

# CREATIVITY AND INDONESIAN PERFORMING ARTS

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## INTRODUCTION

Indonesian performing arts has become one of the primary disciplines in art schools throughout Indonesia. Even in educational institutions that do not essentially focus on arts as its academic disciplines, the subject of Indonesian performing arts still receives a great deal of study. The scrutiny on the subject have produced countless numbers of papers, theses, dissertations, and even a copious amount of books published by various domestic or foreign researchers alike.

As an artistic territory, Indonesian performing arts has left its profound imprint in the history of the country. For generations, mankind has laid their foundation on the Indonesian archipelago (*Nusantara*) through a multitude of artistic expressions and ritualistic ceremonies—some are intentionally showcased for public, some remain hidden from general knowledge. Within typological perspective, Indonesian performing arts can be assessed through the following criteria: first, its exhibited elements of beauty; second, its social function; and third, whether or not it is a form dramatization (Sedyawati, 2002: 8). These criteria of typology are often left unrealized or neglected altogether.

The creativity of Indonesians is limitless, especially when it comes to actualizing their creative expressions through the means of performing arts. It cannot be denied that the field of performing arts is constantly undergoing both evolution and revolution. Community-based art, mainly, is the one thing that keeps on growing deliberately without anyone's prompting. Similarly, individual art is relentless in representing their self-awareness of individual identity and aesthetic values to the public.

To track the basics of Indonesian performing arts down to its core is to unearth the traditions and their artistic elements that construct the arts in the first place. From there, one may arrive at a conclusion about the ever-present human creativity—in this case, in the hands of artists. Art without artists will be no art, and artists without art are mere nobodies. Creation is never an imitation.

### The narrative elements of performing arts

Indonesia's official motto, *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (literally means "out of many, one") or Unity in Diversity, is an ancient legacy that lives through generations. This motto speaks strongly of the nation's heterogeneous characteristic reflected by its multitude of cultures, traditions, belief systems, religions, and written and oral folklores. Numerous manuscripts from the archipelago have also been scrutinized numerous times and have served as a fountain of inspiration for countless

subsequent narrative-based stories. For instance, the epics of *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* from India that have been adapted into becoming one of the most popular stories in Indonesia's *wayang purwa* puppet theater, have itself gained its spot as an element of "local genius" courtesy of the Javanese ancestors. In the case of *wayang purwa*, a set of localized characters called *Panakawan* is added into the story, marking its distinction from its source origin.

Clearly, Indonesian performing arts cannot be separated from its narrative, without which the arts will be devoid of "colors" originated from a glossary of unique folklores. Mythologies and cosmology that construct these folklores is responsible for giving performing arts its tonality, heroic characteristics, adventurous qualities, dramatic odyssey elements, aspects of unexpected magical power, and others. As a result, locality and its flavor are vividly showing whenever Indonesian performing arts is presented, especially through in narrative-based performances.

### **The artistic aspects of performing arts**

In general, artistic quality relates to art or artists. The phrase "artistic image", however, should be philosophically understood as the reflection or reproduction of objective reality in art that starts with a particular aesthetic perspective. This process merges and harmonizes opposites: subjective with objective, logical with sensual, emotional with rational, abstract with concrete, general with specialized, absolute with accidental, mental with physical, parts with whole, essence with appearance, contents with shapes, and reconciles words, rhymes, knowledge, and proportion into one living, meaningful, and beautiful image. Through this process, art is able to implement its specific function, namely giving a profound aesthetic satisfaction to the people (Dagun, 2005: 142).

Aesthetic and artistic image have always been interwoven with Indonesian performing arts since time immemorial. This lengthy relationship is described inside the 8<sup>th</sup> edition of *Indonesian Heritage: Performing Arts*. I especially recommend owning and reading this book to nurture a profound sense of belonging. It is particularly useful for artists, who may re-read and recreate this diverse and voluminous treasure that is the field Indonesian performing arts in order to maintain newness in creating their works.

