



## Reactualizing Regional Identity through Dance: A Creative Response to Boyolali's Cattle Icon in *Amita Lembu Abipraya*

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### **Abstract**

This study examines the cattle icon as a cultural marker of Boyolali and its reactualization through the *Amita Lembu Abipraya* dance, emphasizing its role in strengthening regional identity. As an agrarian–livestock region, Boyolali maintains deep historical, social, emotional, and economic attachments to cattle, positioning the icon as a significant locus for locally grounded identity construction. This research employs a qualitative design using an ethnokoreological approach. Data were collected through observation, literature review, and in-depth interviews with the choreographer, dancers, music arrangers, and local art practitioners. The findings indicate that the cattle icon functions not only as an economic symbol but also as a dynamic cultural construct reproduced through artistic practice. The *Amita Lembu Abipraya* dance transforms the icon into a living aesthetic expression through the integration of stylized movement vocabularies, visual symbolism, and musical composition. This performative reactualization reaffirms cattle as representations of strength, resilience, vitality, and the continuity of life within Boyolali society. The study argues that such artistic reactualization constitutes a strategic cultural mechanism for sustaining, articulating, and negotiating regional identity amid contemporary dynamics.

**Keywords:** *Ethnochoreology; Place Identity; Creative Responses; Cultural Icon*

### **Introduction**

Boyolali Regency is widely recognized for the adoption of cattle (*lembu* in Javanese) as its regional icon, a designation grounded in the prominence of the livestock sector as a defining local characteristic. The regency is commonly referred to as the “Milk City” due to its position as one of the largest and most productive dairy-producing regions in Central Java (Parmawati et al., 2019). This characterization is reinforced by evidence indicating that a majority of the local population depends on cattle farming as a primary livelihood, positioning dairy cattle as a strategic component of the regional economic structure (Jati et al., 2021). The widespread distribution of cattle across nearly all subdistricts further suggests that this iconization reflects not only a leading local commodity but also a collective identity rooted in agrarian and livestock traditions (Asriandita, 2017; Barokah, 2009). Consequently,

cattle as Boyolali's icon function not merely as indicators of economic strength, but as representations of regional identity shaped through sustained cultural practices and productive activities.

Regional icons can function as strategic representational elements that signify territorial identity. Peng, Strijker, and Wu (2020) argue that the meanings and values embodied in spatial features or place icons play a crucial role in shaping place identity by representing collective memory, cultural values, and regional character. Similarly, Widyaswari (2018) emphasizes that icons operate as easily recognizable visual identities, making them effective markers of group representation. Zamparini et al. (2023) further contend that iconic objects or structures serve not only as physical markers but also as aspirational identity artifacts mobilized in public discourse to construct idealized urban images. In a broader context, studies on local cultural traditions demonstrate that cultural icons can evolve into collective identity markers at both regional and national levels (Medeiros, 2005; Wahyuni, 2023). Thus, icons function not merely as aesthetic elements, but as key representations through which regional identity is articulated.

The role of cattle as an icon representing the identity of Boyolali Regency is manifested through various public monuments, particularly cow sculptures distributed across several areas. These iconic forms not only reinforce the region's image as a center of dairy cattle farming, but also function as representational media through which Boyolali's local character is articulated. One of the most prominent examples is the *Lembu Sora* Statue, a cow-shaped monument designed as a multipurpose facility for public gatherings. Located within the Integrated Government Complex of Boyolali Regency, the structure measures 18 × 12 × 11 meters and was completed in mid-2015 (Nurcahyati & Suwasana, 2021). Known as the *Lembu Sora* Building, the monument affirms cattle as a cultural symbol of Boyolali that extends beyond economic significance to encompass regional visual identity. Ramadhanti (2022) identifies this icon as a form of local cultural representation, commonly referred to by residents as *sapi ndekem* (a cow lying down), which reinforces Boyolali's image as the "Milk City" and a region grounded in cattle-farming traditions. Thus, cattle monuments—particularly the *Lembu Sora* Building—serve as visual articulations of Boyolali's identity within public space.

