

New Tradition in a Modernity-Deficit Postcolony

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ABSTRACT

A binary opposition between 'tradition versus modernity' has preoccupied the Indonesian public and its analysts for a century. The 'New Theatre' is the country's most celebrated form in the performing arts for its amalgamation of 'tradition and modernity', but the dualism persists. A critical reexamination of the New Theatre will benefit substantially from a review of the broader debate about a flawed modernity that has allegedly characterised many postcolonies, due to the legacies of their traditions.

Introduction

Modernity is full of inherent paradoxes. Under the militarist rule of the New Order (1966-1998) Indonesia pursued a vigorous project of modernisation that brought about expanded industrialisation, economic growth, urbanisation, and deeper incorporation into global capitalism. Under the spell of the modernisation paradigm, 'traditions' were declared suspects. Yet, the period also witnessed a long-term search for and invention of 'tradition'.¹ During this time theatre arts "exploded with innovation" (Rafferty 1990: 14), rendering it a most prolific period in its history. "[P]ondering the connections between modern theatre and traditional cultural forms became a major preoccupation of the first two decades of the New Order" (Bodden, 2007: 75). Artists have been enthusiastically experimenting with the appropriation of elements from one type of theatre to the others. However, they and their analysts have not seriously problematised the traditional/modern dualism itself.

This essay re-examines the debate about modernity in the postcolony, and how the New Theatre responds to and partakes in the tradition/modernity binary discourse. The article consists of three sections. It proceeds with an outline of basic notions of modernity, emphasising its contradictory concepts that have been responsible for the tradition and modernity dichotomy. The review will be useful to the next section that examines how three of Indonesia's most prominent theatre artists (Rendra, Putu Wijaya, and Nano Riantiarno) dealt with the dichotomy. As the issue is derived from a larger debate about modernity in the postcolony, the concluding section will return to the broader debate beyond the theatre world.

The work of the three artists mentioned above have been widely recognised as part of the larger development from the late 1960s of 'New Tradition' theatre as a way of distinguishing them from both 'traditional' theatre, and the 'modern' Western-style realist theatre. In Indonesia traditional and modern theatres are distinguished in the following terms: their broader *social function and audience* (part of religious and communal functions for all members of a collective, versus secular performance for autonomous individuals who wish to attend at their discretion); *language* (one of the ethnic languages versus Indonesian, the national language); the manner

dialogues are prepared (relying on actor improvisation on stage, versus a completed pre-production script to be memorised); as well as the way *dialogues are presented* in performance (a substantial amount being recited or sung, versus realist spoken conversations); and *venue* (open space, versus a theatre building with a proscenium). When applied to reality, the distinction proves problematic, as criss-crossing is very common. Worse still, the distinction is often taken to represent a dichotomy between some pristinely native local/ regional/ sub-national culture of the East, with all the negative values implied (old, conservative, static, rigid, repetitive) and a freshly new, rational, globalised Western culture with all its presumed superior values (novel, progressive, innovative, dynamic). Often overlooked in binary opposition is the variation within each genre, the hybridised character of both genres from early on. More importantly, there exists no ability or willingness to remember the selected episodes from the nation's history that has made such distinction prominent in the first place.

As in most postcolonies, Indonesia's activities in the artistic, academic or religious circles do not occupy an autonomous space as generally seen or expected in liberal democracies. Likewise, the distinction between the 'public' and 'private' spaces remains foreign to the majority of the population. In the name of nation-building and modernisation, the state deeply intervenes in the lives and activities of their citizens, often inadvertently politicising the otherwise apolitical or more independent minded practitioners in the artistic, academic or religious circles. Although there is no one-to-one relationship between the performing arts and the country's political dynamics, it would be remiss to discuss theatre in this postcolony in isolation from its broader political context.

