

The Practice Of Creative Music And Dance Performances *Of The Asli Mala Group*

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Abstract

What are the contexts and conditions important to the sustainability of an expressive culture, especially in the face of an everchanging socio-cultural environment? This research examines the strategies used by the Asli Mala performance group to adapt the traditional Rong Ngeng Pattani into their creative performances. Using data gathered from observations and interviews during fieldwork in 2018-19 and drawing on Bourdieu's practice theory, I asked: How might we read Asli Mala's creative works in terms of fields, capitals, and strategies? While I argue that there are dominant and dominated agents operating under four sub-fields, the strategies employed by the Asli Mala involve a constant negotiation of their performance productions to meet the terms and conditions of the sub-fields. These strategies emerged from changing habitus caused by the accumulation and expansion of different forms of capital. Despite its popularity, these new performances are still considered unauthentic by traditional Rong Ngeng Pattani advocates.

Keywords: *Traditional Rong Ngeng Pattani, Strategy, Capital, Habitus, Asli Mala, Creative Music, Creative Dance, Pierre Bourdieu, Thailand, Cultural Sustainability*

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Introduction

Rong Ngeng is one of the common folk dances of Southern Thailand. The dance is performed in pairs, usually male and female. The primary accompanying instruments are a *Rammanna* frame drum, a gong, and a violin. Rong ngeng is usually performed during festive events. According to local history, during the late 19th century female clerks in the Rayayaring Palace of Phraya Phiphitsenamat received Rong Ngeng training and gave performances as a welcoming gesture to state guests at festive events (Rueangnarong, 2011:77-79).

Based on scholarly literature, rong ngeng can be divided into two categories. One is the rong ngeng of the western coast of Southern Thailand in the provinces of Krabi, Phuket, and Satun. The other is that of the East coast in the three southern border provinces of Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat (Khwanpradap, 1997). Both types of rong ngeng are distinct from one another in terms of instruments, ensemble, repertoire, choreography and clothing, among other things. Each rong ngeng performance group has specific customs and traditions that distinguish one group's tradition from other.

In a book titled *Bu-nga Pattani: The Folklore of the Southern Border Thai Muslim*, a Southern Thai folk music expert states, regarding the performing arts in the three Southern Thai border provinces, that “these performances are now being eclipsed by those coming from the West and the Central Thai. Like the folk performances in other regions, they are fading away over time” (Rueangnarong, 2011:77). That-saniya Khanthacha, performance creator of Asli Mala performance group adds, “rong ngeng in Pattani is also facing a decline in popularity. Changing social contexts, differing interpretation of music and dance versus religions are some of the main reasons behind the fall” (Khanthacha, 2017: personal communication).

A survey reveals that there have been attempts by multiple performance groups and the Rong Ngeng Pattani Practitioners' network to revive the performance's social significance to its local culture. This has led to the rong ngeng preservation initiatives and activities in several areas. For instance, the Revitalization and Preservation of Southern Thai Folk Music in Pattani was active during 2000 (Anukul, 2007:34-37). Another example are new performance creations of rong ngeng in Songkhla province by students of Songkhla Rajbhat University and Thaksin University. These movements were to encourage the engagement of local rong ngeng practitioners with the student's own creative works (Phromnuchathip, 2017: personal communication).

In addition, rong ngeng competitions were held throughout the three Southern border provinces, notably the 56th rong ngeng competition held along the Wathanatham road during the city celebrations and the Red Cross exhibition in Yala province in 2018. Preservation and transmission of rong ngeng in Southern Thailand has since been undertaken seriously by practitioners, academic and government institutions and the private sectors alike.

In 2018, Asli Mala became an outstanding rong ngeng group in Songkhla province for their performance novelty. Yet they identify themselves as inheritors of the

traditional form of rong ngeng Pattani from the local practitioners. Two individuals are the driving force behind the Asli Mala's creative works. Aphichat Khanthacha is responsible for musical works. Aphichat is a student of Khader Waedeng, a national artist renowned for folk violin virtuosity (Department of Cultural Promotion, 2006). The second individual is Thatsaniya Khanthacha, a choreographer who graduated from Songkhla Rajbhat University. The university is at the forefront of fostering creative performances as an integral part of its Bachelor of Arts degree, offered by the arts department. Thatsaniya receives training in the traditional rong ngeng Pattani and Pattani folk dance from several teachers including Chao Chantharachit, Kaukiat Tharanon, Nopphamat Phromnuchathip, and Nawapaun Sukumaraphan.

