

“ANGGUN NAN TONGGA”, “MANDI ANGIN”, AND “WAYANG PADANG” AS INDOONESIAN POSTMODERN THEATRICAL PRACTICES

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ABSTRACT

This study explored “Anggun Nan Tongga”, “MandiAngin”, and “Wayang Padang” which were produced by Bumi Theatre Padang Group and were regarded as the real Indonesian theatrical practice. The Indonesian postmodern theatrical practices, which are regarded as the real ones, are different from the previous Indonesian modern theatrical practices which are considered the pseudo and false ones, although they were accepted as the real ones. This study was intended to identify the form, the influential factors, and the meaning of the Indonesian postmodern practices produced by the Bumi Theatre Padang Group in the three theatres mentioned above.

The results of the study showed ANT, MA, and WP were in the forms of relative art and contextual aesthetic concept. They were decentrally and democratically created. The existence of the viewers was used as the subject. The management of the culture-oriented production activity, group and society. The professionalization of the group and members in the cultural quality and humanity. The influential factors included the ideology of power, hegemony, the failure of becoming the Indonesian theatre, the attempt made to develop Indonesian theatre, the reformation which tended to be postmodern in Indonesia, the change in global postmodern culture. These could be defined as identity, cultural defense, social plurality, the real democracy, the critical and creative productivity, and religiosity.

Keywords: “Anggun Nan Tongga”, “MandiAngin”, “Wayang Padang”, Indonesian postmodern theatrical practices.

INTRODUCTION

This present study explored the Indonesian postmodern theatrical practices in “Anggun Nan Tongga” (ANT), “MandiAngin” (MA), and “Wayang Padang” (WP) produced by the Padang Group Bumi Theatre. They were regarded as the real Indonesian modern theatrical practices. They were different from the previous Indonesian modern practices which were regarded as the pseudo and false Indonesian theatres, although they were accepted as the real Indonesian theatrical practices. The present study focused on the form, the influential factors, and the meaning of the Indonesian postmodern theatrical practices.

The present study was inspired by the so far development of Indonesian theatre which was not in accordance with the development of the real Indonesian theatre; it developed as the Western modern theatre. Although the Indonesian modern theatre representing such development was referred to as the Indonesian theatre, it was still unacceptable and strange to the community in general. To make it the real Indonesian theatre, it should be made in existence as the development of the Indonesian postmodern

theatre. In such development, the Indonesian theatre was practiced as the Indonesian postmodern theatre, namely, as the theatrical practice taking the real Indonesian form and culture. In addition, it should have the Indonesian meaning. The Indonesian postmodern theatrical practices constituted an attempt made by the Padang Group Bumi Theatre to make such development the real Indonesian.

It was expected that the result of the present study would give new contribution and become a scientific reference. In practice, it was expected that the result of the present study would be useful to the Indonesian art and culture.

RESEARCH METHOD

The present study was conducted using qualitative method, meaning that the data used were the qualitative data. The data were obtained from both the primary and secondary sources. The primary data were obtained from documents, and the secondary data were obtained from informants and the objective under study. The informants were purposively determined. They were determined based on the knowledge they had and their theatrical experience. The theories used in the present study were the theory of deconstruction, the theory of hegemony, the theory of multiculturalism, the theory of post colonialism, and the theory of hyper reality (hyper semiotics). The data were collected using documentary study, observation of participation, and interview. The data were analyzed descriptively and qualitatively.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Indonesian postmodern theatrical practices refer to the theatrical activities based on how the Indonesian postmodern theatres are performed. In this case, theatre is intertextually viewed, meaning that it does not only refer to any creation but also to all the elements which are related to it and where it is. As it exists in a group which produces it, theatre intertextually refers to the performance, the creation, the viewers, the production management, the group, and the community, and the theatrical professionalism as a group and members.

