

Aesthetic Reception of Short Stories Toward Theatrical Dimensions: A Case Study of Dramatic Adaptations of Putu Wijaya's Short Story

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Abstract

*This study examines how students' aesthetic reception is manifested in the transformation of three short stories by Putu Wijaya, *Anjing*, *Darah*, and *Suap*, into theatrical performances. Employing a qualitative approach, the study integrates literary reception theory with Gerard Genette's narratology (order, duration, and frequency) alongside perspectives on adaptation and performativity. The data consist of the original short stories, adaptation scripts, and performance documentation produced by students of the Indonesian Literature Study Program at UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya. The findings reveal that adaptation does not constitute a direct transfer of narrative, but rather a process of aesthetic reception realized through strategies of compression, expansion, elimination, repetition, and climax displacement. These transformations reshape the narrative structures of prose into dramatic structures and convert verbal signs into performative signs expressed through dialogue, gesture, bodily movement, space, rhythm, and character interaction. Each performance reflects the students' ways of reading, interpreting, and renegotiating the meanings of Putu Wijaya's works in accordance with dramaturgical demands. The study demonstrates that students' theatrical performances constitute a concrete form of aesthetic reception as well as a pedagogical-creative practice that reveals the dynamic relationship among text, reader, medium, and the production of meaning in literary education.*

Keywords: *aesthetic reception; adaptation; theatrical performance; Putu Wijaya; narratology*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana penerimaan estetika siswa terwujud dalam transformasi tiga cerpen karya Putu Wijaya, yaitu *Anjing*, *Darah*, dan *Suap*, menjadi pertunjukan teater. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif, penelitian ini mengintegrasikan teori penerimaan sastra dengan naratologi Gerard Genette (urutan, durasi, dan frekuensi) serta perspektif tentang adaptasi dan performativitas. Data penelitian terdiri dari cerita pendek asli, naskah adaptasi, dan dokumentasi pertunjukan yang dihasilkan oleh mahasiswa Program Studi Sastra Indonesia di UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa adaptasi bukanlah transfer narasi secara langsung, melainkan proses penerimaan estetika yang direalisasikan melalui strategi kompresi, ekspansi, eliminasi, pengulangan, dan perpindahan klimaks. Transformasi-transformasi ini membentuk ulang struktur naratif prosa menjadi struktur dramatis serta mengubah tanda-tanda verbal menjadi tanda-tanda performatif yang diekspresikan melalui dialog, gerak tubuh, ruang, ritme, dan interaksi karakter. Setiap pertunjukan mencerminkan cara mahasiswa membaca, menafsirkan, dan menegosiasikan kembali makna karya-karya Putu Wijaya sesuai dengan tuntutan dramaturgi. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa pertunjukan teater mahasiswa merupakan bentuk konkret dari penerimaan estetika sekaligus praktik pedagogis-kreatif yang mengungkap hubungan dinamis antara teks, pembaca, medium, dan produksi makna dalam pendidikan sastra.

Kata kunci: *resepsi estetika; adaptasi; pertunjukan teater; Putu Wijaya; naratologi*



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INTRODUCTION

The study of literary adaptation from prose into theatrical performance concerns not only a transformation of form but also a transformation in the ways texts are read, interpreted, and re-presented (Praharwati & Romadhon, 2017). As a narrative genre, the short story operates through language, plot, point of view, narration, description, and the organization of narrative time. In contrast, theatre operates through the actors' bodies, dialogue, voice, space, movement, rhythm, props, lighting, and the direct relationship between performers and audiences (Setiawan et al., 2023). These differences in medium indicate that adapting a short story into a stage performance cannot be understood as a mere mechanical transfer of the story. Rather, adaptation constitutes a process of creative interpretation that requires reader-adaptors to select, emphasize, omit, add, shift, or reorganize elements of the source text so that they can function effectively within a performative medium (J. F. N. Rizky & Zulfikar, 2024; Yusriansyah, 2023).

In this context, adaptation offers an important space for examining how literary meaning is reproduced. When a short story is read and then performed, the text is no longer merely a sequence of words but becomes a theatrical event (Nurhasanah, 2022). Description may become gesture, internal conflict may become monologue or bodily expression, narration may be transformed into dialogue, and narrative pauses may be converted into dramatic rhythm. Theatrical performance is not merely the final outcome of literary appreciation but also a concrete form of reading (Yudono & Daya, 2023). It demonstrates how readers receive, negotiate, and endow the source text with new emphases in a different medium (Eka & Nurhasanah, 2022).

