

The Aesthetic Expression of Ronggeng Culture in *Sang Penari*

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Abstract

Sang Penari presents Ronggeng culture not simply as a traditional performance inherited from village life, but as an artistic form closely connected with the body, memory, social identity, and local cultural experience. Through the character of Srintil, the film turns Ronggeng dance into a central visual and emotional language. The movement of the dancer, traditional costume, music, ritual scenes, rural landscape, and the rhythm of cinematography work together to create an aesthetic image of Ronggeng culture that is both attractive and emotionally complex. This paper examines the aesthetic expression of Ronggeng culture in *Sang Penari* from several related aspects, with particular attention to dance and bodily performance, visual composition, costume and color, music and ritual, and the construction of female identity. Rather than treating Ronggeng only as a cultural symbol, the discussion focuses on how the film transforms traditional performance into cinematic experience. Srintil's body is especially important in this process. It is at once the medium through which Ronggeng is performed and a site where cultural expectation, personal feeling, and social pressure meet. The film therefore gives traditional beauty a complicated emotional dimension. Its representation of Ronggeng is not a neutral reproduction of local tradition, but a selective and aesthetic reconstruction shaped by cinematic language. Through this reconstruction, *Sang Penari* preserves recognizable elements of local culture while also giving them new visual, emotional, and narrative meanings. The film shows how traditional performance can continue to function as cultural memory within contemporary Indonesian cinema.

Keywords: *Sang Penari*, Ronggeng culture, traditional dance, visual aesthetics, female identity, cultural memory

1. Introduction

1.1 The Cultural Meaning of Ronggeng Tradition

Ronggeng is a traditional performance form associated with Javanese cultural life, combining dance, music, bodily movement, and communal participation. In many local contexts, it has been connected with village entertainment, collective celebration, and ritual practice. Its cultural

meaning therefore goes beyond choreography itself. The performance depends on the interaction between dancer, musicians, and community, while the female dancer occupies the central position. Through gesture, rhythm, costume, and bodily movement, she becomes both an individual performer and a carrier of local cultural meaning (Yulianeta, 2018).

Ronggeng also preserves elements of collective

memory. Its links with village life, traditional music, and communal gatherings give the form a strong sense of cultural continuity. This background is especially important in *Sang Penari*. Srintil's emergence as a Ronggeng dancer is not presented simply as the discovery of personal talent. Her new identity is recognized and shaped by the people of Dukuh Paruk, and it gradually affects both her place within the community and her relationship with Rasus. Ronggeng thus becomes more than a performance in the film. It represents local tradition, cultural belonging, and the tension between collective expectation and individual choice (Nusuary & Meutia, 2021; Surherni et al., 2021).

1.2 The Transformation of Ronggeng Culture into Cinematic Art

When Ronggeng culture enters film, it is transformed from a local performance practice into an audiovisual experience. *Sang Penari* uses movement, costume, music, facial expression, and village scenery to give the tradition a clear cinematic form. The film does not simply record Ronggeng as cultural heritage. It selects and reorganizes its elements through framing, editing, sound, and narrative, allowing the performance to acquire new emotional and visual meanings (Inda, 2016; Suaka, 2014).

This transformation is closely connected with Srintil's character. Ronggeng scenes are not separated from the story but become part of her personal development. Her dancing affects how she is seen by the village and how she understands her own identity. Traditional culture is therefore presented not as a static background, but as something that enters individual experience. Through cinematic language, *Sang Penari* turns Ronggeng into both a cultural symbol and an important part of the film's emotional expression (Inda, 2016; Suaka, 2014).

2. The Aesthetic Expression of Ronggeng Dance and Body

2.1 Dance Movement and Rhythmic Beauty

Dance is the most direct way through which Ronggeng culture becomes visible in *Sang Penari*. Srintil's performance is built from controlled gestures, changes in posture, hand movement, body turns, and shifts of weight. These movements are not excessively dramatic. Their beauty comes from continuity, balance, and repetition, which gives the dance a restrained but

recognizable visual character.