Postmodern constitutes the cultural form or fashion marked by pluralism and deconstructive way of thinking. It is different from the modern cultural form and fashion marked by monism and hegemonic way of thinking. They are distinguished historically and culturally. Postmodern appears as a reaction to the modern culture which is regarded as a failure. It appears to correct, refuse, terminate, or deconstruct the modern culture while forming itself to be a new culture which is regarded as being more meaningful (Grenz, 2001: 13-14; Al-Fayyadl, 2006: 11; Barker, 2004: 410; Pilliang, 2003: 19, and 2006: 32). Indonesian postmodern means the postmodern cultural form and fashion which is specific to Indonesia,

which is marked by pluralism as the main consideration and the deconstructive way of thinking which is specific to Indonesia, meaning that the meaning it has is more Indonesian. It is different from the previous modern culture which is regarded as monistic, hegemonic, and as a failure.

Such an Indonesian postmodern theatrical practice refers to a number of theatrical practices such as the performance, the creation, the acceptability or the existence of viewers, the management of production activity, the group, and the community, and the professionalism of as a group and members, which adopt the postmodern cultural form and fashion which are specific to Indonesia, and which are marked by pluralism as the main consideration and the deconstructive way of thinking which are specific to Indonesia, meaning that the meaning it has is more Indonesian. It is made different from the previous Indonesian modern cultural form and fashion, which is regarded as monistic and hegemonic, and as a failure.

A theatre group created the real Indonesian theatre, the Indonesian postmodern theatre as follows. First, the real Indonesian theatre was created as the form of practice which was related to the performance, the acceptability, the creation, the management, and the professionalism, and as cultural, social, political, artistic, and aesthetic concepts. Second, it was created as the deconstruction of the Indonesian modern theatre in regard to the performance, the creation, the management, and the professionalism, and to the cultural, social, political, artistic, and aesthetic concepts. Third, it was created as the practice of meaningfulness which was aimed at the cultural, social, political, aesthetic and artistic theatrical concepts which were really Indonesian.

Since its early stage, the theatrical practices in Indonesia have been developed through groups (Soemardjo, 1992: 93; Hadi, 1996: 6). The group members are not only the players but also those who create the form and determine where the development should go. The most recent development of the existence of the theatre group was dominated by Mandiri Theatre (PutuWijaya) and Bumi Theatre (WirsanHadi) (Republika, 19 Desember 1993, p. 12). The first was well-known for the concept "New Indonesian Theatre" (Wijaya, 2000: 13), and the second was well-known for the concept "democratic theatre" (Hadi in Kompas, 1986). The two groups criticized the art convention and the aesthetics of the Indonesian modern theatre.

As far as the Bumi Theatre group is concerned, the preference to the Indonesian postmodern could be seen from the theatrical creation it performed. As far as the development of postmodern in Indonesian is concerned, especially the development through the theatrical art, the development started before the reformation era, that is, in 1990s, or, exactly in 1993 through the performance of "JalanLurus" (produced by Bumi Theatre Group) in TIM Jakarta. Such a performance did not only indicate the development of the Indonesian

postmodern theatre and the group producing it as the pioneer of the development, it also indicated the appearance of the Indonesian postmodern theatrical practice. Apart from that, it also indicated that the members of the group producing it were the doers of such a theatrical practice (Syafri, 2005: 26; and 2010: 38). Its journey in the last two decades could also be observed from ANT (performed in Padang and Jakarta in 1998), MA (performed in Padang and Yogyakarta in 1999), and WP (performed in Padang and Jakarta in 2006).

The forms of the Indonesian postmodern theatrical practice performed by the Padang Bumi Theatre in ANT, MA and WP included: first, the performance in the forms of relative art and contextual aesthetics, meaning that they were performed as relative, changeable, and plural arts; these were realized through the contextual aesthetic concepts which were acceptable to the community. Second, they were decentrally and democratically created, meaning that the process during which they were created did not entirely refer to the text; the play director was the center of the autocratic and creative creation; in this case, the text was relative in nature and the play director was the decentralized and democratic creative leader. Third, the existence of the viewers was the subject, meaning that an attempt was made to make the viewers as the real subject rather than as the object of what was watched. This included the reposition of the area of the viewers, they were made to participate, an opportunity was provided to them to make their own interpretation, and they were made to be smart. Fourth, the management of the production activity was oriented towards the group and the community, meaning that the production activity was managed independently; the objective was culture rather than the profit; the group was managed as an informal, egalitarian and democratic organization (communal); the objective was togetherness or brotherhood; and the development of the quality of people's intelligence was the subject of the culture. Fifth, an attempt was made to achieve the cultural quality and humanity as the quality of professionalism of the group and its members.

