

## **READERS' RESPONSE TO THE PERFORMANCE OF TEATER GANDRIK'S *TANGIS* ON THE RECENT SOCIO-POLITICAL PHENOMENA**

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### **Abstract**

Literary works, including in this context play scripts later performed, often go beyond mere entertainment or exhibition. Play scripts and theatrical performances as well frequently introduce particular moral lessons, educative messages, even social controls. This research aims to describe the following matters: (a) the coverage of national mass media on three performances of *Tangis* (Cry) by Teater Gandrik; (b) the socio-political phenomena presented in the performance; and (c) the construct of the readers or audience on the performance. The object of this research consists of a number of news or reviews of such performance covered in national mass media in 2015. To collect the data, reading and taking notes methods were applied. The validity and reliability of the data were measured by employing semantic validity as well as intra-rater and inter-rater reliabilities. The data was later categorized and analyzed using a descriptive qualitative approach, focusing on literary reception. There were at least 15 news or reviews compiled, signifying a considerable interest of the mass media in interpreting the performance. Almost each of these coverages discuss the social circumstance represented in the play. The issue of the conflict between KPK (Corruption Eradication Commission) and Polri (Indonesian National Police) is one of the actual phenomena indirectly captured by the media relating to this performance. These media reportages serve as a construct established by the audience (experts) or the review creator or news reporters about Teater Gandrik, particularly on the play that crowns this group as one of top-notch Indonesian theater companies.

Keywords: reception, performance, teater gandrik, mass media, social phenomena

## **RESPON PEMBACA TERHADAP PERTUNJUKAN DRAMA *TANGIS* OLEH TEATER GADRIK DALAM FENOMENA SOSIAL-POLITIK TERKINI**

### **Abstrak**

Karya sastra, termasuk dalam konteks ini naskah drama yang kemudian dipentaskan, seringkali lebih dari sekadar hiburan atau pameran. Naskah drama dan pertunjukan teater juga sering memperkenalkan pelajaran moral tertentu, pesan edukatif, bahkan kontrol sosial. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan hal-hal sebagai berikut: (a) liputan media massa nasional atas tiga pertunjukan *Tangis* (Menangis) oleh Teater Gandrik; (b) fenomena sosial politik yang dihadirkan dalam pertunjukan; dan (c) kon-

struk pembaca atau penonton terhadap pertunjukan. Objek penelitian ini terdiri dari sejumlah berita atau ulasan tentang pertunjukan tersebut yang diliput di media massa nasional pada tahun 2015. Untuk mengumpulkan data digunakan metode membaca dan mencatat. Validitas dan reliabilitas data diukur dengan menggunakan validitas semantik serta reliabilitas intra-penilai dan antar-penilai. Data tersebut kemudian dikategorikan dan dianalisis dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif, dengan fokus pada resepsi sastra. Sedikitnya ada 15 berita atau resensi yang dihimpun, menandakan minat media massa yang cukup besar dalam memaknai pertunjukan tersebut. Hampir setiap liputan ini membahas tentang keadaan sosial yang direpresentasikan dalam lakon tersebut. Isu konflik antara KPK (Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi) dan Polri (Polri) merupakan salah satu fenomena aktual yang secara tidak langsung ditangkap oleh media terkait kinerja tersebut. Reportase media ini menjadi konstruksi yang dibangun oleh penonton (pakar) atau pembuat resensi atau reporter berita tentang Teater Gandrik, terutama pada lakon yang menobatkan grup ini sebagai salah satu perusahaan teater terkemuka di Indonesia.

Kata kunci: resepsi, pertunjukan, teater gandrik, media massa, fenomena sosial

## INTRODUCTION

As the backbone of Indonesian theatrical performances, Yogyakarta thrives as one of three cities substantial in the modern theater development. Since the early age of modernism in Indonesia, further to post-independence era, and going forward to the latest period of the 21st century, Yogyakarta remains central to the dynamics of performing arts, in addition to Jakarta and Bandung (Sumardjo, 1992; Waluyo, 2002). It is a place where diverse theater groups and theater performances have had their development and progress from then up to this day.

