

FROM SACRED RITUAL TO THEATRICAL PROTEST: INTERDISCIPLINARY SPECTRUM OF THEATER STUDIES IN INDONESIA^a

Del ritual sagrado a la protesta teatral: el espectro interdisciplinario de los estudios teatrales en Indonesia

Artículo de revisión

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Abstract

This paper approaches the spectrum of theater studies in Indonesia in an interdisciplinary manner, encompassing both descriptive and normative perspectives. From a descriptive standpoint, the spectrum is shaped by

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various ways of attributing meaning to theater as an entity. In a normative approach, various disciplines offer perspectives that contribute to creating a spectrum of meaning for theater in relation to the life of Indonesian society. Through a literature review, the research identifies at least three approaches to constructing theater studies in Indonesia: synchronic, diachronic and, combined. These three approaches are drawn from disciplines outside of theater, such as historical, anthropological, and sociological studies. Based on this perspectives, theater studies in Indonesia has moved from viewing theater in its meaning as a form of sacred ritual in the past to theater as symbolic capital today. These interdisciplinary perspective has an influence on the meaning of theater in theater studies itself as a discipline. Theater in Indonesia as a subject of study, therefore, is not only understood as an art that originates from dramatic works, but is more broadly understood as all forms of art that are centered on human action displayed in live performances, including sacred rituals, cultural performances, and theatrical protests.

Keywords

Cultural performance; Indonesia; Sacred ritual; Theater studies; Theater; Theatrical protest.

Resumen

Este artículo aborda de manera interdisciplinaria el espectro de los estudios teatrales en Indonesia, tanto descriptiva como normativamente. Desde una perspectiva descriptiva, el espectro se configura debido a las diversas formas de atribuir significado al teatro como entidad. Desde un enfoque normativo, varias disciplinas aportan perspectivas que contribuyen a crear un espectro de significados del teatro en relación con la vida de la sociedad indonesia. A través de una revisión de la literatura, la investigación identifica al menos tres enfoques para construir estudios teatrales en Indonesia: sincrónico, diacrónico y combinado. Estos tres enfoques provienen de disciplinas ajenas al teatro, como lo son los estudios históricos, antropológicos y sociológicos. Gracias a esta perspectiva interdisciplinaria, los estudios teatrales en Indonesia han pasado de considerar el teatro en su significado como una forma de ritual sagrado en el pasado al teatro como capital simbólico en la actualidad. Esta perspectiva interdisciplinaria ejerce una influencia significativa en la conceptualización del teatro dentro del ámbito de los estudios teatrales como disciplina. Por lo tanto, el teatro en Indonesia como tema de estudio no solo se entiende como un arte que se origina a partir de obras dramáticas, sino que se entiende más ampliamente como todas las formas de arte que se centran en la acción humana y se muestran en representaciones en vivo, incluidos rituales sagrados, representaciones culturales y protestas teatrales.

Palabras clave

Estudios teatrales; Indonesia; Protestas teatrales; Representaciones culturales; Ritual sagrado; Teatro.

Introduction

Since the discipline of theater arts first grew in Indonesia, complex relationships with various other disciplines have also emerged. This relationship, among other things, surfaced in the form of theatrical actors' involvement in discussions and philosophy classes. On the other hand, there are several philosophical thinkers who are actively involved in the world of Indonesian theater, both as discourse instigators and as active actors. The relationship between theater and philosophy, among other things, produces a new meaning of theater as stated by Arifin C. Noer, one of the leading figures in Indonesian modern theater, that theater and drama do not only contain stories, but can also contain theological and metaphysical contemplation (Sutrisno, 2015).

However, the relationship between theater and various other disciplines in the development of its studies in Indonesia is not directly proportional to the development of theater science and studies itself. The various references available about Indonesian theater show that there is still minimal discussion about the world of studies and examination of the meaning of theater practice and the meaning of theater itself as a discipline. Discussions often only end as descriptions of various forms of theater practice in Indonesia, which are rarely followed by in-depth discussions regarding the meaning of theater practice, its possible contribution to the development of theater studies, as well as its reciprocal relationships with various other disciplines.