Reader reception is therefore a crucial aspect of adaptation studies. A literary work is not complete within the text itself but acquires meaning through the act of reading. Iser (1978) argues that literary texts provide indeterminate spaces that readers must concretize. Jauss (1982) shows that every act of reading occurs within a particular horizon of expectations, while Fish (1980) locates meaning within the work of interpretive communities. Within this framework, readers are understood not as passive recipients but as active producers of meaning. When students read short stories and then adapt them into theatrical performances, they do not merely comprehend the narratives but also construct collective interpretations. These interpretations are reflected in dramaturgical decisions

about which sections are retained, which scenes are condensed, which conflicts are intensified, which characters are assigned new functions, and how narrative climaxes are transformed into dramatic moments (Karma & Saadillah, 2021).

This article examines how students in the Indonesian Literature Study Program at UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya receive three short stories by Putu Wijaya, namely *Anjing*, *Darah*, and *Suap*. These stories were read, interpreted, and then adapted into theatrical performances. The selection of Putu Wijaya's works is grounded in the aesthetic strength of his short stories, which frequently present absurd situations, social irony, moral conflict, bodily tension, and power relations embedded in everyday experiences (S. Rizky et al., 2021). *Anjing* presents a struggle over identity between humans and animals, *Darah* explores issues of the body, miracles, social class, and societal pressure, while *Suap* portrays moral dilemmas within the worlds of art and financial power (Sutopo, 2023). Collectively, these stories provide a rich field for examining how prose narratives are transformed when they enter the logic of theatrical performance.

Putu Wijaya is one of Indonesia's prominent authors, whose works span literature, theater, satire, absurdity, and social criticism. In many of his works, the boundary between reality and anomaly is deliberately destabilized. His characters face social, moral, or existential pressures that compel readers to question the normality of the world depicted. These characteristics endow Putu Wijaya's short stories with strong theatrical potential. However, this potential does not automatically materialize in performance. Rather, it must be constructed through processes of reading, selection, sign processing, and the reconfiguration of narrative structures into performative ones. At this point, students' theatrical performances become significant. They demonstrate that Putu Wijaya's texts are read not merely as literary works but also as dramaturgical material.

A number of studies on literary reception have emphasized the role of readers in producing meaning. Meanwhile, studies of adaptation and medium transformation have shown that shifts from one medium to another invariably involve reinterpretation. Hutcheon and O'Flynn (2012) conceptualize adaptation as repetition without replication, namely a re-presentation that remains connected to the source text yet is never identical to it. Sanders (2016) likewise argues that adaptation and appropriation operate through a creative relationship between the original text and the new text. From the perspective of sign systems, the transition from the short story to the stage can be understood as an

intersemiotic translation, namely, the transfer of meaning from one verbal sign system to another, involving the body, voice, space, visuality, and stage action (Jakobson, 1959). Adaptation cannot be evaluated solely on the basis of fidelity to the source text but must instead be understood as an interpretive practice that generates new forms, emphases, and effects.

Nevertheless, within Indonesian literary scholarship, the relationship between student reception as a community of readers and the transformation of short-story narrative structures into theatrical performances has received relatively little operational discussion. The adaptation of short stories into theater is often treated either as an act of literary appreciation or as a formal transformation from text to performance (Bogard, 2016). Yet insufficient research has explained in detail how reader reception operates through transformations of narrative structure, including the sequence of events, scene duration, repetition frequency, the omission of particular sections, dialogue expansion, conflict condensation, and the displacement of narrative climaxes. In fact, such decisions constitute concrete traces of how readers understand and interpret the source text.

This gap serves as the point of departure for the present article. The primary concern of this study is not merely that Putu Wijaya's short stories are performed by students, but rather how those performances reveal how students read, select, emphasize, and reorganize the short stories' narrative elements (Pietrzak-Franger et al., 2023). In other words, theatrical performance is treated as a space of aesthetic reception in which readings of the short stories are embodied in dramatic structures and performative signs (SAĞLAM, 2022). Through theatrical performance, reception no longer appears solely as comments or written responses but instead takes the form of creative productions that can be analyzed through adaptation scripts, scene divisions, dialogue, stage actions, dramatic rhythm, and shifts in the focalization of conflict.

