

Symbolism and metaphor in *Wayang Beber* Pacitan: Hermeneutic analysis of visual language, mythology and behavioral change

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ABSTRACT This research uses the Dilthey hermeneutic approach to analyze the symbolism and metaphor in the *Wayang Beber* Pacitan. Through a literature review of cultural journals, undergraduate theses, university theses, and online scholarly articles, this research reveals several significant findings. First, the symbols in the *Wayang Beber*, influenced by Islam, limit the representation of humans in their original form, thus creating symbols representing humans and their social life. Second, symbolism in the *Wayang Beber* is full of meanings, especially in cultural and social education, with stories containing moral and character education messages. Third, metaphors in the *Wayang Beber* are not only contained in symbols but also in the storyline that teaches life values such as courage, honesty, and resistance to injustice. Fourth, the visualization of the *Wayang Beber* considers social messages as well as aspects of beauty and cultural aesthetics of East Java. Fifth, the myths of the *Wayang Beber* are present in the story texts, character symbolisms, and visualization of event locations. This research concludes that analyzing symbolism and metaphor in the *Wayang Beber* Pacitan with Dilthey hermeneutics provides a deep understanding of life's meanings and values through the community's cultural myths conveyed through text and visual symbols in *Wayang Beber* performances.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Wayang Beber is one of Indonesia's traditional performing arts forms that is deeply culturally rich. Pacitan, a regency in East Java, is known as one of the places where the art of *Wayang Beber* thrives (Prahastiwi et al., n.d). This art is an integral part of Pacitan's cultural heritage and an essential medium for conveying moral messages, values, and mythology inherent in East Javanese culture.

In recent years (around the 2020s), there has been an increasing interest in researching *Wayang Beber*, especially in understanding the meanings and values contained within its works. In this context, the Dilthey hermeneutic approach offers a robust framework for exploring the symbolism and metaphor in *Wayang Beber* Pacitan, enabling a profound understanding of the cultural and philosophical messages conveyed through this performing art (Sutriyanto, 2018).

Although there have been some studies on *Wayang Beber*, research examining the symbolism and metaphor in this art form with the Dilthey hermeneutic approach is still limited. Therefore, this research aims to fill this gap by exploring and analyzing the symbolism and metaphor in *Wayang Beber* Pacitan and understanding its meanings and values.

The main objectives of this research are to (i) analyze the symbolism in *Wayang Beber* Pacitan and under-

stand the influence of Islam in shaping these symbols; (ii) trace the meanings and cultural messages contained within the symbolism of *Wayang Beber* Pacitan; (iii) examine the use of metaphor in *Wayang Beber* Pacitan and how these metaphors teach life values to the community; (iv) understand the visualization of *Wayang Beber* Pacitan as a reflection of the beauty and cultural aesthetics of East Java; and (v) discuss the role of myths in *Wayang Beber* Pacitan and how these myths are interpreted through story texts and visual symbols.

This research is expected to significantly contribute to understanding *Wayang Beber* Pacitan as part of Indonesia's cultural heritage. The findings of this research are expected to serve as valuable information for cultural researchers, artists, and enthusiasts of traditional Indonesian performing arts.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Concept of Hermeneutics

2.1.1 Hermenutika Wilhelm Dilthey

In the context of cultural art studies, Wilhelm Dilthey's thoughts on hermeneutics offer a deep and contextual approach to understanding the complexity of human culture (Sholikah, 2017) Al Munir (2021) states that anthropologists use the hermeneutic method in researching human culture.

This is also articulated by Clifford Geertz, who considers culture a symbolic system with meaning. Humans recognize and create symbols to communicate. Therefore, culture is a system of symbols and texts that can be interpreted. In line with Geertz's understanding, according to Anwar (2018), hermeneutics is interpreting human culture as a text that can be interpreted.

Dilthey emphasizes the importance of subjective understanding (*Verstehen*) of humans and cultural phenomena, which involves empathy and direct experience with the object under study (Wahyudi, 2019). For him, interpretation is not just about understanding texts literally but also about entering the mental and emotional world of the individuals or groups who created them. In cultural studies, Dilthey's hermeneutic approach highlights the importance of historical, cultural, and social contexts in the process of interpretation. This allows us to see how culture is shaped by and shapes individuals, as well as how values, beliefs, and norms are expressed and understood through cultural expression. This approach remains relevant for contemporary cultural studies because culture constantly changes and evolves, and deep contextual understanding remains crucial in interpreting complex and diverse cultural phenomena (Sidik & Sulistyana, 2021). Dilthey's hermeneutics also provides space for critical reflection on the construction of meaning and cultural identity in the era of globalization, where cultures meet and interact. Thus, Dilthey's hermeneutic approach remains a relevant and valuable framework for understanding the dynamics of contemporary culture.

