

## From Amazon To Bali – A Journey Through Myths

Igor de Almeida Amanajas

UNICAMP – Campinas University (Sao Paulo – Brazil)  
Ph.D. Student – Performing Arts Program – Arts Institute

*iamanajas@yahoo.com.br*

This article aims to report practical intercultural experiences in the experimental choreographies' creation relating characters from the Brazilian Amazonian culture under the structure and movement bases belonging to traditional Balinese mask dance-dramas.

From aesthetic rules pertaining to classical dance, after ten years of training with the master I Made Djimat and his family, in Batuan village, there is a need to elaborate choreographic compositions based on characters from the artist's Amazon mythology who seeks to narrate the roots of its people and culture through Balinese dances learned over a decade of dedication and refinement of its techniques.

More than an artistic experience, it is a rediscovery of origins that presupposes the intersection of myths that are similar despite their divergent homelands. The choreographic composition uses Balinese masks, costumes, music and movements that were integrated with native Amazonian cultural elements.

The research aims to find out which elements are viable in the crossing of cultures (Bali-Brazil) regarding the development of new creations. Other questions arise from this study, such as: How can one experience interculturality so that none of the cultures lose their roots, thus maintaining their traditional knowledge?

The mythical character in development for this study is a bird of prey that, at night, flies over the villagers' houses announcing ill omen. The next morning, the bird, already transformed into an old witch, goes through the same houses announcing her arrival with a whistle. The residents then, to avoid the old witch's curses, present her with coffee, tobacco and fish. Such myth is structured basing its composition of movements and choreographies on traditional characters from Balinese culture such as *Garuda* and *Matah Gede*, among others.

*Key words: Interculturalism; dance-drama; amazon folklore; topeng; theater*

### INTRODUCTION

Before we start, I would like you, dear reader, to take my hand and accompany me on a journey back in time, returning to my origins. I invite you to travel to Belem city, Para state, Amazon region in northern Brazil.

Born and raised until my seventeens in the Amazon region of Brazil, I remember that when I was a child used to spend my school holidays at my family's beach house on an island called Mosqueiro, an hour away from the capital. At that time, the children enjoyed two to three months' vacation and my mother who worked in the capital, used to send me every year to the small island under the care of my grandmother. Mosqueiro island is still inhabited by a simple and humble riverside population that survives mostly on fishing, which is their main source of income. Others are employed as caretakers guarding people's houses which are only used in summer holidays few times

a year as a refuge from the big city, as my family used to do.

Our beach house had been built many years before I was born by my grandfather, it is located at the end of a small street that ends at the edge of a small beach called Prainha. Over the years other houses were also built on the premises where we had our refuge and each residence had its caretaker who, in addition to taking care of the house, was also responsible for other small daily services. The children of these caretakers were all my age, so we used to play together during the holidays. We spent the day running barefoot on the beach's sand, cutting our feet and legs on the rocks, jumping over the houses' walls and entering vacant lots whose vegetation had spread on all sides. At night, we hid by the houses in the dimly lit small street or walked to the island's main square to sit in our deck chairs on the grass to chat for long hours while playing dominoes. Through those kids I heard the most

formidable legends that dominated their imaginations and, little by little, such stories became part of mine as well.

From then on, during the nights, I listened attentively to the sounds of the forest under the covers, waiting for the old *Matinta Pereira* who might come to haunt the houses, or searching for any men dressed in white on the street – it could certainly be the *Boto* in disguise. I also learned to respect the sea and ask for permission before entering *Iara's* domains. I remember how real it felt to be surrounded by this folkloric imagery that was integrated into the daily life until my mid-teens, a period that I almost did not return to Mosqueiro island due to studies and other commitments that a life in the capital demands.

When I arrived in Bali for the first time I had a strong feeling, an inexplicable joy in my heart that said, “it’s good to come back home”. Of course, I didn’t understand this feeling, or even how it could be possible since it was my first experience on the Asian continent. Mosqueiro and Bali island are located few degrees under the equator line, both having a very similar climate. On my first visit to the traditional local market in Sukawati village I was introduced to rambutan, jackfruit, mangosteen – fruits that I already knew from my childhood and which, to the dismay of the Balinese, were nothing new to me, unlike the usual and curious reactions of other foreigners. The Balinese themselves physically resemble the Mosqueiro population, it seems that Brazilian indigenous and Malay traits can be confused briefly at a first glance.

