



Baris wayang dance: Ritual meaning and community perception in Balinese Hinduism

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ABSTRACT

Background: The Baris Wayang Dance is only performed at the Dalem Beads Upgrading Great Lumintang Temple. This dance is a combination of dance, karawitan, vocal, puppetry, and costume, and is only performed upon the God's vision who lived at the temple occurred. **Methods:** This study uses a qualitative method with a descriptive-analytical approach. To obtain valid data in the field, this study used observation techniques, interviews with key informants and the community in Lumintang village, and literature studies. To analyze the above problems, religious and semiotic theories were used. **Findings:** The results of the study show that, the form of the Line Wayang Dance performance is composed of the structure of kawitan, pepeson, pengumbang, and pengluwuran; performed on the basis of the God's vision who resides in the temple; danced by nine dancers while singing the purifying song, and holding puppets that represent Gods; also accompanied by traditional music, the public's perception of this dance performance is understood as a means of purifying and offering sacred offerings to God, the denotative meaning of this performance is reflecting the story of wayang and Hindu religious symbols; this dance connotatively represents the cycle of human life, a form of communication between people and the divine; and at the mythical level it is interpreted as the embodiment of the God's vision. **Conclusion:** Based on this phenomenon, the problems in this study can be formulated as follows, what is the form of the Baris Wayang Dance performance, what is public perception of the Baris Wayang Dance performance, what is the meaning contained in the performance from a Hindu theological perspective. **Novelty/Originality of this article:** The novelty of this study lies in its unique exploration of the Baris Wayang Dance as a sacred, vision-inspired ritual that integrates multiple traditional art forms to symbolize divine communication and the human life cycle within a specific Balinese temple context.

KEYWORDS: *deva yajña* ceremony; line wayang dance; religiosity.

1. Introduction

Religious performing arts are often imbued with symbolism that reflects spiritual values and religious concepts (Wisnawa, 2018). Symbols in Balinese Hinduism are often sacralized by incorporating the supernatural into natural objects, often referred to as *taksu*, through the ngulapin ceremony, a process of summoning divine power to reside within these sacred symbols (Wastawa, 2021). These symbols can be found in dance movements, costumes, accompanying music, props, and the narrative presented in the performance (Suarta, 2014; Sumardjo, 2000).

The Baris Wayang Dance is a unique sacred dance form that developed in Lumintang Hamlet (Yudabakti, 2007). This dance performance not only contains aesthetic value, but is also full of spiritual and symbolic meaning that is a Hindu religious practice in Bali

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(Denpasar City Government, 2019). The Baris Wayang Dance in Lumintang Hamlet is a combination of dance, gamelan, vocal arts, puppetry, and costume art. The performance is not based on human will, but will only be carried out based on *pawisik* from Ida Bhatara who resides at Pura Dalem Manik Penataran Agung Lumintang through the intermediary of *pengun* or *peremas* (sanctified person), and the dancer is granted the power of *taksu* by Ida Bhatara Ratu Kembar who resides at Pura Taman Beji Batu Bolong Dalem Silemintang. The puppet properties used are the sacred Sudamala puppets, which represent Ida Bhatara who resides in the Dalem Manik Penataran Agung Lumintang Temple and in the Taman Beji Watu Bolong Dalem Silemintang Temple, namely; the Panca Pandawa puppet figures represent Ida Bhatara Panca Dewata, the Twalen figure represents Ida Bhatara Ratu Ngurah who resides in the Dalem Manik Penataran Agung Lumintang Temple, and the Hanoman figure represents Ida Bhatara Ratu Kembar who resides in the Taman Beji Batu Bolong Dalem Silemintang Temple. The function of this dance is as a purifying of the macrocosm and microcosm so that balance occurs in the main and middle level *Deva Yajña* ceremonies which use ayaban offerings, *bebangkit* and *pulogembal*. This phenomenon makes it a very unique religious phenomenon to be studied from a religious perspective.

This research is important because it can provide broader insight into the relationship between dance and spirituality in the Hindu tradition at the Pura Dalem Manik Penataran Agung Lumintang, in Lumintang Hamlet, Dauh Puri Kaja Village, North Denpasar District. Furthermore, this research is also expected to enrich understanding of how traditional performing arts can function as a means of religious expression and strengthen a community's cultural identity.

The study of Baris Wayang Dance in Lumintang Hamlet opens up a space for reflection on how traditional performing arts are not merely aesthetic expressions, but also theological media that connect humans with supernatural powers. This relationship shows that religious art can be a vehicle for bringing sacredness into everyday life, where symbols and performance props are not understood merely as objects, but as spiritual intermediaries that mediate the relationship between humans, nature, and the gods (Armayani, 2021; Kesiman et al., 2020). Thus, the Baris Wayang Dance shows that art is a space for dialectics between religious experience and cultural manifestation (Linggih, 2024).