One of the primary references for understanding Wilhelm Dilthey's thought is his book "Introduction to the Human Sciences" (*Einleitung in die Geisteswissenschaften*). In this work, Dilthey develops his critical ideas about the difference between natural and cultural sciences and the importance of hermeneutics in understanding humans and cultural phenomena. In this book, Dilthey presents his arguments about the epistemology of cultural sciences (*Geisteswissenschaften*). Al Munir (2021) as a distinct branch of natural sciences (*Naturwissenschaften*) (Wahyudi, 2019). He emphasizes that the nature of humans and cultural phenomena cannot be understood objectively as in natural sciences but requires subjective understanding or *Verstehen*. Dilthey argues that *Verstehen* is a complex mental process in which individuals understand, interpret, and experience human experiences in texts, works of art, or other cultural phenomena (Sitorus et al., 2022). In their research titled "Wilhelm Dilthey's Hermeneutics as a Tool for Interpreting Literary Works," Sitorus et al. conclude that Dilthey's hermeneutics can reveal the reciprocal relationship between experiencing (*erlebnis*), expression (*ausdruck*), and understanding (*verstehen*).

In his book "A Hermeneutics Approach to the Study of History and Culture," Bulhof (1980) as cited in Sitorus et al. (2022) also underscores the importance of context in interpreting cultural phenomena. He emphasizes that understanding culture can only be achieved through understanding the historical, cultural, and social context that influences it. Therefore, Dilthey advocates for hermeneutic interpretation to be conducted while considering the background and conditions in which the phenomenon arises (Sitorus et al., 2022). Additionally, Dilthey also discusses the significance of subjectivity in cultural interpretation. According to him, individuals have unique subjective experi-

ences, and to understand humans and their cultures, we must enter the mental world of those individuals, Farah (2019) through empathy and our own subjective experiences.

Compared to the hermeneutic views of other figures, such as Friedrich Schleiermacher or Hans-Georg Gadamer, there are differences in emphasis and methodological approaches (Al Munir, 2021; Wahyudi, 2019). Schleiermacher, for example, emphasizes the linguistic aspects of interpreting texts and understanding the author's original intentions. Meanwhile, Gadamer highlights the role of preconceptions and the horizon of individual experiences in the interpretive process, emphasizing the dialogue between the text and the reader and the importance of tradition in shaping meaning. On the other hand, Dilthey emphasizes the historical and contextual aspects of interpretation and pays attention to the role of subjective experience in understanding cultural phenomena.

2.1.2 Visual Hermeneutics and Myth

Discussing the visual language messages in a *Wayang Beber* performance using a hermeneutic approach requires understanding Schleiermacher's hermeneutic concepts. Schleiermacher's hermeneutic concept brings a new direction to using hermeneutics in interpreting non-religious texts. Schleiermacher's general hermeneutics have two central theoretical elements in interpreting text understanding: grammatical and psychological. Although they are different domains, the grammatical and psychological aspects are interrelated. This concept is known as the Hermeneutic Circle because it contains a dialectic between specific parts of the text and the entire text. Thus, grammatical hermeneutics and psychological hermeneutics collaborate in understanding the text. The grammatical aspect focuses on the language used in the text, while the psychological aspect focuses on the author's expressive expression and perception. In the context of *Wayang Beber*, the grammatical aspect involves ancient Javanese grammar, which, in today's era, is not widely understood by many people. Therefore, understanding the meaning from this linguistic perspective becomes more critical before understanding the psychological aspects of the *Wayang Beber* performance.

Wayang Beber is performed through the narration of a Dalang (puppeteer) about folk stories that contain social values. According to Barthes (2012), as cited in ? narration is one of the elements of semiotics, where the Dalang narrates based on the storyline and actualization of the characters being narrated. This psychosocial process allows the narrator or Dalang to express combinations of psychological and grammatical aspects of the *Wayang Beber* language, thus being perceivable by the audience's senses. The symbols in the *Wayang Beber* performance are markers that carry meaning through both verbal narration and visual representation of the *Wayang Beber* characters.

The interpretation of signs or markers indicates that there is also an essential semiotic aspect to interpreting the language in *Wayang Beber*. In connection with the myths in *Wayang Beber*, Roland Barthes (1915-1980) was a French philosopher known for his contributions to semiotics, literary theory, and culture. It is stated that a myth can be born in the signs shown through the visualization of a culture. According to him, myths can emerge from behind the signs in everyday communication or a tradition and culture,

whether written or visualized in languages that can be understood, analyzed and concluded [Asrofah \(2014\)](#).

