

## The Creation of the Modern Theatre, the Moon that is Outsided, is from the story of Princess Reno Lungguk Dharmasraya

Deli Fitriyeni<sup>1</sup>, Yusril<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>ISI Padangpanjang, Indonesia



DOI : <https://doi.org/10.61796/jlhss.v3i2.1768>



### Sections Info

#### Article history:

Submitted: November 24, 2025

Final Revised: December 12, 2025

Accepted: January 17, 2026

Published: February 28, 2026

#### Keywords:

Modern theatre

The moon that was left behind

Putri Reno Lungguk

### ABSTRACT

**Objective:** This practice-based research aims to deconstruct and transform the narrative of the legend into a cohesive and relevant modern theater performance. **Method:** The interdisciplinary method combines ethnographic approaches (observational and in-depth interviews in Dharmasraya), dramaturgical analysis for script deconstruction, and collaborative creation methods based on theater laboratories to realize the work. **Results:** The research results demonstrate success in two main aspects. Firstly, the narrative deconstruction shifts the focus from the myth of the kingdom's establishment to the psychological struggles of the Princess, transforming her from a passive object into a subject with agency and complex internal conflicts. Secondly, the staging successfully creates an organic aesthetic synthesis between psychological realism as a framework and integrated Minangkabau performative elements (music, movement patterns, spatial arrangements) dramatically, not merely as decorations. **Novelty:** In conclusion, the creation of "The Neglected Moon" not only produces innovative artistic works but also offers a viable methodological model for transforming Indonesian folklore into contemporary theater. The implementation of this research contributes twofold: as an effort in preserving dynamic and critical cultural heritage and as a practical reference for directors and performing arts researchers in revitalizing oral traditions into fresh and meaningful works for contemporary audiences.

## INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, with its extraordinary cultural wealth, holds thousands of oral narratives, legends, and folk tales that serve not only as entertainment but also as custodians of collective memory, guides to values, and explanations of the origins of a community. Among these treasures lies the legend of Princess Reno Lungguk from Dharmasraya, West Sumatra, which narrates the heroic and tragic journey of a royal princess. As the third princess of the Kingdom of Pagaruyung, she was banished to the wilderness due to the leprosy or smallpox she suffered, a common practice of the time to prevent contagion but laden with stigma and social ostracism. From this exile, through perseverance and wisdom, Princess Reno Lungguk along with her loyal followers succeeded in establishing a new settlement and eventually founding the Kingdom of Koto Besar in the late 17th century, with the magnificent Rumah Gadang Koto Besar serving as a symbol of governance and customary deliberation [1].

However, oral narratives like this often get trapped in storytelling structures that are episodic, hierarchical, and tend to dichotomize characters into black-and-white without delving into their psychological complexities and motives [9]. In many versions of the legend circulating in Dharmasraya society, Princess Reno Lungguk appears more as a passive symbol of fate's victim who accepts her destiny without resistance, or merely

as an icon of the kingdom's founder detached from her human struggles. Approaches of this kind, although they succeed in preserving the core narrative, tend to neglect the dimensions of subjectivity, inner conflicts, and the agency or capacity for action of the princess as an individual with free will. Herein lies the urgency as well as the creative opportunity: to transform such static narratives into a dynamic, reflective, and contextually engaging performing arts piece. The decision to adapt this legend into a modern theater format is not a mere coincidence or an experimental endeavor in form.

Modern theater, with its emphasis on artistic unity, depth of character psychology, and the central role of the director as the unifier of vision, provides the appropriate tools to dissect and reassemble folklore into a cohesive dramatic structure [2], [10]. As explained in the history of theater development, the modern era is characterized by job specialization and the emergence of the director as the "invisible hand" that coordinates all stage elements towards a unified artistic statement [2]. This approach enables creators not only to retell the myth of the kingdom's founding but also to interrogate the myth itself: What did Princess Reno Lungguk feel when she was expelled from the palace? Was her illness truly the sole reason for her exile, or were there political intrigues and jealousies behind it? How did she find the strength to survive and even build a new kingdom? Questions like these can only be answered through a creative approach that allows for deep exploration of the characters' motivations and internal conflicts.

