Values of Multiculturalism In The Process of Teaching and Learning the Dance Arts

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Abstract: This writing explores the values of multiculturalism in the process of teaching and learning the dance arts at the state university called Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, Indonesia. In result, it is mentioned that the Indonesian people as one that is composite on the basis of its diverse cultural background has experienced a great deal of repeated failures. It could be seen in the many problems of conflict and violence that frequently happen. To counter such problems, this writing offers the dance art teaching and learning process at State University of Yogyakarta as basis for character education designed with the theme of understanding multiculturalism in Indonesia. In the process of teaching and learning the dance arts, one often finds values of multiculturalism which could be processed to strengthen the direction of character education toward the importance of respecting and appreciating multiculturalism.

Keywords: values of multiculturalism**,** character education, the teaching and learning of the dance arts.

1. Introduction

Multiculturalism is a reality undeniable to a people still in the process of nation-building like the people of Indonesia. Such multiculturalism could be seen to be a great potential of the nation because it is part of its national wealth. Conversely, it could also change into a great problem when diverse elements of the nation put forth their ego and desire to dominate each other (Naim, 2008: 27). As proof, emotional thought patterns still dominate Indonesian society. Destructive behavior for the reason of wanting to dominate each other often occurs on the basis of a group of interests acting for the sake of rivalry, feud, disagreement, quarrel, conflict, and social clash. The burdensome consequence of the emotional thought patterns is how difficult it becomes to move towards an integrated, harmonious, and balanced life in society.

Emotional thought patterns are often brought along into social interactions ending up with ethnocentrism, which refers to attitudes and acts meant to show that the culture that one possesses is considered the most right while other people's cultures are considered wrong. Problems with ethnocentrism often happen in living within a society, a nation, and a country involving differences in various matters whose nature is political, social, economic, legal, cultural, regional, and so on. Such social interactions not infrequently cause inter-tribal quarrels and such problems occasionally cause anarchy, which could be of a large or small scope. So it is obvious that one of the greatest problems which the Indonesian people has been faced with is multiculturalism.

The people of Indonesia as one with a composite nature and multiculturalism as its background has often experienced repeated failures in formulating democracy, justice, and welfare. The occurrence of the failures is frequently caused by certain parties making manipulations and diversions of problems with its roots in greed and primordialism, egoism, and tribe, race, and group affiliation. Such parties have the heart to forget the voice of fellow children of the nation as people of Indonesia (Sutrisno,

2001). Such is multiculturalism, on one side describable as a valuable asset of the nation but on the other side causing conflicts and clashes when not tidily put in order.

Multiculturalism implying diversity in various aspects of life causes problems related to politics, economics, religion, ethnicity, tribe, race, and group affiliation, and so on. Those problems often narrow up like a cone to become a peak problem so that bloody conflict and violence occur. Admitting that the Indonesian people is a civilized one, many ask, however, how the bloody conflict and violence could happen with the extremely horrible impact of sacrificing human life. The various occurrences of conflict and violence could make one think deeply about why it is so easy for Indonesians to express emotions without restrain, to let themselves lose temper, and to eventually commit atrocities. Here appears a great problem which the Indonesian people is faced with concerning multiculturalism.

It is a fact that multiculturalism in Indonesia is something that Indonesians are already given with, meaning that it is a gift from God. The position of multiculturalism of being able, on one side, to threaten stability and, in turn, cause conflict and violence but also being able, on the other side, to facilitate an opportunity for the formation of a plural society that is rich with cultural wealth is undeniable. Whatever it is, multiculturalism is a reality which constitutes a challenge that should be confronted.

