

The Kalpika Natha Mascot Dance: A Substance of Anthropological, Semiotic, and Aesthetic Studies

I Gusti Ayu Mas Nari Wulan^{1*}, I Wayan Karja²

^{1,2}*Institut Seni Indonesia Denpasar, Indonesia*

***Corresponding Author:** ayumasnariwulan22@gmail.com

Abstract: The creation of a mascot dance entitled Kalpika Natha at SMP Negeri 2 Abiansema is one of the ideas to create a symbol or identity through performing arts including dance, vocal art, and karawitan. In this interdisciplinary research, anthropological, semiotic, and aesthetic approaches are used. In anthropological studies, the art of mascot dance can be studied from the point of view of cultural and social aspects. The Kalpika Natha Mascot Dance as a representation of organizational identity can be a reflection of societal values and norms. Apart from that, the Kalpika Natha Mascot Dance can also be a medium to introduce and promote the culture of a region or country. Semiotic studies can assist in understanding the meaning and symbols contained therein which are interpreted through semiotic analysis to reveal the message the choreographer wants to convey. Furthermore, in the study of aesthetics, it can be seen from the form, the weight of the content of the Kalpika Natha dance. In this research, interdisciplinary studies of anthropology, semiotics, and aesthetics can provide a more comprehensive understanding of mascot dance as a form of performing art and promotional media. Thus, this research can provide broader implications for the development of the Kalpika Natha Dance in the future.

Keywords: aesthetics, anthropology, mascot dance, semiotics, symbol.

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Introduction

Bali is one area that has a diversity of arts and culture. There are various kinds of traditional traditions that are still maintained today. In addition, the arts in Bali include vocal arts, wayang, dance, drama, karawitan, and various fine arts and crafts. The development of arts in Bali is not only about religious ceremonial activities, but a spectacle that can be enjoyed by the public. In the current era, art is used as an identity in each region. One of them is about the creation of a mascot.

A mascot is a form of visual personification that is created through a design thought process as a figure of decoration, identification, imagery and as a symbol of luck (Kusuma et al, 2020). The shape of a mascot is part of the communication that shows the characteristics that occur in a certain area/place. In the Big Indonesian Dictionary, the word mascot means a person, animal or object that is treated by a group as a symbol of bringing good luck or safety (KBBI edition III, 2002: 720).

Related to this, the creation of a mascot, especially in schools, mostly carries themes related to education. Of the several schools in Abiansema, one of them

is SMP Negeri 2 Abiansema which is located in the village of Sedang, Abiansema, Badung. The school's great desire for the realization of an identity is because several schools in the Badung area already have their own identity. Therefore, the school was moved to make this happen by creating a mascot dance.

According to Maryono (2010: 6) argues that dance is an expression of the human soul which is expressed artistically through the main medium of the dancer's body movements to appreciate beauty. Meanwhile, Humardani (in Maryono, 2015: 1) states that dance is human movement which is differentiated based on the nature of human movement and works of art. Broadly speaking, the art of dance is expressed through human gestures accompanied by the expressions and feelings carried out by a dancer. Referring to this, the mascot dance that is well known today is a form of creative dance, in general, it functions as a welcoming dance and is performed both in formal and non-formal events, or in the implementation of certain activities in an area. In other words, this dance can be danced anytime and anywhere according to the activities carried out.

In an interdisciplinary study of the Kalpika Natha Mascot Dance, anthropology plays an important role in understanding the cultural context in which the dance is performed. Anthropology studies humans and culture in their various aspects. In this context, anthropology will assist in understanding the cultural meaning behind costumes, characters, movements, and dance procedures. Anthropology will answer questions such as how the dance is related to the cultural identity of a group, whether there are certain rites or traditions associated with the mascot dance, and how this dance is inherited and maintained by certain communities.

In addition, semiotics also has an important role in this study. Semiotics studies the signs and symbolic systems used in human communication. In the context of the art of Mascot Kalpika Natha dance, semiotics will help analyze the signs contained in the variety of movements, the colors of the costumes, and their appearance. In addition, semiotics can also explore meanings that may be different for audiences who come from different cultural backgrounds or contexts. This dance aesthetic study has rich and varied aesthetic implications. In the Kalpika Natha Mascot Dance, aesthetic implications include an understanding of the elements of dance that are connected to the cultural and social context of Bali. Aesthetics will answer the form, content, and weight of the dance performance.