Modernity's paradoxes

One reason why scholars have not easily agreed on the birthday and birth place of modernity is the difficulty in defining what modernity is.² This problem is not simply reducible to the presumed multiple or alternative modernities, whose conceptual implication has been problematised by Kahn (2001: 659).³ Many attribute the difficulty to the ambivalent character within the conditions of modernity. Some scholars even go as far as to question seriously if any society meets the ideal criteria usually attributed to modernity (Venn & Featherstone, 2006: 457-459). Understandably, many find it more productive to speak of the different modernist aspirations, commitments, or movements and their contexts in a given time.

David Harvey identifies the end of World War Two as the beginning of a hegemony of universal or high modernism which served well the political and economic interests of the war's victors. It was a "corporate capitalist version of the Enlightenment project of development for progress and human emancipation", characterised by a strong "belief 'in linear progress, absolute truths, and rational planning of ideal social orders' under standardized conditions of knowledge and production" (Harvey, 1989: 35). Even if we decide to take Harvey's portrayal as fair and accurate, we must be careful not to over-generalise. Taking specific historical moments as the basis for speaking of modernity in a generic sense has led many to false binary oppositions, with tradition/modernity being a salient example in the first half of the past century, modernity/postmodernity in the last decades of the twentieth century,⁴ or solid/fluid modernity more recently at the dawn of the twenty-first century.⁵

Most scholars would be inclined to agree with Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) that the "invention of tradition" is a modernist discursive construct, without which modernity cannot come into being. Even with a general consensus on the constructedness of tradition, the tradition/modernity dichotomy persists among people of various backgrounds, not least in academic circles. It finds expression under different phrases and dominant frames of thought, such as 'West/ern/ers' versus 'East/ern/ers', whites versus coloured, coloniser versus colonised races.

Modernisation in what is now Indonesia took hold resolutely in the late nineteenth century, "when 'capitalist' markets for land, labour and primary products were created through the

intervention of a bureaucratising and rationalising state apparatus” of Dutch colonialism (Kahn & Formosa, 2002: 58). The train of tumultuous events in the first half of the twentieth century—two World Wars, nationalist revolution, then the Cold War—severely disrupted Indonesia’s economic development, while also intensifying the divisions within the fragile and newly-born nation. A remarkable return to the colonial-style order and modernisation took shape when the New Order government assumed state power in 1966, following one of the bloodiest massacres in modern history. Approximately one million Indonesians were killed by their compatriots in less than half a year. Those who survived the massacre and all their family members lost their basic civil rights for the next two generations. With generous support from the Western Bloc of the Cold War, the militarist New Order government ruled under a single president (General Suharto) for 32 years, exercising state terrorism (Heryanto, 2006). The period witnessed a remarkable growth of theatrical works in Indonesia that has had no parallels ever since. Didacticism and political engagement have been prominent features of artistic works in the entire history of Indonesia, making it impossible for theatre artists to be apolitical, or seen as such by others, even if they tried.

Theatre in Indonesia has a long and rich history, dating back long before the birth of the nation (Cohen, 2006, 2009; Winet, 2010). However, that history from the early twentieth century, and the political turmoil half a century later have been erased or distorted for political convenience. In terms of size and quality of productions, the two decades immediately prior to the widespread adoption of the internet and smart phones at the turn of the century was a most prolific period. Theatrical training and seminars, festivals and competitions, journalistic reports, interviews and opinions in the media on theatre prevailed across the archipelago, especially among urban youths in the industrialised island of Java (Bodden, 2010; Hatley, 2008). As one might expect, the period also saw regular government restrictions, including banning of theatrical productions, as well as prosecutions of artists for their alleged “inflammatory” or “seditious” works. Nearly all luminaries among the who’s who in performing arts (on stage and screen) in the early decades of the 2000s had their formative years in theatre activities in the New Order period. They include Putu Wijaya, Nano Riantiarno, Chaerul Umam, Jajang C. Noer, Deddy Mizwar, Ratna Sarumpaet, Ikranegara, Emha Ainun Najib, Butet Kertarajasa and Slamet Rahardjo.