The visual articulation of cattle statues in Boyolali underscores the significance of regional markers in the formation of territorial identity and image. The *Lembu Sora* monument functions as a representational medium in the construction of local cultural identity, serving as a collective identity marker that connects the community to its lived space through visual imagery and emotional-social attachment. Šifta and Chromý (2017) emphasize that regional icons play a strategic role in shaping territorial identity by embodying collectively ascribed meanings of place. Furthermore, Zimmerbauer (2011) argues that the visualization of regional icons constitutes part of the institutionalization of place, closely linked to place branding and identity reinforcement. The relationship between identity and territorial image is reciprocal: identity informs image construction, while icon-based imagery strengthens the internalization of local identity among communities. Thus, the cattle icon in Boyolali operates as a significant visual instrument in the production and reproduction of regional identity within both sociocultural and territorial development contexts.

Within the context of reinforcing icons as representations of regional identity, identity production constitutes a constructive process that can be realized through creative responses to icons, particularly via performing arts. Performing arts possess attractive, communicative, and participatory qualities that enable the rearticulation of iconic meanings while strengthening the legitimacy of their signifiers within collective consciousness. Cultural identity expressed through performance functions as a representational framework of values and meanings shaped by the interaction between cultural archetypes and social contexts (Fabryka-Protška et al., 2024). Empirical findings indicate that creative engagement through performative practices can serve as an effective strategy for local identity production, as demonstrated in the promotion of regional identity in Pathum Thani Province, Thailand (Boontonglek et al., 2024). In this regard, Bromley (2010) emphasizes that performing arts not only represent identity but also participate in its symbolic and cultural reproduction. Furthermore, Henry (1999) argues that performing arts are generative phenomena that actively shape collective identity through performative experience, thereby

functioning as a strategic medium in the construction of icon-based regional identity embedded in the social imagination.

The *Amita Lembu Abipraya* dance was created as a creative response to the dairy cattle icon representing Boyolali Regency's identity as the "Milk City." Beyond serving as a medium of visual representation, the dance functions as a cultural strategy for the production and reproduction of regional identity through performance. This article examines the cattle icon as a form of Boyolali's cultural identity reactivated through *Amita Lembu Abipraya* and analyzes its cultural significance in reinforcing the regional image. The reactivated cattle icon is significant due to its historical, social, and emotional attachment to the Boyolali community, as well as its representation of local economic values rooted in agrarian and livestock-based livelihoods. Through symbolic articulation in performance, the cattle icon is recontextualized within a contemporary cultural space and revitalized as a source for the formation of Boyolali's collective identity. Accordingly, this study demonstrates the strategic role of performing arts as an effective medium for constructing, sustaining, and strengthening regional identity grounded in local icons.

Reactualization refers to the process of reintroducing cultural values, symbols, or traditions into contemporary contexts through creative reinterpretation, while maintaining their historical grounding and underlying symbolic meanings. From an anthropological perspective, Wallace (1956) conceptualizes reactualization as part of revitalization movements, understood as deliberate collective efforts to revive cultural elements considered essential to the continuity of collective identity. Within this framework, this process extends beyond preservation toward the production of new meanings that resonate with ongoing social change. At the level of local cultural practice, reactualization functions as a significant cultural strategy for reinforcing regional identity by enabling the re-signification of cultural icons through creative media, including performing arts (Geertz, 1973; Smith, 2006). Through symbolic and aesthetic representation, cultural icons embedded in collective memory are reproduced and renegotiated in artistic forms as markers of regional cultural identity (Ernawati et al., 2024; Hidajad, 2023).

## **Method**

This study employs an ethnokoreological approach to examine the *Amita Lembu Abipraya* dance as a medium for the reactualization of a regional icon representing the cultural identity of Boyolali Regency. Ethnokoreology conceptualizes dance as a cultural product inseparable from the value systems, social structures, and symbolic realities of the communities that sustain it. Accordingly, the analysis addresses not only choreographic aspects, but also the relationships among movement structure, symbolic meaning, and the underlying sociocultural context (Sriyadi & Pramutomo, 2024). *Amita Lembu Abipraya* is positioned as a creative response to the dairy cattle icon associated with Boyolali's image as the "Milk City." Through symbolic articulation in performance, the cattle icon is reactualized as an aesthetic representation grounded in historical roots and local identity values. Thus, the dance functions not merely as an artistic expression, but as a cultural strategy for reinforcing regional identity through the reproduction of local iconic meanings within Boyolali's cultural sphere.

