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THE EXISTENCE OF BALINESE MASK DANCE DRAMA IN THE MILLENNIAL GENERATION IN GIANYAR REGENCY

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This qualitative research aims to examine the phenomenon and analyze the forms of existence of the Balinese Mask Dance Drama among the millennial generation in Gianyar Regency. Traditionally, this art demands multi-competency and a *pawintenan* ritual, usually performed by mature dancers. However, contemporary observation shows that millennials are actively involved, significantly influencing the evolution of art due to their distinct lifestyle. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The analytical framework used is the aesthetics of existentialism. The results demonstrate that millennial mask artists ensure the art's existence through specific innovations. These include: integrating dance movements that imitate viral trends (such as TikTok dances) while maintaining core Balinese movements; mask shape innovations (e.g., movable mouth parts); emphasizing costume colors; and using multiple languages (Indonesian, English, slang) to address current social dynamics. Furthermore, digital media is leveraged for accompaniment music and promotion, serving as a primary learning source.

Keywords: Balinese Mask Dance Drama, Mask Dance Drama Existence, Millennial Mask, Millennial Generation

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INTRODUCTION

The Balinese Mask dance drama is a traditional Balinese dance drama performed with masks, featuring traditional characteristics. The Balinese Mask dance drama was initially better known as *the Pajegan* mask. Pajegan mask is a type of Balinese performing art in the form of a dance drama performed by a dancer. A dancer who plays it *majeg* (performing all the characters) in the story (Bandem & deBoer, 2004, p. 20). In its development, this mask dance drama is performed by more than one person, sometimes by two or five (*panca* masks), and some mask characters are also combined in the *prembon* dance drama (*perimbunan*) (Dibia, 2012). The Balinese Mask dance drama is associated with the *Dalem Siddhakarya* mask, which is related to a sacred offering in the Yadnya ceremony. In Balinese Mask performance art, there are two types of characters based on the carrying technique. The first character is a *kolok* mask (a silent mask)/ *panglembar* (danced as the opening of the performance), played with a *bungkulan tapel* (full-face mask), demonstrating dance movements according to the mask character, for example, *Keras* Mask, *Old* Mask, *Bujuh* Mask, and *Monyer* Mask. The second character is the *pangrawos* mask (talking mask); playing this mask requires more dialogue, though the dance element is still used to affirm the character's identity. In the *pangrawos* mask, they are not only required to be able to do dialogue but also sing several types of *tembang* that are included in the aspect of *Dharmagita*, such as *sekar alit* (*pupuh*), *sekar madya* (*kidung*), *sekar agung* (*kakawin*), *sloka*, and *palawakya* according to the characters performed (Pastika, 2022, p. 12).

Many competencies that prospective dancers must master in performing Balinese Mask plays affect the regeneration process. Usually, as a whole, a Balinese artist dares to perform Balinese Mask material if he is already an adult/old, aged 35-50 (Strawson, 2014, p. 300). Strawson's observations concluded that at least one person who will study and present the Balinese Mask performance must learn about traditional literature as the material in the performance. In addition, when constructing the performance structure as a whole, a part of the ritual must be performed, especially regarding the character of the *Siddhakarya* mask. This character in the structure of the Balinese Mask performance appears at the end by carrying a *kakereb* (cloth with a picture of Balinese sacred symbol) and carrying *sekarura* (rice dyed yellow/turmeric and containing *uang kepeng*); in the performance, the dancer will say mantras and *ucap-ucap* using the Kawi language, and mantras with Sanskrit (Pastika, 2022, p. 13). To dance this *Siddhakarya* mask, a dancer must go through a *pawintenan ritual* to purify *the angga sarira* (body) and increase spiritual power because this dance is included in the sacred aspect that is connected to the Yadnya ceremony (Pastika & Sukerni, 2022, p. 26).

The complexity and some special requirements for presenting the Balinese Mask performing art have led a few artists to pursue it. This researcher observed the series of *Panca* Mask Parades at the Bali Arts Festival (PKB) from 2014 to 2018. The participants representing each Regency/City throughout Bali are at least 30-40 years old. Several times, there were participants under 25, but they only danced the *panglembar* mask. In addition, very few mask dance artists in the young age range are familiar with *pangrawos* masks or can perform all the existing characters, unless they are graduates of formal performing arts education programs, such as SMKN 3 Sukawati or the Indonesian Bali Institute of the Arts. However, over the last 3 years, starting in 2020, many young artists have emerged who perform high-quality mask dance dramas. The provisional suspicion is that Batuan Village in Sukawati District, Gianyar Regency, has initiated many mask competitions. The first mask performance competition was held at the *Panglembar* Mask Competition 2018, followed by other similar competitions. The number of cultural arts activities with the Balinese Mask Dance Drama theme has led to considerable involvement among young artists, especially in Gianyar Regency. For example, the competition at the end of 2023 is the *Bondres* Mask Competition at the Sukawati Art Festival. In the competition, the Balinese Mask Dance Drama featured the characters *Penasar Kelihan* and *Penasar Cenikan*, after which the dancers could change their

masks using *bondres* masks (funny characters). The enthusiasm of young artists in this millennium for participating in the competition is evidenced by the 28 participants.