Asli Mala is a performance group that embraces the "traditional" knowledge – a system of belief, rules, customs, and cultures – of rong ngeng Pattani, and they reflect it through their costumes, instruments, repertoire, and choreography. This traditional knowledge is subsequently blended with the innovation of new creative performances.

Asli Mala was founded in 2004. The group has a distinct approach to the accompanying musical repertoire for rong ngeng Pattani. I will refer to this approach as the "traditional rong ngeng Pattani." This repertoire is transmitted from Khader Waedeng, whereas the choreography is handed down from the rong ngeng groups of Chao Chantharachit, Kaukiat Tharanon, and Nopphamat Phromnuchathip.

In 2008, Asli Mala debuted with three performance categories: traditional rong ngeng Pattani, Pattani folk dances, and creative works. The choice of performance is contingent upon the prescribed convention of the event in question, the requirements of the hirer, and the expectations of the audience.

Asli Mala plays a role not only in preserving and continuing traditional rong ngeng Pattani and other folk dances from the province but also in creating new performances in response to changing contexts, thereby constantly expanding its service territory. For this reason, I am interested in the practice that occurs within the creation of music and dance by examining the strategies used by Asli Mala to adapt traditional rong ngeng Pattani and incorporate it into their creative performances during 2008-2018. I draw on Pierre Bourdieu's (1997) cultural critique as the main theoretical framework. Equally valued in my methods is ethnography as both analytical and interpretative tools to read the lived experiences. This study thus represents an analysis through the lens of cultural studies. It brings out the analysis of the contexts and conditions that are important to the sustainability of Asli Mala, especially in the everchanging socio-cultural contexts. It is hoped that this study will generate further discussion to problematize other folk performances and eventually understand the socio-cultural mechanics behind the creativity of folk performances in these contemporary and turbulent times.

Research objectives

- To examine the strategies used by Asli Mala's to adapt the traditional rong ngeng Pattani and incorporate it into their creative performances during 2008-2018.
- To analyze the contexts and conditions that are important to the sustainability of Asli Mala, especially in the face of an everchanging socio-cultural environment.

Research Methods

Data for this study was gathered through participating in music and dance performances. In-depth and informal interviews were used as a primary tool to collect data from active agents within the field of study along with non-participant observation and focus group discussion. The obtained data was then interpreted through the lens of Pierre Bourdieu's concept of cultural critique concept (1997) with an emphasis on the adaptation strategies used by Asli Mala in its creative music and dance performances informed by rong ngeng Pattani during 2008-2018. I draw specifically on field, capital, and habitus to address the objectives of this study. Based on the resultant critique, I then suggest some possible common grounds between the contemporary and traditional forms of rong ngeng Pattani in the face of an everchanging socio-cultural environment. Related literature served as foundation for designing research methods that centered on my fieldwork and research tools, which included the following: interview question frames for key interlocutors, inclusivity criteria, planning the field sites, non-participant observation, music and dance performance recordings, and academic seminar. These ultimately allowed for an analysis of data and the subsequent results of the study as discussed below. I conducted fieldwork between 2018 and 2019 using in-depth and informal interviews, and non-participant observation. The field data was gathered during Asli Mala's rehearsals and performances in Songkhla and Pattani.

Fieldwork

1. Preliminary Survey: In order to determine the research question, establish a rapport, and plan the actual fieldwork phase, I contacted the leader of Asli Mala group for permission to witness their performances and conduct informal interviews with the group members.
2. In-depth interview and informal interview: I divided the interlocutors into four groups: Asli Mala group members, traditional rong ngeng Pattani practitioners, other rong ngeng Pattani practitioners, and related individuals. These groups were categorized based on the interview questions.
3. Non-participant observation: While public performances were at the heart of this part, I also paid special attention to preparation and backstage moments to observe the processes leading up to each performance; these mostly centered around rehearsals.

4. Collecting materials music and dance: This included video recordings of Asli Mala creative performances during 2008-2018, footage of which was examined for musical and choreographic characteristics. I also photographed the group's performance outfits, instruments, choreography, and stage design. These audio-visual materials were supplemented by video footage and audio recordings that are both publicly available and copyrighted.