The New Tradition

The so-called “New Tradition” enjoys highly complementary remarks in nearly all published works on modern theatre in Indonesia (Asmara, 1995; Bodden, 2010: 19, 32-5; Hatley, 1995: 48-69; Hatley, 2008: ch.4; Kayam, 1981: 92-9; Rafferty, 1989: 9-30, 1990). New Tradition refers to a trend from the early years of the New Order rule among Indonesian cultural workers to creatively incorporate a wide range of elements of ethnic artistic practices.

The New Tradition has been widely regarded as a watershed in the creative history of the country, departing from all that had existed in the preceding periods. Failure to take into account both the rich and hybridised performing arts in the late colonial period, as well as the 1965 massacre, have been partly responsible for the largely apolitical and future-oriented discussions of the New Theatre. Most accounts of New Tradition consider a one-sided story of a one-way creative incorporation from the traditional to the modern theatre work. The reverse process, whereby ‘traditional’ artists take inspiration from the modern arts, is usually not denied but simply ignored by most observers whose interest focuses on the national, and more prestigious, artistic world.⁶

This section will problematise the novelty of the New Tradition in its own terms, and the next section will examine its broader political context. Some of the key artists widely praised as the forerunners of New Tradition claim to have been practising an old tradition rather than something new (Asmara, 1995: 164). Furthermore, the practice of blending is a global phenomenon, not specifically pronounced in the arts or in any particular time or space. It is perhaps as old as history, and referred to under a wide range of terminologies, among which ‘hybridity’ currently appears to

be highly popular in cultural, media and postcolonial studies (Pieterse, 2001). Therefore, it is the specific details of individual cases that we need to examine in order to gauge their significance.

Below I shall sketch how the works of three of the most prominent theatre artists, namely Rendra, Putu Wijaya, and Nano Riantiarno, fit the claims of the New Tradition. Many believe these individuals represent a pioneering generation of theatre that departed from the work of their predecessors from the first half of the twentieth century. While they all embrace elements of both traditional and modern theatres, none of them (like most of us) can entirely abandon the powerful metaphors of tradition and modernity so deeply embedded in contemporary languages, as if they are two separable mutually independent entities.

Rendra

Rendra (1935-2009) was a towering cultural critic, a romantic artist-cum-dissident during the height of the brutal New Order regime.⁷ In contrast to the overtly political left-leaning artists before their annihilation immediately prior to his debut, Rendra is best remembered by many as a charismatic, bohemian figure, with the flamboyant hippie lifestyle of the 1960s American flower power generation, epitomising a lone moral force in a sea of corruption, political suppression, and disrespect for human dignity. Rendra's intellectual and ideological perspectives derived most prominently from Javanese tradition, mixed with Western modernism, Latin American anti-developmentalism, and syncretic Islam.

Tradition is a keyword in Rendra's many public statements, as eloquently elaborated in his 1983 book *Mempertimbangkan Tradisi* (Considering Tradition). In both his words and his theatre productions, such as *Mastodon dan Burung Kondor* (1973) and *Kisah Perjuangan Suku Naga* (1975), tradition has radically different meanings from those commonly understood in Indonesia and abroad. While being wary of proposing a definition, Rendra conceptualised tradition as a living "collective consciousness" of a given society. Instead of being frozen relics of a given past, in his view, tradition equips us with the faculty to meet our daily needs. However, it also challenges us to deploy it in critical and innovative ways, which may require breaking some of its old taboos, removing its obsolete elements, and in turn injecting new elements which will reinvigorate that tradition itself. Tradition is not some static heritage from ancestors that must be preserved, or manipulated instrumentally for short-term benefits. Implied in Rendra's idealistic sounding theory is some sort of dialectic and organic relationship between age-old practice and creative social strategy in the present. Rendra cited examples of elements of traditions that need to be got rid of, as well as examples of familiar and bad practice in contemporary life that simply manipulate tradition without innovation (Rendra, 1983).

A modernist anti-modernisation sentiment is evident in Rendra's philosophical analysis and artistic performances, where serious conflicts exist not between modernity and tradition but internally within each entity. On one occasion, he was bemused by those who described his works as innovations in contemporary modern theatre and poetry. He claimed that what he did was simply recreate the old practice embedded in selected Javanese children's songs and games with which he and his peers grew up (Rendra, 1983: 5).

