

The Existence of Ni Putu Ari Handayani as a Female Choreographer in Lombok

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to analyse dance through a feminist lens, specifically focusing on the work of Ni Putu Ari Handayani, a female choreographer in Lombok whose dance creations provide a manifestation of her presence and artistic contributions. This research employs a qualitative methodology using a case study design. Researchers employ qualitative methodologies to explore and comprehend societal issues that manifest in the region of Lombok. Moreover, the methodologies employed for data acquisition encompass interviews, documentation analysis, and literature review. The reviewer use the case study approach to offer descriptive and explanatory accounts of choreography that embodies the concept of existence. Furthermore, the present study incorporates Simone De Beauvoir's existentialist viewpoint. This research is grounded in Simone de Beauvoir's concept of existence. The dance works of Ni Putu Ari Handayani serve as a significant point of reference for examining the presence of women in Lombok. These works include Bisog Meniq Dance (2017), Awan Jiwa Dance (2017), and Perempuan Ibu Bumi Dance (2019). The study's findings indicate that the presence of Lombok women is manifested through dance performances, which concurrently serve as a means of public amusement. Ni Putu Ari Handayani plays a crucial role in the preservation of the cultural practises and customs of the Sasak people through her engaging dance performances. Ni Putu Ari Handayani's dance works serve as a valuable reference for women to assert their presence in society. This research sheds light on the societal importance of women, particularly in the context of Lombok, by highlighting the significance of female artists.

Keywords: Choreography, Dance Performance, Existence, Patriarchy, Culture

Introduction

Lombok is the largest island in West Nusa Tenggara and is populated by the Sasak tribe, as well as groups from Sumbawa, Bali, and Java, as well as ethnic Chinese who typically reside in the city of Mataram. The Sasak tribe of Lombok adheres to traditional values that date back to prehistory. There are traditions that are still practised, as well as traditions that are no longer practised due to the effects of modernization (Astuti, 2004). Tradition in the sense of

society as a whole is defined as a system that incorporates historical values that have been preserved. Nonetheless, the traditions and cultures of Lombok's distinct regions remain largely intact. This culture and tradition encompass a wide range of elements, including traditional rituals, wedding rituals, and art. The Sasak people of Lombok integrate a great deal of art as a series of events in their traditional rituals, such as at the nyongkolan event, which is a traditional Sasak wedding tradition accompanied by performances of traditional gendang beleq music and traditional dances.

Art as a part of Lombok's tradition and culture is inseparable from the role of those who continue to learn and preserve this art. The function in preserving this art is frequently disregarded as less significant or influential. In the meantime, art in one region will become extinct if its existence is not correctly preserved. Existence cannot be fully accepted in the arts, particularly in the field of dance, which is still positioned solely as entertainment and spectacle, particularly for males who consider women to be nothing more than an object of pleasure (Henri and Wahyu, 2013). Despite the fact that males also work as dancers, in this context the occupation of dancer is frequently associated with a negative connotation.

Background of The Research

This reviewer will discuss the existence of a female choreographer in Lombok, specifically Ni Putu Ari Handayani. According to De Beauvoir (2019), existence is a form of social existence that reflects something that appears to be equal for men and women. In this research, the existence of female choreographers in Lombok will be discussed. Despite having works of their own, female choreographers frequently do not receive positions or recognition. In her book titled *Enchantment of Women in Literature and Performing Arts*, Endang Caturwati (2009) asserts that women are fascinating entities that can be used as spectacle objects in art. It could be argued that women's role and function in the arts are not all that significant, despite the fact that they have produced numerous works of art that can be viewed by the public.

Literature Review

There are several studies related to the existence of women in dance such as the study conducted by Azura Abal Abas with the title *Feminism in (Contemporary Dance and Aida Redza's Life*, 2017). In this research, Azura reveals the era of Aida Redza's dance creations and Aida Redza's background in creating contemporary dance with the theme of feminism. In this research, Aida Redza has been creating contemporary dance for eight years and boldly raises the issue of injustice against women with the aim of defending and fighting for Malay women in her dance works.