A critical analysis of the script, text extracted from visualization through language understood by the general populace, aims to establish the connection between culture or social values and social structure. Critical analysis examines the content of messages within the text and how the text can evoke meaning. In Barthes' concept of myth, myth is a communication system because myth is essentially a message that holds value. He defines myth as a mode of signification, a form, a "speech type" conveyed through discourse. Myth cannot be depicted through the objects of its message but through how it is conveyed. Anything can become a myth, depending on how it is textualized. In news narratives, readers can interpret this myth through the connotations played by the narrative [Asrofah \(2014\)](#).

2.2 Previous Research on *Wayang Beber* Pacitan

2.2.1 Values of Philosophy in *Wayang Beber* Pacitan Performances

[Anwar \(2018\)](#) in a study on Visual Analysis of *Wayang Beber*, mentions that *Wayang Beber* has profound philosophical aspects because it is not just a traditional art performance but also contains deep philosophical and symbolic meanings. [Sugihartono et al. \(2019\)](#) also state that *Wayang Beber* contains philosophical aspects of cultural heritage and local wisdom. Another study by [Suyanto \(Suyanto, 2017\)](#), similar to the findings of [Sugihartono](#), mentions that the philosophical aspects of *Wayang Beber* include the values of local wisdom contained within the *Wayang Beber* performance. *Wayang Beber* serves as a performing art and a source of inspiration for communities to enrich local cultural products and foster creativity.

Regarding the content of moral values in *Wayang Beber* performances, [Anwar \(2018\)](#) mentions that moral values, social life, and local wisdom are explained through the stories in *Wayang Beber*. Each character in *Wayang Beber* has its philosophical meaning, which portrays the character, values, and teachings intended to be conveyed. In more detail, [\(Sugihartono et al., 2019\)](#) elaborate that the *Wayang Beber* Babad Majapahit performance shows an effort to preserve the traditions and historical values of the Majapahit Kingdom. The use of motifs from Majapahit heritage temple reliefs, such as tumpal (triangular ornament) and images of keris (traditional dagger), also implies deep meanings. For example, the use of brick-red colour in *Wayang Beber* Babad Majapahit depicts the identity of the Majapahit Kingdom made of red bricks, as well as the philosophical visualization of red bricks representing natural elements such as fire, water, earth, and wind. This shows that *Wayang Beber* is not only a performing art but also preserves philosophical values that align with local wisdom and the cultural history of the archipelago.

From these three studies, it can be concluded that the values of life portrayed in *Wayang Beber* performances reflect human life and values, such as struggle, loyalty, kindness, justice, and moral principles in everyday life. Through the stories conveyed in *Wayang Beber*, audiences can learn about ethics, morality, and wisdom that can be used as references in daily life. Moreover, the stories in *Wayang Beber* can also convey profound philosophical messages about life, the relationship between humans and nature, and spiritual values [Anwar \(2018\)](#); [Suyanto \(2017\)](#).

2.2.2 Symbolism and Metaphor

A study by [Dradjat et al. \(2022\)](#) delves into how various symbols in *Wayang Beber* carry meanings that reflect social status and character backgrounds and how these symbols can effectively convey cultural values. This research also elucidates the use of symbols such as the wings of Garuda, symbols of the land, and the mountain-shaped gunung in *Wayang Beber* and how these symbols can be translated into human activities ([Ahmadi, 2020](#)), in a study on the *Wayang Beber* story of Remeng Mangunjaya, asserts that *Wayang Beber* performances serve ritual, social, and cultural functions. The story of Remeng Mangunjaya within the context of *Wayang Beber* presents symbols and metaphors containing teachings about life values such as sincerity, sacrifice, perseverance, and the struggle against desires to uphold truth.

Barthes (2012) regards metaphor as one of the elements of semiotics ([Patricia, 2018](#)), which is essentially the process of transferring meaning from the source object to another object, in this case, the context of human life. *Wayang* pupeteers often use this metaphor to provide examples from *Wayang*'s storyline about embodying values into significant actions to help fellow humans.

3. METHOD

3.1 Research Approach

The research approach employed in this study is qualitative. This approach was chosen because the study aims to understand the meanings and values of *Wayang Beber* Pacitan through the analysis of symbolism and metaphor. The qualitative approach enables researchers to explore the complexity of cultural phenomena and understand their context.

3.2 Data Sources

The data sources used in this research consist of two types: (i) Primary Sources: Primary data sources include recordings of *Wayang Beber* Pacitan performances in video format. These recordings serve as the primary source for analyzing the visualization of *Wayang Beber* performances and for identifying the symbolism and metaphor contained within their stories; (ii) Secondary Sources: Secondary data sources include related literature on *Wayang Beber* Pacitan, including booksscholarly articles undergraduate theses, master's theses and cultural journals discussing aspects of symbolism, metaphor, and mythology in *Wayang Beber*. These sources will support the analysis and interpretation of primary data.