Rendra's departure from the theatre orthodoxy of the 1940s and 1950s may help validate the New Tradition thesis. However, his case is also a reminder that tradition is not as simple and monolithic as usually depicted as being inherently against modernity in the binary opposition that served as the basis for a synthesis called New Tradition. Rendra's creative work can be designated "New", as most analysts have done, or as the "Old" Tradition in line with his own claims. He suggested that what he did was a direct continuation of an old tradition in Java that even many contemporary Javanese were unaware of or uninterested in. In Rendra's case, the idea of New Tradition is not entirely baseless, but it is nonetheless deeply problematic.

Putu Wijaya

Putu Wijaya (b. 11 April 1944) is in some sense more subversive than Rendra to the dominant logic of the New Order rule. However, Wijaya is subversive in subtle ways. Rendra attracted the nation's politically restless segments and heroically confronted the New Order regime on its own terms, which led to banning and arrests. In contrast, Wijaya has largely been left alone by the security apparatus and anti-government political activists alike. To many fellow artists and critics, Wijaya is primarily an absurdist theatre artist. However, Wijaya responds to the attribution by alleging that it represents a serious failure to understand the traditional theatre (Balinese) that serves as the source of his inspiration. On human sufferings, and the struggles to overcome them, Wijaya is no less serious than Rendra; perhaps he is too serious for many to appreciate and applaud. Wijaya's narrative style departs radically from the mainstream practice.⁸

By most estimates, Wijaya has published more stories (plays, short stories, novels, television soap operas) than any other Indonesian author, and has won more writing awards than his contemporaries.⁹ There are no heroes or villains in his anti-humanist stories. Characters in most of his stories have no name. When names are provided, they take the form of marital or professional statuses, or they are called "Someones". Fatal circumstances and human conditions that can be found anywhere at any time are the impetus for very funny and tragic events in his stories. While most of his stories are non-realist, they often depict some of the most banal situations in the everyday lives of 'ordinary' people, before a series of unexpected twists and turns run through the story line, full of slippages and a demonstration of the impossibility of any simple and straightforward communication even on everyday issues.

In 1985-86 Wijaya was a scholar in residence at The University of Wisconsin in Madison, USA. During his fellowship he directed a production of his play *Gerr* (translated by Michael Bodden as *Geez!*), with American students acting and American technicians assisting. In a post-production note he reflected on his experience, discussing his frustrations. Here are two excerpts (translated from Indonesian by Ellen Rafferty):

During one of the first rehearsals, one of the students asked me why Bima [a leading character in the play] had died. He continued asking questions because he really wanted to know whether Bima in the end escapes or is buried. When I answered that I did not know, he thought I was teasing him. "How could you not know? You are the author," he said with disappointment ... It was difficult for me to explain ... The efforts of the actors to analyze *Geez!* in a rational manner and to understand the characters from a psychologically real perspective made the readings difficult. ... They were frustrated and so was I (Wijaya, 1989: 149).

The regulations on campus made me totally ineffective—everything had to be planned in advance. The directors of lighting, costumes, and staging all asked for a description of what would be needed. ... This organized way of working was totally alien to my way of proceeding. ... I encourage participation from the actors in the creation of costumes, lighting, and stage directions. Yet, in Madison everyone waited for my instruction. (Wijaya, 1989: 152)

Wijaya recognises the contrasts between the different styles of theatre conventions. However, to attribute the contrast, as he does, to a division between East/West or Traditional/Modern is problematic. Many features of his theatre may be found in, or inspired by, Balinese theatre practices, as he claims. However, Wijaya's demand that the actors memorise the scripted dialogues more than they were prepared to do and his less than flexible inclinations to give an actor the liberty to rephrase some of the dialogues in the original script—contra Mohamad's observation (1980)—on top of his use of the Indonesian language (or its English translation) in the entire play, distinguish his theatre significantly from 'traditional' theatres as generally understood and already outlined earlier in this essay.

