

Lipyaksara: The Creation of Theater Art Using Artaud's Cruel Theater Style

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ABSTRACT

Objective: *Lipyaksara* is the name of a book owned by Calonarang. Calonarang herself is a powerful and magical woman. The contents of the Calonarang book contain mantras about good and evil. The *Lipyaksara* book created a conflict between Calonarang and King Airlangga's party in order to control the book. Creating war and Calonarang lost the battle. The story was realized into a theater performance with the same title as the book, *Lipyaksara*. The novel by Cok Sawitri entitled "*Manggali Kalki*" became the object for creating texts and dramatic performances. **Method:** Balinese traditional theater became the basis of the body in the process of realizing the work. The method of creating theater includes the process of adapting the novel into a performance text, training and exploring actors, to packaging it into an experimental performance. **Results:** So, *Lipyaksara* theater combines elements of Balinese tradition with an experimental modern theater style, creating a performance rich in narrative and artistic expression. **Novelty:** Worked using Artaud's Cruel Theater style.

INTRODUCTION

Lipyaksara or Lipyakara is a sacred book of Calonarang. Lipyaksara itself contains the teachings contained in the Calonarang palm leaf, composed by someone in Semadri Camara, facing west under the Harung river, Saka year 1462. No one knows the complete contents of Lipyaksara. Some people believe that Lipyaksara contains negative magical spells, such as witchcraft, Aji Wegig, Pengiwo, and so on. It is said that the Lipyaksara book contains about *nisca Lingga* (Black Magic) and *Nircaya Lingga* (White Magic) which then made Calonarang become powerful, mastering the science of spreading diseases and turning into a leak. In the Calonarang lontar, it is told that Lipyakara which was originally owned by Calonarang was then stolen by Mpu Bahula in a political way [1].

It is said that Calonarang had a daughter named Ratna Manggali. Ratna Manggali who had reached adulthood still did not have a husband, which made Calonarang furious. Calonarang ordered his students to spread the disease in the Girah or Jirah village. The people of Jirah, who were helpless over the outbreak, then reported their concerns to King Airlangga, who was in power at that time. Seeing this condition, King Airlangga then ordered Mpu Bahula, one of Mpu Baradah's students, who was King Airlangga's advisor, to propose to and then marry Ratna Manggali. On the basis of this marriage, Calonarang felt happy, then suppressed his anger and finally stopped spreading the plague.

After getting married and living together, Mpu Bahula dared to ask Ratna Manggali about the source of his father-in-law's (Calonarang) supernatural powers. Ratna replied that the source of her mother's supernatural powers came from a holy book called

Lipyaksara. The book which is believed to be Durga's teachings has made Calonarang a powerful being with high-level knowledge. When Calonarang was careless, Mpu Bahula stole the book and then handed it over to Mpu Baradah. Finding out that his book had been stolen, Calonarang was furious and extremely angry again. Based on this incident, a battle broke out between Calonarang and Mpu Baradah, which Mpu Baradah then won. In the fierce battle, Calonarang later died in a state of moksa. Contrary to what many people say, Lipyaksara is in fact a book of teachings on goodness. Therefore, Mpu Baradah wanted the book to be studied [2].

Calonarang himself is a legendary community figure among the people of East Java and Bali. According to [3], the Calonarang legend is closely linked to the sacred Balinese cultural tradition and is a ritual performance with strong magical value, especially during the piodalan ceremony at Pura Prajapati and Pura Dalem (temples believed to be the palace of the God Shiva, the smelter). Piodalan itself can be interpreted as a celebration of the anniversary of the holy place in question. This legend is also part of a historical story that is believed to be an important figure in the development of the Airlangga kingdom. Some people believe that the Calonarang site is in Sukorejo Village, Gurah District, Kediri Regency, East Java. This is inseparable from the mention of the origin of Calonarang in the story that is circulating, namely the Widow of Girah, where Girah is identical to Gurah.

A Balinese artist, Bandem, estimated that the Calonarang performance was one of the most popular performances around 1825 in the Gianyar area. [4] Until now, the Calonarang performance is still often performed as part of the Balinese traditional ceremony ritual. Usually the Calonarang traditional ritual will begin when the time shows sandikala, the peak of this ritual will take place exactly at midnight, where the Balinese people believe that midnight is the right time to 'bring to life' the figure of Rangda in a trance state [5].

Calonarang art is a type of dance that is categorized as a sacred dance or Wali dance (religious dance) [6]. Calonarang is one of the Balinese arts that shows the cultural value system of the community. Dance drama performances created by artists cannot be separated from the lives of society and its environment. Therefore, an artist who creates a performance cannot be separated from the problems and issues that are developing in society [7].