3.3 Data Collection Techniques

The data collection techniques used in this research are: (i) Observation: Involving direct observation of *Wayang Beber* Pacitan performances recorded in video format. Observations are conducted to identify visual symbolism metaphors in the story, as well as the visualization of locations and characters in the performance ([Ratna, 2016](#)); and (ii) Literature Review: Involving the search and analysis of relevant literature on *Wayang Beber* Pacitan, especially those discussing symbolism, metaphor, and mythology in this performing art. The literature review will provide a theoretical basis for data analysis. The literature review is also conducted by reading and analyzing primary sources

such as books, journals, magazines, or performance recordings. Furthermore, according to Ratna (2016), obtaining data from primary sources avoids the possibility of misinterpretation if information is obtained from secondary sources.

Data collection was carried out from February to March 2024. The data extraction activities began with a literature review, studying recordings of *Wayang Beber* performances, and discussions with *Wayang Beber* enthusiasts.

3.4 Data Analysis

The data analysis was conducted using the Dilthey hermeneutic approach, involving an in-depth interpretation of the text and symbols in *Wayang Beber* Pacitan. The analysis focused on identifying symbols, metaphors, and meanings in the stories of *Wayang Beber* Pacitan. Data analysis was also completed in March 2024, and the writing of the research article was carried out during the period of March-May 2024.

3.5 Validity and Reliability

Several quality control steps will be implemented to ensure the validity and reliability of the research results, including (i) Triangulation: Utilizing various data sources and data collection techniques to ensure the consistency and validity of the findings. In this regard, initial findings are considered to have doubts, thus requiring comparison to test the validity of the data (Ratna, 2016). According to Patton (1987), there are four ways to test data validity, namely by comparing findings from interviews/discussions, comparing statements from individuals that can be directly conducted during group discussions, checking against previous data (history), and comparing opinions from various levels based on education, social position, or individual experience; (ii) Peer Review : Involving review by peers or experts in the field of Pacitan scroll puppetry to ensure the validity of interpretation and data analysis. Peer review also aims to achieve high objectivity in the findings and data analysis; (iii) Reflexivity: The researcher will continuously reflect on their subjective position, values, and biases that may influence data interpretation, as well as efforts to minimize these influences. Sugara (2018), in his research on the quality and reliability of qualitative research, mentions four ways to achieve a balance between subjectivity and reflexivity, namely: self-journaling in the research process through detailed documentation of the research process/stages, capturing feedback from research subjects, and involving an "advisor", in this case, the supervisor or lecturer at the researcher's affiliated university.

4. RESULT & DISCUSSION

4.1 *Wayang Beber* Performance Procession

The *Wayang Beber* performance or staging is conducted through the ritual process of Javanese tradition that contains myths about seeking protection from dangers and evils that may befall the community. The procession before the performance is conducted by community figures and several individuals who assist in carrying offerings such as flowers, food, and incense. Community figures recite prayers and verses in ancient Javanese, which may not be easily understood by the current generation. Excerpts

of prayers and verses from the procession escorting the *Wayang Beber* performance are presented as follows:

"tolak tanggul, tolak tanggul ono kala sengkolo soko kidul tumpakan sapi putih, tolak tanggul ono kala sengkolo soko lor, wetan, kulon... suminggaha, tan sirno sekabehing memala"

In brief, it means that danger is always lurking from all directions that could threaten the community's peace. Through the prayers offered, it is hoped that the dangers from all directions will dissipate and the community will be spared from such perils.

Then, the Dalang sits cross-legged behind the wooden box containing the scrolls of *Wayang Beber* and, after a moment of silence, ensures that the gamelan musicians behind him are ready. After a while, the simple gamelan, consisting of gongs, siter (a bowed instrument similar to a violin but upright), and kendang (drum), begins to play. The Dalang then unfurls the first scroll of the first scene. The story to be performed is the tale of Panji: Jaka Kembang Kuning. The *Wayang Beber* performance of the Jaka Kembang Kuning story consists of six scrolls, each comprising four scenes. The entire *Wayang Beber* performance of the Jaka Kembang Kuning story lasts 35-40 minutes. At the end of the scenes, the Dalang slowly concludes the story by rolling up the last scroll and placing it back into the wooden box, closing the performance with a concluding greeting to the audience.

4.2 Summary of the Tale of Jaka Kembang Kuning

The *Wayang Beber* Pacitan story of Jaka Kembang Kuning comprises six scrolls, each containing four scenes (jagong). The main story presented in *Wayang Beber* Pacitan is the love journey between Dewi Sekartaji and Panji Asmara Bangun, which can be briefly outlined as follows (Magnesium-benzoat, 2016).