This article analyzes the process using two main theoretical frameworks. First, reception theory helps understand students' adaptations as active, collaborative reading practices. Reception is seen not as a subjective impression outside the text but as an interpretive act reflected in their adaptation choices. The students are viewed as an interpretive community because they read Putu Wijaya's short stories within academic, pedagogical, and creative settings. Their reading develops collectively through discussions, scriptwriting, assigning roles, rehearsals, and performances. Each adaptation change,

therefore, represents a negotiation among the source text, the readers' expectations, theatrical needs, and artistic strategies.

This article utilizes Gerard Genette's narratology to analyze how narrative structures from short stories are adapted into theatrical performances. The key categories examined are order, duration, and frequency. *Order* refers to the arrangement of events, *duration* relates to the relationship between story time and narrative time, and *frequency* pertains to how often events are repeated within the narrative (Genette, 1980). These categories help explore how story structures are modified, being translated, selected, condensed, expanded, or shifted during theatrical adaptation. The study employs Genette's narratology flexibly, recognizing that it was originally designed for verbal narratives. Therefore, while these categories guide the analysis, they are not applied *rigidly*. Instead, they serve as initial points to understand how prose is transformed into dramatic form.

Beyond narrative elements, this article examines the theatrical aspect that sets stage performance apart from prose texts. Theatre is a performative event that creates meaning through actors, space, voice, movement, rhythm, props, lighting, and audience interaction. Scholars such as Elam (2003), Fischer-Lichte (2008), and Pavis (1998) note that theatrical signs are not only verbal but also visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and spatial. Therefore, analyzing theatrical performance requires more than examining plot changes. Moving from short story to theatre involves transforming narrative signs into performative signs. Narration shifts to dialogue, description to gesture, internal conflict to stage action, and dramatic pauses to tempo.

By examining the relationships among reception, adaptation, narratology, and performativity, this article proposes two research questions. First, how do the narrative structures of Putu Wijaya's short stories *Anjing*, *Darah*, and *Suap* transform when adapted into students' theatrical performances, particularly in terms of order, duration, frequency, condensation, omission, repetition, and the displacement of the climax? Second, how do these transformations reveal the students' aesthetic reception of Putu Wijaya's short stories as a practice of creative and collective reading? These two questions aim to explain not only the formal differences between short stories and theatrical performances but also the mechanisms of reception that operate behind these transformations.

This study is significant because it offers a perspective that regards students' theatrical performances not merely as supplementary activities in literature learning but as

objects of inquiry that reveal the complex relationships among text, reader, medium, and the production of meaning. Within literature pedagogy, theatrical performance is often understood simply as a form of literary appreciation or student creativity. This article shifts that understanding by demonstrating that theatrical performance also constitutes an analytical practice. Through theatrical performance, students examine narrative structures, interpret conflicts, determine dramatic focal points, establish dramatic rhythm, and transform narrative into stage action. Adaptation may be understood as a method of reading that enables literary texts to be examined through another medium.

This article contributes to literary reception studies by showing that reader responses can be traced through creative products rather than relying solely on interviews, commentaries, questionnaires, or written replies. These performances constitute a concrete form of meaning concretization that reveals how the source text is received and interpreted. Methodologically, the article provides a framework for understanding how prose narrative elements are reshaped into dramatic forms through techniques like compression, expansion, elimination, substitution, repetition, and displacement of the climax. From a pedagogical perspective, this article demonstrates that transforming short stories into theater can be an effective strategy for critical reading, fostering students' comprehension of literature through interpretation, collaboration, and creative reimagining.

