

Research Paper



The aesthetics of sabda cipta: the formulation of vibration in ranggawarsita's serat sopana laya

Teguh Tri Wahyudi*^{ID}

*Department of Indonesian Language and Literature, Faculty of Letters, State University of Malang, Indonesia.

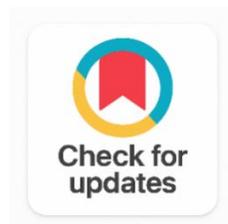
Article Info

Article History:

Received: 09 October 2025
Revised: 20 December 2025
Accepted: 26 December 2025
Published: 11 February 2026

Keywords:

Aesthetics of the Word
Ranggawarsita
Dhvani
Creation
Serat Sopana Laya



ABSTRACT

This article discusses the aesthetic concept of sabda cipta in Serat Sopana Laya (SSL) by Ranggawarsita as a formulation of inner vibrations in the creation of classical Javanese literary works. In the perspective of dhvani aesthetics, sabda is understood as a sacred vibration that radiates resonance between divine power and human creativity. Through sabda, Ranggawarsita expresses spiritual experiences that are processed into rhythmic aesthetic structures in macapat songs. Cipta plays a role as a center of creative energy that organizes the experience of feeling, imagination, and mind into a complete aesthetic unity. This study highlights five forms of vibrations of sabda cipta in the text, namely icip pati, pamoring kawula gusti, laku kasampurnan, aja sasar, and anteping tekad. Each form reflects the stages of human spiritual journey towards the perfection of life—from awareness of death, the union of humans with God, self-cultivation, vigilance so as not to get lost, to the steadfastness of determination to face eternity. Through these five vibrations, Serat Sopana Laya displays the harmony between spiritual and aesthetic dimensions, making the word not merely a verbal expression, but a medium that unites humans with their origins.

Corresponding Author:

Teguh Tri Wahyudi
Department of Indonesian Language and Literature, Faculty of Letters, State University of Malang, Indonesia.
Email: teguh.tri.fs@um.ac.id

Copyright © 2026 The Author(s). This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License, (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>) which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the classical Javanese literary heritage, literary works serve not only as a means of expressing the beauty of language [1], but also as a medium for expressing inner thoughts containing spiritual, moral, and philosophical values of life [2]. Language (sabda) in the Javanese tradition holds a sacred position [3]. It is not merely a means of communication, but a vessel of metaphysical power capable of connecting

humans with their original source, namely God [4]. This view is in line with the teachings of ancient Indian linguistic philosophy known as the dhvani theory an aesthetic concept developed by Anandavardhana in Dhvanyāloka [5]. In this theory, the true meaning of a literary work lies not in its literal meaning (abhidhā), but in the vibration of implied meaning (vyanjana), namely the emotional and spiritual resonance that arises from the sabda [6].

Jathavedan (2017) asserts that the essence of sabda is sabda sakti moola, namely "a sound that originates from the power of divine expression." [7] In this context, every word is not merely a linguistic sign, but a living entity that radiates spiritual power [8]. Amaladass (1984) even calls sabda a "cosmic vibration" that bridges the gap between the real (vyakta) and the unreal (avyakta) [9]. This view is very close to the Javanese aesthetic tradition that places sabda as part of spiritual practice and the cultivation of feelings [10]. Therefore, aesthetics in Javanese literature cannot be separated from the spiritual experience of its creator [11].

This phenomenon is clearly visible in Serat Sopana Laya (SSL) by Ranggawarsita, a great poet of the Surakarta Palace in the 19th century, known as the closing era of Javanese poetry [12]. This work was born at a time when the Javanese value system was shaken by colonialism and modernization [13]. Amidst a spiritual and social crisis, Ranggawarsita presents SSL as a reflection of the search for the authenticity of human life through the power of the word. This work is not simply a collection of macapat songs, but also a spiritual text that teaches practices towards perfection [14]. The term Sopana Laya means "ladder to harmony," a metaphor for the spiritual ladder towards union with the All-Existent.

The main issue that emerges in this study is how the word "sabda" functions not only as an aesthetic element in the form of song, but also as a means of forming metaphysical awareness. In Ranggawarsita's work, the word "sabda" acts as an inner vibration that reflects the relationship between creativity, feeling, imagination, and reason [15]. These four elements form an aesthetic order called the aesthetics of the word 'sabda cipta' (creative word aesthetics). Through the word "sabda", Ranggawarsita organizes the human spiritual journey in pursuing the practice of perfection.

The questions this study seeks to answer are how these five vibrations shape the aesthetic system within the text, and to what extent the word acts as a connecting medium between the artistic and spiritual dimensions [16]. By exploring the relationship between creation and the word, this study seeks to reveal that Serat Sopana Laya is not only a beautiful work of literature, but also an inner document reflecting Javanese philosophy of life: harmony between humans, nature, and God.

Thus, the discussion on the aesthetics of the word of creation in Serat Sopana Laya is expected to enrich the understanding of the role of the word in the Javanese literary tradition, and show that the aesthetics in classical Nusantara works are actually rooted in spiritual vibrations that lead humans to the highest consciousness an awareness that true beauty originates from the vibrations of the word that lives in creation.