Even nowadays, with all its potential art talents, this city carries on being the heart of theaters' growth. If Jakarta has Teater Koma as well as many other renowned groups and Bandung houses Studiklub Teater Bandung and some satellite theaters, Yogyakarta becomes the base for some distinguished theater groups.

There are Teater Gandrik and Teater Garasi, along with several college theater groups. Those names are actively performing, both fresh titles and recycled ones. They keep the wheel of national performance arts dynamics turning and often made the headlines during the initial years of the 21st century.

They succeed in making a distinction, especially in terms of the characters in their play. Teater Garasi carries more of a non-conventional, absurd play in its performance. Teater Gandrik, on the other hand, tends to present realistic, humorous tales with criticism aimed at the current socio-political phenomena. This theatrical troupe is also known for its unique *sampakan* style, where the audience can throw their reaction straightaway to the dialog presented on stage (Nurhadi BW, 2012).

By this fact, it appears that the style and characteristics of Teater Gandrik's

performance in raising socio-political themes along with its theatrical criticism are worth studying. Literary works, including in this context play scripts later performed, often go beyond mere entertainment or exhibition. They and theatrical performances as well frequently introduce particular moral lessons, educative messages, even social controls. How Teater Gandrik presents these values in response to the recent socio-political phenomena is the background of this research.

The object of the study covers articles or reviews of its performance, published in mass media, both printed and electronic (online media). They serve as a way to comprehend and keep up with the development of Teater Gandrik in a constellation of response to the socio-political issues at that point of time.

Through these articles, the reception or response from the readers takes place. They often come as a discourse that may construct public opinion on certain phenomena, i.e. the perspective of Teater Gandrik in viewing the current trend. This slight point of study may develop an afterthought to understand the whole or true phenomenon of Indonesian socio-political course in the big picture. It then serves as the rationale for designing this study,

This study serves three objectives. First is to figure out the coverage magnitude of the performance entitled *Tangis* (Cry) by Teater Gandrik in 2015 in national mass media. Second is to understand the socio-political phenomena presented in the performance. Third is to comprehend the construct of the readers or audience on the performance.

Literary reception emerged in the early 1970s as: (1) an escape to cope with structuralism that was deemed to only recognize the elements of literature, (2) the appreciation to humanity values as the embodiment of universal humanism awareness, (3) the realization that the values of literary works can be developed only through the reader's competency, (4) the recognition that the value of arts endures because of the readers; and (5) the understanding that meanings lie in the ambiguity between literary works and readers (Swandayani, 2013:11).

Etymologically, literary reception means a response to a work of literature. The word reception is derived from *recipere* (Latin), defined as a manner of readers in receiving or responding to a literary work (Ratna, 2005:165). Segers (2000:35) briefly defines literary reception aesthetics as a method of observing literary text based on the actual reaction of the readers most likely displayed to a literary work.

Jauss introduces the horizon of expectation, defining how every reader has a certain expectation established from their past reading as their human experience. The impact of literary work values for a reader depends on the relationship between structure, characteristics, and origin of the work and the readers' horizon of expectation. Such a horizon is determined by the education, experience, knowledge, and capability in responding to literary works. Therefore, each person will give different response. Also, the response will also differ depending on the period (Teuw, 1984:196).

In addition to this dissimilarity, it is undeniably true that there are open spac-

es for the readers to fill in the literary works. Iser (Segers, 2000:39) even acknowledges that with larger spaces, a literary work will have greater value. However, these spaces still bear limitation. Readers will not be able to fill them in case too many.

In literary reception, readers and communities of readers are the main concerns. The historic life of a literary work cannot be present without readers' participation. Readers, as Jauss (1974:12) identifies, have an active role in writing history. They are the fuel of the history. The literary reception theorists classify readers into categories. Some readers are passive, and some others are creative. Creative readers may be literary critics, review writers, reviewers of literary works, or authors who use other literary works as the basis of their own works, in another word a hypogram (Swandayani, 2013:11).

Another categorization separates readers into: (1) real readers, (2) implied readers, and (3) ideal readers. Real readers are actual readers who personally read the literary work. Implicit readers are the entire structure of textual indication that instructs the way real readers read. They are the immanent factors of a text with a particular quality, often responded by the real readers in different ways. Ideal readers or super readers are the hypothetical construct of a theorist in the interpretation process (Tegerns, 2000:50).