Broadening Research Topics through Seminar

1. Adding and auditing available information: I organized a two-part academic seminars based on research topic Creative Rong Ngeng: Values and Meanings of Sustainability to present the findings of this study and to exchange and discuss ideas with local performance troupes from Southern Thailand. The seminar also provided an opportunity for the audiences to critique the methodology and accuracy of my research and its finding.

2. Validation, analysis, and conclusion: I validated the qualitative data with the related literature, interviews, observations, audio-visual recordings of the performance, and the seminar. I then presented the data obtained from the various sources before categorizing it based on relevant issues according to the theoretical framework. Finally, I delivered my finding through descriptive analysis.

The Key Interlocutors and Inclusion Criteria

1. The Members of Asli Mala: I interviewed the creators of rong ngeng music in search of in-depth insights into the creativity by considering the concept, capital, habitus or the tendency to creativity, and factors leading to the changes in rong ngeng performances within the field and sub-fields of the study. The key contributors for this part of the research were Aphichat Khanthacha and Thatsaniya Khanthacha, creators of music and dance, respectively, for Asli Mala.

2. Traditional Rong Ngeng Pattani Practitioners: Since Asli Mala initially practiced traditional rong ngeng Pattani during its formative years, I decided to learn from the artists whose music and dance exerted the influence of traditional rong ngeng Pattani on Asli Mala, namely Khader Waedeng, a National Artist of folk performing arts and Seng Abu, a traditional rong ngeng Pattani practitioner. I also sought input from another rong ngeng artist, Nopphamat Phromnuchathip, who received training from Khun Charuwisetsueksakaun, and her student Kaukiat Suktharanon. Nopphamat and Kaukiat transmitted some of the traditional rong ngeng Pattani movements to the choreographers of Asli Mala.

3. Pattani Folk Dance Practitioners: The creative performance of Asli Mala are inspired by the traditional rong ngeng Pattani. The invented performances still retain the characteristic movements and costumes of the traditional rong ngeng Pattani. Individuals associated with these creations are Nopphamat Phromnuchathip, Kaukiat Suktharanon, Chao Chantharachit, and Nawaphaun Sukumaraphan, some of whom, it should be noted, also appear in the traditional rong ngeng Pattani group.

4. Related individuals: This group refers to rong ngeng performers outside Thailand, patrons of the art, those who hire performers or are responsible for rong ngeng competitions, and academic institutions that support the transmission of rong ngeng.

Limitations

Per the requests of my interlocutors, some of their personal information cannot be disclosed in this research. This limits the analysis, explanation, elaboration, and presentation of the data gathered in the field.

I designed my research and answered the central questions using Pierre Bourdieu's cultural critique, focusing on fields, capital, and habitus. Together, this frameworks was deployed to unpack the strategies applied by the agents to adapt traditional rong ngeng Pattani for incorporation into the creative performances of Asli Mala during 2008-2018.

Tradition, in the context of this research, refers to conventions, beliefs, customs expressed in the forms of dress, instruments, repertoire, lyrics, and performance rooted in traditional rong ngeng Pattani, and performance-related beliefs. This "tradition" can be observed in the creative performances of Asli Mala.

Construction of the Mainstream Rong Ngeng and its Power

As a performing art, Rong ngeng Pattani was associated with the Pattani court during the time of Phraya Phiphitsenamatyathibaudisisurasongkhram, also known as Niso, who built the Yaring Palace in 1895. Rong ngeng training was given to female palace clerks. These women then served as dancing partners to the noble male guests who frequented the palace for feasts and celebrations (Watcharasukhum, 1997:33-72). Refined and elegant, this form of rong ngeng has strict conventions and explicitly laid out theories. In Pattani, this version of the dance was considered a mainstream tradition. Not only was the dance's status used to glorify the province's ruler at that time, it also played a role in diplomacy. The movements and costumes contained religious references, a symbol of upper-class Muslims. As the popularity of this form of rong ngeng declined in the court around 1932, it spread beyond the palace through the folk dance-drama mak yong. As a result, the subtlety, conventions, and refinement of the court rong ngeng was "toned down." For example, physical contact between the male and female dancers became permissible and other rhythmic elements like rumba and samba were introduced. The revised form of rong ngeng, however, only enjoyed a short span of popularity before eventually fading away (Watcharasukhum, 1997:33-72).