### **Indonesian performing arts in the context of creativity**

Oftentimes people take Indonesian performing arts for granted, thinking that it will remain constant. This is an incorrect, yet unfortunately enduring, perspective. It needs to be remembered that Indonesian performing arts exists within Indonesian people in the context of Nusantara civilization. *Kenusantaraan*, or the "quality of being Nusantara", is unique and particular in its cultural context, be it visible or invisible culture, tangible or intangible. With the proper understanding that culture is dynamic, it will become clear that the dynamics of culture is highly influenced by creativity—particularly, the creativity of Indonesian people since the dawn of civilization.

“Creativity refers to any phenomenon of new creation (a product, a solution, an artwork, et cetera), all of which possess values. What is “new” may speak of the creator, or the people and the region connected with new occurrences. Meanwhile, what is “valuable” usually comes with resemblance in a variation in a multitude of ways. (Anoiko, 2011: 23)

The previous statement not only indicates the expanse of creativity, but also telling us to keep inventing something new, something that maintain the presence of *homocreator* or *sociocreator*. It can be done individually, communally, or regionally depending on the new occurrences. We can utilize the essence of creativity, which is to “invent something new”, as an approach to fully understand the Performing Arts of Indonesia.

Therefore this text is written with the intention of relaying the outline of Indonesian performing arts within the context of creativity in terms of the creativity of individual or community situated in the ethnic or sub-ethnic Indonesian regions. The author will also limit the examples in the text by selecting the few that are deemed to be most representative, such as: 1) ceremonies and *arak-arakan* (parades/processions); 2) dances; 3) traditional music; 4) mask performance; 5) *wayang* or puppet theater; 6) Islamic performing arts; 7) traditional theater; and 8) modern theater.

The method utilized in this writing is literature review supplemented by personal notes of observation on Indonesian performing arts. Although yet to be holistically concentrated, the author hopes that this writing can help to encourage creativity for those involved in the field of Indonesian performing arts.

## DISCUSSION

*“Dari Sabang sampai Merauke/Menjajar pulau-pulau/Sambung menyambung menjadi satu itulah Indonesia”*

This excerpt from the song *Dari sabang sampai Merauke* (From Sabang to Merauke) by R. Suharjo will tend to ignite the spirit of nationalism of any Indonesian singing it. Until today, Indonesia is still going strong as a unitary state even with vastly different ethnicities, religions, and cultures. One of its most notable distinctions in terms of diversity can be seen in its field of performing arts. Indonesian performing arts keep being reborn in so many ways through the hands of its active inheritors, keeping it constantly afresh. This quality of freshness is a prominent characteristic that should be maintained in order to showcase the artists’ creativity.

Two integral concepts that serve as the underlying basics, namely the narrative and the artistic elements, will be perpetually present and will never expire. Whoever harnesses these concepts in their interpretation of Indonesian performing arts is guaranteed to possess “the power of locality” that will equip them with the necessary skill to compete against other country’s performing arts. We may have heard that Malaysia declared their claim on Indonesian music based on a highly

debatable reason. Not long after, the fiasco died down and has never heard of again since. How did Malaysia dare to state such claim? Meanwhile, why do we tend to forget our own valuable potentials, our own cultural and social—and even lately turns into economical—asset? The answer is simple: it is because we are sadly lacking of awareness and consideration for our own excellence. We often tend to easily admire and celebrate foreign influences that come with all of their glitz and glamour. Youth of today easily absorbs these foreign cultures into their way of life, complete with all of its accessories and style. Putting it bluntly, this lack of awareness is originated from our lack of inadequate cultural education which is always in disarray.

Cultural education is educating through the means of ethnopedagogy, namely situating the potential of locality as the integral power to achieve targets in the process of learning. The first crucial phase is to cultivate the appreciation of art. From their early age, children need to be familiar with the appreciation of arts. One of the ways to achieve this is to acquaint them with *wayang* performance<sup>1</sup>. *Wayang* is a multifunctional and multidimensional medium that can be utilized as a tool to teach “positive values” and the importance of local wisdom, which are the elements fundamental to sustain national character. Unfortunately, this sympathetic act has yet to be established as a “national movement”. *Wayang* is more than deserving to be appreciated in order for us to fully embrace the symbolic and moral values contained in its dramatic narrative, all that teaches us what it means to be a “decent” human being.