Putu Wijaya (2006), one of the senior theater artists in Indonesia said that the development of theater creativity in Indonesia was not supported by developments in criticism and documentation (p. 50). This statement also reveals the lack of adequate studies on various developments in theater practice in Indonesia. Consequently, the development of theater in Indonesia appears to be primarily a progression of forms and themes, with less relevance to advancements in the world of knowledge and thought. Furthermore, it seems as if there has been no significant progress in building a theater study that is uniquely Indonesian, let alone an interdisciplinary one.

In fact, in the history of the development of world theater, it has been proven that interaction with other scientific disciplines is an important stimulant for the development of the practice of various different theatrical forms and styles. The development of this practice then became material for the development of theater studies, also in its interaction with other disciplines. Positivist sociology, for example, encourages discussions about the style of realism. Evolutionary biology became the basis for the development of analysis of the style of naturalism, while the philosophy of existentialism after the Second World War sparked discussions about the theater of the absurd.

Reflecting on this fact, it is considered crucial the reading of diverse interdisciplinary theater studies that have been conducted, so that these studies can be used as material for the advancement of theater studies in Indonesia. Based on this reading, developments, changes and even deviations in the meaning and position of theater will be seen. This knowledge will not only be useful for actors and theater audiences in Indonesia, but most importantly, it will also be useful for academics and theater scientists. This interdisciplinary meaning will complement the meaning of theater from within its own discipline, namely dramaturgically, which sees theater as a purely artistic entity (Gusrizal et al., 2021; Harymawan, 1993; Pramayoza et al., 2018).

Method

This study is based on an examination of various writings in the form of books and articles related to theater in Indonesia. This means that this study uses literature study as the main method. Some of the literature studied was written by foreign researchers, while some were written by Indonesian researchers themselves. These two perspectives are deemed necessary to be reviewed together, in order to obtain balance in formulating an assessment of the meaning of theater from time to time in Indonesia as a subject of study. So theater studies in Indonesia are not only able to show the unique symptoms of Indonesia itself, but can also see its connection with various world theater traditions.

References to the history of theater grow first in Indonesia. Thus, methodologically, until the 1960s the terms theater studies and theater history studies were understood as the same thing, because both focused on the study of subjects originating from the past (Balme, 2008; Fischer-Lichte, 2014). Even though at present theater studies in Indonesia is actually not an exclusive field, both in terms of learning and in terms of research, historical studies remains an important part or quite important area of the works of researchers and experts in the field of theater. Studies with other approaches are built on these various historical studies.

Based on that view, there are at least two approaches or paradigms of research on theater in Indonesia that are commonly used so far, namely the synchronic approach and the diachronic approach (Ahimsa-Putra, 2000). The research method of theater history is basically a study with a diachronic approach, which is complementary to the anthropological and sociological approaches to theater which tend to be synchronic. The result is a descriptive discussion of the meaning of theater in Indonesia which produces intra-disciplinary understanding, namely from within knowledge of theater itself, but also normatively, namely the meaning of theater as part of people's lives in Indonesia.

Historical Approach: Sacred Rituals, Modernization Sites, and National Expressions

Historical research basically becomes an important foundation for the growth of theater studies (Balme, 2008). Efforts to grow theater historiography have been carried out by many art historians in Indonesia, at least by looking at three stages of historiography, namely traditional historiography, colonial historiography, and national historiography. Traditional historiography shows that theater and folk dramatic art in the past were sacred ritual, which was then used as a “tool of political legitimacy” by the kings. They use it to connect themselves with supernatural powers, so that they have legitimacy in the eyes

of the people to rule and lead the world (Geertz, 1980; Soedarsono, 1983). Thus, in feudal society in Indonesia, theater served as a tool to display strength and power, deeply rooted in the spiritualism and cosmology of that era.

Theoretically, research on the historiography of traditional theater in Indonesia which yields this kind of understanding is built on studies that see theater in Indonesia as a site that displays different layers of culture, as a consequence of its long history as a nation. The layers of culture that later formed culture broadly and theater in particular in Indonesia included animism from South Yunan, Hindu-Buddhism from India, Islam from the Middle East, and Modernism from the West (Brandon, 2003; Holt, 2000). On the other hand, an important understanding resulting from this kind of study is an attitude of anti-essentialism, which emphasizes the absence of genuine theater in Indonesia, as in other places in the world.