Based on this explanation, efforts are needed to learn and pass on the process of creating the Kalpika Natha Mascot Dance so that it is better known by the community at school, especially in the school environment. This research examines Kalpika Natha as a representation of organizational identity which can reflect the values and norms of society. Apart from that, the Kalpika Natha Mascot Dance can also be a medium for introducing and promoting the culture of a region or country. Then in the study of semiotics it can help in understanding the meaning and symbols contained in the mascot dance art and then interpreted through semiotic analysis to reveal the message the choreographer wants to

convey. Furthermore, in aesthetic studies, it can be seen from the form, weight, and content of the Kalpika Natha dance.

Methodology

This research method uses arts-based research or arts-based educational research as stated by Leavy (in Siregar, 2019: 142). Leavy who is a leading arts-based researcher explains that the practice of arts-based research is a set of methodological tools. This approach uses a qualitative descriptive approach including data collection, analysis, interpretation, and representation. This approach has the potential to carry out visual studies, generating data that would not appear with just written or verbal communication (Leavy in Karja, 2023).

In this study, it is intended to obtain detailed and detailed information about the Kalpika Natha Mascot Dance. With the type of research used in narrative and action. Where the action in question is the researcher goes directly to the field in the process of creating works of art. In the method of collecting data using observation, observing the school about the process of creating the Kalpika Natha Mascot Dance. Observations were made by observing aspects of movement, costumes, music, and social responses. After that, interviews were conducted, namely interviewing school principals, dancers, and artistic figures to gain an in-depth understanding of the meaning, function, and cultural context of the dance. After the data has been collected, a content analysis process is carried out, namely analyzing narratives, symbols, movements, and cultural contexts in the existing mascot dance art. This stage involves observing and analyzing the dance elements contained in the Kalpika Natha dance.

In interdisciplinary studies, it is important to combine methods and approaches from various disciplines (Klein, 2006; Newell & Green, 1982; Newell et al., 2001) to gain a holistic understanding of dance. This research will help uncover and analyze the symbolic meaning contained in the Kalpika Natha Mascot Dance and how that meaning is received and interpreted by the audience.

Results and discussion

Results Description of Kalpika Natha Dance

The mascot dance for SMP Negeri 2 Abiansemal is entitled Kalpika Natha. The creation of this dance was inspired by Pawintenan Saraswati for Hindus, namely Kalpika. Kalpika is a symbol of the radiance of the power of the Tri Linga and Tri Murti, which means controlling and sharpening the mind so that it is ready to receive knowledge. While Natha means king or leader in the main sense. Kalpika Natha symbolizes a student in gaining knowledge with a clear mind who will later become an intelligent person with intellectual, emotional and spiritual balance to be able to become a wise and authoritative person in creating harmony in the world based on Tri Hita Karana.

Mascot Dance is a form of dance that describes a sense of pride and is synonymous with being used as an icon that reflects the uniqueness of a region or region (Gunarta, 2020: 143). In its development, mascot dance can take the form of welcoming dance, creative dance, or other forms and can be widely disseminated. Like the Kalpika Natha Dance which is the mascot at SMP Negeri 2 Abiansemal. The launching of this dance was held on 1 April 2023 and was

inaugurated by the Head of the Badung Regency Sports Education and Youth Service which took place at the Wantilan of Dalem Temple, Sedang Village, Abiansemal, Badung.

In Bali, hibiscus (*kembang sepatu*) is used as *Kalpika/Kartika*, which is a tool that is always used by *Sulinggih*, a holy man who usually leads, or as a ceremonial puddler. *Kartika* is made from a hibiscus leaf and its flowers are red and Japanese flowers (*frangipani*) are white. The hibiscus leaves are folded so that they form a rectangular rhombus, wrapping Japanese flowers and hibiscus flowers. The *Kalpika* color symbolizes: Trimurti: the green/black color represents Vishnu, the red color represents Brahma and the white color represents Shiva (Maharlika, 2017: 71; Karja, 2020). In Bali the meaning of color is very significant, representing forms and symbols in everyday life based on the philosophy of Hinduism (Karja, 2021).

Based on an interview with I Dewa Gede Putrayadnya (interview 30 December 2022) it was explained that a concept would be realized in dance. The concept was inspired by a prayer facility, namely the *kalpika* flower. *Kalpika* is usually used after doing wreaths as a symbol of self-purification for Hindus. The power of the *Tri Linga* is where you place something good so that later it can be used properly. From this presentation, the choreographer created a dance piece inspired by the *kalpika* flower which symbolizes the character of grace, energy and majesty performed through beautiful movements.

Form of Kalpika Natha Dance

The *Kalpika Natha Dance* is realized in the form of creative dance. It can be explained that creative dance is a new dance creation that is no longer bound by classical or traditional dance standards and in its expression emphasizes freedom of expression, both movement and facial expressions (Gunarta, 2020: 143). So creative dance can also be said to be a dance inspired by the movement patterns of classical dance or traditional dance which is processed and given a creative touch by the creator so that it has elements of novelty.