### **Ceremonies and *arak-arakan* (parade)**

Every ethnicity and sub-ethnicity in Indonesia has their own unique ceremony. The ceremonies is generally connected with the circle of life (birth-puberty-marriage union-death), warding off evil and misfortune, fertility, veneration of the dead ancestors, and others. All of these ceremonies always feature localized performing arts in its connection to communal medium of expression. Most of it is presented in the form of *sambatan* (evocation of spirits) dance, which includes *Sanghyang*, *Seblang*, *Sintren*, *gundala-gundala*, and others.

*Arak-arakan* is a tradition inherited from generations and has existed for centuries. In their execution, the ceremonies are often opened with *arak-arakan* whose name is unique to each of its region<sup>2</sup>. This tradition mainly involves movement from one place to another, but it mostly depends on its requirement. If the *arak-arakan* is sacred, then the procession will move counter-clockwise, whereas if the

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<sup>1</sup> The Wayang Golek Appreciation Program is organized by the government of the city of Bandung, aiming at elementary school and middle-school students of Bandung. It began in 2000, but it was halted for a while only to be continued in 2017. The program takes place in Pendopo Kota Bandung, and showed the play of *Gatotkaca Sabda guru* with Wawan Dede Amung Sutarya as the dalang. This wayang performance is held for 2 hours. It also includes a pop quiz on the knowledge about wayang in the middle of the show for the students as the audience. The winners get a prize of bank deposit courtesy of the sponsor of the show.

<sup>2</sup> *Arak-arakan* is also called *Kirab* (Javanese), *Helaran*, *iring-iringan* (Sundanese), *Ider-ideran* (Cirebon), and *Pawai* (on bigger cities). They all can be said as kinds of street theaters, because they are performed on the street, by circling a village, or along the streets in large cities.

*arak-arakan* is irreligious then the procession will move clockwise. This depends whether the event is ascetic or profane. This is actually such a primordial way of thinking descended throughout generations since the ancient times; so much so that if the ceremony master or local leaders are asked why the rituals are done that way, they will simply answer, "It's just the way it is."

Tourism in Indonesia, which now relies on "public spaces" to highlight the beauty of the country, has begun to position traditional ceremonies and *arak-arakan* as an integral tool in promoting local tourism destinations. Generally, this turns into opportunities for local artists to present their creative interpretations on their local ceremonies and *arak-arakan* through novel means. The result will eventually emerge as a form of "tourism art", whose main purpose is obviously to increase the number of domestic and foreign tourists visiting the country.

Furthermore, the concept of space-time-event will always be inseparable with Indonesian performing arts. Ceremonies and *arak-arakan* are no exceptions. The space-time-event component in sacred ceremonies varies from that of the profane ones. This is something that needs to be recognized and remembered, although lately it has turned into a form of "commodification" for each of its region.

## Dances

The basic of any dance is movement. However, traditional dances are not merely a collection of rhythmic movements. Dances have been reborn in more ways than anyone can count, where each evolution is a new creation. In a way, this evolution reflects the dynamic quality of dance itself. The creativity of Indonesian dance arts has been evolving in its own unique ways since long before it touches the urban and metropolitan life, back when the arts were still in the hands of its ethnic and sub-ethnic community.

Indonesian traditional dances have their own long list of history, many of which have been discussed extensively in countless scientific papers within the academic community of arts and cultures. Dances composed throughout the years are mostly originated from the creative minds of the dancers and dance artists<sup>3</sup>. These artists have expanded their creativities within different contexts of space-time-event. Likewise, the dynamics of Indonesian traditional dance have proven its perseverance in various dance competitions on regional, national, or international levels. In a glance, unfortunately, the field of traditional dancing among children and youngsters has yet to develop as one might hope.

## Traditional music

Indonesia traditional music has always been the unique properties of its ethnic and sub-ethnic inheritors. The concept of space-time-event is always presence in every interpretation of traditional music. Sacred music possesses a kind of

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<sup>3</sup> History has seen a number of influential dance artists in Indonesian dance anthology, such as Huriah Adam, I Mario, Bagong Kusudihardjo, Tjetje Soemantri, Gugum Gumbira, Tom Ibnur, Didi Nini Towok, and others. It also includes contributions from contemporary artists, such as Sardono W Kusumo, Miroto, Eko Supriyanto, and others.

monotony that allows the creators to have a “mental space” as the music, as their musicality transfer them away to the “spiritual world”<sup>4</sup>. The existence of this mental space undoubtedly depends on the creators.