Within the discipline of ethnokoreology, dance research is fundamentally qualitative in nature, as it is oriented toward understanding dance as a cultural phenomenon embedded in social context, symbolic values, and the knowledge systems of its supporting community (Pramutomo et al., 2016). Consistent with this orientation, the present study relies on qualitative data derived from direct empirical fieldwork. Primary data were collected through three methods: observation, literature study, and interviews. Observation was conducted to examine the presentation of the *Amita Lembu Abipraya* dance, including movement structure, spatial patterns, costume and makeup, and musical accompaniment. A literature study was employed to analyze relevant scholarship on regional icons and identity formation, cultural reactualization through performing arts, and the role of the cattle icon in Boyolali's sociocultural life. In-depth interviews were carried out with knowledgeable informants—such as the choreographer, dancers, studio administrators, accompanists, and local art practitioners—to obtain comprehensive insights into the

creative process, symbolic meanings, and objectives underlying the creation of *Amita Lembu Abipraya*. Accordingly, these data collection techniques enable a holistic understanding of the research object.

Data analysis in this study employs a descriptive-analytical approach conducted through systematic scientific procedures. The analysis is carried out in three main stages. The first stage involves data reduction, which includes the selection, categorization, and simplification of data by examining information relevant to the research focus. The second stage is data presentation, in which the research findings are organized into analytically structured narratives that link empirical data with the study's conceptual framework. The third stage consists of verification and conclusion drawing, conducted through critical interpretation of the analyzed data to explain how *Amita Lembu Abipraya*, as a dance form representing a creative response to the cow as an icon, functions as a medium for the reactualization of Boyolali's regional identity. Through these stages, the study achieves a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between artistic dance forms, symbolic values, and their cultural functions in constructing and reinforcing regional identity.

### **Cattle as Boyolali Regency's Icon in Dance Creativity**

In the realm of performing arts, the visual elements in a dance hold a significant position. Through these visual elements, spectators can grasp various values and meanings conveyed. Sunaryadi (2013) asserts that aesthetical values of a dance can be perceived sensorially through movements, makeup, and costume design. In other words, costume design stands as one of the visual elements contributing to the success of a dance performance. Visually, costume design exerts a significant influence on the aesthetic value of a dance.

In the context of Boyolali's everyday life, cattle cannot be understood merely as economic commodities, but rather as cultural entities deeply integrated into the community's social structure and way of life. In rural and highland areas of Boyolali, particularly among dairy farming communities, cattle husbandry functions as a repetitive practice that shapes daily rhythms. Activities such as animal care, health maintenance, milking, and milk processing are not perceived solely as labor, but rather as routines that organize time, energy, and attention within farming households. This pattern indicates that livestock practices operate as a cultural system that regulates human relationships with nature and the resources sustaining everyday life.

Intensive and sustained interactions between farmers and cattle give rise to personal and emotional relationships. Cattle are understood as symbols of diligence, patience, and livelihood sustainability, as successful animal care is directly linked to household economic well-being. In this context, husbandry knowledge is not acquired solely through formal education but is transmitted through experience, hands-on practice, and intergenerational interaction. This process of transmission positions livestock practices as a medium for conveying cultural values, work ethic, and community perspectives on the environment. These findings align with rural anthropological studies that emphasize the role of subsistence practices in the formation of local knowledge and collective identity (Bicker et al., 2000; Satria, 2015).

Furthermore, the presence of cattle contributes to the formation and reinforcement of social relations within Boyolali communities. Various communal activities—such as mutual cooperation, neighborhood gatherings, and interactions among farmers—often take place in spaces directly associated with livestock practices. The farming communities that emerge function as social arenas for sharing experiences, technical knowledge, and moral as well as economic support (Priyono, interview, November 28, 2025). Accordingly, cattle are not only embedded in everyday practices but also play a crucial role in fostering social solidarity and community cohesion. This condition affirms that human–animal relations in agrarian societies are frequently sociocultural in nature rather than merely instrumental (Ingold, 2000).

