

# Millennial Spirit in the Producing of Traditional Theatre “*Tukang Asahan*” Applying Pavis Method

Yadi Mulyadi\*

Theatre Department  
Institut Seni Budaya Indonesia (ISBI) Bandung  
Bandung, Indonesia  
\*yadi\_mulyadi@isbi.ac.id

**Abstract**—The study aims to reveal the creative process of the producing of traditional theatre “*Tukang Asahan*” the play script of Wahyu Wibisana. *Tukang Asahan* covers three styles of traditional theatre, they are *Sandiwara Sunda*, *Gending Karesmen* and *Longser*. The study is conducted to the fifth semester students taking traditional theatre subject for the three consecutive years. The producing of traditional theatre here uncovers the successive concretization exposed as Patrice Pavis method in mapping the ideas of transforming theatre work. It is to find out about the transformation of the dramatic text, written, then translated, analyzed dramaturgically, staged and received by the audience. The method will show how the artists contribute each other in designing the performance form and narrating the cultural values surrounding. The producing of the traditional theatre performance is bound by the target culture and the communities supporting the work, especially the audience and the actors. The process of responding the target culture and the supporting people shows the power of millennial as the target audience. More specifically, the result shows *Tukang Asahan* performance concretize the spirit of millennial in the producing of the traditional theatre.

**Keywords:** *traditional theatre, millennial, Tukang Asahan, Patrice Pavis method, performance*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Millennials are the generation between 18 – 34 years of age in 2015 [1]. However, there would be different characteristic between those 18 years old and 34 years old. The young generation from millennials especially those living in the city like Bandung are those very closed to the impact of globalization since they are bound to social media and internet. Millennials are the leaders of online practices but they are by no means the exclusive users [1]. Globalization wipes out the cultural borders. Being not anticipated, this situation may cause the millennials to be uprooted from their local identity. However, millennials are also potential to expose art and culture if they are involved as the producers. As stated by Berger [1], millennials are trendsetter, their behavior can be a predictive model for where the general population is moving. In other words, millennials are not only as subjects of cultural production but also the producers themselves. Moreover, based on population census, millennials in Bandung are the dominant population in number [2].

Millennials being dominated by abundance of information and technology tools are more opened to the way of life in the global society. The society is taking role in shaping their ideas and behavior. They imitate and duplicate their idol more easily. On the other side, they are more directed to think and behave out of the box, not generally accepted to their surroundings. They tend to show off and become overconfidence. Millennials are narcissistic. Their use of social media contributes to the narcissism [1]. This characteristic more or less keeps their distance from tradition. Tradition or traditional arts are considered as out of date and not fervent for their personal trending. This disruption condition among millennials is the consequence of digitalization and internet of thing [3].

This condition, however, is the opportunity for the art activists to empower the potentials and energy of the millennial. It is the challenge for the art practitioners to construct the cultural art into the character and spirit of millennials. As Frederic Charles Petit states that “...millennials are not merely wandering from traditional behaviors; rather they are setting the new course for older and younger generations to follow” [4]. In this case, the power of millennials can be utilized to construct the existence of traditional arts.

However, the target to involve and to stage traditional theatre which uses Sundanese language to the fifth semester as millennial generation is not easy. The staging of traditional theatre requires not only acting skill but also dancing and singing from the actors. The process is not easy because theatre students do not have specific subject for dancing and singing. Besides, most of the millennials are not familiar to the accent, vocabularies, and choice of diction of Sundanese language. Moreover, the form of traditional theatre is oriented to the open acting requiring character flexibility, improvisation, and humor skills. In fact, the time for practice is also limited since the fifth semester students have some other practical subjects which also need practice or rehearsal time. However, those difficulties stimulate the research to be conducted.

## II. TRADITIONAL THEATRE AND MILLENNIAL GENERATION

The study is conducted to the fifth semester students taking traditional theatre subject for the three consecutive years in ISBI Bandung. The fifth semester students are the youngest millennial generation. The subject of traditional theatre is given

for three semesters. The introduction to traditional theatre on the 2nd semester, the form of traditional theatre on the 3rd semester, and the practice of traditional theatre on the 5th semester. In this fifth semester, the students should perform one traditional theatre, one performance for one class.

For the last three years since 2016 until 2018, the script chosen for the performance is “*Tukang Asahan*” written by Wahyu Wibisana. There are three forms of traditional theatre in “*Tukang Asahan*” representing traditional theatre existing in West Java and Banten. The three forms are: *Sandiwara*, *Longser*, and *Gending Karesmen*. The three forms cannot be separated from Sundanese music *Karawitan*. The main characteristic of traditional theatre are the strength of music, dance, and song in the performance [5,6].

More clearly, the three forms in traditional theatre “*Tukang Asahan*” are built based on Sundanese *Karawitan* music. On the other words, the performers are required to have skills on singing and dancing based on *Karawitan* music. However, the millennial appreciation toward the three forms is significantly poor, otherwise those few who are already involved in the group of traditional theatre. Therefore, there should be novel efforts to approach millennials. One of them is by giving the touch of digital which is closed to the millennial world. The text transformation of “*Tukang Asahan*” script comprising of dialogue, songs, and dance movements oriented to *Kasundaan* (Sundanese traits) is made into digital *Karawitan*. In this way, the process of dancing and singing practice becomes more economical and can be done anywhere.

