

## Involvement of State Officials As Cast of Characters in Folk Theater Ketoprak RRI Yogyakarta

Joe Harrianto Setiawan<sup>1)\*</sup>, Santi Indra Astuti<sup>2)</sup>, Rawi Diwangkara<sup>3)</sup>, Daniari Setiawati<sup>4)</sup>

<sup>1,3,4)</sup>LSPR Communication and Business Institute, Indonesia

<sup>2)</sup>School of Communication, Universiti Sains Malaysia

\*Corresponding Author

Email : [joe.hs@lspr.edu](mailto:joe.hs@lspr.edu)

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### ABSTRACT

*Ketoprak is a traditional Javanese performing art that incorporates elements of karawitan, dance, comedy, song, acting, and artistic arrangements. Traditional art is divided into two types, such as folk art and classical art, or palace art. Ketoprak is a folk art that has its origins among the people who live outside the palace. As a folk art, ketoprak is also used to communicate to the authorities issues that the people are concerned about. Criticizing through the performing arts is a powerful way to express criticism without taking offense. Ketoprak is usually performed by a group of artists on stage. However, in recent years, ketoprak performances have been performed not only by community performer groups but also by state officials taking the cast of characters on stage. The involvement of state officials at all levels, from regional to ministerial, as well as guest stars and main characters. Including those carried out under the RRI Yogyakarta ketoprak program. The descriptive qualitative research method was used to figure out how the implementation of the ketoprak program at RRI can preserve ketoprak's dignity as a folk theater, despite the fact that it is represented by state officials, by conducting interviews with program producers and respected ketoprak performers from Yogyakarta. The study's findings show that in its development, ketoprak was divided into two forms, conventional ketoprak which was standard with rules or pakem that were still preserved by RRI Yogyakarta and ketoprak garapan which is open to be interpreted in various ways and is free to be casted by anyone, including officials who are performed in the live version of the RRI Ketoprak Program.*

### KEYWORDS

Culture  
Performing Arts  
Ketoprak  
Folk Theater  
Public Broadcast

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### INTRODUCTION

Ketoprak continues to try to survive amidst the growth of various forms of modern art. Various efforts continue to be made by ketoprak artists so that they continue to exist and gain public attention. Apart from expanding the performance medium from the stage to the mass media space, it also involves all parties in the ketoprak performance. Ketoprak is a traditional art form from Java that performed by conveying stories of legends and kingdoms of the past which were previously conveyed through oral tradition. Ketoprak tells the story of the heroism and life journey of the Javanese royal family (Lisbijanto, 2013). Ketoprak performances are always accompanied by Javanese songs which are inserted into several parts of the story so that it can be considered an operetta (Dinas Kebudayaan Kabupaten Kulon Progo, n.d.).

Ketoprak is an evolution of the *gojegan* and *kothekan* play or traditional Javanese performance involving singing folk songs such as *Iilir-ilir* and *Ijojo* to the rhythmic accompaniment of the sound

of *lesung* (wood mortar). This performance then named to Ketoprak Lesung with the addition of a flute and tambourine as a new musical instrument. The actors not only sing, they also dance which is framed in a simple story about the daily lives of people in the village (Endraswara, 2014).

The characteristics listed above are consistent with concepts of traditional theater, which is a performing art that evolved from the spontaneity of people in their local communities. Traditional theater's emergence varies by region. This is due to the fact that the elements that comprise traditional theater vary depending on the cultural conditions and attitudes of the community, as well as the sources and procedures through which traditional theater originated (Santosa, 2008). Traditional art is art created by many people that contains elements of beauty, and the results become common property (Alwi, 2003). Traditional art is divided into two types of art, namely folk art and palace art, or classical art. Folk traditional arts serve the world of agriculture in rural areas, while classical arts serve the centers of royal rulers. Traditional art is folk art, which is a reflection of people's daily way of life (Bastomi, 1988).

Ketoprak gained popularity in the 1940s after it was broadcast on RRI Yogyakarta radio, then known as MAVRO (*Mataramsche Vereniging voor Radio Omroep*). Ketoprak became a popular public performance between 1950 and 1960 (Puji, 2019). Beside as a traditional theater art of Central Java that has grown and taken root in society (Hasanuddin, 2015), ketoprak is also considered a form of "resistance" art to palace arts, such as wayang kulit and wayang orang (Endraswara, 2014). Ketoprak is a form of art that comes from the people and can be used to communicate to the authorities issues that the people are concerned about. Giving criticism through the performing arts is a useful way to do so without offending someone (Ibrahim, 2006).