4.2.1 First Scroll

Prabu Brawijaya of the Kediri Kingdom summons his aides, including Patih Prawira Arya Deksa Negara, who discusses the state's security with his subordinates. Patih Arya Deksa promptly appears before the king in haste, informing him that his daughter, Dewi Sekartaji, has fled the palace after refusing to marry Raden Klana Sewandana from the neighbouring kingdom. The king announces a reward for anyone who finds Dewi Sekartaji, regardless of status or rank, promising to make them her sibling or husband. Patih Arya Deksa then relays the announcement to all the inhabitants.

A young man named Jaka Kembang Kuning presents himself to the king to participate in the reward with the miraculous ability to command the bull in the square. The king inquires about the youth's identity from Patih Arya Deksa, who explains that Jaka Kembang Kuning is an envoy from Ki Demang Kuning. The king orders Jaka Kembang Kuning to be summoned and asks if he is willing to search for Dewi Sekartaji, his beloved, with the command that he must not return until he finds her.

Jaka Kembang Kuning and his two servants, Ki Tawang Alun and Ki Naladerma set out to search for Dewi Sekartaji. On their journey, they encounter three knights who are spies of Raden Klana Sewandana. Jaka Kembang Kuning rejects their offer and directs them to the son of Prabu

Brawijaya in the Kingdom of Kediri. Ki Tawang Alun advises Jaka Kembang Kuning to hold a flying Barong performance in Pasar Katumenggungan, a place Dewi Sekartaji favours. Meanwhile, Dewi Sekartaji, who has fled from the palace, heads to the house of Ki Tumenggung in Katumenggungan Paluamba, where Nyi and Ki Tumenggung scold her for causing them trouble with her presence. Ultimately, Dewi Sekartaji decides to leave.

Jaka Kembang Kuning promptly follows Ki Tawang Alun's advice by organizing a flying Barong performance in the marketplace. Dewi Sekartaji, who is in the market, encounters Jaka Kembang Kuning, disguised as a street musician. They recognize each other, but Jaka Kembang Kuning asks Dewi Sekartaji to keep their meeting a secret. Then, Jaka Kembang Kuning returns to Kademangan Kuning, while Dewi Sekartaji returns to Katumenggungan Paluamba.

4.2.2 Second Scroll

After returning home, Jaka Kembang Kuning meets his father, Ki Demang Kuning, and tells him that he has found Dewi Sekartaji. Ki Demang Kuning sends Ki Tawang Alun to inform Prabu Brawijaya about the discovery, while Ki Naladerma is sent to present an engagement ring to Dewi Sekartaji as proof of the finding. Meanwhile, at the Keputren, Retno Mindoko rejects the proposal from the envoy of Raden Klana Sewandana for Dewi Sekartaji, leading to a battle between them. Retno Tenggaron, leading the marriage proposal entourage, eventually loses the battle and retreats.

Ki Tawang Alun informs Prabu Brawijaya about Dewi Sekartaji's discovery by Jaka Kembang Kuning. However, Raden Klana Sewandana, who claims his right as Dewi Sekartaji's prospective husband, causes a conflict between Ki Tawang Alun and Raden Klana Sewandana.

4.2.3 Third Scroll

After Dewi Sekartaji, Jaka Kembang Kuning accepted his proposal and rejoiced. Meanwhile, at Raden Klana Sewandana's army headquarters, they strategize to defeat Ki Tawang Alun as a condition to marry Dewi Sekartaji. Retno Tenggaron then reports that his proposal has been rejected by Retno Mindoko, sparking Raden Klana Sewandana's anger and decision to retaliate. Patih Kebo Lorodan then challenges Ki Tawang Alun to a duel in the square of the Kingdom of Kediri, where Ki Tawang Alun ultimately loses and gets severely injured. Seeing this situation, Jaka Kembang Kuning and Ki Naladerma decide to follow Ki Tawang Alun to the Kingdom of Kediri.

4.2.4 Fourth Scroll

Ki Naladerma guides Ki Tawang Alun to the residence of Ki Tumenggung, where Dewi Sekartaji heals Ki Tawang Alun. Seeing Ki Tawang Alun defeated in the duel with Patih Kebo Lorodan, Jaka Kembang Kuning takes over his position in the fight. During the duel with Patih Kebo Lorodan, Jaka Kembang Kuning manages to defeat him, resulting in the death of Patih Kebo Lorodan. Subsequently, Raden Klana Sewandana withdraws to prepare his attack on the Kingdom of Kediri. Later, Raden Gandarepa arrives at Kademangan Kuning to meet Jaka Kembang Kuning and inform him of Prabu Brawijaya's plan to defeat Raden Klana Sewandana. Jaka Kembang Kuning welcomes the plan. Afterward,

Raden Gandarepa meets Ki Tawang Alun, instructing him to kill Raden Klana Sewandana on Prabu Brawijaya's orders, emphasizing that the killer must be Ki Tawang Alun.