Meanwhile, tracing history with a colonial historiographical approach provides an understanding that the emergence of modern theater cannot be separated from the process of self-identification of colonized peoples to position themselves as part of modern life. In this case, theater is a way of establishing oneself as a modern society, as well as an anti-colonial strategy. This has been seen since the days of Malay Opera from the development of Comedie Stamboel and Opera Dardanella, and even the popularity of the term "drama" in Indonesia (Cohen, 2006, 2013; Hutari, 2009; Van Kerckhoff, 1886).

One of the things that can be revealed from history using the historiographical method is the history of the spirit of the times (*Zeitgeist*) or the views of society at the time (Soemanto, 2001, p. 268). An example is that socially, Indonesian society half a century ago was still bound by the stigma that being a theatrical actor, known as *anak wayang*, was not a good pursuit for women. They were perceived as male-dominated, carrying a moral judgment that associated them with negative impressions. The negative impression attached to the world of stage keeps women from associating more intensely with stage life, more specifically theatre (Yoesoef, 2005).

Meanwhile, colonial historiography also reveals that theater in Indonesia is the result of extensive transculturation, and not merely a form of Dutch colonial influence and interference. This perspective acknowledges the application of hybridization and syncretization concepts in theater, while also it recognizes the indigenous peoples capacity to adopt various styles and forms of theatre, which evoke post-colonial concepts, in which theater is a site of colonial hegemony and its residues are visible years later (Pramayoza & Yuliza, 2023; Thajib, 2010; Varney et al., 2013; Winet, 2010). Even so, it is said that “modern Indonesian theatre until the present has never stepped beyond the shadow of coloniality” (Winet, 2010, p. XV).

Historical research even shows that even with the development of contemporary Indonesian theater today, the process of decolonization is still ongoing, to find a language that is politically capable of being “in-between” (Darwis, 2013; Thajib, 2010). This kind of study also contributes to knowledge about Indonesian Postmodern Theater, namely a form of searching for idioms and theater styles that aims to go beyond modernism in theater, which has even become “a key arena for expressing political dissent under the authoritarian New Order regime” (Bodden, 2010, p. 2).

Apart from being historiographical, an ontological understanding of theater in Indonesia with a historical approach is also developed by the study of theater iconography, a sub-discipline in theater history that focuses on the visual history of performance. Iconography contributes its own understanding, as a counterweight to the history of theater based on written sources (Balme, 2008). Based on research on theater iconography, we get an overview of the performances created by Soekarno, the proclaimer of independence and Indonesia’s first president, who when he was a Dutch prisoner in Beng-kulu, founded a theater group called Toneel Club Monte Carlo. Based on the play script written by Soekarno and several photos of the performance, the style of the performance can be reconstructed, which is close to the socio-drama style (Setiyanto, 2006).

In addition, an understanding of theatre is also obtained from research on drama scripts, which are an important part of theater history (Fischer-Lichte, 2002). Similar studies have been carried out in research on the history of theater in Indonesia, especially from literary circles. Research on play texts provides a broad understanding of the nature of drama as an essay, which describes contemporary thinking, as well as provides an overview of the moral standards prevailing in that era (Sumardjo, 2020). In the early days of the independence movement, theater was not only a way to spread the lingua franca, but also a way to spread the seeds of the struggle for independence, against Dutch colonialism.

Periodization research on Indonesian theater explores changes in the style and genre of theatrical performances that have occurred by looking at certain periods of time. Periodization can also occur within a smaller scope, for example within a province. In Bali, for example, a hybrid drama developed in the mid-1960s called *Dracula* (read: *Drasula*) which stands for drama, magic, and comedy. The writer of fairy tales, named I Made Taro, was one of the famous young comedians at that time (Putra, 2013, p. 173). Meanwhile elsewhere, in the mid-1950s until now, participants in the Makassar art theater have generally seen themselves as part of the national theater community. This is marked by the quality of the drama they create and stage, which they see as one of their contributions to presenting superior aspects of the nation's culture (Bodden, 2013).