As an art that originates from people who live outside the palace fortress as well as ludruk, ketoprak is a traditional drama performed by a group of artists on a stage. The performers prepare the stage and perform the role of king, warrior, prince, or princess according to the storyline. However, in recent developments, ketoprak performances are not only performed by arts groups whose members are the common people, but state officials also take part on stage as performers. Officials from regional level to ministers took part in the performance, from guest stars to main performers. Officials began participating in ketoprak performances in order to preserve the cultural arts, which were considered to be fading (Yudiaryani et al., 2019).

As at the end of 2022, the DIY Regional Government presented the *Ketoprak Pejabat* (State Official Ketoprak), which is a collaboration stage for officials, academics, cultural figures and the community. *Ketoprak Pejabat* was enlivened by regional leadership forums (Forkopimda) such as the DIY Regional Police Chief, Regional Air Force Chief, UGM Chancellor, Regional Military Commander, Air Force Academic Governor, and other officials. This Ketoprak was performed live on an open stage in the center of Yogyakarta City with the theme "*Crah Agawe Bubrah, Rukun Agawe Santosa*" (Humas DIY, 2022). Furthermore, on March 9 2023, the Yogyakarta City Government is campaigning for the zero inorganic waste movement to the community by holding *Ketoprak Nara Praja* at the Yogyakarta Cultural Park Concert Hall. This performance was performed by the Acting Mayor of Yogyakarta, Chair of the Yogyakarta City Legislative, Commander of Regional Military 0734, Yogyakarta Police Chief and the Head of the Yogyakarta City District Prosecutor's Office (admin warta.jogjakota.go.id, 2023).

Ketoprak performances featuring officials as performers are nothing new in Yogya, in 2015 the performance entitled '*Ngilangi Bebendu*' was also performed by several officials from the Bantul Regency Government who acted as guest stars. The officials involved in the ketoprak performance were, Assistant Secretary III of Bantul Regency, Head of the Bantul Education Service, Chair of PCNU Bantul and Chair of Muhammadiyah Bantul (Admin bantulkab.go.id, 2015).

Not only in Yogyakarta, to socialize the policies and programs of the Boyolali Regency Government for the citizens, the Regent of Boyolali staged the *Pentas Ketoprak Birokrasi*

(Bureaucratic Ketoprak Performance) which was performed by the Regent of Boyolali himself together with the Deputy Regent of Boyolali, the Boyolali Regional Secretary, the Boyolali Police Chief, and also the Chairman of the DPRD. As well as involving echelon II and III officials within the Boyolali Regency Government on February 13 2018 (yandip prov jateng, 2018).

Klaten Regency Government officials also appeared in the state official ketoprak performance which was held in the Sunan Pandanaran Klaten Building area, on August 3 2017 with the title *Amukti Palapa*. Apart from the officials who appeared, the heads of regional apparatus organizations (OPD), members of the DPRD, heads of BUMD, sub-district heads, school principals, and local cultural figures also participated as performers with the Governor of Central Java, Ganjar Pranowo (Ermawati, 2017).

Central Java Provincial Government officials also organized ketoprak entitled *Babad Nglaroh* on August 35 2019, performed by the Central Java Regional Secretary, Assistants, Regents and Mayors throughout Solo Raya and important officials others include the Governor of Central Java (Sidiq, 2019).

Not only at the regional government level, Indonesia ministries also held ketoprak performances on March 29 2014. The Ministry of BUMN held a Ketoprak performance entitled *Raden Wijaya Winisudha* which was performed by the Minister of State for BUMN Dahlan Iskan, together with the Board of Directors of BUMN PT Pindad (Persero)(admin pindad.com, 2014). Previously, on May 29 2009, the Minister of Communication and Information, Mohammad Nuh, performed the cast of Resi in a ketoprak performance at Ken Arok Sports Hall, Malang, East Java (Sholeh, 2009). In the ketoprak performance entitled 'Red and White Prevents War' on May 7 2010, a number of BUMN officials and directors performed, including PLN Director Dahlan Iskan, General Director of Perum Bulog Sutarto Alimoeso, Commissioners of Bank BRI, and Presidential Special Staff Heru Lelono and Minister of Health Endang Rahayu Sedyaningsih (Agustiar, 2010).

From these reports, it can be seen that state officials are also using ketoprak as a means of socializing government programs for the reason of preserving regional culture. Radio Republik Indonesia (RRI) Nusantara II Yogyakarta also has a famous cultural radio program, namely the *Kethoprak Mataram*. This program is also inseparable from the involvement of state officials. According to the Head of the DIY Culture Service, Djoko Dwiyanto, art is a means of creating cultural resilience that lives and develops in society. Since the 70s, a number of ketoprak groups have emerged in DIY, and have been recognized at the national level. Therefore, this inherited ketoprak performing art should be preserved and developed. He even emphasized the government's seriousness in preserving the art of ketoprak by involving state officials to take part in ketoprak performances (Dude, 2009).