Ten years ago, I didn’t know about the demons, heroes and gods of Balinese mythology that belongs to the Hindu religion and custom’s imaginary. I didn’t know who *Rangda* demon was, I didn’t know it’s story, but I could deeply understand, perhaps not intellectually, the Balinese people’s fear and respect for that supernatural figure and why, every night, on street corners, they placed offerings on the ground containing flowers, incense, handful of rice – but also tobacco and coffee. “To appease the demons,” it’s believed. I didn’t understand the characters that were danced in the dance-dramas either. Who were they? What were they talking about? What’s the plot? Do they dance instead of “acting”? Everything was new and extraordinary, but, internally, I already carried something inside my memories that reminded me my childhood, I already knew such customs – so the Mosqueiro island’s riverside people do not also remember their legends in their folkloric dances? Both cultures vivify their origins and beliefs through artistic expressions.

Of course, such comparisons are subjective at first, as they are memories and sensations that I carry from my roots and were only perceived by me after many years of immersing myself in Balinese culture. These connections were not illuminated to me through a revealing epiphany on an auspicious day. It took years to understand the local Balinese culture in order to make such connections bloom.



Figure 1 - *Matinta Pereira* mask in construction by I Dewa Gede Mandra – Batuan, 2021  
Source: Igor Amanajás

For the past ten years I have been researching and training Balinese dance dramas under the guidance of my master I Made Djimat and his family in Batuan village, Gianyar. From this artistic encounter I was able to develop my Master’s researches regarding the art of the *Topeng* dancer in 2016. Now I am currently developing a new project at the Ph.D. level which explores the possibilities of intercultural choreographic creations. The study seeks to compose choreographies that narrate characters of Brazilian Amazonian folklore, my culture, through Balinese practices and aesthetic rules. There will be four distinct characters featuring four independent solos which I collectively named them as: *Kekebyaran Amazon*. In this article, I intend to report and share the first steps of *Matinta Pereira's* character choreographic elaboration, which is still in process at this moment.

## MATINTA PEREIRA

On January 15<sup>th</sup> of 2021, I proposed a meeting at the *Umah Kodok* (Master Djimat’s house) premises in Batuan with some Balinese artists who would collaborate in this project. I Nyoman Kariasa, professor and head of the under graduation program in traditional music at ISI – Denpasar, native from Pinda village in Gianyar, would be the composer of the new musical creation in the gamelan orchestra; I Dewa Gede Mandra, painter and mask maker, grandson of the great mask master I Dewa Putu Kebes, born in Batuan village, lives just across the street from *Umah Kodok*, would create the new masks (*topeng*); I Made Redha, also native of Batuan village, skilled in leather carving, would produce the costumes (*pakian*) and crowns (*gelungan*); the choreography would be created by *bapak Djimat*.

I started the meeting distributing copies of a dossier on Amazon legends. In addition to the folklore narratives and character’s descriptions, there were photos and explanations of fruits, fabrics, dances, prints, indigenous paintings, vegetation, indigenous faces, all the information



Figure 2 - Igor Amanajas training section at Umah Kodok,  
Matinta Pereira character - Batuan, 2021  
Source: Igor Amanajás

that I could gather from my culture. It was necessary that these elements were presented to these great artists in order to them imagine what would be proposed to them afterwards. I explained my intentions in the elaboration of four independent solos that would each correspond to a different character. It would be necessary masks, costumes, musical compositions and particular choreographies for each solo. The objective would be that through the aesthetic and structure of traditional Balinese dance these characters could be developed incorporating some elements of the Amazonian culture in each segment of the scenic composition. It was not about replacing Balinese components with Amazonian ones, but promoting a direct integration between the parts, a conversation among two particularities hoping that they would merge into a third hybrid element. Those elements would not be just Balinese or just Brazilians anymore, but a crossed new proposition in which the two cultures could still be recognizable.

What possible similarities could be noticed when crossing two cultures that, opposite in their singularities, found a way to dialogue in my own body and memory? What adaptations would be necessary in order to not lose the cultural identity of the original sources? Is it possible that the Balinese people would be interested in these creations which, despite being structured on their local aesthetics and scenic style, would bring up characters alien to their tradition and religious mythology? How could Amazonian elements be integrated into the dance composition and scenic props without having the stylistic traits deviated or distorted?

The first character to be worked on would be old *Matinta Pereira*, in my opinion, the most laborious. I will share then the legend as I heard it in my childhood.

The riverside people believe that on certain nights a bird of omen flies over the houses, emitting a death cry. The bird chooses a wall or roof to land on and starts to scream,

silencing only when the resident promises it coffee, tobacco or fish. The next day it returns already transformed into an old witch. *Matinta Pereira* comes to get what she was promised, announcing her arrival with a terrifying whistle. The resident deposits the presents in front of the door or on the window frame outside the house so the old woman can pick them up and leave in peace. If the house master does not keep his word, *Matinta* will forever haunt him, throwing curses of illness and death upon the family. The witch's origin is unknown and varies between the various locations where the legend is revived through orality. Some say that *Matinta's* curse is hereditary passing from mother to daughter. In case *Matinta* has no one to leave the curse, about to die, she goes through the villages in disguise and asks only "Who wants? Who wants?". The girl who answers that she wants without knowing what, will receive the curse as an inheritance becoming the new *Matinta Pereira*.