There are not many researches on the history of theater in Indonesia that takes a biographical approach. However, some researchers have started to collect travel notes of a group or a theater figure in Indonesia. From such research, some key information is found to understand the creative process of a theater group or figure. Akhudiati, for example, has a tendency to work by incorporating elements he encountered in childhood as instinctive encouragement in his texts (Candra, 2020). This similar approach is also applied to exploring personal concepts, as was done for the concepts of Rendra's *Teater Mini*

Kata (Minimum Word Theatre), Wisran Hadi's *Teater Kata-Kata* (Rhetoric Theater), or Putu Wijaya's *Teater Piktografik* (Pictographic Theater) (Adda, 2019; Mohamad, 2000; Pramayoza, 2020, 2022; Yohanes, 2013; Yudiaryani, 2015).

The search for the history of theater then gave birth to basic concepts in the study of theater in Indonesia. All of these historical approaches provide knowledge about the meaning and position of the Indonesian National Theatre. This search resulted in an understanding that there is an essential difference between Indonesian modern theater and modern Indonesian theatre. Indonesian modern theater is the formation of a new type of theater in society, while modern Indonesian theater is a theater in relation to the emergence of layers of urban society. Modern society in Indonesia did not emerge in the 20th century through Dutch colonial political domination, because long before urban communities had started to grow in Indonesia. So that modern Indonesian theater is a theater that grows when Indonesian society begins to switch to modern life, and at the same time Indonesian modern theater has not yet emerged (Sumardjo, 1999, 2020).

Thus, seen historically, modern Indonesian theater has grown since the mid-19th century, with the emergence of cities known as *bandar*, namely mainly port cities. In this case, what is called *Maleisch tooneel* or "Malay opera" is modern Indonesian theater, namely a new form of entertainment, which was born from the emergence of new settlements in the Dutch East Indies, where the population was plural, consisting of indigenous people, Chinese, and Indo community (European Mestizos) and also from the Middle East. In the meantime modern Indonesian theater has only emerged since the use of the Indonesian language as a lingua franca, which crystallized as a movement to build a national culture, namely since Indonesia's independence. So, theater in Indonesia, from a historical perspective, moves from its meaning as a site for trying out modernization, towards a site for forming a common identity as a nation-state.

Anthropological Approach: Cultural Performances, Local Aesthetics, and Meaningful Experience

An anthropological approach to theater in Indonesia is generally carried out in research on the development of folk theater or traditional theater, although it is also associated with the development of the nation-state and nationalism. A basic understanding of traditional theater is built in several panoramic studies, which describe various forms of traditional theater in Indonesia. One of the key understandings from the study of traditional theater in Indonesia is that it is egalitarian, collective, fluid, and often closely related to local myths and mystical beliefs (Achmad, 2006; Bandem & Murgiyanto, 1996; Nalan, 2006).

This discussion of theater with an anthropological perspective provides its own perspective on various rites, both traditional and modern. From such studies, an understanding is obtained that theater is essentially a rite, which is held in the framework of understanding religiosity, community, identity, and even modernization. The existence of various traditional rites in Indonesia shows the interconnectedness between belief systems and theater. A theatrical performance as a rite is at the same time a social drama, which describes the conditions and layers of society. The concept of the rites even goes a long way, namely in the context of modern Indonesian theatre, where presence in theatrical events is always closely related to the world of experience of the audience, to reassess various values in everyday life (Kayam, 1981; Saini, 1988).

The understanding of theater events as rites also opens important understandings of various social and symbolic aspects of the Indonesian people's theatre. From there, views are obtained about the close relationship between the development of theater, both modern and traditional, and the anthropological social conditions of Indonesian society, both in the 1960s as a result of the guided democratic politics implemented by President Soekarno, and in life during President Suharto's New Order era, as seen in folk theatrical performances of *ludruk* and *ketoprak*, in which the national identity imposed through the language of unity actually triggers resistance symbolically in the form of theatrical expression (Hatley, 1971, 2008b; Hellman, 2003; Peacock, 2005).