Titik Putriningsih (2006) with the title *Dance Studies from a Gender Perspective*. Women in society always have limitations in social interaction. These boundaries have been established in social and cultural settings. Like art, female choreographers still find it difficult to find a place to perform. Previous studies conducted by Azura have looked at dance works from the point of view of feminist choreographer Aida Redza who fights for Malay women's rights. Meanwhile, Titik Putriningsih's study shows that it is still difficult for female choreographers to work. The works of female choreographers are only shown on certain occasions. Several female choreographers who have succeeded in presenting their dance works as the focus of this research are Sri Astuti from Yogyakarta and Inong from Surakarta. The two choreographers have created a social themed dance performance. In 2004 the "Women of Performing Arts and Interpretation" program was used by the two choreographers as a tool that not only has an aesthetic meaning but also functions as a critical perspective on the lives of

women who are treated unfairly. Female dancers are not only seen from their beautiful faces and bodies, but female dancers can also convey messages about the injustice they feel.

The dance that depicts women's struggles and women's strength is a study by Falahandani (2017) with the title *Revealing the Value of Struggle Through Limited Movement in the Work of Perjuangan Dance*. Intan's study is also similar to other studies that examine women's issues and women's struggles. In the study conducted by Intan, the focus is on the Perjuangan dance which displays the struggles of a mother in living her life. In the art of dance, women's emancipation has been shown. Women are considered to be more free to think, move, voice their opinions and be able to manage the household and interact with the community. The Perjuangan dance performances are presented in a limited space. The choreographer's goal in giving a performance in a confined space is to show a mother who has a disability but can struggle at home and outside the home. This work is dedicated so that people see the struggles of mothers as strong women.

Sari (2017) *Representation of Women in the Performance "Demi Masa: A Study of Dance"* by Alfianto. In this study, Ratna argues that the figure of a woman is seen from her subordinate position in society. The stigma in society is that women only deserve to be in the household. So that in the field of work, women are more positioned as subordinate than men. As given to women by society, women only deserve to be at home. In works of art, women are often only used as objects to explore their bodies in various styles or after works of art such as paintings, sculptures, films and performance art, women's bodies are presented in a sensual style. If one pays attention to a work of art, a woman's body is only to show her sensual part, not the position and role of women in life. In the dance work "Demi Masa" by Alfianto, Ratna Komala Sari tries to present the feminine and masculine sides of the female body in a dance performance. So, the female figure featured in the dance work "Demi Masa" is a myth related to the history that has occurred in today's society related to the woman herself. Then it will be revealed how the dancer's body shape is "masculine" and "feminine" through choreographic movements that are interconnected with the visuals displayed on the stage.

The above article has shown that women's work in dance art not only displays an aesthetic appearance, but also a strong female figure. Dance performances for women are a place to express their concerns about forms of violence against women and things that are unfair to women.

Research Methodology

To achieve the objectives of this research, the researcher used a qualitative analysis with a case study approach. This study is related to the community, namely the Sasak people in Lombok. Therefore, in order to examine society and understand existing social realities, researchers choose qualitative analysis rules to facilitate researchers analyzing social problems such as related issues and phenomena. The qualitative analysis method can be defined as a process of inquiry to understand social problems or human problems based on a comprehensive and complex picture through the in-depth views of informants (Creswell, 1994 in Lebar, 2009). This inquiry process is carried out by researchers to obtain comprehensive information about the study being carried out. In this case researchers and informants held regular meetings during the course of this study to obtain overall data. The main informant in this case is Ni Putu Ari Handayani as the creator of the dance. The data obtained by the researcher is through actual data from informants and in accordance with the facts that have occurred. In this case, there are facts about the dance creations created by Ni Putu Ari Handayani. Procedure Analysis of qualitative descriptive data was chosen because it can

describe the situation clearly and systematically, so that the data obtained by the researcher can be concluded to answer and solve research problems and achieve research objectives. This study's primary sample consisted of three dance performances choreographed by the first female choreographers in Lombok, two cultural experts and community leaders, and three ordinary individuals. The reviewer selected the first sample because it pertains to female dancers in Lombok and their perspectives on women, female dancers, and dance works that address issues pertaining to women. The second sample consists of a cultural specialist who will assist the expert in better comprehending Sasak culture. The third sample, the general public, will provide an overview of how society perceives Sasak culture, particularly in terms of women's roles and responsibilities. The process of data analysis is an analytical procedure that examines the significance of human words and actions (Width, 2021). According to Miles & Huberman (2014), this research employs data analysis techniques based on three simultaneous activity methods: data simplification, data presentation, and obtaining conclusions or verification.

