

HOW EXPLORING BODY EXPERIMENTATION IN MODERN THEATER OF WEST SUMATRA: A TWO-DECADE STUDY (1990-2010) PRESENTED?

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the emergence of body experimentation in modern theater groups in West Sumatra from 1990 to 2010, focusing on the motives behind using the body as a communicative medium in theatrical performances. The study aims to comprehend the conceptualization and factors contributing to the presence of innovative theatrical presentations. The literature review explores existing studies on Indonesian theater, particularly modern theater, and relevant works related to West Sumatra theater. Due to limited literature on West Sumatran theater, the study utilizes secondary data from journals, magazines, newspaper clippings, and the internet. The research employs a qualitative methodology, incorporating a literature review, observation of selected theater groups engaging in body experimentation, and interviews with key figures. Data analysis involves transcribing interviews, selecting relevant information, categorizing data, and conducting a thorough analysis, revealing the evolution of body experimentation in West Sumatran theater. The discussion section delves into three key themes: the influence of traditional spirit on modern Sumatran theater, body exploration within modern theater groups, and the notable rise of body-centric theater in West Sumatra. The article emphasizes the interconnectedness of these themes and their impact on the dynamic theatrical landscape in the region. In conclusion, the research highlights the significance of body experimentation in West Sumatran modern theater, contributing to a broader understanding of evolving theatrical practices in Indonesia, and offering valuable insights for scholars and enthusiasts interested in the dynamic intersection of tradition and innovation in performing practitioners arts.

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INTRODUCTION

The theater scene in West Sumatra during the period of 1990-2000 showcased a diversity of presentation forms, encompassing traditional, modern, and a fusion of tradition with modern elements in theatrical presentations. The modern theater form in West Sumatra is believed to have originated from theater practitioners such as Nazif Basir, Mira Dardjis, Syafril Zen, Nasrul Siddik, Mahjuddin Khairul Harun, and BHR. Tanjung, Darvies Rasjidin, as well as other directors like Hardian Radjab, BHR Tanjung, and Wisran Hadi, from the 1950s to the 1970s. After the theater era of the 1970s, the theater scene in West Sumatra was revitalized by theater groups from universities and independent theater groups that emerged from the 1980s to the 2010s. In those two decades, many new theater groups emerged, adding color to the development of theater in West Sumatra. The presence of theater groups since the 1980s has brought forth a variety of performances, both realistic, using words as script texts, and non-realistic, with experimentation in the movements of actors and objects. However, since the 1990s, some of these groups have introduced performances with innovative elements in West Sumatra theater.

Studies on the tradition of creating modern theater in West Sumatra, especially those emphasizing body and word experimentation, have focused on two main points. First, studies consider the aspects of form and theater figures biographically, while the second is related to dimensions and aesthetics (H et al., n.d.; Pramayoza, 2009; Sahrul, 2011b). Although there are comprehensive new studies on this development (Raystifa, 2021), there hasn't been exploratory research yet on the practices of creating modern theater in West Sumatra during the period of 1990-2000 and the contextual factors influencing the changes.

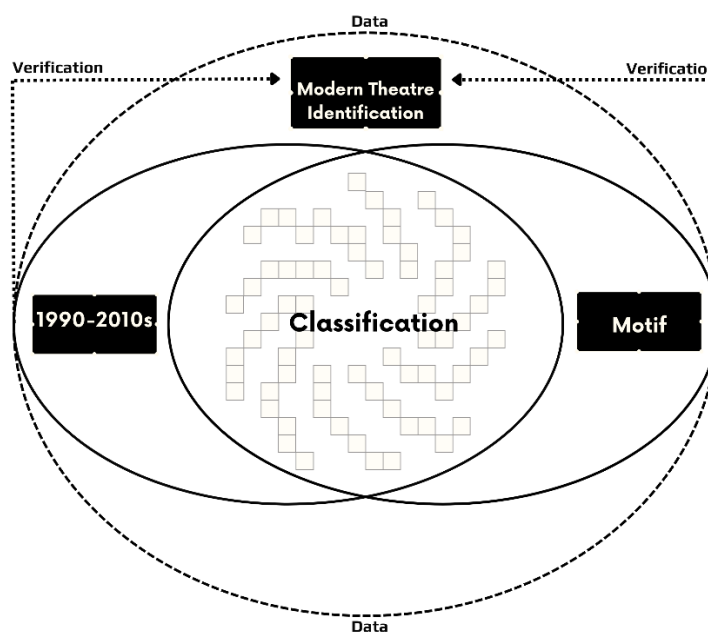
This study complements previous research by highlighting the development of practices in creating modern theater that utilizes body and word experimentation, known as physical theater or Rujak theater, and even categorized as post-dramatic theater (Lehmann, 2006). The aim of this study is to examine the practice of Body Experimentation in West Sumatra Theater from 1990 to 2000 and to formulate practices that shape the understanding of body experimentation as the basis for mapping modern theater practices in West Sumatra. This article argues that the tradition of creating modern theater in West Sumatra tends to embody the spirit of tradition and emphasizes the body, resulting in several phenomenal body theater works. The practices that