Initially used in the field of literature, reception theory may be utilized as an analysis instrument to "read" non-literary works, such as philosophical or cultural text, including play performance.

Therefore, for this study, the researchers feel the need to hold to the reception theory and Foucault's discourse theory, particularly meaning-making of a text. According to Iser (1972:212), in producing the meaning of a text, readers are required to actively participate. The concretization of a text demands the readers to stimulate their imagination. Iser even asserts that literary criticism should not focus on the meaning, but rather the effect.

Jauss (1974:14) further states that a literary work is not a standalone object with similar facade before every reader in a certain period. The reception theory argues that the intention of a text is already present within the text itself, not a creation made up by the readers. Iser explains that readers play a role to break down the alternate deduction-induction processes, i.e. the unformulated part of a literary work, to reveal something between the lines inside the work (Allen, 2004:6-7).

Iser (1978:38) views that the meaning of a text is not absolute, yet also not arbitrary. Even though this textual structure guides readers to a particular meaning, this meaning is not a certain external reality nor is a duplicate of a world desired by the readers; it is something to be imagined by the readers. On the other hand, Fish does not acknowledge objective text.

In his viewpoint, readers do not just "simply" read text. This reading goes forward based on a number of decisions that establish a means used to read and hence construct the text. Readers do not approach a particular piece of text with empty minds; together with them are expectations, assumptions, and experiences, ei-

ther ideologically (an intentional interpretive strategy) or within their unconscious thought through what is referred to as “readers’ briefcase” (Allen, 2004:8-9).

While interpretations may have no limitations, they are not entirely a subjective and individual response; it is instead drafted based on a framework provided by so-called “interpretive communities”. This term is comparable to Foucault’s concept of discourse. Interpretive communities are an educational and learning place to adopt a specific framework of thinking and perspective.

Michel Foucault is a post-structuralist who promoted important ideas for the development of discourse critique, specifically in relation to power. The term “discourse” then gains a new meaning beyond the definition formulated by the structuralist critics. Discourse is not simply “a group of signs” (the elements of meaning-making referring to the content or representation), but the way of producing knowledge and practices that systematically construct the object being discussed (Foucault, 2002:9). With the new definition of discourse, Foucault correlated the meaning-making system with two areas overlooked all this time by structuralism, namely history and politics.

A relevant study for this research was conducted by Nurhayati (2015), published in *Jurnal Litera*, entitled “Seni Pertunjukan Tradisional Dulmuluk: Revitalisasi dan Apresiasi Mahasiswa” (Traditional Performing Arts of Dulmuluk: Revitalization and Students’ Appreciation). She addressed the response from students of Teacher Training and Education Faculty at Sriwijaya University to Dulmuluk performing arts.

Weix (1995), in *Indonesia Journal* from Cornell University, US, also mentioned Teater Gandrik when discussing Teater Gapit from Surakarta in the article entitled “Gapit Theatre: New Javanese Play’s on Tradision”. Teater Gapit is a modern theater company departing from the elements of traditional Indonesian plays, such as Ketoprak and Ludruk. Whereas, Teater Gandrik is relatively influenced more by a traditional theatrical performance called Srandul.

Also in the journal, Aberle (2011) examined the role of Indonesian theater groups as a medium of resistance nearing the end of New Order era, under the title “Review of Resistance on the National Stage: Theatre and Politics in Late New Order” as a response to a book called *Resistance on the National Stage: Theatre and Politics in Late New Order Indonesia*. The book was written by Michael H. Bodden published by Ohio University press in 2010. Established in 1983, Teater Gandrik also performed as the opposition to the New Order government. Now, after two decades following the fall of the regime, the role is observed from the reader’s response to *Tangis* (2015).

## METHOD

This study is a documentary research on a number of news published in 2015 by national mass media covering Teater Gandrik and its performance. Prior to the analysis, the data was first collected, i.e. news and reviews on the performance, from newspapers, magazines, and online media.

To collect the data, reading and taking notes methods were applied. The da-

ta was then categorized, analyzed, and interpreted. The instrument for data collection is data card. This data card was used to facilitate some data recording and data categorization.

