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Hermeneutics, the Symbolic Meaning of the Cosmic Rivalry in the Legong Legod Bawa Dance in the Digitalization Era

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the symbolic meaning of cosmic rivalry in the Legong Legod Bawa dance through a hermeneutic perspective. Legong Legod Bawa is a traditional Balinese dance that embodies philosophical, religious, and symbolic values related to concepts of balance and the interplay of cosmic forces. The study employs a qualitative method with a hermeneutic approach to interpret the symbols, movements, characters, dramatic structure, and performance elements that represent this cosmic rivalry. The analysis interprets performance signs not merely based on visual forms but also through the underlying cultural context, mythology, and worldview of the Balinese people. Rooted in and developed within Saba Village, Gianyar, Legong Legod Bawa adheres to established Palegongan conventions while showcasing distinctive, dynamic movement characteristics.

The findings indicate that the cosmic rivalry depicted in Legong Legod Bawa does not simply portray a conflict between two forces; rather, it represents the quest for supremacy, human limitations in comprehending supernatural powers, and the vital importance of balance within the cosmic order. Symbols conveyed through movement, expression, characterization, and dramatic narrative serve as a medium to communicate philosophical values regarding the relationships between power, ego, harmony, and cosmic balance. Thus, the hermeneutic approach allows Legong Legod Bawa to be understood as a cultural text with multi-layered meanings—a subject worthy of study both as an aesthetic expression and as a reflection of Balinese life values. The representation of Hindu mythology from the Shiva Purana within this Palegongan dance also relates to contemporary issues of human character; specifically, the prevalence of criminal acts today—often observed via social media—highlights a lack of human self-control.

KEYWORDS

Hermeneutics, Symbolic Meaning, Cosmic Rivalry, Legong Legod Bawa Dance, Balinese Culture

Introduction

Bali is renowned as a dynamic hub of artistic creativity, where classical dance serves not merely as entertainment but also as a symbolic medium for conveying philosophical and spiritual values. One such classical dance form, distinguished by its high aesthetic appeal and complex movement structure, is the Legong dance. Legong is a highly celebrated traditional Balinese dance that remains vibrant and active to this day.

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As a traditional dance that continues to flourish in Bali, Legong possesses numerous unique qualities and distinctive characteristics. A key factor contributing to the enduring aesthetic value of the dance is the intricate connection between its movements and the accompanying gamelan music. This aligns with Bandem's (2018:14) definition of the term "Legong," which derives from the root word leg signifying fluid and supple movement—combined with the word gong.

In 2015, UNESCO recognized Legong dance as an Intangible Cultural Heritage, affirming its status as an invaluable cultural asset for both Bali and Indonesia. This recognition has spurred ongoing efforts to preserve and strengthen classical Balinese dance arts. Legong has undergone rapid development in terms of both quantity and quality. Originally, Legong Keraton (Palace Legong) evolved within royal courts before expanding beyond palace confines in the early 19th century. Female dancers, who initially trained and performed within the palace, returned to their respective villages to preserve the dance and teach it to the wider community. Within the repertoire of Palegongan dance, there are various narrative themes; one particularly unique dance, rich in philosophical significance, is Legong Legod Bawa.

Rooted in and developed within the village of Saba, Gianyar, Legong Legod Bawa is a dance form that adheres strictly to established Palegongan conventions while showcasing distinctive, more dynamic movement characteristics. Unlike the typical Legong Keraton, this dance is performed by two female dancers without the Condong role, creating an intense aesthetic focus on the interaction between the two main characters. Legong dance incorporates elements of dramatization—a form of representation adapted to the specific story or narrative—expressed through movement. Stuart Hall (1995:13) explicitly defines representation as the process of producing meaning through language; in the art of dance, the language employed is that of bodily movement, utilizing meaningful symbols to convey the messages embedded within the story.

Classical Legong dance is typically associated with Legong Keraton Lasem, performed by two Legong dancers and one Condong dancer. In contrast, the Legong Legod Bawa dance is unique for omitting the Condong role; instead, it is performed as a duet by two female dancers representing majestic masculine figures: the gods Brahma and Vishnu. The dance's primary distinction lies in its narrative source Hindu mythology recounting the rivalry between Brahma and Vishnu as they sought the beginning and end of Lord Shiva's lingga. This narrative is not merely a tale of competition but a profound philosophical metaphor concerning the search for self-identity, self-control, the nature of ultimate truth, and the limits of human intellectual and spiritual capacity in comprehending the Divine.