The millennial generation, born from the 1980s to the 2000s, has a lifestyle that adapts to the development of the digital world as it exists today (Ahmad, 2020, p. 40). Today, the development of the digital world has made gadgets part of everyday life. Art is also one of the aspects that has a significant influence, especially Balinese Mask Dance Drama. As discussed above, this type of art was less in demand among young artists, but now it is in demand among young artists. The enthusiasm of artists from the millennial generation is increasing. Theoretically, each generation has a role in preserving traditional art and culture in a region (Raihan et al., 2023, p. 47). If referring to the conditions and habits of the millennial generation in the digital era, the phenomenon is the opposite of hypotheses and studies by other researchers on the digital world's impact on the millennial generation, specifically discussing the survival and preservation of traditional performing arts. The increasing enthusiasm of millennial-generation artists in Gianyar Regency indicates a shift in artistic style, marked during the COVID-19 pandemic by cutting-edge works using digital media. For example, several virtual performances have been used as an agenda for implementing PKB 2021 and hybrid art performances in PKB in 2021 (Pastika, 2021, p. 72).

The Balinese Mask dance drama has existed for a long time, as evidenced by its association with the Yadnya ceremony. However, the increasing participation of the millennial generation, who are directly involved as dancers in the Balinese Mask Dance Drama, will advance its development in facial and formal art. The easiest thing to observe is the use of "millennial generation-style" language among several characters in the Balinese Mask Dance Drama. Language styles among the millennial generation tend to vary in the absorption of foreign languages (Sukatmo Sukatmo, 2022, p. 65). Other changes resulting from the millennial generation's involvement in Gianyar Regency's arts development need to be studied in depth.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative method with a field research design. This approach was specifically chosen to conduct an in-depth examination of the phenomenon and the various forms of innovation surrounding the Balinese Mask Dance Drama among the millennial generation in Gianyar Regency. The research aims for a holistic understanding of how contemporary lifestyles and demands influence and reshape this traditional performing art, as evidenced by the article's findings. The research location encompassed seven sub-districts in Gianyar Regency: Sukawati, Blahbatuh, Ubud, Tampaksiring, Tegalalang, Payangan, and Gianyar District. The research sample began with the selection of seven key informants, one from each sub-district. It was subsequently expanded using a snowball technique, resulting in a total of 54 informants distributed throughout the region. Data were collected through several methods: observation of Balinese Mask performances, direct interviews, distribution of e-forms to key informants, and documentation of the performances.

The data analysis was conducted within the framework of existentialism. This framework is crucial because, as Earnshaw (2006, p. 7) explains, existentialism highlights that "...total responsibility in total solitude, wasn't this the revelation of our freedom?" This is relevant to how millennial artists use their creative freedom to express themselves and redefine the art form. According to Raihan et al. (2023, p. 48), existence is not rigid and stagnant but somewhat flexible. It undergoes development or vice versa, depending on the individual's ability to actualize his potential. Furthermore, this framework is supported by Soewarlan's (2015, p. 212) view that the existence of art is an effort to "integrate groups, find meaning, identity, and solidarity" through the creation of pleasant and functional symbolic forms (entertainment, communication, and symbolism) generated by the individual potential of the artists.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Research Result

Given the research location in Gianyar Regency, the researcher divided the data collection zones into sub-districts: Sukawati, Blahbatuh, Ubud, Tampaksiring, Tegalalang, Payangan, and Gianyar District. For the seven key informants in each sub-district of Gianyar Regency, the e-form distribution process *was* carried out independently. This technique is included in the *snowball technique*, with the precision of the subject of other informants determined by the field-assisted key informant. There are 54 accumulated informants spread across seven sub-districts in Gianyar Regency. The data indicates that the highest millennial artist participation is in Sukawati District, followed by Blahbatuh District.

