

# JEK NEBENNE! : A METHOD OF SELF-HEALING IN A PERFORMANCE-LECTURE

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## ABSTRACT

*This artwork thesis depicts a multimedia performance, which combines several media such as photos, videos, sound recordings, installation, diagrams, charts, graphic design, and scientific journals, as well as digital cameras in performance-lecture. The creation practice borrowing the mode of a lecture combined with performance refers to “jek nebenne!” as the director’s memory-recollection to start his work practice. The term “jek nebenne!” is not a standard language which means “don’t mess with me!”, it is used as the director’s foothold in connecting a trauma in a family as a result of domestic violence which is reflected in the same experience of his mother, just like the experience of a female masseuse, brick miner, and farmworker for over thirty years in Bangkalan over the behavior of their respective husbands, as well as a shift of function from the feminine to the masculine. “Jek nebenne!” becomes some sort of creation reference which was often said by his mother, haunting him to this day and suspected to be the source of failure. Including the failure to integrate with the two performers who also experienced trauma (sexual and gender) until the show goes on. His position was leaked as a therapist to evacuate from the situation by sharing his sensitive emotion to the public; leaking of conflict concoction, exploration of body and ability, as well as performer’s skill through medias mentioned above. The practice of performance-lecture focuses on psychodrama with a shift of dramaturgy from trauma to sensitive and intervening performer and the production team to show that domestic violence creates a prolonged scar. The director fears that the cruising range of his biography trauma will cause him to re-experience the vulnerability and leaving the audience with intricacy. The practice of such shift as a process of evacuation from acute trauma, as a continuation of “jek nebenne!” self-healing method for positive growth of the soul.*

**Keywords:** performance-lecture, “jek nebenne!”, self-healing method

## INTRODUCTION

The term “*jek nebenne!*” becomes a main foundation of creation by making charts and records of events within a period of over thirty years to trace the body of the director of a wide variety of deviation events. For example, the beating of his mother, grandmother, father, siblings and aunt, as well as the people around him who have been involved in social interaction. In addition to that, there’s also the behavior of violence against women, a deviation in sexual behavior with animals (a swan) and criminal behavior such as theft (of duck and chicken).

“*Jek nebenne!*” is a kind of psychodrama<sup>1</sup> presuming the director’s body of having a Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD)<sup>2</sup> this whole time without

consulting a clinical psychologist in his daily life to cure him. The acts of deviation does not present or grow on their own, but it was triggered by a family that has experienced violence. The director’s mother for nearly thirty years has experienced domestic violence from her husband resulting in a prolonged trauma to the director and causing him a deviation of social behavior as mentioned above as part of the trauma of identity.

Based on the writings of Marta Thorsheim (a therapist, founder of the Institute for Traumawork in Norwegia), the trauma of identity starts from childhood which is often determined by what can’t be remembered consciously. But it is stored in the body, which maintains memory-recollection and implicit feelings of trauma; associated with the warning system, provocation, body, soul, and self

expression;<sup>3</sup> which are closely related and working reciprocally between trauma and identity.

Trauma of identity is tried to be traced and tracked back with “*jek nebenne!*” as director’s self-healing method in connecting family trauma as a result of domestic violence reflected in the same experiences as the director’s mother, female masseuse, brick miner, and farmworker for over thirty years in Bangkalan over the behavior of their respective husbands as well as a shift of function from the feminine to the masculine.

The creation practice in this artwork uses video, in particular in the performance-lecture<sup>4</sup> seen by Belén Cerezo<sup>5</sup> (visual artist, researcher and educator based in Nottingham, England and Bilbao, Spain). Videos can also be seen as one of the elements that serve very effectively to strengthen the theme of the show, in accordance with the vision and mission of “a performance”. The presence of video has two perspectives; the stage and the screen. The difference of medium rises diversity of projection in discussing a topic of appropriate goals and objectives desired.

The two perspectives of performance-lecture are what expected to strengthen “*jek nebenne!*” as a mediator therapist of self-healing so as to escape from a problematic and the reality of a bitter life or to be in the shadow of failure (material and non-material), to be a method of self-healing in order to cultivate a more positive soul, and able to minimize every form of behavioral deviation through this creative practice.