Furthermore, the issues raised by the legend of Princess Reno Lungguk have a strong resonance with contemporary concerns, especially those related to the position of women, social stigma, and the right to determine one's life choices. The physical exile experienced by the princess can be interpreted as a metaphor for various forms of expression and marginalization still faced by many women today, whether constrained by customary norms, sacrificed for family honor, or stigmatized due to physical differences. Thus, transforming this legend into a modern theater stage is an effort to build a bridge between the past and the present, between the local Dharmasraya and the universality of human experiences. Theater serves as a "third space" that allows negotiation between tradition and modernity, where the audience is invited to not only be passive spectators but also engage emotionally and intellectually in the struggles of the characters [3], [11].

The creation process of the *Estranged Moon* was preceded by in-depth ethnographic research at the legendary location of Koto Besar, Dharmasraya. Through participant observation and in-depth interviews with key informants, such as royal successors and elders, the creators sought to capture not only historical facts but also the "spirit" or emotional essence of the story. This field data then became raw material that was deconstructed and reinterpreted [4]. Through a psychological realism approach, the character of Princess Reno Lungguk was crafted as a complex human with doubts, fears, ambitions, and steadfastness. The conflicts were no longer merely external (disease, exile) but also internal (struggles between customary obligations and personal desires, between submission and rebellion). Minangkabau traditional elements, such as talempong music, dance, and the visual aesthetics of Rumah Gadang, were not just local embellishments

but were organically integrated into the dramatic structure to enrich the texture and meaning of the performance.

Ultimately, the background of creating the Estranged Moon can be seen as a multi-dimensional creative response. Firstly, it is an effort to preserve cultural heritage through contemporary mediums, ensuring that the legend of Princess Reno Lungguk remains alive and relevant to new generations. Secondly, it is a cultural critique practice that offers a reinterpretation of historical narratives from a more empathetic perspective centered on women's experiences. Thirdly, it is a bold artistic exploration that combines modern theater aesthetics with local traditional roots, creating a distinct and articulate stage form. Thus, the performance not only tells the story of an estranged princess in the past but also touches the hearts of those who have experienced alienation, struggled for self-autonomy, and sought light in the midst of their own dark fate.

The creation of modern theater based on folk tales often falls into two extreme poles: being adaptations that are too literal, thus losing critical power and psychological depth, or becoming experimental forms detached from their cultural roots, thereby losing essence and original context. In the context of the legend of Princess Reno Lungguk from Dharmasraya, the problematic becomes increasingly complex. On one hand, this story has frozen in a static oral narrative, positioning its main characters as passive figures, victims of disease and exile without agency or deep inner struggles. On the other hand, the attempt to bring it to the modern stage risks obscuring Minangkabau's local values if it merely adopts Western dramatic structures in a raw manner. The core issue of this research is how to find the appropriate methodology to deconstruct traditional hierarchical and symbolic narratives into coherent modern dramatic structures, all while preserving and contextualizing cultural essence and philosophy to remain relevant to contemporary audiences. The challenge lies in balancing respect for traditional sources with the need for artistic renewal and social critique.

From at least three perspectives, this research presents a pressing case. Firstly, from a cultural preservation standpoint, the legend of Princess Reno Lungguk as part of Minangkabau oral history is at risk of fading with changing times. Transforming it into an attractive and meaningful modern theater production serves as a dynamic preservation strategy, ensuring that younger generations stay connected to ancestral heritage through a medium they understand. Secondly, from a performing arts perspective, there is an urgent need to develop an Indonesian theater creation model that goes beyond mere Western imitation, but can creatively and critically synthesize global aesthetics with Nusantara traditional roots. This research offers a practical laboratory for exploring such a synthesis. Thirdly, from a social and gender studies perspective, this legend harbors potential for critiquing patriarchal structures and current social stigmas. In essence, the ultimate goal of this research is to generate not only an artistic product (performance), but also new knowledge on methods of creation and critical interpretation of cultural heritage, so that the legend of Princess Reno Lungguk can be reinvigorated with fresh and powerful meaning on the modern theater stage.