The Pattani court version of rong ngeng was revitalized in 1951 by Khun Charuwetsueksakaun (also known as Chemu), the lead education officer at Meuang Pattani district. Much like the standardized folk dance from Central Thailand, ramwong mattrathan, the revival followed the government's nation-building policy issued by Marshall Phibun Songkhram to "civilize" Thai citizens. Rong ngeng again became a political as well as diplomatic tool to showcase the ruler's status, the loyal submission to the state's policy of religion affiliation, and the state's "civi-

lized” status. This standardization thus led to the construction of what is today known as the “traditional rong ngeng Pattani” (Phrommanuchatip, 2017: personal communication). The standardization of rong ngeng was executed through the clothing, musical instruments, repertoire, song texts, performance practices, and social conventions and beliefs. These regulations went beyond rong ngeng itself and were applied to other Pattani folk dances and later the creative works of Asli Mala.

Elements of the Mainstream Rong Ngeng Tradition

1. Costume: Male dancers wear a round-neck, long sleeve t-shirt with a sash and a black hat. Female dancers wear a Javanese-style blouse with an ankle length sarong. The quality of the garments is also a class statement of the wearer.
2. Musical Instruments: Violin, mandolin, accordion, rammana or frame drum, and maracas. The musicians sit in a row with violin at the center.
3. Repertoire and song texts: There are seven musical pieces with lyrics: “Laghuduwo,” “Lanung,” “Pujopisang,” “Cinta Sayang,” “Ano Didi,” “Mak Inang Java,” and “Mak Inang Lama.” I did not find any individuals who could sing the lyrics of those pieces.
4. Performance practices: The dance is performed by at least five male and female pairs. The dancers stand in two rows facing one another, at an equal distance between each for aesthetic reasons. The dancers must perform a salam or Muslim acknowledgment bow before and after each performance item.
5. Performance-related conventions in the traditional rong ngeng Pattani: Khun Charuwisetseuksakaun established the conventions for the performance and transmission of rong ngeng so as to avoid variations of the movements and ensure group cohesion. These conventions are strictly observed.
6. Customs and beliefs related to the performance: The movements must not be modified, and doing so would be a wrongdoing and show disrespect to one’s teacher. Since the performance attire is based on Muslim Malay traditional dress, the dancers must be fully covered. There is also no physical contact in any of the dance movements.

The Fall of Mainstream Rong Ngeng and the Rise of Creative Rong Ngeng by Asli Mala

Scholars and artists both assert that folk performances and rong ngeng Pattani is gradually on the decline. Praphon Reuannarong (2011) claims that expressive cultures from Central Thailand and the West are encroaching and overwhelming the local performances whose existence is made possible by the preservation, promotion, and refining.

I found that the fall of the traditional rong ngeng Pattani is due mainly to five factors. These are: (i) the change in society and the encroachment of other forms

of entertainment, (ii) the conflict between religious ideology on the one hand and the clothing as well as the transmission among the Muslim practitioners, on the other, (iii) the out-migration of potential inheritors caused by political unrest and violence in the area, (iv) difficulty in selecting suitable inheritors of rong ngeng Pattani, and (v) the restrictions imposed by traditions and conventions. Despite these factors, and the fact that they are from a different area, the Asli Mala performance inherited rong ngeng Pattani and set about incorporating external musical and dance aspects into their rong ngeng performances. The accumulation of diverse performance experience slowly shifted the goal of transmission from mere reproduction to innovation.

Research Results

Asli Mala's Strategies for Adapting the Traditional Rong Ngeng Pattani and Incorporating it into Their Creative Performances During 2008-2018

The results reveal details of the four *fields* of musical and dance creation that are influenced by traditional rong ngeng Pattani. The first relates to the dominant agents, namely, music and dance creators of Asli Mala, Aphichat Khanthacha and Thatsaniya Khantacha. The second includes the dominated agents, who are Khader Waedeng, Seng Abu, Nopphamas Phromnuchathip, and Kaukiat Suktharanon. All of the above are practitioners of traditional rong ngeng Pattani or the once mainstream rong ngeng in the Pattani court. The third *field* is the tradition – a set of rules determined by the structure. This tradition consists of dress, musical instruments, repertoire and song texts, performance practices, performance-related conventions, and customs and beliefs in the performance. The last consists of subfields, circles, and related institutions. This includes rong ngeng knowledge from outside Thailand, patrons and hirers of competitions, academic institutes and transmission, all of which constitute the basis for the adaptation strategies. This is in turn the result of capital accumulation of the dominant agents, leading to two important changes of habitus.