This article positions students' theatrical performances as a space where reading and creation intersect. Putu Wijaya's short stories are not seen as texts simply transferred to the stage unchanged, but as narrative frameworks reinterpreted within a performative context. Moving from prose to theatre is not just about simplification, it is an interpretive act that shows how reader-adaptors understand, choose, and highlight certain meanings. In this view, adaptation becomes an aesthetic process that explores the relationships between the source text, the reader community, dramaturgical choices, and the creation of meaning in theatrical performance.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section examines how the narrative structures of three short stories by Putu Wijaya, namely *Anjing*, *Darah*, and *Suap*, are transformed into theatrical performances by students in the Indonesian Literature Study Program at UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya. The analysis is not intended to assess whether the performances are faithful or unfaithful to the

source texts but rather to explain how the source texts are read, selected, and re-presented within the theatrical medium. Accordingly, differences between the short stories and the performances are treated as traces of the students' aesthetic reception.

The discussion focuses on three main aspects. First, it examines changes in narrative structure using Gerard Genette's categories of *order*, *duration*, and *frequency* (Genette, 1980). Second, it explores dramaturgical transformation strategies such as compression, expansion, elimination, substitution, repetition, and the shifting of the climax. Third, it considers the receptive meanings of these transformations, specifically how adaptation choices reveal the ways students interpret Putu Wijaya as an author whose works engage with absurdity, social irony, moral conflict, the body, and power dynamics.

The Transformation of *Anjing*: Plot Compression and the Displacement of the Climax

The short story *Anjing* has a relatively linear narrative structure. The sequence of events unfolds from the protagonist's transformation (from a dog to a human) through a series of social experiences that lead him to realize the complexities of being human. In the short story, the protagonist's journey is structured around several key events. Those are acquiring linguistic consciousness, encountering a woman and her husband, walking through a park, shopping at a supermarket, entering a university environment, being seduced by a woman, being taken to a hospital, transforming back into a dog, and finally wishing to become human again. This structure demonstrates a pattern of an existential journey. The protagonist not only moves from one place to another but also shifts from one conception of humanity to another. Those are language, desire, consumption, education, origin, shame, family, and justice.

In the theatrical performance, this structure is compressed. Several narrative events in the short story are no longer presented as complete scenes but are instead condensed, combined, or transformed into narrative pauses. The episode in the park, for example, no longer stands as an extended narrative sequence but becomes a reflective moment conveyed through narration and stage action. By contrast, the supermarket episode receives greater emphasis because it is divided into two parts. Those are the shopping experience and the encounter with the supermarket authorities. Conversely, the hospital episode, which constitutes an important climax in the short story, is omitted from the performance. As a

consequence, the dramatic center shifts from a social-familial crisis to an identity crisis when the protagonist reverts to a dog and loses his partner.

The omission of the hospital scene shows that the performance not only abbreviates the short story but also transforms its dramatic focal point. In the short story, the hospital scene portrays the protagonist as a subject rejected by family structures and human social norms. Although he has become human, he is not automatically accepted as one. Instead, his family humiliates him, questions his actions, and renders him increasingly alienated. This layer of conflict is not retained in the performance. Instead, the performance reinforces the contrast between the experience of becoming human and the experience of becoming a dog once again. Through this choice, the principal conflict shifts from a critique of the family and social institutions to an existential irony. While he is a dog, he longs to become human, yet, once human, he is unable to endure the rules that govern human existence.

This compression strategy may be understood as a way the students receive *Anjing*. The students appear to read the short story primarily as a narrative of fractured identity and the instability of the boundary between humans and animals, rather than as a critique primarily directed toward the institution of the family. The scenes considered to possess the greatest theatrical potential are those that depict the protagonist's body in an in-between condition, like a dog speaking like a human, a human still governed by canine instincts, and a dog that has acquired human experience. The protagonist's body thus becomes the central performative sign. What is explained through internal narration in the short story is translated into movement, physical reactions, vocal intonation, and changes in bodily expression in the performance.

From a temporal perspective, *Anjing*'s performance employs two concurrent strategies, like speeding up and slowing down. Speeding up happens when multiple narrative segments are condensed to avoid making the stage action overly lengthy. Slowing down occurs when the performance leaves room for the narrator's pauses, especially to depict the protagonist's inner thoughts. These pauses are crucial because not every reflection in the short story can be directly voiced. The narrator acts as a link between the written narrative and the theatrical presentation. Thus, the narrator is not just an explanatory tool but also an intermedial device that preserves the short story's narrative essence within the theatrical form.