The involvement of the millennial generation in Balinese Mask Dramatari in Gianyar Regency is increasing. This is evidenced by the many cultural arts festivals titled Mask Competition held in various places in the Gianyar Regency Area, both organized by art institutions and incorporated into larger series of activities by government institutions such as schools, villages, and several other Gianyar Regency government agencies. The data collected showed that 54 informants reported an increase in the number of millennial artists participating in Balinese Mask Dramatari art activities.

In addition, some data were found on the implementation of cultural festivals, including a Balinese Mask Drama performance art competition in Gianyar Regency over the last 4 years. The Bali Mask Competition was held 18 times in Gianyar Regency from 2021 to 2024. Various parties organised it, including Regency Government Institutions, Villages, Art Communities, and Educational Institutions. This shows the people of Gianyar's enthusiasm for the Balinese Mask Dramatari. The data findings reveal several innovative aspects of the millennial generation's involvement in the Balinese mask dance drama in Gianyar Regency. The innovations carried out can be seen in the following table:

Table 1. The Original Version of the Balinese Mask Dance Drama and its Innovations

(Source: Researcher's Observations, 2021-2024)

Element	Original	Innovations
Dance movement	<i>abab patopengan</i>	the addition of elements of viral movements on social media, such as TikTok dance and other movements
Mask	adapting to the character through the forms of traditional masks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovation from the results of the exploration of the shape of the mask following the character in the play • Innovation in the form of <i>ciplak-ciplak masks</i> • Bondres Mask Innovation imitates Bondres Makeup • Sidhakarya's demonic mask innovation
Costume	Dominant colors of gold, red, and black	Matching color innovation
Dialogue	using the Balinese and Kawi languages	Use of foreign languages and slang
Music	Using Gamelan	Digital Music Usage

Discussion

Dibia (2013) mentioned that the Balinese mask dance drama can be divided into four groups: Panglembar Mask, Curious Mask, *Ratu* Mask, *Pengabih* Mask (Patih/Pedanda), and *Bondres Mask*. Analyzing the forms of existence in the Balinese Mask Dance Drama by the millennial generation in Gianyar Regency seems to require beginning by describing the performance's aesthetic forms.

1. Dance Movement Form

The island's distinctive cultural identity characterizes Balinese dance movements. The interweaving of aesthetic and expressive movements is visualised through attitudes and limb movements that differ from those of other Indonesian dances and even from those of dances worldwide. The movements used are inseparable from the four outlines of Balinese dance movements: *agem*, *tandang*, *tangkis*, and *tangkep*. The body posture in Balinese dance can be seen from the head-to-toe posture known as *agem*. *Agem* is the basic attitude of Balinese dance and is used in all types of traditional Balinese dances, including creative dances that develop Balinese dance movements (Pastika & Putra, 2024, p. 26). *Tandang* refers to the group of foot movements, *hand* movements, and *facial* expressions/expressions (Prayitna Dewi & Satria, 2020, p. 17). Overall, *the agem* is divided into two parts, namely *the tengawan* (right) and *the ngebot* (left) (Dibia, 2013, p. 30).

Furthermore, Dibia (2013, p. 30) explained that the difference in *agem* attitude lies in the dancer's placement of the fulcrum of body weight. If the weight is on the right leg, it is called *agem tengawan*, and vice versa. *Agem tengawan* and *ngebot* differ in each type of Balinese dance, although technically, the attitude is the same. The dance movements in the Balinese Mask Dance Drama still use Balinese dance movements (men) with *agem patopengan* (Pastika, 2022, p. 12). *Agem patopengan* is a type of Balinese men's dance *agem* distinguished by its *abah* (characteristics of carrying/movement style). Dibia (2013, p. 59) explained that, in addition to body position, body weight points, and leg positions in *agem*, there are also features that distinguish the form of *agem* across several types of Balinese dance, namely the movement style characteristic of the tara type called *abah*. *Agem patopengan*, used in the Balinese Mask dance drama, is closely related to *agem* and the treasury of dance movements used in the Gambuh dance drama. The attitude of *agem patopengan* is, in principle, the same as *agem* men's dance, *agem tengawan*, and *ngebot*. However, the apparent difference lies in the position of the hands: wider open (*mapah*), lower than the shoulder position, and with the palms facing down.