So, here is the irony. Unlike Rendra, who critically problematised Javanese culture while taking inspiration from it and reinvigorating it, Wijaya claims to subscribe wholeheartedly to the tradition

of his choice, while critically confronting modern life and its mainstream theatrical conventions. It is precisely his conscious pursuit of 'truly' traditional qualities that underscores Wijaya's distance from what he intends to achieve, and highlights the New-ness of his works instead of its claimed Traditional-ness, and belying the main thrust of the New Tradition thesis. To what extent the Balinese tradition that Wijaya aspires to is pure and authentic, and whether it exists outside modernity, evade his discussion.

Nano Riantiarno

Of the three playwrights and directors considered in this section, Nano Riantiarno (b. 6 June 1949) appears the least serious towards issues of political change or the tradition/modernity conundrum. Most observers consider his works to be light-weight and Riantiarno does not mind such assessment (Riantiarno 1980: 86). Riantiarno's works never pull punches at the political elite. Like Rendra, Riantiarno faced a number of government retaliations, with bans and other forms of restrictions. Unlike in Rendra's works, however, there are no didactic or civilising missions from the voice of a wise character in Riantiarno's productions. When likeable characters appear, they often come from the urban underclass. His performance is characterised by overtly down-to-earth festivity, full of humour, music and sexual allusions with scathing commentaries on the elite. Observers admire Riantiarno and his wife Ratna for making their company, Teater Koma, the single most commercially successful theatre company in the country. The same success draws cynical comments among those who regard Teater Koma as being too commercially-oriented at the expense of artistic integrity.¹⁰

Arguably, the allegedly market-friendly orientation has made Teater Koma the most hybridised style of theatre among its contemporaries. With no pretension to enlightening the public, Teater Koma is committed to entertaining its metropolitan audience by incorporating multi-ethnic actors and trans-national sources of stories, costumes, music, and languages. The blending of elements of what have been normally designated as traditional and modern theatres occurs throughout, but it is never foregrounded to make any statement whatsoever. The fact that this format has proven to have consistently struck a chord with the largest theatre audience in modern Indonesia over the past three decades may be a good indication of Indonesia's modernity. It is a modernity with blatant contradictions that have frequently been taken in some quarters to be signs of Indonesia's modernity deficit.

Instead of being an innovation called New Tradition, Teater Koma can be seen as another reincarnation of Komedi Stamboel, the forerunner of modern theatres in Indonesia "that flourished from 1890 through the 1930s" in the incipient days of Indonesia's modernity (Cohen, 2009: 277). Younger than Komedi Stamboel and older than Teater Koma, there is also the Srimulat theatre company (founded on 8 August 1950, formally dissolved in 1990, reincarnated on television since 1997), which shared many of the features of Komedi Stamboel and Teater Koma.¹¹ From this perspective, the most popular theatres in Indonesia, past and present, are neither "New" nor "Traditional."

The erasure from history of the early theatres in the archipelago has been responsible for inaccurate claims such as "Until TIM [Taman Ismail Marzuki of the Jakarta Arts Centre] opened, performing arts in Indonesia were localised. This new centre marked the first time that artists from different regions could see each other's work" (Asmara, 1995: 168).¹² Even a cultural critic as senior and highly reputed as Goenawan Mohamad shares the myth of the novelty of the New Tradition, suggesting a total break from its predecessors (Mohamad, 1980: 106). Mohamad is aware of the early history of modern theatres in the Dutch East Indies colony. However, he makes the common mistake of excluding them from the history of Indonesian national theatre for their allegedly being western centric (Mohamad, 1980: 136). Winet persuasively presents a contrary argument why past history has been strongly denied in the official nationalist historiography of Indonesian theatre by scholars such as Boen Oemaryati, whom Mohamad cites favourably (Winet, 2010).

Modernity deficit

In a scrupulous study of contemporary theatres in Indonesia, Bodden analyses the tension between advocates of “traditional-oriented” and “modernist” ideologies in the history of Indonesian culture. Bodden’s work leads us to the bigger problems beyond the theatre, and to the concerns of this concluding section. All the foregoing discussion begs to differ from Bodden’s otherwise admirable work. I wish to argue that there is a much deeper intimacy between what on the surface appear as the modern and the traditional opposition.