The *Kalpika Natha Dance* is danced in groups of 5 female dancers. The selection of female dancers is meant to represent the tenderness, majesty, firmness, and uniqueness of the *kalpika* flower character. While the selection of 5 dancers is intended as a fulfillment of choreographic needs. In addition, the determination of the number of five dancers is also intended to be able to form attractive, dynamic, and flexible floor pattern designs or compositions, both when danced in a large stage area or in a narrow stage area so that they still look good.

Presentation of *Kalpika Natha Dance* with a duration of 8 minutes, while the presentation structure is divided into three. *Pepeson* is the first part of a dance performance which begins with musical accompaniment, followed by the dancers entering the arena to start the dance (Dewi et al., 2019). In this section, the *Kalpika Natha Dance* depicts the symbol of the *kalpika* flower and by doing the gesture of the welcome symbol.



[Source: Wulan & Karja, 2023]

Figure 1. Nyakup Bawa pose as a welcome greeting to the pepeson part of the Kalpika Natha mascot dance of SMP Negeri 2 Abiansemal

Pengawak is a core part in dance performances and contains symbolic movements that describe the values, meanings, and themes raised in the dance (Dewi et al., 2019). In the part of the crew of the Kalpika Natha Dance, it describes the majesty of a leader (principal) in an activity attended by students. The movement of this part expresses a majesty.



[Source: Wulan & Karja, 2023]

Figure 2. The crew member depicts the majesty of a leader as seen from the floor pattern, which is a person with a high level

Pangecet is a part of the dance which displays dynamic movements in harmony with the musical accompaniment of the dance and is rich in rhythm. Then the pakaad is the closing or final part of the dance performance and contains conclusions regarding the discourse or meaning contained in the dance.

From the pancet to pekaad section, it describes joy and cheerfulness, causing a feeling of happiness (Dewi et al, 2019).



[Source: Wulan & Karja, 2023]

Figure 3. This section describes a person's joy by doing the meebed-ebedan movement.

Kalpika Natha Dance Concept

In the creation of the Kalpika Natha dance, the dance moves are based on Balinese traditional dance movements, namely palegongan and rarejangan with the character of bancihan. Based on traditional dance forms, the authors as the choreographer then tries to re-explore, develop, and create them so that they can present dance movements that have a novelty value. As for some of the movements contained in the Kalpika Natha Dance, among others, mentang laras, nyakupbawa, ngelo, ileg-ileg are movements that give a soft and graceful impression. While the ngicig, ulap-ulap, trisig movements give a more dynamic impression. Movement development is carried out on aspects of movement including (design, volume, space, and level) and rhythm through variations in counting patterns according to the creativity of the choreographer and the dancer's technical ability in dancing the Kalpika Natha Dance so as to create elements of beauty.

Accompaniment of Kalpika Natha Dance

Dance accompaniment music can be in the form of internal music, which comes from the rhythm of the dancer's body when moving or in the form of external music using musical instruments or gamelan. The musical instruments used to accompany the Kalpika Natha Dance are a set of gamelan gong kebyar. The use of gamelan gong kebyar is able to convey the impression of being gentle, majestic and dynamic according to the movements of the mascot dance. In addition, the potential that exists in SMP Negeri 2 Abiansemal only has gamelan gong kebyar to make it easier in the creation process. The accompaniment of the Kalpika Natha Dance was worked on by I Gusti Ngurah Bagus Harta Yana who is also the coach of the extracurricular percussion at the school.

Makeup and Dressmaking

The type of make-up used in the performance of the Kalpika Natha Dance is stage make-up with princess characters. The use of eyeshadow with shades of yellow, red and blue, as well as quite thick eyeliner on the eyelids, is a characteristic of stage make-up, especially in Bali, in order to strengthen the expression and sharpen the eyes of the dancers.



[Source: Wulan & Karja, 2023]

Figure 4. The make-up and fashion of the Kalpika Natha Dance

Dressmaking is an important element in supporting the dance. To strengthen the appearance of the Kalpika Natha Dance in the performance, the dance costumes have also been designed according to the concept of the dance movements. Dance costumes must be able to beautify dance movements and be comfortable when used by dancers. Dressmaking or costume design is one of the elements that also determines the success of a dance performance. The dress code for the Kalpika Natha Dance is as follows.