Result and Discussion

There are several factors that explain ni putu's existence as a female choreographer, as follows:

General Background

Ni Putu Ari Handayani born in Ampenan, Mataram city, West Nusa Tenggara on September 14, 1985. The history of Ni Putu's education begins with the Kindergarten Tanjung Karang-Ampenan, Nusa Tenggara Barat (NTB), Indonesia. Continued at Tanjung Karang 2 Elementary School, NTB. State Junior High School 6 Mataram, NTB and continued to senior high school at SMK 3 Batu Bulan, Gianyar-Bali. Then the last education taken by Ni Putu Ari Handayani was a dance diploma program at the Indonesian Art Institute, Yogyakarta. After completing her education, Ni Putu focused on creating and adding to her artistic experience by creating many pieces of traditional and modern dance as well as contemporary.

Ni Putu Ari Handayani has had various experiences in the arts, such as in 2004 Ni Putu had the opportunity to study modern dance in Hamberg, Germany. It was during this recitation period that prompted Ni Putu to think more broadly in creating works of art so as to create works of modern and contemporary dance. Ni Putu was also an exchange student at a Malaysian arts school in 2006 and in 2007 she was once again awarded a prize in Malaysia as a dance director. At the same time, the dance work entitled Plat Blank was presented at the Malaysian Art Workshop. Her sensitivity to Sasak tradition and culture made him one of the best dance arrangers in the Sasak Culture event at the Yogyakarta Arts Festival in 2008 entitled Kereng. Kereng is the Sasak language which means cloth, where the use of cloth for Sasak women is very important, especially for married women.

Then in 2009 Ni Putu became one of the dancers with the title Long Table at the Indonesian Arts Festival in Jakarta. A dancer who represented Yogyakarta at the Gong Kebyar Festival, Surakarta in 2010 and the same year as make-up and costume artist for the Yogyakarta Arts Ambassador. In 2011, he represented East Kalimantan in Jakarta as a dance director and also a dancer with the title Mulek. The dance choreographer entitled Centil in 2012, represented the Bangli region at the Denpasar-Bali folk arts festival. Choreographer of a dance entitled Dirty Blood in 2014, on world drug day which was held in Mataram City, West Nusa Tenggara.

Ni Putu Ari Handayani has been taking a break for a year in creating dance works, namely in 2016 no works were created. After taking a break for a year, Ni Putu reinvented the dance piece in 2017. Some of the dance works created in 2017 are Kasmaran Dance which won 2nd place

at the FLS2N (National Student Art Competition Festival) in Mataram. FLS2N number 1 winner ranked high school in the city of Mataram with the title Barong Tengkok Dance. Again, won number 1 in the FLS2N event at the SMK (Vocational High School) ranking in the city of Mataram with the Nyirih Dance title, as well as the make-up and costume artist for the Kidang Dance in the high school FLS2N event in Mataram. Furthermore, as the best dance director in the youth dance festival in Mataram. The best make-up and dress artist at the Indonesian choreographer event in Berau, East Kalimantan. After several competitions accompanied by Ni Putu, he continued to create another work, namely the Bisok Meniq dance, which he provided for five months.

In 2018, the first winner of the FLS2N event was the Low School ranking and brought NTB to the national level with the Nyebok dance performance. Second place in the FLS2N event at the Middle School ranking with the Topat War dance title in NTB. Lapah dance choreographer at the West Lombok eniman Masuk Sekolah (GSMS) event. As a guest speaker at the FLS2N event in West Lombok Regency. As a guest speaker at the West Lombok Regency art workshop. The choreographer of the Awan Jiwa dance in an inter-ethnic context at Taman Budaya Mataram. At the same time, Ni Putu used this opportunity to present the Cloud Jiwa dance as a form of protest against the injustices faced by women in the household.

Ni Putu Ari Handayani's artistic experience was continued in 2019, namely as the choreographer for the Eggrang Tambok Dance which won 3rd place in the regional ranking at the FLS2N Middle School event. Performer for Pertiwi Dance at the FLS2N event in the Middle School ranking and as a trainer in the Lower School ranking and High School FLS2N Activities in West Lombok Regency. The director of the Kasih dance at the West Nusa Tenggara youth choreography event. Dance director Dedare Lempot at the West Nusa Tenggara Weaving Festival. As a resource person for art studios for elementary school and junior high school teachers in West Lombok district. Art speaker for elementary and junior high school students in West Lombok Regency, as well as speakers in gandrung dance art activities in West Lombok Regency. In this activity, Ni Putu explains how to dance the gandrung dance and the function of the gandrung dance, especially when a female dancer invites one of the men to dance together.

