

# Strategy for Depicting the Character of Water in "Tabuh Kreasi Tirta Pemutih"

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**Abstract:** This study aims to provide a reference regarding the methods or techniques used by a Balinese Gamelan music composer in depicting a water character. Qualitative research is used because it is an appropriate type of research where the data obtained is a description of the condition of an object being studied. The data collection techniques used in this research are literature study, observation, interviews and documentation. There are several strategies that can be used to depict the character of water, which the composer previously used in the work "Tabuh Kreasi Tirta Pemutih", such as processing the battens found in Balinese Gamelan as a medium for speaking, ornamenting the playing patterns of the instruments, and utilizing various song genres that can be played by Gamelan Semarandana. This study contributes to providing thoughts or points of view regarding strategies or techniques that can be used in depicting the character of water in a Balinese karawitan musical composition using gamelan as a medium for expression.

**Keywords:** Balinese gamelan, ornamentation, strategy, water.

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## Introduction

Creating works that are innovative and have original value requires ideas as a starting point. Without ideas, artists will not be able to create (Eskak, 2013). Ideas are the source of a writer's thoughts when a work is to be realized (Putra, 2021). Based on this, selecting an idea as the start of a creation must go through a very careful process and consideration to make it easier for an arranger or composer to realize the idea into a work.

The same thing happened in a series of creative processes in the creation of the music of "Tabuh Kreasi Tirta Pemutih", where its idea was to describe the character of the water at the sacred spring of Pura Dalem Pemutih, which is located in the Peminge Traditional Village, Benoa Village, Badung, Bali. Taking this idea in the form of the characteristics of water is certainly not solely due to the uniqueness of this object (the water), but has gone through studies where the characteristics of this water can be implemented well by the creator (I Putu Nanda Yoga Mayura) and can also be well understood by viewers of the work through working concepts and media that have been designed in harmony with the idea which exists.

Music is very close to everyday human life, whether it exists outside itself or within itself. From this closeness, the art of music emerged as a medium for expressing various kinds of feelings (Pramudya, 2019). Especially in the realm of

Balinese Karawitan, music is mostly used as a medium for artists to express their feelings and describe their surroundings. This is confirmed by information obtained during an interview with the late. Wayan Suweca was at his residence in April 2019, at which time the discussion was about one of the angklung percussion entitled "Yellow Peacock". The word peacock symbolizes beauty and yellow symbolizes fertility or prosperity. This song describes the conditions in the rice fields and plantations of previous communities when the harvest arrives. Likewise, it is related to the condition of a water object in "Tabuh Kreasi Tirta Pemutih". The implementation of this idea in the form of music, especially Balinese Karawitan music, is because Balinese Karawitan, whose medium is Balinese Gamelan, is considered capable of interpreting several situations. The uniqueness of traditional Balinese music is reflected in terms of form (sound source, musicality, musical expression, presentation) and aesthetic (scientific, philosophical) concepts which differentiate it from music from other ethnic groups in Indonesia (Sugiarta, 2015). Therefore, it is felt that the uniqueness of Balinese Karawitan music can be used as a medium of expression to implement several concepts that have been designed in the creation of Tirta Pemutih's percussion creations.

"Tabuh Kreasi Tirta Pemutih" is a work of musical art that uses local wisdom, namely the source of holy water or in Balinese terms yeh klebutan (mata air, that is water that comes out naturally to the surface of the land where in Bali the yeh klebutan is a holy spring) as its main idea. "Tabuh Kreasi Tirta Pemutih" was created in 2022 by the writer (I Putu Nanda Yoga Mayura) who uses Gamelan Semarandana barungan as the final assignment exam for the Karawitan Arts Department at Institut Seni Indonesia Denpasar, Bali. According to the quote above, this work was created to express or depict the character of water in a musical medium. The depiction of the water found in the source of this holy spring will later be presented in each structure of his work which includes: pengawit, gegenderan, bapang, penyecet, and pekaad, and it is also hoped that the images that have been designed will be able to plunge the audience into an imagination about the water. In guiding the opinions of art lovers when viewing the works presented, this also touches on a person's psychological aspects, especially in the field of art.

Psychology is a science that studies all individual behavior that cannot be separated from environmental processes and that occurs within the individual (Saleh, 2018). If it is related to art, especially Balinese Karawitan music, it can certainly be said how art is able to influence both the mind and behavior of humans themselves.