Furthermore, this phenomenon confirms that the Balinese Hinduism belief system is highly dependent on cosmological legitimacy, which is manifested through ritual practices. The invocation of *pawisik* and the granting of *taksu* by Ida Bhatara not only position the performance as a cultural event but also as a form of affirming cosmic harmony. From a religious anthropology perspective, this shows how symbols, rituals, and myths form a network of mutually reinforcing meanings (Dewi et al., 2022). In other words, this sacred dance is not merely entertainment, but a means of restoring cosmic balance and purifying human existence within the framework of *yajna* (Erawati, 2024).

Finally, research on Baris Wayang Dance is important to reveal how the Lumintang Hamlet community maintains its cultural identity amid the tide of modernity. This sacred performing art serves as a reservoir of values, preserving the continuity of tradition while symbolizing resistance to cultural homogenization. Therefore, understanding the Baris Wayang Dance means not only researching a dance, but also exploring how Balinese people maintain sacredness, articulate faith, and strengthen communal solidarity through religious art forms that have been passed down from generation to generation.

1.1 Theoretical basis

To understand religiosity in the Baris Wayang Dance, an in-depth study of the form of the Baris Wayang Dance performance and the public's perception of this dance performance is required. In this case, Koentjaraningrat (1974) religious theory can be used as an approach to analyze the form of the Baris Wayang Dance, as well as the importance of seeing how the public perceives and experiences the Baris Wayang Dance performance within the belief system of the people in Lumintang Hamlet. This theory reveals that religion has

several main elements, such as a system of religious emotions, beliefs, a system of rituals, religious equipment or symbols, and followers. In the context of the Baris Wayang Dance, these elements can be identified through the form of the dance performance, while the analysis of public perception of the dance performance does not only stop at the conceptual level, but also touches on the side of the collective experience and beliefs of the community.

In addition, the meaning contained in the Baris Wayang Dance can also be studied using Roland Barthes' semiotic theory. Barthes divides meaning into two levels, namely denotation (literal meaning) and connotation (symbolic meaning). In the context of the Baris Wayang Dance, denotative meaning can be found in the form of movements, accompanying music, properties, and costume design, while connotative meaning is related to symbolism that depicts religious values, spirituality, and the concept of divinity in Hinduism. With a semiotic approach, this study can reveal how the symbols in the Baris Wayang Dance performance represent beliefs and sacred values in Hindu society (Purwanta, 2021; Storyteller, 2023).

2. Methods

This research is a descriptive field and library research, which aims to describe the phenomenon in more depth (Sugiyono, 2020; Umar, 2013). The object of study in this research is the Baris Wayang Dance performance at Pura Dalem Manik Penataran Agung Lumintang, Jl. Ahmad Yani Selatan, Banjar Lumintang, Dauh Puri Kaja Village, North Denpasar District (Denpasar City Government, 2024). This research uses an active participant observation technique, where the author had the opportunity to help the team from Pasraman Prabha Budaya in wearing costumes for Baris Wayang dancers on May 10, 2023. Interviews are a data collection technique by conducting questions and answers, both directly and indirectly. In addition, document studies are also used. The results of research from observations and interviews will be more reliable if supported by these documents. The data analysis technique in this research on Baris Wayang Dance follows the stages of Miles and Huberman (Matthew et al., 2014), namely data reduction, data display (data presentation), and drawing conclusions (Silva, 2024). The data presentation technique in this research is carried out descriptively qualitatively, namely by describing the data that has been collected from the results of observations, interviews, and documentation in narrative form.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 *The form of the Baris Wayang dance performance at the Dalem Manik Penataran Agung Lumintang Temple*

Koentjaraningrat's theory of religion serves as a foundation for understanding how religious practices, rituals, and spiritual expressions play a role in human life (Pratiwi, 2017). Through this approach, we can analyze how religion manifests itself in various aspects of culture, including performing arts, religious architecture, and ritual traditions, including in performing arts contexts such as the Baris Wayang Dance at the Pura Dalem Manik Penataran Agung Lumintang in the Hindu-Balinese tradition.

The Baris Wayang Dance in Lumintang Hamlet, Dauh Puri Kaja Village, North Denpasar District is a form of traditional Balinese dance that has a strong religious dimension (Bandem & de Boer, 1995). This dance is not only an aesthetic performance, but also has a deep meaning in Hindu religious rituals in Bali. This dance is usually performed in the context of religious rituals, such as religious ceremonies (*Deva Yajña*) of the main or middle level that uses *ayaban bebangkit* and *pulogembal* at the Dalem Manik Penataran Agung Lumintang Temple, Dauh Puri Kaja Village, North Denpasar District. The location of the performance is in the main area (*main mandala*) of the Dalem Manik Penataran Agung Lumintang Temple which has been sanctified, strengthening the religious aspect of this

dance. Before the performance, a purification ritual or offering to the gods is performed as a form of respect and request for blessings.