Rhythm is equally important. The dancer's movements closely follow the musical accompaniment, and the body seems to respond to sound through pauses, turns, and repeated gestures. The alternation between movement and brief stillness creates a measured pace, preventing the performance from becoming visually monotonous. In this way, rhythm is produced not only by music but also by the timing of the body itself.

The film also presents Ronggeng as a communal performance rather than an isolated stage act. Srintil dances before people who understand the cultural meaning of the tradition, so her movement becomes part of a shared social experience. Through dance, she gains visibility and recognition within Dukuh Paruk. The aesthetic quality of Ronggeng therefore comes not only from physical movement, but from the connection between body, music, audience, and cultural identity (Yulianeta, 2018).

2.2 The Body as a Medium of Cultural Expression

In *Sang Penari*, the body is not only the physical instrument through which Ronggeng dance is performed. It also becomes a medium through which cultural meanings are made visible. Srintil's gestures, posture, movement, and presence all carry the expectations attached to the role of a Ronggeng dancer. Once she is recognized by the community, her body is no longer understood only in personal terms. It gradually becomes connected with a public cultural identity (Nusuary & Meutia, 2021).

This gives bodily expression an important place in the film. Srintil does not communicate only through dialogue. Her emotional condition is often suggested through movement, facial expression, and the way she performs before others. The body therefore becomes part of the narrative language. It allows the film to connect individual feeling with traditional performance without separating the two. What the audience sees is not simply a dancer completing a sequence of movements, but a character whose inner state is repeatedly reflected through bodily control and performance.

At the same time, Srintil's body carries symbolic meaning for Dukuh Paruk. Through her performance, she becomes associated with the continuation of Ronggeng tradition and with the cultural identity of the village. Her body is valued because it can reproduce familiar

movements and forms, but this recognition also brings expectation. The more strongly she is identified as a Ronggeng dancer, the more difficult it becomes to separate her personal identity from the role assigned to her by the community (Nusuary & Meutia, 2021; Yulianeta, 2017).

This tension becomes more visible when the film moves between public performance and private experience. In performance, Srintil's body is controlled, visible, and socially recognized. Outside those moments, the same body may appear hesitant, tired, or emotionally exposed. The contrast prevents her from becoming a fixed cultural symbol. It reminds the viewer that the body carrying tradition is still the body of an individual with personal feelings and choices.

The body in *Sang Penari* therefore functions at two levels. It expresses individual emotion, but it also carries collective memory and cultural meaning. This dual function gives Ronggeng performance much of its complexity. Through Srintil, the film presents the body as the point where tradition and personal experience meet, making embodied performance an important part of the film's aesthetic expression.

2.3 Performance, Emotion and Character Construction

Performance in *Sang Penari* is closely tied to the construction of Srintil's character. Her identity is not revealed only through dialogue or plot development. It also emerges through the way she performs, responds to the audience, and carries herself before and after the dance. Ronggeng performance therefore becomes part of character narration. It shows how Srintil gradually moves from an ordinary village girl into a figure who is publicly recognized and culturally defined.

Emotion enters this process in a subtle way. Srintil's performances do not always carry the same emotional tone. Confidence, attraction, hesitation, and pressure appear through facial expression, bodily control, and the intensity of movement. These changes allow the audience to sense the difference between the public image of the Ronggeng dancer and Srintil's private emotional state. The contrast is especially important because her performance can remain formally controlled even when her personal life becomes increasingly unstable.

Her development is also reflected in the changing meaning of performance. At one stage, dancing

brings recognition and gives Srintil a strong sense of presence within Dukuh Paruk. Later, the same cultural role becomes more closely connected with expectation, emotional conflict, and limited personal choice. The performance itself may still appear beautiful, but the viewer gradually understands that its meaning has changed for the character. In this sense, the film uses repetition with variation: Ronggeng returns throughout the narrative, yet each return carries a slightly different emotional weight (Nusuary & Meutia, 2021).

