

# **The European Cultural Influence on The Contemporary Indonesian Theater in The Beginning of 21<sup>st</sup> century: The Study of The Literary Reception through The Media in Indonesia**

by

**Dian Swandayani**

French Department, Faculty of Languages and Arts,  
Yogyakarta State University (YSU), INDONESIA  
e-mail: dianswandayani\_uny@yahoo.co.id

## **Abstract**

This paper aims to describe the European cultural influence on the contemporary Indonesian theater in the beginning of 21<sup>st</sup> century through the media in Indonesia. The subject which discuss are the important media in Indonesia. Data collected by reading of those medias. Data analyzed by qualitative technique with the Cultural Studies.

Indonesia, according to Dennis Lombard, is regarded as a world cultural cross country ( *le Carrefour javanais* ) which has been influenced by the cultures of the world , such as Chinese , Arabic ,Indian, and Western. Until the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century , the process of acculturation, including European, is still in progress as an element forming a national identity that continues to change. Even within the last 10 years , the acculturation of various aspects of culture in Indonesia intensified happen. This acculturation happens, for example, in the fields of philosophy, literature, art, culture , science and technology . Theater, as a part of the arts, also helped get the effect . In this field , the European nations are nations that are quite advanced in developing the theater, including in promoting it around the world, including Indonesia . In this article, it will be presented reception Indonesian society to the contemporary indonesian theater which influenced Europe . The number of articles on the European theater published in the media in Indonesia will be analyse with the study of the Cultural Studies. Through the technique of content analysis is expected to find patterns of European acculturation to Contemporary Indonesian theater in the beginning of 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Keywords: theater , acculturation , literary reception , European.

## **1. Introduction**

The first development of the Indonesian culture has been influenced by the foreign cultures. The process is often called the acculturation process which is still ongoing. The process is often a process of an internalization of foreign values, proposed by Peter L. Berger (1990:125). The process of internalization, acculturation, and multiculturalisme of the foreign values can take place within a the specified period, the various forms, and through the various medias. Media is one of the place to spread the foreign culture in the present. In this cas, the media is placed to disseminate the foreign cultural influences for the readers. One aspect of the culture that also acquire the foreign cultural influences is the art of the theater. In this field, the European nations is one of the nation who developed the art of the theater and take the promotion in the field of theater to the world, including to Indonesia.

This article will be presented the reception of the Indonesian people against the European influence in the development of the art of the theater in Indonesia. The using of the literary reception theory is carried out in the articles on the art of theater is loaded by *Kompas* and *Tempo* in 2000-2007. Through the content analysis is expected to find patterns and shapes of the acculturation of the European culture in the field of theater arts at the present time in Indonesia.

In the history of Indonesian culture, the acculturation with the foreign cultures, such as Europe, China, India, Arabia, and the influence of the foreign cultures mark the influence of the age of the modernism in Indonesia. This is also confirmed by Lombard (2000:11-39) which states that Indonesia has been influenced by the cultures of the world such as India, China, Islam and the West. The influence of the European culture (as a representative of Western culture) on the development of the Indonesian culture indirectly started when the Portuguese and Spanish initiate a trade mission to the Indonesian archipelago in the early of 16th century (Kubitschek & Wessel, 1981: 43). This is because Indonesia's strategic geographical location is between two oceans (Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean) and two continents (Asia continent and Australia continent). Indonesia's strategic position makes Indonesia since the first crossing into the area or cross different cultures of the world (*le CarrefourJavanais* ). Up to now the acculturation process is still ongoing. There are various aspects of a foreign culture is accepted and absorbed as one of the elements forming the national identity continues to change, such as philosophy, literature, art, culture, science and technology. One of the elements of the culture are quite under the influence of the foreign culture is the field of theater. In this regard, the European culture as a culture of the world that represent Western culture also influence the development of the developpement of the theater in Indonesia. Call it the works of Molière, Eugène Ionesco, William Shakespeare ,

Bertold Brech, Sophocles, Jean Anouih, Samuel Beckett was popular in a variety of theatrical performances in Indonesia. Together with the development of the Western culture in Indonesia, then developed of the the art of staging in large cities which leads to the need for lifestyle. The theater performance is then evolved toward modern the art of the theater in Indonesia. (Sumardjo,1992:12).