In Koentjaraningrat's religious theory, religious ceremonies reflect how humans express their beliefs through symbolic actions performed collectively. The Baris Wayang dance is not merely a performing art, but also an integral part of the Balinese religious system, aimed at worshiping the gods, maintaining cosmic balance, and strengthening the community's spiritual identity (Suarjata, 2023). Wali Baris Bugbug dance at Dalem Gede Selaungan Temple, Bangli District. *Pangkaja Hindu Religion Journal*, 26(2), 150–159..

The Baris Wayang Dance is performed in the main courtyard of the Dalem Manik Penataran Agung Lumintang Temple as part of a sacred procession that aims to purify the macrocosm and microcosm in maintaining the sanctity and harmony of the ritual, welcoming the gods and ancestral spirits, and as a means of collective meditation, where the dancers and audience can experience a deep spiritual experience through the rhythm of the movements, gamelan music, and the sacred atmosphere created in the performance.

During the performance, the sacred atmosphere is increasingly felt through the smoke of incense, prayers chanted by the pengungga (Hindu religious leader), movements and chants chanted by the dancers and kidung interpreters, the Sudamala puppet properties used, the vibrations of the gamelan batel accompaniment, and the silence created by the audience who are immersed in the sacredness of the dance (Gautama, 2009). All these elements work synergistically to create a profound religious experience, where the dancers seem to experience spiritual transcendence and become intermediaries between humans and the divine world (Ida Bhataru who resides at Pura Dalem Manik Penataran Agung Lumintang and *taksu* Ratu Bagus who resides at Pura Taman Beji Batu Bolong Dalem Silemintang). Like Baris Dance dancers in general, Baris Wayang Dance dancers use costumes, properties, accompanied by wayang batel gamelan instruments.

Table 1. Forms of costumes and their symbolic meanings in baris dance

No	Costume	Description	Symbolic Meaning
1	<i>Gelungan</i>	Headdress covered in white cloth with gold ornaments and flowers; conical shape	Spiritual awareness
2	<i>Badong</i>	Large necklace made of leather, decorated with shiny materials (gold, imitation gems)	Majesty of the dancer as "representative of the gods" in sacred ceremonies
3	<i>Sesimping</i>	Ornament of hard cloth covering chest and shoulders, in poleng (black and white)	Duality of life (<i>Rwa Bhineda</i>)
4	<i>Poleng shawl</i>	Black and white shawl	Symbol of Rwa Bhineda (duality of life)
5	Long-Sleeved Shirt & White Trousers	Plain white attire	Purity and sincerity
6	<i>Kana</i> Bracelets	Hand ornaments depicting gallant warriors	Reminder to keep actions on the path of truth
7	Gold Belt and Belt	Shiny golden belt, also with poleng element	Divine light; control of lust; reminder of duality (<i>Rwa Bhineda</i>)
8	<i>Saput</i>	Cloth worn after mounting the keris	Purity of intention and action; control of lust
9	<i>Semayut</i>	Place to fasten the keris	Keeps the weapon secure
10	Chest Cloth	Covering worn after mounting poleng-colored sesimping	Completes symbolic attire of duality and protection
11	Gold Jewelry & Headdress	Sparkling ornaments	Divine light

In addition to costumes, the dancers also use keris and puppet properties with the following characters; (1) Twalen, (2) Merdah, (3) Yudistira, (4) Bima, (5) Arjuna, (6) Nakula, (7) Sahadewa, (8) Hanoman, and (9) Krisna. The puppets used in the performance are

representations of Ida Bhatara who resides at the Pura Dalem Manik Penataran Agung Lumintang and at the Pura Taman Beji Watu Bolong Dalem Silemintang.

The Baris Wayang dance is always accompanied by gamelan batel wayang music, which plays a crucial role in creating a spiritual atmosphere. Musical elements that support the sacredness of this dance include; *krumpung drums* (male and female), *batel gongs*, *ceng-ceng ricik*, *klentong*, *klenang*, *gender wayang* (two pemade, two barangan), *tawa-tawa*, *suling pemetit*, and *suling pengumbang*.

In addition to the hymns sung by the dancers and hymns, sacred mantras recited by priests or priests are also part of the Baris Wayang Dance performance during religious ceremonies. These hymns and mantras serve as a means of purification, strengthening the ritual's intentions, and inviting divine powers to attend the procession before and after the Baris Wayang Dance performance.

In every religious ceremony involving the Baris Wayang Dance, there are several parties who have important roles, including the Balinese Hinduism priest/priest who leads the ceremony, gives blessings to the dancers, and directs spiritual energy in the ritual; the Baris dancer who acts as a spiritual warrior who connects humans with the realm of the gods through religious movements and expressions, and the community who plays a role as participants who follow the ceremony solemnly, reflecting the concept of togetherness in Balinese Hinduism spiritual life. The Baris Wayang Dance in Lumintang Hamlet has a performance structure, namely; *kawitan* (beginning), *pepeson*, *pengumbang*, and *pangluwuran* (finish of the dance).

3.1.1 Kawitan (beginning)

The Baris Wayang dance cannot be performed haphazardly. It is only performed upon a *pawisik* (revelation or guidance) from Ida Bhatara, who resides at the Pura Dalem Manik Penataran Agung Lumintang, through a *pengungga* (preacher) or *paremas* (consecrated person).