developed during this period overall influenced the contemporary modern theater movement in West Sumatra, with changes in the tradition of creation having implications for the further development of modern theater.

METHOD

This article aims to explore the practice of body experimentation in modern theater in West Sumatra during the period from the 1990s to the 2000s. Conceptually, modern theater in West Sumatra today is related to the development of theater in the 1990s to the 2000s, which includes body experimentation practices, including aspects of text. Studies on the experimentation practices conducted by modern theater groups in West Sumatra are very interesting, especially in their current formation, which emphasizes ongoing experimentation work to this day. This research adopts an ethnographic approach focused on investigating complex and contextual phenomena in the development of modern theater in West Sumatra (Harwati, 2019). The ethnographic approach allows researchers to understand cultural meanings and human behavior through in-depth observation and direct interaction with the research subjects (Berry, 2011). In this context, ethnography also involves a deeply reflective process regarding the position and identity of the researcher in relation to the research subjects (Young, 2013). Therefore, the ethnographic approach can help understand and identify the experimentation practices conducted by modern theater groups in West Sumatra during the specified research period. Research data were obtained through primary, secondary, and tertiary informants. Observations, interviews, literature reviews, as well as documentation such as photos and videos of the Si Muntu parade tradition were used. Direct observations and interviews were conducted with several informants, including Nazif Basir (Artis, Theater Director, Jakarta), Syuhendri (Theater Director, West Sumatera), Ibrahim Ilyas (Theater Director, West Sumatera), Papa Rusli (Poet, West Sumatera), Yusril Katil (Theater Director, West Sumatera), Edi Suisno (Academic, West Sumatera), Boyke Sulaiman (Artis), Ibu Erna (poet and theater director West Sumatera), Tony Broer (actor, Bandung), Afrizal Malna (Writer and Theater Performer, Yogyakarta), Dian Ardiansyah (theater actor and director, Bandung). The interviews focused on understanding detailed knowledge about the existence of theater groups in West Sumatra, as well as their changes and presence during the specified research period. In addition to interviews, data were collected through a literature review and other documents related

to the existence of modern theater in West Sumatra contributing to experimentation practices. Documents such as reports, journals, and related writings were identified, reviewed, and analyzed. Data were presented in the form of interview transcripts, with relevant quotes presented contextually and interpretively. Data interpretation was not limited to description, as data triangulation was conducted to verify information from different sources. Before data analysis, data reduction was performed by categorizing data based on research questions. Tables and figures were used for visualization, while verification was done by comparing data from different sources. Interpretative analysis was then conducted to establish the significance of data, following the three stages of data analysis proposed by Huberman and Miles. (Miles & Huberman, 2014) That is 1) data reduction, 2) display, and 3) verification.



Picture 1. Conceptual Model

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Body Experimentation in West Sumatra Theater

The tendency towards body experimentation in modern theater in West Sumatra certainly cannot stand alone. This process requires a long time and interaction with a culture that supports the community where the art form develops. This development can be observed from external and internal factors in a society where the art form grows,

especially in developing countries.

The theater began to develop in West Sumatra before the 1970s, when there was already a theater group called Teater Kota Padang with members such as Nazif Basir, Mira Dardjis, Syafril Zen, Nasrul Siddik, Mahjuddin Khairul Harun, BHR. Tanjung, and Darvies Rasjidin. However, the quality of performances at that time was still lacking and sporadic. Nevertheless, the creation of theater and the creative process undertaken by directors had not yet put West Sumatra on the map of Indonesian theater. This movement was then pioneered by Nazif Basir through adaptations of realistic scripts (interview, Nazif Basir, 2011).