On July 6 2023, RRI Yogyakarta held a Kethoprak Mataram performance to educate the public regarding the 2024 Election while preserving cultural arts by highlighting the story '*Warok Suromenggolo, Suminten Edan*' at the RRI Demangan Auditorium. Apart from being performed by the RRI Yogyakarta Javanese Arts Family, the performance also involved the Chairman of the DIY KPU (General Election Commissions), Hamdan Kurniawan and Mohammad Najib from the DIY Bawaslu (Election Supervisory Body) to perform a cast (Hamda, 2023). The Regent of Sleman, Sri Purnomo, was also appointed to perform ketoprak in Jamsinas IV 2015 at the RRI Auditorium, with the perform "*Ndhepani bumi kelahiran*" (admin radarjogja.jawapos.com, 2015). The state officials emphasized as a public broadcaster, RRI has a role in dealing with the flow of information in the era of globalization. With its wide reach and role in highlighting Indonesia's cultural riches, RRI remains a pioneer in the field of information.



**Figure 1.** Regent of Sleman Sri Purnomo (second from right) cast character as ketoprak performer in Jamsinas IV 2015 at the RRI Auditorium, Jalan Affandi Sleman.  
(admin radarjogja.jawapos.com, 2015)

The RRI ketoprak broadcast program is the longest, having been broadcasting for over 80 years and continuing to this day. Many sources state that Ketoprak Radio was first broadcast in 1935 by Radio MAVRO before becoming RRI Yogyakarta. Then it was transferred to radio during the Japanese occupation, and since its inception in 1945, RRI Yogyakarta has included ketoprak as one of its broadcast programs. In fact, Kethoprak Mataram RRI Yogyakarta has not only become an icon that highlights the existence of RRI Yogyakarta, but it has also become one of the rich identities of the Yogyakarta community's artistic creations (Ivan, 2016). This broadcast program is now no longer just auditive but is actually staged in full in the auditorium stage studio for viewers to watch live and broadcast on the YouTube channel on RRI Yogyakarta Office radio.

Radio Republik Indonesia is a Public Broadcasting Institution which has an obligation to preserve culture. As in Law No. 32 of 2002, it is stated that broadcasting as a mass communication activity has the function of being a medium for information, education, healthy entertainment, control and social glue. In carrying out its broadcasting function it also has economic and cultural functions. Public broadcasting institutions are broadcasting owned by the public as a counterpart to private ownership. Its programs contain public services in the form of disseminating programs of public interest and interest, such as education, culture, or information that helps people in their daily lives.

The policy of the Republic of Indonesia Radio Public Broadcasting Institution (LPP RRI) is to support 4 (four) national development agendas which are in accordance with the duties and functions of the RRI as Public Broadcasting Institution. One of LPP RRI's policies is to become a leading public radio regarding cultural content in the context of building national identity, strengthening national identity and culture, as well as developing and preserving local wisdom through various broadcast programs, through optimizing special cultural programs, namely Programa 4 (Pro -4) with the tagline Encyclopedia of Indonesian Culture one of which is the preservation of traditional culture in this case ketoprak art performance by RRI Yogyakarta.

From the results of research conducted by Intarti (Intarti, 2010), it was found that the role and tasks of the Ketoprak RRI Yogyakarta program have a primary function, namely as an aesthetic presentation medium and as an entertainment medium. Meanwhile, its secondary function is as a promotional medium, as a propaganda medium, as a public communication medium, and as a learning medium for Javanese culture. Thus, the existence of Ketoprak RRI can be seen as carrying out the continuity of traditional theater in Yogyakarta.

As explained above, ketoprak is an art that was born from the people, performed by the people, and presented to the people, which also carries a spirit of improvement, including carrying out social criticism both horizontally among societies and vertically towards the authorities, in this case the government. It is interesting to study how the values of ketoprak as folk art theater which has recently been involved by officials who are part of the authorities as cast of characters. Therefore, this research presents a problem statement, what is the standpoint of RRI Yogyakarta as public broadcaster towards the involvement of state officials as cast of characters in the folks theater ketoprak. The research purposes are to investigate the background process of involving state officials as cast of character in the ketoprak performance recently and to learn how RRI Yogyakarta could maintain the dignity of ketoprak as a folks theater.

## METHOD

This method of research is qualitative as Bogdan and Taylor (L.J Moleong, 2022) define qualitative research as a method of collecting descriptive data from people through written or spoken words as well as through observing their behavior. The primary source of data used in this study was narratives gathered through interviews, which are focused conversations between an interviewer and an interviewee in which the interviewee provides answers to the interviewer's questions (Arikunto, 2023). In order to obtain reliable data, researchers conducted in-person interviews with research participants who were selected to talk about a variety of subjects related to the implementation of the Kethoprak Mataram RRI Yogyakarta program.