Before the performance, a *nuwur ritual* (invoking) the presence of *Ida Bhatara Taksu Ratu Bagus Taman Kembar* is performed. This *taksu spirit* resides in the Taman Beji Batu Bolong Dalem Silemintang Temple, which is the place of purification for Ida Bhatara at the Dalem Manik Penataran Agung Lumintang Temple. In the Baris Wayang Dance performance, the concepts of *taksu* and *wahyu* are very important because they are related to spirituality, magical powers, and the perfection of dance expression as a sacred offering in Balinese Hinduism teachings.

Taksu is a spiritual power or sacred energy believed to be present within an artist, including a dancer. In the context of Baris Wayang Dance, *taksu* reflects not only technical skill but also magical power and inner sincerity in conveying spiritual messages through dance movements. A Baris Wayang dancer must possess deep spiritual awareness, because without *taksu*, the dance is considered to lack its soul and religious essence. Meanwhile, *Wahyu* in this context refers to the inspiration or sacred guidance received by the dancer, *pengajian*, or artists involved in the performance. Baris Wayang Dance is often considered a medium of communication between humans and the *niskala* (unseen) realm, so its performances are believed to be moments where revelation descends and bestows blessings on those present.

In the *Kawitan* section, all the dancers perform the *kukus wangi ritual*, a self-purification ritual using *pejati* (a type of incense) and *steamed* using *pasepan* (a fire made from coconut shell charcoal). During this procession, the *kidung* (leader of the dance) chants an invitation song, requesting that the *Queen of Taman Kembar (Sesuhunan Ratu Bagus)* give the Baris Wayang a sign of supernatural power. Usually, one of the *Pemangku* (leader of the dance) experiences a *trance*.

The song is sung repeatedly until the Baris Wayang dancers exhibit a sense of possession. The song is sung to invoke the power of Ida Bhatara Ratu Bagus Taman Kembar. Usually, the *Pemangku* who carries *Ratu Bagus Kembar*, or the *Pemangku* who carries *Ratu*

Semar Twalen, experiences possession, a sign that the Baris Wayang dance is ready to be performed (Denpasar City Government, 2014).

Dancers who possess *taksu* will appear more alive in movements that feel magical, have strong expressions, and are able to stir the audience's emotions. Dances filled with *taksu* are believed to create spiritual vibrations within the Dalem Manik Penataran Agung Lumintang Temple, bringing blessings, and strengthening the relationship between humans and the Gods/*Bhtara* who reside there.

3.1.2 Pepeson

In this section, the *punakawan* dancers performing the *Twalen* and *Merdah* puppets enter the performance area, dancing *the Gending Tabuh Pangkat Semar*, followed by the *penangkalan* movements, similar to the typical *parwa* dance drama scene. The people of Lumintang Hamlet believe that this is the initial stage of the purifying ritual before the other dancers enter the performance area. The *Twalen* and *Merdah* dancers then worship their master by chanting *Puh Pengalang*, namely:

"Sawur ira tan long, singgih sabda muniwara tan ketalianing compassion versus devotion".

The drum accompaniment of *Gending Pangkat Semar* then changed to *Gending Pangkat Parta Lumaku* or *Pangkat Para Ratu*. At that time, the dancers who danced the *Panca Pandawa* characters (*Yudistira*, *Bima Sena*, *Arjuna*, *Nakula*, *Sahadewa*, *Krisna*, and *Hanoman*) entered the performance venue with their right hand carrying the puppet with each act, and their left hand *pointing (ngembat)* to the left. The dance movements in this section are very simple, using only a straight/marched floor pattern. This depicts the charismatic power of the nine *wayang* characters being danced (Denpasar City Government, 2014).

3.1.3 Developer

Pengumbang section conveys meaning about human life as social beings. This is characterized by loud chants such as:

"puh ih, ih, ih sampun wacaknaya enak pada lumampah. Agelis reko den ira bipraya angetap tangkis,"

Accompanied by *gegaboran* movements and movements that interpret natural and everyday movements. The dancers also sing *kidung* (singing rhymes) that are inseparable from their dance movements.

3.1.4 Pengluwuran (end of dance)

Pengluwuran carries the meaning of returning/consecrating *the spirit*, where the dancers offer prayers and offerings of percussion instruments before releasing the coils. At this point, the *kidung* (leader of the dance) sings a *pengluwuran* song, the melody of which can move the audience. This *pengluwuran* song is sung repeatedly until all the dancers have completed the *pengluwuran* process.

The singing of the "*Kidung Pengluwuran*" (a traditional Indonesian dance) marks the end of the dance. *Ida Bhatara Ratu Bagus Kembar* is then placed back in *the Purwaning Daksina* shrine. After the performance, a communal prayer is usually held as an expression of gratitude and to ask for blessings from *Ida Bhatara* for the smooth running of the performance. The dancers also perform a ritual cleansing ritual to cleanse the spiritual energy that entered during the performance. By following these procedures, the *Baris Wayang* Dance performance at the *Pura Dalem Manik Penataran Agung Lumintang* can

proceed solemnly, preserving the spiritual values and traditions that have been passed down through generations.