Returning to Mosqueiro island, I remember of very old lady who worked as a caretaker in the house just across from mine. Mrs. Brigida had wrinkled and battered skin by years of hard work under the blazing sun, she always wore a flowered dress and her shaggy white hair escaped rebelliously from the tight bun on the back of her head. Mrs. Brigida seemed to be over five hundred years old, yet she dragged her worn sandals every day walking back and forth through the village. The elderly woman used to lean on the houses low walls to chat always ready to accept a cup of coffee at every stop.

The children of the village then began to speculate the possibility that she was the *Matinta Pereira*. From that day on Mrs. Brigida caused me an inexplicable fear. I runed and hid every time that I saw her coming.

Years passed and for a long time I did not return to Mosqueiro's house. After a while someone told me that Mrs. Brigida had died. Poor old lady! When I started to search for the legends of my childhood to assemble the solos, *Matinta Pereira* was the first one that popped in my memory. When I think about the *Matinta Pereira*, the face of Mrs. Brigida instantly comes to my mind. It is impossible to disassociate the two figures.

I mentioned earlier that the *Matinta Pereira* composition would be the most laborious. The reason is that I decided to work with the two forms of the character in different masks. The first would be the bird of omen and the second the old witch. It would be necessary two costumes, two masks, two musical compositions and two choreographies. This solo would also represent my first experience elaborating a choreography, until then I had only dedicated myself to learn the classical dances passed down by several generations. No longer I would copy a traditional choreography, *bapak Djimat* and I would set off from a totally new and unknown place.



The following week after the meeting *bapak* Djimat and I started to work. Our first day was entirely dedicated to exploring bird movements. As usual, I always copied *bapak*, trying to mimic the plasticity of his moving body as much as possible. *Bapak*'s richness of repertoire movements is impressive. He has dedicated his life perfecting traditional dances and dance-dramas, rarely been interested in contemporary creations, however, his body is already so filled with the lexicon of Balinese aesthetic movements that imagining the bird's movements transposed to the Balinese style seemed to him easy as frying an egg. His hands changed shape in the blink of an eye, taking on new dynamics that were hard to follow. His fingers spoke each for themselves, drawing between them a new image with each hand's movement. Wrinkled by time and knowledge, they moved with such precision and expressiveness that for a few moments I caught myself just watching, forgetting to try to mold them on me.

For almost two hours we only practiced arm and hand movements in which *bapak* guided me through a multitude of possibilities. I asked him where he had acquired such a repertoire, he replied that a lot came from the Garuda character and from observing the behavior of the birds in nature.

The next day we engaged the legs in our study of movements. Once again, I was surprised by the immense collection of walks, positions, base changes and gears that *bapak* had in its power. The most incredible was that all these different movements, full of expression, nuance and precision, did not escape the Balinese aesthetic style. It was possible to identify the basic technique's principles even if its plasticity was not, in its entirety, that of traditional movements. With the leg's integration in our practice, the whole body necessarily had to be mobilized. The torso, neck and facial expressions now also participated in the exploration. It became more and more difficult to follow *bapak*.

Bird movements tend to be built with *keras* energy qualities, however, the legend's bird is a transformed witch. Witch characters in Balinese dance also have *keras* qualities compared to queens and princess. We should then explore strong movements and energetic qualities that contained significant doses of *manis* so the character, both bird and witch, could be identified as female.

The following week we started to work on the old woman's movements. I explained to *bapak* that I had imagined the character as a mix between *Topeng Tua Luh* (the old woman) from the dance-drama *Topeng* and a demon (*raksasa*), as it was a witch. The characteristic movements that would build up her composition should contain feminine (*manis*), old woman (*manis*) and *raksasa* (*keras*) elements. *Bapak* promptly exclaimed "*Matah Gede!*" *Matah Gede* is the black magic-versed widow



Figure 3 - I Made Redha working on the bird's wing - Batuan, 2021

Source: Igor Amanajás

witch character of the magical dance-drama *Calonarang*, performed at the *Pura Dalem* (temple where the village cemetery is located) extending into the early hours of the morning. The witch who spreads pestilence and horror in the powerful dance-drama seemed to fit the purposes of building the new character perfectly. Inspired on *Matah Gede* we continued our search for movements that could be reused in the construction of *Matinta Pereira*.