Asli Mala's Capital Accumulation Period Prior to 2008

This period involved economic, social, cultural, and symbolic capital. The music and dance creators exhibited a great deal of cultural capital, meaning they were well-versed of the traditional rong ngeng Pattani, Pattani folk dance, Thai classical dance and manora. They also possessed social capital in the form of the rong ngeng Pattani practitioners' network, Pattani folk dance practitioners' network, *pheua chiwit* musicians' network, scholars, and manora practitioners' network. These sources of capital played an important role in its subsequent expansion.

Asli Mala's Capital Expansion During 2008-2018

The capital expansion saw dramatic changes in habitus during the designated period and led to the creation of new performances. The specific expansion of the four sources of capital that continuously affected the changes in habitus were: (i) five new performance pieces namely *Tari Lileng*, *Kipas Payong*, *Tari Rebana Tamburine*, *Tari Diker Hulu*, and *Tari Kerish Qama*; (ii) support from patrons and hirers in, for example, the Karichaphaun Pattani event; (iii) competitions; and (iv) transmission of performances and creative processes in academic institutions. Most important

during this period were the practices and strategies used, within the field of music and dance creations influenced by the traditional *rong ngeng* Pattani, to negotiate with the tradition. The strategies and negotiations with the tradition in the field of music and dance creations are discussed below.

1. Inviting Dominated Agents to Participate in the Creative Performances

Inviting the dominated agents into the process of creating a new performance was one of the creators' strategies used to negotiate with the tradition. This filtered out and checked for any possible violation of the tradition; and in case of a deviation, the act in question may still be accepted by certain groups of traditional practitioners.

2. Negotiation Through Naming Performance Titles: Avoiding Rong Ngeng

The dominant agents purposely avoided the word "rong ngeng" in the title of their new performances created after 2008. While these performances contain aspects from music and dance derived from *rong ngeng*, there are more than a few elements borrowed from outside the tradition. Some of these external aspects are movements from other folk dances, foot movements from Malaysia's *asli* dance, *sapin* dance. The dress used in these performances is also different from that found in traditional *rong ngeng* Pattani and Pattani folk dance. Such deviation is, as suggested, accepted only by certain groups of tradition bearers – its acceptance is by no means consensual. Thus, avoiding the prefix "rong ngeng" before the new performance titles implies an intention to evade a head-on collision between the dominant and dominated agents over the designation of the new creations.

3. Creating Flexible Performances Under Conditions and Limitations in the subfields

The expansion of sources of capital made available by the dominant agents was laden with strategies to negotiate with tradition over the prescribed rules and conventions. This process may occur unbeknownst to the dominant agents because it was driven by the context, conditions, and limitations specific to each field. This includes the circle of patrons and hirers, academic institutions, transmission process, and competitions. The conditions and limitations faced by the agents are, in other words, the rules of each subfield. In addition to the practice framed by the rules of the tradition, there are also rules predicated by the subfields., and it is under these constraints that the agents must operate.

The new performances created by the agents are flexible within the limitations and conditions in each subfield. This flexibility serves as a strategy to negotiate with and subsequently modify the tradition's structure, resulting in a new rule that applies to the new performances. In considering the traditions and limitations they were faced with, the creators did exhibit agency in employing the strategies under the limited and conditioned subfields of patrons and hirers. For example, the patrons and hirers subfield predicated a fixed duration of the performance and necessitated a storyline featuring a *keris* dagger. Within these frameworks, the creators incorporated various Indonesian performing arts: accompanying music, *rong ngeng*, *sapin* and *silak* dances. These performances were created only within the hiring territory and did not contain the word *rong ngeng* in any of

their titles despite the using rong ngeng music and dance moves. Other subfields were academic institutions, transmission process, and competitions.

Context and Conditions for the Sustainability of Asli Mala Within a Changing Socio-Cultural Environment

1. The creation of new performances that are continuously changing under the subfield conditions: Asli Mala thrives through creating new performances under the conditions set by the subfields. The subfield that perhaps plays the most significant role in determining the extent of change in Asli Mala performances is the patrons and hirers subfield, as it may trigger changes in the attitude of the dominant agents. It is also a space to express the group's creativity. Hiring thus provides an opportunity for identity articulation and consequently the leads to the sustained existence of groups such as Asli Mala.