The historical and cultural interconnectedness between Boyolali communities and cattle husbandry has expanded into the symbolic realm, culminating in the designation of cattle as the official icon of Boyolali Regency. This designation reflects a prolonged social process closely tied to the strategic

role of the livestock sector as a primary foundation of the regional economy (Marsono, interview, November 28, 2025). As one of Central Java's major dairy-producing centers, Boyolali's adoption of cattle as a regional emblem gains strong social and economic legitimacy. The cattle icon is consistently materialized through various visual representations in public space, including statues, architectural ornaments on government buildings, regional mascots, and tourism promotional materials.

These visual representations serve to affirm cattle as markers of both Boyolali's economic and cultural identity, embedded within the community's collective consciousness. Through the cattle icon, values such as hard work, perseverance, purity, and abundance are constructed as defining regional characteristics. From a cultural studies perspective, such regional icons play a crucial role in shaping territorial image, differentiating one region from another, and strengthening residents' sense of belonging and pride in local identity (Barker & Jane, 2016; Hall, 1997). This symbolic identity is productive in that it creates space for diverse cultural expressions grounded in collective experience, including culinary practices, crafts, and performing arts.

The reinforcement of cattle as a regional icon has extended into the realm of cultural expression, particularly dance performance. Dance is regarded as an effective medium for articulating cultural symbols, as it conveys meaning through bodily movement, rhythm, and visual aesthetics. In the context of Boyolali, the cattle icon no longer functions merely as a static visual sign, but is animated through aesthetic experience that can be performed, interpreted, and appreciated by broader audiences. The transformation of the symbol into dance reflects the community's creative process of reworking local identity to remain relevant within contemporary social and cultural dynamics.

From this process emerged the *Amita Lembu Abipraya* dance, which represents the harmonious relationship between the people of Boyolali and cattle as both a source of livelihood and a marker of cultural identity. The dance movements are derived from the stylization of cattle behaviors and characteristics, transformed into aesthetic, rhythmic, and expressive movement forms. Beyond serving as a representation of local culture, the dance also functions as a medium for strengthening Boyolali's regional image in various performance contexts at both local and national levels (Saputra, interview, November 27, 2025). As noted in performing arts scholarship, dance grounded in local identity plays a strategic role in reinforcing collective memory while providing space for negotiation between tradition and creative innovation (Kwok, 1978). Accordingly, *Amita Lembu Abipraya* can be understood as a dynamic form of cultural articulation that positions the cattle icon as both a source of artistic inspiration and an affirmation of Boyolali's cultural identity.

### **Choreographic Elements in Amita Lembu Abipraya**

The costume in the *Amita Lembu Abipraya* dance functions beyond a decorative element, serving as a symbolic medium that emphasizes the dance's central character: cattle as a representation of strength, resilience, and fertility. The use of a cow-head mask, complete with horns, constitutes a key visual element in establishing the dancer's characterization. In performing arts studies, masks are understood as devices of identity transformation that enable the human body to convincingly embody specific symbolic figures (Schechner, 2020). The incorporation of synthetic hair details on the mask enhances the realism of the cattle depiction, creating a physical form closely aligned with the represented object and thereby intensifying the performance's imaginative and symbolic power.



**Figure 1.** The cow-shaped mask used in the *Amita Lembu Abipraya* dance  
(Source: Hapsari, 2025)



**Figure 2.** *Gruda* ornament on the mask in the *Amita Lembu Abipraya* dance  
(Source: Hapsari, 2025)

Additional head ornaments, such as *jamang* and *gruda*, adorned with distinctive ornamental motifs, emphasize the dignity and vigor of the cattle figure. From the perspective of dance costume semiotics, these elements function as markers of status and character while reinforcing the local identity embedded in the dance. The use of *gimbalan* as an added hair element further enriches the visualization of cattle as a complete living being rather than a mere formal imitation. The combination of the mask's

relatively lightweight construction and the harmonious integration of costume elements enables agile movement without diminishing the representational strength of the cattle character.