The informants in this research were the implementers of the Mataram RRI Yogyakarta Kethoprak Program which are Sugiman Dwi Nurseto as Producer of the Kethoprak Mataram RRI Program; Angger Sukisno, Yogyakarta Ketoprak Artist and Performer; Dalijo, Yogyakarta Ketoprak Artist and Performer. This research aims to obtain a clearer, more complete picture and information, so the research location was determined to be the location where this program was produced. Research location at RRI Yogyakarta Gejayan.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Ketoprak as folk art

According to the source, Dalijo, a Javanese artist who is also a ketoprak performer, stated that ketoprak has been around since 1870, originating from the Pleret area of Bantul. Ketoprak was originally performed to celebrate the harvest. Simple performances are carried out by farmers using the rhythmic accompaniment of the sound of a *lesung* (wood mortar) being beaten. "Performing in minimal clothing. Anything you can beat can use a *kotekan* (rhythm) and *lesung*. Ketoprak comes from the sound of knocking *prak-prak*," explained Dalijo. According to Dalijo, the story is still simple, like a knight fighting a giant. Knights are depictions of farmers, and giants are planthoppers. Stories related to the lives of farmers, such as the story of a farmer who wanted to sell grain and then someone stole the harvest, "The story originally came from the people, not from the palace. Palace-centric stories don't exist yet," explained Dalijo. He added that stories are taken from everyday stories.

The information from the source above states one version about the early history of ketoprak. In fact, until now, there has been no agreement on the origin of ketoprak because no source has been found that records when and where ketoprak appeared authentically. There is an opinion that ketoprak originally appeared in Klaten, which was expressed by a servant of the Kasunanan Palace who lived in Klaten (Endraswara, 2014). Meanwhile, there are also those who state that ketoprak first appeared in 1908, during a performance training period by the RMT, Wreksodiningrat. Another opinion states that ketoprak originated in Bantul Regency, Yogyakarta (Satoto, 2012). However, as a result of the Lokakarya Ketoprak (workshop) on April 7-9, 1974, the artists agreed

to divide the history of the development of ketoprak into three periods: First, the ketoprak lesung period, from 1887–1925. Second, the transitional ketoprak period, from 1925–1927. The third period was ketoprak gamelan, 1927, until the workshop was concluded (Marsidah, 1987). This is in line with findings from Suroso (Suroso, 2018) which states that the performing art of Ketoprak Dor is still presented or practiced by Javanese community groups on the Deli plantation, which in fact have been plantation workers since colonial times.

### Palace-centric ketoprak

According to Dalijo, the ketoprak performer group traveled all the way to Gunung Kidul, then east to Wonogiri before heading north to the Kasunanan Surakarta neighborhood. "As it gained popularity in the community, other villages eventually accepted it. "Eventually it became a traveling show," Dalijo explained. Then they busked all the way to Surakarta's Kasunanan neighborhood, Wonogiri, and Gunung Kidul. The performance of ketoprak was well received in the Surakarta market area until it was finally adopted by Kanjeng Tumenggung Wreksodiningrat, a servant in the Surakarta Kasunanan who appreciated regional culture. "He developed ketoprak with gamelan accompaniment, *tonil* or screen background, and gave a performance venue," added Dalijo. The stories are even more diverse. From here, the story of the royal palace began to be staged. "Like chronicles about the development of the Surakarta palace, Panji stories like Anglingdarma, Majapahit stories, and so on," said Dalijo. Apart from local legends or folk myths, there are adaptations of stories from various regions, both Indonesian and international. Since then, ketoprak has grown even more. "Ketoprak has become showbiz—people's theater performances that are bought and sold. "There are ticket sales, there are big bosses," added Dalijo.

Ketoprak performances are increasingly widespread in various regions with the growth of new ketoprak groups. Each group of ketoprak brings its own characteristics. "Each one brings its own characteristics. But over time, there began to be a *pakem* (standard) or common thread. Such as the use of *keprak*, gamelan music, and the performers must sing and speak refined Javanese language," according to the source, Angger Sukisno, a Javanese cultural artist who is also a performer for Ketoprak. Dalijo added that ketoprak is a Javanese performing art that is between Wayang Orang and Javanese drama. "If wayang orang is full of literary language with *pakem* gamelan accompaniment and Javanese drama is freer with everyday language, then ketoprak is in the middle," said Dalijo. Apart from that, the arrangement of characters in ketoprak is also starting to find its standard format. Even though the Ketoprak story can be adapted from any story, there are always standard characters, such as *Bambangan* or hero character as the protagonist, a robber or evil character as the antagonist, and the female character as the tritagonist.