From a frequency perspective, both the short story and the theatrical performance of *Anjing* generally follow a singulative pattern. Each event occurs and is presented once. However, the performance thematically highlights this pattern through repeated situations where the protagonist consistently fails to grasp the human system of signs. He struggles to understand the rules related to desire, consumption, identity, and social relationships. While the events are not formally repeated, this recurring pattern of failure creates a sense of repetition in meaning. The performance emphasizes this pattern by focusing on the protagonist's body, which is constantly delayed in understanding social cues.

The transformation of *Anjing* demonstrates a reception pattern rooted in compression and the shifting of the climax. The students interpret the short story as portraying an unstable identity and adapt it into a theatrical piece by condensing the plot, emphasizing visually striking scenes, and omitting less critical parts for the drama's pacing. These changes reveal that theatrical aesthetic reception involves selective adaptation, like not all aspects of the original story are included on stage, but only those deemed most theatrical are, and then heightened.

The Transformation of *Darah*: Social Repetition and the Dramatization of Collective Pressure

In contrast to *Anjing*, which focuses on the physical form situated between humans and animals, *Darah* emphasizes the female body as the site of miracle, suspicion, and social pressure. The short story narrates the experience of Mirah, who discovers that the blood flowing from her finger is white and later turns blue. What initially seems to be a private bodily event rapidly transforms into a public matter. Mirah's body is no longer solely her own but becomes an object of interpretation for her relatives, the local community, neighborhood security officers, and state authorities. Consequently, *Darah* offers a compelling framework for examining the relationship among the body, myth, social power, and the construction of truth.

From an ordered perspective, both the short story and the theatrical adaptation of *Darah* follow a chronological progression. The sequence starts with Mirah injuring herself in the kitchen, her shock upon seeing white blood, her aunt and uncle's reactions, the spreading of the news in the marketplace, social scrutiny, and ultimately Mirah's efforts to demonstrate the extraordinary nature of her blood. However, the theatrical version

reorganizes some segments of this conflict. Certain sequences are rearranged to present social pressure on Mirah earlier and more visibly to the audience. While in the short story this pressure builds gradually through narration, in the play it is conveyed mainly through dialogue, repeated questioning, and the actors surrounding Mirah.

The key change in *Darah's* performance is its use of repetition. In the short story, *repetition* primarily appears as an ongoing pattern, such as Mirah repeatedly injuring herself while cooking. This reflects her role in domestic chores and daily life. Her injuries are routine, what is unusual is the change in her blood's color. In the theatrical version, however, this repetition becomes more expansive, involving multiple characters who ask questions about the white blood and discuss Mirah's blood from different viewpoints, including her aunt, uncle, residents, and security officer. This shift is important because it turns the miraculous body into a social symbol, making societal pressure both seen and heard.

Repetition in the theatrical performance serves more than to clarify the story. It also builds dramatic tension. The recurring questions progressively make Mirah more vulnerable. The audience sees not just that Mirah is suspected, but how this suspicion is shaped by a collective voice. This approach turns the narrative of social upheaval into a theatrical experience. The local residents, family, and authorities are not merely supporting characters but embody a community that forces Mirah's body to respond to demands for proof.

Darah's performance shows condensed narrative parts and expanded conflict scenes, emphasizing dramaturgical tension. A brief narration or dialogue captures Mirah's shift in attitude after discovering her white blood. Scenes where characters question her blood extend, as they are rich in performative cues such as voices, gazes, gestures, and postures that create pressure. The performance prioritizes prolonging conflict-heavy moments over purely informational ones.

Pauses in *Darah* also change function. In the short story, these pauses occur when the narration allows for the recollection of King Yudhishtira's white blood, linking Mirah's body to themes of purity and nobility. In the theatrical adaptation, while the pauses remain significant, their effect shifts. When mythological memory is brought onto the stage, it goes beyond internal reflection and becomes a symbol of Mirah's self-interpretation. She perceives her body through myth, whereas society views her body with suspicion. This

tension between how she understands herself and how society perceives her becomes the core of the performance.

The students' response to *Darah* is shown through their focus on the social aspect of bodily conflict. While Putu Wijaya's short story centers on an abnormal body, the theatrical adaptation presents this anomaly as a shared experience. The students see *Darah* not just as a story about a miraculous body but as a narrative about societal control, scrutiny, and the demand for physical proof. This changes the focus from Mirah's inner feelings to the social pressures she faces.

