

# Figurative Language and Aesthetic Value in the Dance Drama *The Search for Sita*

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**Abstract—***The Search for Sita* is an English-language dance drama adapted from the Ramayana epic, specifically the Aranya Kanda section, which tells the story of *Dewi Sita's* abduction by Rahwana. This study aims to analyze and describe the figurative language and aesthetic values contained in the dance drama. The approach used is descriptive qualitative, with data obtained through observation of audio-visual recordings of performances and analysis of dance drama scripts, then analyzed using language style theory and aesthetic theory. The results of this study show that the figurative language contained in the dance drama *The Search for Sita* includes metaphors, similes, personification, and hyperbole. Meanwhile, aesthetic values are manifested through unity, complexity, and intensity between the elements of choreography, accompanying music, costumes, and narration. The integration of figurative language and aesthetic values not only strengthens artistic appeal but also presents moral messages and religious values relevant to character education.

**Index Terms—***The Search for Sita*, figurative language, aesthetic values, dance drama, *Ramayana*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Globalization has expanded the function of performing arts from mere entertainment into a medium for cross-cultural communication and effective cultural diplomacy (Moneta et al., 2025; Mazlan et al., 2025; Suryadmaja & Saearani, 2025). Along with this shift, technological advancement and increased cultural mobility necessitate the revitalization of traditional works in order to maintain their relevance within contemporary socio-cultural dynamics. Such revitalization is commonly realized through innovations in form, language, and modes of presentation that bridge tradition and modernity. A concrete manifestation of this effort is the dance drama *The Search for Sita*, an adaptation of the *Aranya Kanda* episode of the Ramayana epic, performed in English and enriched by the visual aesthetics of Balinese dance costumes.

The linguistic dimension constitutes a crucial element in constructing the dramatic power of a performance. Figurative language, including metaphor, simile, personification, and hyperbole, functions as a stylistic device that intensifies emotional expression and aesthetic resonance (Pranata et al., 2025; Keraf, 2009). In *The Search for Sita*, figurative language does not merely serve as rhetorical ornamentation; rather, it operates as a meaningful vehicle for conveying moral and religious values through poetic imagery. Consequently, examining this linguistic aspect holds substantial academic relevance for understanding the relationship between language use and performative aesthetics within the context of dance drama.

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In addition to its linguistic features, the aesthetic dimension of this work merits scholarly attention due to its synthesis of traditional and modern, local and global, as well as verbal and nonverbal elements within a unified dramatic structure. According to Beardsley (1981), aesthetic value is grounded in three core principles: unity, complexity, and intensity. These principles provide an analytical framework for examining how artistic beauty emerges through the harmonious interaction of elements such as choreography, musical accompaniment, costumes, narration, and stage design. In *The Search for Sita*, these aesthetic components are realized through an integrated visual, musical, and linguistic composition that articulates values of loyalty, sacrifice, and spirituality.

Previous studies offer an important foundation for the present research. Fardeni and Maulina (2025) identify figurative language and imagery as effective means for conveying aesthetic and moral values in literary texts, while Ntelu et al. (2020) demonstrate that figurative expressions deepen emotional meaning and enrich aesthetic layers in Chairil Anwar's poetry. Similarly, Irwanti and Gusthini (2024) reveal that figurative language in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* functions not only as stylistic embellishment but also as a narrative mechanism for constructing imaginative experiences and moral messages. Within the field of aesthetic studies, Mudiasih et al. (2025) show that dance drama contributes significantly to character education through aesthetic experiences that evoke moral awareness. Suryadmaja and Saearani (2025) further emphasize that performing arts in the global era must preserve aesthetic integrity while adapting to cultural transitions and technological transformations. Sumerjana et al. (2025) also highlight that musical aesthetics strengthen emotional engagement and narrative meaning in dance drama performances. Collectively, these studies demonstrate that both figurative language and aesthetic dimensions play a fundamental role in shaping meaning and artistic value.