Other costume components—such as *badong*, *rampek*, cattle bells (*klunthung sapi*), *panjen* trousers, *buntal* in black, white, yellow, and red, ankle bells, and wrist ornaments—reflect an effort to integrate folk dance aesthetics with animal symbolism (Atmoko, interview, November 24, 2025). The sounds produced by cattle bells and ankle chimes accompanying the dancers' movements create a synesthetic relationship among visual form, movement, and sound, rendering costume an integral part of the dance's musical structure. This phenomenon aligns with studies suggesting that traditional dance costumes are often conceived as performative elements that interact directly with movement and rhythm. Accordingly, the costume in the *Amita Lembu Abipraya* dance functions as a sign system that unifies aesthetic, symbolic, and cultural identity aspects of Boyolali.



**Figure 3.** *Gimbalan* in the *Amita Lembu Abipraya* dance costume  
(Source: Hapsari, 2025)



**Figure 4.** Front view of the *Amita Lembu Abipraya* dance costume design  
(Source: Hapsari, 2025)

Movement in the *Amita Lembu Abipraya* dance is structured through processes of adaptation and stylization of cattle's natural behavior. The *mbedal* movement, which depicts leaping or rapid forward motion, represents energy and vitality, while the *nggambul* (butting) movement emphasizes the cattle's bravery and strength (Atmoko, interview, November 24, 2025). In choreographic theory, the stylization of animal movement constitutes an artistic strategy for transforming natural behavior into an aesthetic and communicative movement language. A forward-leaning body posture, with clenched fists raised to symbolize horns, demonstrates an explicit effort to embody the cattle character through the dancer's bodily articulation.



**Figure 5.** Movement poses representing cattle in the *Amita Lembu Abipraya* dance  
(Source: Hapsari, 2025)

Jumping and kicking movements add dynamic intensity while representing cattle's natural responses when threatened or uncomfortable. Other movement variations—such as *jogetan*, *sembahan*, *geculan*, *kiprahan*, *entrag gambul*, and *jeblosan*—enrich the choreographic structure with diverse expressive nuances, ranging from reverence and agility to shifts in spatial patterning. The dominance of lower-limb and head movements underscores an emphasis on strength, agility, and vitality, which constitute the core characteristics of cattle as symbols of life and hard work in agrarian societies. Emphasizing this bodily center of energy in dance serves to reinforce both character and intended meaning.

The entire movement sequence is harmoniously structured to establish effective visual communication with the audience. Although the dancers wear masks, the cattle character is clearly conveyed through the intensity of bodily movement, rhythmic footwork, and the coordinated articulation of the head, arms, and legs. This demonstrates that in masked dance, expression does not rely on facial mimicry but on the body as a total expressive medium. Accordingly, movement in the *Amita Lembu Abipraya* dance is not only representational but also narrative and symbolic.

The music used in the *Amita Lembu Abipraya* dance combines traditional and modern instruments, including *bonang*, *kendhang*, *saron*, *terbang*, *bende*, *jimbe*, drums, bass, guitar, saxophone, and organ. This combination creates a dynamic musical landscape capable of accommodating the power of cattle-inspired movement while simultaneously conveying a contemporary sensibility. In ethnomusicological studies, instrumental hybridization is understood as an adaptive strategy for maintaining the relevance of traditional arts amid shifting aesthetic preferences and social contexts (Abraham, 2025).

The dominance of percussive accents in the music of the *Amita Lembu Abipraya* dance plays a crucial role in emphasizing impressions of energy, strength, and vigor that represent the character of cattle. Meanwhile, melodic lines produced by wind and plucked instruments introduce dramatic and reflective nuances that enrich the performance's emotional layers. In this context, music is not positioned merely as accompaniment to movement, but as a structural element that constructs emotional atmosphere and reinforces the dance's artistic narrative.

The dimension of performative meaning is further deepened through the use of vocal elements in the form of *tembang*, which function as a medium for conveying moral messages and cultural identity. The lyrics "*Lembu metal Boyolali, siyogo hambekso, go mulya anak putune, pujo sukmo pari suko*" articulate the Boyolali community's view of cattle as symbols of preparedness, devotion, and intergenerational hopes for prosperity. This song, which praises cattle as the region's icon, underscores the close relationship between performing arts, the construction of regional identity, and the formation of collective pride (Kurniawan, interview, October 4, 2025). From a cultural studies perspective, such performing arts function as spaces for identity articulation, representing local values in aesthetic form. Accordingly, the synergy among movement, music, and *tembang* in the *Amita Lembu Abipraya* dance positions it not only as an aesthetic spectacle, but also as a medium for the representation and affirmation of Boyolali's cultural identity.