Regarding the treasury of movements associated with the masks' characteristics, one unique feature of Balinese mask dance is the use of the mask itself. Each mask worn by the dancer represents a character, ranging from aristocratic figures and commoners figures. The movements are often influenced by the characters they portray, creating an engaging visual experience for the audience. Millennial mask dancers in Gianyar Regency seem to have understood the *paileh* (of each existing mask dance, even though the quality of the dance movements is different. The dance movements performed in the Balinese Mask Dance Drama by the millennial generation are not much different from those of previous generations. It can even be said that they dive into and dig dance repertoires from previous mask artists. Agung Giri stated that the *paileh* (dance structure and movement phrase) used to dance the Dalem Arsawijaya Mask Dance uses the style of *Gung Kak Cebang* (one of the well-known mask artists from Cebang, Gianyar) (interview, August 27, 2024)

Millennial mask dancers take advantage of the space and learning opportunities to explore personal styles considered the best and most comfortable. This is an effort to enrich the diversity of the *paileh* and to directly preserve the styles of great artists who have even passed away, as a record of their artistic achievements. Nevertheless, it is still the same as explaining some of the movement treasures found in the previous mask dance. The difference is only a little: the way it is performed, the intensity of the energy, the quality, and the volume of one dance movement performed. Some movements that have just been discovered in performances by the millennial generation are spontaneous, incorporating, or simply expressive. These movements are usually performed in funny characters, such as in the *Bujuh/Bancuk* Mask dance, *Monyer* Mask, and *Bondres* Mask. Movements demonstrating the use of gadgets, calling the audience, or viral movements from social media, such as *TikTok dancing*, were also found. Although the movement is spontaneous and improvised to make *the audience laugh*, it still follows the music's rhythm and accompaniment. In addition, it was

also found that the use of subtle princess dance movements on some bondres characters, or even the Old *Eluh* (female) Mask dance, such as *nyalud* (movement like taking water), *ngegol* (hip movement to the side), and others.

2. Development of the Shape of the Mask

Masks in Balinese Mask Dance Drama are an integral element that symbolizes character and social status in Balinese society during the palace-centric era (Dana, 2011). Masks are made from wood, usually from *pule* wood or other types such as *sandat* wood, *dabdab wong*, *waru*, and others. In this performance, the mask shape reflects characterization and depicts the social hierarchy in Balinese culture. The affirmation of social strata is seen in the masks used and movements on several characters that show their social position. Traditional Balinese performances that use plays from epics and history always carry the concept of social strata, which are differentiated into *Puri*, *Purohita*, and *Para* (Sugita & Pastika, 2021, p. 22). *Puri* means "palace" and refers to a group of court officials, kings, patih, and people in strategic positions in the government, including a series of genealogical or descendant lines. *Purohita* signifies a priest, *bhagawanta* or *panditha*, a saint with duties regarding ceremonies, sacred teachings, and royal advisors. While *para* refers to the people outside the palace (commoners) and the servants/who serve in the palace (*parekan*).

One of the innovations made by millennial mask artists on *Patih* Mask is the creation of new patterns of *Patih* Mask shapes that still retain traditional mask shapes. In addition, it excavates the forms of *kekunan* (ancient) masks, imitating those of ancient masks/statues usually found in various museums. The unique feature is the use of Gajah Mada's narrow-eyed mask (see figure 1-left) to convey a tough, ruthless character. In addition, a *Patih* Mask was found, made of *ciplak-cilak* (see figure 1-right).



Figure 1. Keras Mask Innovation

(Source: Left, Middle: Doc. Researcher, 2024, right: Doc. Made Kara, 2022)

The 2nd *Panglembar* mask is the Old Mask. Dancing the Old Mask is felt to be the same as resisting emotional turmoil and impulsivity because of hearing the accentuation of accompanying music. This dance is not easy for new dancers and requires a further understanding of the character. This dance is performed without dialogue or *tembang* (Mariasa, 2015). The development refutes Mariasa's claim by showing that it is evident in millennial mask artists in Gianyar Regency. Made Puasa, a mask artist from Tegalalang, Gianyar, presented a performance of the Old Mask Dance, accompanied by monologues and *tembang*. He revealed that at first, he often watched the Old Mask Dance performance, which was filled with *sasendonan* songs performed by his other dancers. Then, he took the initiative to use the *Panambak* Mask (a type of mask in the Barong dance drama) with an old character to perform the Old Mask Dance in the Balinese Mask Dance Drama. *The panambak* mask is a

ciplak-ciplak mask that allows him to do monologues and *songs directly*. The mask with the characteristics of Fasting was then called the Waky Werdha Mask (interview July 1, 2024).