The source's explanation above is in line with the data, which states that Raden Mas Tumenggung Wreksodiningrat was an artist and cultural figure from the Surakarta Palace who packaged this folk art into a new aesthetic form. As an artist who is heavily involved in the world of Javanese dance and wayang, RM Wreksodiningrat had the idea to create a performance that could easily convey the atmosphere of life in the royal environment. As is known, there are other types of performances that also use dance, namely the art of wayang orang, but the stories in wayang orang only tell the characters in the Ramayana and Mahabarata manuscripts. So the ketoprak performing arts emerged, which tell the story of the heroism and life journey of the royal family (Lisbijanto, 2013). According to records, this folk art was performed for the first time on January 5, 1909, to enliven the great marriage of Kanjeng Gusti, Prince Adipati Arya Paku Alam VII, with Princess Sri Susuhunan Pakubuwana X from Surakarta, named Gusti Bendara Raden Ajeng Retno Puwoso, which is located in Kepatihan Surakarta.

So that in the end, ketoprak in its development has characteristics according to Murgiyanto (1983), such as: the stories that are based on it come from history, chronicles, *Panji* (heroes) with social and political themes (love stories, heroism, etc.). The story is based on a palace-centric and

their people. Between the problem and the climax, there is usually a humorous interlude, a joke scene or a comedy scene from the servant or companion of the protagonist. The climax is usually accompanied by a *gladen* or silat/action scene. The language or dialogue uses standard Javanese which includes four varieties, namely; *krama inggil* (fine and high), *krama madya* (fine and medium), *krama village* (middle/village fine) and *ngoko* (rough). If there is an element of singing or song, it is usually found in *karonsih* scenes or expressions of love between lovers. The musical arrangement uses musical compositions, both *slendro* and *pelog*, plus the *kenthongan* (clacking) as a *keprak* (tempo) which functions to start the performance/scene, change the atmosphere, and acting guide. The fashion for Javanese folk tales uses *kejawen* (*gedog* and *basahan*). The make-up is very striking, but adjusted to the needs of the role, character and character. The staging or setting uses background images or *tonil*, paintings made on cloth to indicate the scene, plus the setting as an idiom or indicator of social class.

### RRI Yogyakarta Ketoprak Program

Along with the development of media technology, ketoprak performances also began to be broadcast in radio format in Yogyakarta on Radio MAVRO (Mataramsche Vereeniging voor Radio Omroep), a radio broadcast owned by the Dutch government since 1935. After Indonesia's independence in 1945, Radio MAVRO was acquired to become Radio Republik Indonesia Yogyakarta Station, with a constant broadcast of ketoprak in audio format. "The broadcast continues until today, maintained by ketoprak performing artists for several generations from the era of independence until now. The broadcast time remains the same every Wednesday night," said source Sugiman Dwi Nurseto, producer of the Kethoprak Mataram RRI Yogyakarta Program.

The ketoprak performance was adapted for an audio version called theater of mind. "Because the audience can only hear, all the dialogue is made as visual as possible. For example, the performers murmur about the beauty and size of the palace to bring the audience to the palace hall," said Dalijo. Or by adding the sound of gurgling water to depict a rural atmosphere. "The difference is that in the past we actually used hose water, now there are sound effects," added Sugiman. The rest remains the same as RRI's ketoprak program, while maintaining the *pakem* that has been established from the beginning. But as time went by, RRI listeners asked for RRI's ketoprak performance to also be performed live on stage. "Because listeners are curious. They had heard his voice and wanted to know what kind of person he was. So in 1948, to appreciate listeners aspirations, RRI's ketoprak was also performed on stage directly in front of the audience," said Sugiman. Sugiman explained that the audience was always full, so since then, the RRI Ketoprak has regularly performed live performances once a month in addition to the regular broadcast every Wednesday night.

The ketoprak artists at RRI have long been aware that the development of ketoprak performing art cannot be stopped. "During its development, various ketoprak genres emerged. However, from the past, the RRI ketoprak was maintained as a ketoprak that conformed to the *pakem*. We call it conventional ketoprak," said Sugiman. RRI as a public broadcasting institution continues to maintain ketoprak in accordance with its *pakem*. "Especially at its peak in the 1990s to 2000s, that was the glorious period of Ketoprak at that time and RRI became a barometer for Ketoprak," added Sugiman. Sugiman assumes that if the ketoprak *pakem* is not maintained or lost, it could mean that the art of ketoprak is also lost.

Angger also agrees that the RRI Yogyakarta ketoprak is a stronghold for conventional ketoprak. "If conventional practices are not handled or cared for, the fear is that they will turn upside down. People might said, ketoprak used to be like that, but now it's like this. Later, if you look for something like before, it won't be there. Therefore, RRI is still sticking with conventional ketoprak," added Angger. He gave an example in ketoprak performances outside the station, the

king's character could have joking dialogue but at Ketoprak RRI this could not be done because it was not in accordance with the king's *pakem*.