2. RELATED WORK

In SSL, the aesthetic concept of creative words emerges through structures and symbols that are processed with high discipline in the form of macapat songs [17]. Each pupuh has macapat poetic pattern known as guru gatra, guru lagu, and guru wilangan, but behind these formal attachments lies an inner freedom that gives birth to vibrations of meaning [18]. As explained by Kusumadinigrat (1890) in Wirit Wedharaning Cipta Sasmitaning Ngilmi, creativity is an inner power that originates from divine light, which functions to soothe and guide humans towards a balance between feeling (surya) and wishful thinking (candra) [19]. Thus, the aesthetics of creative speech not only processes form, but also emits vibrations of meaning from within the creator.

In SSL, Ranggawarsita formulated five types of vibrations of the divine word as a framework for the human spiritual journey: icip pati, pamoring kawula gusti, laku kasampurnan, aja sasar, and anteping tekad. Each vibration represents a phase of spiritual experience. Icip pati is the initial stage related to the awareness of death as a process of self-purification [20]. It is rooted in the Islamic teaching antamutu kabla mauti, khayatun bakda khayatin "die before you die" which is interpreted as a spiritual practice to

experience death while still alive. Furthermore, pamoring kawula gusti depicts the union of humans and God as the essence of true existence [17]. This concept aligns with the philosophy of curiga manjing warangka, which means the unity of body and soul atom.

The third stage, laku kasampurnan, is a process of spiritual purification through the disciplines of asceticism, meditation, and self-control. Ranggawarsita explains seven forms of asceticism that humans must undergo to achieve true life [21]. The next stage, aja sasar, serves as a warning to prevent humans from going astray in their spiritual practice. He emphasizes the importance of recognizing the types of death mati sasar, mati benar, and mati mulia as a reflection of the direction of the soul's journey [22]. Finally, anteping tekad signifies the firmness of one's intention to achieve eternal life, namely the total union between oneself and God [23].

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

The type of research applied is qualitative research with a collaborative library research approach. The library approach uses a number of literature as reference material and references in data management. The object of research is library materials, therefore, according to the framework of the material object of this research, the text of the song produced by Ranggawarsita, namely SSL, is the primary data source and several secondary sources relevant to the research framework.

3.2. Data Collection

The data collection method in this study was conducted using philological methods. The data collected fall into the category of ancient literature written in Javanese script. The data is illustrated in the following Figure 1.

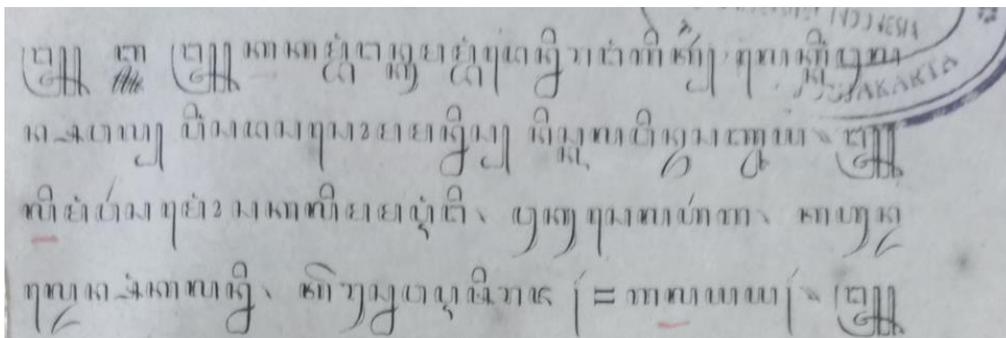


Figure 1. Serat Sopana Laya

In accordance with the job description of a philologist, it is important to present readable texts as a precursor to research into regionally scripted texts. The stages involved are: 1) transliteration of each text selected as a research sample; 2) presentation of edited texts as the basis for the study; and 3) preparation and presentation of translations into Indonesian.

3.3. Data Analysis

Data analysis begins with the interpretation of the SSL text data that was read. Data analysis is applied based on the dhvani aesthetic framework developed by Anandavardhana, a model for studying poetry in India (Ingalls et al., 1990). The methodological framework for applying dhvani aesthetics is presented in the following Figure 2 of the dhvani aesthetic study flowchart.

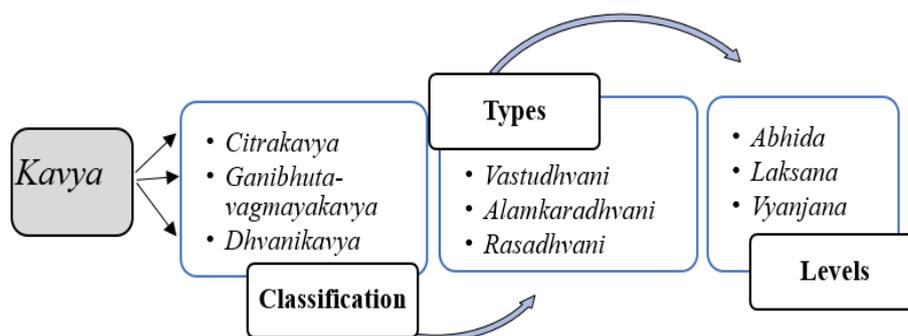


Figure 2. The Dhvani Aesthetic Study Flowchart

There are three stages of analysis that must be carried out on the text. First, the identification and classification of the poetic text into three classes: (a) Dhvani-kavya Uttama (b) Gunibhuta-vamgmaya-kavya Madhyama, and (c) Chitrakavya Adhama. This classification serves as the basis for the various types of words embodied in the poetic text and the artha contained therein. The data collection technique is based on a hermeneutic reading of the written data and then grouped based on the characteristics of each poetic class found in the SSL text.