Bodden focuses his study on the long and ongoing tension between the two ideologies among the segments of the Indonesian “elites” as expressed in the national culture, with special reference to the theatre. The first and dominant ideology, according to Bodden, is that of “a group of elites who tend to favour artistic practices that are based upon ideologies of art generally associated with western liberal humanism”. It finds itself

in conflict with several other ideologies, the most prominent of which, for [the] purposes of this paper, is one claiming more direct ties to traditional cultural aesthetics, ideologies and practices (especially those construed as connected to traditional Javanese court artistic practices). This latter could be said to be frequently (though not always) in accord with those conservative aristocratic political ideologies constructed and favoured by the New Order state. (Bodden, 2007: 65)

Bodden is careful to make a number of qualifications, acknowledging the mutations and overlaps between the two ideologies and two segments of the elites. Notwithstanding these exceptions, the opposition between the two is taken to be unproblematic in Bodden’s framework. He duly considers that other scholars before him have examined the “struggle between at least two forces within society: conservative elites versus urban youth; traditional *priyayi* (aristocrats, servants of the state) versus western-influenced nationalists; bureaucracy versus the middle classes; or the state against theatre workers” (Bodden, 2007: 66). What they have not done, Bodden claims, and he tasks himself with, is not so much to question the basis of such a framework (as I am trying to do here), but to refine it (Bodden, 2007: 67).

Bodden’s analysis is rich with empirical data and sensitive to the complexity he encountered in the field, making it difficult for me to do justice to his nuanced and sophisticated essay. However, despite his theoretical discussion that relies heavily on semi-canonised sources in cultural studies (Pierre Bourdieu, Raymond Williams, and Stuart Hall), the ghost of the modernisation theory creeps into his overall and fundamental arguments. In Bodden’s examination, the conflict between the two ideologies/social groups continues to the present, with occasional complications but no fundamental alterations. The modernist view has also taken some conservative Dutch values, but the contrast between the two continues to stand in his analysis: new Westernised/modern/progressive (or relatively more progressive) forces versus old Native/traditional/hopelessly conservative ones.

The few samples below show how pervasive and persistent the dichotomy of East/ tradition versus West/modernity has been in the Indonesian public and scholarship of it. In ways comparable to Rendra’s appreciation for tradition, Benedict Anderson’s essay “The Idea of Power in Javanese Culture” (Anderson, 1990: 17-77) is a critical yet sympathetic attempt to piece together in a systematic fashion an understanding of the notion of power in Javanese culture. Reminiscent of Rendra’s criticism of the common failure to appreciate tradition critically, Anderson describes what modern social scientists had allegedly misunderstood or overlooked, by making a list of four areas of contrast between the Javanese *traditional* view of power and that of its *modern* European counterpart (Anderson, 1990: 21-30). Also in ways comparable to Wijaya’s comments on the resilience of ethnic traditions, Anderson argues further that despite the series of heavy onslaughts against this traditional culture by “Dutch colonialism, the Japanese occupation, the nationalist revolutions, and the socioeconomic changes they brought about, the cultural grip of this traditional perspective remains very strong” (Anderson, 1990: 72).

Many analysts have approvingly cited Anderson about the strongly ‘traditional’ nature of the Indonesian power holders, even if they are less forgiving than Anderson in their judgment of this dominant tradition in Indonesian modernity. One influential foreign analyst dubs the New Order’s capitalist development an “*ersatz*” (or pseudo) capitalism (Yoshihara, 1988). The concept became rapidly and widely popular among social scientists in the late 1980s and early 1990s. It found a new currency among analysts at the turn of the century, after anti-government protesters took to the street in 1998 and popularised the epithet *Korupsi, Kolusi, Nepotisme* (Corruption, Collusion, Nepotism) to describe the evils that had corrupted Indonesia.