Since the 1970s, the people of West Sumatra have witnessed theatrical performances centered in the city of Padang. This form of theater was introduced by Bumi Teater, Teater Padang, and other theater artists through repeated performances. However, this form of theater was not very popular among the general population of West Sumatra, as evidenced by the lack of audiences and the lack of attention from the government in providing production assistance to the emerging theater groups at that time (interview, Syuhendri, April 2011).

Between the 1980s and 1990s, a theater group called Bumi Teater, under the leadership of Wisran Hadi, played a significant role in the development of modern theater in West Sumatra. The contributions made by Bumi Teater involved numerous performances in West Sumatra that were known even in theater forums in Jakarta. Many theater directors in West Sumatra who emerged in the 1990s came from this group. Some of the young directors who emerged during this period include Asbon Budinan Haza, Aswendi Dahdir, A. Alin De, Herisman Is, Zirmayanto, Zaifan Merry, Indra Nara Persada, M. Ibrahim, Agusfian Iskandar, Desvita Wardhini, Raffendie Sanjaya, Syarifuddin Arifin, Armeind Sufhasril, Syafril, and Yusril (Sahrul, 2011a).

The directors then formed their theater groups, such as A. Alin De, who founded Teater Dayung-Dayung, Yusril, who established Teater Hitam Putih, and Armen Sufasril with Teater Gaung Ekspose. In addition to young directors from the 1990s, directors also emerged from the Teater Padang group led by Hardian Radjab, such as Syuhendri. Until the 1990s, theater performances were still centered at Taman Budaya Padang as the center of artistic growth. At that time, theater performances were still in the form of realism, using script texts as guidance for the creation of West Sumatra directors.

However, in the 1990s, experimental-based performances began to emerge. This

form of theater did not consider the audience market as much as realistic theater did. Examples include those performed by Yusril with the Hitam Putih Community, Prel T with the Experimental Theater group, and Zurmailis with KSST Noktah. This experimentation became a characteristic of West Sumatra theater performances in the 1990s (interview, Yusril, October 2011).

Among these three names, only Yusril chose to focus on staging experimental works by applying body exploration to his works until 2010. Between 2000 and 2010, several theater groups in West Sumatra also began to experiment with theater to find new expressive languages in their performances. Art activities such as the National Experimental Student Theater Meeting (PTEMN) at Andalas University in 2000 paved the way for the emergence of experimental theater performances. The theme of "Experimentation" provided by the committee encouraged participants to adopt new forms in their performance styles. For example, director Kurniasih Zaitun staged "Komplikasi," which borrowed characterization concepts from drug sellers still present in several cities and regencies in West Sumatra.

Experimental performances also appeared at the 2002 PTEMN at Andalas University Padang, with director Dede Prama Yoza and the Kolaboratorium Teater Muda (KTM) theater group. The KTM performance titled "Senja 200 Kepala" adapted Eugene O'Neill's full script "Tanda Silang," a realistic theater play using various symbols such as 200 masks, iron aquariums, mud, and other art objects. This performance involved exploration of the actors' bodies, and after appearing at PTEMN, the "Senja 200 Kepala" performance was also staged at the 2002 Arts and Culture Week in STSI Padangpanjang, representing a form of theater that innovated in form (personal documentation, Singgalang, November 2000).

In the 2000s, theater performances experimenting with the body and objects emerged, introducing various movement languages in their performances. In 2001 at Taman Budaya Padang, the first theater performance using exploration of the body and objects titled "Dalam Topeng-topeng" was staged, directed by Tatang Rusmana with the Kupu-Kupu Perak theater group. Other performances such as "Aku Sendiri," "Sirkus Topeng Waska," "Rumah Tanpa Air Mata," "Dalam Penjara," and "Pedagang Topeng Keliling" combined movement experimentation and art objects, although always showing an attempt at experimenting with new forms outside the conventions of realistic theater. This phenomenon was also evident in KSST Noktah from Padang city, which began presenting performances different from realistic theater, such as "Dunia Yang Terkubur"

(2003), "Perempuan itu Bernama Sabai" (2007), "Rumah Jantan" (2009), and "Tanah Ibu" (2010).