The validity and reliability of the data were measured by employing semantic validity as well as intra-rater and inter-rater reliabilities. Semantic validity was performed by analyzing the context of the meaning-making of a text or script. Whereas, the intra-rater reliability technique was carried out by repeated reading to the effect of data consistency, and inter-reliability technique was conducted through discussion with all research team members.

Following collection and categorization, the data was then analyzed with qualitative descriptive method. The method was preferred to capture the image on the description of the development map and constellation of translated foreign literary works as reflected and constructed by Indonesian mass media. The analysis was carried out by applying literary reception or reader-response theory.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Findings

Below is the data acquired for this study.

**Table 1. List of Publications on *Tangis* by Teater Gandrik as the Representation of Reader's Reception**

No.	Title	Writer	Link
1	Bila Teater Gandrik Pentaskan Tangis untuk Peringati Hari Antikorupsi (Teater Gandrik Performs Tangis to Commemorate Anti-Corruption Day)	Dwi Agus	<b>Radar Jogja.</b> Retrieved 23 October 2020 from <a href="https://radar-jogja.jawapos.com/boks/2014/12/11/bila-teater-gandrik-">https://radar-jogja.jawapos.com/boks/2014/12/11/bila-teater-gandrik-</a>
2	Agus Noor Rombak Dua Naskah Penulis Senior Teater Gandrik (Agus Noor Rewrites Two Scripts Made by Teater Gandrik's Senior Scriptwriter)	Tia Agnes Astuti	<b>Detik.</b> Retrieved 22 October 2020 from <a href="https://hot.detik.com/art/d-2830825/agus-noor-rombak-dua-naskah-penulis-senior-teater-gandrik">https://hot.detik.com/art/d-2830825/agus-noor-rombak-dua-naskah-penulis-senior-teater-gandrik</a>
3	Butet Kartaredjasa Sentil Blusukan Jokowi di Panggung Teater (On Theater Stage, Butet Kartaredjasa Insinuates Jokowi's Impromptu Visits)	Tia Agnes Astuti	<b>Detik.</b> Retrieved 25 October 2020 from <a href="https://hot.detik.com/art/d-2830750/butet-kartaredjasa-sentil-blusukan-jokowi-di-panggung-teater">https://hot.detik.com/art/d-2830750/butet-kartaredjasa-sentil-blusukan-jokowi-di-panggung-teater</a>
4	Tertawa Ngakak dan Tangis ala Teater Gandrik (Laughing Out Loud and Crying à la Teater Gandrik)	Tia Agnes Astuti	<b>Detik.</b> Retrieved 22 October 2020 from <a href="https://hot.detik.com/art/d-2830624/tertawa-ngakak-dan-tangis-ala-teater-gandrik">https://hot.detik.com/art/d-2830624/tertawa-ngakak-dan-tangis-ala-teater-gandrik</a>
5	Guyonan dan Improvisasi Jadi Ciri Khas Teater Gandrik (Humors and Improvisation, The Attributes of Teater Gandrik)	Tia Agnes Astuti	<b>Detik.</b> Retrieved 22 October 2020 from <a href="https://hot.detik.com/art/d-2832628/guyonan-dan-improvisasi-jadi-ciri-khas-teater-gandrik">https://hot.detik.com/art/d-2832628/guyonan-dan-improvisasi-jadi-ciri-khas-teater-gandrik</a>