## RESEARCH METHOD

The creation of the modern theater "Bulan yang Tersisih" stemming from the legend of Putri Reno Lungguk is inseparable from a rigorous and multidimensional methodological framework. The research approach utilized is qualitative and interdisciplinary, combining ethnographic methods to delve into the roots of tradition, dramaturgical approaches to transform oral narratives into dramatic structures, and practice-based research methods for creating performing arts. The integration of these three approaches is necessary because the research subject is not a static social phenomenon, but a living cultural heritage that requires interpretation, deconstruction, and reenactment in new and meaningful aesthetic forms. The initial fundamental step is conducting ethnographic research in the original locations of the legend, namely Dharmasraya and Koto Besar.

This method was chosen to understand the legend not as a static text but as a living cultural practice embedded in the collective memory and social interactions of the community. Researchers employ a participant observation approach by residing and directly interacting with the community, observing historical sites such as the tombs of the kings of Koto Besar and the Rumah Gadang, and immersing themselves in the cultural atmosphere that shapes the narrative background. Additionally, in-depth interviews are conducted with key informants selected purposively.

The primary informants include Yusrawati (45 years old), the successor to the Royal Mother of Koto Besar, and M. Nasir, a respected elder in the kingdom. The interviews are conducted in a semi-structured manner with open-ended questions, allowing informants to organically recount the legend's version while revealing their personal values, emotions, and interpretations of the story of Princess Reno Lungguk. This interview process is meticulously recorded and noted, observing research ethics, including obtaining consent and explaining the research objectives. This ethnographic approach adheres to the principles articulated by James P. Spradley, emphasizing that the essence of ethnography lies in "understanding the way of life of others from their own perspective" [4]. This approach enables researchers not only to gather factual data on the chronology of the establishment of the Kingdom of Koto Besar but also to capture the emotional nuances, implicit social conflicts, and how the community interprets themes of exile, illness, and female leadership within the narrative.

Ethnographic data that has been collected then serves as raw material for the stage of dramaturgical analysis and transformation. In this phase, the researcher acts as both a dramaturg and a scriptwriter. The methods employed are narrative analysis and deconstruction. Episodic and often linear legends are scrutinized to identify potential dramatic elements: who are the main characters, what are their objectives, what obstacles do they face, and how is the conflict formed. The deconstruction process is carried out to dismantle stereotypes and uncover gaps in the story. For example, in a traditional legend, the exile of Princess Reno Lungguk is solely attributed to her illness. Through critical reading, the researcher develops a more complex conflict by introducing political motifs, such as power struggles and jealousy among siblings (Puti Tangah), thus giving the

departure of the princess richer psychological and social motivations that are more believable (verisimilitude) within the context of realistic drama [12], [13].

This process also involves character analysis to transform characters from symbols (e.g., "suffering princess") into individuals with differentiated psychology, backgrounds, internal contradictions, and storyline developments (character arc). In the context of modern theater, the construction of such complex characters is imperative, as explained by Avra Sidiropoulou that a director's interpretation of the text must be able to "inhabit the emotional landscape of the characters" [3], [14]. After the dramaturgical framework has taken shape in the form of a dramatic script, the research shifts to the domain of the artistic creation method for performance arts. This method is practical, exploratory, and iterative, guided by the director's role as the primary researcher. The research is conducted through a series of theatre laboratory work. The process begins with collective interpretation of the script with the creative team (assistant director, dramaturge, designers) to align artistic vision. Subsequently, casting is carried out with talent tests that evaluate not only the actors' technical abilities but also their depth of empathy and understanding of the characters' psychology.