In the third week *bapak* sat behind the *gamelan* instrument (*gangsa*) proposing that I improvised the dance of both characters considering the movement studies from the previous weeks while himself would also improvise the music. This was radically new in my entire experience in Bali. I had never tried to improvise anything, an entire choreography seemed exciting. But, after ten years of practice, it is possible to be guided by rules and structures that facilitate the actor's work.

During improvisations, which were many, we chose movements that seemed to be suitable for each character. I never tried to repeat the same sequence of movements, my hope was that we could raise a large repertoire of possibilities if we did something new on each repetition. *Bapak* followed the commands I dictated to him through my body in the music, speeding or slowing down the tempo whenever it was necessary. We followed the traditional structure: *pepson*, *pengawak* and *pakaad*.

I Nyoman Kariasa gave us the first version of the bird song after a month we started to practice. And then, one month after that the witch musical draft was ready. From that moment was possible to start a new stage in the choreography's elaboration in which some selected movements would be fit into the musical composition. The composition uses the *Gamelan Semar Pegulingan* orchestra, played by musicians from the *Pinda Sari* group, from Pinda village, conducted by *bapak* Kariasa. The music that has an accelerated tempo needed to be repeatedly



Figure 4 - Igor Amanajás wearing the unfinished bird's costume in training section - Batuan, 2021

Source: Igor Amanajás

listened so we could understand its minimal details in order to promote the marriage between the movements and musical stimulus. After several attempts, we finally arrived at what was named as the choreographic structure's basis, that means a first sketch still far from being perfect and adequate. From this draft, the music could be readjusted to the character's narrative needs. We performed a rehearsal at *bapak* Kariasa's house with all the orchestra's members in order to modify details in the musical structure based on the choreography. *Bapak* Djimat was present accompanied by his youngest daughter, I Ketut Maringsi, a dancer graduated from *ISI – Denpasar*. Ibu Ketut observed the choreographic structure's basis and offered to help with the dance development since many movements were not synched with the gamelan composition.

As mentioned before, master Djimat is a great traditional dance-dramas' actor, however new contemporary creations are not his forte, despite his deep knowledge that enables him to understand and contribute to this project. Therefore, we concluded that *ibu* Ketut's help would be more suitable for her previous experience both academically and creating contemporary soils. *Bapak* Djimat would be accompanying us closely as a scenic critic and no longer in the choreography elaboration.

For seven months, both choreographies were tirelessly worked up to their current stage. Despite the visible and significant evolution, the initial choreographic structural basis can still be identified today. Of course, this base is at the choreography roots and no longer on the surface. In every rehearsal the choreography changes in its details, never stagnating. There is always a new idea or moves that can be perfected and polished to achieve greatness. Not just the movements itself, later other elements started to be added in the choreography like props, *gelungans* and wings that forced us to readjust movements and sequences that were already fixed.

*Bapak* Djimat incorporated to *Matinta Pereira*'s character a text in *Jawa Kuna* (old Javanese) language that it's used before the curtains are opened:

*Irike*

*Riwijil ira*

*Sire Matinta Pereira raksasi*

*Apa nirmitania umijil*

*Arap yan abawu rasa lawan kite*

*Amerih wedang, seseban lawan ulam aneng segara*

*Sihnggih*

I want to come out

I am

The demon *Matinta Pereira*

The reason that I come

Is to talk to you

To ask for coffee, tobacco and fish

Here I come!

The intention is to keep the *Jawa Kuna* language just like the traditional dance-dramas. Even if the public does not understand what is being said - whether Brazilian or Balinese - they may feel the same chill caused by similar characters in Balinese culture. Through the vocal stimulus, I believe that the character, even from another culture, can cause parallel impressions in the audience. Other speeches steeled from *Matah Gede* or *Sida Karya* (character from drama-dance *Topeng*) were added in different parts of the choreography giving substance and tridimensionality to the character.

Three months after the work started, *bapak* Mandra gave us the masks that would be used on the two characters. Already established movements and sequences needed to be altered to better fit the mask's requirements. The costume is still in process, but certainly will figure another stage on the work in which other adjustments will have to be done. Creation never seems to end, and I don't think it ever will. The performing artist's work is laborious, detailed and complex. It takes patience to sculpt the character, perseverance to achieve the maximum refinement in the quality of movements and love to dedicate yourself with body and soul.

## CONCLUSION

The study which I report in this article is still in process, it would be rushed to draw definitive conclusions about the character's effectiveness in Balinese public's perception. However, four months ago a curious fact occurred, and I would like to share at this opportunity. During a training session in Batuan, a girl from the village came to watch the rehearsals, filmed an excerpt of *Matinta Pereira*'s choreography and posted it on an internet social media. The video was viewed by more than ten thousand people

in just one day, mostly Balinese. Many people reacted positively to what they watched, showing amazement and curiosity. The comments were intrigued asking which character was being portrayed: *Sida Karya? Matah Gede? Topeng Tua?*

In the middle of hundreds of comments an observation was made by some. Balinese people drew the attention of their community to the fact that a *bule* (foreigner) was dancing as a Balinese at a time which the Balinese themselves (specially the new generation) were losing interest in learning the performative techniques of their culture. The youngers, which are now interested in social media, no longer are willing to devote themselves to a long and laborious dance training.

