

Natural Cosmic Esthetic Presentation in a *Pwahaci* Dance Ritual Performance in Cigugur, Kuningan District, West Java, Indonesia

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Abstract—This study is qualitative description of the structure weaving of ritual performance in describing the spiritual awareness of all participants. Especially the community of the *Penghat Kepercayaan* of Sundanese *Wiwitan* in Cigugur. It's aiming to show the teachings of the kindness, the truth and the beauty of the cosmic aesthetic actions of nature in the arts expressed. The research was built on the aesthetic theory of theology, supported by performance and ritual theories. The research method used verbal data and pictorial data, combining complete participant and observer participant. Based on the theory and method performed by this ritual show, it has a diversity of philosophical and symbolic meanings. The character of *DewiPwahaci* is a picture of the image of the divinity of mankind in Sundanese as a duty and obligation to seek perfection of life. This is also interpreted as the implementation of *PikukuhTilu* teachings in realizing a harmonious relationship between human and nature, with God, and with each other.

Keywords: *Pwahaci dance, natural cosmic rituals, pikukuhtilu, the beauty aesthetic*

I. INTRODUCTION

The title of the writing "Aesthetic Presentation of the Cosmic Teachings of Nature" means the act of presenting natural reality, which is both imaginative and mimetic (imitation) of nature, also an expression of feelings and expressions of values, meaning, cognitive (knowledge, experience), and the quality of the medium. The term "aesthetic" which comes from the word "*estete*" (Greek), is an action related to the problem of sensing, which means "I sensed". In Javanese "sensing" is the same meaning as "*nyondro*", which means "I look, I hear, I feel, smell, and touch". Supposing that "I do not know out there," by sensing then I know. Mind sense is understood by all the senses. The term "aesthetic" does not mean art but the art of dancing is one of aesthetic areas. Ritualistic art and artistic rituals, both exist in the aesthetic area. With this understanding, the act of dancing can be understood philosophically as a medium of action in searching for meaning specifically for the Observer of the *Sunda Wiwitan Trust in Cigugur*.

The term "ritual performance" has a range of performance acts. There are eight areas of action that coincide with performances including: daily life, cooking, socializing, art,

sports (other popular entertainment), business, technology, sex, ritual, and play [1]. Furthermore, Ronald L Grimes understands ritual performance as a show that has many connotations. In etymology comes from two Latin words: namely '*per*' means through, and '*forma*' means form. Ingmail.com the broadest sense, ritual is considered as formal behavior, and on the other hand performance is playing a role in front of an audience that shows a role in a fictitious sense; in another sense performance is demonstrated in terms of 'achieving' [2]. A person usually knows when he is in a situation or is playing a role, and when he is 'himself'.

The *Pwahaci* Dance performance process is displayed in front of the *Keranjang Kencana* Decoration equipped with smaller chairs on the right and left sides, and there are heirlooms spears and umbrellas. There are also various fruits and grains, especially rice - Large piles of rice are placed in the middle of the stage.

The motive for the dance is centered on both hands. The movements of both hands are directed at both eyes, nose, ears, right and left arms, mouth, and both legs. This dance is complemented by four dancers with offerings. The entering process of the dancer into the stage through the rear left direction, which in turn leads to the center, then forms a circle. From the shape of the circle then goes backward diagonally in a row, until the position is in a row in front of the *Keranjang Kencana* Decoration and facing forward, kneeling down, at the of the back room, with each offering placed in front of it.

The sounds of harps accompanying the entry of four offerings carriers. The song of "*Ambu Dewi*" specifically accommodates the main lyrics of core dance. The lyrics *Ambu Dewi* music is "*Ambu Dewi Hyang Pawahaci Baeu ngahiji ka kami Ambu Dewi Hyang Pwahaci Baeu ngahiji na ati* (Goddess Pwahaci please be together with us, Goddess Pwahaci please be together in our hearts [3]. *Pwahaci* dance performance can be called religious rituals, because it aims to live up to the basic values of the spiritual teachings of Nature Cosmic.

The important meaning of the topic of the dance movement expressions related to the appreciation of meditative nature of dance brings a philosophical understanding of ritual events. Thus the question is: What is the philosophical meaning of

aesthetic dance actions related to spiritual Nature Cosmic teachings specifically to the participants of the *Sunda Wiwitan* Belief Community in Cigugur?

The purpose of this paper is to provide an understanding that the events of art performances, especially dance, have a range that can become a spiritual philosophical aesthetic appreciation of the goodness, truth and beauty values within the context of ritual events.