3.2 Public perception of the function of the baris wayang dance performance at the Dalem Manik Penataran Agung Lumintang Temple

The Baris Wayang dance is linked to Hindu mythology, which underpins the Balinese belief system. Several stories from the Mahabharata and Ramayana are associated with the meanings contained in this dance. In this context, the Baris Wayang dancers are seen as representing holy warriors fighting for justice and truth, which, in Hindu belief, is part of humanity's sacred duty on earth.

In Koentjaraningrat's religious theory, religious communities play a central role in the implementation and preservation of religious practices, including rituals involving performing arts such as the Baris Wayang Dance. Public perception of the Baris Wayang Dance performance reflects collective beliefs that grow from tradition, spiritual experience, and ancestral cultural heritage. Every level of society, from children to traditional leaders, has unique perspectives that reinforce the religious function and symbolic meaning of this sacred dance.

The traditional leaders of Lumintang Hamlet have a very deep and complex perception of the Baris Wayang Dance performance. They not only view this dance as an expression of cultural arts, but more than that, as an inseparable part of the customary structure and religious ceremonies passed down from generation to generation. In the view of the traditional leaders, the Baris Wayang Dance is a symbol of the *mystical agreement* between the community and ancestors that must be continuously brought to life in a tangible form every time a major ceremony takes place at the Dalem Manik Penataran Agung Temple. Quoting directly from the Head of Dauh Puri Kaja Village, it can be concluded that the Baris Wayang Dance performance not only functions as a religious expression, but also as a mainstay of the cultural identity and social structure of the community. This dance is a reflection of customary values, the preservation of ancestral heritage, and the community's collective expression of the *mystical world* that must be continuously maintained in a balance between the spiritual and the spiritual.

For the religious leaders (*Pemangku*) in Lumintang Hamlet, the Baris Wayang Dance performance is not just a show, but is part of a very sacred *yadnya* (observance of the sacrifice). In their view, this dance has a high spiritual status because it is believed to be a form of sincere devotion (*bhakti*) to Ida Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa and His manifestations, especially Ida Bhatara Ratu Kembar at Pura Taman Beji Dalem Silemintang, as well as Ida Bhatara who resides at Pura Dalem Manik Penataran Agung Lumintang. *Pemangku* have full confidence that the Baris Wayang Dance performance is a spiritual will that is *dresta* (sacred tradition) and must be carried out with full spiritual responsibility.

The adults in Lumintang Hamlet demonstrate a deep and reverent understanding of the Baris Wayang dance performance. They view this dance not merely as an artistic performance, but as an essential part of religious practices deeply rooted in their spiritual and social lives. For them, this performance connects humanity with the sacred powers residing in the Dalem Manik Penataran Agung Lumintang Temple and Ida Bhatara Ratu Kembar Temple in the Taman Beji Batu Bolong Dalem Silemintang Temple, who are believed to be the spiritual source of the dance's revival through *pawisik*. Most adults state that when the Baris Wayang dance is performed within a specific *Deva Yajña ritual*, its presence creates a distinct nuance compared to other dance performances, as, in their view, it is truly "born from the will of *the niskala*". Therefore, reverence for this dance extends not only during the performance, but also throughout the ritual preparation and purification of the temple equipment and surroundings. They refer to this dance as the "dance of the call of Bhatara," which should not be performed carelessly. Thus, the adult community's perception of the Baris Wayang Dance performance is one that combines aesthetic, ethical, spiritual, and social elements. They are not merely spectators but also crucial actors, ensuring that the dance remains alive, sacred, and meaningful across generations. Through

this perspective, it is clear that the Baris Wayang Dance has become an integral part of the religious and cultural life of the adult community of Lumintang Hamlet.

Children and teenagers in Lumintang Hamlet have a unique perception of the Baris Wayang Dance performance. For them, this dance is not just a form of entertainment or cultural activity, but something full of authority, mystery, and spiritual meaning. From childhood, they have been introduced to the Baris Wayang Dance as no ordinary dance, but a sacred dance that cannot be performed carelessly because it originates from *the pawisik* Ida Bhatara who resides at the Pura Dalem Manik Penataran Agung Lumintang. Children in Lumintang Hamlet interpret the Baris Wayang Dance with a mixture of respect, awe, spirituality, and pride. This dance has become a medium for cultural and religious education that shapes their character and spiritual identity from an early age (Kaswara, 2016; Soedarsono, 1978; Sustiwati, 2011). The Baris Wayang Dance performance, in this case, serves as a bridge between ancestral heritage and the awareness of the younger generation growing amidst changing times.