Despite these contributions, research that explicitly examines the integration of figurative language and aesthetic value within the context of English-language dance drama remains limited. Existing studies tend to focus either on aesthetic analysis or on character education and cultural values, while the interplay between linguistic and artistic dimensions is rarely addressed in a single analytical framework. This gap indicates the need for research that systematically explores the synergy between language and aesthetics in performance.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze and describe the figurative language and aesthetic values embodied in the dance drama *The Search for Sita*. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach, the data are obtained through observation of audio-visual recordings of the performance and analysis of the dance drama script. The data are subsequently examined using theories of figurative language and aesthetic principles. This study contributes to the development of aesthetic and stylistic studies by offering an integrated perspective on how linguistic expression and artistic beauty interact to construct meaning in contemporary dance drama.

## II. RESEARCH METHOD

The research method used in this study is a descriptive qualitative approach aimed at analyzing and describing the aesthetic values and figurative language in the dance drama *The Search for Sita*. The research data consists of two types, namely primary data and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through observation of audio-visual recordings of the performance of *The Search for Sita*, while secondary data were collected through analysis of the dance drama script and a review of relevant literature on figurative language and aesthetic values.

Data collection techniques included observation, documentation, and literature study. Observations focused on the dance drama script as well as aesthetic elements of the performance, such as choreography, accompanying music, costumes, and lighting, to identify manifestations of aesthetic values in the staging. Documentation involved the collection of scripts, photographs, and performance notes to support textual and visual analysis. Literature studies were conducted to strengthen the theoretical foundation by referring to Keraf's (2009) theory of figurative language and Beardsley's (1981) theory of aesthetics, along with previous studies related to Ramayana-based performing arts.

The analysis of figurative language was conducted by applying Keraf's (2009) classification, which includes metaphor, simile, personification, and hyperbole. Each dialogue and narrative segment in the script was carefully selected based on its relevance to expressive meaning and symbolic representation. These segments were then coded according to the type of figurative language they represent, allowing for systematic identification and interpretation. The selection of dialogues was based on their frequency of appearance, narrative importance, and representativeness of key themes in *The Search for Sita*, ensuring data relevance and adequacy.

Meanwhile, the analysis of aesthetic values was based on Beardsley's (1981) three criteria: unity, complexity, and intensity. Unity was examined through the coherence between movement, music, narrative, and visual elements; complexity was analyzed by identifying variations and contrasts in choreography, musical patterns, and staging; and intensity was assessed through the expressive strength and emotional impact of the performance. Data analysis was conducted interactively using qualitative procedures that involved data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings from observation and script analysis were interpreted descriptively to explain how figurative language and aesthetic values are constructed and conveyed in the dance drama *The Search for Sita*.

### III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

#### A. Figurative Language Contained in *The Search for Sita* Dance Drama

Figurative language is a form of language use that aims to create aesthetic and emotional effects through deviations from the literal meanings of words (Colston & Gibbs, 2021; Palupi, 2021). According to Keraf (2009), figurative language encompasses several types, such as metaphor, simile, personification, hyperbole, metonymy, synecdoche, euphemism, irony, and allegory. In the dance drama *The Search for Sita*, figurative language is predominantly realized through metaphor, simile, personification, and hyperbole. These four types are discussed in the following section as expressions of aesthetic beauty and semantic intensity, in line with Yulianti and Jayantini (2023), who argue that figurative language not only embellishes discourse but also deepens emotional resonance and spiritual meaning in literary texts.

##### (a). Metaphor

Metaphors are used to convey meaning through implicit comparisons without using comparative words such as like or as (Kuzu, 2023; Rahayu et al., 2024). This style of language serves to enrich meaning and present a deeper image by shifting literal meaning to symbolic meaning. Examples of sentences containing metaphors can be found in the following quotes and descriptions.