Nowadays, sacred music is still desired due to its singularity and unique quality. These qualities are inseparable with the aspect of cultural diversity and its inherent primordial way of thinking passed down from generations to generations. Although, during its journey, cultural dynamics and the people’s perspectives also greatly influences the presence of sacred music, as it becomes increasingly adaptive with the current tourism condition and situation. This eventually evokes the concept of space-time-event that can be categorized as *pseudoritual*. This quality of pseudoritual is where a performance seems authentic, but actually it has been tailored to fit the demands of the tourism market.

It also needs to be mentioned that Indonesian traditional music has become an act of commodification in the form of CDs or VCDs for tourism market consumption. The creative process of the musicians is truly diversified according to their intents and purposes. Traditional musicians mostly position themselves as the “servant of the recording studios” which, frankly, exists in the first place to cater to the singers and the consumers taste. Its process of adaptation is so swift and unpredictable.

We may perceive the aforementioned phenomenon as a profanity that runs dynamically. Nevertheless, from there arise an interesting treatment for ancestral legacy such as that of Javanese, Sundanese, and Balinese gamelan. This inherited art of gamelan has built up a shared awareness that eventually gives birth to gamelan festivals both on national and international levels. As a traditional music ensemble, gamelan has helped to encourage the creations of new and exciting compositions that are deserved to be discussed in its own seminar.

To return to the topic of traditional music, bamboo musical instrument has proven its ability to retain the ethnopedagogical values through the hands of its predecessors. The exceptional creativity produced by this component of Indonesian traditional music has received international acclaim and thus deserves to earn a great amount of respect<sup>5</sup>. Its allure does not merely come from the way it is performed, but also in how it features fellowship and togetherness as one of its main prowess.

## Mask Performance

Mask is already a familiar object for Indonesians due to it being regularly used in traditional performances<sup>6</sup>. Mask or *topeng* is used mainly to showcase the entirety

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<sup>4</sup> *Tarawangsa* music from Rancakalong, Sumedang, West Java, especially reflects this. In this performance, a Tarawangsa bower plays a string of monotone melodies, accompanying “elderly couples” who slowly dance along to the lethargic music.

<sup>5</sup> Indonesian bamboo musical instruments, especially angklung, has been awarded by UNESCO as the Masterpiece of Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity on 18 November 2010. Angklung is highly appreciated because it promotes cooperation, mutual respects, and social harmony.

<sup>6</sup> Mask in layman’s term is an object that covers one’s face. When it is used by dancers or actors, it is called *kedok* or *tapel*. Masks in this sense are made from easily chiseled woods, like *jaran*, *randu*, *pule*, and others. To talk about mask

of the self (Sedyawati, 2002:39). The entirety of the self in this sense is a particular character or a diversity of characters one portrays in a dramatic event inside of a play. Masks are used to present different characters with their particular “characterization system”. Masks can be categorized into three according to its sizes: face-fit, larger than face, and enormous (for instance, a *Barong* mask representing a fairy tale beast). The shape of masks may range from lifelike to absurdly-shaped. The lifelike masks connote realistic performances, whereas the bizarre and absurd ones are often associated with non-realistic performances. Realistic masks also generally have more distillations and colors which are meant to represent particular symbols (for instance in the case of Topeng Cirebon). Meanwhile, absurd masks tend to feature more simple forms to invoke artistic “captivations” (for example, *Berutuk* from Bali, *Sekura* from West Lampung, *Gundala-gundala*, *Toping-toping* from North Sumatra, *Hudoq* from East Kalimantan, *Badawang* and *Bebegig* from Sunda, *Ondel-ondel* from Jakarta, and many more).

Masks may also be delivered through a dramatic theater performance originated from oral tradition, legends, *wayang*, Panji folklores, *carangan* stories, and others. In West Java, the word Mask is also associated with folk theater performance, as can be seen in *Banjet* mask, Bekasi mask, or *Uyeg* mask. Nowadays there have been many other contemporary performances utilizing masks as a part of their artistic expression.