Figure 2. Werdha Waky Mask

(Source: Doc. Puasa, 2024)

Millennial mask artists also developed *bondres* masks. *Bondres* refers to a group of funny characters in several dance dramas in Bali, such as *Calonarang*, *Prembon*, and Mask Dance Dramas. Some of the *bondres* masks that usually appear in Balinese Mask dance dramas include *bondres bongol* (deaf), *keta* (stuttering/stammering), *cungih* (cleft lip), *kejos* (buck teeth), *tiga roda* *bondres* (a familiar name for the type of 3-toothed *bondres*), *bondres eluh jantuk* (prominent forehead women), and others. Regarding innovation in masks, Joni Artawan made a *Tombong bondres* mask. *Tombong* is a stage name he often performs to perform jokes/*bondres mapulas* (with makeup). *Tombong's bondres* mask is made to imitate the makeup form of the *Tombong* character he brings. Apart from Joni, several *bondres* artists also do the same thing, such as comedians *Sapilir*, *Kacut*, and others (interview, August 1, 2024)



Figure 3. The Character of Tombong in Bondres Mapulas and the Mask

(Source: Doc. Researcher, 2021-2024)

In addition, *Siddhakarya* Masks have also begun to be innovated. The *Dalem Sidhakarya* Mask is a persona of the *Brahmana Keling* figure. The *Brahmana Keling* are priests who come from Keling (Java). The *Dalem Sidhakarya* is a *bisheka* (title) given by the King of Bali, Dalem Waturenggong, after the *Brahmana Keling* returned to Sweca Pura (the kingdom) after being expelled by Dalem Waturenggong. This is in accordance with the story in the *Babad Be Bali Sidhakarya*, which states that *Brahmana Keling* claimed to have a

brotherly relationship with the King of Bali. However, upon his arrival in Bali, he was expelled due to his shabby, tattered appearance (Candra & Wardana, 2019, p. 17).

One of the millennial artists in Gianyar Regency created a *Sidhakarya* Mask that looks different. The artist is named Mayun from Bayad, Payangan, Gianyar. He created the form of *Sidhakarya* by emphasizing the creepy look on his face. It is characterized by a long *padang astra* (temple fangs) and colors that tend to look *daki* (dirty). The color of *Sidhakarya* Masks is usually milky white or greenish. However, in its development, many newly made *Sidhakarya* Masks deliberately look old-fashioned. This is expected to add a haunted impression to the *Sidhakarya* Mask.



Figure 4. Sidhakarya Mask Innovation

(Source: Doc. Mayun, 2018)

3. Costume Innovation

Mask artists in Gianyar Regency made several innovations related to the costumes used in the Balinese Mask Dance Drama. One of the most visible is the use of rare costume colors. As shown in Fig. 5, the colors on the costumes form a harmonious palette, including red, gold, white, black, green, and others. However, one of the changes made by the artist, who is also the Deputy Governor of Bali (2018-2023), Prof. Dr. Ir. Tjokorda Artha Ardana Sukawati, who is often called Cok Ace, has led to a breakthrough in the use of uniformly colored costumes, namely white. All the costume parts mentioned earlier are predominantly white. Cok Ace, active in dancing masks, always uses this all-white costume on several occasions, specifically dancing *Sidhakarya* Masks. This is in accordance with the character of *Sidhakarya*, a holy Brahmin figure. In line with this, the color white is seen as representing holiness, cleanliness, and sincerity (Purwita, 2021).



Figure 5. Costume Colour Innovation by Cok Ace

(Source: Doc. Researcher, 2024)

4. Dialogue in the Performance

Dialogue is a crucial element in performing arts, especially in those dominated by dialogue, such as dance drama. As the primary means of communication, dialogue allows characters to express their thoughts and feelings (Sugita et al., 2023, p. 66). For a performer in a play, the only way to communicate is through language (Bandem & Rembang, 1976). Furthermore, Bandem and Rembang explained that in their performance, the Balinese Mask Dance Drama uses two types of language: sign language (pantomimic) and spoken language. Sign language in Balinese mask dance drama performances plays a vital role in visually conveying emotions and stories to the audience. Sign language is a form of body language that communicates solely through body movements and facial expressions (Isma, 2018, p. 58).

Even in the Balinese Mask Dance Drama, the audience could not see the dancers' facial expressions. However, the clear and diverse expression of movement adds a visual dimension, reinforcing the nuances conveyed so the audience sees and feels the performance. The researcher's observation at a Balinese Mask dance drama performance was that there were disabled audiences (deaf) who were very focused on watching from the beginning to the end of the performance. Several times, the audience laughed during the *bondres* mask scene. Although he could not listen to the dialogue of the mask artist, he appreciated, enjoyed, and tried to understand the performance's presentation. This makes the Balinese Mask Dance Drama performance an "inclusive experience" where everyone can feel the story's essence. As such, sign language enhances visual appeal and strengthens the connection between dancers and audiences, creating a deep emotional bond in each performance.