The ideology contained in the literary work Calonarang is gender equality, enthusiasm for learning, loyalty to teachers, compassion, towards the goal of life, spreading the virtues of Buddhist teachings. Then the ideology contained in the Calonarang Geseng Waringin drama performance is the politics of marriage, women's resistance, the attitude of devotion and surrender shown by the sawa matah actors, and showing off their supernatural powers. Continuing from the form of Balinese art, it can be said that "Bali is Manik" which is an expression that is not just a jargon, but an icon that Bali is diverse in tradition, art and culture where Hinduism is its spirit. [8] Calonarang Drama for example is an art performance that is always linked to ritual and taksu. Even the Calonarang art performance itself is a medium for the presence of taksu

in the realm of performance. Because if you look at the procession of the performance and its rituals, there is a way for Balinese Hindus to present the taksu, both into the Calonarang pragina and the audience who enjoy the performance. Even in Calonarang, taksu is presented in extreme ways and methods of proving that the taksu does exist. However, taksu is always identified with sincerity and determination.

In general, there are many versions of the story about the Calonarang dance drama known in society. Generally, Calonarang will be known as a powerful widow who spreads a plague in the land of Kadiri. However, through the Cok Sawitri novel trilogy, readers will have a new perspective on the figure. If ranked, the first novel is titled Widow of Jirah, Si Rarung, and Manggali Kalki.

Widow of Jirah is like an opening door for the concept of State Dharma and Religion Dharma. In the novel Si Rarung, which is full of feelings of loss, deep sorrow, the Jirah clan who was forced to be removed, even the love story. Cok Sawitri seems to want to emphasize how sometimes human grief is so complicated, as well as power and decisions of power, even though in its time, sometimes it is flawed when it clashes with other interests and always leaves a hole of conflict for the next life. In his novel Menggali Kalki, if so far the main character in the story of Calonarang Rangda Ing Jirah, but this time there is a story from another perspective, namely the story of the journey of the figure of Manggali, the only daughter of Calonarang.

Lipyaksara is a performance inspired by one of the Cok Sawitri Novel trilogies, namely Manggali Kalki. A performance that also serves as a medium for delivering dialogue in three ways, namely verbally with dialogue in the script, body gestures (dialogue transformed into basic Balinese dance movements), and delivery through tembang kangen (geguritan), so that this is what makes the lipyaksara performance unrealistic in a theater performance style. The selection of all elements of tembang geguritan and Balinese dance in the performance functions to convey dialogue indirectly and, becomes an additional element that supports this performance into a complete unity. In addition to the new perspective taken, namely through Manggali which is interesting to explore, Artaud's cruel theater techniques and acting have relevance to the creation of the body in forming a medium for delivering messages in the Lipyaksara performance.

Theatre describes several techniques and creative subjects for designing and developing a surrealist theatrical form. The artist could not have achieved Artaud's surrealism without paying attention to his concept of cruel theater. In the cruel theater Artaud attempts to return the theater to its true function, namely an act to re-draw the conclusion that theater and the reality of life are two different objects. Reality is the position of humans living their conscious nature, while the stage is another form of reality but becomes a place for the realization of imaginative things or things that speak the language of the subconscious.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a library research approach as the main method. This type of library research involves collecting and analyzing data sourced from various relevant literature, such as scientific journal articles, research reports, books, and other documents related to the theory and practice of Artaud's cruel theater and the creation of theatrical works of art [9]. The main objective of this approach is to gain a deep and comprehensive understanding of the concept, method, and application of cruel theater in modern works of art, especially those related to the creation process and its philosophical and symbolic aspects.

The data sources used in this study are relevant scientific journal articles from various academic databases and research reports that discuss cruel theater, performative art creation methods, and the application of Artaud's style in art creation. The data obtained were selected based on their relevance and validity in supporting the analysis of the concept and process of creating theatrical works of art that breathe the style of cruel theater. This data becomes the theoretical basis and main reference in compiling the analysis and interpretation.

To collect the data, researchers used study document and bibliography techniques. The collection process was carried out systematically, including searching through digital databases such as Google Scholar, JSTOR, ScienceDirect, as well as institutional digital libraries and scientific journals containing relevant articles. Data selection was carried out based on certain criteria such as publication date, peer-reviewed level, and relevance to the research topic. Furthermore, the data was cataloged in the form of a summary and content analysis to facilitate the interpretation process.

In data analysis techniques, researchers use qualitative analysis methods that are descriptive and interpretive. The collected data are analyzed through coding, namely grouping findings based on main themes, such as the concept of cruel theater, the process of creating theater, and aspects of symbolism and magic. This analysis is carried out critically and in depth to emphasize the relationship between Artaud's theory, its application in works of art, and the application of relevant creative methodologies.