*Beside him, the jewel of Mithila, the radiant Sita. Grace in her steps, kindness in her eyes. Loyal beyond measure, gentle yet strong. She is love made flesh, the light of Rama's path. Sita glances softly toward Rama, her posture calm and serene.*

Based on the above excerpt, the metaphors are evident in the phrases “*the jewel of Mithila*” and “*she is love made flesh, the light of Rama's path.*” The expression “*the jewel of Mithila*” does not mean that Sita is a physical jewel, but rather a metaphor that describes her as a symbol of purity, beauty, and the noble values of the kingdom of Mithila. Meanwhile, “*love made flesh*” and “*the light of Rama's path*” are metaphors that personify love and light as the tangible embodiment of Sita, a symbol of love, loyalty, and moral enlightenment for Rama. These metaphors personify love and light as the tangible embodiment of Sita, a symbol of love, loyalty, and moral enlightenment for Rama. This interpretation corresponds with the broader perspective highlighted by Suryati et al. (2023), who note that metaphor functions as a dynamic linguistic device that conveys abstract concepts and emotional values through symbolic representation.

In addition, the use of metaphors can also be found in the following excerpt.

*They had no servants, no silk, no gold... yet their hearts were full. Love made every moment rich. Duty made every step sacred.*

Based on the above excerpt, the metaphorical style is evident in the sentences “*Love made every moment rich*” and “*Duty made every step sacred.*” Neither of these expressions is meant to be taken literally. Love does not actually produce material wealth, and duty does not literally make a person's steps sacred. Instead, these metaphors illustrate that the true value of life does not lie in worldly luxuries, but in the depth of love and moral awareness in carrying out one's duties. The metaphor “*Love made every moment rich*” describes love as a source of happiness and inner abundance, while “*Duty made every step sacred*” symbolizes devotion to dharma, which makes every action spiritually meaningful. These two metaphors show a transformation from material to spiritual experience, in accordance with the moral teachings in the *Ramayana* story. This interpretation resonates with Rumman and Al Salem (2023), who emphasize that metaphorical expressions often serve as a bridge between the tangible and the transcendent, allowing abstract spiritual values to be conveyed through concrete linguistic imagery, and with Zheng (2021), who notes that metaphorical discourse can effectively communicate cultural and moral ideals across diverse cultural contexts.

##### (b). Simile

A simile is a figure of speech used to explicitly compare two things by using comparative words such as *as*, *like*, *as if*, or *like* (Keraf, 2009; Salwia et al., 2022). This figure of speech serves to clarify images, emphasize certain impressions, and beautify expressions through similarities between the two objects being compared. Examples of sentences containing similes can be found in the following quotations and descriptions.

*From mountain winds and sacred flame, comes Hanuman, son of Vayu, servant of Rama. Joyful. Fearless. Brilliant as the rising sun. His spirit unbreakable. His loyalty is eternal. “Where there is dharma, there is Hanuman.”*

Based on the above excerpt, the simile style of language is evident in the phrase “*Brilliant as the rising sun.*” This comparison explicitly uses the word “*as*” to describe *Hanuman's* brilliance, which is likened to the rising sun. This simile not only conveys a visual image of light and radiance, but also evokes symbolic meanings of enlightenment, strength, and spiritual enthusiasm. In this context, *Hanuman* is positioned as a source of moral energy that illuminates the path of truth, just as the sun brings light to the world. The use of simile beautifies the narrative while emphasizing *Hanuman's* character as a heroic and sacred figure. The comparison with the sun confirms his unwavering purity and spiritual strength.

In addition, the use of simile can also be found in the following manuscript excerpt.

*It was no ordinary creature. Its fur glowed like firelight. Its eyes held the mystery of forgotten dreams. The forest stood still, watching it.*

Based on the above excerpt, the simile style of language is evident in the phrase “*Its fur glowed like firelight.*” This comparison explicitly uses the word like to liken the creature’s fur to the glow of fire. The simile reinforces the visual imagery by presenting a warm, soft, and captivating impression, while also emphasizing the creature’s presence as a figure with extraordinary power that remains in harmony with nature.