According to Kusumawardani (2013), symbolic meaning refers to the significance of a symbol a form linked to interpretation and associatively connected to aspects beyond the symbol's physical shape. In this context, dance serves as a form of symbolic communication, conveying impressions and theoretical perspectives on character through the language of human movement stylized into a work of art.

The representation of the Shiva Purana myth within this palegongan dance relates to the phenomenon of human character; in today's social media landscape, we frequently witness a lack

of self-control contributing to a surge in criminal activity. By drawing upon the philosophy of the Shiva Purana, Legong Legod Bawa offers insight into self-control, addressing the selfishness and arrogance that can reside within individuals. Human nature harbors seven forms of darkness known as Sapta Timira, traits that appear increasingly prominent in contemporary times.

This dance is rarely encountered in the digital era, as the younger generation tends to follow social media trends that favor creative or modern dance styles. To address the declining interest among the younger generation in learning and preserving the classical Legong dance, it is essential to understand the hermeneutics of the symbolic meanings embedded in the dance's concept, thereby enabling it to serve as a positive educational medium for the community. Furthermore, this research aims to ensure that the younger generation gains a thorough understanding of the Legong Legod Bawa dance and comprehends the meanings embodied within it.

Based on the preceding discussion, research into the Hermeneutics of the Symbolic Meaning of Cosmic Rivalry in the Legong Legod Bawa Dance is essential. Such research fosters an understanding of the connection between the dance's artistic form and the symbolic meanings derived from the Hindu Shiva Purana mythology embedded within it. Furthermore, it equips the younger generation with the theoretical knowledge and practical insight needed to safeguard and preserve classical Legong dance amidst modernization. Additionally, the dance's aesthetic qualities which define the identity of Legong Legod Bawa—and the narrative themes it portrays serve as a reference point for young people, enabling them to internalize the moral and character-building messages conveyed and thereby grow into better individuals. Thus, the benefits of this research extend beyond the realm of dance; it contributes to reinforcing the noble values of cultural identity and ensuring the continuity of ancestral heritage that requires ongoing preservation.

Methods

This study employs a qualitative method with a hermeneutic approach. The qualitative method was selected because the research focuses on understanding and interpreting the symbolic meanings within the Legong Legod Bawa dance, specifically regarding the representation of cosmic rivalry. The hermeneutic approach is used to deeply interpret the various signs and symbols present in the performance, taking into account the relationships between the dance text, the Balinese cultural context, the underlying mythology, and the community's interpretation of the dance.

Through this method, the research aims to yield a profound understanding of how cosmic rivalry is represented through symbols in the Legong Legod Bawa dance, while also elucidating the philosophical and cultural meanings underlying these representations.

Result

Hermeneutic Theory

Hans-Georg Gadamer describes hermeneutics as the practice of interpretive understanding in everyday life—a practice that renders the search for a specific "method" or a singular "truth" superfluous. Hermeneutic theory is highly relevant to language use, as individuals interpret one

another to grasp what is being communicated. A prominent aspect of his understanding of the open and inclusive nature of hermeneutics is his interpretation of history as a "fusion of horizons" between the past and the present. This concept not only elucidates the interaction between these two eras but also acknowledges that no interpretation is ever truly complete. While many appreciate Gadamer's emphasis on interpretation, he has also faced criticism for his less-than-critical approach to tradition and prejudice (Browning, 2016).

Symbolic Theory

Ernst Cassirer posits that humans find their direction and path in life through the existence of symbols. He likens the contemporary world to a labyrinth; humans constantly seek a way out but struggle to escape due to the absence of clear signposts, perpetually searching for an "Ariadne's thread" to lead them to the exit (Dillistone, 2022:122). Humans are beings who inhabit a symbolic universe. Cassirer notes that, like other living creatures, humans possess receptor and effector systems; however, humans possess the unique capacity to interpose a third system the symbolic system between the other two, thereby generating cultural forms. This theory is employed here to interpret the symbolic meaning of the Legong Legod Bawa dance.

Balinese Cosmological Concept: Rwa Bhineda

The term Rwa Bhineda is composed of the words Rwa and Bhineda; Rwa signifies "two," while Bhineda denotes difference or dissimilarity. Thus, rwa bhinneda can be defined as a term for any two things that are dissimilar or distinct and appear contradictory yet coexist. This theory serves as an excellent conceptual framework for research aimed at explaining the concept of cosmic rivalry or balance between the tip and the base of the Lingga as represented in the Legong dance and relating it to the realities of human nature.