The relationship between performance and emotion also deepens the tension between Srintil and Rasus. Her role as a Ronggeng dancer gives her recognition within the village, but it also places distance between her public identity and personal desire. The film uses performance to make this conflict visible rather than explaining it directly. Srintil's changing attitude toward dance, the way she looks at others, and the emotional atmosphere surrounding her performances all contribute to the development of the relationship.

This is important for character construction because Srintil is never reduced to a passive representative of tradition. Her performances show both adaptation and resistance. She accepts aspects of the role assigned to her, yet her emotional reactions reveal that this identity is not always fully aligned with her private wishes. The gap between outward performance and inward feeling gives her character greater depth.

Through this combination of performance and emotion, *Sang Penari* avoids presenting Srintil as a fixed symbol of Ronggeng culture. She remains a character with personal desires, doubts, and emotional contradictions. Ronggeng shapes her identity, but it does not fully define her. This tension between cultural role and individual feeling makes performance one of the most important tools through which the film constructs Srintil's emotional world.

3. Visual Aesthetics of Ronggeng Culture in *Sang Penari*

3.1 Costume, Color and Traditional Visual Symbols

Costume is one of the most visible elements through which Ronggeng culture is given a distinct visual identity in *Sang Penari*. Srintil's appearance during performance differs clearly from her everyday image. Traditional dress, makeup, hair arrangement, and accessories transform her from an ordinary village girl into a recognizable Ronggeng dancer. This visual

change is not merely decorative. It marks the moment when personal identity is placed within a cultural role and makes that role immediately legible to the audience (Nusuary & Meutia, 2021).

Color further strengthens this effect. The film often places the warmer tones of costume, skin, earth, and village surroundings within the same visual field, creating a close relationship between the performer and the local environment. Rather than using color only for visual attraction, the film allows it to support the atmosphere of Ronggeng performance. Brighter and more carefully arranged visual elements become especially noticeable during performance scenes, while quieter tones in other moments help distinguish public display from private experience (Hendiawan & Obadiah, 2025).

Traditional visual symbols also appear through clothing, ornaments, performance objects, and the spatial arrangement of the dance. These elements help situate Ronggeng within a particular cultural world without requiring constant verbal explanation. Their meaning comes partly from repetition. As similar visual forms return throughout the film, they gradually become associated with Srintil's identity and with the cultural memory of Dukuh Paruk.

The visual beauty of Ronggeng in *Sang Penari* therefore depends on the combination of costume, color, body, and setting. None of these elements works entirely on its own. Together they construct an image of tradition that is attractive but not static. As Srintil's circumstances change, the same visual signs can carry different emotional meanings. Costume and color thus contribute not only to cultural representation but also to the film's changing mood and to the development of Srintil's identity.

3.2 Village Space and Local Cultural Atmosphere

The village setting in *Sang Penari* plays an important role in shaping the visual character of Ronggeng culture. Dukuh Paruk is presented through houses, open ground, paths, fields, vegetation, and communal gathering spaces. These elements create a rural environment in which performance appears closely connected with everyday life. Ronggeng does not seem to belong to a separate theatrical space. It grows out of the same environment in which people work, meet, talk, and participate in village activities (Hendiawan & Obadiah, 2025).

This spatial arrangement gives the film a strong sense of locality. The distance between performer

and audience is often small, and the surrounding village remains visible during performance scenes. Such visual choices make Ronggeng part of a shared cultural atmosphere rather than an isolated spectacle. The landscape, architecture, and communal spaces provide a setting in which the tradition appears socially rooted and familiar to the people who live there.

The village environment also supports the emotional tone of the film. Open rural spaces can suggest freedom, intimacy, and continuity with nature, while more enclosed or crowded settings often intensify social pressure and collective attention. The film uses these contrasts without turning the setting into a purely symbolic background. Space remains part of ordinary life, yet it also influences how Srintil's experiences are perceived.