### **The Amita Lembu Abipraya Dance as the Reactualization of Regional Identity Through Performing Art**

The reactualization of icons within the context of regional culture constitutes a cultural process aimed at reintroducing traditional symbols into new forms of expression, ensuring that they remain meaningful and relevant to contemporary social dynamics and aesthetic sensibilities. This process is not oriented toward the static preservation of symbols, but rather involves the transformation of meaning through reinterpretation in response to continually changing contexts. Within this framework, the *Amita Lembu Abipraya* dance occupies a strategic position as a medium for the reactualization of Boyolali's regional identity, representing a creative response to the cattle icon that has long functioned as the primary marker of local identity.

As a performing art, the *Amita Lembu Abipraya* dance does not merely present cattle as a visual image or narrative symbol, but reanimates it through a dynamic and multidimensional artistic language. The integration of movement, music, costume, and performative atmosphere positions the dance as a new interpretive space for the cattle icon, allowing the symbol not only to be preserved but also to be re-signified within broader aesthetic and social contexts. Accordingly, the dance functions as a medium for articulating Boyolali's identity, bridging local tradition with contemporary cultural sensibilities.

At the symbolic level, the *Amita Lembu Abipraya* dance is grounded in the Boyolali community's collective understanding of cattle as entities that transcend purely economic functions. Cattle are positioned as sources of value, inspiration, and livelihood sustainability, closely intertwined with the historical experiences of agrarian society. Through the process of reactualization, the dance shifts the representation of cattle from a functional, everyday relationship toward a more reflective symbolic interpretation. Cattle are no longer presented merely as livestock, but as images of strength, energy, resilience, and continuity of life, reflecting the character of the Boyolali community shaped by long-standing livestock practices. In this context, the cattle icon functions as a medium for representing collective identity that can be aesthetically performed and communicated.

The reactualization of identity is concretely realized through the embodiment of a symbolic body that merges with the dancer. The use of a cow-head mask is not intended to reproduce the animal's realistic facial features, but functions as a marker of the dancer's identity transformation into the cattle (*lembu*) character. In performing arts studies, masks are understood as symbolic devices that enable identity transition and the creation of new representational spaces (Averett, 2020; Sosnowska, 2023). The artistic technology employed, using lightweight materials, positions the mask not merely as a visual prop, but as a metaphor for the historical and cultural relationship between humans and animals that has long shaped Boyolali society. Through the mask, the dancer does not simply imitate the form of cattle, but internalizes the spirit of the icon it represents.

This representational dimension is further reinforced through the use of costumes equipped with ankle bells, *gimbalan*, and visual attributes that evoke a sense of fur texture. Costume elements function to preserve cattle characteristics while demonstrating the Boyolali community's creativity in translating local icons into performance aesthetics. Reactualization occurs when costume extends beyond figurative representation and develops into a visual device that communicates social values such as strength, courage, and vitality (Petranović, 2022; Shukla, 2015). At this point, the cattle icon undergoes a transformation from a static figure—such as a statue or public ornament—into a kinetic figure that lives, moves, and interacts within the performance space. This transformation underscores the capacity of performing arts to animate icons through the body and movement.

Within the choreographic domain, the reactualization of regional identity is realized through an interpretive treatment of movement rather than a literal imitation of cattle behavior. Movements such as *mbedal*, butting, and jumping are not rendered naturalistically, but are reworked through intensity, rhythm, and aesthetic composition. This approach allows the dance to operate within the realm of artistic expression without losing its symbolic grounding. Movement thus functions as a bridge between animal characteristics and the human character of the Boyolali community, reinterpreted through bodily language. The strong, energetic, and direct movement qualities reflect the traits of agrarian–highland communities, commonly associated with resilience, discipline, and perseverance. This identity is not conveyed through verbal narration, but is embodied kinesthetically through the dancer's bodily dynamics.