Discussion

Contextualizing the Myth of Cosmic Rivalry

In the hermeneutic process, this study considers the relationship between text, context, and interpreter. The dance is positioned as a cultural text that can be read and interpreted through its various performance elements. The social, cultural, and religious contexts of Balinese society serve to deepen the understanding of the symbols identified, while interview data from informants provide a basis for avoiding interpretations that are purely subjective.

According to the Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language), mythology is the study of literary forms containing sacred concepts and tales regarding the lives of deities and supernatural beings within a culture. Mythology also encompasses myths or collections of sacred traditional stories that explain the origins of the world, the universe, gods, heroes, and a society's cultural values, often involving supernatural beings to impart meaning to life and provide moral guidance. The Legong Legod Bawa dance holds specific significance through its narrative drawn from the Shiva Purana (a Hindu mythological text) which is embodied within the structure of the Legong dance.

The Shiva Purana is one of the eighteen major Puranas in Hinduism dedicated to Lord Shiva. It contains stories about Shiva, cosmology, philosophy, and teachings regarding meditation and the path to spiritual liberation. The Shiva Purana is considered a vital scripture for studying and understanding the essence of Lord Shiva and his manifestations in the world. The narrative of

the Legong Legod Bawa dance is drawn from the Shiva Purana; the dance itself represents a story that introduces and explores the characters of the deities Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva.

The art of Legong dance has undergone rapid development in terms of both quantity and quality. Originally, Legong Keraton (Palace Legong) developed within royal courts before spreading beyond palace grounds in the early 19th century. Female dancers who initially trained and performed Legong within the palace returned to their respective villages to preserve and teach the dance to the wider community. One variant of Legong that continues to thrive today is Legong Legod Bawa, which originated in Saba Village.

Legong Legod Bawa a Legong dance that flourished in Saba Village, Gianyar—traces its roots to the royal courts of Bali, with origins said to lie in a prince's dream. It subsequently evolved outside the palace environment, specifically in Saba Village. This local development introduced distinctive movements and narrative elements adapted by its creators, establishing the unique identity of the Saba style of Legong. In terms of its narrative and choreography, this dance possesses a form and structure distinct from other Legong styles, characterized by specific portrayals of figures and a movement style unique to Saba.

This dance is drawn from Hindu mythology (tattwa), recounting the rivalry between Lord Brahma (manifested as a swan) and Lord Vishnu (manifested as a wild boar, or Varaha). The narrative is adapted into the structure of the Legong dance. The story begins in Heaven, where Lord Brahma and Lord Vishnu are conversing, each boasting of their own invincible supernatural powers and authority. Lord Shiva overhears their exchange as neither is willing to yield or acknowledge the other as superior. A conflict ensues, prompting Lord Shiva to intervene by transforming into a Lingga (a phallic pillar symbolizing divine energy) and setting a challenge: whoever can locate either the tip or the base of the Lingga shall be deemed the most powerful.

Both Lord Brahma and Lord Vishnu feel compelled to prove their respective powers. Lord Brahma decides to transform into a fire-bird to search for the Lingga’s peak. Not to be outdone, Lord Vishnu transforms into Varaha (a giant wild boar) to seek the Lingga's base. Both deities strive with all their might to find their respective targets. As Lord Brahma flies higher, the tip of the Lingga rises ever higher; similarly, as Lord Vishnu descends to find the base, the base recedes ever further downward. Eventually, both Lord Brahma and Lord Vishnu find themselves unable to locate the extremities of Lord Shiva's Lingga. They concede, realizing that beyond their own abilities lies a far greater power boundless and immeasurable embodied by Lord Shiva as the Supreme Being.

The story’s significance lies in the failure to locate the top or bottom of the lingga, symbolizing that God (Shiva) cannot be measured by reason, ego, or mere physical strength. The rivalry between Brahma (the Creator) and Vishnu (the Preserver) over the lingga a symbol involving ego and humility illustrates the human tendency to believe oneself supreme. Ultimately, however, the quest concludes with the realization that Shiva is the source of all things (the ultimate truth), thereby transcending the competitive ego within humanity.

In the Hindu-Shaivite tradition, the Linggaand Yoni are sacred symbols representing the union of the universe's two primary energies: the masculine (Shiva) and the feminine (Shakti/Parvati). The lingga is not merely a sexual object but a manifestation of fertility, creation, and cosmic balance.

The mythology of the lingga is rooted in the Linga Purana, which recounts a dispute between Lord Brahma (the Creator) and Lord Vishnu (the Preserver) regarding who was supreme. Amidst their argument, a colossal pillar of fire (a lingga) appeared, seemingly without beginning or end. Brahma flew upward to find its summit, while Vishnu descended to find its base; both

failed to locate either extremity. Finally, Lord Shiva emerged from within the lingga, revealing himself as the source of all existence an entity transcending the concepts of space and time.