Darah's transformation illustrates how repetition functions as a key dramaturgical tool. In the short story, it serves as a narrative device, while in the play, it exerts vocal and social pressure. The recurring questions do more than repeat information. This repetition reveals that Mirah's body is wounded both physically and socially. At this moment, the students' aesthetic response becomes clear. They see the dramatic potential in bodily conflict and turn it into a collective scene that pressures the protagonist.

The Transformation of *Suap*: Dialogue Expansion and the Acceleration of Moral Conflict

The short story *Suap* differs from *Anjing* and *Darah* because its main conflict centers not on a strange body but on the morality tested by money, power, and professional integrity in the arts. It depicts a protagonist faced with a bribery offer while judging a painting contest. The story's core unfolds through rejection, temptation, the disappearance of an envelope, suspicion, anger, and moral reflection. *Suap* uses irony by showing a character who starts with idealism yet eventually becomes ensnared in bribery and suspicion.

In the theatrical performance, *Suap* experiences a significant transformation as its moral conflict is emphasized through interpersonal dynamics. The scene introduces a domestic context with Renggo and Doma, then features Sora and two others attempting to bribe Renggo. By deepening and intensifying these relationships, the moral dilemma shifts from merely the narrator's internal struggle to a dialogic conflict. The audience sees how Renggo is pressured, persuaded, challenged, and ultimately pushed to a decision that ruins his domestic relationship.

Both the short story and the theatrical performance follow a chronological order from start to finish. However, the performance more vividly shifts the emotional intensity of the conflict. In the short story, the protagonist's internal battle develops slowly over time,

allowing readers to experience the moral evolution through narration, introspection, and changing attitudes. Conversely, the play speeds up this process, with the protagonist making decisions sooner, and the moral outcomes becoming clear through Doma's disappointment, the family's departure, and Renggo's social downfall. This choice highlights that the performance values dramatic impact and clarity over the narrative's extended complexity.

In *Suap*, the main adaptation approach is expanding dialogue. A story initially centered on narration and reflection is converted into characters' verbal interactions. For example, the exchange between Renggo and Doma shows underlying issues in their relationship that aren't always openly stated in the original story. Similarly, the dialogues involving Renggo and people offering a bribe demonstrate how moral language can be used to justify self-interest. The bribe isn't just a physical gift but also a discourse filled with persuasion, moral rationalizations, pressure, and manipulation. The theatrical version thus depicts bribery as more than a monetary exchange. It becomes a battle of language and influence.

From a temporal perspective, the performance of *Suap* utilizes summarization to accelerate specific intervals, such as the period between the bribery offer, the competition, and its eventual outcomes. Concurrently, the performance decelerates in segments that emphasize verbal conflict. Conversational scenes are accorded greater prominence because dialogue constitutes one of the principal expressive devices of theatre. Consequently, *the duration* within the performance is not dictated by the chronological length of events in the short story but by their dramatic significance. Events capable of generating theatrical tension are extended, whereas those primarily serving as connectors within the plot are shortened.

From a frequency perspective, the theatrical performance of *Suap* demonstrates an iterative pattern through the recurrent expressions of anger and repeated arguments between Renggo and Doma. This repetition illustrates that bribery not only compromises Renggo's professional integrity but also undermines his domestic relationships. Consequently, the performance expands the moral implications of the short story. Whereas the short story highlights the moral irony of a protagonist manipulated by circumstances surrounding bribery, the performance places greater emphasis on the disintegration of the family and the protagonist's alienation. This interpretive choice suggests that the students

perceive *Suap* as a narrative concerning the social consequences of moral decisions rather than merely a satire on bribery.

The most significant transformation in the theatrical performance of *Suap* is the intensification of consequences. In the short story, the narrator's reflection constitutes a crucial element because readers are invited to observe how the protagonist gradually becomes aware of his entrapment. In the theatrical performance, this realization is transformed into a scene of downfall. Renggo loses the trust of others, is abandoned, and is forced to bear the consequences of his decisions. The performance transforms reflection into the visualization of consequences. What unfolds within the protagonist's inner consciousness in the short story is represented on stage as the collapse of interpersonal relationships and social standing.