This article will discuss how much influence of the European culture in the field of the theater by a reception of the Indonesian readers. One way for the reader to know how the reception is to assess how much the theater based on the translation of texts in media received a response. The review of the responses in the media is quite important, because through a medium for spreading the influence of the foreign culture can take place quickly, given the vast range of media distribution. The media is selected *Kompas* daily, as one of the leading newspaper in Indonesia, which has the largest circulation weekly magazine *Tempo*, and as a representative of the magazine is quite popular in Indonesia. The selected edition is the edition published between 2000 and 2007; the period is notable as the first milestone of the third millennium. The Analysis told that can be used as a basis for discuss the media response to the theater is a literary reception theory. The reception is a literary text processing, a ways of giving meaning to literature so that it can respond to it (Jauss, 1974:12). The response in this case is not only done between a literary work with a reader, but also the reader as a historical process, the reader within a certain period. The reception aesthetics can be briefly referred to as a teaching literary texts investigating the reaction based on the real and the reader may be to literature . In aesthetic reception , the main concern is literature readers and the reading public. The readers, according to Jauss (1974:12), has an active role, even a power of forming the history. Related to this theory, the artwork base on the theater representation plays can be described as a work of literature who reflect the views or background social life of society. Based on this background, this article will discuss the matters related to the article that discusses the theater based on the work of translation in *Kompas* and *Tempo* magazine from 2000 to 2007 .

## **2. The influence of The European Culture in the theater in Indonesia.**

As the development of the modern art of the theater in Indonesia found a number of the showing that are ready to be staged as many as 400 documents in Indonesia which consists of 389 Indonesian's originals manuscripts and 296 original manuscripts in the form of the adaptation or the translation of the work (Sumardjo,1992:277-278). Most of the

translations came from the English translations. The data mentioned by Sumardjo (1992:263) obtained results from the United Kingdom are 80 texts, 43 texts are from France, 20 manuscripts are from Russia, 11 manuscripts are from the German, and 6 manuscripts are from Spain. The rest of the script are 47 from America and 6 of the Japanese script.

Based on the findings of the research Nurhadi (2003) about the development of the modern theater at the end of the XXI century acquired a number of the findings that indicate 13 the original manuscript from Indonesia and 17 manuscripts of translations. Most of the translation manuscript originated from European writers. Nurhadi (2003) mentioned 17 translations of 7 manuscript translation and adaptation of the 8 manuscripts are from Europe, namely : 1) Lear, 2) Endgame, 3) Opera Salted Fish, 4) Hamlet Ahead of Election, 5) Art, 6) Sri , 7) Swirl, 8) Oedipus rex, 9) Gamboeh Machbeth, 10) The Reconstrution of Crime, 11) Miss Julie, 12) Kekawin Married, 13) No Way Out , 14) Trains Kencana, 15) Sampek Engtay, 16) Gambuh Machbeth, and 17) Faust. The 17 shows and adaptations of European adaptations have been staged in several major cities in Indonesia , such as Jakarta, Bandung, Solo, Yogyakarta, Bali and Makassar. The comparison between the number of original shows and translations shows have been staged in Indonesia indicated the influence of European culture can be quite important in the history of modern theater in Indonesia. It also indicated the dominance of the Indonesian original works.

Here are presented the talking about the rubrics of the theater under the influence of European culture on *Kompas daily* and *Tempo Magazine* 2000-2007. In *Tempo*, the rubric of the theater consists of 13 articles related to the European theater, either in the form of European theater group performances in Indonesia and works of the translations of the European shows staged in Indonesia by Indonesian theater groups. The review article thirteenth staging theatrical luminaries from Europe such as : 1) Friedrich Dürrenmatt, 2) Michel Laubu, 3) Samuel Beckett, 4) Camille Boitel, 5) Hendrik Ibsen, 6) Gerad Mosterd, 7) Multatuli Douwes Dekker, 8) Compagnie la'Enterprise, 9) Knossos, 10) Double Group 6, 11) Jean Giraudoux, 12) Theatre Talipot, and 13) Dario Fo. A number of the European theater on *Tempo* commented as the following examples. In 2001, a group of French Double 6 in stage performances Flexible Theatre, Jakarta Arts Institute. This staging, according to Suyono and Kuswardono in *Tempo daily* includes a dazzling spectacle by presenting a game of shadows simple technology and the concept of shadow puppets. Further Suyono and Kuswardono (2001) states that the spectacle titled Ignis is praiseworthy. First, because of all the technology used is not complicated. By shining a light five spots in the ceiling down, they create the illusion of a video connected with two projectors. The Video contains footage of

neon - lit neon, bars, bar, vertical iron bars which filming is done moving . If the picture were fired into the screen, which makes the impression of a shadow dancer walking on rollers or outpouring dot electric melt. Help spot light curtain is able to make the surface color of violet color separation game, green, red. Eric Wurtz amazed to shadow puppets. His work arose from a workshop in 1997 at the Jakarta Arts Institute. Together dancer Gladys Sanchez of France, Wurtz conducted a study of the secret shadow puppet for two months. Thus, was born the group Double 6.