In archaeology and iconography, the lingga is frequently found as a stone cylinder set into a yoni. This form is often divided into three sections representing the base, middle, and top—which mirror the Triloka (Three Worlds) or the Tri-Deva (Trinity of Gods). The lowest section, typically square in shape, is embedded within the yoni; it symbolizes the roots of life, the material world (Bhurloka), and Lord Brahma. The middle section is octagonal and protrudes from the yoni. This symbolizes the sustaining energy, the intermediate realm (Bhuvarloka), and Lord Vishnu. The upper section is cylindrical or elongated with a rounded tip. This symbolizes the pinnacle of creation, the upper realm (Svarloka), and Lord Shiva.

The union of the lingga entering the yoni symbolizes the fertilization of the earth by the sky, resulting in agricultural fertility and prosperity for the people. The upward-pointing tip of the lingga symbolizes fire or the sky (representing power), while its base represents the earth.

In Indonesia particularly in Java and Bali the lingga-yoni motif, a significant symbol in Nusantara culture, is frequently found within temple complexes (especially Shiva temples such as Sambisari or Ijo) or amidst rice fields. The linggaserves as a sacred object of veneration a medium for invoking safety and fertility rather than merely being a statue. Its placement atop the yoni symbolizes the union of the microcosm (humanity) and the macrocosm (the universe), a union crucial for the regeneration of life.

In Hindu teachings, these three concepts are known as Satyam, Shiwam, and Sundaram. Satyam signifies ultimate, immutable truth akin to the concept of logos or theory where theory acts as an analytical tool to uncover the truth and utility within a chosen subject. Shiwam denotes purity, peace, or perfection, referring to the ethical values embodied in a work as a source of peace and a reflection of God's omnipotence. Finally, Sundaram signifies the beauty or perfection inherent in God, manifested through spiritual experience and the aesthetic qualities of human creation; it evokes a sense of awe or wonder in the observer a concept known in Balinese culture as taksu. Taksu is a spiritual force, a magical energy, or a charisma radiating from individuals, objects, and places. It is far more than mere charm; it is a potent energy that enhances intelligence, authority, and the capacity for success, particularly in the realms of performing arts and spiritual life. In Hindu mythology, the quest to find the tip (Agni) and the base (Tirtha) of Lord Shiva’s Linga symbolizes the search for one's true self and the essence of ultimate truth (Brahman), as well as the limitations of even the highest beings before the Supreme God. Lord Brahma as the manifestation of the Creator and Lord Vishnu as the manifestation of the Preserver are depicted as rivals, yet they ultimately submit to the greatness of Lord Shiva. This rivalry is not interpreted as a destructive conflict, but rather as a cosmic dynamic (Rwa Bhineda) that maintains the balance of the universe.

Symbolic Representation in the Legong Legod Bawa Dance

Cassirer posits that humans are able to find direction and a path in life because of symbols. He likens the contemporary world to a labyrinth; humans constantly seek a way out but struggle to escape due to a lack of guidance, perpetually searching for the "Ariadne's thread" that might lead them out of the maze (Dillistone, 2022:122).

Language: A fundamental means of communication and a medium for shaping human thought.

Myth and Religion: Ways for humans to derive sacred meaning, a sense of security, and order amidst the chaos of the world.

Art: A form of aesthetic expression that enriches the human perspective on reality.

History: A reconstruction of the past that fosters an awareness of identity and continuity.

Science: A system of logical and conceptual thought for understanding the laws of nature.

It is well known that the style of Legong dance varies depending on geographical location, the dance instructor or teacher, and the accompanying musical ensemble. These factors create distinct characteristics and serve as a key attraction of the Legong Legod Bawa dance. We can explore this appeal by examining the aesthetic elements that underpin the integrity of the Legong Legod Bawa dance as a work of art expressed through movement.

The primary medium of a dance work is, of course, human movement sculpted through the dimensions of space, time, and energy to convey the artist's ideas, concepts, emotions, and aesthetic experiences. Beyond movement, there are supporting elements that serve as auxiliary media such as facial expressions, costumes and attire, props and accessories, musical accompaniment and sound (or vocals), and lighting all of which play a crucial role in the integrity of the dance performance.