### **Wayang**

The history of *wayang* in Indonesia is an extensive and incredibly intricate one. *Wayang* is multidimensional as well as multifunctional. *Wayang* may be used as both a stage for ceremony and entertainment. People have mutually accepted the underlying concept of *wayang* as “a spectacle as well as a means of guidance”. As a medium for ceremonies, *wayang* is known as *ruwatan* or *ngaruwat*, which means to ward off misfortune. Dramatic plays such as *Batara Kala* (the personification of the Time) who pursues *Jatusmati* (a representation of Mankind) is one of the most sacred plays popular among the *pedalangan* (community of *dalang*/puppet masters) of Indonesia. Both staged in the form of *wayang kulit* or *wayang golek*, this play inherently teaches an important lesson that human life is limited, and therefore we must make the most of our time dedicating ourselves to be a proper human being.

Aside from sacred plays, the *dalang* also often perform *galur* plays (plays that are the opposite of traditional epics such as *Mahabharata*, *Ramayana*, and *Lokapala*). These plays are also popularly performed as they are passed down from generations to generations. Furthermore, there are also *carangan* plays, which are created by some of the most famous *dalang* themselves. *Carangan* plays generally display the *dalang*’s personal ideologies since it is their means of creative interpretation. The ideology often manifests into inherent morals that urge the audience to think and

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or “topeng” means not to merely talk about a medium of performing, but a kind of folk performance itself that can be found in many parts of Indonesia. TH. Pigeaud (1938) categorized it into Topeng Besar (Large Masks) and Topeng Kecil (Small Masks).

reflect. An example of this can be seen in the wayang golek performance of *Kumbakarna Gugur* by the dalang Asep Sunandar Sunarya<sup>7</sup>. Due to this, dalang are often considered as “the enlightener”.

According to its development, wayang can be categorized into two: traditional wayang and contemporary wayang. Traditional wayang is still popular up to this day, preserved by its loyal fans who staged its performance in every occasion they can (be it *khitanan*/circumcision ceremony, anniversary of local regions, independence day celebration, political campaign event, art appreciation event, and others). Meanwhile, contemporary wayang was created by artists who either came from *pedalangan* community or various art institutions. Electrical wayang created by Made Sidia is one example of contemporary wayang that has been able to penetrate international market. Another successful example of this is wayang *motekar* by Herry Dim from Bandung.

Aside from using puppets as the medium of wayang, people can also act as wayang in plays. Examples of human wayang include *wayang wong*, *wayang topeng*, and others. Wayang may also take the form of dance performances, and has increasingly become more popular among creators and fans alike. One of the examples of human wayang via dance performance is Teater Wayang Sunda (TeWaySun) by Arthur S. Nalan from Bandung. The stories that are depicted by this form of theater are mostly controversial, and often feature rarely seen characters that reflect human qualities. This can be seen in plays such as *The Song of Dorna* and *The Song of Aswatama*.

### Islamic Performing Arts

Islamic Performing Arts refer to performances related to the Islamic teachings as is seen in historical and socio-cultural context. The word “Islamic” is chosen not because these art forms are part of the default Islamic teachings, but because they are a kind of byproducts that carries on along with the spread of the religion. However, the spread of Islam in Indonesian may indeed be attributed to some particular forms of ancient performances (Sedyawati, 2002: 63). In fact, the spread of Islam was highly influential in encouraging the creativity of *walisanga* (the nine primary Islamic saints/*wali*). Their creative interpretation of Islamic teachings is especially apparent in the form of wayang kulit plays that utilize “local potentials”, featuring the local characters of *punakawan* (“folks who watch”) as a representation of the people’s voice. Examples of these Islam-influenced plays include *Serat Kalimusada*, *Dewa Ruci*, *Yudhistira Merad*, and *Sunan Bonang Kembar*. Other forms of creative interpretation are the “*nadhoman*” tradition or *pupujian* as heard in many *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools), and also *suluk-suluk pesisiran* that highly incorporates sufism practice.

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<sup>7</sup> *Kumbakarna Gugur* is a kind of *carangan* play, teaching morals that one should know oneself, in whatever one does and whatever one decides to do for the rest of their life. This moral message is actually adapted from the “teachings” of Imam Al’Ghazali, whom the local public has previously recognized through the performances of the renowned dalang Abah Sunarya from *padepokan* (artistic community) Giri Harja Kabupaten Bandung, West Java.