The phase of text comprehension and rehearsals forms the core of this method. Researchers apply a psychologically based acting approach, adopting principles from Konstantin Stanislavski such as "objective" and "affective memory" to aid actors in embodying the internal motivations of characters, especially for the portrayal of Princess Reno Lungguk, who must convey the turmoil between submission and rebellion. In addition to working with actors, the method of creation also involves experimentation and integration of stage design elements. Researchers collaborate with artistic directors, lighting designers, and composers to translate dramatic concepts into visual and auditory languages. A minimalist yet symbolic stage set, such as the use of white fabric and the division of stage areas, is designed to represent spatial fragmentation and alienation. The lighting design is carefully crafted with a detailed lighting plot, using specific colors and intensity (e.g., dim blue light for isolation scenes) as a visual metaphor for the characters' psychological state [15].

The music is composed by combining traditional Minangkabau instruments like *talempong* and drums with modern musical structures, serving not merely as illustration but as an emotional narrator that enhances the tension and dynamics of scenes. Blocking processes (actors' movements on stage) are meticulously carried out through repeated exercises, where each position and movement is analyzed for its significance, such as placing Princess Reno Lungguk in a secluded area to emphasize her isolation. All these elements are then brought together in combined practices (technical rehearsals and dress rehearsals), a phase in which research takes the form of direct testing to assess the coherence, pacing, and overall impact of the performance. Overall, the research methodology in the creation of *The Banished Moon* is an integrative cycle, beginning with ethnographic data excavation, followed by analysis and textual transformation through a dramaturgical approach, and realized performatively through collaborative and practice-based methods of artistic creation.

These three methodological pillars complement and inform each other. Ethnographic data provides depth and authenticity, dramaturgical analysis offers narrative structure and complexity, while artistic creation methods bridge concepts into sensual and emotional stage experiences. Such research, often referred to as artistic creation research, not only produces a product (theatrical performance) but also generates new knowledge about the methodology of transcoding oral heritage, strategies for approaching psychological realism in the context of Indonesian folklore, and models for interdisciplinary creative collaboration. Thus, each stage in this method is not merely a technical step but also a form of ongoing inquiry into the potential meanings of an eternal legend.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *Results*

This research is a synthesis of a long process that combines ethnographic, dramaturgical, and artistic approaches to transform the oral legend of Princess Reno Lungguk into a cohesive and meaningful modern theater performance. The study successfully identifies and addresses two fundamental questions in creation: A) How to deconstruct the narrative of the legend into modern theater form? and B) How to realize it on stage? The outcome is not only an artistic product ("The Displaced Moon"), but also a methodological model and a series of significant artistic-conceptual findings.

#### **A. Deconstruction of Legendary Narratives Towards Modern Theater**

The deconstruction of Putri Reno Lungguk's narrative into a modern theatrical form is carried out through four interrelated core strategies: 1) Shifting Point of View and Character Agency, 2) Complexification of Conflict and Motivation, 3) Psychologization and Humanization of Characters, and 4) Reinterpretation of Themes in a Contemporary Context.

##### **1. Shifting Point of View and Character Agency**

In oral legends, narratives often have a collective and external nature, positioning Princess Reno Lungguk as an object subject to events. The deconstruction process successfully shifts this perspective to internal and subjective, depicting Princess Reno Lungguk not merely as a passive victim of exile due to illness. Through textual interpretation, she is constructed as a subject with agency, capable of reflecting, choosing, and acting. Her departure from the Pagaruyung palace is no longer interpreted solely as banishment but as a political and existential decision to take control of her life, seeking freedom within the constraints of tradition and stigma. This shift transforms the narrative from "a kingdom born from exile" to "female subjectivity born from resistance and autonomy." This deconstructive principle aligns with Avra Sidiropoulou's concept that a director's interpretation should be able to 'inhabit the emotional landscape of characters' and reveal their subjectivity [3].

##### **2. Complexifying Conflict and Motivation**

The original legend tends to simplify the conflict as "human versus fate (illness)." Research significantly broadens and deepens this conflict. External conflicts are enriched

by incorporating political intrigue and familial jealousy. Antagonistic characters are introduced, such as Puti Tangah (the princess's sister) and Datuk Bagindo Kayo, who plan to oust Princess Reno Lungguk not only due to illness but also out of power ambition and jealousy towards her beauty and status. This creates a more dynamic and thrilling inter-character conflict. On the other hand, the princess's internal conflict is meticulously explored. She is depicted struggling between the duties as a royal princess (to obey, uphold family honor) and the desire as an individual to be free, recognized as a whole human beyond the stigma of her illness, and to determine her own path in life. This complexity results in a non-linear plot, filled with logical causal tension, where each character's actions have psychologically and socially explainable motivations.