Balinese, Kawi (Ancient Javanese), and Sanskrit dominate the language used in the Balinese Mask Dance Drama performance. Central figures such as the *Ratu* Mask and the *pengabih*, especially the *patih*, use Kawi. Meanwhile, figures such as curious, *pedanda*, and *bondres* use Balinese. Meanwhile, Sanskrit is used to recite a *sloka* during the *Sidhakarya* Mask ritual and is displayed as a dialogue quote reference. In Balinese mask dance drama performances, the Balinese language is still referred to as *Sor-Singh* (Balinese language structure), a language arrangement according to social strata and position. In addition to using *kawi*, Balinese mask dance dramas performed by millennial artists in Gianyar Regency sometimes use Indonesian and foreign languages (English, Chinese, Japanese, and many more). As an insert of dialogue, Indonesian is found in all types of *wawantaka/pangrawos* masks (*penasar*, *pedanda*, *bondres*). Some common Indonesian vocabulary that lacks a Balinese equivalent will still be presented in Indonesian. However, he sometimes forgot the Balinese term for his dance and ended up using it by accident.

The use of foreign languages such as English, Mandarin, Japanese, and many more is also just an insert in this show. One of the dominant mask characters that uses foreign languages is the *Bondres toris* mask. In several performances, the Balinese Mask dance drama features a *toris* mask depicting a foreigner who travels to Bali to enjoy the beauty of Balinese culture. Dancers who wear this mask must be able to speak foreign languages, for example, by wearing Dutch *toris* masks, Chinese *toris*, and *toris* from several other countries. The *Toris Bondres* mask is said to imitate foreigners who visited Bali in the colonial era.

This integration of different languages shows adaptation and innovation in the performing arts and reflects the artists' efforts to reach a wider audience. By incorporating elements of a broader or international language, they aim to create a more inclusive experience, especially for tourists and spectators outside the region. From an artistic perspective, using these different languages gives a new color to the performance, creating a more diverse and modern feel while still maintaining strong roots in tradition. Millennial artists in Gianyar play a role as culturators and innovators, harmonising tradition with audience needs and shaping language development today, especially among younger generations. The development of language today, especially among younger generations, is influenced by online social media, which has become a routine activity for millennials. In the

Balinese Mask Dance Drama performed by millennial artists, they also used several contemporary language forms, including slang. Slang is a popular saying that cannot be found in any language dictionary. Slang is envied by abbreviations, acronyms, contractions, varietal guardians, clippings, foreign languages, letter releases, improvisation of original words, association of meanings, new words, and monophonisation (Anindya & Rondang, 2021). Some examples of the use of slang found in Balinese Mask dance drama performances by millennial artists include: *senggol dong*, *chuacks*, *mana paten*, *ya dik ya*, *menyala wi suapi*, *mantul* (mantap betul), *kukurukuk mpukjeru*, *lemesang-lemesang*, *e-e-e parah ni em parah*, *baper*, *ngarep*, *gas tipis-tips*, and so on.

The use of contemporary language and viral chatter on social media such as TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, and others in the Balinese Mask Dance Drama performance is one of the unique and interesting innovations carried out by millennial mask artists. In this fast-paced digital age, where pop trends and culture often dominate the public eye, millennial mask artists adapt by drawing on elements familiar to younger generations. This helps make the show feel more contemporary and creates a more engaging, entertaining experience.

5. Dance Accompaniment Music

Traditional Balinese Mask Dance Drama refers to the *gending* (melodies). Bandem and Rembang (1976) found several types of names about *gendings* that are commonly used, which are as follows: 1) *Gegilak Wirakesari*: Keras Mask (*panglembar*). 2) *Tabuh Telu Werdha Lumaku*: Old Mask (*panglembar*). 3) *Bapang Gede*: Penasar Kelihan. 4) *Lelongoran*: Penasar *Cenikan*. 5) *Jaransirig*: Dalem Arsawijaya. 6) *Bapang Adeng/Omang*, *Biakalang*: *Pangabih* (Patih Mask). 7) *Kale*: *Pangkat* and *Pasiat*. 8) *Jagra Werda*: *Pedanda* Mask. 9) *Segara/Omang Peraga*: *Sidhakarya* Mask

Millennial mask artists still use these types of mask-*gending* in Gianyar Regency. The development is now. Many millennial *tabuh* artists are creating *gendings* to accompany the Balinese Mask dance drama. Praptika said that he often arranges mask *gendings* with his *gamelan* in Blahbatuh. What is done is to add variations of *kebyar* to the *gending* (*pangawit*: prefix) or change the use of the *gending* melody, but still based on the traditional *gendings* and their characteristics (adjusting to the type of mask) (interview, August 24, 2024). Variations such as adding *kebyar* are musical developments influenced by the art of *kebyar* in Bali. The development in this musical aspect was due to the influence of the reporter in the Gong *Kebyar gamelan*. In some arts, the term "*ngebyar*" identifies and expresses new motifs with more dynamic nuances (Arya Sugiarta, 2015; Sugiarta, 2015).