Other groups presenting theater performances with an exploration of the body and objects were also found in several theater groups and directors from Padang Panjang, such as Kelompok Teater Sakata, which presented "Dekonstruksi Perawan" at the 2006 Theater Appreciation Week, "The Female Earth" at the 2007 Women Playwright International Conference in Jakarta, and "Sel dan Tulang" in 2007 at STSI Padang Panjang.

Theater performances experimenting with the body and objects on stage in West Sumatra were mainly centered on theater groups in Padang and Padangpanjang formed from the 1990s to 2010. Although some other cities had theater groups, they did not produce productions that highlighted experimentation with the body and objects. The development of modern theater in West Sumatra from the 1990s to 2020 remained centered in cities as centers of art, with Taman Budaya Padang as the driving force behind the activities of West Sumatra artists (Pramayoza, 2009).



Picture 2. The Development of Modern Theater in West Sumatra
Designed by Saaduddin, 2024

DISCUSSION

Body Experimentation on the Stages of Indonesian Theater

The exploration of the body in Indonesian theater has been a significant aspect of its artistic development, reflecting a dynamic engagement with cultural expression and identity. This trend towards body experimentation has evolved over time, influenced by both internal and external factors within Indonesian society. Historically, Indonesian theater has been rich with diverse forms of traditional performance, each with its own unique physicality and aesthetic. However, with the emergence of modern theater in Indonesia, particularly in the late 20th century, there has been a growing interest in experimenting with the body as a means of artistic expression.

One notable example of body experimentation in Indonesian theater is the work of contemporary theater groups and directors who have incorporated physicality and movement into their performances. These experiments often involve breaking away from traditional forms and exploring new ways of using the body to convey emotion, narrative, and symbolism on stage.

Furthermore, Indonesian theater has seen the rise of interdisciplinary collaborations that combine elements of dance, music, and visual arts with theatrical performance. These collaborations have provided fertile ground for exploring the boundaries of the body in performance and pushing the limits of artistic expression.

Awareness of using the language of theatrical performance beyond textual scripts, involving bodily movements, has emerged in Indonesia and found its place among theater enthusiasts in the country. In Indonesia, initially, the form of theater that applied experimentation with the actor's body as the focal point of the performance was first introduced by Bengkel Teater under the direction of WS Rendra, upon his return from America (Yudiaryani, 2015).

WS Rendra is a figure in the theater world who introduced a new form of theatrical expression, starting with the awareness that the body has its own space on a stage where it can be presented as a language of expression in theatrical performances with the assistance of various other objects representing various metaphors.

Speaking of the development of modern Indonesian theater that uses the body as a new medium for exploration in its performances, we must look at the role of Bengkel Teater under Rendra's leadership. Bengkel Teater, initially known as Bengkel Teater Yogya, made Yogyakarta known as the initial city for the development of influential

modern theater in Java at that time, serving as a center for the development of theatrical creativity.

Bengkel Teater Yogya often presented several repertoires based on various actor training forms that attempted to respond to nature as its laboratory. This was done after WS Rendra's return from America around 1967. Several repertoires of Bengkel Teater Yogya were performed in several cities such as Balai Budaya, the Directorate of Arts, and TVRI, all located in Jakarta, and also in Yogyakarta at various places like the courtyard of Bengkel Teater Yogya, the hall of the bank tabungan pos, the Wisnu Wardhana dance institute, and in the city of Bandung where it was also performed in several venues such as the Merdeka building.

Nearly dozens of articles and press releases highlighted the repertoires of Bengkel Teater Yogya, such as in several Mini Kata Bengkel Teater Yogya theater performances including "Dua Tukang Kelontong," "Para Tukang Copet," "Di Bawah Tiang Listrik," "Pedang, Topi, dan Tertawa," "Bip Bop dan Vigneta," "Piiiip," "Rambate-Rate-Rate-Rata," "Caaat-Caatt," "Dimanakah Kau Saudaraku."