Through Dukuh Paruk, *Sang Penari* gives Ronggeng culture a clear local atmosphere. The visual identity of the tradition is created not only by the dancer but also by the environment around her. Village space, community presence, and natural scenery work together to make Ronggeng appear as a lived cultural practice, closely tied to place and collective memory (Hendiawan & Obadiah, 2025).

3.3 Cinematography and the Poetic Representation of Tradition

Cinematography gives Ronggeng culture in *Sang Penari* a poetic quality that goes beyond direct documentation. The film does not simply place traditional dance in front of the camera and allow the performance to speak for itself. Instead, the visual treatment determines how the viewer approaches the dancer, the village, and the cultural environment surrounding Ronggeng. The body, landscape, light, and everyday spaces are frequently brought into the same visual structure. In this way, traditional performance appears as part of a lived world rather than as an isolated cultural object (Hendiawan & Obadiah, 2025).

The changing distance of the camera is particularly important. Wider shots often place Srintil within the village or natural surroundings, making her body only one element within a larger cultural landscape. These images connect Ronggeng with Dukuh Paruk and suggest that the tradition belongs to the collective life of the community. Medium shots bring greater attention to bodily movement and interaction, while close-ups of the face, hands, or small

gestures create a more intimate view of the performer. The movement between these distances allows the film to shift between Ronggeng as a communal tradition and Srintil's personal experience of performing it.

Close-ups are especially effective because they prevent performance from becoming purely spectacular. The viewer is encouraged to notice small changes in Srintil's expression rather than focusing only on the complete dance. A glance, a restrained smile, or a moment of hesitation can alter the emotional meaning of a scene. The camera therefore gives individual feeling a place within the formal structure of traditional performance. Ronggeng remains visually recognizable, but it is never completely separated from the person who performs it.

Composition also contributes to the film's treatment of tradition. Srintil is frequently framed in relation to other figures, village spaces, or natural surroundings rather than against an empty background. Such compositions make the social dimension of Ronggeng visible. When she performs before the villagers, her position within the frame emphasizes both her importance and her exposure to collective attention. In quieter scenes, the placement of her figure within a larger landscape can produce a very different effect, suggesting distance, uncertainty, or isolation. The meaning of the body therefore changes according to the visual space that surrounds it (Hendiawan & Obadijah, 2025).

Natural scenery is another significant part of the film's poetic style. Fields, trees, earth, open paths, and rural horizons are not simply establishing images used to identify location. They create a visual rhythm that connects human activity with the environment of Dukuh Paruk. The relatively unhurried presentation of these spaces also gives the film moments of visual pause. Such pauses are important because they allow the story to move away from direct action and toward mood. Tradition is experienced through atmosphere, not only through explicit scenes of dancing or ritual.

Lighting strengthens this effect. Much of the film's visual character depends on relatively natural-looking light and subdued transitions between brightness and shadow. Rather than presenting traditional culture through highly decorative imagery at every moment, the cinematography often retains the texture of ordinary village life. This restraint makes the

more visually concentrated performance scenes stand out without making them feel detached from their surroundings. The aestheticization of Ronggeng is therefore present, but it does not completely remove the tradition from everyday experience.

The pace of the images also contributes to the poetic representation of Ronggeng culture. The film often allows gestures, faces, and landscapes to remain on screen long enough for their emotional quality to develop. This is different from using rapid editing simply to emphasize the energy of dance. A slower visual rhythm gives greater attention to bodily detail and the relationship between performer and environment. It also creates room for ambiguity. The viewer may appreciate the beauty of Srintil's performance while simultaneously sensing the pressure that accompanies her cultural role.

This visual approach becomes particularly meaningful because beauty in *Sang Penari* is rarely uncomplicated. The same images that celebrate Srintil's presence as a dancer can also reveal her vulnerability. A close view of her face may emphasize confidence in one scene and emotional distance in another. A wide view of the village may suggest communal belonging, but it can also make visible the strength of the social world that surrounds her. Cinematography therefore does more than beautify tradition. It gives traditional culture emotional complexity.