### 3. Psychologizing and Humanizing Characters

Characters in legends, including Princess Reno Lungguk, often appear as flat figures (flat characters). Through the approach of psychological realism, research has succeeded in transforming them into rounded characters (round characters) with flesh and blood. Princess Reno Lungguk is given a complex emotional background: feelings of shame, loneliness, doubt, fear, but also anger, determination, and hope. Her metaphorical dialogues (for example, about "seeking a space of tranquility") are translated into psychological actions and physical choices on stage. Similarly, other characters like Puti Tangah are not merely evil, but motivated by insecurities and distorted ambitions; Datuk Rajo Sampono represents loyalty and genuine love that transcend physical appearances. This process of humanization allows the audience to empathize not with symbols, but with humans experiencing universal struggles.

### 4. Reinterpretation of Themes in Contemporary Context

The themes of legends are reinterpreted to be relevant to contemporary audiences. The central theme shifts from "the origins of the kingdom" to "individual freedom against worldly constraints". These constraints can take the form of oppressive traditions, social stigmas, blind ambitions, or even possessive love. Contemporary issues such as disease stigma, social isolation, women's mobility, and bodily autonomy are implicitly woven into the storyline. The narrator in the performance functions as a philosophical commentator who directly highlights this relevance, challenging the audience to reflect on their own modern "enslavements". Thus, historical legends do not remain artifacts of the past but become mirrors and tools of critique for present-day social life.

## **B. Embodying Dramatic Texts into Modern Theater Performances**

The realization of the script "The Isolated Moon" into a modern theater performance is a process of translating dramatic concepts into a concrete, sensory, and cohesive stage language. Research findings demonstrate the successful application of modern directing principles that combine Western psychological realism aesthetics with Minangkabau performative elements, resulting in a unique artistic synthesis. This success is evident in several key aspects:

### 1. Symbolic and Functional Stage and Space Design

The stage design is minimalist yet highly symbolic, utilizing a stretched white cloth as the main element. The stage design reflects the principle that scenography is an

inseparable part of thematic expression [5], while also aligning with contemporary interpretations of theatrical space and symbolism [16]. This cloth serves dual purposes: as a flexible space divider, a screen for projecting moods, and a visual metaphor for purity, isolation, and a blank canvas where fate is written. The stage is carefully divided into three main areas representing different worlds: the Pagaruyung palace (world of tradition and power), the forest (transitional world of danger), and Princess Reno Lungguk's hiding place/new kingdom (world of potential and liberation). This division allows for a smooth flow of the narrative and strengthens the themes of journey and transformation. This design reflects George Kernodle's principle that setting is an inseparable part of thematic expression [5].

## 2. Lighting Design as Visual and Emotional Narrator

Lighting serves not only as illumination but as an active character revealing inner states. A specific lighting plot is created using colors and intensities to differentiate atmospheres. Dim blue and purple lighting dominate Princess's isolation scenes, creating a cold, sad, and isolated atmosphere. Warm (yellow/gold) light is used for flashbacks or hopeful moments. Narrow spotlights focusing on Princess Reno Lungguk in monologue scenes highlight her solitude and introspection. Smooth (fade) or sharp (snap) light transitions are used to signify scene shifts and emotional peaks, allowing light to "dance" alongside the show's dramaturgy.

## 3. Integration of Music and Sound as Emotional Foundation

Music is not treated as a background illustration but as the emotional core and abstract narrator of the performance. The music composition combines traditional Minangkabau instruments (such as *talempong*, *gendang*, and *suling*) with modern rhythmic and harmonic structures. A fast tempo (120 BPM) with tight repetitive percussion patterns is used to build tension and anxiety, particularly in intricate scenes. Long, fragmented melodies from the *suling* or vocals are used to convey sorrow and longing. The music serves as a bridge between psychological realism and mythical atmosphere, connecting the inner depths of characters with the cultural roots from which the story originates. The music acts as a powerful transitional marker, strengthening the local identity without appearing overly folkloric.