Different understandings of the events of theatrical performances arise from an ethnographic-inspired approach. Instead of using theater theories taken from the West and then used in an “eagle eye” manner to look at various phenomena of theater and dramatic art in Indonesia, ethnographic research offers to build a conceptual or theoretical framework about Indonesian theater that is more down-to-earth or more rooted in tradition of Indonesian society. Nevertheless, anthropologists themselves realize that dialogue with Western concepts is impossible to avoid and is actually important (Simatupang, 2013, p. 21).

The later ethnographic method, among other things, proposed cultural hermeneutics, namely how to interpret a theatrical activity as a construction or “woven” of meaning created by humans in their efforts to give meaning to their lives. This type of interpretation is carried out, among other things, on various daily activities which that are in the nature of spectacles, which are seen as dramatic performances or theatrical phenomena, which are carried out by the perpetrators as a symbolic mechanism of struggle between classes, to simultaneously overcome various potential horizontal conflicts (Geertz, 1992).

The study of theater with an ethnographic approach also provides its own understanding that there are many types of activities and community activities that at first glance look similar to theater or drama, basically the people themselves are not seen as an art. That is, these activities are not intended solely for aesthetic purposes or to fulfill the need for beauty, but are carried out for other needs, for example as a form of ceremony or as a form of traditional activity and so on, where the theatrical and dramatic aspects are inseparable from the objective actually from the activity (Nalan, 2006; Simatupang, 2013).

In addition to the concept of “rites”, another crucial concept in theater anthropology is that of “cultural performances”. In these performances, diverse communities believe that what they showcase represents the best of themselves. It serves as a source of pride and a temporary expression of their

distinct societal identity. These performances also act as a means to maintain and practice various cherished values within their community (Murgiyanto, 2015; Simatupang, 2013).

The cultural performance approach to theater practice in Indonesia also offers a perspective to broaden the frame of the categorization of theater, to read various cultural performances and their aesthetics. This perspective is offered as a consequence of an understanding of the placement of others as a subject of study, which in an anthropological perspective should be understood from their own point of view (Simatupang, 2013, p. 94). This kind of discussion builds an understanding that various dramatic or theatrical activities carried out by the community are a form of expression of their pride in their own ethnic culture (Murgiyanto, 2015, p. 28).

An anthropological understanding of theater in Indonesia with this approach, in particular and in depth also limits its studies to certain traditional theater genres. The study is carried out on a type of dramatic performance which is often not identified as theater, which lives in a particular area or ethnic community. Studies using this emic approach, for example, were carried out on *ludruk* in the Madurese community, *lenong* in the Betawi community, *randai* and *sandiwara* in the Minangkabau community, *reyog* in the Ponorogo community, drama gong in the Balinese community (Bouvier, 2002; Kleden-Probonegoro, 1996, 2010; Pauka, 2002; Pramayoza, 2013, 2016; Simatupang, 2019; Yuliadi, 2005).

The result is an understanding of the life and development of ethnic aesthetics, namely the concept of beauty that only applies to one ethnicity, which cannot be generalized and equated arbitrarily with other ethnicities. What is seen as *le'bur* (fun) by the Madurese ethnic community (Bouvier, 2002), is not the same as *ndadi* (to be) for the people of Ponorogo (Simatupang, 2019), or *taraso* (feels) for the Minangkabau people (Pramayoza, 2013). However, these three are the highest aesthetic measurements used by each ethnic group in appreciating a dramatic performance of their own.

However, an anthropological perspective on theater often leads to the development of grounded theory, for example when theatrical and dramatic phenomena can be connected with what is known as myth. At this level, a structuralist view of theater in Indonesia emerged, which, among other things, resulted in an understanding of the parallels between theatrical and dramatic practices from different regions and ethnicities in terms of the substance of myths, which accompanied various rites and then some of them were transformed into play scripts (Abdullah, 2005; Ahimsa-Putra, 2006; Sumardjo, 2006).