The poetic quality of *Sang Penari* ultimately comes from this combination of cultural detail and visual suggestion. Ronggeng is presented through recognizable movements and settings, but the camera continually adds another level of meaning through distance, composition, light, and duration. Traditional culture becomes something that can be felt visually rather than merely identified. By bringing together the dancer's body, the village environment, and Srintil's changing emotional state, the film transforms Ronggeng into a cinematic language of memory, desire, belonging, and loss.

4. Music, Ritual and the Sensory Aesthetics of Ronggeng Culture

4.1 Traditional Music and the Rhythm of Film Narrative

Traditional music is closely connected with the presence of Ronggeng in *Sang Penari*. It does more than accompany dance. Musical rhythm helps define the atmosphere of performance and gives bodily movement a clearer structure. When

Srintil dances, sound and movement appear to develop together, allowing the viewer to experience Ronggeng as an integrated form rather than as a sequence of visual gestures alone (Yulianeta, 2018).

The role of music also extends beyond performance scenes. Changes in tempo and intensity contribute to the rhythm of the film itself. More lively passages can strengthen the communal energy surrounding Ronggeng, while quieter musical moments create space for reflection and emotional uncertainty. In this way, music helps the narrative move between public celebration and private feeling without requiring an obvious break between the two.

Music is also important because it connects individual experience with collective memory. For the people of Dukuh Paruk, the sounds associated with Ronggeng belong to a familiar cultural environment. Their repeated appearance gives the performance a sense of continuity and recognition. For Srintil, however, the same musical setting gradually acquires a more personal meaning as her identity becomes increasingly tied to the role of the dancer.

The rhythm of the film therefore depends partly on the interaction between music, performance, and emotion. Traditional sound does not remain in the background. It shapes how scenes are felt and how the viewer responds to changes in Srintil's situation. By linking musical rhythm with bodily movement and narrative development, *Sang Penari* turns sound into an important part of the aesthetic experience of Ronggeng culture.

4.2 Ritual Elements and the Aestheticization of Tradition

Ritual elements give Ronggeng culture in *Sang Penari* a meaning that extends beyond entertainment. The process through which Srintil is recognized as a Ronggeng dancer is connected with collective belief, custom, and expectations within Dukuh Paruk. These elements place her performance within a larger cultural order. Dance is not presented as an individual artistic choice alone; it is surrounded by practices that give the role social and symbolic legitimacy (Nusuary & Meutia, 2021; Surherni et al., 2021).

The film aestheticizes these ritual elements through gesture, costume, sound, and carefully arranged communal scenes. Rather than explaining every traditional practice in detail, it often allows meaning to emerge from

atmosphere. Repeated actions, the presence of elders, changes in Srintil's appearance, and the attention of the villagers create a sense that becoming a Ronggeng dancer involves a transition in status. The ritual quality of these moments makes the transformation visible without turning the film into an ethnographic record (Nusuary & Meutia, 2021).

At the same time, ritual is not presented as something entirely harmonious. It can provide cultural continuity and strengthen the connection between Srintil and the community, but it also introduces expectations that affect her personal life. The beauty of tradition is therefore accompanied by a certain pressure. What appears visually meaningful to the community can carry a more complicated emotional meaning for the individual who must perform the role.

Through this treatment, *Sang Penari* turns ritual into part of its aesthetic language. Traditional practices are preserved as recognizable cultural forms, yet they are also reshaped by cinematic composition and narrative. Ritual thus becomes both a sign of cultural continuity and a way of expressing the tension between inherited tradition and personal experience.

4.3 The Integration of Visual and Auditory Experience

One of the distinctive features of *Sang Penari* is the way visual and auditory elements are combined during Ronggeng performance. Dance movement, costume, facial expression, music, and the responses of the surrounding community rarely function separately. They are experienced together, creating a sensory form in which the viewer receives cultural meaning through both image and sound.