4.2.5 Fifth Scroll

At his residence, Raden Klana Sewandana asks his brother, Retno Tenggaron, to change his appearance to resemble Raden Gandarepa, creating confusion among everyone except Ki Tawang Alun, who realizes the change. Disguised as Raden Gandarepa, Raden Klana Sewandana goes to the Tamansari of the Kingdom of Kediri to propose to Dewi Sekartaji, but she suspiciously rejects him when his true identity is revealed. Warfare erupts as the real Raden Gandarepa appears, accusing Raden Klana Sewandana of impersonation. The pursuit ends in the square of the Kingdom of Kediri, where a massive battle occurs between the forces of Raden Klana Sewandana and his followers against Jaka Kembang Kuning, Ki Tawang Alun, and the forces of the Kingdom of Kediri. During the battle, Ki Tawang Alun successfully kills Raden Klana Sewandana using the Keris Pasopati, ending the chaos and bringing victory to Jaka Kembang Kuning and Ki Tawang Alun.

4.2.6 Sixth Scroll

Jaka Kembang Kuning brings the captured princesses, including Retno Tenggaron, to the palace of the Kingdom of Kediri for a meeting with Prabu Brawijaya. Prabu Brawijaya welcomes them and listens to the report of the events from the disappearance of Dewi Sekartaji to the death of Raden Klana Sewandana. Before Prabu Brawijaya, Jaka Kembang Kuning and Dewi Sekartaji seek his blessing for their marriage, with the presence of Raden Gandarepa, Ki Naladerma, and Ki Tawang Alun as witnesses. Subsequently, the marriage of Jaka Kembang Kuning and Dewi Sekartaji is arranged by Mbok Dipa Kilisada.

4.3 The Hermeneutic Interpretation of Dilthey on *Wayang Beber* Performance

Dilthey's hermeneutics is an interpretive approach developed by a German philosopher, Wilhelm Dilthey. This theory is often used in cultural analysis to understand the meanings and values contained within cultural phenomena. Dilthey emphasizes the importance of understanding the historical, social, and cultural context in interpreting texts or cultural phenomena (Sitorus et al., 2022). He believed we must enter the subjective world of the individual who created it to understand something. Thus, understanding culture through the lens of Dilthey's hermeneutics involves four main steps:

1. Understanding (*Verstehen*): Understanding is key in Dilthey's hermeneutics. It involves comprehending the subjective meaning behind actions, artworks, or other cultural manifestations. Understanding is achieved by entering into the subjective perspective of the actors or creators of culture.
2. Sympathy (*Einfühlung*): Dilthey emphasizes the importance of sympathy or empathy in understanding culture. This means that we should strive to feel and understand the feelings, thoughts, and motivations of people within the culture being analyzed.
3. Reconstruction (*Rekonstruktion*): Dilthey's hermeneutics emphasizes the importance of reconstructing the

TABLE 1. The Hermeneutic Interpretation of Dilthey on the Performance and Story of Jaka Kembang Kuning

Dilthey's Hermeneutics	Wayang Beber Performance Procession	Jaka Kembang Kuning Wayang Beber Story
Understanding (Verstehen)	In this context, understanding is achieved by attempting to enter the subjective world of the Javanese community carrying out the <i>Wayang Beber</i> performance procession. Understanding the significance of prayers, poems, and rituals performed before the show is the initial step in Dilthey's hermeneutical interpretation.	The story revolves around the love journey of Dewi Sekartaji and Jaka Kembang Kuning. Dewi Sekartaji flees from the palace and refuses to marry Raden Klana Sewandana. The king, Prabu Brawijaya, announces a contest to find Dewi Sekartaji. Jaka Kembang Kuning, aided by Ki Tawang Alun and Ki Naladerma, endeavours to locate Dewi Sekartaji.
Sympathy (Einfühlung)	Empathy towards the Javanese culture conducting the <i>Wayang Beber</i> procession is crucial in understanding the meaning and purpose of the ritual. Understanding feelings, thoughts, and beliefs helps to approach an authentic understanding.	We can feel the joy and sadness of the characters in this story, such as Dewi Sekartaji's desperation in fleeing, Jaka Kembang Kuning's courage in finding his love, and the conflicts between different groups.
Reconstruction (Rekonstruktion)	Reconstructing Java's historical, social, and cultural context means identifying the origins, meanings, and evolution of the <i>Wayang Beber</i> ritual and performance.	This story reflects values such as courage, loyalty, and deep love. By understanding the historical and cultural context in which this story takes place, we can interpret the implied moral messages within this tale.
Aesthetic Experience (Ästhetische Erfahrung)	Aesthetic experience in the context of <i>Wayang Beber</i> involves an appreciation for traditional performing arts, such as gamelan music, the Dalang (puppeteer) movements, and the visualization of the <i>Wayang Beber</i> scrolls.	The performance also involves aesthetic aspects, such as the visualization of the wayang show, gamelan music, and the dramatization of crucial scenes. The beauty and expressive power of the performance provide a profound experience for the audience.

historical and cultural context in which a cultural phenomenon emerges. By reconstructing this context, we can better understand its meanings and values.