3.3 *The symbolic meaning contained in the baris wayang Dance performance at the Dalem Manik Penataran Agung Lumintang Temple*

Semiotics is the study of signs and meanings found in various aspects of human life, including language, art, culture, and communication. One of the most influential figures in semiotic theory is Roland Barthes. Barthes developed a semiotic approach that highlights how signs and symbols in culture shape meaning through systems of denotation, connotation, and myth.

The Wayang Dance at Pura Dalem Manik Penataran Agung Lumintang has layers of symbolism rooted in Balinese Hinduism cosmology. The Sudamala wayang props used are not merely aesthetic elements, but sacred representations of Ida Bhatara who resides in the temple. The presence of wayang characters, such as Panca Pandawa as a representation of Panca Dewata, Twalen as a manifestation of Ida Bhatara Ratu Ngurah, and Hanoman as a symbol of Ida Bhatara Ratu Kembar, confirms that each figure has a transcendental function that unites the mythological world with ritual reality. Thus, this dance performance becomes a medium for the encounter between humans and divine powers through symbols that live in the collective consciousness of the Balinese people.

In addition to the symbols in the props, the dance movements, gamelan, and accompanying vocals also contain ritual and religious meanings. The movements of the Baris Wayang dancers, which are understood as a form of devotion, symbolize humanity's readiness to carry out dharma and sacrifice to maintain the harmony of the cosmos. The gamelan accompaniment and vocals are not merely atmospheric additions, but are believed to be a means of summoning sacred energy to bring taksu to the dancers. Thus, all elements of the performance come together in a symbolic ritual that purifies the *jagat alit* (microcosm) and *jagat agung* (macrocosm), achieving balance in accordance with the principle of yajña in Balinese Hinduism tradition.

Furthermore, the symbolism in the Baris Wayang Dance also reflects the communal identity of Lumintang Hamlet as guardians of sacred traditions. The existence of pawisik as the basis for performing the dance confirms that this art form was not born solely from human will, but is a manifestation of divine will that must be carried out. This reinforces the community's belief that the Baris Wayang Dance is not merely a form of performing art, but a purification ritual that ensures the order of the cosmos. Therefore, the symbolic meaning in this dance not only shows the integration of art and religion, but also affirms the role of sacred art as a medium of spirituality and a bond of cultural solidarity within the community.

3.3.1 *Denotative meaning in baris wayang dance performances*

Within Roland Barthes's semiotic framework, denotative meaning refers to the first level of meaning, namely literal, objective, and actual meaning as observed by the senses. At

this stage, the analysis has not yet touched on the ideological, symbolic, or cultural realms in depth. Therefore, the study of the denotative meaning of the Baris wayang dance will focus on the external elements of the dance performance, such as movement, costume, makeup, props, musical accompaniment, and performance structure.

At a denotative level, Baris Wayang Dance can be understood as an art performance consisting of dance movements, costumes, makeup, wayang props, gamelan accompaniment, vocals, and a clear performance structure. The dancers' movements depict the gallant attitude of a soldier, full of concentration, with rhythms that follow the beat of the gamelan. The costumes used feature traditional Balinese clothing dominated by white, black, and gold colors, symbolizing purity, strength, and glory. Wayang props, such as the characters Sudamala, Panca Pandawa, Twalen, and Hanoman, are an integral part of the performance. Musically, the gamelan accompanies the entire performance with distinctive patterns, complemented by vocals that lend a sacred atmosphere. Structurally, the performance begins with an opening, the presentation of the puppets, the climax of the dance, and ends with a closing that marks the completion of the ritual procession. At this level, the meaning that can be read is still descriptive, that is, what is empirically visible to the eye.

3.3.2 Connotative meaning in baris wayang dance performances

In Roland Barthes's semiotics, connotative meaning is the second level of meaning that is, meaning that arises from the relationship of a sign to culture, myth, ideology, or certain values within a society. At this stage, we no longer see the elements of the Baris Wayang dance performance as mere forms, but rather as a system of signs containing religious, philosophical, and spiritual meanings that are alive in Balinese Hinduism culture.

At a connotative level, every element of the Baris Wayang Dance performance contains religious and philosophical meanings that are alive in Balinese Hinduism culture. The dance movements not only depict the bravery of warriors, but also symbolize the spiritual readiness of humans to carry out their dharma. The costumes worn are not merely body decorations, but representations of cosmic power and the sacred status of the dancers as divine mediums. Wayang Sudamala signifies purification, Panca Pandawa symbolizes the harmony of the Panca Dewata, Twalen is the link between the *niskala* and *sekala* worlds, and Hanoman is a symbol of courage and loyalty. The gamelan music and vocals are not merely accompaniments, but are believed to be a call to sacred energy that brings *taksu* to the dancers. Thus, the entire performance articulates the values of spirituality, purity, and the harmonious relationship between humans, nature, and the gods.

3.3.3 The meaning of myths in the baris wayang dance performance

The mythical meaning of the Baris Wayang dance reflects the community's collective belief in supernatural powers and the existence of *the niskala* (spiritual) that govern their lives. This dance is seen not only as a cultural heritage but also as a manifestation of the sacred will of Ida Bhatara, who resides at the Pura Dalem Manik Penataran Agung Lumintang, who is believed to have sent down a *pawisik* as a spiritual calling to carry out the performance.