This integration is especially clear in performance scenes. The rhythm of music gives movement a temporal structure, while the camera selects gestures, expressions, and details that correspond with changes in sound. The result is not simply a visual record with musical accompaniment. Sound shapes the way movement is perceived, and movement gives physical form to rhythm. The two elements reinforce each other.

The surrounding environment also contributes to this sensory experience. Village space, audience presence, natural scenery, and traditional sound create a cultural atmosphere that is difficult to reduce to a single visual symbol. Ronggeng is presented as something lived and shared. Its aesthetic effect comes from the combination of

what is seen, heard, and emotionally sensed within the scene.

Through this audiovisual integration, *Sang Penari* gives Ronggeng culture a more complete cinematic form. Traditional performance becomes not only visible but also emotionally present. The interaction of image and sound allows the film to preserve the communal and performative qualities of Ronggeng while transforming them into a distinctly cinematic experience.

5. Ronggeng Culture, Female Identity and Aesthetic Meaning

5.1 *Srintil as a Ronggeng Dancer*

Srintil occupies the center of *Sang Penari* because her personal development is closely connected with her identity as a Ronggeng dancer. Her transformation is not presented simply as the acquisition of a performing skill. Becoming a Ronggeng changes the way she is seen by the people of Dukuh Paruk and gradually gives her a public identity that extends beyond her private self. Her dancing brings recognition, but it also places her within a cultural role that already carries established meanings and expectations (Nusuary & Meutia, 2021).

At the beginning of this transformation, Srintil's ability to dance gives her a new visibility within the village. Performance provides her with confidence and a distinct social position. When she appears as a Ronggeng dancer, her body, costume, gesture, and expression work together to create an image that is different from her everyday appearance. She becomes not only Srintil as an individual, but also a figure through whom the community recognizes a familiar tradition. This change makes Ronggeng central to the construction of her identity.

Her position as a dancer, however, is never purely artistic. It is shaped by the expectations of the community. The villagers value Srintil partly because she is able to continue a cultural practice that is meaningful to Dukuh Paruk. Her personal identity is therefore gradually connected with a collective need. This gives her status, but it also reduces the distance between her private life and public role. The more completely she is recognized as a Ronggeng dancer, the more difficult it becomes for her to exist outside that identity (Juhanah et al., 2023; Nusuary & Meutia, 2021).

The film gives this process emotional complexity

by refusing to present Srintil as either a passive victim of tradition or a completely independent performer. She takes pride in aspects of her role and responds to the attention that comes with performance. At the same time, the demands surrounding Ronggeng do not always correspond with what she wants in her personal life. Her identity is formed through this unstable relationship between participation and limitation. She belongs to the tradition, yet she is not fully contained by it.

This complexity is also reflected in the contrast between Srintil's public presence and her private emotions. During performance, she can appear confident, composed, and visually commanding. Away from the performance space, other aspects of her character become visible: attachment, uncertainty, disappointment, and desire. These differences do not create two completely separate identities. Rather, they show that the Ronggeng role is only one part of a more complicated self.

Srintil therefore functions as more than the central performer of Ronggeng culture in the film. Her character allows *Sang Penari* to explore what happens when cultural identity becomes deeply connected with personal identity. Through her, the beauty of traditional performance is given a human dimension. Ronggeng provides recognition and belonging, but it also creates expectations that shape the course of an individual life. This tension prepares the ground for the film's deeper exploration of female identity, personal desire, and the aesthetic meaning of Srintil's experience.

5.2 *Female Beauty between Tradition and Individual Desire*

Female beauty in *Sang Penari* is closely connected with the cultural role of the Ronggeng dancer. Srintil is admired not only because of her physical appearance but because her body is able to embody a form of beauty that the community already recognizes. Gesture, costume, movement, and performance transform her into a public figure whose attractiveness is inseparable from tradition. Beauty here is shaped by cultural practice rather than treated as a purely personal quality (Nusuary & Meutia, 2021; Yulianeta, 2017).