In addition, in 2020 Ni Putu became a guest speaker at the dance creation technical guidance event held by the Education and Culture Office of West Nusa Tenggara Province and in this activity the reviewer participated in an activity with Ni Putu Ari Handayani. In this activity, Ni Putu became a mentor in creating contemporary dance for two days accompanied by a reviewer. Ni Putu also took part in the Folk Dance of Krikaleri and Izmir Region workshops from Turkey- CIOFF International Marathon – CIOFF Folklore at Distance. Participants in the webinar "Criticism of Our Dance Now" in the dance department of the Faculty of Arts, Yogyakarta Art Institute. On this occasion Ni Putu focused more on how women create dance as criticism. Furthermore, Ni Putu became a dance trainer at the State Palace of the Republic of Indonesia on the Republic of Indonesia's Independence Day. At that event, Lombok was one of the representatives for the performing arts at the State Palace and Ni Putu was given the opportunity to present her dance work. Then as a jury for the Begending Begendang Festival held by the NTB Province Education and Culture Office and a jury for the West Nusa Tenggara Youth Dance Festival.

Ni Putu also has work experience in several schools and universities as a dance instructor at Sanata Darma University, Yogyakarta and as a dance trainer at Siwa Nata Raja Studio, Yogyakarta in 2007-2009. As dance lecturer at Hamzanwadi University, East Lombok in 2013-2014. As a teacher at SMKN 5 Mataram from 2014-2019. Curriculum teacher at Tadika Tunas

Daud Mataram from 2014-2019 and in 2016 Ni Putu Ari Handayani was a dance trainer at the German embassy for three months during the Republic of Indonesia's Independence Day event.

The existence of Ni Putu in dance works

There are many dance works that have been created by Ni Putu Ari Handayani and have become very popular works. There are three works by Ni Putu that will be highlighted in this study, namely: the dance of the mother earth woman, the bisok meni q dance and the cloud of soul dance. These three dance works have had a very extraordinary impact, namely as a reflection of the strength and existence of Sasak women.

Ni Putu Ari Handayani in an interview:

“It's not easy for me as a woman to dare to break away from the traditions that have been formed in society, but society also needs to see and be made aware that there are old traditions that need to be changed and there are also things that need to be perpetuated” (Interview, 2022)

Bisoq Meniq Dance



The Bisoq Meniq dance was created by Ni Putu Ari Handayani in (2017) which tells about the traditional Maulid ceremony in Bayan Village, North Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara. This dance shows the ritual process carried out by the Bayan people, especially the Bisoq Meniq process (washing rice) which is only permitted by women. Women in this dance only have a function and role as food providers.

Awan Jiwa Dance



Tari Awan Jiwa is the work of Ni Putu Ari Handayani which was created in (2017), this dance has a dark impression on her life. The story of a life filled with suffering caused by her own father causes Ni Putu to live a stronger life as a woman. Together with her mother, he had been tortured by her own biological father and he recounted the incident in a dance titled Cloud of the Soul. Interview with Ni Putu Ari Handayani:

“I hope that through the cloud of souls dance there will be no more violence against women and women will be given an open space to be able to speak” (Interview, March 3, 2022)

Perempuan Ibu Bumi Dance



Perempuan Ibu Bumi dance tells the story of a woman who dared to fight injustice caused by gold mining in Sekotong village, West Lombok, a strong woman, a brave woman who was able to stand up in the common room. This dance was created by Ni Putu Ari Handayani in 2019. Interview with Ni Putu Ari Handayani:

“The gold mine located in Sekotong village, West Lombok has opened my mind to create a work showing women who dare to fight injustice” (Interview, 2022)

The Existence of Ni Putu Is Based on The Theory Of Simone De Beauvoir

Existentialist feminism initiated by Simone De Beauvoir can be seen through her three thoughts about women, namely 1) Women's destiny and history, 2) Myths about women and 3) Women's lives. Through Simone De Beauvoir's three thoughts, the researcher tries to analyze Ni Putu's dance work which shows this situation. Simone De Beauvoir's thoughts and

Ni Putu's thoughts through the three works analyzed by the reviewers can be summed up as follows:

Fate and history of women

The destiny and history of women can be seen through Ni Putu's work entitled *Bisoq Meniq*. In *Bisoq Meniq*'s work, Ni Putu explains household chores that must be done by women. The social system has regulated women's lives, especially obedience and obedience to their husbands. Housework seems to only be a demand for women that doesn't need to be done by men. The *Bisoq Meniq* dance continues the *Bisoq Meniq Maulid* customary ritual, Kampung Bayan Lombok, Ni Putu provides an overview of the position of women in the household and in society.