The many events of violence indicate that our country is suffering from a crisis of values or a distortion of morals in living within a nation. In addition, the various events of violence ranging from those small in scale to those large in scale proves that the quality of Indonesian people's morals is still a matter of great concern (Zuchdi, 2008: 142). Many often suspect that the cause of all the moral crisis befalling our society all this time is that education or, more particularly, the moral education taught at school is felt to still have a lot of weaknesses. Education is the most important and very vital aspect in forming the character of the nation. Any of the peoples living on the face of the earth would never experience progress if not forged with education. In the present

opportunity, a study is conducted on education in nationalism by seeing the values of multiculturalism appear in the teaching and learning process of the dance arts.

2. Values of Multicultualism

In a curriculum for education in the arts (like the dance arts, the musical arts, the visual arts, the arts of handicrafting, for example), the term education in nationalism does not appear. However, Retnowati (2011) reveals, among others, the culture related to learners' behavior through multiculturally based evaluation of the visual arts, in the sense that in the teaching and learning process there has already been evaluation based on education in nationalism. Thus, the term has appeared after the art teaching and learning process is conducted and results of the process turns out to point at a character of learners who behave and act on the basis of one type of the values of nationalism, namely, the values of multicultualism.

It is unavoidable that the art teaching and learning process contains a load of values of multiculturalism (Nethsinghe, 2012: 57). Indeed multicultural education develops interpretation and comprehension of the values of multiculturalism, which is a concept about varied culture. In cultural variety, it is inevitable to have mutual understanding, tolerance, considerateness, and the like in order that a life in peace and welfare is attained with everybody spared from continuous conflict (Naim, 2008: 125).

All this time the urgency of education in multiculturalism has not been felt yet by the world of education and society in general. In the world of education itself, pluralism and multiculturalism are not yet sufficiently known whether as ideas or as socio-cultural practice. Pluralism and multiculturalism have just come to the point of being merely touched upon separately and in very limited ways in the field of social and religious sciences such as sociology, antropology, politics, and study on religion. So conceptually education in multiculturalism is not yet applied in Indonesia. It is in spite of the view that education in multiculturalism should be the first stepping stone before

entering other studies for it should not be forgotten that the Indonesian society is a multicultural one which is often subject to problems of social conflict, social gap, and social clash.

Therefore, multiculturalism-based education is something crucial. The construction of education with a multicultural basis should rest upon a process of bringing about awareness with a multiple or plural insight to a life with religion, with politics, and with culture. In a more distant view, the construction of education in multiculturalism could be positioned as part of an effort to comprehensively and systematically prevent and overcome ethnic and religious conflict, religious radicalism, social separatism, and national disintegration. As for the basic value in the conception of education with a multicultural basis, it is tolerance, which here means respecting all difference as a reality that should be positioned as it properly should instead of exerting forced entrance into a certain concept (Naim, 2008: 52). Thus, multiculturalism values eventually imply the nature of respecting other human beings who also possess other cultures or, in other words, multiculturalistic nature produces humanistic nature. Education with a multicultural basis becomes an initial point for causing to grow in learners respect of the differences occurring around them.

A pastor says that education with multiculturalism as basis is education which counts on us to open our vision on a broader horizon and to be able to go across boundaries of ethnic groups or cultural and religious traditions so that we are capable to view "humanity" as a family with us as members possessing both difference and similarity in what we dream of achieving. Actually, education becomes a process of dissemination to offer values of multiculturalism. The position of the family environment should be made a center of education because each individual acquires values of multiculturalism in living together in his or her family. Likewise, the school environment should be made like the family environment. When children are used to experiencing differences in the family environment and in the school environment as

enrichment in their personal development, then we could hope for a democratic future for Indonesia. It means that there are values of respect towards the presence of others there (Kartono, 2009: 45). Certainly, in the school environment, values of respect towards variety would also appear and that is what is called multiculturalism (Sensoy, 2010: 1). The reason is that the sense of the expression *multi-* (most possibly related to the word *multiple*) covers all difference and variety, whatever the form of the difference and the variety is.