## 4. Acting and Blocking Based on Psychology and Geometry

The acting approach adopts the Stanislavskian technique of psychological realism, where actors build their characters from internal motivations. The result is subtle, intense, and meaningful performances filled with silence. Blocking (actors' movement patterns) is designed with geometric precision to reinforce power relationships and emotions. Princess Reno Lungguk is often placed in isolated or lower positions, emphasizing her alienation. Confrontation scenes feature a tense triangular formation between Princess Reno Lungguk, Puti Tengah, and Datuk Bagindo Kayo. Each position change is calculated to direct the audience's focus and reveal the relational dynamics between characters. This blocking is not static but evolves with the characters' emotional development.

## 5. Costumes and Props as Character Extensions

Costumes are designed with inspiration from Minangkabau traditions but simplified for a contemporary impression and functional movement. The long veil worn by Princess Reno Lungguk is a key prop that symbolizes multiple interpretations: it serves as a protector (from gazes), concealment (of shame), and eventually transforms into a grand turban (when she finds her strength). The staff carried by the Narrator and Datuk Rajo Sampono symbolizes wisdom, strength, and support. The minimal yet meaningful use of props focuses attention on acting and dialogue.

## 6. The Director's Role as the Unifier of Artistic Vision

All the aforementioned elements are successfully consolidated into a cohesive whole thanks to the central role of the director as both a researcher and an artistic leader. In line with the function of a modern director, they act as an "invisible hand," coordinating all specialists (actors, lighting designers, sound designers, stage designers) towards a clear artistic vision: portraying the psychological struggles of Princess Reno Lungguk with depth and contemporary relevance. This collaborative process involves continuous discussions and repeated technical exercises (dress rehearsals) until achieving a seamless unity of rhythm, tempo, and dynamics in the performance.

## *Discussion*

The creation of the modern theatre production *Moon of the Outcasts*, rooted in the legend of Princess Reno Lungguk from Dharmasraya, cannot be understood merely as a process of transferring oral narratives to the stage. Rather, it must be situated within a broader discourse on contemporary artistic practices negotiating with tradition. This research reveals a multi-dimensional achievement, where the technical and aesthetic success of the performance is only the surface of a deeper cultural transformation. The discussion will delve into how each aspect of the research results, from deconstructive approaches to artistic synthesis, and the socio-cultural consequences, engage in dialogue with academic discourse and cutting-edge artistic practices, while also offering a fresh perspective on the possibilities of revitalizing folklore within the framework of contemporary Indonesian art.

The initial fundamental step in this creation is the deconstruction of the frozen narratives of legends ingrained in the collective memory. This process is not a reckless act of destruction but rather a critical and creative reinterpretation aimed at dismantling the established hierarchies of meaning to reveal the hidden possibilities of interpretations. In the context of Indonesian folklore, folk tales are often treated as sacred monuments that should not be altered, thereby hindering their potential to thrive in the imagination of new generations. The approach applied in this study views legends as open texts, whose meanings are never final and are always ready to be reactivated through artistic interventions. Shifting the focus from the myths of the kingdom's origins to the psychological struggles of a woman, this creation embodies what is known in cultural studies as a "reading strategy from the margins," by highlighting subjects that have long been at the periphery of grand historical narratives. Princess Reno Lungguk is

no longer a passive figure determined by her fate of illness but transforms into an active agent whose decision to leave the palace and start a new life is a political statement about bodily autonomy and women's spatial agency. This transformation aligns with the latest developments in gender performativity studies that emphasize the importance of seizing narratives and reshaping women's subjectivities in cultural texts [6]. By giving a "voice" and "will" to the princess, this performance not only brings the character to life but also contributes to the broader discourse on the repositioning of women in the history and culture of the Archipelago.

