

# Better Late than Never:

## Strengthening the Role of Women in Performing Arts in the Millennial Era

Trianti Nugraheni

Department of Dance Education, Faculty of Arts and Design Education  
Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia  
Bandung, Indonesia  
tnugraheni73@gmail.com

**Abstract**—The aim of this paper is strengthening the Role of Women in Performing Arts in the Millennial Era. In some aspects of life and profession, women tend to be placed in private areas. One area that facilitates women to appear in the public area of the Performing Arts, even he plays a major and vital role for the ongoing performances ranging from ritual performances, personal entertainment, and aesthetic presentations. Its presence as a sacred figure in ritual arts, to commodities and commercial potential should be understood as the potential strength of its role in performing arts. This paper is used multidiscipline method, and used Ethnochoreology, Sociology, and History. This paper will begin with a review of dance texts and continue understanding of the context by describing the strengths and uniqueness of women as performers, so that this understanding can be used as a potential awareness of women to strengthen and optimize their role. The result of this paper is: In fact, the role of women in performing arts is often ignored and only considered as objects. Of course this view needs to be changed. The conclusion of this paper is: In the Millennial era demands changes in various aspects of life. This cannot be avoided, but it needs to be anticipated intelligently and wisely. High adaptability and fast speed in accessing data are needed to anticipate this era. For this, every individual needs to understand his strengths and strengths in order to have high competitiveness.

**Keywords**—role of women; performing arts; millennial era

### I. INTRODUCTION

Role of Women in the Performing Arts in the Millennial Era needs to be strengthening. The changing times have demanded change in all aspects of life. If this change is not addressed properly and wisely, there will be gaps in various things. During this time it can be observed that one indicator of the deterioration of the quality of life of the nation is the weakening of character, resulting in behaviors such as violence, dishonesty, increasingly disrespectful towards others, weakened social cohesion, increased suspicion and hatred, worsening language use, decreased work ethic, the weakening of the sense of individual responsibility and the color of the country, the higher the self-destructive behavior and the increasingly blurred moral guidelines [1].

Of course, to anticipate this, involvement and cooperation from various parties is needed as a precaution. The various parties in question are the whole community. So far, the role of men and women in development has not been balanced,

meaning that in the public sphere the role is still dominated by men, while women, the role is still quite limited and restricted. This can be proved, in some aspects of life and the profession that is developing in the community, the position of women is often overlooked and is considered a "second class" citizen. In other words, the position and role of women is still limited in the private area. One area that embodies the role of women is performance art. Women in performing arts are usually positioned in two social poles, namely at the sacred ritual poles and entertainment poles that are loaded with commercial demands [2].

At both poles, so far, both some people and women themselves as performers often place women as objects. Both in patrilineal and matrilineal culture that developed in Indonesia, it has succeeded in positioning women culturally as a complement to the show. For example, in ritual performances he is used as a medium / object to connect the upper world and the underworld, while during entertainment shows, he is placed as an object to bring commercial benefits. The way to interpret the role of women in this show is hereditary in various cultures in Indonesia, thus closing other interpretations that place women as central and main figures, and important in one performance.

Ideally, a critical view of the role and image of women in performing arts can be changed and changed. This is in line with Storey's opinion that the image of women is changing, one alternative is to replace the other and reduce it to a meaningless background. In feminist theory, we are in a radical change of vision, a demand that we see meaning that did not exist before [3].

Problems regarding the lack of the role of women as the subject of performing arts are caused by a lack of understanding and awareness of the potential of women both as creators, actors, and connoisseurs of art. It can also be said that women have been complacent and safeguarded by culturally constrained situations, which have placed them in the marginal position and tend to be passive. As a result, most of the women, both as creators, actors and performers of performing arts, are less responsive and responsive in anticipating various changes of the times.

Ideally the development of politics, economics, law, security and mastery of science and technology must be integrated with the development of human character as a

figure, so that it will lead to human welfare, welfare and lasting peace [1, 4]. Thus every change cannot be avoided, but must be addressed by all levels of society including women intelligently. Currently we are faced with the industry 4.0 era or also called millennial era, Vasja expressed his opinion about "A Complex View of Industry" 4.0 in the SAGE journal, explained

The period of fourth industrial revolution will be marked by the full automation and digitization processes, and the use of electronics and information technology, such as 3D printing, the development of online sales services such as car services, medical examinations from home, ordering food directly centre from store to the refrigerator, and so on, will have a significant impact on small and medium size changes [5].