Millennial spirits regarding digital things and practicality are the key point to begin the production process of traditional theatre “*Tukang Asahan*”. The script uses Sundanese language in three forms of West Java traditional theatre, *Sandiwara Sunda*, *Longser* and *Gending Karesmen*. These three forms for the millennials are new. They cannot initially differentiate each of the forms. They are especially new to *Sandiwara Sunda* and *Gending Karesmen*. Taking a position between millennial and traditional script becomes a spirit to prepare a design of the performance production. The design articulates the two contrasting elements to explore the millennial expressions toward their culture. The exploration should be economical and must be cultural in which containing meaningful series of practices [7].

### III. MILLENNIAL IN THE CREATIVE PROCESS OF “*TUKANG ASAHAN*”

There are two main dramatic ideas on the form of “*Tukang Asahan*” production. They are:

#### A. *The Script*

A script is the main source of designing ideas of dramatic text. It covers the cultural concept regarding the setting and the conflicts. There is a structure of the cultural form of the story in the script.

#### B. *Performer (Millennial Actors)*

The performers or the actors of “*Tukang Asahan*” are the media of transformation from the first ideas, that is the script.

The performers are the media of the source culture. In this case, the performers are the millennial generation the target of the ideas in the script.

The reality of two ideas in the performance “*Tukang Asahan*” is the performance of the dramatic text as the context and the contextual. The reception of the performers toward the text show the collaboration between the creative process and the cultural ideas, the script and the performers. Each of them may show their identity. “*Tukang Asahan*” is traditional theatre which has no distance between the performers and the audience. The creative process can be accepted as the new form of the production process. The steps to be conducted in the creative process of “*Tukang Asahan*” are:

- Identifying the three forms of West Java traditional theatre, *Sandiwara Sunda*, *Longser* and *Gending Karesmen* by observing the documentation of the three forms.
- Analyzing the script directly in the process through: reading, expressing dialogue while acting and singing.
- Practicing the scenes of fighting choreography, princess attendant, and the kingdom.
- Fitting the costume with link and match alternative to the characters by proposing the traditional costumes for strengthening the character.

The creative process of “*Tukang Asahan*” to the fifth semester students during the three consecutive years (2016 – 2018) show differences. These differences are based on the millennial interpretation to the characters. For example, to the characterization of *Kabayan* and *Iteung* as his wife in the scenes of *Longser*. In 2016, the first year, *Iteung* is depicted as a woman with fashionable attire and high heels. On the second year, *Iteung* is pictured as a slim person but with masculine appearance and character. On the third year, *Iteung* is presented as a comedian. However, one thing in common about the interpretation toward the character of *Iteung* is that she is not anymore an innocent and fully obedient to her husband. The character of *Iteung* refers to the millennial character. She is not only the complement object in the family but she can be much more than that. As depicted in figure 1 and 2.



Fig. 1. In 2016, *Iteung modis*.



Fig. 2. In 2017, Iteung Maskuline.



Fig. 3. Iteung comedian.

The form of performance produced by the millennials are solid as the one which have innovation in the form of traditional performance. The process of “*Tukang Asahan*” uses the concept of “series of concretizations” by Patrice Pavice as described in fig 4 [8].

In the creative process of “*Tukang Asahan*” performance, the script is positioned as to, which is the virtual ideas of the text. The script contains the artistic concept as well as the conflicts between the characters. In the series of the process, it should be known the culture target. By having determined the audience and the target culture to be obtained, there would be

ideas for the performance form which is adjusted to the culture target or the audience (T4). In the process of the production until the staging (T1, T2, and T3) there is a reception between the millennial performers and the Sundanese script “*Tukang Asahan*”.

The director takes control here by guiding the reception to the nowadays viewpoint. The script with Sundanese language. The script with Sundanese language and Sundanese attitude is brought to the setting without ignoring the identity of millennial Sundanese. The characters in “*Tukang Asahan*” are presented successfully as the character needed as well as with dancing and singing. The audience can enjoy the scenes and the conflicts in the performance. The essence of theatre arts is to make believe. If performers can make audience believe what they are doing, it is then enough [8]. The using of digital gamelan in the performance and the creative process enable the performers to practice singing and dancing accompanied by music in their mobile gadget.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] A.A. Berger, *Cultural Perspectives on Millennials*. Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.
- [2] Unknown, “BPS” [Online]. Retrieved from <https://bandungkota.bps.go.id>
- [3] Unknown, “Pengertian Disrupsi dan Contohnya,” [online]. Retrieved from <https://romeltea.com/pengertian-disrupsi-dan-contohnya>
- [4] F.C. Petit, “Millennials: Wanderers or Trailblazers?” [Online]. Retrieved from <https://www.mediapost.com/publications/article/287617/millennials-wanderers-or-trailblazers.html>
- [5] N. Riantiarso, *Kitab Teater Tanya Jawab Seputar Seni Pertunjukan*. Jakarta: Grasindo, 2011.
- [6] T.F. Awuy, *Teater Indonesia Konsep Sejarah Problema*. Jakarta: Dewan Kesenian Jakarta, 1999.
- [7] C. Barker, *Cultural Studies Teori & Praktik*. Yogyakarta: KreasWacana, 2008.
- [8] P. Pavis, *Theatre at the Crossroads of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1992.