In influencing the human mind, especially for art lovers, an art work must be carefully considered regarding how to process the idea raised into the work that is able to communicate the idea in question. In the work of "Tabuh Kreasi Tirta Pemutih" the object is in the form of water. The focus is how this water object will later influence the work that will be created so that the work is able to capture the meaning of the work which depicts the water itself. In this work, there is a challenge related to how develop creative strategies in composing this

work in order to provide or communicate the object in the form of water to the viewers.

## **Methodology**

Since the research target is how strategies to describe the characteristics of water are implemented in gamelan media, qualitative research is used to guide the research process. Qualitative research is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and behavior that has been observed. The data collection techniques used in this research are literature study, observation, interviews and documentation. The technique for checking the validity of the data is checked using the data triangulation method (Moleong, 2007).

This research describes events that are heard, felt and made in narrative or descriptive statements. This type of research has natural characteristics or is based on phenomena that occur in the field with an emphasis on quality. With the aim of digging up information about the character of the water itself, it is certainly a very appropriate method to use. Because in this research the results to be achieved are information obtained through literature study, documentation and interviews. Qualitative research methods have become a scientific tradition used in scientific research, especially social sciences, culture, psychology and education. Even in the applied research tradition, this method is much in demand because its benefits are better understood and can directly lead to policy action when compared to quantitative research (Subadi, 2006).

The source study in this research uses written sources in the form of those taken from several articles and unwritten sources obtained from the research location itself by observing the source of the holy spring at Geger Beach.

## **Results and discussion**

"Tabuh Kreasi Tirta Pemutih" is a work of Balinese Karawitan music which is basically a depiction of a holy spring object or yeh klebutan located around Geger Beach. This work is presented through a medium of expression in the form of gamelan, namely Gamelan Semarandana. The purpose of creating this creative percussion is certainly motivated by the unique things found in a holy spring. In order to be able to describe or describe the source of this spring or more specifically the characteristics of water, it is necessary to carry out studies related to the object that will be used as an idea to work on.

After getting some information from the observations made, it is then necessary to think or take creative steps to interpret the ideas that have been obtained into the work that will be created. The definition of creative thinking is an activity or mental activity that is used to create new ideas (Rusdi, 2017). Looking at the uniqueness or conditions on the ground regarding this spring, there are several ideas that can be drawn as musical concepts and transformed into musical compositions. The interesting ideas are: small explosions caused by the emergence of the spring from the surface of the sand, and also the volume of waves when the spring emerges from the sand.



(Source: Mayura, 2024)

Figure 1. Idea for work in the form of a spring

With these unique features, the next stage in creating a work is the composer's strategy in depicting this water object in a musical composition. Strategy is a strategy or art of designing a plan or technique that will be used to achieve something desired (Hasriadi, 2022). A well-thought-out strategy is needed when creating a piece of music so that what is described can be understood by those who enjoy the work. It's not just about making music as you like, but how a composer's insight is really tested because in a work, especially in "Tabuh Kreasi Tirta Pemutih", the work have been framed with an idea in the form of water, this musical composition must start from that water. Alone.

In depicting a water object as a working idea, the activity or strategy that will be carried out has been determined. In transforming the uniqueness contained in the working idea into a musical work, the strategy carried out has gone through several stages and also experiments so as to obtain results that are in accordance with the conditions of the holy spring object in the field. There are several creative strategies or steps taken by the composer to be able to describe the character of the water found in the holy spring at Geger Beach in "Tabuh Kreasi Tirta Pemutih". They are batten processing, ornamentation on playing instruments, and processing song characters from the expression media used.

### *Batten Processing*

Judging from the source of this holy spring, there is an idea in the form of small waves produced by the emergence of this spring from the beach sand. Its appearance causes waves with small power which will then be transformed into gamelan media through the rengs in Balinese gamelan. Reng is a regular sound produced by hitting a bladed instrument, each of which has a different Hertz

(Putra, 2019). The reng or sound waves of the Balinese gamelan are produced from the singing instruments and the sucking instruments whose hertz differences have been adjusted. The difference between the pengumbang and the pengisep in this gambelan creates a "wave" sound which is characteristic of Balinese gambelan (Sudiatmika, 2011).