According to Vasja, the fourth industrial revolution period will be characterized by full automation and digitization processes, and the use of electronic and information technology such as 3D printing, the development of online sales services such as car services, medical examinations from home, ordering food directly from the store to the refrigerator, and etc. Of course this will have a significant impact on change, both in small and medium size. This change will also be faced by the world of performing arts, both by creators, actors and connoisseurs. To anticipate this, real effort is needed so that women's roles can be more empowered and not be left behind. Through this brief presentation, the author invites the reader to understand again the discourse of the role of women in the performing arts, especially in the People's Dance family in West Java. Jaipongan as one of the dances included in the category of folk dance is set as the focus of discussion, because the nature and type of dance is quite plastic, so that since Jaipongan appears it can always develop well in some times from the 1980s to the present.

The position and role of women in the Sundanese community have gained an important place. Some female figures and ideal figures are indirectly constructed by culture through Legends and Foclores, for example 1). The existence of Dewi Sri as the goddess of rice, the mythical figure presented in every series of agricultural ceremonies, 2). Sunan Ambu in Sundanese rhymes is one of the most well-known and respected female characters. Sunan, short for the word Susuhunan, or who is worshiped. Thus the understanding of Sunan Ambu, is a woman who is worshiped, great, and powerful [4, 6]. Ambu is a mother, in this case a mother who is divine. The female figure carved in the old Sunda story has a multitude, as Dewi, as a respected mother, full of authority, charismatic, full of love, educating, helpful, and has the paws.

In this case it can be said that he plays a role in the spiritual world, indirectly this is constructed through the myths that apply in society. Sumardjo explains that myth is a story that provides certain guidelines and directions to society, how should humans in society behave in their daily lives [7]. Myth gives life teachings that must be obeyed because the stories are the true history of the universe. Furthermore, this myth helped shape the ideal Sundanese women.

## II. METHOD

The paper use Ethnochoreology with a qualitative approach that applies theories and concepts from the discipline of History, Sociology, Anthropology, Dance composition, and Folklore.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The essence of dance is motion, where motion is the most primary symptom of man and motion is the oldest of human media to express his desires or is a form of spontaneous reflection of human inner motion [8]. Furthermore it was stated also that dance is the expression of the human soul which is realized in the form of beautiful rhythmic movements [8]. Dance as one of the cultural products in society has also recorded the image and ideal figure of women. In performing arts, Sundanese female ideal figures are reflected in character figures, for example in wayang, in Wayang Wong Priangan, Arimbi characters are often presented in the form of storytelling. This Arimbi character has a character very similar to Purbasari in the story of Lutung Kasarung. It can be said that the ideal female figure that developed among nobles was a powerful, wise and energetic leader.

The image and figure of women who developed among the people can be seen from the Jaipong dance. Jaipong dance is a development of Ketuk Tilu dance, which was developed by Gugum Gumbira in the 1970s. Some of the early works of Jaipongan included: Keser Bojong, Oray Welang, Rendeng Bojong, Senggot, Toka-toka, Sonteng, Pencug, Kawung Anten. At the beginning of its development, Jaipongan reaped various accusations, criticisms, and blasphemies that were really sharp, but it turned out that in the next stage it was able to penetrate various groups, from the young to the upper elite [9]. Currently Jaipongan is growing rapidly, through the students of Gugum Gumbira, several dance works have been created that use Jaipong as a foundation for their creativity. By borrowing the concept of chronological development on Ketuk Tilu, that is, bihari (formerly), kamari (yesterday), and kiwari (at present), it can be said that Jaipong Gugum can be categorized as Jaipong bihari, while Jaipong developed by Gugum students belongs to the Jaipong category kamari and kiwari. Jaipong bihari has a simple and thick choreography, costumes, music and property with ketuk tilu and silat movements. Jaipong kamari, most of them have used themes in the dance, and have more varied choreography, costumes, music and property than Jaipong bihari. The Jaipong kiwari has a very complex motion choreography, costumes, and pretty dynamics music. One example of Jaipong kiwari is the Jaipong Mojang Priangan dance, which is currently quite popular in the Sundanese community.