Islam within the artistic frame is the main highlight of Festival Istiqlal<sup>8</sup>. This festival is organized by the government, and is meant to be event of appreciation for Islamic arts (in the forms of literature, fine arts, or performance arts among others). The Islamic-oriented local potentials of Nusantara are delivered through folk theaters, historical books, and seminars that are published into books which include thoughts about: the diversity of cultures in Nusantara (1996) and in the Java island (1996). Both books contain a collection of essays and notes describing various results of researches, observations, and experiences pertaining to “the spirit of Islam in the nation’s culture”.

Nowadays Islamic performing arts have undergone such an exciting development as seen from their new media of expression. The art does not necessarily have to be restricted by traditions, which allows it to express its Islamic values more freely. The characterized creativity of the homocreators of Islamic performing arts is especially apparent. “The spirit of Islam” is always present through the messages that “touches the hearts” of fans, especially Muslims. For instance, the song *Tombo Ati*, an example of Santiwaran<sup>9</sup> music, that has been reiterated as an Islamic pop song.

### Traditional theaters

The diversity of Nusantara national theatre, also known as folk theatre, has gone through numerous changes throughout its history. Some forms of the arts unfortunately could not stand the test of time and may have ceased to exist. In general, Nusantara folk theater may be divided into two categories: narrated theater and dramatic theater. Narrated theater is a form of storytelling theatrical performance delivered by a narrator while being accompanied by each region’s ethnic musical ensemble<sup>10</sup>. They perform plays that are derived from local oral folktales, such as Pantun Sunda<sup>11</sup>. Nowadays, narrated theater is not as popular as it used to, since a lot of its original narrators have passed away and their successors are not as enthusiastic in resurrecting the art form. Even so, some forms of narrated theater persist through reiterations in dance performances and modern theaters. In other words, although narrated theater has rarely performed in its traditional form,

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<sup>8</sup> Festival Istiqlal is a festival that highlights Occidentalism ideology as opposed to the more-popular orientalism. This festival was held in 1995-1996 in Jakarta.

<sup>9</sup> *Santiwaran* is an Islamic musical performance that shows *pengrawit Kendhang*, *terbang*, and *kemanak*, plus a *Pesinden* singer. The musical ensemble is mostly Javanese, at the exception of *terbang* that is harmonized with Javanese musical scale of *Slendro*, but its lyrics are filled with Islamic teachings and prayers combined with Javanese themes. The accompanying musical instruments of Santiwaran are all percussions. A modern touch of Islamic performance arts in Indonesia can be seen in the entire participants being female. Even in many other cases, women artists have replaced men in performing (see description of Salawat and Santiwaran, *Indonesian Heritage* (2002) page:65).

<sup>10</sup> Narrated theaters of Nusantara include *Pantun Sunda*, *bujanggaan*, *Maca Wawacan* (West Java), *Bakaba* (Minangkabau), *Sinrili* (South Sulawesi), *Hikayat Betawi* (DKI Jakarta), *Cepung* (Lombok), *Macapat* (Java), *Dalang Jembung* (Banyumas) and others.

<sup>11</sup> Pantun Sunda plays include: *Lutung Kasarung*, *Mundinglaya Dikusumah*, *Budak Manjor*, *Panggung Karaton*, *Sulanjana*, et cetera. There is also a variant of Pantun Sunda called Pantun Bogor, which performs plays such as *Dadap malang sisi Cimandiri*, *Pajajaran beukah kembang*, *Tujuh Ronggeng Kalasirna*, etc.

it has merged into modern theaters and been reborn into new creations. This is one of the examples of conservation through innovations.

Meanwhile, dramatic theater staged plays which are adapted from local folklores, legends, oral history, stories from babad Tanah Jawi, Majapahit stories, and others. The performances are accompanied by musical ensemble (*pelog* and *salendro*) and are played on proscenium and arena stages<sup>12</sup>. In West Java, particularly, such performances are acted through two means, namely Teater Oncor and Teater Layar<sup>13</sup>.