## DISCUSSION

The creation of “Performance-Lecture: Jek Nebenne!” is a practice prepared to be a method of self-healing due to a family trauma that the director is experiencing. This family trauma impacts on all sorts of forms of behavioral deviations that has been happening for over thirty years. Starting from violent behavior against family (mother, late grandmother, father, younger siblings, and aunt), the people around, violence against women, and sexual deviation behavior towards animal (swan).

The director becomes a narrator and a therapist for himself at once in performance-lecture by describing the practice of domestic violence through a masseuse, brick miner, and farmworker that are reflected over a similar experience as his mother’s in the circle of noble, cleric, and *blater* for over thirty years. This work also shows at once how the responsibility of a breadwinner that should be borne by the husbands was rather carried by the wives instead due to the husband lounging, gambling, drunkenness and often involved in a harmful fight.

“Jek Nebenne!” is also deliberately displays a conflict between director and performer as well as between performers. Whether through live conversation or a reconstruction of a sound recording. Like a recording of a performer’s conflict leaving a location; a lodging house. Since the beginning, the two performers have realized that they are prepared to be a barrier or an obstacle in a method of self-healing made by the director who acts as his own therapist.

## Performance-Lecture Psychodrama

Moreno argues that psychodrama is a form of human development by exploring through dramatical actions, problems, issues, concerns, dreams, and ideals of people, groups, and systems. While Fong argues that psychodrama is a form of art therapy where a counselor pushes their clients to use their body as a media to dig up personal truth and to heal from a trauma of an experience rather than traditional verbal participation (Sari 2017, 128).

Based on the two opinions above, the director elaborates an understanding of a therapist work in self-healing of a trauma through performance-lecture. The director becomes his own counselor and with the use of the two performers as clients (the two people who also experience a trauma) to examine the director himself. Two performers are placed as a subject of a barrier and obstacle in the function of self-healing. To be precise, to see how far the director’s behavioral deviation and banality are not done towards both performers. In this context, psychodrama is used as a method of individual work

by using an intermediary of two performers to be a healing agent (therapeutic agent) for the director and at the same time as a material of “college exam”.



Figure 1. The director instructed the slide operator - that is used as a plot of the show.  
(Photo: Irvan Aliftyano)

“College exam” material can also be referred to as media used in this practice of creation, leading to a memory-recollection of “*jek nebenne!*” which moves in the territory of one’s unconsciousness on all kinds of behavioral deviation and always intersects with the ego that lives in the space of consciousness over a reality faced in the present time, as reflected in Auslander<sup>6</sup> about Lacan’s psychoanalytic in connection with the unconsciousness.

The unconsciousness disclosed by Lacan can be understood as subjectivity. Subjectivity is the entrance of someone into a language, understood as a synchronic system of sign and a social code that produces meaning, known as the symbolic order. The symbolic order places the director and narrator or orator in a position that permits the director to be the subject of the acting itself. Including both performers. The majority of psychoanalysts believe that the development of the ego as the center of consciousness is a biological development.

### Jek Nebenne!: Self-Healing Method in Performance Lecture

Some of the methods below also refer to the thought of Lacan and Žižek stated in Auslander, which are also always intersect with the elements of psychodrama. This practice of performance-lecture

psychodrama wishes to be understood as a practice of creation departing from a psychoanalysis study associated with unconsciousness in every behavioral deviation causing them to be integrated in every identity and making things look like an illusion. All this time, the director also views the symbolic order as a “falsehood” that must be revoked from its root. Because all that have been hanging on to him for a long time. As if an identity is the one creating or constructing all sorts of behavioral deviation in a social order, which actually should be recognized and analyzed first.

#### a. Notes on Memory-Recollection and Diagrams of the Body

Notes on memory-recollection and diagrams of the body is a tracking on all kinds of behavioral deviation over the last thirty years. Starting from the era of 1990s until 2010s, the beginning of a various behavior from the family. This method is doing some kind of digging of a memory-recollection on behavior by taking detailed notes, collecting them, and making them into diagrams by categorizing them; to see how many behavioral deviations did the director do towards his mother, his late grandmother, father, younger siblings, and aunt. How many violent acts done by hands, foot, head, and sturdy objects? How many fights have happened? How many disagreements have ended with arguments and cursing? How many conflicts were abandoned? How many bodies have injured others? How many bodies were injured by others? How many violent acts against women? How many times a behavior of sexual deviation towards animal (swan) has been done?