The following is the choreography of Jaipong Mojang Priangan dance: Mincid "Beulit Kacang" (Symmetrical), Modern Variation 1 (Asymmetrical), Modern Variation 2 (Symmetrical), Mincid "Buka Payung" (Symmetrical), Modern Variation 3 (Symmetrical), Mincid (Symmetrical). Nyindekkeun (Asymmetrical), Buka Payung Nangreu (Symmetrical), Paksi Muih and Nyindekkeun (Asymmetrical), Keupat 1 Anca (Asymmetrical), Keupat 1 Ngrecek (Asymmetrical), Ngayun tangang (Symmetrical), Paksi Muih and

Nyindekkeun (Asymmetric), Mincid ( Symmetrical), Ngayun Tangan (Symmetrical), Paksi Muih and Nyindekkeun (Asymmetrical), Oray Meuntas 1 (Asymmetrical), Oray Meuntas 2 (Asymmetrical), Mincid Tungkup (Symmetrical), Paksi Muih and Nyindekkeun (Asymmetrical), Mincid Buka Payung (Symmetrical), Modern Mincid Variations (Asymmetrical), Nyindek (Asymmetrical), Open Nangreu Umbrella (Symmetrical), Paksi Muih and Nyindekkeun Nyikut (Asymmetrical), Intricate 1 anca (Asymmetric), Scratch 1 (Asymmetrical), Ngayun Hand (Symmetrical), Paksi Muih and Nyindekkeun (Asymmetrical), Mincid Salsa (Symmetrical), Ngayun Tangan (Symmetrical), Paksi Muih and Nyindekkeun (Asymmetrical), Oray Meuntas (Asymmetrical), Combinations (Salsa, Oray Meuntas, Open Payung (Asymmetrical), Paksi Muih and Nyindekkeun (Asymmetric).

In Jaipong bihari and kamari the characteristics are: 1) patterned motion with a fixed count in one motion pattern; 2) in the motive of motion there is no accent or in other words the calculation of the motion is right on the sound of the drum, there is no proper arsenic or thesis; 3) movement only originates from Ketuk Tilu and Silat; 4) do not have much variation in motion patterns. As for the Jaipong kiwari has the following characteristics: 1) movement originating from several dance families in Sunda coupled with modern dance movements such as Salsa and Chaca; 2). There are several motions whose accents coincide with the music or thesis of the accompaniment; 3) using elegant costumes like princesses from nobility.

Based on the above characteristics it can be said that Jaipong bihari and kamari use more symmetrical design and small-medium motion volume, so that it seems simpler, and more calm, and feminine. Meanwhile, Jaipong Kiwari seems more energetic and dynamic, because the choreography uses movements that are asymmetric in design and have small to medium-large volumes of motion, making it look more masculine. This is consistent with Soedarsono's statement. The human body can be divided into three parts, each of which has a different character 1). The upper part from the chest upwards is the part that has intellectual or spiritual character; 2). The middle part has a feeling full of feeling; and 3). The lower part starts from the waist down, is a full part of life [8]. When viewed from the lines of motion, divided into two namely symmetrical and asymmetrical. Symmetrical lines have the impression of being simple, sturdy, calm. Asymmetric lines give an interesting and dynamic impression. Meanwhile on the basis of the volume of motion is divided into three: large or open volume gives the impression of masculine, small or closed volume has a feminine impression, while the volume is giving the impression of a smooth man or woman who is strong, or effeminate. Meanwhile the character of the motion pattern is categorized: 1). Flat pattern movements have an open character, honest, but also shallow character; 2). Motion patterned in, away from or approaching the audience, giving the impression of a deep feeling; 3). Vertical, up or down patterned movements have an egocentric character to express a sense of resignation; 4). Horizontal patterned motion has a feeling of wanting to leave; 5). Cross-patterned motion gives a strong impression and a confused impression; 6). Pure patterned motion has a calm and open character; 7). Sweet

curved patterned motion; 8). A straight pattern or right angle gives a strong impression; 9). A motion with a pattern of spiral impressions brings closer the relationship between dancers and the audience [8].