This writing uses the theological aesthetic theory by Han Urs von Balthasar, supported by an understanding of Richard Schecner's performance theory, and specifically the ritual performance by Ronald L Greme. The next supporting theory is the concept/ritual theory written by Victor Turner. The concept or the theory becomes an important part of the philosophical meaning of the *Pwahaci* Dance ritual performance. Han Urs Balthazar understands that a ritual event has a meaning of beauty which is related to goodness and truth. Balthazar established a theological philosophy starting from analogy which is not of an abstract being, but became as it is found concretely within its attributes. A creature manifests themselves in an enlighten which is something beautiful and impresses us. Artistic ritual and ritualistic arts are accepted as admiration because they are good and right. The good, the right and the beautiful are the so-called as transcendental attributes, because they pass the essence and co-existence boundaries with what exists. All gives theological aesthetics analogy (the presence of God). With this understanding, art can be understood as an aesthetic action that summarizes the existence of *reuniting bonum* (goodness), *yerum* (truth) and *pulkrum* (beauty), united in a phenomenon [4].

As a Pillar of Catholic Theology, Balthasar took the object of the "The Cross of Jesus Christ", as an object that has the aesthetic requirements of beauty. The drama of Jesus' life becomes an amazing event, because there is a sacrifice of love filled with joy. This is interpreted as a love theology, which is analogy between goodness, truth and beauty. That object became an aesthetic building of beauty that: "... humans only exist in dialogue that the horizons of all beings are limited, opening themselves to express four things: All beings are one, love is good, therefore all beings are good, love is true, because all beings are true, and love only if in appearance we understand the essence that manifest itself [5]. Ronald L Grimes further explained that in many cultures and historical periods, ritual performance is a weaving of structures of ritual effectiveness and entertainment [2]. Weaving is sometimes loose, and at other times strong. When the woven is strong, rituals spread and connections become integral, and sustainable. As for the ritual; understanding, that ritual is always associated with the existence of myths and symbols, becomes an inseparable "Trinity" concept. Rituals are repetitions of presentations reminiscing about past realities, and anticipatory efforts toward future realities; Myth is the linguistic aspect that is sung in a rite through symbolic actions.

Ritual events have significant elements as sacred (holy) communication that occurs namely as: exhibition "what is shown; Action "what is done; and Instruction "what was said [6]. Dramatization of dance expression becomes a performance activity, which is a series of actions arranged based on

traditional procedures, giving spirit in the act of praying, dancing, singing, telling stories of past events and celebrating them. Symbols give a natural character, represent and remind again of the same quality, imagined in reality or thought [7]. Each type of ritual has dominant symbols and a tendency to be the focus of interaction. The multi-vocal nature of the symbol has a positional dimension, which is the symbol that comes from its relationship with other symbols.

II. METHODS

The research method is descriptive qualitative, describing the exact nature of an individual, the situation (process events), in certain groups, determine the frequency of the relationship of one symptom with other symptoms in a society. This is a picture of the empirical reality behind the phenomena that are suitable and appropriate between empirical reality and the prevailing theory. The data collected were verbal and pictorial [8]. The verbal data come from interview scripts, field notes, personal documents, memo notes, manuscripts and other official documents. The pictorial data come in the form of photos and videos of performances, stage, and show equipment. The data collection is combining four sub-models of observation including complete participant, observer as participant, complete observer, and as participant as observer [9].

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The motive of movement of the both hands domination in the *Pwahaci* Dance, directed at the senses of the eyes, ears, legs, and so on, is an interpretation of the act to neutralize negative auras, derived from natural spirits that enter human beings. That aesthetic action is an analogy of the four basic elements and seven color elements, and their respective characters. Earth, water, fire, and wind, are the four elements that are driven by power. Power creates physical elements as organic materials and inorganic materials. Organic materials consist of soil, water, fire, wind, which has a different character from one another. The wind can only be heard, cannot be touched, cannot be tasted, seen and felt; Water can be touched but cannot be tasted, can be heard can be seen from the four. Wind, water, and fire are one cold and hot, and that can move the wind, and they are all integrated into the ground. Plants, animals, and so on become seven or even nine characters of red, green, blue, yellow, orange, indigo, purple, infrared, and ultraviolet which are in the microcosm.

As for one example, that if the yellow neon light is replaced with a red light, it will give the impression of a different feeling. During the day, people feel the light, and we can also see the rainbow on the glass that reflects the colors red, yellow, green, blue, white, orange, purple. Finally, the overall colors, including infrared and ultra violet, is an earthly character. It is understood as "essence" that will grow the color, taste, and others. Those characteristics are "styles" creeping in, as if humans were wrapped in color [10]. On the other hand, the philosophical value of *Pwahaci* functions as an image of the human divinity in the action of Javanese Sundanese (neutralizes the negative aura of all natural spirits to become a spirit of humanity).