3. Process of Teaching and learning the Dance Arts

The process of teaching and learning the dance arts, in our case, occurs at the Department of the Dance Art Education, Faculty of Language and Arts, State University of Yogyakarta. The lecturers' and students' background concerning region of origin is a basic asset benefiting them in studying multiculturalism. They come from various regions or provinces like Riau, Jambi, West Sumatra, North Sumatra, Lampung, South Sumatra, Bengkulu, West Jawa, Central Jawa, Yogyakarta, East Jawa, Bali, Nusa Tenggara, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, and so on. Likewise, the curriculum material in the process of teaching and learning the dance arts, which consists of, among others, dances from Surakarta, Yogyakarta, Banyumas, Sunda, Minang, East Jawa, Banyuwangi, Bali, and Makasar as well as those from some foreign countries, also constitutes an asset helpful to them in studying multiculturalism. Once learners coming from different regions of origin present their respective dances in accordance with their respective capability, there seems to be mutual understanding of each other's performance. It shows a form of human life with individuals mutually understanding each other and with various subjectivity (O'Flynn, 2013: 130).

The different ways used by learners from various regions to study various dances also constitute an asset for the development of education in multiculturalism or art education with a multicultural basis. It is comparable to the execution of the

teaching and learning of the visual arts with a multicultural basis, which is a teaching and learning model putting more importance on the activity of learners with various cultural background possessed and integrated into the teaching and learning process (Retnowati, 2011). According to Retnowati (2010), there are many ways to know learners' understanding revealed through visual art teaching and learning. To say it simply, by carefully examining visual artwork, one would obtain many indications of how the artists, who are, in this case, the learners concerned, conceptualize a theme. One would also know how far they try to clarify the theme by adding details to different artworks of theirs and that is also part of education in multiculturalism.

Of course the execution of the teaching and learning of the arts, whether it is the dance arts, the musical arts, or the visual arts, for example, could be arranged by repositioning art education with a multicultural basis. In the education in multiculturalism, a plural, diverse, or composite nature of culture is shown. Learners are given a chance to open themselves to other cultures originating in various regions in Indonesia. For example, the Department of the Dance Art Education, Faculty of Language and Arts, State University of Yogyakarta, teaches dance class material consisting of dance skills and socio-cultural knowledge covering the dance material. Types of dance material taught cover (1) dance material from learners' own respective regions, (2) dance material from other regions, and (3) dance material from foreign countries. Those types are still complemented with art and socio-cultural knowledge from such fields as esthetics, art criticism, art sociology, art anthropology, the basic natural sciences, religion, research, and various educational sciences.

The process of studying the arts belonging to one's own ethnic group together with the arts belonging to a different ethnic group as the process of teaching and learning the arts becomes the basis of education in multiculturalism. As in an example given by Schwadron (1975: 105), multicultural musical art education is education in music based on comparative esthetics (with comparison of performance) and

ethnomusicology (i.e., study of relation between music and culture). Comparative esthetics in the musical arts involves comparing elements of performance in the music originating in one's own region with those in the music originating in another region. The elements consist of players, instruments, musical scale, melody, make-up, costume design, stage setting, lighting design, and properties. It is all a form of text interpretation to create character (Kwakye-Opong, 2014: 77). In addition, the cultural background of musical appearance, the social structure of players, and the life existence of music are also studied. It is based on the view that the phenomenon of music is inseparable from its socio-cultural context.

When one learns a dance or musical piece originating in North Sumatra, for example, automatically one also learns the culture of North Sumatra. This is a specific way of thinking that also supports the multicultural perspective in art education. On that basis, studying the culture related to certain music is also a way to understand the society of the region where the music originates (Fung, 1995: 36). So when one learns certain art material, it means that one also learns the culture and the society supporting the art concerned though what is learned in this case does not belong to one's own culture. Here it is clear that learning various sorts of art is the same as learning multiculturalism.