Second, the determination of the type of dhvani is based on three types: vastudhvani, alankaaradhvani, and rasa dhvani. The data collection technique for the vastu dhvani and alamkara dhvani types is based on a careful reading of the data in the form of written text, while the rasa dhvani type is based on an oral reading of the poetic text. Vastu dhvani and alamkara dhvani are located in the body of the poem, while rasa dhvani is located in the content, which is the soul of the poem.

Third, the analysis process of dhvani theory is presented at three levels: Abhida, Lakshana, and Vyanjana. The abhida and lakshana levels represent the methods for presenting the sabda and artha components in the body of the poem, while the vyanjana level represents the rasa component, which constitutes the soul of the poem.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. The Aesthetic Nature of the Word of Creation in the Context of Dhvani

The aesthetic concept of the creative word in Serat Sopana Laya (SSL) cannot be separated from the theoretical basis that places the word as the source of vibrations of meaning. In the dhvani framework proposed by Anandavardhana [15], dhvani is defined as the "resonance" or "echo" of meaning that is not directly spoken, but is felt by the reader through the effects of sound, rhythm, and symbolism of language. This view stems from the belief that language has a life force that not only marks, but also brings to life inner experiences.

Jathavedan explains that the sacred word moola means "a sound rooted in divine power," so that every sound in a literary work created with spiritual awareness contains a vibrational power that can penetrate sensory awareness [7]. In the context of Javanese aesthetics, this concept aligns with Ranggawarsita's view that places the word as a sasmita vibration a subtle sign of inner power received through creativity. Thus, the word is not merely a means of communication, but a means of spiritual cultivation that unites the author with the source of meaning. Vibrations can also be obtained based on the sasmita received at the level of creation, feeling, thought and mind, the interconnection of which is visible in the following image ing Figure 3.

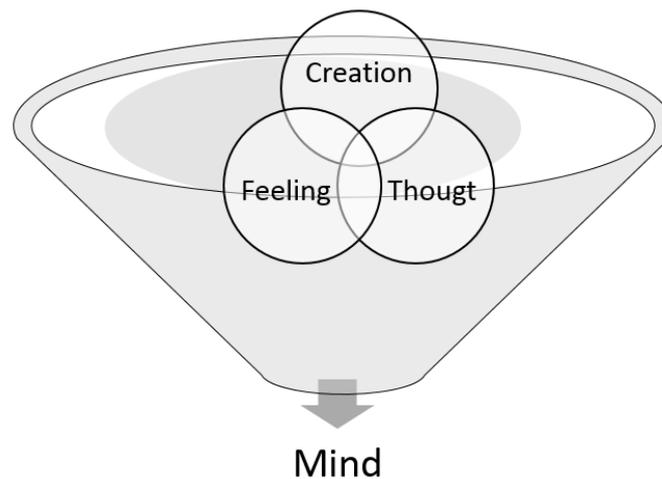


Figure 3. Interconnection of Sasmita Vibration

Amaladass calls the word "cosmic vibration" that is not bound by space and time [9]. In Serat Sopana Laya, this vibration is processed through the macapat song system, which has a structure of meter, guru lagu, and guru wilangan, creating a harmony between the outer form and the inner content. Thus, the aesthetics of the word of creation is a vibration system that unites linguistic, musical, and spiritual dimensions.

Ranggawarsita views creativity as a center of creative energy that accommodates divine vibrations. In Javanese tradition, creativity is an inner power that radiates will and knowledge, as explained by Kusumadiningrat (1890) in Wirit Wedharaning Cipta Sasmitaning Ngilmi: "Cipta iku pepadhang kang nyawiji, minangka sarining nur Ilahi." This means that creativity is a unified light, a radiance of divine light. Thus, when creativity vibrates, it gives birth to words; and when words are processed through practice, they are transformed into works with life-giving power.

Based on this theoretical basis, Serat Sopana Laya can be understood as a text that contains the formula for the creation of the word through five types of creative vibrations: *icip pati*, *pamoring kawula gusti*, *laku kasampurnan*, *aja sasar*, and *anteping tekad*. Each vibration represents a different spiritual stage, but they are interconnected, forming a pattern of the journey toward perfection (*kasampurnan*) can be seen on Figure 4.

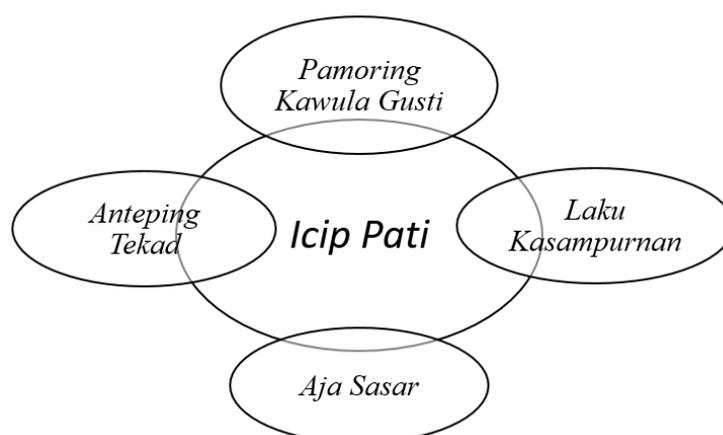


Figure 4. Interconnection of Five Sabda Cipta Vibration

4.2. Sabda Cipta Icip Pati: Awareness of Death as the Gateway to Life

The first stage in the vibrational structure of the creative word is *icip pati*, which means "tasting death." This term comes from two words, *icip* (to try) and *pati* (death), and in a spiritual context means the

inner practice of experiencing the process of death while living. Ranggawarsita adapted the Sufi teaching *antamutu kabla mauti, khayatun bakda khayatin* "die before death, live after life" which was developed by the saints in the practice of dhaim prayer [20] as shown in Figure 5 and the results of the transliteration and translation in Table 1.