In addition, the simile is also reflected in the following excerpt from the text.

*Her words, like arrows, struck deep. And though his heart burned with devotion, Lakshmana could no longer stay.*

Based on the above excerpt, the simile style of language can be seen in the phrase “*Her words, like arrows, struck deep.*” This sentence explicitly uses the comparative word like to liken *Sita’s* words to arrows that pierce *Lakshmana’s* heart. This expression is not meant to be taken literally, but rather describes how *Sita’s* words have painful emotional power and cause deep emotional wounds. This use of simile not only conveys *Sita’s* emotional pain vividly but also reflects how figurative comparison can embody cultural and moral values. Such a function aligns with Kardana et al. (2022), who emphasize that simile serves as a linguistic medium for revitalizing local wisdom and strengthening character through emotional and moral expression.

In addition, the use of simile can also be found in the following part of the text.

*And then the mask falls. Ravana reveals his true form. No longer the gentle sage, but the fearsome king of demons! His desire burns like fire. His arms reach out, and Sita runs.*

Based on the above excerpt, the simile style of language can be seen in the phrase “*His desire burns like fire.*” This comparison explicitly uses the word like to describe *Ravana’s* burning desire, which is like fire. This simile is not meant to be taken literally, but rather emphasizes the intensity of *Ravana’s* lust and obsession with *Sita*. Fire here serves as a symbol of destructive, hot, and uncontrollable power, reflecting *Ravana’s* basic nature as a figure ruled by worldly desires.

#### (c). Personification

Personification is a figure of speech that gives human characteristics to inanimate objects, natural elements, or abstract concepts, making them appear alive and capable of behaving like humans (Silaban & Yuhdi, 2023; Imrotin et al., 2022). This figure of speech is often used to strengthen emotional nuances and create a poetic atmosphere in literary works. Examples of the use of personification can be found in the following script excerpts and descriptions.

*Alone now. The forest returns to silence. But it has witnessed betrayal. The winds will carry her cry...*

Based on the above excerpt, personification is evident in the phrases “*The forest returns to silence*” and “*The winds will carry her cry.*” Both expressions give human characteristics to natural elements, namely the forest and the wind. The forest is described as if it has the awareness to return to silence, while the wind is treated as if it is capable of carrying *Sita’s* cries, as if it has empathy for her suffering. This personification brings nature to life and makes it feel the tragedy experienced by humans.

The function of personification in this text is to reinforce the emotional and spiritual atmosphere of *Sita’s* abduction. Nature is not just a passive backdrop, but appears as a silent witness participating in the suffering. The silence of the forest reflects sadness and loss, while the gusts of wind depict the spread of grief that transcends space and time. Thus, personification serves to deepen the aesthetic meaning while presenting a symbolic message that human suffering resonates with the universe, in line with the findings of Yulianti and Jayantini (2023), who assert that figurative language functions as a means of expressing emotions and spirituality in religious texts, and with Pimpuang and Yuttapongtada (2025), who highlight how cultural and spiritual values are reflected through symbolic representations in artistic expressions.

#### (d). Hyperbole

Hyperbole is a figure of speech that uses exaggerated statements to emphasize meaning and create a dramatic effect (Intang & Jufri, 2025). In literary works and performances, hyperbole is often used to describe strength, greatness, or emotional intensity in an exaggerated manner in order to evoke heroic and monumental impressions. Examples of sentences containing hyperbole can be found in the following script excerpts and descriptions.