4. Aesthetic Experience (*Ästhetische Erfahrung*): Dilthey also underscores the importance of aesthetic experience in understanding culture. Aesthetic experience involves feelings of beauty, admiration, or awe that arise when we engage with works of art or other cultural manifestations.

Based on the four lenses/stages of interpretation in Dilthey's Hermeneutics, the *Wayang Beber* performance of the story of Jaka Kembang Kuning is explained for both the performance process and the narrative's meaning. The interpretation of both stages using Dilthey's hermeneutical lens is presented in the following table 1:

4.4 Symbolic Meaning and Metaphor in *Wayang Beber* Jaka Kembang Kuning

Wayang Beber is one of the symbol-laden arts owned by the Pacitan community and the East Java-Central Java region. *Wayang Beber* performances in Pacitan are not just entertainment but also carry religious meaning and are related to the community's beliefs about life. The symbols of *Wayang Beber* are described as follows:

4.4.1 Fulfillment of Promises/Vows/Oaths

"Kaul," "ujar," or "nadzar" is a commitment to make a sacrifice or perform a specific ceremony if one's wish is fulfilled. For example, someone promises to hold a *Wayang Beber* performance if their harvest is abundant. Alternatively, it expresses gratitude for other successes, such as a child's graduation from school, getting a job, or recovering from illness.

Before conducting a *Wayang Beber* performance, the sponsor must prepare all the requirements, such as holding a ritual or feast, preparing offerings, and setting up the performance venue, along with all the equipment and supplies for the event and the performance itself.

4.4.2 Symbolism of Forms and Characters in the *Wayang Beber* Story

Wayang Beber's performances constitute an exploration of human life values and culture, conveyed through the portrayal of symbols in the show. These symbols encompass various characters, such as knights, giants, gods, and animals, as well as dialogues of characters and the Dalang's narration. From an epistemological standpoint, these symbols imply messages of knowledge and life teachings, making *Wayang* a source of understanding life values and knowledge. Through wayang performances, humans are invited to contemplate the essence of life and its mysteries

and confront the present world's challenges. Each wayang performance reflects the inner struggle between good and evil principles, or mystical and magical aspects, in human life, with each scene depicting eternal phases of life.

4.4.3 Symbolism of Wayang Beber Puppeteer

The "Dalang" is an individual who brings characters to life in a *Wayang Beber* performance. They play a crucial role in the entire Wayang performance. Regarding the symbolism of the Dalang in wayang performances, Zoetmulder (1983) in *Serat Centhini* Volume IX explains as follows.

Janma tama karya lajem ing pandulu sasmitaning hyang sejati Dalang lan wayang dinunung panganggone hyang mawarni karya upameng pandulon. Kelir gumelar wayang pinanggung asnapun makuluk ing widi gedebog bantala wegung balencong pandomaning urip gamelan gendhing ing lakon.

"The "Dalang" holds symbolic meaning as the representation of the soul; the puppet represents the body, and God is the entity responding to it. Although God is not physically visible, in Adhikara's analysis, God is depicted as a figure responding to the puppet because He is not directly present on the stage, similar to the time of the performance that is unseen by the audience. The puppet comes to life because of the soul imparted by the Dalang. When the performance ends, the puppet leaves the Dalang (the body left behind), and the puppet is then placed in a box (chest) because it is no longer active, while the Dalang remains alive".

Overall, a *Wayang Beber* performance is a spectacle of beauty. The beauty in *Wayang Beber's* performances en-

compasses all the values embedded within. Therefore, the concept of beauty in wayang performances has a comprehensive meaning. Beauty is not only related to the visually appealing characters of the puppets, which are intricate, delicate, and colourful, or the harmonious sound of the gamelan accompanying the melodious singing of the vocalists. What is more important are the messages the Dalang conveys, whether they are about truth, evil, joy, or sadness, which can touch the hearts of the audience and make them sincerely appreciate it.

4.4.4 Symbolism of Gamelan, Percussionist, and Female Singer (Sinden)

In wayang performances, the activities of the gamelan players and *Sinden* (singers) who chant songs and accompany the gendhing-gendhing music play a crucial role. The accompanying gendhing music in wayang is adjusted according to the situations in the Dalang, which needs to move the performance from one scene to the next. *Klenengan*, which consists of songs sung before the wayang performance as a time filler and the gendhing-gendhing as a sign that the performance is about to begin, provide cues to the puppeteer, Dalang, and the audience to prepare themselves and take their respective places. The gendhing in wayang performances holds meanings that are related to human life values.