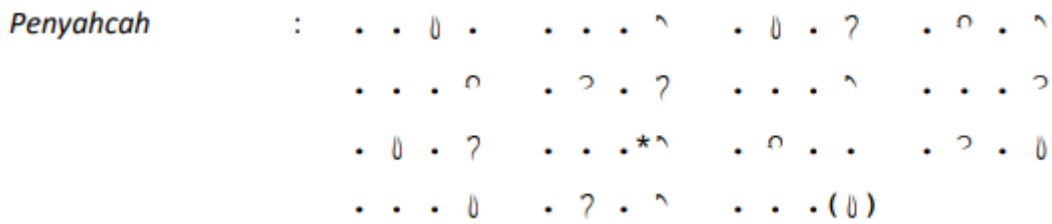
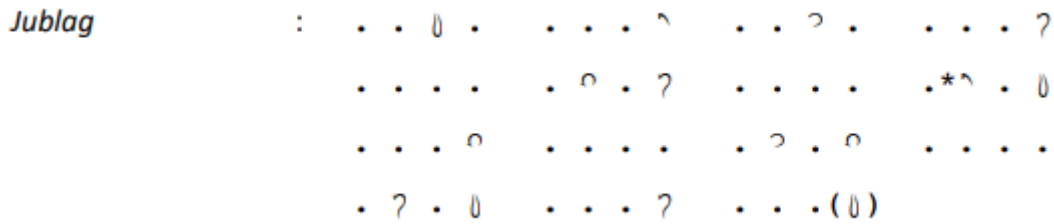
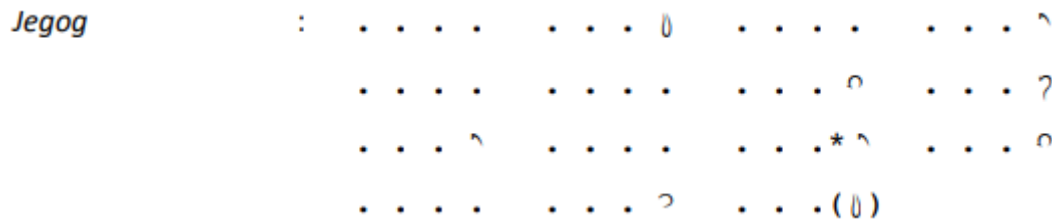
With the reng playing produced by playing an instrument in the Balinese gamelan, it is very supportive if used as a medium for depicting water waves. The common thread of this transformation is in waves, where water and gamelan sounds both have waves.

Finding the potential of the Balinese gamelan which has strings as a reference in depicting the water waves themselves, the next thing that will be done is to modify the playing of the instrument so that the strings from the gamelan itself can stand out in the music. In the strategy of depicting water waves in the percussion work created by Tirta Pemutih, a creative step was taken by highlighting the playing of the instruments of nyacah, jublag and jegog. The highlighting of the playing of several instruments is done because basically the technique of playing these instruments adopts the pacaperiring technique. The pacaperiring system is a singing technique where the dancer only sings the main song or note (Desiari & Suratni, 2022). With this system, the distance between one stroke and the next on the instruments of nyacah, jublag, and jegog has a rather long (rare) time span compared to other instruments that use the wilet technique in their playing. Over a long period of time, this is how people can hear the strings on the instrument, so that imagination will emerge regarding the depiction of water waves through the resulting strings.

### *Ornamentation on Playing Instruments*

The word ornament comes from the Latin word ornare, which means to decorate. The term ornament means the application of decoration to an object or product (Artha & Nuriarta, 2019).

In the method of creating a work in Balinese musical music, the presence of ornaments is also often used as a creative medium by a composer. Ornaments or embellishments (pepayasan in Balinese) in a composition can be applied to many aspects of the gamelan itself, starting from the playing technique, the development of the melody, and so on. However, in the work of "Tabuh Kreasi Tirta Pemutih", the use of the term ornament or papayasan lies in several things, the first is in terms of processing the melody played by the jublag and penyahcah instruments, which then builds on the melody and then develops it into various accentuations played by the instruments. bronze, kantil, riong, and kendang. Decorating the predetermined notes gives a variety of sound colors, and if you draw on the depiction of water, this leads to the depiction of wavy water where the waves are very diverse, like the appearance of boiling water, there are explosions of water everywhere.