*From the depths of Lanka, comes Ravana, king of ten heads. A mind unmatched, a will unbending. Pride is his crown. Desire, his sword. He moves with thunder, masked in silk and sin. “Gods may tremble. Kings may kneel. But Ravana... Ravana conquers.”*

Based on the above excerpt, hyperbole is clearly evident in the sentence “*Gods may tremble. Kings may kneel. But Ravana conquers.*” This expression exaggerates *Ravana’s* power by describing how even the gods tremble and kings kneel before him. This statement is not meant to be taken literally, but rather to emphasize *Ravana’s* extraordinary power and arrogance. This hyperbole serves to highlight the antagonist’s ambitious character and his belief that he is above all other beings. The use of the words trembles and kneel creates a dramatic impression and reinforces the epic atmosphere of the battle between good and evil.

In addition, the use of hyperbole can also be found in the following excerpt from the script.

*“I will find you, Sita. Even if I must cross oceans and battle demons, I will bring you home.”*

Based on the above excerpt, hyperbole is evident in the statement “*Even if I must cross oceans and battle demons.*” This expression is clearly an exaggerated statement, as crossing oceans and fighting giants are used as symbols of unwavering determination, not as literal descriptions. This hyperbole illustrates the intensity of Rama's love and devotion to Sita, while also emphasizing the moral values of loyalty and courage in the face of any obstacle.

### B. Aesthetic Value in *The Search for Sita* Dance Drama

Aesthetics, in the context of performing arts, refers to the study of beauty, artistic perception, and the principles that govern the creation and appreciation of art (Rahimi, 2024; Haseman & Winston, 2010; Hagtvedt, 2020). This includes sensory, emotional, and intellectual responses generated through artistic expression, as well as harmony between form, content, and meaning (Djelantik, 1999; Wicaksandita & Wicaksana, 2025). In this study, Beardsley's (1981) aesthetic framework is operationalized by examining how choreographic structure, musical organization, narration, costumes, and lighting functionally contribute to unity, complexity, and intensity within the performance. An aesthetic analysis of the dance drama *The Search for Sita* shows the integration of traditional and innovative elements, which can be understood through the three aesthetic criteria proposed by Beardsley (1981), namely *unity*, *complexity*, and *intensity*. In terms of unity, as stated by Beardsley (1981), this performance displays internal coherence through the interconnection of elements that support each other's expressive goals. Unity is identified through the practical alignment of movement patterns, musical structure, narrative flow, and visual design that collectively sustain the dramaturgical direction of the performance. The choreography, which is rooted in Balinese dance conventions, moves in floor patterns and transitions (*tandang* and *tangkis*) that are synchronized with the music. This unity is in line with the findings of Fadhlan et al. (2025), who identified four stages of collaborative creativity, namely *exploratory contemplation*, *improvisation*, *expressive collaboration*, and *final touches*, which transform the dancers' bodies into active mediums for cross-disciplinary artistic expression. In addition, *karawitan* music serves as a rhythmic framework, a provider of motifs, and a marker of accentuation (*reyong*, *kendang*, *gong*) that binds the dramaturgical structure.

Balinese puppet-style clothing and makeup preserve visual identity and character typology, while the narrative provides a teleological direction that ensures each segment fulfills its expressive and functional purpose. This coherence generates a sense of closure between scenes, as choreographic motifs, movement phrases, and musical cues continually refer to one another to construct a unified totality of meaning. The resulting unity is not merely the simultaneity of artistic components but an organicity that reflects an internal consistency toward aesthetic and dramatic objectives. As Yulianti and Marhaeni (2021) explain, *unity* in performance is achieved when movement, music, and narrative form a harmonious integration. In this context, the unity of *The Search for Sita* is further reinforced by Beardsley's indicators of functional coherence, the absence of superfluous elements, and the interdependence of meaning throughout the performance. This view is supported by Novianto et al. (2024), who argue that aesthetic unity in Indonesian art often emerges through a dialogue between traditionalism and modernism, maintaining cultural identity amid global aesthetic influences. In a similar manner, Murwanti et al. (2025) emphasize that the principle of unity in artistic practice can also be observed through visual and ecological balance, where each element such as technique, color, and form contributes proportionally to the integrity of the final creation. Therefore, the aesthetic unity of *The Search for Sita* can be understood as a synthesis of traditional continuity, structural harmony, and ecological-cultural awareness that affirms the relevance of performing arts in the discourse of contemporary cultural sustainability. The following figure illustrates one of the scenes from *The Search for Sita*, showing the embodiment of aesthetic balance and cultural symbolism within the performance.