The discussion was interesting because, as a foreigner and visitor to this land, I also share this same preoccupation. Nowadays fewer Balinese are being able to perform the dance-drama techniques of their own culture. Masters like *bapak Djimat* and so many others are leaving us, and who will be the ones that will carry forward the precious knowledge that have been passed down from generation to generation? The interest of young people in these sacred secrets must be awakened and revived. If there is no reconnection to the roots now, what will be the future of the performing arts in Bali?

The construction of these new choreographies has the intension to discuss about traditions and roots. Not just mine but from each Balinese that might watch the performances in the future. Hoping that those characters will be of interest to the local culture, I humbly share my own culture and roots with the Balinese people who gave me so much of their own.

### CONSULTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:

BANDEM, I Made. (1983). *Ensiklopedi Tari Bali*. Denpasar: Sekolah Tinggi Seni Indonesia (STSI) Denpasar.

BARBA, Eugenio; SAVARESE, Nicola. (2012). *A arte secreta do ator: um dicionário de antropologia teatral*. São Paulo: É Realizações Editora.

DJANYUS, Nyoman. (1980). *Teori Tari Bali*. Denpasar: Sumber Mas Bali.

EISEMAN JR., Fred B. (1990). *Bali sekala & niskala: essays on religion, ritual, and art*. Singapore: Tuttle Publishing.

SPIES, Walter; ZOETE, Beryl de. (1986). *Dance and drama in Bali*. Singapore: Oxford University Press.

## **“Ulam Asu” Advocacy Against the Dog Meat Trade in Bali**

**Desak Putu Yogi Antari Tirta Yasa S.Sn., M.Sn**

Institut Seni Indonesia Denpasar

*antaritirta@isi-dps.ac.id*

“Ulam Asu” is a documentary movie about dog meat trade in Bali directed by I Putu Raditya Pandet. Released in 2018, “Ulam Asu” has been used to advocate the resistance against the dog meat trade by Yayasan Seva Bhuana through their education program. Yayasan Seva Bhuana is a local foundation that works in improving animal welfare in Bali and concern in dog meat trade issues. Historically and culturally, the Bali dogs have a close relationship with Balinese life. Balinese people and the Bali dogs live side by side. The Bali dogs even have a special position in Balinese ceremony called *caru*. This research will discuss how “Ulam Asu” is used as video advocacy by Yayasan Seva Bhuana and how “Ulam Asu” works as media resistance against the dog meat trade. This research was carried out with descriptive qualitative methods. Through the elements of the movie, “Ulam Asu” presents a strong emotional influence. It is able to connect the audience with personal stories that they have experienced with Bali dogs. Yayasan Seva Bhuana uses “Ulam Asu” in their educational program as a process of integrating documentary movie into advocacy efforts. Real results and impact on the campaign against the dog meat trade were achieved by building public awareness through the video advocacy.

*Keywords: Bali dog, dog meat, advocacy, documentary, resistance*

### **INTRODUCTION**

“*Ulam Asu*” is a documentary movie released in 2018 representing the reality of the dog meat trade in Bali. Directed by I Putu Raditya Pandet, “*Ulam Asu*” aims to resistance media to the dog meat trade. Based on the regulations of the Directorate General of Livestock and Animal Health, dog meat is not included in the food category because it is not a product of livestock or forestry. Raditya Pandet as director of “*Ulam Asu*” felt the need to reveal all the stories related to the dog meat trade in Bali in the form of a documentary, so that it can be used in a movement against dog meat consumption, especially in Bali.

The existence of dogs cannot be separated from the life of Balinese people. Apart from being pets and house keepers, there are wild dogs (unattended dogs) aswell. Dogs also have a role in Balinese culture, one of which is the existence of dogs as a means of *caru* ceremony which is a part of *yadnya* ceremony. Dr. Lawrence Blair, a British anthropologist who has spent more than 25 years in Indonesia stated that the Bali dog is a very special dog because of its pure genetics, different from other breeds of dogs. The Bali dog is suspected of being a proto-canine or purebred dog that evolved from wolves-like animals. In fact, the age of the Bali dog is thought to be older than the Dingo - a native Australian breed.

Bali Dog has a unique characteristic. Despite living side by side with humans, Bali dogs usually live in packs with one alpha as the leader and don't really become domestic animals. The habit of Balinese people who let their dogs loose is also related to the characteristic of Bali dogs. From there then came the term community dogs, where a group of dogs live and guard a certain area. Bali dogs are also territorial. So that in one area there may be only one dog pack that controls the area with a hierarchy within the pack.