The problem with the idea of *ersatz* capitalism is its assumption of the possibility, and desirability, of a “true” capitalism (Heryanto 1990: 63-6). Back in the 1980s Bourdieu and Wallerstein had already observed the aristocratisation of capitalist class (Bourdieu, 1980; Wallerstein, 1988). More recently, Kahn and Formosa (2002) launched a compelling criticism of the idea of *ersatz* capitalism. Contrary to the common practice of viewing Asia’s economic practice as “crony capitalism”, they demonstrate that crony capitalism is “not a deviation”, and “not premodern”. It is a global phenomenon, not a uniquely “Asian” one. Having considered a wide range of cases around the globe, they come to the conclusion “practically everywhere, in East and West, North and South, rich nations and poor nations, small places and big places, rural or urban settings, local or global scales, cronyism appears to be an integral part of modern capitalism and the modern domains of politics, government and state bureaucracy” (Kahn & Formosa, 2002: 61).

There is no pure capitalism, and there exists no pure modernity or tradition, in theatre or society at large. The rise of highly celebrated New Theatre in Indonesia, for its presumed innovation in blending of elements of traditional and modern theatres is a product of the long-lasting dichotomy between East/tradition versus West/modernity. That dichotomy dates back from the colonial days whose history has been much erased from public discussion. It acquired new currency from the late 1960s as a novelty, following the modern massacres of the left in 1965-1966, and public silence and amnesia of its occurrence. Except in a few allusions in the highly surrealist works by Wijaya, one would have difficulties finding any reference in New Theatre to the bloodbath that provided the conditions of its own birth.

Notes

I am enormously grateful for detailed comments from two anonymous reviewers on an earlier version of the essay, and from participants to the Symposium *Theatre and Performance in the Asia-Pacific: Regional culture and modernity in the global era* (Melbourne, 26-28 September 2011) where the paper was initially presented. I enjoyed generous support from the ANU’s School of Culture, History and Language for my participation to the Symposium, and Fellowship from the Centre for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University when I revised this essay in 2012. The shortcomings that persist in the current essay are the author’s sole responsibility.

1. For convenience, no quotation marks will be given to subsequent use of the terms ‘tradition’ and ‘modernity’. There is a large volume of scholarly work on this theme. Examples in English include: Anderson (1990: 123-151); Chalmers (2006); Foulcher, (1990: 301-320); Heryanto (1995); Holt (1972); Hooker (1993); Schiller and Martin-Schiller (1997).
2. For a brief overview, see Pomeranz (2009); Venn and Featherstone (2006).
3. While acknowledging that “modernity is always and everywhere embedded in particular circumstances” and thus “multiple modernities”, Kahn argues that modernity can be “abstracted from context and singularized”. Otherwise the term modernity would “have no meaning on its own” (Kahn 2001:659).
4. Harvey (1989) provides a critique of the modernity versus postmodernity binary. For a poststructuralist critique of the Western Enlightenment and modernist thought see Young (1990); and a counter-critique by Álvares (2005).

5. The debate has been attributed to the work of Bauman, particularly his *Liquid Modernity* (2000). For a critique of Bauman, see Jay (2010). For Bauman's defence, see his interview with Dawes (2011).
6. One remarkable exception is Hatley (2008) on Yogyakarta-based theatre works of various genres and categories and the inter-links among them.
7. For a discussion of the early theatre works of Rendra see Soemanto (2000: 143-171).
8. For more on Putu Wijaya's theatre works, see Rafferty (1989, 1990). For an account of Putu's working concept in his own words, see Wijaya (1980).
9. Perhaps no one knows the exact number. One recent journalistic report suggests that he has authored 30 novels, 40 plays, and approximately 1000 short stories (Yophiandi, 2011).
10. For a fascinating analysis of Riantiarno's classic production *Opera Kecoa*, and the broader political context, see Zurbuchen (1990).
11. For more on Srimulat see Anwari (1999); Kayam (1981: 93-5); and Siegel (1986: 87-116).
12. For detailed study of the trans-regional and travelling theatre companies across the archipelago in the early twentieth century, see Cohen (2006, 2009); also Cohen, and Noszlopy (2010).

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