No.	Title	Writer	Link
6	Tangis Gandrik untuk KPK (Gandrik's Cry for KPK)	Shinta Maharani	<b>Koran Tempo.</b> Retrieved 22 October 2020 from <a href="https://koran.tempo.co/read/pentas/365211/tangis-gandrik-untuk-kpk">https://koran.tempo.co/read/pentas/365211/tangis-gandrik-untuk-kpk</a>
7	Makin Bertumpu pada Kelucuan Susilo (Relying Heavier on Susilo's Humor)	Shinta Maharani	<b>Majalah Tempo.</b> Retrieved 22 October 2020 from <a href="https://majalah.tempo.co/read/teater/147549/makin-bertumpu-pada-kelucuan-susilo">https://majalah.tempo.co/read/teater/147549/makin-bertumpu-pada-kelucuan-susilo</a>
8	Festival Antikorupsi: Konflik KPK-Polri Bumbui Pementasan Teater Gandrik (Anti-Corruption Festival: KPK vs Polri Conflict Spices Teater Gandrik's Performance)	Mediani Dyah Natalia	<b>Harian Jogja.</b> Retrieved 24 October 2020 from <a href="https://hiburan.harianjogja.com/read/2015/02/12/509/576570/festival-antikorupsi-konflik-kpk-polri-bumbui-pementasan-teater-gandrik">https://hiburan.harianjogja.com/read/2015/02/12/509/576570/festival-antikorupsi-konflik-kpk-polri-bumbui-pementasan-teater-gandrik</a>
9	Tangis Teater Gandrik di Hari Korupsi (The Cry of Teater Gandrik on Anti-Corruption Day)	Editorial Team	<b>Suryaden</b> <a href="https://www.suryaden.com/katuranggan/tangis-teater-gandrik-di-hari-korupsi">https://www.suryaden.com/katuranggan/tangis-teater-gandrik-di-hari-korupsi</a>
10	Pertunjukan Teater Gandrik Berjudul "Tangis" (Tangis: A Performance by Teater Gandrik)	Editorial Team	<b>Indonesia Kaya.</b> <a href="https://www.indonesiakaya.com/agenda-budaya/detail/pertunjukan-teater-gandrik-berjudul-tangis">https://www.indonesiakaya.com/agenda-budaya/detail/pertunjukan-teater-gandrik-berjudul-tangis</a>
11	"Tangis" Angkat Fenomena Aktual Tanah Air Dengan Khas Teater Gandrik (Tangis Introduces National Actual Phenomena with Teater Gandrik-Style)	Editorial Team	<b>Indonesia Kaya.</b> Retrieved 22 October 2020 from <a href="https://www.indonesiakaya.com/liputan-budaya/detail/tangis-angkat-fenomena-aktual-tanah-air-dengan-khas-teater-gandrik">https://www.indonesiakaya.com/liputan-budaya/detail/tangis-angkat-fenomena-aktual-tanah-air-dengan-khas-teater-gandrik</a>
12	Hadir di Jakarta, Teater Gandrik Pentaskan "Tangis" Malam Ini (Coming to Jakarta, Teater Gandrik to Perform "Tangis" Tonight)	Editorial Team	<b>Detik.</b> Retrieved 22 October 2020 from <a href="https://hot.detik.com/art/d-2838675/hadir-di-jakarta-teater-gandrik-pentaskan-tangis-malam-ini">https://hot.detik.com/art/d-2838675/hadir-di-jakarta-teater-gandrik-pentaskan-tangis-malam-ini</a>
13	Tangisan Gandrik untuk Negeri Jokowi (Gandrik's Cry for the Country of Jokowi)	Editorial Team	<b>Jawa Pos</b> , 15 February 2015
14	Melalui Tangis, Gandrik Refleksikan Keadaan Bangsa (With Tangis, Gandrik Reflects on The National Condition)		<b>Tribun Jogja.</b> Retrieved 22 October 2020 from <a href="https://jogja.tribunnews.com/2015/02/11/melalui-tangis-gandrik-refleksikan-keadaan-bangsa">https://jogja.tribunnews.com/2015/02/11/melalui-tangis-gandrik-refleksikan-keadaan-bangsa</a>
15	Hari Antikorupsi, Teater Gandrik Pentas Lagi (Commemorating Anti-Corruption Day, Teater Gandrik is Back On Stage)	Pribadi Wicaksono	<b>Tempo.</b> Retrieved on 25 October 2020 from <a href="https://seleb.tempo.co/read/627227/hari-antikorupsi-teater-gandrik-pentas-lagi">https://seleb.tempo.co/read/627227/hari-antikorupsi-teater-gandrik-pentas-lagi</a>

## Discussion

### *Performance of Tangis*

After data collection, the following information were acquired. *Tangis* was initially performed by Teater Gandrik in Koesnadi Hardjasoemantri Cultural Center (PAKKH) auditorium, Gadjah Mada University (UGM), on Tuesday, 9 December 2014 at 18.30-20.30. It was held in cooperation between Teater Gandrik and Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) to commemorate Anti-corruption Day. In contrast to other exhibitions, the play was presented with dramatic reading, i.e. recitation of script on stage added with “simple” elements of performance.