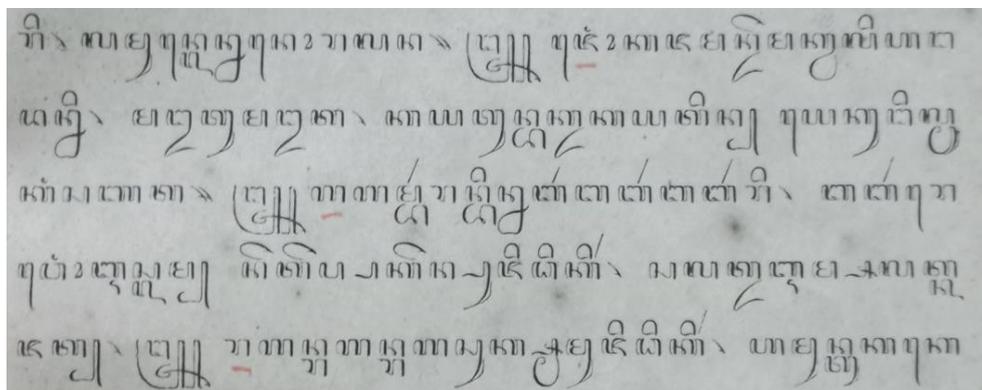


Figure 5. Serat Sopana Laya Pupuh I Maskumambang

Table 1. Pupuh Maskumambang Verse 5 and 6

No	Transliteration	Translation
5	Jangka jaman demak wali angadani, mautu mauta, kayatun bakda kayatin, yèku ngilmu kang sanyata.	The story of the cycle of the Demak when the saint who initiated it, die before you die, live after you live, that is true knowledge
6	Gagabaran binabar babar babari, babaré wong Islam, netepaken puji dhikir, salat daim salat kajat.	The description he conveys is truly narrated, his teachings to Muslims, practicing praise and remembrance, daim prayer and kajat prayer.

In Serat Sopana Laya, pupuh I Maskumambang verse 5 and 6, this adage is manifested through the line "mautu mauta, kayatum bakda kayatin," a phonetic adaptation of an Arabic sentence that has been processed according to the patterns of Javanese *guru lagu* and *guru wilangan tembang*. These sound changes not only conform to the rules of *macapat* but also enrich the phonetic resonance, which contains profound spiritual meaning.

Symbolically, *icip pati* represents a transcendental state in which humans practice detachment from worldly attachments. It is not biological death, but rather the death of ego-consciousness. In Javanese teachings, this experience is equivalent to the process of "mati sajroning urip" dying within life to attain "urip sejati" (true life).

Ranggawarsita emphasized three main symbols in tasting starch

1. **Lana:** immortality, the ultimate goal of humans who want to return to their origins (*sangkan paraning dumadi*).
2. **Dhaim prayer:** unceasing worship, a symbol of the union of consciousness with God.
3. **Bakal:** the original element of human creation, depicting the essence of existence that must be recognized.

These three elements form the aesthetic foundation that brings the first canto to life. Sound, rhythm, and diction are arranged in such a way as to create a contemplative atmosphere that leads the reader to existential contemplation. From a *dhvani* perspective, the vibration of meaning that emerges from *icip pati* is both an aesthetic and spiritual experience: the reader experiences death as a beautiful event that leads to enlightenment.

4.3. Sabda Cipta Pamoring Kawula Gusti: The Union of Human and Divine

The second stage, pamoring kawula gusti, symbolizes the union between humans (kawula) and God (Gusti). This content is realized in Figure 6 and the results of its transliteration and translation are in Table 2.

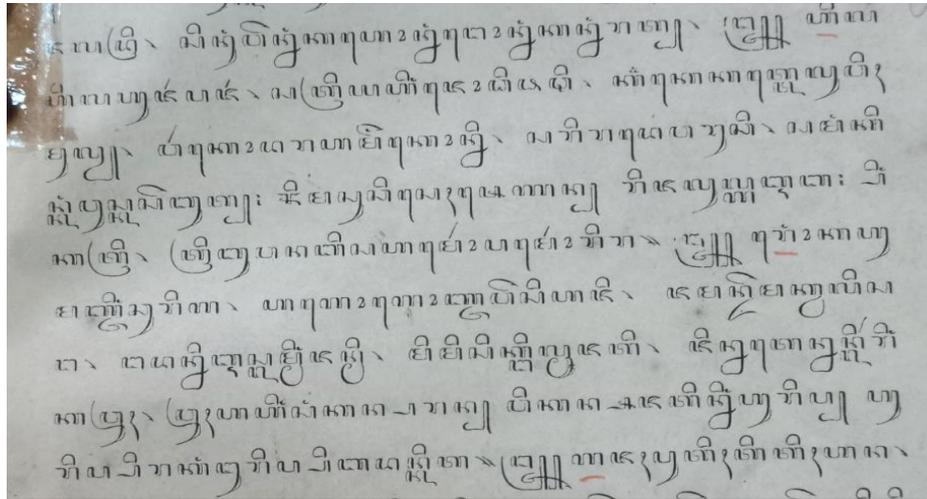


Figure 6. Serat Sopana Laya Pupuh Sinon Verse 5 and 6

In pupuh II Sinom, Ranggawarsita describes this concept through the metaphor of a keris: curiga manjing warangka, warangka manjing curiga. The suspect (keris blade) represents the soul, the warangka (sheath) represents the body, and the pamor between the two represents the urip (spirit of life).