Sugiman has no objections with the development of ketoprak outside RRI Yogyakarta into various forms. "Go ahead, it's also called folk art. That's fine," said Sugiman. Dalijo also believes that because ketoprak comes from the people, its shape is flexible and can adapt to time and place. "It's different when it comes to wayang orang. It's palace art. It absolutely cannot and should not be changed," explained Dalijo. Angger also has the same opinion, "As long as it's not RRI, many styles of ketoprak are allowed. I also have groups outside RRI. But if it's RRI, that's not allowed." But in order to preserve ketoprak, RRI Yogyakarta still continue to perform ketoprak *pakem* for their broadcasts program using traditional methods such as *tembang*, gamelan instruments, fine Javanese speech, and conventional story structures with improvised dialogue.

The opinions of the speakers above are in line with the results of research conducted by Intarti (Intarti, 2010) which states that the existence of Ketoprak RRI can be seen as carrying out the continuity of traditional theater in Yogyakarta. Ketoprak RRI has a form of performance that is still strong with traditional and conventional elements. The traditional elements that are maintained are the use of wayang performance structures, the use of *tembang* (Javanese traditional song), the use of *keprak* instruments, the use of literary and ordinary language, and the use of *gending* (traditional musical pieces). Behind the form of performance that still maintains a traditional feel, the idea of preservation is the main factor in choosing the institution's form of expression.

Based on a workshop on the performing arts of ketoprak held by the Taman Budaya Yogyakarta Special Regional on October 3–4, 1990, it was formulated that in general the art of ketoprak was divided into two types, namely ketoprak konvensional (conventional ketoprak) and ketoprak *garapan* (costumized ketoprak). According to Bondan Nusantara, the general characteristics of conventional ketoprak are: Not using a full scenario or script; The drama of the perform refers to the Wayang Purwa; Dialogue is improvisational; Acting and blocking are intuitive; Realist fashion and make-up; The accompanying music uses Javanese gamelan (*slendro* and *pelog*); Using *keprak* and *tembang*; The show is about 6 hours or more long; The story theme and plot are flexible (Nusantara, 1997).

### **The Involvement State Official in Ketoprak**

According to Sugiman, with the advent of new forms of entertainment, some people believe that ketoprak must evolve to keep up with the times. "There was a sense of anxiety that traditional art was not selling, so they innovated. There are ketoprak *plesetan* (puns), ketoprak humor, and state officials performing ketoprak. It is okay. Because the goal is to get people to enjoy ketoprak again," explained Sugiman. Ketoprak performances that feature state officials as guest stars or main performers have become quite common recently. The goals are diverse. "There are a lot of state officials performing ketoprak outside the RRI," Angger explained that there are those who want to help preserve ketoprak and those who want to commemorate specific days. Another reason for inviting state officials is to facilitate funding for the performance through the participation of local officials. "At the same time, so that they are aware that ketoprak as art actually needs to be preserved," he said. The form could be a collaboration in which the official appears as a guest star alongside the actual ketoprak performing artists. "This is a different format. We must merge with complete awareness. The director admits that they are not ketoprak performers. So it's possible that the language used is Indonesian rather than Javanese," Dalijo explained.

Even in Yogyakarta Province, according to Dalijo, there is a ketoprak group called Ketoprak *Eksel* which consists of DIY provincial executive and legislative officials. "The group members are council members, there are also mayors and regents who take part. But there were several original ketoprak performers who also appeared. So the basic *pakem* is still maintained. Guarded by our friends," explained Dalijo. In principle, ketoprak performing artists do not have a problem with this

and continue to serve the wishes of state officials to participate in ketoprak performing art. "For example, if they can't sing the song *Gandrung* (Javanese love song), replace it with dangdut (genre Indonesia folk music), that's fine. Because the officials usually like dangdut songs, they were included in the show," explained Dalijo. Even though it no longer meets the *pakem*, Dalijo believes the performance can still be referred to as ketoprak. "*Monggo*, please just do it. However, the truly ketoprak is the one with *pakem*," Dalijo explained. Because if these officials had to perform the ketoprak with *pakem*, it would take a long time to practice just one performance. Furthermore, Angger says they don't have time to attend every practice. "Let them know that they have to learn to sing too," Angger went on to say. "Even if you practice for a year, you will not be able to do it fluently. So this format is fine as is," Dalijo explained. "We are just open. In fact, by involving officials in ketoprak, they will realize that performing ketoprak is not as simple as they thought. "It's okay to let them know first that performing ketoprak is like this," Sugiman went on to say. In this way, ketoprak can rise again because it has been more appreciated. Dalijo admitted that he frequently directs state officials who perform ketoprak. He stated that officials delegated the cast selection to the director. Officials are not always required to cast as kings. "On campus, the staff lecturers and the rector both perform ketoprak. Instead, I went back. The rector becomes a gardener, and his employees become kings. It had to be this way at one point. That's where the uniqueness is," Dalijo said. He also revealed that he had transformed the Sleman Regent into a comedian character. "When they're on stage, they mingle; their actual positions should be removed. And they want to do it. They enjoy it," Dalijo added. "They are no longer awkward." However, Sugiman believes that even though officials cast as subordinates, their manners as ketoprak performers must be maintained. "You can't just do whatever you want, just because you're being made a gardener is like having your head smacked," Dalijo said.