Interviews were inserted during the performance in a talk show style under the central theme. Several public figures appeared as speakers, namely: Police Inspector General Drs. Suhardi Alius, MH (Chief of Criminal Investigation Agency of Indonesian National Police); Agung Andhi Nirwanto (Vice Attorney General); M. Busyro Muqoddas, S.H., M.Hum (Vice Chairperson of KPK); dan Harry Azhar Azis (The Audit Board of the Republic of Indonesia). They responded to the questions addressed by the puppeteer (Susilo Nugroho) who steered the plot.

On 11-12 February 2015, the performance was again held in the Concert Hall of Taman Budaya Yogyakarta, and later in Jakarta on 20-21 February in Taman Ismail Marzuki. Different from the premiere show, these performances were staged in a “complete” format, discarding the dramatic reading, with each duration of approximately 120 minutes.

Several reader’s receptions were published in Indonesian national mass media, as listed in Table 1.

They reflect the positive response on the performance at both occasions. *suryaden.com* (10 December 2014), *tempo.co* (12 December 2014), and *radarjogja.jawapos.com* (11 December 2014) were the only online media covering the dramatic reading version of the play. They highlighted the performance as a part of the Anti-Corruption Festival organized by KPK on the same day in Yogyakarta.

In the subsequent shows, the media response was more diverse. *detik.com* even published six articles about the show. One of which advertised the performance in Jakarta (Editorial Team, 2015d). The other article reported the pre-show press conference (Astuti, 2015d). Whereas, the remaining were the coverage (reception) of the exhibition in various headlines. One was entitled *Guyonan dan Improvisasi Jadi Ciri Khas Teater Gandrik* (Humors and Improvisation, The Attributes of Teater Gandrik), a reportage from the press conference prior to the show in Yogyakarta.

Dialog memorization is a character of Teater Koma, but not of Teater Gandrik. Established on 13 September 1983, this theater company boasts its free improvisation for the performers.

It was expressed by one of the actors, Butet Kartaredjasa, in advance of the Yogyakarta event. “Every theater group always holds on to a tradition. And this is ours since the beginning,” he added.

However, the artists must adhere to the storyline set by the scriptwriter. “Gandrik’s style is humorous and satirical, just as it always is. But there is always a clear plot to follow,” said Butet (Astuti, 2015d).



This news fragment provides a basic knowledge for the potential audience unfamiliar with or first timer to the style of Teater Gandrik.

In another article, *detik.com* informed that the play was based on two works from the late Heru Kusawa Murti, namely *Tangis* and *Juragan Abiyoso* (Master Abiyoso). Both titles had been adapted into a TV drama and staged in 1989. The stories were recreated by Agus Noor, a regular script writer for Teater Gandrik (Astuti, 2015a). Besides, there were other articles reviewing the performance in Yogyakarta, i.e. one entitled *Tertawa Ngakak dan Tangis ala Teater Gandrik* (Laughing Out Loud and Crying à la Teater Gandrik) and *Butet Kartaredjasa Sentil Blusukan Jokowi di Panggung Teater* (On Theater Stage, Butet Kartaredjasa Insinuates Jokowi's Impromptu Visits). They presented different perspectives to the performance. The former focused more on the entertaining side of the performance that succeeded in amusing the audience with the humors (Astuti, 2015c). Whereas, the latter emphasized further on the satire aimed at the government (Astuti, 2015b).

Through *koran.tempo.co* (15 February 2015) and *majalah.tempo.co* (23 February 2020), Tempo introduced a more comprehensive response to the performance. The first source underlined the actual social critics in Indonesia at the moment as quoted below.

*Tangis* unfolded the conflict between KPK and Indonesian National Police. In a scene, Master Abiyoso chattered: "There are rulers who can't keep their promises. Winning and being smart are two different things. The ruling party even made a bad choice of police chief. I can't believe Mas Muspro (friend of

Master Abiyoso). How can he still trust political parties? Such a bull," he said.