Throughout the wayang performance, the musical instruments used, such as *gamelan*, *rebab*, *gendera*, *saron*, *kempul*, and *kendang*, carry deep symbolic meanings. *Rebab*, derived from the words "*reb*," meaning desire and "*bab*," meaning issue, signifies the importance of formulating issues before action. *Gender*, originating from "*gendera*" symbolizes the need for a leader who leads from the front, also known as "*barung*" depicting firmness and superiority.

TABLE 2. Excavation of Myths in Wayang Beber Pacitan Culture

Steps of Barthes' analysis	A summary of the analysis results
Identification of Myth	In the tale of Jaka Kembang Kuning, myths can be found within the narrative of quest and battle for love and justice. These myths encompass the hero's journey, facing obstacles and trials in achieving their goal and the struggle between good and evil.
Identification of Mythical Symbols	The mythological symbols in this story include characters such as Jaka Kembang Kuning, Dewi Sekartaji, Raden Klana Sewandana, and Ki Tawang Alun, as well as elements like battles, courtship, and marriage. These symbols convey meanings about love, courage, and justice.
Deconstruction of Myth	Through the deconstruction of the myth, we can see how the narrative of seeking love and battling for justice constructs social constructions of specific values, such as bravery and sacrifice. These myths significantly shape society's understanding of the relationship between individuals and society and between good and evil.
Critical Analysis	In critically analyzing this story, we can question how the myths presented in the text influence our understanding of social relationships, power hierarchies, and gender constructions within the depicted society.
Interpretation and Understanding	Lastly, through interpretation and understanding, we can comprehend the meanings contained within these myths and how these meanings may be relevant to broader cultural and social contexts. In this case, the tale of Jaka Kembang Kuning can be interpreted as a narrative of the struggle to achieve justice and love and the values upheld in Javanese society at that time.

Saron, interpreted as firm intention and firmness, refers to the meaning of "seron" which means hard.

Kempul is interpreted as compactness based on the origin of the word *kempul*, which means dense or compact. Meanwhile, *kendhang* symbolizes control of the soul, a clear and selfless mind that does everything solely for Allah.

4.5 Aspects of Mythology in Wayang Beber

Mythology is an integral part of culture that has been ingrained in the minds of society for years. However, the impact of other cultural influences has led to slow but ongoing changes over time. This results in a fusion of old and influencing cultures, creating new forms due to ongoing syncretism and adaptation. An example of this evolution can be seen in the story of Jaka Kembang Kuning in *Wayang Beber*, which demonstrates adaptation to cultural changes and influences from current globalization. Interpretations of wayang mythology vary among modern society, with some considering it a source of noble teachings while others criticize it as upholding feudal culture or as a driver of superstitious practices that can erode the faith of religious society.

The excavation of aspects of *Wayang Beber* mythology was conducted through literary studies using Roland Barthes' approach, and the results are presented in the following table 2:

Through Barthes' analytical approach, the story of Jaka Kembang Kuning forms a myth about the journey of love and battle that depicts the social values of its time. Symbols such as the main characters, battles, courtship, and marriage convey the conflict between good and evil and the struggle to achieve specific goals. According to Barthes' view, the symbols of characters in the storyline of Jaka Kembang Kuning are signifiers (Mulyaden, 2021), providing clues to the existence of myths surrounding the story of Jaka Kembang Kuning. Critical analysis of this story raises questions about the myth's social constructions and implied values and their impact on understanding and social norms. Through interpretation and understanding, we can grasp the meanings contained within these myths (Putra, 2013), as well as their relevance to broader cultural and social contexts, thus providing a deeper understanding of the moral messages and values contained within the tale of Jaka Kembang Kuning.

5. CONCLUSION

The procession of *Wayang Beber* performances is an integral part of Javanese traditional rituals to seek protection from dangers and evils that may befall the community. The performance of the *Wayang Beber* story of Jaka Kembang Kuning depicts the journey of love between Dewi Sekartaji and Panji Asmara Bangun, followed by battles between good and evil in pursuit of love and justice. Dilthey's hermeneutics is used to interpret the meanings and values of this *Wayang Beber* performance, emphasizing understanding, sympathy, reconstruction, and aesthetic experience. Furthermore, the symbolism in *Wayang Beber* includes symbols such as the puppeteer, gamelan orchestra, percussionist, and female singer (*Sinden*), reflecting the values of Javanese life and culture. Excavation of *Wayang Beber* mythology identifies myths about the struggle for love and justice and interpretations of traditional Javanese values such as loyalty, sacrifice, and bravery. Thus, the perfor-

mance of the *Wayang Beber* story of Jaka Kembang Kuning is not only a beautiful artistic spectacle but also laden with deep meanings and values for Javanese society.

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