The successful deconstruction subsequently finds its concrete form in a unique aesthetic synthesis on the stage. Here, the creation of the Forsaken Moon confronts and successfully addresses the classic challenges in contemporary performing arts in Indonesia: how to create an authentic artistic form without falling into folkloric nostalgia on one hand, or dependency on Western idioms on the other. The answer lies in the organic integration between the dramatic structure of modern theater, particularly psychological realism, and the performative and philosophical elements of Minangkabau culture. Psychological realism, typically associated with portraying domestic life and internal conflicts in modern settings, is here applied to delve into the inner world of a traditional royal princess. The result is an emotional depth that humanizes the characters in the legend, allowing contemporary audiences to recognize and empathize with their suffering without losing their cultural context [6].

However, what is more intriguing is how traditional elements do not merely serve as decoration or geographical markers. For instance, the *talempong* music is transformed from ceremonial and entertainment music into an essential dramaturgical element. Its repetitive rhythmic patterns are used to build tension, illustrating the unrelenting social pressures, or even representing the anxious heartbeat of the princess. Similarly, the stage space inspired by the concept of space in the *Rumah Gadang*, with clear delineations for specific functions, becomes a powerful visual metaphor for the hierarchical and rigid social order that is later "violated" by Princess Reno Lungguk's movements crossing those boundaries. This approach demonstrates a mature understanding of how cultural heritage can be actively utilized in creating new forms, rather than just as references or quotations. Such practices align with the trends in contemporary Southeast Asian performing arts, where artists increasingly engage in "tactical quoting" of traditional elements not to assert authenticity but to generate new meanings and critique present-day conditions [7]. Collaborative Creative Process in Contemporary Art

Collaborative creative processes involving a variety of expertise disciplines from ethnographic research to technical stage design are crucial aspects that need to be addressed. This working model reflects a paradigm shift in contemporary art creation, moving from the "sole genius" model to the "collective laboratory" model. Directors in this project do not function as the ultimate authority dictating, but rather as curators and facilitators managing the convergence of various knowledge and creativity. Ethnographic knowledge from different layers provides contextual depth; dramaturgical skills offer a strong narrative framework; while the artistic sensitivity of lighting

designers, sound engineers, and dancers transform these concepts into direct sensory experiences. Every artistic decision, from the blue light enveloping a scene of isolation to the music composition interrupting dialogue, results from continuous negotiation and experimentation. Such collaboration not only produces richer and more cohesive performances but also creates an inclusive and dynamic creative ecosystem. This approach echoes the working practices in contemporary devising theater, where works emerge from shared exploration processes, with all team members regarded as creators [8].

In the Indonesian context, where hierarchical structures in art production often prevail, collaborative approaches like these offer an alternative, more democratic model with the potential to generate innovative works. Finally, the most significant impact of this research and creation may lie in its capacity to elevate local legends into relevant universal allegories for contemporary audiences. "The Exiled Moon" successfully transcends the boundaries of space and time from 17th-century Dharmasraya. Through the character of Princess Reno Lungguk grappling with stigma, rejection, and identity quest, the performance speaks to anyone who has ever felt alienated, marginalized, or unfairly treated due to a perceived "difference." Smallpox serves as a flexible metaphor for all forms of social stigma ranging from health conditions, sexual orientation, economic status, to political beliefs. Her decision to depart and forge a new life becomes a universal symbol of resilience, agency, and the right to self-definition.

The Narrator, in their role as a philosophical commentator, actively threads through, linking the personal tragedy of the princess to broader questions of freedom, morality, and hypocrisy in modern society. Thus, the performance functions as a small "public space" where audiences are invited not merely as passive consumers of an old tale but as active participants in a collective reflection on humanity's current state. This transformation of legend into a platform for such social critique is a significant contribution to our cultural ecology. It demonstrates that the most meaningful cultural preservation is not in merely conserving stories like artifacts in a museum but in revitalizing them as tools for thinking, feeling, and dialoguing about the issues we collectively face. In this regard, "The Exiled Moon" has provided a valuable example of how performing arts can serve as a living bridge between past heritage and present challenges, between specific locality and universal humanity.