Another scene made an insinuation against president Joko Widodo, passing a dialog between Prasojo and Abiyoso. Abiyoso got very upset at Prasojo due to his intent of resignation. "I feel ashamed for my father being careless," said Prasojo, explaining the reason behind his withdrawal. Abiyoso refused the request and then lectured him, "Don't blame yourself for other's mistake. That's not what a leader does. Even if it's your mom's fault. Show people that you have a heart to listen to."

Djaduk liberated the audience to interpret the story. He considered the interpretation as the freedom of the audience's imagination. One for example is KPK-National Police kerfuffle. Towards the end of the performance, the puppeteer approached a few people in the crowd of audience. He asked them in English, one of them was a foreign spectator "What do you think the end of the story would be?". The crowd laughed seeing the foreigner's reaction as he failed to understand the question (Maharani, 2015a).

In an article entitled *Makin Bertumpu pada Kelucuan Susilo* (Relying Further on Susilo's Humor), Tempo expressed an autocritique for the performance through the interview with a play performer from Yogyakarta, Landung Simatupang, as quoted as follows.

Yet, of all troupers, Susilo tends to be dominant. He is good at making people laugh, being great and talented in crafting jokes. Landung Simatupang, his fellow play performer, saw the growing humor

in him. In his eyes, there is no such things as old jokes in Susilo.

Here, Susilo Nugroho played a role as the puppeteer. Landung compared him with comical, adaptive, more of vulgar puppeteers, yet in certain moments when performing, they seem to be capable of controlling their jocularity in order to expose the “actual message” of the story.

It was something Susilo Nugroho tried to attain along the performance, as Landung remarked. However, it is unfortunate that he could not maintain that nature in the entire show. He kept referring himself as “the god of dark jokes”. Landung supposed that Teater Gandrik needed to abate quips on national condition or humanity for exchange of laugh or gimmicks to entice applause (Maharani, 2015b).

Jawa Pos Daily Newspaper (15 February 2015) presented a more in-depth coverage on the performance. It quoted that *Tangis* carried an interesting theme that could be interpreted as the miniature of the destroyed state foundations due to growing corruption in Indonesia, not only in bureaucracy but also in every walk of life. Furthermore, from the semiotic point of view, it is very relevant to the Indonesia which suffers a crisis of leadership, role model, and togetherness. It took an instance of the conflict between KPK and National Police, two law enforcement institutions often caught in dispute with one another (Sahid, 2015).

In *indonesiakaya.com*, two relatively alike articles appeared about the performance. One contained ‘publication’ information with poster, profile, location, synopsis, and the ticket price (Editorial Team, 2015a), and another displayed images, pro-

file, synopsis (Editorial Team, 2015b).

... this story had been recreated by Agus Noor since a year ago indeed, but the latest issue could really become the magnet of the story.

The satire on the national situation, such as the attenuation of KPK and massive corruption, were repeated by every performer in the play (Thohari, 2015).

It is the core of the story. The cry isn’t merely an instrument to pursue ambitions, but also a symbol of destruction. In the hands of Agus Noor as the scriptwriter, *Tangis* was intentionally adapted to the social context in Indonesia these days.

Current events in Indonesia seemed to be a particular advantage for Agus Noor to prepare the script.

Among others is the heating-up relationship between KPK and National Police that becomes a piece of the story. Hence, contextual social criticism is strong in this 13-trouper performance (Natalia, 2015).

The statements above were also quoted in *jogja.tribunnews.com* and *harianjogja.com* as a response to the performance held in Concert Hall of Taman Budaya Yogyakarta. These “local” media created similar meaning to the story by correlating the conflict presented on stage with the actual phenomena, i.e. KPK vs National Police. From this data also, it is known that *Tangis* had actually been performed since December 2014.

### ***Indonesia’s Socio-political Situation as the Background of the Performance***

As mentioned above, the performance originated from two scripts, *Tangis* and *Juragan Abiyoso*. It took two weeks for

Agus Noor to adapt both into one fresh story. However, the dialog may change during the actual performance. Free improvisation is customary for this group so long as no derail from the plot (Astuti, 2015d). It is then not surprising when satirical jokes are thrown out of the blue amid the performance.