#### b. Social Rite of Soul Purification

The social rite in question is none other than a rite of a child towards his parents in the following steps: (1) crawling below his mother’s crotch seven times in front of the door of the director’s room. Where his mother stands in the doorway, (2) the director puts his mother’s right feet into a bucket filled with water and 7 kinds of flowers, (3) the soles of the mother are washed gently

- until the water trickled down completely into another bucket, and (4) the director drinks the water from the mother's soles, (5) the director also chants the holy verses of the Koran; surah Al Faatihah, Al Falaq, An Naas, and followed by a prayer from a child begging for forgiveness for both parents.
- c. **The Exploration of A Failed Body**  
The exploration of a failed body is an exploration conducted by the director himself in a lodging house expected to be a part of his life failure this whole time. This exploration begins with an audio recording of confession of sin and stain of the family represented by the mother and witnessed by the father, younger siblings and aunt. The audio recording is also doing some kind of digging into memory-recollection of the past with all kinds of violent behaviors, the objects used, the means of hurting an injuring; whether it is by kicking, punching, choking, or slapping.
  - d. **Data Deletion (Archive)**  
The removal of data becomes important; the whole record of memory-recollection, detailed diagrams, and all shirts, pants which are still preserved as an archive are completely deleted or abolished as a method of evacuation from every kind of past memory, but the family trauma is planned to be reflected in a very similar experience or the so-called "college exam" material.
  - e. **Reflexivity**  
The reflexivity referred in this writing is a method related to reflective acts; tracking families who have experienced domestic violence. Instead of healing the director's father, he was eventually included as an informant in this tracking process. The father's position who has done the same violent act is indirectly getting more involved in the director's 2 years healing process. Because as an informant, he encounters many cases of domestic violent, especially ones that are similar to the director's experience.
  - f. **Body versus Body**  
The traumatic performer's body is met by the director's traumatic body, this method can be called as a method of versus; and the performer can be called as "college exam" material. The versus mentioned here is not about a physical conflict, but the body of family trauma versus the body of sexual and gender trauma. How far the director is able to see the obstacles and hurdles. If in the future, the director is still practicing violent behavior, that means the previous method can be called a failure, because the growth of the director's soul is frozen and can't be evacuated. The rigidity and the dead ends are important indicators to see if the soul is growing positively; when in fact the negative souls are still present.

### **The Impact of Jek Nebenne!: A Method of Self-Healing**

Based on the practice of creation by tracking own's body, then the main focus on its impact is more on the side of the director and the relationship between the director and his family (mother, father, younger sibling, and aunt) who has been harmed and hurt, excluding the late grandmother. The perceived impacts from the method of self-healing are such following.

- a. **A More Positive Growth for The Director's Soul**  
The method of memory-recollection notes and the diagram of the body continued by a social rite of soul purification practically made the director stop doing behavioral deviation, violent acts and argument ending with violence for over these past two years. The director tends to avoid conflicts that are potential for physical violent to happen. Particularly in family. Especially with his mother, he never yell at her, let alone behave violently; so far he can control himself in the most positive way. The growth of his soul is getting more positive regarding the change in his behavior during this two years.

## b. A Positive Growth of Soul of the Father

The father's soul growth is also looking positive these past two years. Whereas before, he is likely to experience tension with the director. Both verbal and non-verbal. The involvement of the father in the tracking process of families experiencing domestic violence in Bangkalan turned his body different, his body is becoming a more loving body. Anything required by the director for this practice of creation to happen (including preparing all kinds of property) was done genuinely and sincerely by the father. Even a day before the show took place, he disclosed his helplessness against the past. As if he is seeing himself in the "mirror" through the director's show, though he knows that the story narrated in the show is other's story that is extremely similar to his experience. The father sees a reflection of himself in the story of the masseuse, even though the director has insisted that it's just a similar experience as his family's experience.

The father admitted that his past mistakes was due to his confusion of the life pattern around him; hanging out with *blater* which was very close to the behavior of a bastard, the absence of local government regarding available jobs, the absence of help from the local communities on domestic violence, and the mother's attitude that seemed to accept such violent practice.