Table 2. Pupuh Sinom Verse 5 And 6

No	Transliteration	Translation
5	Ila-ila ujar pajar, satriya ing jodhipathi, khakèkaté luwih mulya, warkodara amengkoni, sarira dèwa ruci, samangkin kang wus kasebut, bima suci sèh senan, rijalul gaib ping katri, tribuwana bisa amor pamorira.	Consider the metaphor told, the knight in Jodipati, whose essence is more noble, Werkudara who is able to control, the embodiment of the god ruci, who will later be given the nickname, Bima Suci Seh Senan, the third supernatural rijalul, the three worlds have blended with his prestige.
6	Rangka umanjing curiga, agaganja wesi aji, jaman demak wali sanga, ngadani islaming janmi, mimisik ngilmu jati, jinatènèning liring kawruh, wruha ing sangkan paran, wikan sajatining urip, uripira kang nguripi mring badan kita.	The warangka united with its keris, with its iron hilt, During the Demak era the association of the nine saints, began to spread the teachings of Islam to all people. (They) taught true knowledge, showed all knowledge, so that one could know the origin, to be able to understand the truth of life, the life that sustains humanity.

The depth of this symbol shows that pamor is not just a mixture of metals on the keris blade, but is a symbol of the union between the mortal and the immortal. In humans, the pamoring kawula gusti is the union of physical, spiritual and divine spirit elements.

Ranggawarsita views pamoring kawula gusti as an important stage after icip pati, because only through death can the human ego be united with its origin. This process is described in the song as the

journey of Werkudara in the story of Dewa Ruci, who dives into the ocean to look for the water of life, then enters Dewa Ruci's body through the ear hole—a symbol of the soul's entry into divine consciousness.

In its aesthetic structure, the Sinom poem reflects harmony and balance, just as the pamoring kawula gusti demands a balance between the physical and the spiritual. The song's gentle rhythm and repetitive rhymes create a serene atmosphere, emphasizing that unification occurs not through force, but through sincerity.

4.4. Sabda Cipta Laku Kasampurnan: The Path of Inner Purification

The third vibration, laku kasampurnan, is the stage of spiritual discipline to achieve perfection. In Serat Sopana Laya, Ranggawarsita explains that kasampurnan is not achieved through rational knowledge alone, but through consistent laku (life practice). He wrote: kang tinuku tapa brata—"true knowledge must be redeemed with laku tapa brata." This content is realized in Figure 7 and the results of its transliteration and translation in Table 3.

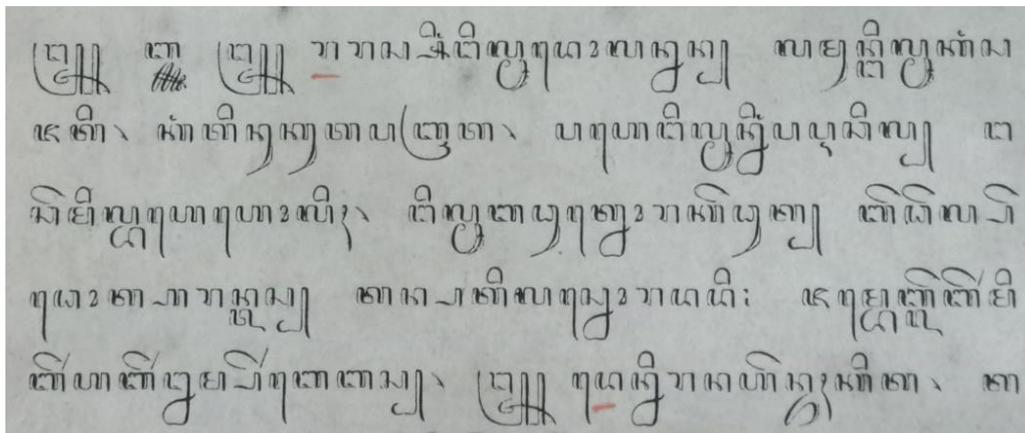


Figure 7. Pupuh Sinom Verse 1

Table 3. Sinom Verse 1

No	Transliteration	Translation
1	Rarasing ngilmu dolanan, lamun ngilmu kang sajati, kang tinuku tapa brata, paé ngilmuning parecil, ngacemil baé olih, ngilmu badhut nora kedhut, bedhel pedhot arantas, tanpa tilas nora dadi, jambé bleber miber aber lempem bèbas.	The harmony of knowledge in play, if it is true knowledge, acquired through asceticism, is different from the knowledge of a frog child, where even a taste is permissible. The knowledge of a clown that doesn't beat, its blunt pieces torn, without a trace, remains, like a betel nut that falls and flies freely.