However, modern theater in Indonesia is also sometimes looked at with an anthropological gaze, in this case with a biographical ethnographic approach, which results in an understanding of the way of life of individual artists. This approach results in an understanding of the dialectical relationship between a theater figure and his work with individual identity representations. A theatrical work, basically is an expression built through sources of experience and knowledge, which is heavily influenced by cultural processes, namely the interaction between individual artists and the society in which the artist resides (Agnesia, 2016; König, 1997).

Anthropological views on the practice of theater and the dramatic arts then trigger a new approach that leads to the study of performance. From the point of view of performance studies, the issue of “game” emerged which saw theater as part of human tendencies as *Homo Ludens* (Nazar, 2018; Pramayoza, 2009). This newer way of research also pays attention to the audience, a party that has so far been neglected in studies of theater in Indonesia. Thus, theater is no longer seen merely as an artistic entity that belongs to the actors, but also belongs to those who enjoy it, namely the audience. Thus, theater is also discussed from the point of existence and phenomenology (Sahrul, 2011; Simatupang, 2013; Swastika, 2004; Yudiaryani, 2019).

Today, the suggestion to use a “performance-centered approach” is perhaps one of the most appropriate methods to consider for use in theater research. In this way, the search for the meanings, norms, and values of a theatrical event is fully taken from the phenomenological reality, namely the

experience of the performers and the audience *in situ*, at the time and place of the theatrical performance itself. In short, the performance-centered approach provides a significant understanding of “performativity” —in Lono Simatupang (2013, p. 74) is: *pergelaran* (presentation)—, signifying something that is done, not just shown, by a theatrical or dramatic event for actors and spectators, as a new experience (Murgiyanto, 2015; Simatupang, 2013).

Thus, the anthropological approach to theater produces a new understanding based on three things that are interconnected with each other, namely emics, induction, and phenomenology. The meaning of theater is produced based on the actor’s point of view or native point of view, which pays attention to the meaning of a language based on what is understood by the speakers of that language, not something determined by outsiders or something that is universal and general. Because of that, of course, knowledge about theatrical phenomena or phenomena of dramatic arts with an anthropological approach to theater must also prioritize the induction process as a way of building knowledge, namely by gathering various information from the field, based on direct phenomenological experience, and then building it into a separate knowledge.

Sociological Approach: Theatrical Protest, New (Media) Literacy, and Symbolic Capital

The sociological approach to theater in Indonesia began to appear in various studies in the late 1990s, through a series of writings that were actually triggered by discussions in literature (Budiman, 1994). From research on play scripts and theater performances using a sociological approach, the concept of social drama or socio-drama emerged. This concept departs from social drama which sees that in everyday life it is like a theatrical performance where people can be different in presenting themselves on the frontstage and backstage (Murgiyanto, 2017; Soemanto, 2001).

The meeting between theater and tyranny and the state is the most widely discussed from a sociological perspective in the study of theater in Indonesia. The transition to the Post-New Order era, or the Reform era, is one of the sociological observations that has paid the most attention to researchers, both in terms of traditional and modern theater (Bain, 2005; Bodden, 2006; Febriansyah, 2009). At this level, the theater is also a form of demonstration, where various protests are voiced, and at the same time, it is a site for independence, which presents a new form and meaning of performance called theatrical protest.

Changes in the political situation, among others with the birth of reform, basically gave rise to various new forms of performances involving the media, which indirectly showed a shift in understanding of the function and structure of theater socially (Hatley, 2008a, 2014). Theater then becomes a site for carrying out various social improvement efforts, including building a shared identity, integration process, and building new social cohesion after the crisis (Bodden, 2006; Hatley, 2009).

Sociological studies on theater in Indonesia also reveal the didactic side of theater as one of its social functions, both teaching in the context of certain communities, as well as for certain ages and groups, for example for street children (Nashir, 2001; Suryatmoko, 2014). One thing that is immediately apparent from this research with the sociology of theater approach is that theater is not only a form of artistic expression, but also a social site that is part of a social movement, even a political movement (Aberle, 2014; Bodden, 2006; Hatley, 2009, 2012).