As a performance, ritual has a connection with myths, symbols, and is present in the expression of singing, dancing, drama, mantra /prayer during the process. The Cosmic Teachings of Nature emphasize the importance of human efforts to cleanse the mind from the negative effects of other creatures outside human beings. God created humans from *aciningbumi* (essence of the earth), containing soil, water, fire and air, given the spirit of a single life (*ngadalit*) [11]. Humans are God's most noble creations compared to other creatures. Humans' nobleness consists of three important elements, namely *raga badag* (body), there is a need for a life force to move; *Raga Badag* can because of *raga halus* (substance or truth of God). All has different qualities, raises wills, feelings, creativity, inspiration from the Spirit which is the soul of the living God, *hurip* (the life force of God's substance), *Nyawa* (the motion of life); *Cahaya* (the effect of kindness); and *Sukma* (moving power movements). *Raga kasar* (rough body) form is the customs, habits, attitudes or behavior typical of humans.

Djati Kusumah revealed that humans have *sir*, *rasa*, and *piker* (wills, feelings and senses) that are different from the behavior of animals and plants that are only driven by instincts, and differ in static inanimate objects, and move if there are influences from outside themselves [12]. Beside human beings, all other creatures do not have the ability to return to their origin directly. To be able to return to their origin, they must first be perfected by the intermediaries of the human beings.

The *raga kasar* (rough body) is composed of two parts covering the character of humanity and national character. There are five distinctive characteristics of humanity as the basis for all of his life behaviors including: *welasasih*, *tata karma undausuk*, *budi daya-budi basa*, *wiwaha yuda nagara* [13].

Welasasih or compassion; *tata karma* is good manners in a society which is a mutual respect in accordance with the level of relational; *Undausuk* is attitudes and words towards people who deserve respect; *Budi daya-budi basa* means that "*budi*" is personality, "*daya*" is the driving force of behavior, and "*basa*" means language/speech that is always considered carefully and wisely. Furthermore, the national characteristics include: appearance, language, customs, characters, and culture. The rough body automatically disappears when humans die.

To illustrate the painting of the cosmic spiritual awareness of nature, the *Pwahaci* Dance was performed which then presented as an illustration of the image of human deity having a duty and obligation as Sundanese Javanese. The act of dancing is an expression to direct the conscience with five senses using the will, taste, and in mind doing everything that is good and right. Inside there is a value of love (humanity) as the meaning of *Ngeblat ka Ratu-raja*, an extension of the *ratu nu ngarata* dan *raja nu ngajagat rata*, which is the philosophical meaning of action about everything that is regulating and organizing so that everything becomes just and equitable.

Multi-vocal meaning of the symbol is understood not only as the Goddess *Inti Sari Bumi*, but *The Mother Goddess* which means Dewi Pertiwi (Mother Earth) or Motherland. It has national values about cultural customs (appreciation of the

Iman Kan Tanah). Aspects which include ideas, language, behavior, and equipment - are understood as sacred communication of sacred acts, sacred spells, and sacred performances [14].

IV. CONCLUSION

The figure of DewiPwahaci becomes the field of meaning of the aesthetic action of the pilgrimage of man reaching the perfection of life. These requirements are summarized in the *pikukuhtilu* which are the divine guidance, the universal guidance, the noble guidance (humanity and nationality). Nature and art become a means of spiritual communication, formulating a desire to return to the natural, which means that humans must maintain a harmonious relationship with nature, God, and others.

Aspects of the ritual system are sacred (holy) communication which includes sacred actions, sacred mantras, and sacred performances of what is done, said, and exhibited. The multi-vocal nature of the DewiPwahaci's symbol is directed at the values of humanity and nationality. The positional character of the *Pwahaci* Dance symbol, being the focus in interacting with other activities, is carried out on a complementary level, as a source of overall themes.

The symbolic statement of the meditative dance, provides awareness about humans as managers, who regulate and neutralize the entry of the spirit of the universe into the body (the human being). This is analogous to an aesthetic act (appreciation) of Sundanese Javanese which is neutralizing the negative aura of natural spirits to become human spirits. Only through human nature, the spirits can be completely returned to the Creator. This meaningful presentation is the idea of pilgrimage from the universe, towards human beings, until they reach perfection.

The nature is a "Book of Life", an extension of God's work. The Cosmic Spiritual Teachings of Nature; and Everything becomes the ritual effectiveness of a weaving structure from the Ritual Leader. With this understanding the art of dramatization of the *Pwahaci* Dance ritual performance. are operationally visualized, sounded aural, musical and theatrical aesthetic actions. In Balthasar's understanding is reuniting between the *bonum* (goodness), *verum* (truth), *pulchrum* (beauty), and *agnoscum* (acknowledgement).

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