Figure 1. Choreography in the Dance Drama *The Search for Sita*

Beardsley (1981) emphasizes that *complexity* in art is valuable when the diversity of artistic elements produces enrichment without losing coherence or orientation of meaning. In this analysis, complexity is observed through variations in movement motifs, musical textures, character interactions, and symbolic layering that create multiple interpretative levels within the performance. In *The Search for Sita*, complexity emerges through variations of movement motifs developed by meaningful repetition, contrast, and expansion among characters. The differentiation of *Rama*, *Sita*, *Hanuman*, *Ravana*, and *Jatayu* is manifested not only through the quality of movement and energy dynamics but also through spatial patterns and inter-body relations that form multilayered kinesthetic dialogues. This aesthetic complexity reflects a continuous negotiation between tradition and innovation, aligning with the artistic negotiation described by Siswantari et al. (2024), who reveal that dance aesthetics evolve through the harmonization of artistic creativity with cultural and religious values. Similarly, as Karsono (2023) explains, traditional performances and music festivals function as arenas of cultural reproduction and education that sustain collective identity through creative diversity. Seen from this perspective, *The Search for Sita* demonstrates that aesthetic complexity in performing arts extends beyond formal variation to encompass the dialogic interplay of cultural values, learning processes, and intergenerational creativity.

Meanwhile, digital gamelan music contributes to timbral and textural complexity through layers of *ostinato*, *interlocking* patterns, and changes in density that support the emotional dynamics of the scene. This complexity extends to narrative symbolism that maps the conflict between good and evil as an axis of meaning. The results of this analysis are in line with the practice of aesthetic interpretation of symbols in Balinese colossal performances (Kasih & Yulianti, 2025), which shows how the diversity of role iconography deepens meaning. In line with Yulianti et al. (2024), who assert that the aesthetic value of accompanying music is determined by the diversity of musical motifs that give depth of meaning, diversity here operates across elements: musical motifs meet movement motifs, costume typology blends with character markers, and lighting and digital projections thicken the dramatic atmosphere. Thus, complexity does not stop at the accumulation of variations, but is present as an orchestration of differentiation that interprets each other, deepens themes, and affirms the multilayered aesthetic experience of the audience.

Beardsley's (1981) *intensity* framework places expressive quality as a trigger for focused and consistent emotional engagement. Intensity in this study is identified through the management of movement energy, tempo acceleration, spatial compression, musical dynamics, and climactic narrative moments. In the dance drama *The Search for Sita*, intensity is built gradually through the articulation of movement energy, spatial compression, and tempo control so that dramatic peaks such as Sita's abduction and Jatayu's sacrifice present measured emotional outbursts. The intensification of digital *karawitan* music, particularly through *reyong* accents, *gegulet kendang*, harmonization of *calung*, *jegogan*, and *string* melodies, as well as gong resolutions, works as a tension buffer that blends with changes in movement quality and body perspective, producing a strong correspondence between sound and kinesthesia.

Meanwhile, the presence of English narration reinforces communicative intensity by expanding cross-cultural understanding without reducing traditional nuances; this verbal layer clarifies the meaning of references, while the nonverbal layer maintains depth of feeling. In line with Yulianti (2024), who emphasizes the importance of expressive intensity in multicultural choreography, the management of intensity in this work transcends artistic aspects alone and functions as a bridge for intercultural dialogue. Thus, intensity does not appear as a momentary explosion, but as a structured continuity of emotional pressure, ensuring that each dramatic peak has a clear, cohesive, and communicative affective charge for cross-cultural audiences. The following scenes visualize these moments as manifestations of aesthetic energy and narrative power.