The purpose of this focus group is to explore the possibility of interactions shadows and body. "The game of light and shadow in the tradition of Indonesian art is fantastic balance". On the other issue, a performance review of *Tempo* pantomimer France in action at Gedung Kesenian Jakarta, in early July 2005. Camille Boitel -inspired appearance of the biblical story, rooted in the circus. Suyono in his article states the ability Camille Boitel create images of the same object material that is impressive. " They call me the spectacle of the modern circus, " he said quoting critics of the country of origin : France. Catalog mime the play calling, but it is for convenience only. He himself did not give a damn whether he mime, acrobatics, or monologue. He is a graduate of a circus school in Paris. However, clearly, the appearance Boitel away from the traditional image of pantomime. He did not appear like the figure of Bip, a character "joker" flawless white with comical gestures created in 1947 by Marcel Marceau - pantomimer ago it became popular. Boitel motion everyday. This performance by Boitel entitled L' Homme d' Hus. Based on the reflections of the book of Job in the Bible. Job, a man of Uzziah, was a pious, but was sentenced to perpetual trials. He lost everything : possessions, wife, son, and friend shunned. Job rebelled against God. Questioning the divine justice. In addition, a number of European influence in Indonesian theaters is to perform a number of European works of playwright played by Indonesian theater group.

One of *Tempo's* comments on staging translations or adaptations that include the works of Dario Fo, Jean Giraudoux, Multatuli (Douwes Dekker), Hendrik Ibsen, and Samuel Beckett. In one edition, *Tempo daily* review about staging the works of Beckett, in commemoration of the 100 years of his birth by a group of Indonesian theater. In one article, *Tempo daily* review Putu Wijaya above staging drama Last Recordings Beckett Krapp's work. This text manuscript staged with three other short Beckett plays, played to commemorate 100 years of the birth of Beckett . Three other repertoire Practice Without Words II is directed by Lakshmi Notokusumo, Bara with director Joseph F. Ginter, and Come and Go is directed by Arya Dipayana. Four short plays Beckett has not been played in

Indonesia . So far, Beckett is more widely known through the work of its length : Waiting for Godot and Endgame . Theatre Workshop Renda ever staged Waiting for Godot in 1969 to a packed house for four hours. London Theatre Studies also often performed two repertoire that. Beckett 's plays are filled with contradictions and absurdities of various kinds. There, in the dramas, also in the drama of our lives, parades pain of playing around in such a wide variety. While we wait, we met with all sorts of craziness, any form of miracle. And humans can not escape from the episode waiting for it. Beckett is known as a poet, critic, novelist, and playwright. He was born on 13 April 1906 in Foxrock, County Dublin, Ireland. His first two plays he wrote between 1951-1953, namely Eleutheria and Waiting for Godot.

### **3. The Conclusion**

Many rubric of theater discussed in this article, it indicate the uptake and the reception of the European culture that goes intense and not “vice versa”. It means the process of acculturation is not a process of inter- cultural interaction in the sense of " take and give " but rather on the absorption of culture on one side. Indonesia in this regard in the position as the European cultural absorber or in other words Indonesia as parties to receptions of the European cultural values. The describing of Indonesia is called Pieter L. Burger (1990 ) as a process of internalization over European culture. Europe is still has a major role in shaping modern Indonesian culture. In the field of theater, the idioms is the idioms of modern theater condensed of the European cultural influences. In this case, the Europe in particular become a role model constellation of Indonesia, in the field of culture, not only in the writing of the literature, the ideas, the fashion, and the music but also in the art, the dance, the theater, the movies, and the traveling, as the part of a lifestyle. There is a desire of Indonesia to emulate the European, which is also hinted at a sense of the miss in the cultural fields. Only needs to be noted that the staging of a play foreign (European) in Indonesia, many produced works that are considered important stage in the history of modern Indonesian theater. Nevertheless, the role of other cultures such as the United States, (including Canada and Australia), Asia (including India, China, Japan, Korea) and the Middle East played a role in determining the direction of the development of Indonesian culture , especially in the field of theater arts. Indonesia can be said to be an area that has a diverse culture that is dynamic, an icon for a process of acculturation to the success of multiculturalism .

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