Symbolic theory is employed in this study to understand the Legong Legod Bawa dance as a form of cultural expression embodying various symbols and meanings. These symbols manifest not only through movement but also through characterization, expressions, costumes, props, musical accompaniment, floor patterns, and the dramatic structure of the performance. Each element is understood as part of a symbolic system representing the values, ideas, and cultural perspectives of the Balinese people.

In the context of the research titled "Hermeneutika The Symbolic Meaning of Cosmic Rivalry in Legong Legod Bawa Dance in the Digitalization Era", symbolic theory is used to identify and interpret how cosmic rivalry is represented through various performance elements. Cosmic rivalry is not understood merely as a conflict between characters; rather, it is examined as a symbol representing the interplay of forces, ego, superiority, and limitations, as well as the endeavor to achieve balance within the cosmic order.

Ernst Cassirer’s concept of the human being as animal symbolicumserves to explain that humans comprehend reality through systems of symbols. In the context of the Legong Legod Bawa dance, the symbols present in the performance act as a medium for expressing cultural ideas and values that cannot always be conveyed directly. Consequently, elements such as movement, characterization, expression, costumes, music, and other performance components serve not only an aesthetic function but also a symbolic one.

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The inclusion of the digitalization era context highlights that the existence and interpretation of symbols within the Legong Legod Bawa dance are inextricably linked to technological advancements and digital media. Performances that were once primarily experienced firsthand can now be viewed across various digital platforms. This shift in medium can influence how

symbols are presented, perceived, and interpreted by the public—particularly the younger generation. Thus, symbolic theory is used to examine the continuity, transformation, and reinterpretation of the symbols of cosmic rivalry as the Legong Legod Bawa dance enters the digital realm. This dance is performed by two female dancers who initially execute Legong movements in an abstract manner; later, during the pengecet section, they assume specific roles, with one dancer portraying Lord Brahma and the other Lord Vishnu. The dramatic narrative of the Legong Legod Bawa dance is relatively simple and abstract, unfolding after the third act the pengecet phase. The message and core story are conveyed to the audience by a juru tandak (vocalist), who narrates the tale through singing that follows the rhythm of the accompanying music.

The Legong Legod Bawa dance comprises several structural sections: Pengawit (Opening); Pangawak (Main Section); Pengrangrang I; Pesiat; Pengrangrang II; Pemurtian; Pesiat; Pakaad (Conclusion)

In the pengawit and pangawak sections, the movements are fluid, supple, and rhythmic, reflecting refinement of character and harmony. The rhythmic synchronization between the dancers' movements and the gamelan accompaniment symbolizes the alignment of the macrocosm and the microcosm. During the pemurtian section, the dancers wear specific costumes and utilize props (such as wings and arrows) appropriate to their respective characters. Pemurtian (derived from the Sanskrit word murti) signifies embodiment, transformation, or the transition from an abstract state to a physical or material form. Within the context of Balinese Hindu culture and spirituality, the term is closely linked to the process of manifesting spiritual energy or a deity. The pemurtian section is followed by the pengrangrang section.

In the context of Balinese performing arts and karawitan (traditional music), pengrangrang serves as an introductory segment within the structure of a musical composition (gending). This section typically features a free-flowing melody designed to introduce the musical notes to be used and to provide melodic variation. It functions to establish or highlight the fundamental tones (saih or patet) of the piece to be performed.

The pesiat section represents the dance's climax; the movements here are more agile and dynamic, demanding a high level of dexterity as the dancers portray two distinct characters clashing in a contest of supernatural power while searching for the lingga of Lord Shiva.

The pekaad section (sometimes referred to as pekaad) in the Legong dance serves as the concluding part of the entire performance structure. In this section, the dancers perform movements to exit the stage or retreat behind the backdrop, signaling that the story or dance has concluded. The aesthetics of the Legong Legod Bawa dance can be examined through its constituent elements: wiraga (physical movement), wirama (rhythm), wirasa (expression/feeling), and wirupa (visual appearance).

Wiraga

Wiraga is a fundamental element of dance art referring to the mastery of bodily movement skills—both technical and aesthetic—across the dancer's entire physique, ranging from limb movements to changes in positioning. The concept is rooted in the word raga (body), emphasizing the dancer's ability to execute rhythmic, dynamic, and aesthetic movements to effectively convey the dance's meaning. In Legong dance, rapid and dynamic movements are performed with a fluid, flowing quality, incorporating the Tri Angga concept—a spatial division or cosmological structure in Balinese society that categorizes all aspects of life, including the human body, as central elements of the dance. These movements are swift and dynamic,

synchronized with the accompanying gamelan rhythm while maintaining the dancer's graceful fluidity.