The art teaching and learning process containing education in multiculturalism also occurs in the process of teaching and learning the Javanese *karawitan* art (the musical art using Javanese *gamelan*, which refers to ethnic or traditional musical instruments), run by the Department of the Dance Art Education, Faculty of Language and Arts, State University of Yogyakarta. The process is always done together because it takes the form of an orchestra involving a large number of people in the sense that it could not be done individually, alone, or by only one person. It is done that way from practice time to examination time. In a class of *karawitan* art, the teacher and students

concerned mingle into one to hold discussion sessions, make cultural transactions, play the *gamelan* together, and incorporate the values of being Javanese.

The learners consist of students originating in not only Java but also regions outside Java such as Madura, Bali, Sunda, Minang, Riau, Batak, Sumatra Selatan, Lampung, Bugis, and Dayak. Thus, many of them come from different regional and cultural background. Such variety logically would lure one to social conflict because those who are from outside Java are "forced", so to speak, to learn Javanese culture. But, in reality, all this time there has never been any conflict, let alone that ending up with the occurrence of physical violence. On the contrary, in fact those students feel happy. The position of feeling happy leads them gradually to understanding difference because they realize that, after all, the difference should be learned through the class subject called the Javanese *karawitan* art.

Realizing the importance of learning the Javanese *karawitan* art, they appear to be in synergy in developing cooperation among classmates to study the Javanese *karawitan* art material. In result, besides being capable of mastering practice in the Javanese *karawitan* art, they also acquire the values of being Javanese such as sensitivity to *gamelan*, which usually exerts as impact sensitivity to the Javanese cultural ethics. In short, the system of teaching and learning the Javanese *karawitan* art also contains a transfer of knowledge, a transfer of skills, and a transfer of values. This is often admitted by learners from Sumatra, who say that they feel *nJawani* (or Javanese-cultured). When considered more deeply, the process of becoming *nJawani* is a process of multiculturalist person formation. In addition, the most important thing in the teaching and learning process concerned here is that the learners are swept along to a change in behavior into a humanist behavior because, after all, there is a demand that they cooperate mutually with fellow learners in studying the practice of Javanese *karawitan* art; they could not do the study individually, by themselves, or alone. A concrete example is that when they are going to face an examination, they should

practice together and not alone, individually, or by themselves. Such practice is done outside class hours. So the teaching and learning activity is done both inside and outside school time (Taylor, 2011: 219).

What is mentioned above means that there is a demand that they learn helping each other. Though there is only one learner having an examination at one time, he or she should ask his or her classmates for help. Likewise, the classmates should be willing to help. Active involvement, together with communication with dominant norms in humanization as background, contains forms of involvement, accessibility, and sharing and is based on process and change (Adema, 2013: 491). The process of teaching and learning Javanese *karawitan* art clearly shows character education that needs to be developed. It seems that the teaching and learning of art is capable of producing science and knowledge, skills, and moral values, all of which ends up with and opens into the elevation of multiple intelligence.

In the art teaching and learning process, like what happens at the Study Program of Pendidikan Seni Tari, Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, class material of dances from various regional and cultural background in Indonesia is taught to learners. The dances are divided into basic dances and dances from other cultures. The basic dances consist of the Yogyakarta and Surakarta Javanese dances while the dances from other cultures consist of Bali, Sunda, Sumatra, Kalimantan, and Sulawesi, among others, and foreign dances. After understanding the basic dances and the dances from other cultures, students have appreciation of other cultures, being able to see the similarities and differences among dance forms in Indonesia. What is more important is that learners respect other cultures (in line with multiculturalism as a philosophy).

The understanding of multiculturalism could happen because learners are taught not only to be skillful in a dance form but also to be able to master the socio-cultural knowledge about the dance concerned. In other words, a learner in the dance art teaching and learning process is faced with a dance form together with the life existence

of the dance in its social community. In an educational institution which manages art teaching and learning, learners are expected to master the art class material and the cultural knowledge encompassing it. As mentioned by an observer of music culture, Lundquist (1991: 38), the teaching and learning of the musical arts at the higher educational institution and particularly in its prospective-teachers' education program had better be complemented with skills with music from various cultures, added to also with the knowledge to apply various music on music teaching practice. In other words, educational institutions could manage the formation of multiculturalist persons.