Ranggawarsita combined Javanese and Sufi concepts in explaining the practice of kasampurnan. He outlined seven types of asceticism, encompassing the control of the body, mind, desires, true feelings, soul, light, and life [24]. Each type of asceticism serves to cleanse layers of the self so that humans can achieve true life. This is as stated in Table 4.

Table 4. Dandanggula Verse 5

No	Transliteration	Translation
5	Yèn rinasa surasané manis, temah dadya hardaning wardaya, saking dahat dènya rame, marma dèn bisa nggilut,	(This knowledge) if absorbed into its teachings is truly amazing, and because of that, it can become self compelling.

	gilutané amung patitis, titikané dèn kena:, nembé yèn ketemu, nemu sosotya kencana, ujwalané sarpa kenaka nelahi, sumoroté sorotira.	Because it is so widely discussed, one should strive to treat it carefully, obtain the sign, later, if at any time one can find it, obtain gold and diamonds, its light (is like) a snake's claws that dazzle, its light glitters
--	---	--

The aesthetics of perfect practice are reflected in the Dandanggula and Megatruh poems. Both feature extended meter, allowing for narrative and contemplative expression. In the verse "nemu sosotya kencana ujwalane sarpa kenaka nelahi," Ranggawarsita describes the result of practice as discovering a golden gem whose radiance outshines the sun—a symbol of true knowledge.

Aesthetically, the song's regular and repetitive structure reflects the spiritual principles of "discipline" and "inner order." Through the practice of kasampurnan, the word becomes not only an aesthetic medium, but also a method of self-control and union with the cosmic order.

4.5. Sabda Cipta Aja Sasar: Be Careful Not to Get Lost

The fourth stage, aja sasar, is a spiritual warning to prevent humans from going astray on their journey toward perfection. Etymologically, "aja" means "don't," and "sasar" means "to get lost or stray from one's goal." In SSL, this teaching is embodied through advice and symbols of the soul's journey after death as stated in Table 5.

Table 5. Megatruh Verse 16 - 18

No	Terbitan Kritis	Terjemahan
16	Kethokané kethoken bongkot lan pucuk, samono baé nyukupi, pan nora mumurung laku, lakon anglakoni mati, amancada matil maot.	The essence of all these practices is found in the root and the end. That alone is enough, because it doesn't discourage one from pursuing the goal. The fruit of these practices in facing death, namely, the soul leaving the body, transitioning and moving into the supernatural realm.
17	Mung sakedhap nètra pangancasé mangsuk, umanjing suruping pati, patitis jagad kinikud, kukudan dadya sawiji, rinacut manjing kadhaton.	In the blink of an eye, he experienced it. Tasting the realm of death. His action in rolling up the universe was indeed precise. Everything was rolled up and classified, in a united determination, united so that he could enter the palace.
18	Nanging dudu kadhaton ingkang kadulu, yèn kadulu niniwasi, ketiwasan patinipun, tibèng sasar dadya dhemit, manjing watu lan kakayon	But it is not the palace that is visible to the eye, if it is visible it will cause harm, (will) be lost and suffer harm in its death, become lost and turn into a demon, live in a tree or rock

Ranggawarsita distinguishes three types of death: mati sasar (lost), mati bener (natural death), and mati luhur (perfect death) [22]. This classification relates not only to the biological end of life but also symbolizes a person's spiritual qualities. Mati sasar depicts a soul trapped in lust, mati bener as a soul awaiting perfection, and mati mulia as a soul that has become one with God.

In the pupuh Megatruh, Ranggawarsita wrote a saying that describes the soul's journey through darkness towards light, accompanied by the exhortation to padhanga dalane jembara kubure—"the path is bright, the grave is wide." This expression emphasizes that inner clarity and breadth of soul are signs of a noble death.

Aesthetically, this section demonstrates a balance between sound and meaning. Vocal repetition and alliteration create a magical feel, reinforcing the mystical atmosphere that depicts the soul's journey. Aja aims not only for moral teachings but also for aesthetic formulas to keep the reader's awareness focused on the right spiritual path.

4.6. Sabda Cipta Anteping Tekad: Stability as the Peak of Creation

The final stage, anteping tekad, is the culmination of all creative vibrations. Anteping means stability, and determination means a firm will or intention. In Ranggawarsita's view, only with firm determination can humans walk the path of perfection without being shaken by worldly suffering. In the pupuh Maskumambang and Dandanggula, the words ngantepi pati-stability in the face of death-appear as a symbol of the highest consciousness. Humans who reach this stage have transcended the duality of life and death. He is no longer afraid of loss, because he has become one with Divine will.

Prawirakusumadirja (1934) explained that anteping tekad means a firm intention to carry out all actions with sincerity and full awareness. In an aesthetic context, this is manifested through the integration of the song's structure and inner meaning. The repetitive rhythm signifies consistency, while the use of words ending in long vowels reinforces the sense of continuity.

The symbolism of anteping tekad also reflects the Javanese cosmological view that everything originates from unity and will return to unity. Ranggawarsita describes a person with firm determination as someone who has merged with God: the body is weak, the soul is strong, the soul is strong, the soul is strong.

In the context of the aesthetics of the word, anteping determination indicates the point at which the word reaches total stillness. The Word is no longer sound, but pure consciousness. This is what is meant by the "word without sound," the highest stage of human creative and spiritual creation.