From a mythical perspective, the Baris Wayang Dance symbolizes the connection between *the* physical and spiritual worlds, and is considered a sacred medium of communication between humanity and the gods. Its presence is believed to bring protection, cosmic balance, and blessings to the village, so its performances are only performed in highly sacred contexts, as a form of devotion and fulfillment of divine will that transcends logic.

At a mythical level, the Baris Wayang Dance is interpreted as a manifestation of the sacred will of Ida Bhatara, who resides at Pura Dalem Manik Penataran Agung Lumintang. This performance is not carried out solely by human will, but based on *pawisik*, which is believed to be a spiritual calling from the supernatural realm. From a mythological

perspective, this dance becomes a medium of sacred communication between humans and the transcendent world, so that its presence is believed to bring protection, cosmic balance, and blessings to the village. The dance is only permitted in the context of a very sacred ceremony, as a form of devotion and dedication that transcends profane logic. Thus, the myths in the Baris Wayang Dance are not just stories passed down from generation to generation, but also an actualization of collective faith that strengthens social solidarity while reinforcing the community's religious relationship with supernatural powers (Koten, & Pramatha, 2020)

From a semiotic perspective, the denotative level of the Baris Wayang Dance reveals a descriptive, surface-level observation of its performance elements. One simply sees the heroic gestures of the dancers, the richly colored costumes, the sacred wayang puppets, and the musical accompaniment. These external forms present the dance as a traditional performance, aesthetically captivating but not yet imbued with deeper cultural or spiritual significance.

Table 2. Semiotic analysis of baris wayang dance (roland barthes)

Level of Meaning	Performance Elements	Meaning
Denotative (literal meaning, what is seen)	Dance movements	Heroic movements resembling warriors, synchronized with gamelan rhythms
	Costume & makeup	Traditional Balinese attire in dominant white, black, and gold colors
Connotative (cultural, religious, philosophical meanings)	Wayang puppets (Sudamala, Panca Pandawa, Twalen, Hanoman)	Puppet figures appearing as sacred performance properties
	Gamelan & vocal accompaniment	Musical and vocal background that creates a sacred atmosphere
	Performance structure	Clear sequence: opening, climax, closing
	Dance movements	Symbolize human readiness to uphold <i>dharma</i> and spiritual discipline
	Costume & makeup	Representation of cosmic power, symbols of purity and sacred authority
	Sudamala puppet	Symbol of purification, cleansing impurities (<i>leteh</i>)
	Panca Pandawa	Representation of <i>Panca Dewata</i> , cosmic balance of cardinal directions
	Twalen	Mediator between <i>sekala</i> (visible world) and <i>niskala</i> (unseen spiritual realm)
	Hanoman	Symbol of bravery, loyalty, and spiritual strength
	Gamelan & vocals	Medium to summon divine energy and endow the dancer with <i>taksu</i>
Mythical (transcendent, collective, sacred meanings)	Overall performance	Manifestation of <i>Ida Bhatara's</i> divine will through <i>pawisik</i> (spiritual message), not human desire
	Puppet figures	Affirmation that the dance mediates communication with the unseen spiritual realm
	Ritual function	Sacred purification ritual ensuring cosmic order and harmony
	Sacred context	Performed only in <i>yajña</i> ceremonies as acts of devotion, fulfillment of divine will, and legitimization of spiritual authority

At the connotative level, however, the Baris Wayang Dance transcends its surface form and becomes a system of signs loaded with religious and philosophical meaning. The warrior-like movements are no longer just choreography but symbolic enactments of human dedication to dharma. Costumes embody purity and cosmic power, while puppets such as Sudamala and the Panca Pandawa function as sacred signifiers of purification and divine balance. Twalen and Hanoman, though part of the narrative, carry layered cultural significance as mediators and spiritual guardians. Thus, every element of the performance embodies values that resonate with the Balinese Hinduism worldview, embedding ritual meaning into artistic form (Ardiyani et al., 2025).

At the mythical level, the Baris Wayang Dance is not merely interpreted but believed, it becomes a collective truth. The villagers of Lumintang Hamlet see this dance as the sacred will of Ida Bhatara, revealed through pawisik. The performance itself transforms into a sacred medium connecting the visible (*sekala*) and invisible (*niskala*) realms, bringing protection, balance, and blessings. In this way, myth naturalizes the sacred function of the dance, making it unquestionable and indispensable to communal religious life. Here, semiotics illuminates how art, ritual, and faith coalesce into a unified cultural system where performance becomes theology in motion (Jemiwi & Dharma, 2025).