The factors contributing to the postmodern theatrical practice created by the Padang Bumi Theatre group in ANT, MA, and WP were as follows. The first factor was the ideology of power which became the context of the existence of the Indonesian modern theatre. The factor which directly contributed to the postmodern theatrical practice was the ideology of authoritarianism, namely, the ideology of power of the ruling government (the New Order). The factor which indirectly contributed to the postmodern theatrical practice was the dominative ideology, namely, the ideology of the power of modernism itself. Second, the hegemony of the power of authoritarianism of the Indonesian government (the New Order), which included monoculturalism, neocolonialism, and hyperrealism, and the hegemony of the domination of modernism or modern culture, namely, the hegemony of the rational formal art and the aesthetics of universal realism. Third, the failure of becoming the Indonesian theatre; the failure of the Indonesian modern theatre to be the theatre which was really Indonesian as

being locked within the formal art and the modern Western universal aesthetics, the cultural monoculturalism, the social neocolonialism, and the political hyperrealism of the power of the hegemony of the New Order government regime. Fourth, the attempt made to develop the Indonesian theatre which was really Indonesian and had the ability to change; in other words, the attempt made to develop the Indonesian theatre as the theatre which was in the form of plural art (the form of relative art) and in the concept of Indonesian multicultural aesthetics (contextual), and referred to the concepts of multiculturalism, social egalitarianism, and Indonesian democraticism, and at the same time as the theatre which had deconstructive quality both aesthetically, artistically, culturally, socially, and politically. Fifth, the reformation which tended to be postmodern in Indonesia, namely, as the context of change which was in line with the development of the Indonesian postmodern theatre. Sixth, the cultural change in the culture of global postmodernism, namely, as the movement of change which was in line with the movement of the change of the Indonesian postmodern theatre.

The meanings of the postmodern theatrical practice created by the Padang Bumi Theatre through ANT, MA, and WP were as follows. First, the meaning of identity, namely, the meaning of making aware, the meaning of renewal, and the meaning of strengthening the Indonesian identity, both the Indonesian theatrical identity and the Indonesian nationality as the context of its existence. Second, the meaning of cultural defense, namely, the meaning of defending Indonesia as a multicultural country, the meaning of defending diversity, and the meaning of being culturally different without marginalization, and the meaning of defending humans and humanity as the subject both globally and nationally. Third, the meaning of being socially plural, namely, the meaning of making social plurality appear again in Indonesia in accordance with the reality that Indonesian was plural which had been lost due to the practice of centralism or social uniformity. Fourth, the democratic meaning, namely, the meaning of renewal or the meaning of making the Indonesian democracy appear again as the real democracy, that is, the democracy which was rooted in the values of amicability within the concept of equality. Fifth, the meaning of being creative and critically productive; the meaning of being more creative and critical which was produced by the Indonesian postmodern theatre as an Indonesian theatrical product. Sixth, the meaning of religiosity, which highly appreciated religious, spiritual and aesthetic values within the concept of the Indonesian postmodern theatrical aesthetics.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The Indonesian postmodern theatrical practice created by the Padang Bumi Theatre Group through ANT, MA, and WP included (1) the performance through the form of relative art and the aesthetical and contextual concept, (2) the decentralized and democratic theatrical creations, (3) the existence of the viewers as the subject, (4) the management of

the culture-oriented production activity, group, and community, (5) the professionalism of the group and members in the cultural quality and humanity. The factors contributing to the Indonesian postmodern theatrical practice included (1) the ideology of power, (2) hegemony, (3) the failure to become the Indonesian theatre, (4) the attempt made to develop the Indonesian theatre, (5) the reformation which tended to be postmodern in Indonesia, (6) the cultural change in the global postmodern. The meanings of the Indonesian postmodern theatrical practice were as follows (1) identity, (2) cultural defense, (3) social plurality, (4) the real democracy, (5) the creative and critical productivity, and (6) religiosity.

It is suggested that the Indonesian theatrical practices created by the Padang Bumi Theatre Group should develop in the globalization era as an alternative of the existing theatrical practice. In this way, the community will aware of and appreciate it.

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