This cultural recognition gives Srintil a certain power. When she performs, she attracts attention and occupies the visual center of the community. Her body becomes expressive, confident, and socially valued. The film does not present this

visibility as completely negative. Ronggeng gives Srintil a presence that she would not otherwise possess. She is not merely looked at. She also performs actively, controls her movement, and creates much of the attraction surrounding her.

The freedom suggested by performance, however, is limited by the expectations attached to the Ronggeng role. The same cultural system that celebrates Srintil also influences how her body should be seen and what position she is expected to occupy. Her beauty becomes publicly recognized, but it is never entirely private. Other people participate in defining its meaning. Admiration and control begin to exist together, and this tension becomes stronger as her identity as a dancer is more firmly established (Juhanah et al., 2023; Nusuary & Meutia, 2021).

Her relationship with Rasus gives the conflict a more personal dimension. Srintil wants emotional closeness, yet this desire does not always fit comfortably with the expectations surrounding her public role. What she wants as an individual and what the village expects from a Ronggeng dancer gradually move in different directions. The conflict shifts the discussion of beauty away from appearance alone. It becomes connected with intimacy, personal choice, and the extent to which Srintil can decide what her own identity means.

The contrast between public performance and private emotion makes this conflict more visible. During Ronggeng scenes, Srintil often appears composed and visually powerful. In quieter moments, hesitation and vulnerability become more noticeable. These changes reveal the distance between the image expected by the community and the emotional life behind it. The admired performer and the woman with personal desires are closely connected, but they are never completely the same.

Female beauty in *Sang Penari* is therefore not presented as a stable or uncomplicated quality. Srintil gains recognition through her appearance and performance, yet that recognition also places her within a role that is difficult to escape. Her body becomes the meeting point of traditional values, social attention, personal feeling, and individual desire. The complexity of her character comes from this unresolved relationship rather than from beauty itself.

5.3 The Aesthetic Meaning of Tragedy

Tragedy gives *Sang Penari* much of its emotional depth. Srintil's story develops from the attraction

and vitality of Ronggeng performance toward loss, separation, and personal disillusionment. The beauty associated with dance never disappears, but its meaning changes as the narrative progresses. What once appears to offer recognition and belonging gradually becomes connected with emotional cost. This shift gives the film a tragic quality without turning its visual world entirely dark or pessimistic.

Srintil's tragedy is closely tied to the conflict between cultural identity and personal desire. She is valued as a Ronggeng dancer, yet the role that gives her status also limits the possibility of living only according to her own wishes. Her attachment to Rasus makes this conflict more painful. Their relationship is shaped not only by affection but also by the different paths imposed by social roles and historical circumstances. The emotional force of the film comes partly from the fact that neither love nor tradition can easily resolve these tensions (Isfansyah, 2011; Nusuary & Meutia, 2021).

The tragic quality of the story is also reinforced by contrast. Scenes of dance, music, costume, and communal celebration are visually rich, yet they exist beside moments of uncertainty, distance, and loss. The film does not separate beauty from suffering. Instead, the two often appear within the same narrative space. A performance may remain graceful even when the viewer understands that Srintil's personal situation has become more difficult. This contrast makes aesthetic pleasure more complex because beauty is accompanied by an awareness of what the character is losing.

Srintil's changing presence also gives tragedy a visual form. Earlier performances emphasize confidence and public recognition, while later emotional changes affect the way the viewer reads her body and expression. The dancer remains culturally visible, but that visibility no longer guarantees emotional security. Her public image continues to carry value for others even when her private experience becomes increasingly fragile. The gap between these two states becomes one of the film's strongest sources of sadness.