The sociological approach to theater then triggers a discussion about semiotics, because various forms of socio-political aspirations in theater performances appear in the form of signs. This is consistent with the theoretical explanation that the study of theatrical performance itself in particular only emerged in the 1970s, when a new analytical knife called "theater semiotics" emerged (Fischer-Lichte, 2014). The same thing happened in Indonesia, especially at the beginning of the 21st century, when semiotics

began to be used in the study of theater in Indonesia. Several studies of theater with a semiotic approach began to emerge and see theater performances as a sign system, which contains ideology (Dahana, 2001; Sahid, 2013, 2016).

The current practice of theater in Indonesia shows the introduction of theater with various new media, which inevitably must be approached. The ontological issues of theater are increasingly being questioned, among others by seeing theater as no longer just a performance on stage but also as part of exploring new media possibilities. Theaters are now starting to appear on screens provided by various sites on the internet, or by trying to create their own streaming site. Ontological matters indirectly become discourses that immediately emerge from these various forms of experimental practice (Raditya, 2020).

Sociological review also sees theater in Indonesia as an arena, where there is a battle of artistic tastes or aesthetic dispositions between various generations. The younger generation, using theater as a means of producing knowledge, build new intellectual movements and at the same time become a means of resistance to the domination of the older generation (Birowo, 2018; Swastika, 2014). This understanding is increasingly complex with the presence of various forms of theatrical performances in public spaces, which are intended as a form of demonstration, and at the same time reclaiming space.

Thus, theater is not only seen sociologically as a form of artistic expression, but also as symbolic capital, which is used to win battles in a cultural arena. In short, it can be said that studies with a sociological approach to theater show the importance of context, in which the themes and characters displayed in the performance are symbolically related to the socio-historical conditions of Indonesian society itself (Sahid, 2010; Setyawan et al., 2017; Soemanto, 2001). Thus, the sociological approach to Indonesian theater results in an understanding of the essence of theater as a social instrument, reflecting socio-political conditions at a certain time and place. Furthermore, theater is a social tool that can be used to re-evaluate everyday socio-political relations, which is then useful in building new, better social attitudes.

Conclusion

Based on research on various theater studies that have been demonstrated, it appears that the sources of understanding of theater in Indonesia are at least generated through three approaches, namely history, anthropology, and sociology. Of course, there are also contributions from other approaches, such as philosophy, archeology and communication science, to further gain meaning for theater in Indonesia. Philosophy even makes many contributions to the study of theater in Indonesia, which need to be explained in a special paper. But at least, the three approaches that have been described can complement the understanding of theater in Indonesia, and complement the meaning obtained through the dramaturgical approach, which sees theater in itself as an artistic entity.

Historically, the meaning of theater in Indonesia is an artifact, which holds various traces of the development of Indonesian culture, in which different layers of culture exist, ranging from prehistoric rites to popular entertainment in the post-colonial nation-state. Anthropologically, the meaning of theater in Indonesia is as a rite that becomes a space for creating new experiences, for spreading values and meaning, both in traditional contexts and in modern life. Meanwhile, sociologically, the meaning of theater in Indonesia is a site where various social and political relations are reflected, critically assessed, and rearranged as a form of knowledge production, which can then crystallize as a symbolic capital.

Interaction with several other disciplines has resulted in a better understanding of theater itself in theater studies in Indonesia. Taking into account various findings from studies of other disciplines, theater in Indonesia cannot be understood or interpreted simply as a form of artistic work that originates from a written text or dramatic work. In other words, theater in Indonesia is any form of artistic work that makes human behavior the subject of its spectacle. Meanwhile, theater studies also contribute to other disciplines to develop new understanding. From a sociological perspective, the theater produces an understanding that all everyday human behavior can be seen as

a dramaturgy in itself. Meanwhile, to the historical review, theater contributes an understanding of non-drama sources, namely oral traditions, as materials for the creation of theatrical works. Meanwhile, for anthropology, theater opens up an understanding of the role of various ceremonies as a symbolic theatrical form which is not only intended as a cultural and spiritual means, but is also a form of expression of group or ethnic identity.

Conflict of interest

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