1. Pants below the knee: Green is used to cover the legs up to the knees.
2. Anklet: Used on the green ankle with leather decoration.
3. Angkeb paha: The decoration on the thighs, sides and back is made of light green cloth with a combination of white, triangular in shape and decorated with notes.
4. Kamen: The kamen is in the form of a red lancingan decorated with prada motifs.
5. Angkin: Decoration to cover body parts made of white cloth with a combination of green.
6. Ampok-ampok: Decoration on the waist, made of cowhide which is carved and engraved.
7. Long sleeves: Green in color to cover the hands
8. Gelang kana: Used on the forearms and wrists are green with leather decoration.
9. Sesimping: Decoration on the shoulder, made of carved and prada cowhide.
10. Gelungan: Ornament for the head, made of cowhide which is inlaid and prada.

11. Rumbing: Ear decoration.

12. Hairpiece: Additional ornaments or hair attached to the back of the head.

Anthropological Studies in Kalpika Natha Dance

Interdisciplinary studies in mascot dance art research involve combining various disciplines to understand and analyze this phenomenon comprehensively. Below, researchers will discuss studies from each discipline, one of which is anthropological studies.

The strength of anthropological studies on dance as a material object, necessitates being able to reveal the depth of meaning of a dance in various communities, because it is the only approach with a complete and comprehensive observation of dance as a cultural phenomenon. In exploring anthropological aspects, there is an emergence of a description of the Kalpika Natha Dance, which discusses the origins of creation and the function of the Kalpika Natha Dance, especially at SMP Negeri 2 Abiansemal.

The Relation of Semiotic Studies in the Kalpika Natha Dance

In an interdisciplinary study of the Kalpika Natha Dance with the substance of semiotic studies, this approach will explore the use of signs and symbols in the game. Semiotics is the study of signs, including verbal and nonverbal signs, and the way they are used to convey meaning. In the Kalpika Natha Dance research, semiotic analysis can be used to understand the meaning contained in the movements, costumes, facial expressions, and attributes used by the mascot. This research will identify the signs and symbols associated with the Kalpika Natha Dance and gain an understanding of how these symbols interact and produce meaning.

In the study of semiotics, iconicity refers to the relationship between a sign and its object based on visual or physical similarity, while indexicality refers to the relationship between a sign and its object based on causality or direct connection. In this study, semiotics can pay attention to how the Kalpika Natha Dance expresses an identity through strong visual representations, as well as how movements and other physical signs create body language in communication with the audience. From the explanation above, in the study of semiotics in the form of presentation of forms, the concept of dance includes movements, accompaniment and make-up which are the markers in the Kalpika Natha Dance.

Aesthetic Studies in Kalpika Natha Dance

In an interdisciplinary study with the substance of aesthetic studies, where knowledge studies and talks about the beauty of a dance itself. All aspects of beauty can be realized through art because it contains aesthetic elements in it. All artistic objects or events in the Kalpika Natha Dance are meaningful forms or forms of an art, perceptually they can be imagined through the eyes and ears. The concept of being consists of form and structure. Content or weight is not just seen, but must be felt and internalized as the meaning of the embodiment of these aspects. Weight in art consists of atmosphere, idea, figure, and message.

Then the last is presentation or appearance, which is the way an art is presented and served to observers or connoisseurs of the Kalpika Natha Dance.

Conclusion

In the creation of dance works, ideas, imagination, and creativity play a central role in producing original and innovative dance works. The Kalpika Natha Dance as a newly created dance and the mascot of SMP Negeri 2 Abiansema is a concrete example of how these aspects combine in a work of art. Anthropological, semiotic, and aesthetic approaches provide a comprehensive understanding of this dance. In terms of anthropology, the description of the Kalpika Natha Dance reveals the origins of the creation and function of dance in the context of SMP Negeri 2 Abiansema. This provides insight into how local traditions and school culture interact with the creation of new dances, making them more than just works of art, but also a means of expression of identity and a link to cultural roots. Through a semiotic approach, this dance is broken down into signs and symbols that form a deeper meaning. These symbols include dance movements, musical accompaniment, and make-up which become the visual identity and aesthetics of dance. Semiotics studies help us understand how these elements communicate to convey messages and meanings to the audience. Aesthetic studies provide a perspective on the values of beauty in the Kalpika Natha Dance. This includes artistic values in dance movements, the harmony between music and movement, as well as the overall visual presentation. Aesthetics explores the depth of the aesthetic satisfaction felt by the audience, encouraging a deeper appreciation of this work.

Kalpika Natha Dance is not only an art. It introduces local culture to students and parents at SMP Negeri 2 Abiansema, maintains and respects heritage traditions. As the school's mascot, this dance advances the arts in schools. Students do not just watch, but participate in performances and even develop in other arts. This dance bridges the tradition of the old generation and the new generation. With the collaboration of tradition and contemporary elements, this dance fosters dialogue between generations. With innovative elements, students are encouraged to think creatively and understand art more deeply. The Kalpika Natha Dance increases a sense of pride in school and cultural identity and has an impact on the development of dance in society at large.

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