4.7. Integration of Aesthetics and Spirituality in the Five Vibrations of the Word

These five forms of vibration of the word of creation form a layered, interconnected structure. Icip pati is the gateway to awareness; pamoring kawula gusti is the process of unification; laku kasampurnan is the path of discipline; aja sasar is direction control; and anteping tekad is the pinnacle of achievement. From an aesthetic perspective, this structure resembles a ladder that leads humans to inner harmony (laya).

Each stage has its own aesthetic pattern adapted to the song's meter: the melancholic and gentle Maskumambang depicts death; the calm Sinom depicts unification; the harmonious Dandanggula depicts purification; the dramatic Megatruh depicts spiritual death; and the firm Pangkur depicts steadfast determination. The beauty of sound, rhythm, and diction serve as a medium that conveys the author's inner vibrations to the reader.

Thus, the aesthetics of the creative word in Serat Sopana Laya is a system that unites form (sabda) and meaning (cipta), where language functions not only as a sign but also as a spiritual path. Ranggawarsita demonstrates that true beauty is not merely formal aesthetics, but rather a living vibration emanating from consciousness. He proves that poetry, when created with inner integrity, can become a path toward God.

5. CONCLUSION

Serat Sopana Laya Ranggawarsita's work represents the pinnacle of aesthetic and spiritual achievement in classical Javanese literature. Through the aesthetic concept of the creative word, Ranggawarsita successfully combines the power of language, symbolism, and inner experience into a living system of vibrations. In this view, the word is no longer merely a means of verbal expression, but rather a spiritual entity that radiates resonance between humans and God. It works through creative power, arranging sound, meaning, and feeling into a soulful aesthetic unity.

A study of the five forms of vibration of the word of creation icip pati, pamoring kawula gusti, laku kasampurnan, aja sasar, and anteping tekad shows that each stage has both an aesthetic and spiritual function. Icip pati depicts an awareness of mortality as the beginning of self-purification. Pamoring kawula gusti presents the process of unification between humans and the Creator. Laku kasampurnan emphasizes

the importance of inner discipline in achieving true wisdom. Aja sasar reminds humans not to fall into the path of spiritual error, while anteping tekad marks the pinnacle of steadfast intention and total surrender to the divine will.

This entire structure forms a vibrational formula that depicts the human journey toward the perfection of life. Through the integration of words, creation, feeling, and mind, Ranggawarsita presents a Javanese worldview of cosmic harmony: a balanced relationship between humans, nature, and God. Thus, the aesthetics of words and creation are not merely concepts of linguistic beauty, but also spiritual practices that bring to life ethical and religious values. Within this framework, Serat Sopana Laya can be read as a text that formulates the highest aesthetic awareness: that true beauty is born from clear inner vibrations and total surrender to the source of life.

Acknowledgment

We thank Prof. Dr. Faruk, S.U. for their expert guidance. We are also grateful to Dr. Sri Ratna Saktimulya, M.Hum for their assistance with developing theoretical framework. This work was supported by Universitas Negeri Malang and Gajahmada University as a part of Doctoral Disertation. Finally, we thank our families for their steadfast support.

Funding Information

This research was conducted without the support of any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors. All expenses related to the design, execution, analysis, and reporting of the study were borne by the authors. The absence of external funding ensures the impartiality and independence of the research outcomes.

Author Contributions Statement

Name of Author	C	M	So	Va	Fo	I	R	D	O	E	Vi	Su	P	Fu
Teguh Tri Wahyudi	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	

C : Conceptualization

M : Methodology

So : Software

Va : Validation

Fo : Formal analysis

I : Investigation

R : Resources

D : Data Curation

O : Writing - Original Draft

E : Writing - Review & Editing

Vi : Visualization

Su : Supervision

P : Project administration

Fu : Funding acquisition

Conflict of Interest Statement

The author affirms that there are no financial, personal, or professional conflicts of interest that could have influenced the research findings or the preparation of the manuscript.

Informed Consent

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this research study. All participants involved in helping in this study were informed about the purpose, procedures, potential risks, and benefits of the research. Participation was entirely voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from each participant.

Ethical Approval

The research does not involve experiments with human participants.

Data Availability

The data sets generated and analysed during the current study are not publicly available due to confidentiality agreements with participants but are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request. Researchers who wish to access the data for academic purposes may do so by submitting a formal request outlining their intended use, subject to approval and compliance with ethical standards.