The accompanying music further expands the dimension of icon reactualization by establishing a dialogue between tradition and modernity. The combination of traditional and modern instruments demonstrates that Boyolali's cultural identity is adaptive and open to contemporary developments. Strong percussive rhythms emphasize representations of the cattle's energy and strength, while melodic lines from modern instruments create broader accessibility within contemporary performance contexts. From an ethnomusicological perspective, such hybridization constitutes a cultural strategy for sustaining traditional arts amid changing aesthetic preferences and social conditions (Baumann, 2000).

The inclusion of *tembang* in the dance adds layers of philosophical, emotional, and social meaning. The song lyrics convey values of virtue, gentleness, and respect for Javanese culture, while simultaneously affirming the Boyolali community's pride in the cattle icon as a symbol of prosperity. When *tembang* is integrated with movement and music, the performance creates a landscape that unifies aesthetic, spiritual, and social dimensions within a single narrative. Accordingly, performing arts function as a space for articulating identity, representing how the people of Boyolali understand life and their cultural values.

Furthermore, the *Amita Lembu Abipraya* dance functions as a medium for deepening identity among younger generations. Amid the currents of modernization that may distance youth from local cultural roots, the dance offers a communicative and contextual form of cultural learning. Innovations in musical and aesthetic aspects enable the dance to remain relevant without losing its traditional substance. The reactualization of the cattle icon through dance also contributes to shaping Boyolali's image at both regional and national levels. Through dance performance, Boyolali presents not only its economic potential but also its cultural strength as a creative and adaptive region. In this context, dance serves as a form of cultural diplomacy that expands recognition of regional identity.

Overall, the *Amita Lembu Abipraya* dance demonstrates that regional icons need not be maintained in static forms. Through the process of reactualization, the cattle icon continues to evolve, be reinterpreted, and be realized in new forms that remain culturally relevant. The creative process—integrating symbolism, movement, music, and aesthetics—positions the dance not merely as an act of preservation, but as a productive, dialogical, and creative reinforcement of Boyolali's identity amid the dynamics of contemporary change.

The discussion demonstrates that the *Amita Lembu Abipraya* dance embodies the process of reactualization as theorized within anthropological perspectives, wherein cultural symbols are creatively reinterpreted to sustain their relevance while preserving historical meaning (Wallace, 1956). The transformation of the cattle icon into a multidimensional performative form—articulated through choreography, costume, music, and symbolic embodiment—confirms that reactualization operates not merely as preservation but as the production of renewed meanings aligned with contemporary cultural dynamics. This finding supports the view that performing arts function as strategic media for the re-signification of cultural icons and the reinforcement of regional identity (Geertz, 1973; Smith, 2006). In relation to the research objective, the study verifies that the cattle icon serves as a foundational marker of Boyolali's cultural identity, and its artistic reinterpretation through the *Amita Lembu Abipraya* dance contributes significantly to strengthening the region's image as both culturally rooted and adaptively creative. Accordingly, the research affirms that reactualization within performing arts constitutes an effective mechanism for constructing and communicating local identity in the context of ongoing social transformation.

## Conclusion

The findings of this study indicate that the *Amita Lembu Abipraya* dance represents a practice of reactualization as a cultural strategy for both sustaining and transforming regional identity. The reinterpretation of the cattle icon through an artistic construction that integrates symbolism, movement, music, and aesthetics underscores that cultural continuity does not depend on static forms, but rather on the capacity to adapt to contemporary contexts while retaining historical meaning. This affirms the conceptualization of reactualization as part of a revitalization effort that enables the production of new meanings through the re-signification of cultural symbols within the performing arts. Accordingly, the *Amita Lembu Abipraya* dance functions not only as a representation of cultural heritage but also as a medium for articulating Boyolali's identity as dynamic, dialogic, and socially relevant amid ongoing social change.

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### **Informant**

- Saputra, Wahyu (27 years old), artist, Sepandan Kulon, Selo, Boyolali.
- Atmoko, Heri Dwi (22 years old), dancer, Sumur, Tamansari, Boyolali.
- Kurniawan, Hendri (38 years old), composer, Ngampon, Ngampel, Boyolali.
- Priyono, Joko (32 years old), customary leader, Sepandan Kulon, Selo, Boyolali.
- Marsono, Yadi (49 years old), customary leader, Sepandan Kulon, Selo, Boyolali.

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