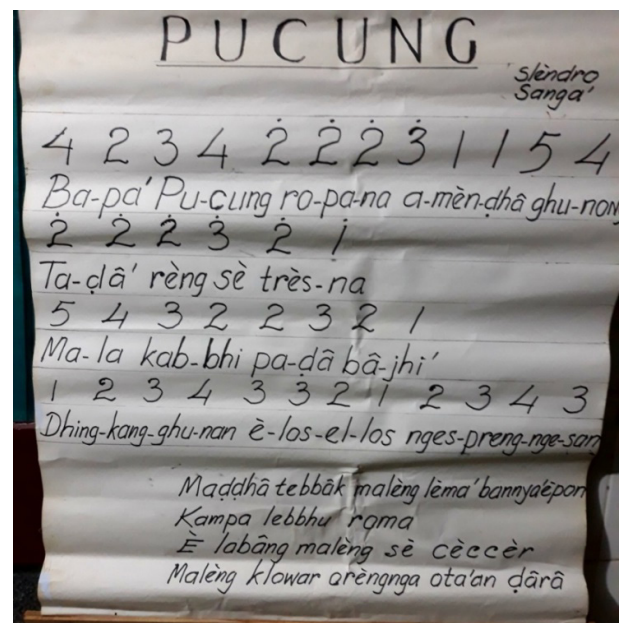


Figure 2: Song of *Pucung* with *Kepatihan* notation, so that the learners can learn *Mamaca* on their own through reading the notation.



Figure 3: H. Sastra is giving a signal (command) to equalize high-low tone/voice in singing *Mamaca* simultaneously.

adaptive robotics, artificial intelligence, internet, human machine interface which are in rapid pace transforming and taking part in various aspects of human life. This reality is a worthy space to extensively expose *Mamaca* on an ongoing basis. The existence of Constitution Number 5 of 2017 concerning the Promotion of Culture brings fresh air as a means of developing the noble values of national culture, enriching diversity, strengthening identity, influencing the direction of world civilization development, and of course preserving national cultural heritage such as *Mamaca* art. *Mamaca* rehearsal, apart from applying imitative method, is also carried out through read notation method. Before reading the verses of the song, the singers must precedingly read *Kepatih* notation so that they have the sense intelligence and are able to pronounce the verses of the song based on the reading of the notation. This also doesn't seem easy to implement to youth who are newbies in the early stages of introducing *Mamaca* art.

A Sustainable *Mamaca* Conservation

Conservation is understood as protection from extinction and maintaining or preserving the form of traditional art. It can be carried out in two ways - sustaining and revitalizing. What means by the former is sustaining the form of art activities that still exist in the midst of society according to its significances so and the latter is revitalizing or reviving artistic forms or activities that have

taken place but experiencing sluggishness leading to their extinction. Both sustaining and revitalizing art forms that are in accordance with the expectations of the supporting community require appropriate and rigorous steps as well as generation having sense of belonging, respects local traditional arts, so that the process of inheriting sustainability occurs (Fahrudin et al., 2022; Irawati, 2018). Inheritance contains the value of development, protection, and also utilization correlated with the supporting community, including *Mamaca* activity in Pamekasan Madura. As a result, *Mamaca* has 'persistence' and 'durability' until now.

Protection is an effort to maintain cultural sustainability, carried out by means of inventory, pasification, maintenance, rescue, and publication. Development includes efforts to revive the cultural ecosystem as well as enrich, and disseminate culture. Utilization is an effort to utilize the object of Cultural Advancement to strengthen ideology, politics, economy, social, culture, defense and security in realizing national goals (Dana, 2021; Irawati 2019). Guidance includes efforts to empower human resource, culture, and cultural institution in staggering and expanding active roles and initiatives as well as maintaining the togetherness of supporting communities to maintain *Mamaca* art energy for government participation.

Therefore, the implementation of a model of conservation or inheritance of *Mamaca* aims to incorporate the values with current and future



Figure 4: *Mamaca* group “Rukun Sampurna” is participating to encourage young participants in *Mamaca* rehearsal.



Figure 5: The youth is practicing *Mamaca* guided by H. Sastra patiently and thoroughly

generations. The channel of inheritance of *Mamaca* values in society can be created through various activities, including art groups or art studios as in the mapping of *Mamaca* group in Pamekasan, Madura. The results of this research contribute to publish and socialize *Mamaca* through formal learning process as the material for Introduction to Culture, Tourism, Art Sociology, Art History, and Cultural Theory subjects in universities including at the Indonesian Institute of the Arts Yogyakarta.

Conservation activities as forms of inheritance are highly paramount and must be carried out by educational institutions, especially High Schools of Arts, Arts Colleges, and universities that have Art Study Programs. In addition to the responsibilities of art institutions, it seems that the students of elementary school to high school to be taught art as local content subject. These institutions put forward the process of educating, creativity, and productive forces for traditional arts as well as formulating strategies for its development. In line with the role of these institutions to be more down to earth, collaboration with art organizations that live in the community is an active supporter of local traditional arts.

Conservation of local traditional arts in archipelago, such as *Mamaca* or whatever it is, of course requires careful, precise, and serious consideration and steps. The limitations of infrastructure and funding are totally understandable. However, several important things need to be taken into account to achieve maximum results, including human resource, environmental resource, infrastructure, conservation model, and funding. The strength of these factors determines that preservation as a form of inheritance of local traditions is well-achieved.

Conclusions

Maintaining the sustainability of traditional performing art works which generally has philosophical and sociological dimension requires a 'renewal' strategy according to the culture of the local community. This has happened to *Mamaca* art, which is still surviving in Pamekasan, Madura, but it demands concrete activities or actions

from (1) supporting organizations, (2) relevant governments, (3) art schools and art colleges, (4) sponsors or industrial parties which are keen on the sustainability of traditional arts, (5) the role of social media. The role of these five elements synergizing each other is the key to the success of maintaining the sustainability of *Mamaca* in Pamekasan, Madura.

The researchers realize that *Mamaca* was not originally born from Madurese community. Its emergence can be traced to *Macapat* tradition in Java that existed in the era of Mataram Kingdom. This *Macapat* tradition came from Hindu-Javanese tradition experiencing development according to the spirit of the era like *Mamaca* in Pamekasan, Madura generally carried out by the older generation. Now, it is necessary to pay attention to the artists, *Mamaca* lovers, and the government for the promotion of local cultural arts as a way to strengthen the harmony of social life.

In order to maintain the sustainability of every traditional performing arts, including literature which usually has certain philosophical and sociological dimensions, a strategy and process of "renewal" based on the local community culture is needed. Although the literary works are not purely born from the local area, at least they function didactically as moral guide for the supporting community. This happens to the traditional *Mamaca* art which is still surviving in Madura, especially in Sumenep and Pamekasan regency. Whether we realize it or not, *Mamaca's* animistic literary values certainly underwent a change when Islam began to enter Java. In the end, the philosophical-transcendental dimension of Islam (such as religious teachings, obligation for improving science and moral) have become core values in *Mamaca* and become a reference system for society in order to navigate the dramaturgy of life.

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