Changes in values in society due to social, economic, technological influences on the product of art and the role of women. Accelerating data exchange, various information and cultural influences have urged and colored dance forms as cultural products. Indirectly also reflects the change in the position and role of women in the performing arts and in the community. The blurring of boundaries due to technology has also mixed some traditional and modern values, public and private, feminine and masculine, spiritual-intellectual boundaries. For this performance art deserves attention for studies and critical analysis by borrowing various concepts, such as gender, postmodernism, to popular culture. This will make the performing arts climate not only based on intuition, but on study, contemplative and clear thinking [10].

Significant change can be conceptualized as a process of forming institutions and patterns of thought are changed by experience and value [11]. In other words, the development of a genre or form of art generally influences externally, namely the influence of art which at that time was considered to be a superior art [9]. Alvin Boskoff's theory of the influence of internal and external factors on changes in Jaipong Mojang Priangan dance performances. Internal changes by Jaipongan creators, actors and connoisseurs. The acceleration of the exchange of cultural information through technological media has colored the ideas and ideas of the creators and Jaipongan actors in expressing their dance. In the Mojang Priangan dance, when judging from the poem, there will be ideas and themes of the song telling about the physical appearance, attitude and manner of speaking of a beautiful, petite, soft, smooth, and charming Sundanese woman. In its development, at this time in the millennial era, the dancers used several traditional and modern modification movements which tended to be fast-paced and used large volumes of motion. It can be said that these movements seem more masculine, although it can be recognized that the motion seems more dynamic and attractive, so it is interesting to listen.

Meanwhile, Jaipongan connoisseurs also developed, which at first Jaipongan developed as folk art, as the times evolved into popular art, as well as mass art. Arnold Hauser in his book *The Sociology of Art*, especially the fifth section entitled "The Differentiation of Art According to Cultural Strata" reviews carefully and intelligently about the relationship between art and the cultural layer of the supporting or enjoying community. Hauser explains that it is very difficult to understand the relationship between artists and their audience [12]. This change and development of Jaipongan connoisseurs seems to have shaped Jaipongan's form and structure changes both in text and context. Performing arts that developed in this millennial era have undergone various changes in form, structure and meaning. Millennial technology in which the acceleration of information crosses boundaries, meaning that whatever is conveyed through technology media requires intelligence and insight policies of women, both as creators, actors, and connoisseurs. There are direct and indirect effects that need to be anticipated in advance. For example: 1). Motion

has combined traditional and modern movements, and is attractive; 2). Costumes are modified like a princess; 3). Property, and the music used has undergone variations and modifications.

These changes often reap the pros and cons between creators, actors, and connoisseurs. In the opinion of connoisseurs and observers, that some text material is not in accordance with the norms and ideal values of Sundanese women who should be carried by women as performers. Meanwhile, from the creator or stylist, he thought that in order to increase the popularity of his dance work, he composed and packed his work with uniqueness that responded to the progress of the times. Both of them certainly need time to adapt to changes in the era of Millennia.

For connoisseurs and observers it needs to be realized that the form and meaning of the text can change according to the times, because the paradigm shift in understanding and constructing the role of women is greatly influenced by changes in values in society. Then there is an effort that places women in a central position, both in the public domestic area, as well as intellectual-spiritual territory. The need for a re-understanding of beautiful stigma is: soft, silent, slow, obedient, cute, small, simple, as the characteristics that are built in Jaipongan bihari dance where dance material is sourced from the tradition genre only because of data information and data exchange and culture and actor mobility is still very limited. Changes in the definition of beauty in the millennial era are energetic, agile, responsive, varied, as reflected in the Jaipongan kiwari. This change parallels the character of the fast-paced millennial era. Since the globalization era all data and cultural exchanges have taken place relatively quickly. Responsiveness is translated by the presence of various cultural influences in the form of dance texts.

For the creators and stylists, it is important to realize that the dance works are a medium of expression that is influenced and can influence the image of women. This requires careful consideration throughout the work process, including the selection of types of motion to represent ideas or themes that will affect the image and the image of women in performances and attributes of motion as well as costumes, themes, songs selected in a dance need to carefully consider social and cultural aspects.

For performers, it's time to realize that his body is not an inanimate object that can be controlled by creators or connoisseurs. Artists as individuals who have the role of expressing art, then he has the right to participate in selecting motion material or costumes that have no negative impact, both for himself and for the public. In fact, it is very important to realize that when expressing, performers are actively involved in building images in the community, for this he should be able to act as subjects with positive power and quality. This potential must be strengthened and grown in the performers.