4. Character Education

The values of multiculturalism would be built up in the learners when character education is really implemented. This is important to be pointed out when one recalls that character education, which is considered able to change the character of Indonesians as a nation, is at present still in the zone of educational discourse or would not be sufficiently effective if it just stops there on paper without the support of educational reality in a broad sense. Character education would not be implanted by itself without conscious effort to internalize it. One of the ways offered to support character education through a teaching and learning process that could be accounted for is the dance art education. The reason is that in the teaching and learning of the dance arts, learners study the culture aspect a lot. The demand on learners is not only that they are skillful in dance art practice but also, more importantly, that they deepen themselves in the values of multiculturalism because in the dance art teaching and learning process they learn, among others, emotion processing. That includes not only esthetic emotion but also the emotion creeping toward an ethical level such as solidarity, which causes the unity commonly manifested in the dance art teaching and learning process (Ward, 2013: 31).

The dance art teaching and learning, in the view of Lickona (2013: 175), contains six benefits of cooperative teaching and learning as part of the effort of character education, namely, (1) through learning cooperatively, students would be taught what the values of cooperation are like, (2) through learning cooperatively, students are helped to know each other by means of building communication in class, (3) through learning cooperatively, students are taught basic life skills with the purpose of being able to listen to other people's views and communicate effectively, (4) through learning cooperatively, students would be directed to improving their academic achievement, self-confidence, and attitude towards school, (5) through learning cooperatively, students are given alternative offers on one condition, namely, that there is no difference between the rich and the poor or between the clever and the stupid and they would learn to cooperate with each other and learn to care about others, and (6) through learning cooperatively, students would possess the potential to control the negative effect of competition. So learning to be cooperative would make students get used to giving more importance to cooperation rather than intensifying competition among themselves as learners.

Education has various functions. They are, among others, transferring science and knowledge, sharpening the mind, training skills, implanting moral values, forming awareness, and shaping character (Naim, 2008: 26-27). The function of education in shaping character is the one emphasized as very important in our world of education. Therefore, the direction of education is not only toward a matter of elevating the academic side or pursuing intellectual improvement of learners but also on the whole toward a matter of involving development of all sides of humanity in the learners both as private individuals and as citizens of the country. Therefore, the education that is based on the academic aspect only is clearly not quite right because it ignores other sides of learners' personality (Suparno, 2009: 48).

Sociologically, the art education process greatly involves the social aspect directly both inside and outside the academic scope. Inside the academic scope, the process of socially mingling like having to cooperate with each other is formal in nature. However, outside the academic scope, it is the social aspect which is far greater in load compared to the selfsame aspect when inside the academic scope. Take, for example, doing dance training outside the academic scope at night. The training is a form of independent and effective dance art teaching and learning that learners should do. The more training is done, the deeper one gets in studying the dance art class material.

It is based on a few definitions of education as follows. First, education refers to a process of human transformation obtained through a balanced development of the body, the mind, the spirit, and the intellect both personally and universally. Second, education implies a process of becoming oneself and discovering the meaning of life. The discovery of self-identity occurs in a union between oneself and other human beings (Nagata, 2002). Third, according to Ki Hadjar Dewantara (2004: 20-21), education is guidance in children's life and growth. The purpose of education is guiding all the inborn powers in children in order that as individuals and as society members they could achieve welfare and happiness of the highest degree possible.