Ketoprak RRI Yogyakarta has also involved state officials participating in its ketoprak performances. However, so that RRI Yogyakarta can maintain its *pakem* as a conventional ketoprak, the involvement of officials is carried out in ketoprak stage performances instead of routine audio broadcasts. "It's incidental, not regular Wednesday. But for certain events, such as election counseling by the KPU or about the importance of wearing a mask during COVID," explained Sugiman. The cast given to state officials in Ketoprak RRI is usually that of the guest who explains the message being entrusted. "It is inserted in a minor scene, and they cannot be made kings because the king must be able to speak Javanese fluently. It's risky, and I'm afraid of misusing the language," added Angger. According to Dalijo, the audience also understood that the officials used Indonesian. The audience can already distinguish between the real ketoprak performers and the guest performers. By involving state officials in ketoprak performances only on stage and not on regular Wednesday broadcasts, RRI Yogyakarta can still maintain its *pakem* as the custodian of conventional ketoprak. Because, basically, according to Sugiman, true ketoprak viewers still want to see the real ketoprak. "The people in the village still want to see the original ketoprak. You are free to use Ketoprak however you see fit. As long as there are idioms, they must be preserved because that is what the people want," Sugiman explained.

According to Dalijo, there are concerns that ketoprak will be used for certain political purposes by officials, which is not something that needs to be questioned. According to him, during the Japanese occupation, ketoprak was used for the benefit of the Japanese army. "During the New Order era, there was a ketoprak group called Beringin Wahono, which was founded by Golkar. There is also the Sapta Mandala ketoprak, which was founded by the Diponegoro Regional Military Command. That's okay, just be flexible. Ketoprak can be used for family planning education, it can also be used as a community outreach tool," explained Dalijo. The flexibility of the ketoprak, according to Dalijo, is because the ketoprak is born from below or from the people, not from above or from the palace, so it is free to adapt to various needs. "But art created from the palace cannot be changed. For example, classical dances cannot be modified. The art of *wayang*

too. Punakawan usually criticize but the original wayang from the palace; even clowns can't make jokes," explained Dalijo. This is because in the art that emerged from the palace, the social status is clear and cannot be contested.

According to the explanation provided above, ketoprak is an open performing art. The art of ketoprak is currently undergoing several changes, both in terms of packaging and functionality. A gradual shift has happened. Since its inception, ketoprak has been an open art that can be influenced by any branch of the performing arts (Iswantoro, 1997). Apart from conventional, ketoprak has another form known as ketoprak *garapan* (customized ketoprak). The characteristics of the ketoprak form are that it uses a full script, the dramatic steps refer to western dramaturgy, the acting and blocking are arranged or patterned, the make-up and clothing are realistic, symbolic, the setting does not have to use a screen (picture screen), the lighting and sound use electrical technology, free accompaniment instruments (diatonic, pentatonic, a combination of both), the performance time is approximately 2.5 hours, *keprak* and *tembang* are sometimes used or not (Nusantara, 1997). The artistic design is an element that cannot be separated from a performance. A performance or performance will be imperfect without an artistic system to support it. Artistic elements in a performance include stage design, clothing, lighting, make-up, sound, and music which can help the performance to be perfect as a performance (Prastiawan et al., 2022).

The involvement of state officials in ketoprak is one form of progress of the ketoprak *garapan*. According to Yudiarni, this occurred in 2005 as a result of globalization, which required local governments to identify DIY as tourism icons in order to compete nationally and internationally, prompting the Regional Government to actively assist in funding ketoprak production. In fact, to capture the audience's attention, regional officials such as the Mayor, Regent, Chancellor, and Head of Department participate in the performance as performers. As a result, traditional performances are packaged to meet current tastes and demands, with new and fresh formats that include simpler storylines and modern theater elements. Ketoprak performances are a way for community members to stay in touch while also using a pun and joke style. Stories are no longer based on myths, chronicles and legends, but include wayang stories with story interpretations that are more contextual to the present (Yudiaryani et al., 2019).