The things that need to be understood jointly by the creators, actors, and connoisseurs are the meaning of private and public for women in the performing arts: private so far is understood as "hidden" physically, both directly not appearing in public and appearing in public but disguised her female identity. It should be realized that even though the place is

hidden, women have a vital position, role and potential. For example, the character Arimbi in the puppet, he was willing to sacrifice his life for his son Gatotkaca. Arimbi's courage needs to be listened to as a potential power. Furthermore, the goddess Sri, who is believed and believed by some Sundanese as the goddess of prosperity, has a position and role that is vital for human survival. Thus it can be said that private is not an obstacle for women in showing their potential.

Likewise, it is necessary to review the placement of women as objects of performance art. So far, the image of women has been shaped by society, meaning that it plays a passive role as an object of performing arts, even in folk performances where there is a meeting or direct physical contact between the perpetrator and the audience, the position of women is often disadvantaged. At this time it's time for women to change the image through their minds and bodies in the performing arts through the media.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Changes in the role of women in life need to be addressed properly, even though the contra at the beginning of change often occurs, it should be understood as a process of adaptation to new forms and structures. The same is true for changes in dance texts which were initially opposed by some traditional artists and the public, because all this time they always thought that tradition was established. Sundanese cultural values contained in the ideal characters of Sundanese women, namely cageur, bageur, bener, pintër, and singër. Cageur means goodness or physical health. Bageur means good in a spiritual sense. Bëñër has the meaning of resting on truth. Pintër means having intelligence or intelligence. Singër means agile, adept, and has the power of innovation in his life. These five things are the core of Sundanese women's ideal character, which in their realization can experience various changes in the form of text and context. By understanding the core character of the woman in more active role to show all her potential in various aspects of life in accordance with the demands of the times, without having to be constrained and limited by public or private matters, and objects or subjects.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

To express gratitude to Kemenristek Dikti for giving the Postgraduate Team grant. Also to the ICADE committee that has given the opportunity to be published at Atlantis Press.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] S. Kartadinata, *Politik Jati Diri: Telaah Filosofi dan Praksis Pendidikan Bagi Penguatan Jati Diri Bangsa*. Bandung: UPI Press, 2014.
- [2] S. Rustiyanti, "Sosok Perempuan dalam Masyarakat Sunda," In *Pesona Perempuan dalam Sastra dan Seni Pertunjukan*. Bandung: Sunan Ambu Press, 2016.
- [3] J. Storey, John, *Pop Culture and Culture Theory: Mapping Landscape Conceptual Cultural Studies translation from An Introductory Guide to Cultural Theory and Popular Culture*. Yogyakarta: Qalam, 2004.
- [4] E. Caturwati, "Sosok Perempuan dalam Masyarakat Sunda," In *Pesona Perempuan dalam Sastra dan Seni Pertunjukan*. Bandung: Sunan Ambu Press, 2009.

- [5] Vasja Roblek, Maja Mesko and Alojz Krapez, "A Complex View of Industry 4.0," SAGE Journal, April-June 2016, pp. 1-11.
- [6] E. Caturwati, "A woman in Sundanese culture" In *Pesona Perempuan dalam Sastra dan Seni Pertunjukan*. Bandung: Sunan Ambu Press, 2009.
- [7] J. Sumardjo, *Simbol-simbol Artefak Budaya Sunda (Tafsir-tafsir Pantun Sunda)*. Bandung: Kelir, 2003.
- [8] E. Sedyawati, *Pengetahuan Elementer Tari dan Beberapa Permasalahan Tari*. Jakarta: Direktorat Kesenian Proyek Pengembangan Kesenian, 1986.
- [9] T. Narawati, *Tari Sunda: Dulu, Kini dan Esok*. Bandung: Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (P4ST UPI) Pusat Penelitian dan Pengembangan Pendidikan Seni Tradisional, 2003.
- [10] S. Rustiyanti, "Sosok Perempuan dalam Masyarakat Sunda" dalam *Pesona Perempuan dalam Sastra dan Seni Pertunjukan*. Bandung: Sunan Ambu Press, 2016.
- [11] A. Boskoff, "Recent Theories of Social Change" in *Sociology and History: Theory and research*. London: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1964.
- [12] A. Hauser, *The Sociology of Art*. Bro. Kenneth J. Noerthoott. Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1982.