From the three definitions of education, it could substantively be abstracted that education is not only a matter of improving the academic and intellectual sides of learners but also more comprehensively a matter involving all the sides of humanity belonging to learners both as private individuals and as citizens of the country. Therefore, the education based on the academic aspect only is clearly not quite right because it ignores the other sides of the learners concerned (Suparno, 2009: 48). Here it is explained that education is intended to result in persons who are not only smart but also in possession of multiculturalist and humanist character.

The paradigm of the educational system could no longer prioritize the aspect of academic ability as measurement of success in achievement. More than that, the

educational system should also begin the national character building. The educational system of the country should review the reinforcement and development done on aspects and quality in national character through learners. This is necessary following the increasingly descending level of quality in learners' etiquette and manners today (Muhaimin, 2010). In addition, the deteriorated condition in social behavior which makes it easy for society to let loose its emotions without restrain and to end up in conflict and violence had better soon undergo treatment through education.

In view of the many problems of conflict and violence facing the nation all this time, it seems that character education becomes urgent to be brought to reality very soon. The reason is that many experts state that character education could be made the solution in responding to this country's problems. When character education could be made a reality, children would become emotionally intelligent and not emotionally unrestrained. Emotional intelligence is an asset of the most importance in getting children ready for the future because then they would be able to face difference so that they could manage various conflicts and differences. It is the hope that multiculturalism in Indonesia, instead of being viewed as obstruction, would be viewed as something giving a chance for various national progress.

Education with the values of multiculturalism as basis (Donoghue, 2012: 1) becomes the beginning for us to cause to grow appreciation and respect of the differences occurring around our children. Education becomes a process of dissemination to offer the national values of peacefulness and friendliness. In the concept of life-long education, the family becomes the center of education because every individual acquires values of pluralism in living together. When in the family and at school our children have got used to experiencing differences as enrichment developing their personal selves, then we might expect a democratic future Indonesia. It means that there are values of respect for the presence of other people there (Kartono, 2009: 45).

Likewise, Dawam (2003: 100) says that multicultural education is a process of developing all the potentials of human beings who respect cultural heterogeneity as a consequence of variety in culture, ethnicity, race, and religion. Multicultural education develops the interpretation and understanding of values of multiculturalism, which is a philosophy about varied culture. The variety of culture makes it inevitable for mutual understanding, tolerance, and the like to be around in order that there comes a life which is in peace and welfare and kept away from endless conflict (Naim, 2008: 125).

5. Conclusion

In the dance art teaching and learning there are character-forming aspects such as the values of cooperating with one another, building inter-learner communication, learning to listen to others' views, building up self-confidence in making achievements, treating other learners indiscriminately, and learning to consider others. Those character-forming aspects are values of multiculturalism which result from the dance art teaching and learning system through quite a lengthy process. Throughout that process learners undergo rigorous training within a time span, going through the stages of class material confirmation, doing practice together, and having examinations. The process, with its features of communication building, mutual cooperation, treatment of fellow learners with no discrimination, and others, results in values of multiculturalism in the learners.

One of those offered to support character education through an accountable teaching and learning process is education in the dance arts. The reason is that in the dance art teaching and learning learners do considerable study of cultural aspects. The demand on the learners is not only that they are to be skillful in dance art practice but also, more importantly, that they are to deepen themselves in values of multiculturalism because one of the activities in the dance art teaching and learning process is emotion processing. Not only esthetic emotion but also emotion creeping to the grounds of

ethics, solidarity, and unity could be manifested in the dance art teaching and learning process.

Thus, the dance art teaching and learning process could be viewed as a form of education with a multiculturalism insight which could be used to study the reality of the varied Indonesian culture. It is in the sense that learners do not just externalize (or express) and then internalize (or absorb) the cultural situation around them; on the contrary, they directly enter the cultural situation so that hopefully they become culture-aware. They are invited to directly practice, feel, and live the dance. In short, in the dance art teaching and learning process, learners directly connect themselves with the object, then study and reflect on it, and at the last stage internalize it so that they could successfully apply the values of multiculturalism.

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