To ensure the validity of the data obtained, triangulation techniques were used. Triangulation is done by comparing data from various sources and approaches, such as adjusting views from scientific articles, research reports, and other academic documents. In addition, researchers also cross-checked the data with primary and secondary sources, and conducted internal validation through peer consultation or review by experts in the field of performing arts. This technique aims to strengthen the trust and reliability of the analysis results and the validity of the data used in the research.

Thus, this approach is expected to be able to produce a credible and reproducible analysis related to the process of creating the LipyakSara theater work with Artaud's cruel theater style. The methodology systematically shows how theory and practice are combined to produce a meaningful performative art work that is in accordance with the principles of cruel theater, and is able to provide scientific contributions in the field of performing arts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Artaud's Cruel Theatre is a style that intersects with the human subconscious, besides discussing things that smell of anxiety, madness, and fantasy, cruel theatre is conceptualized on a paradoxical reasoning that will lead a performance into an artificial dimension but is important to be interpreted [10]. Cruel theatre must arouse universal attention and it must be understood that theatre through its physical aspects requires spatial expression that is spatial [10]. Artaud in his book *The Theatre and Its Double* believes that the highest reality lies in the power of dreams and the elimination of the power of the mind, therefore Artaud's work is still related to the surrealism style.

Antonin Artaud, as one of the leading surrealist figures in Europe, introduced the idea of cruel theater in his proposal entitled *The Theater of Cruelty*. Artaud's cruel theater offers new values in the form of suffering, magical relationships with reality and threatening conditions. Therefore, Artaud interprets theater as another reflection of the actual reality. Theater is a reflection of the shadow of reality that finally looks different in form but has the same meaning, so that the audience realizes that life is actually dangerous and threatening. Artaud's surrealist style emerged from the concept of cruel theater by presenting word games, gestures, music, and actor expressions. In addition, Artaud's cruel theater also features physical torture, sexuality, and a chaotic atmosphere.

Stephen Barber in his book entitled *Blows and Bombs* strengthens the relationship between Artaud and rhythmic movement. Artaud proposed a theater that remains in self-destruction and self-reconstruction, where a theater performance will gain vitality through the process of destroying "destroying itself" and then "rebuilding".

In Artaud's cruel theater performance, there will be an artistic visual illusion and hidden symbols from gestures and utterances. Artaud's view that sees theater as a concrete physical area is inspired by the traditional Balinese theater art that he once witnessed. For Artaud, traditional Balinese theater has a deep meaning. For him, traditional Balinese theater is a theater that does not lose its sensitivity to the mysterious fear that is known as an element that moves theater when it is returned to its level. This is because traditional Balinese theater, according to Artaud, is a pure theatrical idea, where everything has its value and existence in comparison to its own degree of objectification in a performance.

Grotowski sees Artaud's concept of theater as a concept that speaks of the magic of the theater. Perhaps, there is some truth in Grotowski's view. Because Artaud was very inspired and influenced by the ideas of traditional Balinese theater which tended to be mystical, Grotowski. What is contained in Artaud's view by looking back at the trance phenomenon in *taksu* in Bali as a method towards ultimate truth, in Sigmund Freud's view is translated that humans actually have the deepest instinctive tendencies: the instinct to live and the instinct to die.

Thus, art, ritual and *taksu* have a strong connection. *Calonarang* dance is an art performance that is always linked to ritual and *taksu*. Even the *Calonarang* art performance itself is a medium for the presence of *taksu* in the realm of performance. Because if you look at the performance procession and ritual, it is a way for Balinese

Hinduism to present that taksu, both into the Calonarang pragina and the audience of the performance. Even in Calonarang, taksu is presented in extreme ways and methods of proving that the taksu does exist.

The method of the creation process is guided by the method of creating art based on practice (Practice Based Research) and the process in and through. The artistic research that will be conducted refers to the book *Artistic Research*. In the book *Artistic Research* it is explained that, "the starting point for artistic research is the open subjectivity of the researcher and her admission that she is the central research tool of the research" [11]. Based on [6] that art creation includes: stages of exploration, improvisation, and manifestation.

Through several previous explanations and the anxiety experienced, an idea emerged of the idiom of traditional body forms, especially Balinese dance movements in the Calonarang performance to be expressed in the embodiment of a theatrical performance art work with a touch of new idioms. The artist transforms today's reality into theatrical forms referring to Artaud's Cruel Theatre as a metaphor through theatrical performance. Then move on to the observation stage, where this stage is an accurate method for collecting data. The aim is to seek information about ongoing activities to then be used as the object of research study.

The next stage is towards observation, namely researching, sorting, selecting, and considering for the next stage. The creator makes detailed observations of social events that are related to events or conflicts that are similar or the same as the actor's conflict in the script. The observation process begins with the selection of similar works that are in accordance with the creator's ideas, both written works and works in the form of film performances and others. These processes are expected to create harmony with all supporters of the creation of the work involved, as a basis for the next work plan through joint exercises and the intensity of the process.