The Tri Angga concept in Balinese dance represents the head as the sacred element, the torso as the balancing element, and the legs as the supporting element. This application of Tri Angga establishes a spiritual hierarchy aligned with the Tri Loka concept (the three realms of the universe). According to Slamet (2025), this physical arrangement is vertically divided into three zones an adaptation of the Tri Hita Karana philosophy, which teaches harmony among the Creator, humanity, and nature. Similarly, Ariyasa (2024) explains that Tri Angga distinguishes the head as the most sacred part and the center of spirituality (Utama Angga), the torso as occupying an intermediate level of sanctity (Madya Angga), and the legs referred to as Nista Angganas the lowest or least sacred part.

The Tri Angga concept in Balinese tradition views the human body as a unified entity, essential for maintaining internal harmony within the microcosm and balance with the universe. To maintain this balance between the microcosm and the macrocosm, Balinese dance techniques specifically in the Legong dance incorporate Hindu symbolism; notably, the dancer's movements frequently trace the shape of the number eight (8). In spiritual, numerological, and philosophical contexts, the number 8 symbolizes balance, eternity, and limitless potential. It reflects the continuous flow of energy between the universe and the individual, as well as the interplay between material ambition and spiritual growth.

As a tradition rooted in rigorous Balinese dance standards, Legong requires dancers to execute movements with technical precision and correctness. The number 8 serves as a symbol of infinity, representing boundless human potential whether in spirituality, learning, or self-actualization. Its symmetrical form, balancing top and bottom, also signifies equilibrium and reflects the law of cause and effect (karma), fostering harmony between the physical (material) and spiritual realms, as well as between giving and receiving. This aligns with the dancer's motivation: to offer a sincere performance balanced by the joy, talent, and happiness experienced during both ceremonial rituals and stage performances.

By mastering the correct dance techniques, dancers can grasp the deeper significance of the Legong dance, enabling them to perform with genuine dedication and embody the balance between the macrocosm and the microcosm.

Wirama

Wirama is an element of dance art referring to the harmonious alignment between musical rhythm and movement. It serves to regulate the tempo and dynamics of the dance, ensuring that the dancer's movements synchronize with the musical beat, thereby rendering the performance beautiful, meaningful, and captivating to the audience.

Wirasa

Wirasa is an element of dance involving the deep internalization and expression of feelings, emotions, and the dance's character through facial expressions and harmonious body movements, allowing the dance's message to be conveyed profoundly to the audience.

Internalization and Expression:

Wirasa requires the dancer to internalize and express the spirit or emotional essence embodied in the dance.

Facial Expression:

A crucial aspect of wirasa is the dancer's facial expression, which must align with the character of the dance being performed.

Conveying the Message:

Through strong wirasa, the dancer can transmit the dance's energy and emotions to the audience, enabling them to share in the experience.

Wirupa

Wirupa refers to the physical form of the dancer—specifically, how the dancer appears on stage.

In dance, wirupa encompasses the dancer's physical presentation—including costumes, makeup, and props—which serves to convey the dance's message, character, and theme, making them clearer and more engaging for the audience.

Fan.

A prop that is integral to and a signature feature of the Legong dance. Movements involving the fan are not merely visual elements; they symbolize the dynamics of the mind (manah) and the concentration of energy in upholding dharma (goodness and the preservation of the universe).

Arrow.

Arrows placed at the corner of the stage are used during the pesiat (combat) scene. The arrow carries a profound philosophy, symbolizing mental acuity, focus, and the ability to destroy unrighteousness (adharma) with precision. The arrow also symbolizes a pure mind (manacika)—sharp and steadfast, unwavering in the face of worldly temptations. Much like an arrow speeding toward its target, this represents the Hindu devotee's focus on attaining the ultimate life goal: union with God (Moksha). The arrow is used by the dancer portraying Lord Vishnu to reach the depths of the earth during the quest for the Lingga.

Wings

Additionally, the female dancer portraying Lord Brahma wears wings to support her role as a bird (a sacred swan); she uses them to fly to great heights in search of the summit of the cosmic pillar of fire—or the tip of the lingga which represents the manifestation of Lord Shiva.

PHILOSOPHICAL INTERPRETATION OF THE LINGGA AS SPIRITUAL AND LIFE VALUES IN THE ERA OF DIGITALIZATION

The search for the top and bottom ends of the Lingga symbolizes human efforts to understand the highest essence, absolute power, and the infinite nature of God (Shiva), in which the egos of Brahma and Vishnu are defeated by the omnipotence of Shiva. The Lingga symbolizes Shiva-Tattwa (the source of creation and dissolution). It is a metaphor for the process of tat twam asi (I am you), namely the search for the self and God. The undiscovered top and bottom ends indicate that the essence of God cannot be measured by the limited ego or human mind. This mythology teaches that competition, arrogance, or efforts to assert oneself (egoism) will not be able to reach the ultimate truth.