Figure 2. Scene of *Ravana* kidnapping *Sita* in the Dance Drama *The Search for Sita*



Figure 3. *Jatayu's Sacrifice* in the Dance Drama *The Search for Sita*

Overall, the dance drama *The Search for Sita* not only presents a combination of figurative language and aesthetics, but also conveys profound moral messages. The moral messages that can be gleaned from *The Search for Sita* are expressed through figurative language that describes spiritual struggle, loyalty, and devotion to *dharmā*. Metaphors such as “*the jewel of Mithila*” and “*love made flesh*” emphasize the purity of love and Sita’s steadfastness in upholding loyalty and virtue. Similes and hyperbole reinforce the heroic image and unwavering spirit in upholding the truth, while the personification of nature depicts the involvement of cosmic forces that accompany the spiritual journey of the holy characters. These expressions reflect not only aesthetic beauty but also the wisdom of life that aligns with Vedic perspectives on attaining peace and happiness through self-realization (Yulianti et al., 2023). Overall, the figurative language in this work reinforces the universal message of the power of love, loyalty, and sacrifice as the path to truth and spiritual enlightenment, which is relevant to the formation of a character that is honest, empathetic, and based on the value of truth.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The analysis of *The Search for Sita* demonstrates that figurative language and aesthetic principles function in an integrated manner to construct the work’s emotional depth, symbolic meaning, and artistic beauty. The dominant figurative expressions such as metaphor, simile, personification, and hyperbole do not merely embellish the narrative but strengthen the spiritual, moral, and emotional resonance of the story. Metaphors articulate ideals of purity, devotion, and moral enlightenment; similes highlight heroic qualities and emotional intensity; personification animates nature as a witness to human suffering; and hyperbole amplifies the epic scale of conflict and dedication. Together, these linguistic devices support the transmission of universal values such as loyalty, courage, selflessness, and adherence to *dharmā*.

In parallel, the aesthetic value of the performance is manifested through the harmonious interplay of choreography, music, costume, narration, and stage design, which collectively fulfill Beardsley’s criteria of unity, complexity, and intensity. Unity is achieved through the structural coherence of movement, music, and narrative; complexity arises from multilayered variations in kinesthetic, musical, and symbolic elements; and intensity is produced through controlled escalation of emotional and dramatic dynamics. These aesthetic dimensions reveal how traditional Balinese performance principles are revitalized through innovative staging, digital musical textures, and cross-cultural narration, resulting in an artwork that is both culturally grounded and globally communicative.

From a broader academic perspective, these findings offer several implications. In linguistics, the study highlights the role of figurative language as a multimodal meaning-making resource that operates beyond textual discourse, extending into performative and embodied expression. In performance studies, the integration of language, movement, music, and visual design demonstrates how aesthetic coherence and emotional intensity are constructed through interdisciplinary collaboration. Furthermore, in the context of cultural adaptation theory, this study shows that the adaptation of the Ramayana into an English-language dance drama can maintain spiritual and moral integrity while enhancing intercultural accessibility, suggesting a viable model for culturally sensitive global performance practices.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. The analysis is limited to a single dance drama production and focuses primarily on textual and performative interpretation without incorporating audience reception or performers’ perspectives. Future research may extend this study through comparative analyses of different Ramayana adaptations, audience reception studies across cultural contexts, or multimodal investigations that combine linguistic, choreographic, and ethnographic approaches. Such studies would further enrich understanding of how language and aesthetics function dynamically within contemporary performing arts.

Overall, *The Search for Sita* illustrates how figurative language and aesthetic construction mutually reinforce one another to produce a performance rich in symbolic meaning, emotional nuance, and cultural significance. Through the synergy of linguistic expression and artistic form, the dance drama succeeds in conveying the timeless moral message

of love, loyalty, sacrifice, and spiritual truth, affirming its relevance as a contemporary work that bridges tradition and modernity while fostering deeper intercultural appreciation.

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