## c. A Banal Body into A Sensitive Body

A banal body in question is a body constructed with brutality; a tough body, a body of a batter, a body of a kicker, and a body that hurts everyone, turning into an emotional body. Being emotional is constructing the director's body, soul, and emotion into a gentler version compared to two years before. Being emotional is also constructing the director's body into a foolishly loving body. He even tends to be weak in the presence of a woman he likes or adores. Regardless that this was done as a method to hack into the practice of violence.

The most powerful impact so far, is that the emotional body and the performance are really

perceived in the absence of physical violence and verbal abuse. The director can really pass the obstacles and barriers through the characteristics of the two performers. Even when the director is fragile or vulnerable it can still be called as a positive soul growth.

### A Shift of Dramaturgy; from Domestic Violence into Getting Emotional

Based on the impact of the self-healing method, a shift of sub-theme happened; the director who lost a performer and fell in love with his performer or *baper* (getting emotional); which was written by Afrizal as an acronym of 'bawa perasaan'<sup>7</sup>, a kind of resonance of feeling in the further practice. The conflict of creation between the director and performer is then turned into an idea. The archives of a performer produced during the rehearsal are collected to make a new element of the show. Like towel, soap, pillow cover, perfume, hair clips and a drawing made by the performer. These elements are made into a new material as snippets of the show which are posted in an Instagram account and moves in the space of the internet citizen. And the male performer was replaced by another performer who is closer to the director.



**Figure 2.** The *performer* representing how to survive as a wife with various types of jobs.  
(Photo: Zalfa Irbilla)

This shift was unwittingly faced to a performer who is experiencing gender trauma; in connection to a construction of emotion towards a

certain gender (women in particular), which should be able to bridge the director's identity as a resonator in the show. The practice as a resonator was hoped to give triggers to the trauma intuitively. The director brings up those memories at a healthy level of consciousness. But the new performer was stuck in his own trauma of identity, so it was most likely for him to be the resonator and strengthen his emotions three days before the show. As the old performer who was 'liked' by the director, returned due to the director's strategies.

Afrizal mentioned that the organic body and the structure of a show was shaken by the leave and return of the performer in a critical time<sup>8</sup>, doubled by the performer who decided that they didn't want to be involved in the show one minute before the it starts. Tensions are culminated in the director's body; so, he changed his position as a therapist in self-healing to evacuate by sharing his sensitive emotion to the public. The director leaked the conflicts of creation to clarify the identity itself and to find the reality that emerges from his own biography of trauma all this time. It was like creating a safe space to facilitate his own vulnerable soul by "complicating" the structure of the show with a method of intervention.

### **A Method of Intervention in Performance-Lecture: Jek Nebenne!**

The method of intervention as a directing method in the relationship context between the performer and the production team. This method was deliberately prepared to break any deadlock. This is something like ghost dramaturgy; a dramaturgy unknown by anyone. Including the performer and the whole production team. Only the director knows the method. Intervention was produced as an alternative way for disturbance as a result of the accumulation of trauma by the end of the rehearsal. The two performers who have experienced sexual and gender trauma couldn't enter freely into the dramaturgy of trauma that has been designed.

To avoid such disruption over the accumulation of trauma, the director should have applied a certain rehearsal system for the performer

that are focused on that relationship. A system that can change a point of view of trauma, help face a precarious situation, the attack from the internal and external side; bullying, cursing by the internet user, desire, sarcasm, the uncertainty in the context of sexual and gender, as well as the trauma of identity itself; including getting emotional in it.



**Figure 3.** One of the performers is representing a real event in a multiple exposure social activity.  
(Photo: Zalfa Irbilla)

The word intervention is borrowed from the term of politics. It's the interfering of the director and narrator; who is also a performer to help solve the problem faced by the other two performers. A work of meddling, influencing and controlling the performer to escape the disturbances and problems that befall them. The intervention aims to change the structure of the show randomly based on the current situation at the time of the show. But it does not necessarily destroy the initial methods in realizing the elements of the show.

The structure is divided into three parts; the prologue, discussion and the epilogue was changed based on the observation at the time when the performance took place. Each part is structured into a beginning, middle, and end. The structured is shuffled; the early part of discussion can be placed at the beginning of the prologue and vice versa. The changes in structure are based on impression, gestures, audiences, and the performer's reaction over a sudden change.

Intervention is carried out when the performer and the production team are not ready to face unexpected disruption both from internal or external. For example, a technical problem. Such as a light out, signal problem, virtual attack on the performer's Instagram story, lagging phone, network issue with the Zoom application, broken camera, and a sudden attack of personality disorder.