The students' reception of *Suap* is shown in their tendency to dramatize moral conflicts through interpersonal confrontations. They don't just portray the story of bribery but also highlight the clash between opposing values, like artistic ideals versus economic needs, professional integrity versus temptation, loyalty at home versus ambition, and moral duty versus rationalization. As a result, the theatrical performance explicitly presents *Suap* as a drama of moral decline.

General Patterns of Transformation: From Prose Narrative to Performative Signs

Analyzing the three cases above reveals common transformation patterns. Firstly, theatrical performances often use plot compression, especially evident in *Anjing*, where multiple events are combined and the hospital scene is left out. Similar compression appears in *Darah* and *Suap*, achieved by condensing sections that do not directly contribute to the core stage conflict. This suggests that the theatrical form necessitates economical storytelling, not every detail from the prose can be included, as the stage requires a clear conflict, well-paced scenes, and purposeful dramatic moments.

Secondly, the performances develop those sections with strong dramatic potential. For instance, in *Anjing*, the supermarket scene is emphasized because it highlights a direct clash between the protagonist and social norms. In *Darah*, the recurring questioning about Mirah's blood is expanded to create more collective pressure. Similarly, in *Suap*, the dialogues among Renggo, Doma, Sora, and those offering the bribe are lengthened to better

illustrate the moral dilemma. This expansion is deliberate, focusing on segments that effectively produce visual, verbal, and social tension on stage.

Thirdly, performances frequently transform internal conflict into dialogic or bodily conflict. In short stories, characters are able to engage in extended reflection through narration. However, in theatrical performance, such reflections must be translated into action, voice, pauses, or interpersonal interaction. In *Anjing*, the protagonist's internal conflict is conveyed through his awkward bodily movements and the narrator's role in mediating his reflections. In *Darah*, Mirah's psychological pressure is rendered through the imagery of her body being encircled by persistent social questioning. In *Suap*, Renggo's moral struggle is expressed through dialogue and confrontation with other characters.

Fourth, the performances tend to displace the climax in accordance with the logic of theatrical presentation. In *Anjing*, the climax shifts from the hospital scene to the moment when the protagonist becomes a dog again and loses his partner. In *Darah*, the climax is intensified through the public demand for proof concerning Mirah's body. In *Suap*, the climax is accelerated toward the protagonist's decision to accept the bribe and the resulting social consequences. These shifts in climax indicate that the student-adaptors selected the moments they regarded as the most visually and dramatically compelling rather than merely adhering to the climactic point established in the narrative structure of the short stories.

Repetition plays a crucial role in creating dramatic intensity. In *Darah*, it is evident as several characters repeatedly ask about Mirah's white blood. Thematic repetition also appears in *Anjing*, where the protagonist repeatedly fails to understand social norms, and in *Suap*, through recurring debates and ongoing moral pressure on the main character. In theater, repetition helps enhance the drama rather than just restate facts.

These patterns demonstrate that the students' theatrical performances constitute a concrete form of aesthetic reception. Reception is expressed not through the students' explicit statements about the short stories but through their adaptation decisions. When the students omit scenes, expand dialogues, displace climaxes, or repeat conflicts, they reveal which aspects of the short stories they consider significant, theatrical, and meaningful. The performances may be understood as archives of reading that preserve how the students understood, interpreted, and negotiated Putu Wijaya's texts.

Student Reception as a Pedagogical and Creative Practice

These findings also demonstrate that adapting short stories into theatrical performances has significant pedagogical value. Students do not merely read the short stories passively but are required to make creative decisions. They must determine which parts can be staged, which sections need to be condensed, how internal narration should be transformed into stage action, how conflicts should be distributed across scenes, and how audiences should be guided in understanding the story's progression. This process demands critical reading because adaptation cannot be undertaken without a thorough understanding of the source text's structure and meaning.

In this context, the classroom or student community functions as an interpretive community. Students read Putu Wijaya's works within both an academic and a creative horizon. As academic readers, they identify narrative elements, conflicts, characters, and story structure. As creative practitioners, they transform these elements into dialogue, acts, stage directions, dramatic rhythm, and theatrical signs. The integration of these two horizons produces a reception that is not merely cognitive but also performative.