Baris Wayang dance in the Balinese Hinduism tradition functions not only as a performing art, but also as a ritual medium that affirms the relationship between humans and the transcendent realm. As Papp (2020) asserts, rituals have a performative meaning that binds individuals within a symbolic and collective network, making rituals more than just repetitive actions. In the context of Baris Wayang, dance movements and wayang symbolism serve as mechanisms for representing sanctity, in which the dancers' bodies become instruments that connect the profane world with the sacred. Rossano (2020) perspective on ritual as resource management shows that rituals such as this serve to manage the collective energy of the community, spiritual, emotional, and social, to maintain cosmic balance. The emotional dimension, as noted by Röttger-Rössler (2020), is also clearly present: this dance fosters a sense of awe, reverence, and emotional unity that strengthens Durkheim's collective consciousness (Ahmad, 2021). According to Dibia (2012), Balinese dance, including Baris, is always tied to sacred functions, so aesthetics and ritual cannot be separated; the beauty of movement only has meaning when placed in the context of *yadnya* (offering).

Furthermore, the community's perception of the Baris Wayang Dance shows that rituals are not merely "cultural heritage" but a means of reproducing values and identity. Spitzer (2022) highlights that rituals can be a dialectical arena between tradition and the challenges of modernity, where pros and cons arise regarding the relevance of ritual practices amid globalization. However, in Bali, the community still considers it essential because it functions as an instrument of cultural education and a strengthener of social cohesion. Isaacs (2020) refers to rituals as "human rites," which are not only spiritual in nature but also fulfill basic human needs for order, meaning, and solidarity. Within a pragmatic framework, Kádár & House (2020) view rituals as communicative practices that create stable social interaction patterns; this is in line with the role of Baris Wayang in establishing symbolic dialogue between individuals, communities, and deities. Thus, the Balinese people's perception of this dance shows how rituals remain alive, adaptive, and meaningful, while strengthening religious and cultural bonds from generation to generation (Watson-Jones et al., 2021).

The Baris Wayang Dance in Lumintang Hamlet shows how sacred performing arts function as religious instruments that maintain continuity between humans, the cosmos, and the transcendent. The presence of sacred symbols such as Sudamala, Panca Pandawa, Twalen, and Hanoman puppets not only presents mythological narratives but also represents the manifestation of Ida Bhatara. Thus, this performance is not merely visual and musical aesthetics, but a theology manifested in artistic form, where religious and cultural values are organically combined.

In addition, the ritual practices underlying the performance of this dance, such as pawisik, pengesahan pungen or peremas, and the meaning of taksu-show that art cannot be

separated from the belief system that gives it life. In the context of cultural studies, this reflects the concept that religious symbols function as a mechanism of spiritual legitimacy that strengthens social cohesion. The effort to purify the microcosm and macrocosm through this dance demonstrates the role of performing arts as a medium for maintaining cosmic balance, in accordance with the principle of *yajña* in Balinese Hinduism.

Thus, the Baris Wayang Dance can be viewed as a cultural heritage that represents the syncretism between art, religion, and communal identity. The continuity of this practice demonstrates the adaptability of Balinese society in preserving tradition amid the tide of globalization, while also emphasizing that sacredness is not merely inherited but also continually renewed through rituals and performances. Therefore, this study emphasizes the importance of sacred performing arts as a religious means that not only connects humans with the Divine, but also strengthens the collective identity of the community that preserves it.

4. Conclusions

The Baris Wayang Dance is a sacred dance form performed solely on the basis of *the pawisik* of Ida Bhatara. It has a unique performance structure steeped in religious values, including *kawitan* (beginning), *pepeson* (character introduction), *pengumbang* (culmination of conflict or tension), and *pengluwuran* (resolution and release of sacred energy). This structure not only conveys a dramatic narrative but also reflects the cycle of life in Balinese Hinduism. Main props such as wayang puppets, *keris* (a type of keris), and white clothing with distinctive ornamentation emphasize the identity of this dance as a sacred offering.

Public perceptions of the function of this dance performance vary widely, but are rooted in respect and belief in the sacred power invoked through dance. Children view the performance as sacred and mysterious, adults see it as a cultural heritage and spiritual medium, while religious and traditional leaders emphasize its function as a means of communication with *the niskala* (unseen realm), particularly to pray for safety and harmony in the universe. The dancers themselves experience profound spiritual experiences, as they feel like they are mediums for Ida Bhatara, who resides in the palace during the performance.

In terms of symbolic meaning, the Baris Wayang Dance contains complex symbolism. Denotatively, this dance depicts fragments of the Mahabharata story and the role of the gods or ancestors. However, connotatively, the structure of the dance and the properties used represent spiritual values such as steadfastness of *dharma*, purity of soul, and inner struggle. Even the myth of the *pawisik* (spiritual revelation) from Ida Bhatara Ratu Kembar as the trigger for the return of the performance adds depth to the meaning. The Baris Wayang Dance becomes a living symbol of the harmonious relationship between *sekala* (the real world) and *niskala* (the supernatural world), as well as a manifestation of the community's belief in the existence and protection of *niskala* in everyday life. At the mythical level, the Baris Wayang Dance performance is the embodiment of *the pawisik* of Ida Bhatara who resides at the Pura Dalem Manik Penataran Agung Lumintang.

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