Until now Bali has not been able to get out of the rabies endemic status. This is suspected to be related to the dog meat trade in Bali. In the dog meat trade, the distribution of dogs from one area to another can expand the spread of rabies. In addition, dog meat process does not have operational and hygienic standards, considered to be at high risk of spreading zoonotic diseases including rabies and other diseases. The dog meat trade is also closely related to the number of cases of lost pet dogs, to street dogs being poisoned for their meat. It can be said that the consumption of dog meat has a very high health risk. On the other hand, the dog meat trade that is spreading in Bali is inversely proportional to the cultural values adopted by the Balinese people who tend to respect the existence of dogs. The complexity of the problems in the dog meat trade is what was later raised in “*Ulam Asu*”.



Yayasan Seva Bhuana was formed in 2013 and has two main programs : subsidized sterilization and education. The subsidized sterilization is aimed for street animal and people with their local domestic animals (dogs and cats) who could not afford sterilization fee in clinic. Meanwhile education program is aimed to give fresh education towards young local people about animal welfare and environment. After received its legal entities as registered Indonesian Yayasan in July 2016, two main programs of Yayasan Seva Bhuana are now thriving to work with communities in Bali.

Yayasan Seva Bhuana started their education program by creating successful campaign of #SaveBaliDogs in 2012 on twitter, which became a trending topic in Indonesia. Seeing a potential in youth, the education program continued into street feeding and movie screening. Yayasan Seva Bhuana have played several movies: The Cove, Dancing Monkeys, Bali The Island of Dogs, and "*Ulam Asu*".

Movie screening is seen as one of the most appropriate forms of campaign to do in Bali. By watching a movie, the audience will get information through audio-visual form so that the information is easier to understand. Movie is also used as a form of media campaign for various issues raised by Yayasan Seva Bhuana. Specifically for the campaign against the dog meat trade, Yayasan Seva Bhuana uses "*Ulam Asu*" as a form of video advocacy. Yayasan Seva Bhuana views that "*Ulam Asu*" is able to convey information on why the dog meat trade in Bali needs to be fought through his movie. Education is needed so that people understand the dangers behind the dog meat trade, and "*Ulam Asu*" packaged it in a documentary form that is easy for anyone to understand.

The use of "*Ulam Asu*" as an advocacy video for the dog meat trade is in line with the aim of "*Ulam Asu*"'s director. Yayasan Seva Bhuana and Sri Redjeki Films, which is the Production House that houses "*Ulam Asu*", have an agreement regarding the use of "*Ulam Asu*" as an advocacy video against the circulation of dog meat in the education program of Yayasan Seva Bhuana. Lastly, "*Ulam Asu*" was played on Animal Health Social Work, Udayana Faculty of Veterinary Medicine on June 30, 2021.

## METHOD

This study used qualitative research methods. The subject of this research is the "*Ulam Asu*" movie. The object of research in this study is a study of how "*Ulam Asu*" is used as an advocacy video by the Yayasan Seva Bhuana and how "*Ulam Asu*" works as media resistance against the dog meat trade.

The researcher used snowball sampling technique. Some of the initial informants in this study were members of the Yayasan Seva Bhuana which is engaged in educational

programs, Raditya Pandet as the director of "*Ulam Asu*", and people who had watched "*Ulam Asu*" in movie screening education program organized by Yayasan Seva Bhuana. The research location is Bali. The analytical technique used in this study is a qualitative-interpretative method, which is a method that focuses on signs and texts as objects of study, as well as how researchers interpret and understand the code behind these signs. The results of the study will be presented analytically descriptively through descriptions and supported by pictures.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Video, to quote Sam Gregory in the introduction to the book *Video For Change* published in 2008, is an abbreviated term for a number of audiovisual media of different formats, lengths, and purposes ranging from feature documentaries and short films to video clips, public service advertisements and raw footage. In this discussion, "*Ulam Asu*" is a video. Video can have a strong emotional impact because they connect viewers with personal stories. Video can illustrate true visual contrast and provide direct visual evidence of an event. Video can reach many people on a wider scale because it does not require literacy to communicate the information in it. A video can also be used in a very wide variety of segments and for different contexts.