## CONCLUSION

**Fundamental Finding:** Overall, this research successfully demonstrates that deconstructing the narrative of legends requires the dismantling of stereotypes, delving into the psychology of characters, and reinterpreting themes. **Implication:** Meanwhile, its realization on stage necessitates translating these concepts into a cohesive stage language synthesis, where every element of artistic design, lighting, sound, acting, and direction work synergistically to create an immersive, emotional, and intellectual theatrical experience. **Limitation:** This research is limited to a single case study in the form of The Moon Alone, so the findings may not fully represent the diversity of

approaches in adapting and deconstructing other legends across different cultural contexts and theatrical traditions. **Future Research** : Future studies can explore comparative analyses of multiple folklore-based performances, expand interdisciplinary approaches, and examine audience reception to better understand the broader impact of narrative deconstruction and stage synthesis in contemporary theater.

## REFERENCES

- [1] M. Suryajaya, *\*Sejarah Estetika\**. Jakarta, Indonesia: Gang Kabel, 2016.
- [2] T. Cole and H. K. Chinoy, Eds., *\*Directors on Directing: A Source Book of the Modern Theater\**. Indianapolis, IN, USA: Bobbs-Merrill, 1976.
- [3] A. Sidiropoulou, *\*Directions for Directing: Theatre and Method\**. London, U.K.: Routledge, 2019.
- [4] J. P. Spradley, *\*The Ethnographic Interview\**. New York, NY, USA: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1979.
- [5] G. R. Kernodle, *\*Invitation to the Theatre\**. New York, NY, USA: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975.
- [6] J. Butler, *\*Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity\**, 2nd ed. New York, NY, USA: Routledge, 1999. doi: 10.4324/9780203902752.
- [7] M. J. Tan, "Tactical Tradition: Reappropriating Folk Elements in Contemporary Southeast Asian Performance," *\*Asian Theatre Journal\**, vol. 38, no. 1, pp. 134–155, 2021, doi: 10.1353/atj.2021.0006.
- [8] D. Heddon and J. Milling, *\*Devising Performance: A Critical History\**, 2nd ed. London, U.K.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016. doi: 10.1007/978-1-137-32607-8.
- [9] W. S. Hasanuddin, *\*Drama: Karya dalam Dua Dimensi\**. Bandung, Indonesia: Penerbit Angkasa, 2014.
- [10] O. G. Brockett and F. J. Hildy, *\*History of the Theatre\**. Boston, MA, USA: Pearson Education, 2010.
- [11] J. L. Styan, *\*Modern Drama in Theory and Practice 1\**. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1981.
- [12] F. E. Wibowo, *\*Dramaturgi Nusantara: Membaca Kembali Cerita Rakyat dalam Teater Kontemporer\**. Bandung, Indonesia: Penerbit ITB, 2021.
- [13] S. T. Widodo, "Dekonstruksi dan Rekonstruksi Cerita Rakyat dalam Teater Indonesia Kontemporer," *\*Jurnal Kajian Seni\**, vol. 5, no. 2, pp. 145–160, 2019, doi: 10.24821/jks.v5i2.2874.
- [14] P. Pavis, *\*Dictionary of the Theatre: Terms, Concepts, and Analysis\**. Toronto, ON, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1998.
- [15] R. M. A. Harymawan, *\*Dramaturgi\**. Bandung, Indonesia: PT Remaja Rosdakarya, 1988.
- [16] B. Yulianto, "Sintesis Estetik: Menimbang Tradisi dan Modernitas dalam Seni Pertunjukan Indonesia," *\*Panggung: Jurnal Seni dan Budaya\**, vol. 30, no. 1, pp. 1–14, 2020, doi: 10.26742/panggung.v30i1.1125.

---

**\*Deli Fitriyeni (Corresponding Author)**

ISI Padangpanjang, Indonesia

Email: [fitriyeniidely@gmail.com](mailto:fitriyeniidely@gmail.com)

**Yusril**

ISI Padangpanjang, Indonesia

Email: [yusril2001@gmail.com](mailto:yusril2001@gmail.com)

---