REFERENCES

- [1] C. Brakel, "Traditional Javanese Poetry and the Problem of Interpretation," Indonesia Circle. School of Oriental & African Studies. Newsletter, vol. 9, no. 26, pp. 13-24, 1981, doi.org/10.1080/03062848108723840
- [2] X. He and N. Han, 'Script effects as the hidden drive of the mind, cognition, and culture by Hye K. pae', Read. Foreign Lang., vol. 37, no. 1, pp. 1-5, Mar. 2025. doi.org/10.64152/10125/67484
- [3] N. Florida, 'Living in a time of madness: Last days of Java's last prophetic poet', Hist. Theory, vol. 58, no. 4, pp. 86-106, Dec. 2019. doi.org/10.1111/hith.12137
- [4] K. R. Hall, "Traditions of knowledge in old Javanese literature, c. 1000-1500," J Southeast Asian Stud, vol. 36, no. 1, pp. 1-27, Feb. 2005, doi.org/10.1017/S0022463405000019
- [5] A. S. N. Salgaonkar and W. Menezes, 'Multiplicity of meaning and interpretation in language: Revisiting the Dhvani theory', in Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research, Paris: Atlantis Press SARL, 2025, pp. 238-266. doi.org/10.2991/978-2-38476-477-8_17
- [6] A. Charan Sukla, 'Indian intermedial poetics: The Sanskrit Rasa-Dhvani theory', Cultura (Iasi), vol. 13, no. 2, pp. 13-18, Jan. 2016. doi.org/10.3726/b10729_13
- [7] A. Jathavedan, "DHVANI-THE CONTINUATION OF SPHOTA," vol. 5, no. 4, pp. 3574-3577, 2017.
- [8] P. Wibowo, S. Muslifah, S. Widodo, S. Sundari, A. Indratmo, and S. Suyatno, 'A rarity of fibers by Raden ngabei ranggawarsita as reflecting the teaching of its constituent character', in Proceedings of the 4th BASA: International Seminar on Recent Language, Literature and Local Culture Studies, BASA, November 4th 2020, Solok, Indonesia, Solok, Indonesia, 2021. doi.org/10.4108/eai.4-11-2020.2314156
- [9] A. Amaladass, 'DHVANI THEORY AND INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE (Dhvani reading of the Mahabharata by Anandavardhana)', The Adyar Library Bulletin, pp. 68-98, 1990.
- [10] M. Zaelani, Z. Zuriyati, and S. Rohman, 'Dialectical of Islam and Javanese culture in Suluk Saloka Jiwa by Ranggawarsita', lingcure, vol. 6, pp. 154-164, Dec. 2021. doi.org/10.21744/lingcure.v6nS2.1940
- [11] N. K. Florida, 'Reading the unread in traditional Javanese literature', Indonesia, vol. 44, p. 1, Oct. 1987. doi.org/10.2307/3351218
- [12] J. A. Day, Meanings of Change in the Poetry of Nineteenth-Century Java. KITLV Press, 1981.
- [13] S. E. Cipta, 'Ranggawarsita dan Sufisme Jawa: Studi Pemikiran Bagus Burham Terhadap Budaya Islam Jawa (1823-1870)', almada, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 109-127, July 2020. doi.org/10.31538/almada.v3i2.596
- [14] W. Kusumawardhani, 'Self-introspection in the search of identity in serat jayengbaya by ranggawarsita', IOP Conf. Ser. Earth Environ. Sci., vol. 175, p. 012114, July 2018. doi.org/10.1088/1755-1315/175/1/012114
- [15] D. H. H. Ingalls, J. M. Masson, M. Patwardhan, and H. Oriental, The Dhvanyaloka of Anandavardhana with the Locana of Abhinavagupta Translated by. 1990.
- [16] M. Kronegger, H. R. Jauss, and M. Shaw, 'Aesthetic experience and literary hermeneutics', Rocky Mt. Rev. Lang. Lit., vol. 39, no. 2, p. 151, 1985. doi.org/10.2307/1347336
- [17] A. Barowi, "SERAT PAMORING KAWULA GUSTI Perwujudan Islam Kejawen", doi: doi.org/10.14710/sabda.3.2.%p.
- [18] N. Handayani, 'PROSES PENCIPTAAN MUSIK SUARA SINDHEN: INTERPRETASI GENDHING GINONJING KARYA NUR HANDAYANI', GelarJurnal.Seni.Budaya, vol. 16, no. 1, Jan. 2019. doi.org/10.33153/glr.v16i1.2344
- [19] Sastra, 'Wirit wêdharaning cipta sasmitaning ngilmi, kusumadiningrat, c. 1890, #1708 (hlm. 001-092)', Sastra Jawa.
- [20] I. Prawirakusumadirja, 'Solo: Uitgeverij En Boekhandel Stoomdrukkerij "De Bliksem', in Serat Icip Pati, 1934.
- [21] A. L. Hamid, 'KONSEPSI MARTABAT TUJUH DALAM WIRID HIDAYAT JATI RANGGAWARSITA', Afkar_Journal, vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 88-104, July 2019. doi.org/10.31943/afkar_journal.v4i1.61

- [22] H. Hinukertopati, *Pengertian Kebatinan dan Hardo Pusoro*. Purworejo: Paguyuban Wargo Hardo Pusoro. 2000.
- [23] Y. Rahayu and Z. Rahayu, 'Javanese Asceticism in Serat Kalatidha', *Int. J. Multicult. Multireligious Underst.*, vol. 5, no. 1, p. 9, Feb. 2018. doi.org/10.18415/ijmmu.v5i1.101
- [24] M. Atmasasmita, *Atma Pramana*. Semarang: Kwee Bang Kong, 1914.

How to Cite: Teguh Tri Wahyudi. (2026). The aesthetics of sabda cipta: the formulation of vibration in ranggawarsita's serat sopana laya. *Journal of Humanities, Music and Dance (JHMD)*, 6(1), 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.55529/jhmd.61.1.13>

BIOGRAPHIE OF AUTHOR



Teguh Tri Wahyudi , is a doctoral candidate in the Humanities Study Program, Graduate Program, Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta. His S.S., M.A. qualification was obtained based on research into several works by Ranggawarsita. His expertise in Javanese literature and culture serves as a basis for various relevant studies. His research interests include classical Javanese literature, oral literature, performing art and Javanese culture. Email: teguh.tri.fs@um.ac.id