The issue of the conflict between KPK (Corruption Eradication Commission) and Polri (Indonesian National Police) is one of the actual phenomena indirectly captured by the media relating to this performance. Nearly all media present similar argument on the substance of the performance. Trending in some online media at that time, the KPK-Indonesia Police kerfuffle began when Budi Gunawan, the sole candidate of national police chief nominated by the House of Representatives (DPR), was charged as a bribery suspect by the antigraft watchdog. Many considered that the recommendation turned a blind eye to the KPK's investigation on the case against Budi Gunawan. He was allegedly involved in the case of fat bank account of police officers (Editorial Team, 2015c).

When he was named suspect by KPK, DPR instead agreed to his appointment as the National Police chief. He was then a National Police Chief candidate and at the same time a graft suspect. This confusion divided the public. Some supported KPK, whilst some others defended Budi Gunawan, arguing that there was a political interest behind him being a suspect (Giovani, 2015).

The quote from *news.okezone.com* above describes clearly on the burning national issue at that time. Another website report-

ed that the conflict between the KPK and National Police heated up when the deputy chairperson of KPK (Bambang Widjojanto) was then declared suspect by the National Police due to an old case several years prior to assuming his position. The quote below clarifies the above.

National Police's Criminal Investigation Department (Bareskrim) arrested the deputy head of KPK, Bambang Widjojanto, on charges of instructing witnesses to provide false testimony in the proceedings of the Kotawaringin Barat regional election dispute case. The arrest was made by armed police officers in the presence of his son. Hundreds of people then gathered in KPK headquarter to express their support for KPK. In the evening that day, together with several public figures, Samad came to Bareskrim demanding the release of Bambang Widjojanto (Editorial Team, 2015c).

These exposures present a clear picture on how *Tangis* was "influenced" by current national issues. Through *parikena*—gentle insinuations as to not provoking the person referred to—*Tangis* serves as a catharsis for the audience.

### ***The Construct of the Readers or Audience on the Performance***

There are a number of media coverage on the performance in both premises of the event. They can be viewed as the manifestations of receptions on the play. Nearly all give positive reception, supplemented with interpretation of the story, i.e. linking the relevance to the actual event. In other words, the news writers are aware of the connection between the story and the reality.

Some (indonesiakaya.com, detik.com, and *republika.online*) also contributed to the promotion of the event. *Majalah Tempo* is an exceptional one with the addition of autocritique to the review, a perspective the others did not cover.

Criticisms, no matter how fierce or sharp they are, in the news or reviews are essentially a way to discuss or converse with the readers or audience. They also serve as an appreciation for the performance from the mass media, mainly online. Furthermore, those publications function as a reception of the readers or audience (experts) on the performance all along, as well as their construct on either the performance or the theater company.

To conclude from the three shows of the play, these news and reviews form a construct of the audience (experts) or readers as the reviewer or news writer on Teater Gandrik in general, specifically the performance of *Tangis*.

## CONCLUSION

Based on a number of discussions in the previous chapters, there are several matters that can be concluded. First, there was a substantial response to *Tangis* by Teater Gandrik. At least 15 news or reviews from various national media were collected, representing great feedbacks from mass media in relation to the performance.

Second, the performance contextually reflected the current Indonesian socio-political situation. Almost each of these coverages mentions the social circumstance the play referred to. The issue of the conflict between KPK (Corruption Eradication Commission) and Polri (Indonesian National Police) is one of the actual phenomena indirectly captured by the media

relating to this performance. Nearly all media present similar argument on the substance of the performance. Trending in some online media at that time, the KPK-Indonesia Police kerfuffle began when Budi Gunawan, the sole candidate of national police chief nominated by the House of Representatives (DPR), was charged as a bribery suspect by the antigraft watchdog.

Third, criticisms, no matter how fierce or sharp they are, in the news or reviews are essentially a way to discuss or converse with the readers or audience. They also serve as an appreciation for the performance from the mass media, mainly online. Furthermore, those publications function as a reception of the readers or audience (experts) on the performance all along.

To sum up, these news and reviews form a construct of the audience (experts) or readers as the reviewer or news writer on Teater Gandrik in general, specifically the performance of *Tangis*, which places Teater Gandrik as a prominent Indonesian theatrical troupe. This construct is a way of producing knowledge as well as practices that systematically develop Teater Gandrik.

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