Video advocacy is the process of integrating video into an advocacy effort to achieve higher tangible results or to influence the ongoing campaign. Advocacy is the process of working for a position, result, or solution. In this case, Yayasan Seva Bhuana is conducting a campaign against the dog meat trade in Bali. When integrating "*Ulam Asu*" as an advocacy video, there are several things that Yayasan Seva Bhuana pays attention to, including:

1. Define the goal, which is to provide education about the dangers of the dog meat trade to the wider community so that they are willing to be involved in efforts to fight against the dog meat trade in Bali. Yayasan Seva Bhuana which has an educational program realizes that education plays an important role in making a change. People are often considered not to care about the problem of the dog meat trade in Bali. In fact, this ignorance arises because of the lack of public knowledge about the dangers of dog meat trade in Bali. These dangers include the transmission of the zoonotic disease outbreak of rabies, which is currently endemic in Bali, as well as the dangers of dog theft and dog poisoning. By providing education, public awareness of the problem of the dog meat trade is built, so that the community can support the resistance of the dog meat trade.

2. Discuss with other organizations and communities that have worked on the same issue, what methods have been and have worked and what have not. Yayasan Seva



Bhuana has raised various issues regarding Balinese dogs since 2012. During its journey, Yayasan Seva Bhuana has discussion with various communities and other organizations that are also concerned with the the dog meat trade issues. From experience, the form of campaigns such as demonstrations is difficult to accept in Bali. For that, a campaign form that minimizes the potential riots but can bring accurate information to the public needed. From this it is known that video advocacy is the right way to fight against the dog meat trade in Bali.

3. Analyze the style and strengths of Yayasan Seva Bhuana, and identify possible partners to work with. Yayasan Seva Bhuana is a foundation founded by local Balinese people who care about the environment. The proximity of Yayasan Seva Bhuana to the locality is a strength to be able to build a narrative with a perspective that is more easily understood by the Balinese. In addition, Yayasan Seva Bhuana always chooses the path of advocacy in every issue it raises. So far, the Yayasan Bhuana Foundation has partnered with local communities and organizations in running each of its programs.

4. Define the target audience and think deeply about how to communicate the message to the target. The main target of Yayasan Seva Bhuana's educational activities is young people. Young people are seen as a generation that is more able to receive new information quickly and immediately apply it in their daily lives to make changes. In addition, young people are more familiar with forms of technology that are currently developing such as social media, so they are able to disseminate the information they receive more quickly with a wider reach. Yayasan Seva Bhuana always uses a light and fun style of language in each of its campaigns, teaching by conducting discussions that familiarize the speakers with the target. The movies selected in every movie screening activity are always adjusted to the campaign being carried out.

5. Determine the level of involvement and start to be involved in the production to distribution of the film. In "*Ulam Asu*"'s advocacy video, Yayasan Seva Bhuana has been involved in the research phase. The director of the film "*Ulam Asu*", Raditya Pandet has contacted Yayasan Seva Bhuana as one of the informants in the movie. In addition, Yayasan Seva Bhuana has also made a movie distribution agreement, where "*Ulam Asu*" can be played in every movie screening activity of Yayasan Seva Bhuana for educational purposes.

The word "*Ulam Asu*" comes from the Balinese Language, *Bahasa Bali Alus* where *Ulam* means meat and *Asu* means dog, so "*Ulam Asu*" means dog meat. The use of the *Bahasa Bali Alus* in the title of the movie has the aim of making people aware of the existence of the Bali dog which in Balinese culture should be respected and not consumed. "*Ulam Asu*" presents a reality of the dog meat trade that occurs in Bali in the form of a participant observation

documentary. This type of participant observation documentary aims to make the audience feel close to the filmmaker and participate in the process of investigating the dog meat trade carried out by the filmmaker in the film. The genre of "*Ulam Asu*" is an investigative documentary, where the director is the main character who investigates the dog meat trade. In this way, the audience can feel truly in every scene in the film and share in the emotional experience of the filmmaker. In video advocacy, this is known as participatory video. Participatory video is used in a development context as a way to help document and a way to identify solutions to challenges.

"*Ulam Asu*" is present in the form of a documentary that lacks narration, where all descriptions of events in the film are written in the form of a dialogue between the director as the main character and the resource person. Reality from the planning process to the investigation process is shown to create the impression of inviting the audience to participate in every process that occurs during film production. "*Ulam Asu*"'s production stage is broadly divided into interviews, investigations and stockshots, all of which can build on the elements of a documentary.

The elements of the documentary film must be arranged, reprocessed, arranged in the presentation structure so that the message to be conveyed can be well received by the audience. The elements of documentary movies are divided into visual elements and verbal elements. In the book *An Introduction to Film Studies*, the third edition, by Jill Neldes, it is mentioned that the visual and verbal elements commonly used in a documentary are:

1) Visual elements, consisting of:

(1) Reactive observationalism

Documentary filmmaking with as much material as possible taken directly from the subject being filmed. This relates to the accuracy of the observation by the camera director or director.

(2) Proactive observationalism

Making a documentary movie by selecting movie material specifically in connection with previous observations by the camera director or director.