The only method the director could think of was intervention. Specially to find a way out when facing a performer who has impaired feeling or *being too emotional*. In addition to self-awareness or new opportunities for an influence and some kind of propaganda. Its presence is like a "ghost". The shift of the directing method practically also shifts the mode of dramaturgy. The dramaturgy of trauma referring to domestic violence shifted into the dramaturgy of emotion. Theme became sub theme, and sub theme became theme with the risk or consequences of bringing a new "complexity" and "inconvenience" for the audiences, the performer, the production team, even for the director himself as a "failed show".

## CONCLUSION

The tracking of the traumatic body is the main part of the method of self-healing, in addition to several other methods in representing object of creation with the two performers. Furthermore, the two performers are also prepared as barriers or obstacles to examine the change in the director's behavioral deviation in the form of psychodrama; art therapy in which the director becomes his own counselor through dramatic action and by using the body as the primary medium.

The work practice is borrowed from the work practice of lecture by combining photo exhibition, installation, body Madura-Java songs, interview, archive, hobby, song covers, documentary video, research journal, charts, and using a site-specific space which was a boarding house in Bangkalan, Madura as the venue transformed into a 'bucin' (foolishly in love/lovely mother) gallery.

This creation is using a material divided into three forms. The three forms of materials are power point presentation (family trauma, research journals, charts of domestic violence between married couple), materials for exhibition (photos of rehearsal session, installation of historical objects (sewing machine, mortar for 'emping melinjo', cake mixer, rice tray, and laundry tub)), and audiovisual materials (documentary video, rehearsal video, audio recording, video data (YouTube channel and testimonies from several other women), as well as archive videos).

Objects and materials mentioned above are managed and processed by double exposure; double image over a combination of objects at once, or multiple exposure; multiple images or a combination of objects to get an adjusted meaning from diverse images. While the video becomes one of the main media in presentation just like performance-lecture in general, it is also functioned as a representation. The work of presentation and representation are carried out simultaneously that is rarely found in performance-lecture, in addition to the choice of venue which in general are held in an auditorium or indoor places.

The tracking process of the traumatic body brings up a shift of dramaturgy during the performance. The dramaturgy of trauma became the dramaturgy of *baper* (getting emotional) by intervening performer and the production team and changing the structure of event in theater or biographical performance used as a method of self-healing. To complement the dramaturgy of *baper*, two out of three variable's identity was divulged; the masseuse and the husband are none other than the director's parents.

The fear, the vulnerable trauma, the depression and personality disorder became the primary driver of the shift that was predicted personally. But it can be called as one of a success of the self-healing method which previously tended to be negative, it is now seems to give a positive effect on the growth of the soul, also as an evacuation process to create an acute traumatic representation and a healthy identity. Even though it left a complicated

feeling for the performers, the production team, the audience and the director (myself).

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Kipper & Roosevelt in (Sari 2017, 128 - 129) argue that psychodrama is, in one way, unique from other therapies, even though it uses verbal communication and not too dependent on medication. On the contrary, talking through gesture is the main focus, to treat experience which allows counseling to process memory with the guidance of a counselor and participation of group members with similar problems.

<sup>2</sup> In July 2007, the Centre of Data and Information Technology of the Ministry of Education and Culture held an interactive dialogue with Ratna Sulistami D. (a psychologist) in a *discussion* program around the domain of clinical psychology, psychiatry, and primary care provider.

<sup>3</sup> Marta Thorsheim. "What It Means to Have a Trauma of Identity". <https://goop.com/wellness/health/what-it-means-to-have-a-trauma-of-identity/>, posted by Goop.

<sup>4</sup> Source : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bFFjxEJrhFU>, *interview - the last performance (1998) - first part*, posted by Jérôme Bel, December 15th, 2016, source : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gXZsIFUzYVw&t=17s>, *Performance Art in Southeast Asia – Panel 4, Part 2: Ho Rui An*, posted by Haus der Kunst, July 31st 2019.

<sup>5</sup> Belén Cerezo. "How to open my eyes? The performance-lecture as a method within artistic research." *Networking Knowledge* 9 (3), Make, Mistake, Journey.

<sup>6</sup> Philip Auslander. 2008. *Theory for Performance Studies A Student's Guide*, London dan New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

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