Lately, Indonesian folk theaters have been reborn into fresh iterations thanks to the new generation (which can be found in art colleges, for instance)<sup>14</sup>. Moreover, the rapid development of private television as a mass media also contributes to the conservation of folk theaters as an entertainment form, for example through shows like *Ketoprak Plesetan*. Also worth mentioning is the phenomenon of *Bondresan* performance in Bali<sup>15</sup>.

## Modern theater

Indonesian modern theater has been the subject of research of countless Indonesian academicians, either interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary. The researchers also have produced numerous papers published in regional, national, or international journals. The creativity of the creators and directors has served as an evidence of the increasing dynamics of Indonesian theater. Throughout its expansive history, a number of noteworthy characters have actively participated by bringing their monumental works onto the stage<sup>16</sup>, not to mention the playwrights who have contributed to the longevity of modern theaters<sup>17</sup>. This diversity of expression will keep ensuring the dynamics and vigor of Indonesian modern theaters for the advantage of the creators in exploring their own creativity.

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<sup>12</sup> Nusantara dramatic theaters include: *Sandiwara Sunda*, *Sandiwara Cirebon*, *Sandiwara Indramayu*, *Topeng Banjet*, *Topeng Bekasi*, *Topeng Kaleng*, *Longser*, *Uyeg* (West Java), *Ketoprak* (Yogyakarta and Central Java), *Ludruk* (East Java), *Drama Gong* (Bali), *Wayang Gong* (South Kalimantan), *Dulmuluk* (Jambi-Palembang), *Randai* (West Sumatera), *Mak Yong dan Mendu* (Riau), *Wayang Wong* (Yogyakarta and Surakarta), *Srimulat* (Surabaya-DKI Jakarta).

<sup>13</sup> The categorization of *Teater Oncor* and *Teater Layar* is done by the author in order to understand West Javanese theatres. *Teater Oncor* is a folk theater which utilizes *Oncor* (a three-headed torch) in the middle of the performance area. It is used not only to illuminate the performance but also to establish the space-time-event setting. Examples of this include *Longser*, *Banjet*, *Uyeg*. *Teater Layar* is a folk theater using a screen painted by sceneries to establish the current space-time-event setting. Examples of this include *Sandiwara Sunda*, *Sandiwara Indramayu*, *Sandiwara Cirebon*.

<sup>14</sup> A new reiteration of Longser was performed by the alumni of ISBI Bandung art college: *Longser Antar Pulau*, *Longser Gaul*, *Toonil Bandung* (Longser is reworked with a new style and held as a festival for high school and college students)

<sup>15</sup> *Bondresan* started as scenes for *panakawan* (a type of *goro-goro*) within the Drama Gong performance on Bali. It then developed into its own show and staged more contextual plays. Its development becomes a media of communication for culture and politics. It is not only entertaining, but also critical; it discusses the current topics through satirical ways familiar to small folks.

<sup>16</sup> Playwrights and directors of Indonesian theater include, Jim Adilimas, Suyatna Anirun, WS Rendra, Arifin C.Noer, Putu Wijaya, N.Riantiarno, Rachman Sabur, Dindon, among others.

<sup>17</sup> The color of expression is a means of creative communication for Indonesian modern theater people, be it through scripts, musical means, or leaving it with minimum verbal expression, non-verbal expression, the artistic quality of the stage, multimedia expression, physical expression, and so forth.

## CONCLUSION

In this article, I have provided an elucidation of Indonesian performing arts and creativity. Although the descriptions were brief, I aim for a general understanding of anyone who happens to read this article. To highlight my points, I would like to emphasize that Indonesian performing arts, either the ones who are adapted from old traditions or born from new creations, have greatly contributed to the dynamics of Indonesian culture.

The old tradition of Nusantara that has been passed down for generations have been creatively reiterated in so many ways by their active inheritors through Indonesian art performances, manifesting in the concept of space-time-event relevant to its time period. As an old Sundanese proverb says, *miindung ka waktu-mibapa ka zaman* (we need to adapt with the changes of the century).

We are the inheritors of these invaluable traditions of art. As such, we have to be relentless in expressing our creativity, not only through scientific papers and journals, but also through new forms of art without neglecting to preserve the old traditions.

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