Antonin Artaud's Cruel Theatre is a style of theatre that is very much in touch with the human subconscious. This style expresses anxiety, madness, and fantasy through the concept of paradox that takes the performance into a deep artificial dimension, but still contains important meanings that must be understood. Artaud believed that this theater should be able to arouse universal attention and highlight physical aspects that contain strong spatial and symbolic expressions. Through the work of the Cruel Theater, Artaud asserts that the highest reality lies in the power of dreams and the elimination of the power of the human mind, so that this theater has a close relationship with the surrealist style which is full of wordplay, gestures, music, and actor expressions. In addition, elements of physical torture, sexuality, and the atmosphere of chaos become an integral part that strengthens the magical and threatening message of the work [12], [13], [14].

The new values brought into this theater, in addition to being oriented towards emotional and visual experiences, also display suffering and a magical relationship with reality, as a reflection of a reality full of danger and uncertainty. Artaud emphasized that theater is another reflection of reality, a shadow that seems to be different in form but contains a deep meaning that raises the audience's awareness of the dangers of life.

Inspiration from traditional Balinese theater, especially art forms that have a sensitivity to mysterious fears and magical elements, strengthens his view that theater must be pure and full of meaning, able to bring to life transcendental and magical experiences in every performance.

Artaud's view that shows the importance of spiritual aspects and magic in theater is in line with Grotowski's theory that states that magical and mystical powers are an inseparable part of the art of theater. The influence of Balinese culture with the practice of taksu and trance is the basis of this concept, because in Balinese tradition, this spiritual process is a way to the ultimate truth. Balinese performing arts, such as the Calonarang dance, have an important role as a medium to present taksu through rituals and extreme processes that are carried out deliberately to present this spiritual power. Thus, magical elements, rituals, and taksu are not only part of the tradition, but also become the spiritual and artistic foundation in the creation of deep and meaningful theatrical works [15].

In developing artworks, a practice-based creation method is used that emphasizes exploration, improvisation, and real manifestation. This approach considers the subjectivity of the creator as the main center in the creation process, in accordance with the principle of Research Based Artistic which combines direct experience and in-depth observation of social and spiritual phenomena. Through a rigorous observation process, the creator collects data related to relevant social and spiritual conflicts, both from artworks, rituals, and cultural practices, to ensure harmony and depth of meaning in the work to be produced. The use of traditional Balinese movement idioms, especially in the Calonarang dance, is then raised into modern theater works as a universal symbol that connects today's reality with the richness of Balinese culture, through metaphors and symbols that enrich the interpretation of the work.

Thus, Artaud's Cruel Theatre is a profound and complex form of theatre, combining magical, spiritual and visual elements to convey a message about a reality full of danger and mystery. Inspiration from Balinese tradition and taksu practice reinforces the idea that theater is truly a mirror of spiritual depth and wonder that touches the human subconscious. In the process of creating works, a practical approach and deep observation are used to combine traditional idioms with modern concepts, producing works that not only contain high artistic value but also transcendental meanings that are relevant to the contemporary context. Thus, theater is not only entertainment, but also a spiritual vehicle and reflection on the depth of human existence and culture.

CONCLUSION

Fundamental Finding : Lipyaksara's work is an experimental-based creative process by transforming the Cok Sawitri Novel into a theatrical performance text using Artaud's Cruel Theatre style. Lipyaksara does not become a narrative copy of a literary work, but rather explores the essence of the story contained in the novel. The body as a medium of communication emotionally conveys pieces of pain, disappointment, anger and sadness in a surreal space, thus becoming a means of conveying messages through unnatural forms but still within the realm of the dramatic. **Implication :** Through the style

of Artaud's Cruel Theatre, the creator can explore the story in Cok Sawitri's novel into a form of physical suffering, so that the audience can understand that the actors are conveying ideas through physical actions and poetic dialogue. With a touch of Balinese tradition, Lipyaksara then further matures the regional style with choreography, music, and dialogue during the performance. So that the terror produced is based on the nuances of Bali and its mystical and gripping traditions. **Limitation** : Lipyaksara does not become a narrative copy of a literary work, but rather explores the essence of the story contained in the novel. The transformation emphasizes emotional and surreal expressions over literal adaptation, which may limit audience comprehension for those unfamiliar with the source text or the conventions of Artaud's Cruel Theatre. **Future Research** : Future studies could examine how the integration of regional traditions such as Balinese elements in experimental theater contributes to audience reception, especially when combined with global theatrical styles like Artaud's. Exploration into different literary sources and their potential reinterpretation through this method may also provide deeper insights into the cultural translation and transformation process in performance arts.

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