The connection with the dissertation is related to the Lingga facing vertically upward, in this case representing the highest possible imagination of the dance creator, with the concept that is visualized and implemented through the theory of the Yoni, which is horizontal, into a form

of dance. The ideas, concepts, and notions are based on the Hindu mythology of the Shiva Purana, with the aim of demonstrating the existence of the story concerning the search for the top and bottom ends of the Shiva Lingga by Lord Brahma and Lord Shiva, which is then implemented through the means and medium of a palegongan dance entitled Tari Legong Legod Bawa.

The creation of an artwork will, of course, provide a balance with the universe, which can be connected and related to the philosophy in Hinduism, particularly Balinese Hinduism, known as Tri Hita Karana. Tri Hita Karana refers to the three causes of prosperity in human life, emphasizing the importance of establishing harmonious relationships in the three relationships of human beings, consisting of Parhayangan (the relationship between humans and God), Pawongan (the relationship among human beings), and Palemahan (the relationship between humans and the natural environment). The harmony of these three relationships will create a peaceful, prosperous, and balanced life for all beings.

The relationship between humans and God in an artwork can be seen from the meaning of the word art, which originates from the Sanskrit word sani, meaning worship, service, offering, and sincere giving. In Balinese, sincere giving or offering is called Ngayah. When artists offer their artworks as a form of offering to Almighty God, the relationship between humans and God has reached a form of harmony. In a dance artwork, the harmonious relationship between humans and God is manifested through prayer activities before beginning its creation, rehearsals, and performances. Likewise, in terms of the functions of dance, one of them is tari wali, which functions to complement religious ceremonies, and tari Bebali, which functions as an accompaniment to ceremonies and contains a plot or story.

As humans live in the digital era, the reality of life has transformed into a cybernetic space rife with paradoxes. It is here that the integration of Rwa Bhineda and the philosophical values of the Lingga becomes crucial. The digital world has given rise to a new form of Rwa Bhineda: useful information versus hoaxes, global connectivity versus mental isolation, and technological convenience versus dependency (or addiction). Adopting the principle of Rwa Bhineda means acknowledging that the internet possesses both a light side and a dark side. We cannot simply eliminate the internet; instead, we are called upon to use it wisely to maintain life's harmony. In the virtual realm, the human mind is easily swayed by algorithms, trends, and the quest for social validation. This is where the spiritual value of the Lingga serves as a guide for an upright life. Digital-age individuals should emulate the qualities of the Lingga: remaining steadfast in the principles of truth, standing firm in digital ethics (as civilized netizens), and refusing to be easily shaken by the storms of commentary or negative trends on social media.

Furthermore, harmonious human relationships are evident in the collaborative efforts involved in creating art—often referred to as collaborative works—where individuals use their ingenuity to work alongside other artists to produce fundamental artistic creations. Such artworks also serve as a medium of communication with the audience, as reflected in the messages and meanings they convey. In the digital era, the concept of Rwa Bhineda teaches us to be adaptable and wise in embracing the dual nature of technology. Meanwhile, the philosophical interpretation of the Lingga provides us with the inner strength to avoid losing our spiritual identity.

urthermore, the process of creating the dance—specifically the interaction among the dancers—fosters an understanding of harmonious relationships; this indirectly cultivates a spirit of cooperation, mutual assistance, and respect among the performers. Beyond its ceremonial role, the art form serves as a means of entertainment; in Bali, for instance, it is performed during

various events, including Manusa Yadnya ceremonies. In this context, the dance functions as entertainment intended for the general public, a category known as balih-balihan.

This is also related to phenomena occurring today, in which many acts of crime take place throughout the world. There are many manifestations of human arrogance, pride, and selfishness, as though humans never think that in the eyes of God, human beings are merely a handful of dust. In Hinduism, there are six enemies within human beings known as Sad Ripu. These six enemies are Kama, or desire; Lobha, meaning greed; and Krodha, meaning anger. The other three are Mada, or intoxication; Moha, or confusion; and Matsarya, or jealousy. These enemies within human beings must certainly be controlled through fundamental understanding, one of which is by learning the story contained in one part of the Hindu mythology of the Shiva Purana. To overcome the high level of human arrogance is to understand the philosophical hermeneutics, as well as the meanings and messages contained in the concept of the Legong Legod Bawa dance.