The tragedy of *Sang Penari* does not simply come from individual misfortune. It emerges from the collision of personal feeling, cultural expectation, and a changing social world. Srintil's experience gives Ronggeng culture a more complicated aesthetic meaning. Tradition is shown as

beautiful and meaningful, but also capable of placing demands on the individual who embodies it. The final emotional effect lies in this tension: the film preserves the beauty of Ronggeng while allowing the viewer to see the vulnerability of the person who carries that beauty.

6. Cultural Memory and Contemporary Value of Ronggeng Aesthetics

Ronggeng in *Sang Penari* is closely connected with cultural memory. The film preserves not only the image of a traditional dancer but also the wider environment in which the performance gains meaning. Music, costume, bodily movement, village gatherings, ritual practices, and local scenery are brought together as parts of a shared cultural world. These elements allow the film to record how Ronggeng is remembered within the social life of Dukuh Paruk rather than presenting it as an isolated artistic form (Yulianeta, 2018).

Cinema also changes the way this memory is preserved. Traditional performance usually depends on direct participation and repeated practice, while film can reorganize those experiences into lasting visual and auditory images. *Sang Penari* selects particular gestures, sounds, colors, and spaces and gives them narrative importance. The result is not an exact reproduction of Ronggeng tradition, but a cinematic reconstruction shaped by artistic choices. Cultural memory is preserved through selection, interpretation, and emotional emphasis (Inda, 2016; Suaka, 2014).

This reconstruction gives Ronggeng a contemporary value. Viewers who are unfamiliar with the tradition can encounter it through the film's characters and visual language, while those who already know it may recognize familiar cultural elements in a new form. The film makes traditional performance accessible without completely separating it from its local background. Ronggeng remains connected with community, memory, and identity, but it also enters a modern medium capable of reaching audiences beyond the village setting.

The value of this representation lies partly in its complexity. *Sang Penari* does not treat tradition only as something beautiful that should be admired. It also shows the pressures, expectations, and emotional conflicts that can accompany cultural roles. This prevents Ronggeng from becoming a decorative symbol of

heritage. Its aesthetic value is presented together with its human consequences (Nusuary & Meutia, 2021; Yulianeta, 2017).

Ronggeng aesthetics in the film therefore remain meaningful because they connect cultural continuity with individual experience. Dance, music, ritual, and visual imagery keep local memory visible, while Srintil's story gives that memory emotional depth. Through film, Ronggeng is not simply preserved as a tradition from the past. It is reinterpreted as a living cultural form that can still raise questions about identity, belonging, gender, and the relationship between inherited customs and personal life.

7. Conclusion

Sang Penari presents Ronggeng culture through a combination of dance, bodily expression, costume, music, ritual, village space, and cinematic imagery. These elements are not used simply to decorate the story. They shape the visual and emotional character of the film and give Ronggeng a clear cultural presence. Srintil's performance becomes the point where traditional aesthetics, communal expectations, and personal experience come together.

The film's treatment of the body is especially important. Srintil's gestures and movements carry the beauty of Ronggeng, but her body also becomes closely tied to the cultural role assigned to her by Dukuh Paruk. Her public identity as a dancer brings recognition and visibility, while her private emotions reveal another side of that identity. The contrast gives her character depth and prevents Ronggeng from being presented as a simple symbol of tradition.

Visual style strengthens this complexity. Costume, color, rural scenery, camera distance, lighting, and composition turn Ronggeng into a cinematic experience rather than a direct reproduction of traditional performance. Music and ritual add another sensory layer, while the tragic development of Srintil's story changes the emotional meaning of the beauty shown on screen. What begins as an image of cultural vitality gradually becomes connected with conflict, loss, and personal limitation.

The aesthetic value of Ronggeng in *Sang Penari* lies in this mixture of beauty and tension. The film preserves recognizable features of local tradition, yet it also allows them to be questioned and reinterpreted through individual experience. Ronggeng appears as a living cultural form rather than a fixed image of the past, carrying

memory, identity, and emotional meaning into contemporary Indonesian cinema.

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