Researchers also had time to observe the phenomenon around the Balinese Mask Dance Drama during the COVID-19 pandemic. The implementation of health protocols requires the Balinese people to avoid social *distancing*. However, several Balinese Mask dance drama performances are still held. This happened because some community groups believe this art event must still be part of the *Yadnya* ceremony. At that time, it was found that the Balinese Mask dance drama was accompanied by a puppet *gender gamelan* (4 percussionists) to use MP3 recordings. This is done by adjusting so that the dancer can be seen loose to the music, because the accompaniment should follow the dancer's movements.

6. Community Formation as a Unification of Vision

Forming a community, or an art studio, to preserve and improve the existence of Balinese Mask Dance Drama in Gianyar Regency is a very important step. An art studio is an educational institution outside of school whose focus is on managing artistic activities, training, and staging (Melati Sukma et al., 2023, p. 99). Participants in the art studio can explore various art disciplines, including dance, music, theatre, and fine arts. Through this training, they can learn from experienced artists and teachers and develop in line with their talents and interests.

In contrast to art studios that open vast opportunities for community members to join, the art community emphasises personal closeness and a shared vision. Pratita, the Chairman of the Manduka Asrama Art Community, stated that the number in her community increased from 21 to 30. However, on several occasions, other artists were involved in staging activities (interview, August 23, 2024). The exclusivity stems from the desire to create a lasting association. Community members who have known each other for a long time have a personal closeness and a sense of mutual trust that they share the "same values" in this community. The existence of shared values in the community also serves as a moral and ethical foundation that binds its members (Abdullah Suparman, 2013). This creates a sense of mutual trust and respect, where each individual feels accepted and valued. In this context, the community becomes a safe place to express yourself, exchange ideas, and learn from others' experiences. Communities can reinforce a sense of identity and belonging among their members. When individuals feel part of something bigger, they tend to be more committed and more active. It can also foster a positive environment where members support and encourage one another to grow.

The Manduka Asrama Art Community also strengthens a sense of togetherness among its members through cooperation in performances, rehearsals, and other community activities, thereby fostering strong social relationships. The exercise was carried out with the involvement of supervisors who were competent in Balinese Mask Dance Drama. As a coach from this community, Dr. I Ketut Kodi, SSP., M.Si., actively conducts coaching sessions on various occasions and guides in the development and preservation of Balinese Mask Dance Drama. Following the context of hypersemiotics, the interactions create a complex network of signs in which each individual contributes to the overall meaning (Nugraha & Saidi, 2022).

7. Utilization of the Internet and Digital Media

The Balinese Mask Dance Drama, which is rich in traditional nuances, is also influenced by the digital world. As a massive digital generation, Millennial mask artists provide opportunities and space for this art to be sustainable and develop in the digital era. The researcher summarised the techniques the millennial generation uses in digital and online media related to their activities in the Balinese Mask Dance Drama. At least there are Digital media as a performance space, a platform for content promotion, a source of learning, and social media.

One of the most significant innovations in the development of performing arts is the use of digital media as a performance space. The digital space allows performance artists to display their work on stage (see fig.6). Performances in accordance with the elements of the performing arts must engage the performer and the audience. Naugle's research noted that digitalisation of the performing arts began in the 90s (Naugle & Crawford, 2014). The digitization of performance, hand in hand with the use of digital media across several fields, such as sound recordings and digital image capture. However, digitalization came with the invention of computers in the 1950s (Simpson, 2021). Naugle and Crawford's statement reflects that the effort to move the performance space has been carried out using recording techniques. It is still clear in the researcher's memory that



Figure 6. Arsawijaya Mask Dance Video

(Source: YouTube Screenshot, 2025)

several tapes or videos on compact discs (CD-RW) contain recordings of *gendings gong* and other performances such as arja, gong drama, and Balinese mask dance drama. At that time, record shops (a term for record provider kiosks) were filled with rows of recordings of various types of performances. The 90s were the year when the art of gong drama was grounded. Several gong drama titles recorded with the labels Aneka Record, Bali Record, and others are still well preserved today.