Ketoprak, as an open performing art, can be used to protest the government, at commercial events, or even to campaign for a party. Aside from these functions, ketoprak serves several positive purposes, such as character education for the younger generation, introducing local culture and wisdom, and instilling historical values in the younger generation (Setyawan, 2016). Local wisdom can be formed as traditional folklore is one of the ancestors cultural heritages passed down through generations. The process of cultural enculturation is done naturally (Purba, 2023). This is what distinguishes ketoprak from folk art and not classical art. Traditional art is classified into two categories: folk art and classical art, also known as palace art. Folk traditional arts serve agricultural communities in rural areas, whereas classical arts serve royal government centers (Bastomi, 1988). Ketoprak, a traditional folk art form of theater, is inextricably linked to its surroundings (Sahrul, 2017). So it is not surprising that ketoprak develops based on where it grows. This includes official involvement. This demonstrates that ketoprak is adaptable and can adjustment with situations and conditions. This includes use by any party with an interest. For example, during the Japanese occupation, Ketoprak was used as a propaganda tool, during the New Order era, it was used as a messenger of development, and during the reform era, Ketoprak could be used to criticize the government while also serving as a performance for jokes, such as Ketoprak Humor. However, as a traditional theater art, ketoprak still carries good values. Traditional theater is often seen as a cultural treasure that contains norms in life in the form of good values that can be used as guidelines for living life in society (Murahim et al., 2018).

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## DISCUSSION

Ketoprak is a folk art characterized by the use of improvised musical instruments using wood mortars (a tool for pounding rice), flutes, tambourines, and drums. In fact, the name ketoprak is taken from the sound produced by the rhythm of the musical instrument. In its development, ketoprak reached the center of power and was adopted by combining classical traditional art equipment with the addition of gamelan accompaniment, which is usually used for wayang orang performances. A touch of modern theater performance is also added by adding a screen as a backdrop and a more structured story arrangement. Like classical traditional art performances that were born in the palace, the dialogue used uses standard language structures. The stories used from palace-centric are no longer people's everyday stories but take stories from the kingdom of Javanese kings.

Ketoprak began as a performance business, evolving into various genres based on the group of artists who performed it. Until then, ketoprak artists held workshops divided into two large groups: conventional ketoprak and customized ketoprak. Conventional ketoprak is seen as ketoprak that maintains the thread of traditional history with specific standards, whereas customized ketoprak is seen as more flexible and can be contextually adapted to any purpose.

Ketoprak RRI Yogyakarta has a program that maintains the spirit of conventional ketoprak called Kethoprak Mataram. This program was regularly broadcast every Wednesday evening, and since 1948, it has also been performed live on stage. As development progressed, ketoprak in general began to be surpassed by other forms of entertainment, causing it to lose audiences. As a result, various parties, including the government, are working to ensure the continued existence of ketoprak. One approach is to involve state officials as cast performers in order to capture the audience's attention. The artists understand that the presence of state officials can convey a message of power, but it is still permitted as long as it does not interfere with conventional ketoprak areas, which must be maintained in accordance with existing standards. RRI Yogyakarta also allows the involvement of state officials in their ketoprak performances. However, it is limited only to incidental stage performances. Not in the regular Kethoprak Mataram program, which has been appointed to be the custodian of the dignity of conventional Ketoprak.

The state, in this case the government, does have an obligation to preserve cultural heritage, but it is best not to interfere with content tailored to their needs. The government can support it by providing funds or by facilitating the arts. As the findings in research conducted by Zhou (Zhou et al., 2021) stated government must have adequate and effective supervision and policy-making functions. As the backbone of society, businesses, universities, and cultural centers must perform their functions of cultivating talent, understanding market rules, providing social and economic benefits, and disseminating folk art and culture in order to form a virtuous circle of problem discovery and technological progress. The function of folk art or folk theatre has been used extensively to propagate critical social, political and cultural issues in the form of theatrical messages to create awareness among the people. As an indigenous form it breaks all kinds of formal barriers of human communication and appeals directly to the people (Das, 2013).

## CONCLUSIONS

Since its birth, ketoprak has been a traditional performing art created by people with an open interpretation. This differs from traditional art, which originated in the palace and has been limited by standards set by its creators, who were artists who accompanied the power. So ketoprak is open to new developments and interpretations by the artists who carry it. On its journey, ketoprak inevitably comes into contact with power. Ketoprak was adopted by royal artists, who were then injected with elements of classical traditional art, including the presence of palace-centric stories. Then it was used by the authorities to convey certain messages. And recently, the involvement of

state officials with the aim of preservation and appreciation. This is not a problem as long as it remains in the form of ketoprak *garapan*, which allows anyone, including officials, to take part as performer. This type of ketoprak is intended to be more easily shaped. In contrast to classical art, which was born within the walls of the palace, ketoprak is folk art that is open and free to be adapted and utilized by anyone at any time with any purpose.

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