(3) Illustrative mode

An approach to documentaries that attempts to describe directly what the narrator is saying (whose voice is recorded as voice over)

(4) Associative mode

Approach in documentary movies that try to use pieces of the picture in various ways. It is hoped that the metaphorical and symbolic meanings of the literal information in the film can be represented.



Figure 1. Dog meat investigation scene in “Ulam Asu”  
Source : “Ulam Asu”, 2018

## 2. Verbal Elements:

### (1) Overhead exchange

Records of conversations between two or more sources that appear to be recorded accidentally and in person.

### (2) Testimony

Records of observations, opinions or information that are honestly expressed by eyewitnesses, experts, and other sources relating to documentary subjects. This is the main purpose of the interview.

### (3) Exposition

The use of voice over or people directly dealing with the camera, specifically directs the audience who receives information with their arguments.

The proper use of verbal and visual elements is the key to producing a film that can effectively convey a message to the audience so that it can influence the ideology of the audience. At the beginning of the movie, the audience is placed in the position of the director who is completely “blind” about the dog meat trade. As the film progresses, the audience is then exposed to the facts of the investigation carried out by the director. The facts of cruelty to dogs are presented one by one in detail with the investigation method. Messages about against dog meat trade began to be inserted through visual and verbal elements in the film, so that the ideology of against dog meat trade could influence the audience.

Examples of the use of verbal and visual elements in “Ulam Asu” will be explained in the following scene studies that occur in “Ulam Asu” (figure 1)

Visual element: Reactive observationalism.

The subject in this scene is Raditya Pandet and dog meat seller. The camera was hidden inside a bag on the table. This scene gives the impression that the audience is involved in the investigative process that is being carried out by the director.

Verbal element: Overhead exchange.

The verbal element in this scene is the conversation between the subjects in the scene. Raditya Pandet was talking to the dog meat seller, asking information about how much the dog meat price and how to order in big quantities.



Figure 2. Dog slaughter scene in “Ulam Asu”  
Source : “Ulam Asu”, 2018

Visual element: Reactive observationalism

The image in this scene is one of the images that impacts the audience visually. The scene of the dogs being brutally slaughtered caused horror to the audience. Knowing the fact that the slaughter of dogs occurred due to the capture of family pet dogs, made the audience feel that the slaughter of dogs was too cruel and should be stopped. The facts about the slaughter of dogs in Bali which are presented openly, raw and uncensored are the strength of the “Ulam Asu” to be able to lead the audience to believe in the ideology of saving dogs.

Verbal elements: -

In this scene there is no conversation or voice over. There are only audio recordings of the slaughtered that occurred. This make the audience focusing on the visual elements, and made the visual impact even more powerful.

The existence of visual and verbal elements as described above is one of the reasons why “Ulam Asu” is appropriate as an advocacy video against the dog meat trade in Bali. Yayasan Seva Bhuana uses “Ulam Asu” as an advocacy video by showing it in a movie screening followed by a discussion, so that the facts about the dog meat trade presented in “Ulam Asu” can be better understood by the target of the education program. The movie screening also played a role in conveying the ideology of resistance to the dog meat trade in Bali so that more and more people supported the campaign.

## CONCLUSION

“Ulam Asu” is used as video advocacy by Yayasan Seva Bhuana in their educational program as a process of integrating documentary movie into advocacy efforts. Real results and impact on the campaign against the dog meat trade were achieved by building public awareness through the video advocacy by playing “Ulam Asu” in movie screening education program. Through the elements of the movie, “Ulam Asu” works as media resistance of the dog meat trade. Facts about the cruelty that occur in the dog meat trade are presented through verbal and visual elements in the movie. It’s provide new perspective to the audience: resistance of the dog meat trade. “Ulam Asu” presents a strong emotional influence through visual and verbal elements. It is able to connect the audience with

personal stories that they have experienced with Bali dogs. "*Ulam Asu*" managed to become advocacy video that is used by Yayasan Seva Bhuana, that influenced the ideology of the audience, causing support to save Bali dogs from dog meat trade.

## REFERENCE

Ayawaila, Gerzon Ron. (2008). *Dokumenter: Dari Ide Hingga Produksi*. Jakarta: Fakultas Film dan Televisi Institut Kesenian Jakarta.

Bernard, Shila Curran. (2007). *Documentary Storytelling*. USA: Elsevier.

Gregory, Sam., & Gillian Caldwell. (2008). *Video For Change, Panduan Video untuk Advokasi*. Yogyakarta : Insist Press.

Nichols, Bill. (2001). *Introduction to Documentary*. USA: Indiana University Pers.

Pratista, Himawan. (2008). *Memahami Film*. Yogyakarta: Homerian Pustaka.