Furthermore, the Hindu mythology of the Shiva Purana concerning the search for the top and bottom ends of Shiva, together with the arrogance of Lord Brahma and Lord Vishnu, also provides an understanding of character education regarding how humans can control the seven forms of darkness within themselves, known as Sapta Timira. Sapta Timira refers to seven elements or qualities in Hindu teachings that can cause a person's mind to become darkened, intoxicated, or lose awareness, and these seven things generally trigger arrogance, pride, and negative behavior if they are not controlled. Sapta Timira consists of: 1. Surupa: Darkness or intoxication caused by physical handsomeness or beauty; 2. Dhana: Darkness or intoxication caused by abundant wealth or material possessions; 3. Guna: Darkness or intoxication resulting from one's intelligence, cleverness, or knowledge; 4. Kulina: Darkness or intoxication caused by noble lineage or high social status; 5. Yowana: Darkness or intoxication caused by youth, which is full of energy and ambition; 6. Sura: Darkness or intoxication caused by alcoholic beverages or other things that cause loss of consciousness; 7. Kasuran: Darkness or intoxication arising from an uncontrolled sense of courage.

In Hindu ethics, the seven potential causes of human arrogance or intoxication are not prohibited, but they must be controlled so that they are not misused and do not harm oneself or others. By learning about this Hindu mythology, it is hoped that humans can explore and understand how arrogance can destroy everything, so that humans can better control their proud and arrogant nature and achieve the goal of self-perfection as human beings properly.

The relationship between humans and their surrounding environment, including plants, animals, and everything contained within the earth, can be seen in artwork through the utilization of natural resources as artistic means and media. Through profound human thought, people are able to preserve environmental sustainability with responsibility.

The existence and interpretation of symbols in the Legong Legod Bawa Dance cannot be separated from the development of technology and digital media. Performances that were previously experienced primarily through direct encounters can now be viewed through various digital platforms. This change of medium can affect how symbols are presented, received, and interpreted by society, particularly by the younger generation. Thus, symbolic theory is used to examine the continuity, transformation, and reinterpretation of the symbols of cosmic competition when the Legong Legod Bawa Dance enters the digital space.

Humans can maintain the balance of nature after understanding the messages and meanings of the artwork, which are expected to be able to improve human thinking regarding the preservation and conservation of the natural environment. In addition, artworks can also

become a form of cultural commercialization, meaning that an artwork is transformed into a commodity that is traded to obtain economic benefits, which in turn can influence the advancement and maintenance of the surrounding environment, which can be used as a commercial space.

Conclusion

Legong Dance is a rich cultural text. The hermeneutic approach helps us understand that every finger movement, glance of the eyes, and sway of the body in Legong is a symbol of beauty, refinement of character, and the relationship between humans and the divine. It is a reflection of Balinese cultural identity that continues to live and adapt. Based on an aesthetic-philosophical interpretation, Legong Legod Bawa Dance originates from Hindu mythology about the search for the tip and base of the Lingga of Shiva by Lord Brahma and Lord Vishnu. This story affirms that Sang Hyang Widhi (God/Shiva) has neither a beginning (base) nor an end (tip). The efforts of Lord Brahma (as a swan/fire) and Lord Vishnu (as a warak/wild boar) who flew upward and dug downward symbolize the limitations of beings/deities in understanding the essence of God's omnipotence.

Legong Legod Bawa Dance is not merely a dance performance with aesthetic beauty alone. Through hermeneutic study, this dance is a symbolic text that represents the dynamics of cosmic competition between Lord Brahma and Lord Vishnu. This competition symbolizes the search for the highest truth (Siwa Tattwa), in which the process of creation and preservation of the universe always requires balance. Elements such as fluid body movements, the use of fans, and eye expressions merge into a unified meaning that reflects harmony, purity, and the philosophy of life of the Hindu community in Bali.

Aesthetically, Legod Bawa features distinctive movements, performed by two dancers without leaning. These graceful yet dynamic movements reflect the balance between strength (energy) and gentleness (art). Philosophically, this dance depicts the danger of arrogance (ego/rajas nature) that arises when Brahma and Vishnu boast of their supernatural powers, which are then brought to awareness by Shiva through the mystery of the Lingga. The battle in the mythology is not intended to destroy, but rather is a process of spiritual awakening, which in the context of Balinese dance, becomes a symbol of harmony between humans, nature, and God (Tri Hita Karana).

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