Myths About Women

Women who are weak and lack sense are stereotypes fostered by the social system in society. Likewise in the Sasak community, women have been given narrow boundaries and space in carrying out their activities. Actually the stereotype about weak women is a myth that develops in society. Meanwhile, women may actually carry out activities like men if they are taught from a small age the same activities as those carried out by men. In the dance entitled *Wanita Ibu Bumi*, Ni Putu depicts a woman who is able to fight injustice through her rebellion against a gold mine in Sekotong Village, West Lombok.

Women's Life

According to Simone De Beauvoir, women's lives are more limited when they are married. The institution of marriage for society is something that must be obeyed by both men and women. However, this obedience is usually only imposed on women. This gives the impression that women are exposed to domestic violence. Ni Putu conveys the life of women through the dance *Awan Jiwa* which represents women who are oppressed.

Conclusion

According to Ni Putu Ari Handayani's body of work, there are numerous dance pieces with traditional themes. Ni Putu constructs dance works that can be performed not only by adults but also by adolescents and children. Ni Putu's works also characterise many societal occurrences in an effort to comprehend them; he then transforms these descriptions into dance works as a means of information transmission. Ni Putu is without a doubt a choreographer who can exist in a culture that lacks reverence for women dancers. Traditions and culture in society, particularly in the Sasak community, will continue to exist thanks to Ni Putu's dance compositions. Even though Ni Putu's dance techniques have undergone modernization to keep up with the times, they are still part of the traditional dance movement. Art will continue to exist in society if someone can preserve it.

Ni Putu's existence as a female choreographer in Lombok is demonstrated by her creation of various dance works between 2006 and the present. Ni Putu is not only an existential choreographer with her dance works, but she has also preserved the existence of Lombok's culture and traditions through dance performances in order to prevent their extinction. As a result of her training at dance school and as a dance scholar, Ni Putu has developed a sensitivity for creating a variety of dance works as a choreographer. Ni Putu's sensitivity becomes increasingly apparent as she continuously produces dance works in both traditional and contemporary genres. Her existence is also evidenced by her courage as a woman from

Lombok to endure as a dancer and choreographer, despite the fact that women who work in the arts are frequently stigmatised by society. Thus, it can be demonstrated that Ni Putu exists as a dance choreographer in Lombok. In addition, this research can serve as a resource for future scholars who examine the existence of choreographers in the creation of dance works. Through her dance performance, Ni Putu Ari Handayani boldly conveys the true condition of Sasak women. The hope is that society, and women in particular, will see and understand the position of women in society. However, through the theme presented, Ni Putu was able to demonstrate the strength of her work through the displayed dance performance. These works can encourage other women to be more confident and courageous in their pursuit of social justice. The community can see how women are treated in this task, but they can also find the strength to persevere and fight injustice.

For members of the Sasak community who are artists, this can also serve as a reference to new works containing social values that can be applied as life teachings. In Sasak society, the number of works that are exclusively traditional makes it difficult to generate new concepts. However, Ni Putu's work can serve as a guide for other performers who wish to develop innovative concepts. Ni Putu's work is also visible for Sasak women who become "cilokak" dancers, i.e. dancers who use traditional and modern musical instruments that are paraded around the village during celebrations, and can help them become more professional dancers with existing and pure values.

Through Ni Putu's research, dance performances can be used not only as a spectacle, but also as a guide. Ni Putu Ari Handayani, as a woman born into the Sasak tribe, cannot avoid performing dance works that are exclusively modern in nature and derived from the Sasak people's traditional values. In fact, Ni Putu depicts the forms of movement from traditional Sasak dance in her works as a means of preserving the existing art. Ni Putu's work, however, presents something novel with a new form and a modification of movement that is not repetitive and appears contemporary. Ni Putu is also capable of performing contemporary dance performances in her work. It is anticipated that viewing Ni Putu's dance work will inspire an appreciation for regional art that can be performed outside of Lombok.

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