The millennial generation also uses digital media for content promotion, which is one of the most effective strategies for introducing Balinese Mask Dance Drama to the broader public. Social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok can be used to share footage of the performance, making masks, and preparations for a Balinese Mask Dance Drama. This creative and attractive promotion not only increases the visibility of this art but can also attract the attention of audiences who may not be familiar with this art form.

Millennial mask artists share photos and short videos of their performances on Instagram and TikTok. For example, a mask artist can upload video footage of a performance as *stories* or posts. Uploads are made naturally, without editing elements, or only with light edits, such as adding illustration music, *captions*, locations, and so on, using templates provided directly. In posts, photos, and videos, mask artists often add relevant *hashtags*, such as #dramataritopengbali, #topengbali, #BaliArts, and more (see fig. 7). In addition to Instagram, artists can create Facebook pages or community groups to share more in-depth information about the show, including the schedule, location, and the story behind it. They can also post educational articles or videos explaining the philosophy and techniques behind Balinese Mask Dance Drama, such as procedures for using costumes, identifying the shape of the mask, tutorials on mask dance, and the *songs* used. On Facebook, a group can be organized to discuss mask-making techniques, share experiences and tips, and ask experts to offer masks made by mask makers or materials needed to make masks.

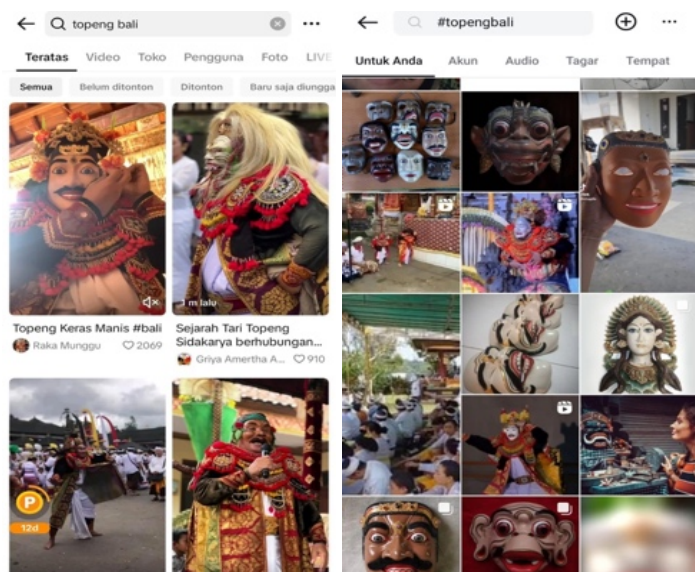


Figure 7. Balinese Mask Search on TikTok and Instagram

(Source: Instagram and TikTok Screenshots, 2025)

Digital media also functions as a fast and fairly complete learning resource. Many millennial mask artists do not deny that this is also done outside artistic activities, using online platforms as a source of learning. Using search engines such as Google, Safari, and so on makes it easy for a person to find the information they need. With the internet and smart devices, anyone can quickly and efficiently find information in the digital world. On the Google site alone, there is an index of material about art, Balinese Mask Dance Drama, the study of meaningful play, and sacred literature used as a foothold for dialogue by mask artists in their performances. In addition to digital text, millennial mask artists can learn from tutorial videos about dance, vocals, *tembang*, and several other aspects. Muliana, a millennial mask artist in Gianya Regency, also admitted that she often watches mask videos on YouTube and other *platforms*. In addition to entertaining herself and filling her time, she also learns about *paileh igel*, *tembang* patopengan, and several play references used in her performance (interview, August 1, 2024). This allows a generation proficient in digital media and online networks to learn this art in a more flexible and accessible way.

CONCLUSION

The millennial generation's presence as dancers in the Balinese Mask dance drama is evident in the innovations they have introduced across various elements. They continue to try to exist between the dimension of tradition, which inherits the richness of philosophy, and the contemporary dimension. This was done to connect the Balinese mask dance drama performance to the current situation and to make it acceptable to all circles. The dance movements still refer to the patopengan movements, but several characters bring viral movements. Even slang is used in the performance. The use of digital media is also seen in dance accompaniment music that uses MP3, as well as in internet media such as social media and search engines, as promotional efforts, collaboration, and learning resources to support quality performances. Because of a shared vision among millennial mask artists in Gianyar Regency, art communities began to emerge, explicitly focused on Balinese mask dance drama.

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