Figure 2. Notation 1 Melodic pattern of the *penyahcah* instrumentFigure 3. Notation 2 Melodic Pattern of the *jublag* InstrumentalFigure 4. Notation 1 Melodic pattern of the *jegog* instrument

The notation image above is an example of a melody pattern by "Tabuh Kreasi Tirta Pemutih" in the singing part. From these notations you can see how the melodic patterns of each instrument have different patterns. The concept to build is the ornamentation of the melodic pattern that is created to depict the commotion that occurs when the water waves appear.

The application of ornamentation in this work also lies in the technique of playing the instrument. The technique referred to is the loudness and softness of the sound when hitting the instrument, or in the Balinese gamelan playing technique it is called *ngumbang-isep*. Playing all the instruments on the media reveals that if you apply this *ngumbang-isep* technique, it will be like water waves, sometimes loud or small. The loud, soft sound of the gamelan in this work indirectly, if experienced, is able to convey the atmosphere of the audience as if being swayed in waves, sometimes the waves are big or small.

### *Processing Song Characters from the Expression Media Used*

Gamelan Semarandana in the media expressed by "Tabuh Kreasi Tirta Pemutih", is a media that is very rich in the various types of characters in it. A brief history of Gamelan Semarandana is that "Genta Pinara Pitu's departure abroad did not dampen I Wayan Beratha's intention to create a new *barungan* as a replacement for Genta Pinara Pitu. In 1987 I Wayan Beratha also made a gamelan combination of Gong Kebyar and Semar Pagulingan called Gamelan Semarandana. This ensemble uses 12 tones, the composition of which follows

the five Gong Kebyar tone system in the low register and the Semar Pagulingan seven tone system in the high register. This gamelan has more blades than Gamelan Genta Pinara Pitu. I Wayan Beratha only added one high ding note to Gamelan Genta Pinara Pitu to create a new barungan called Gamelan Semarandana. The addition of one note was due to the difficulty of playing the kotekan of Legong Keraton gamelan songs which require a high ding note (Bandem, 2013).

With the media Gamelan Semarandana which is a combination of Gamelan Gong Kebyar and Gamelan Semar Pagulingan, people can explore various types of tetabuhan characters. For example, Gong Kebyar, from the spirit of Gamelan Gong Kebyar in Gamelan Semarandana, the character of Gong Kebyar music can be utilized. The musical character of the percussion gong kebyar has the characteristics of a fast tempo, complexity, loudness and dynamics which has become a reference source for the creation of works for other Balinese gamelan ensembles (Rismandika, 2018). Apart from containing the spirit of Gong Kebyar, Gamelan Semarandana also adopts the concepts of Gamelan Semarpegulingan. One of the concepts contained in Gamelan Semarpegulingan is patet or appropriate. Patet in the Balinese musical tradition is also often referred to as inappropriate. This appropriate application is only found in Balinese gamelan which uses the concept of the saih pitu tone. The gamelan concept of saih pitu produces the appropriates/patet: selisir, tembung, sundaren, baro, penger ageng, pengenter alit, and inappropriate lebung (Ardana, 2013). From the many patets that can be played in this expressive medium, it can be described various atmospheres according to the ideas designed.

By compiling various compositions and characters found in Gamelan Semarandana, this becomes material to be implemented in depicting the character of water in the percussion work Tirta Pemutih. Where this depiction is meant when the wave conditions are big then the kekebyar character is used which has a loud nature, and conversely if when the water waves are calm then it can be depicted with the motifs of the Semar Pagulingan gending game which has a calm and serene character with the proprieties of Gamelan Smarandana.

## **Conclusion**

The creation of a work of musical art must be based on a determined idea. This is so that what is narrated and composed can run in the same direction so that the audience as art lovers can understand what is meant. Likewise with what happened to "Tabuh Kreasi Tirta Pemutih". The source of the holy spring at Geger Beach which is used as an idea to work on, must be studied and researched more deeply regarding its unique features in order to use it as a concept for creating music. The composer has a mature strategy in transforming his ideas into the musical work so that it produces an output which apart from the composer as the creator, the performer can also understand what is meant in the creation of the music.

In "Tabuh Kreasi Tirta Pemutih", there are several strategies used by the composer to depict the existence of water at the spring. The tips used in depicting

water are: processing the battens in Gamelan Semarandana expression media, ornamentation in playing instruments, and also processing the song characters of Gamelan Semarandana itself. With this strategy, which has gone through deeper observation, it is hoped that it will be able to influence the audience's imagination into the depiction of water at the source of a holy spring in the Balinese Karawitan musical work entitled "Tabuh Kreasi Tirta Pemutih".

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