Adaptation also shows how Putu Wijaya's aesthetics are renegotiated by a new generation of readers. The absurdity of *Anjing* is rendered as an awkward body and an unstable identity. The bodily anomaly in *Darah* is translated into social pressure on the female protagonist. The moral dilemma in *Suap* manifests as verbal conflict and the disintegration of domestic relationships. The students' theatrical performances not only reproduce Putu Wijaya's works but also reinterpret the central tensions embedded in them.

Ultimately, the transformation of these three short stories demonstrates that adapting prose for the theater is not a secondary process that follows reading but rather a form of reading itself. Adaptation becomes the means through which students understand the text through creative practice. Throughout this process, the narrative structures of the short stories are not eliminated but negotiated to meet the demands of theatrical performance. The short stories provide narrative, conflict, and verbal signs, while the performances transform them into bodies, voices, space, rhythm, and audience interaction. It is at this point that aesthetic reception operates, meaning is not merely read but performed.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that adapting Putu Wijaya's three short stories (*Anjing*, *Darah*, and *Suap*) into students' theatrical performances is not a direct transfer of the stories but rather a process of aesthetic reception that operates through selection, reconfiguration, and the transformation of signs. As reader-adaptors, the students read the source texts, selected the sections they considered to have the greatest dramatic potential, and transformed the prose narrative structures into theatrical structures. The performances function not only as products of literary appreciation but also as archives of reading that reveal how Putu Wijaya's works are interpreted within academic and creative contexts.

The study finds that transforming a short story into a theatrical performance involves two key strategies, compression and expansion. Compression involves condensing, combining, or omitting multiple events to preserve dramatic economy, as seen in *Anjing* where the hospital scene (an important climax in the short story) is omitted in the stage version. On the other hand, expansion emphasizes scenes with strong dramatic potential, such as the supermarket scene in *Anjing*, the collective pressure on Mirah in *Darah*, and the moral debates among Renggo, Doma, Sora, and the bribe-givers in *Suap*. This pattern shows that performances favor sections that are most theatrically engaging rather than those that are most comprehensive narratively.

The second observation involves the transition from narrative signs to performative signs. In short stories, internal conflict, description, reflection, and narrative pauses are expressed through narration. Conversely, in theatrical performances, these elements are conveyed via dialogue, gestures, voice, bodily expressions, space, rhythm, and social interaction. In *Anjing*, the identity crisis between human and animal is depicted through the protagonist's awkward posture and his struggle to conform to human social norms. In *Darah*, Mirah's bodily anomaly is depicted as collective social pressure, emphasized through repeated questions and community voices. In *Suap*, what begins as an internal moral dilemma becomes more explicit through dialogue conflicts and the breakdown of domestic relationships. Thus, shifting mediums results in a corresponding change in how meaning is constructed.

The third finding reveals that students' theatrical performances exemplify aesthetic reception as both a pedagogical and creative process. Instead of verbal comments, their reception is shown through choices like omitting scenes, heightening conflicts, expanding

dialogues, incorporating a narrator, repeating questions, and shifting the climax. These choices suggest that students not only grasped the stories but also renegotiated their core meanings to suit theatrical needs. In this context, students can be seen as an interpretive community engaging with Putu Wijaya through two interconnected lenses, an academic perspective focused on textual structure, and a creative perspective centered on transforming texts into performative acts.

The implications of this study extend across three domains. First, for literary reception studies, the findings show that reader reception can be examined through creative products, not solely through interviews, questionnaires, or written responses. Second, for adaptation studies, this research confirms that adapting prose for the theater should be understood as an intersemiotic transformation, converting verbal narrative into performative signs. Third, for literary pedagogy, the study shows that adapting short stories into theatrical performances can serve as a strategy for critical reading because students are required to understand, interpret, select, and collaboratively reconstruct the source text.

This study, however, has certain limitations. Because direct reception data, such as written reflections, interviews, or records of student discussions, were unavailable, reception in this study was examined through interpretive traces in the adaptation scripts and the structures of the theatrical performances. Future research may extend this investigation by incorporating data on the creative process, interviews with adaptors, directors' production notes, audience responses, or rehearsal documentation. Such data would enable a more comprehensive explanation of the relationship among reading practices, dramaturgical decisions, and performative experience. Nevertheless, this study has demonstrated that adapting Putu Wijaya's short stories into students' theatrical performances constitutes an important site for understanding the relationships among text, reader, medium, and the production of meaning.

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