2. Expansion of territory for creativity and boldly transcending the field and structure of the traditional rong ngeng Pattani within the contemporary socio-cultural context: Finding new territories for showcasing new performances and delimiting the tradition's rules placed on the field of creativity was key to the success of Asli Mala. One of the strategies used to transcend traditional conventions was taking the music and dance to the creative realm and finding platforms for new performances within the appropriate subfields. Exposing creative spaces for the music and dance works of Asli Mala, along with their attempts to revise their performances so as to comply with the social contexts and conditions, challenges the traditional structure. This strategy allowed Asli Mala to exist within a changing society despite facing bias and value judgement from certain individuals.

Discussion

Changes in the Tradition of the Creators When Placed Within Suitable Fields

In this section I discuss the relationship between the fields of creation and the dominant agents, particularly regarding the negotiation of and with the tradition of the dominant agents through the expansion of sources of capital in the subfields; changes in tradition within the fields of creation demonstrate the fields' symbiosis and interdependence.

Based on Bourdieu's concepts of field and habitus, the negotiation serves as both the site and the result of the expansion. When the capacity of an agent changes, the field's rules also change (Kaewthep and Hinwiman, 2008:122-123). The performance creators of Asli Mala, as dominant agents, adapted their new music and dance creations to fit the tradition and rules of the fields. This included engaging the dominated agents in the process of performance creation and negotiation through conditions on naming, specifically, avoiding the use of rong ngeng in the new performance titles, and ensuring that new performances were flexible enough not to transgress the conditions and limitations predicated by the subfields. Consequently, the creators are able to level the playing field with the dominated agents while strategically and subtly deviating from the traditional structure inherent to the group prior to the new creation. With the fields enlarged, it led to the expansion of expression and therefore a broader performance area and

wider acceptance. Thus, the dominating agents replaced traditional rong ngeng Pattani practitioners as well as folk dancers as the holders of the rules in the creation field. In other words, the creators initiated changes to the traditions within the field of creation.

Agents and Subfield Dynamics

The performance creators played an important role in causing changes to the music and dance, and these changes depended on several factors. Using Bourdier's practice theory, two perspectives, one from the agents and the other from the structure, may be applied to explain these changes. From the agents' perspective, multiple options are available for practice with respect to the rules and capital accrued by the Asli Mala group members within the field. Regardless of the strategy eventually employed, it must operate under the framework set by the structure's rules (Kaewthep and Hinwiman, 2008: 122-123). This shows that the agents are not free actors but represents the culmination of capital accumulation and expansion of habitus within the fields.

Within a heterogenous society, the creation of new performances under various subfield conditions, the expansion of the creation fields, and the crossing of fields and structures of the traditional rong ngeng Pattani, conditioned the dominating agents by placing limits to the creativity. Nonetheless, the creators were able to strategically negotiate with the tradition through the expansion of capital within other subfields. Although the creators need to operate under the socially restricted purview of the tradition, they were willing to chart new journeys to new fields and locations for their benefit, that is, experimenting with the tradition.

Research Suggestions

While this research draws partially on Bourdieu's concepts of field, capital, and habitus, to interpret the strategies behind the fieldwork experience regarding music and dance adaptation behind Asli Mala's creative performances based on traditional rong ngeng Pattani during 2008-2018, I must note that the results in no way represent other practices in the field. For future research, I suggest that the roles played by various agents in these practices be understood more thoroughly. This is because within the fields there is always competition for capital, and the greater capital one possesses, the more the power one has to determine the rules and structures.

This research did not strictly follow the "old school" investigation of music and dance per se, thus leaving room for the musical and movement analysis. This information could serve as more "tangible" evidence to nuance the adaptations made by Asli Mala in their creative performances. For future projects like this, one may emphasize formalist analysis of music and dance and use these as a lens through which other theoretical frameworks cultural studies can be explored.

Suggestions for Local Creative Performances

New local performing arts, created to comply with the societal demands, should not be treated as a subversion, but rather as an adaptation aimed at the sustain-

ability of the artists and artform itself. However, maintaining expressive art forms like this should not only rely on adaptation and creation within the conditions and mechanism set by the markets and patrons, and nor should it solely count on governmental support. Instead, creators, performers, and practitioners alike must be able to express cultural values and traditions in their performances, regardless of whether it is a traditional or contemporary presentation. This is to ensure the continuity of rong ngeng Pattani and its expressive identity of the local culture for younger generations.

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