Through the performances of Bengkel Teater, actors created a new language of expression through various physical training sessions, where the power of stage language no longer had to be translated solely through words. Through Bengkel Teater, there was an introduction to performance forms that deviated from mainstream Indonesian theater post the 1950s, which was more dominated by realist styles (Soemanto, 2003)

Bengkel Teater under the leadership of WS Rendra during the initial years after his return from America introduced a form of training for Indonesian theater actors. This training in Bengkel Teater marked the beginning of actors understanding the body's function as a nonverbal force in communication on stage, which was brought about through various forms of training sessions focusing on the body as an instrument. Bakdi Soemanto elaborated on this, further emphasizing the awareness of understanding the body as a new medium in Indonesian theater work during the early years of Indonesian theater in the 1970s (Soemanto, 2003), Even Landung Simatupang, a cultural observer and theater enthusiast from Yogyakarta, provided an interesting note on Bengkel Teater's performances, stating that WS Rendra had a profound impact on most contemporary theater enthusiasts in Yogyakarta during that period.

Several cities in Indonesia during the 1970s received appreciation from Bengkel Teater for its experimental repertoires, particularly Yogyakarta and Jakarta. There were

numerous reviews on the experimental theater forms by WS Rendra, and the term "Teater Mini Kata" even emerged to describe Bengkel Teater's performances. The term "Mini Kata" was introduced by cultural observer Gunawan in his essay titled "About Bip-Bop Why Teater Mini Kata," published by Kompas on June 28, 1968.

During the 1970s to the 1990s, Jakarta also began experimenting with new forms of theater that emphasized the exploration of the actors' bodies in interpreting space, symbols, and words on stage. This experimentation was evident in several theater groups born in the 1970s, such as Teater Mandiri under the direction of Putu Wijaya. This group, considered by some theater critics as post-modern theater, was known for its concept of mental terror on the audience, a concept described by Phillip Zarrilli as "Putu seeing acting as 'total football', or 'total war' (Foley, 2016). Putu Wijaya creates characterless characters that represent various personalities. Drawing from the traditional Balinese arts, Putu Wijaya consistently experiments with space, body, light, and cloth, producing silhouette or shadow effects, as seen in performances like "Jangan Menangis Indonesia" (Don't Cry Indonesia) and "Zero."

Aside from Bengkel Teater, another theater group from Yogyakarta that introduced a new form of theater in Indonesia and focused on body experimentation is Teater Garasi. Initially, Teater Garasi primarily used translated or adapted plays in the 1990s, but in the 2000s, they began to emphasize experimentation in their works. Through productions like "Waktu Batu: Ritus Seratus Kecemasan dan Wajah Siapa yang Terbelah," "Waktu Batu 2," "Waktu Batu 3: Deux ex Machina," "Perasaan-perasaanku Padamu," "Repertoar Hujan "je.ja.lan," and "Tubuh Ketiga," they explored various themes and forms of body expression (Nurhadi, 2010) Teater Garasi demonstrates theatrical totality by introducing new forms in their performances that showcase the power of the actors' bodies. This group is among those theater groups striving to establish new traditions in the creation of modern Indonesian theater (Iswantara, 2021; Iswantara et al., 2012).

In addition, body experimentation has been carried out by several theater groups in Jakarta, which emerged thanks to the Jakarta Theater Festival regularly organized by the Jakarta Arts Council. For example, the Theater SAE group led by Budi S Otong, Theater Kubur led by Dindon WS, and Theater Kami led by Haris Priadi Bah. Theater SAE, originating from the Jakarta Youth Theater Festival, evolved into a theater group that applied body experimentation in their training. This group was prominent in the 1980s under the direction of Boedi S. Otong, known for implementing strict training disciplines

that lasted for hours. Their repertoire, such as "Pengantar Ekstase Kematian Orang-Orang" (1984), "Happening Channel 00" (1986), "Biograji Yanti Setelah 12 menit" (1992), and "Migrasi dari Ruang Tamu" (1993), is recognized as the pioneering form of theater with themes and experimentation on the struggle of the actors' bodies within the context of urban culture (Malna, 2018) Indeed this illustrates that Theater Sae has a tendency to generate human alienation and transformation in the approach taken by each of its actors. Bodden perceives that the process of human transformation within the context of social society can undergo changes in form when presented on stage (Hafifi, 2020) Members of Theater SAE such as Dindon WS and Haris Priadi Bah, after leaving the group, formed their own theater groups and continued to choose forms of experimentation and exploration of the actors' bodies in their works.

The Theater Kubur group, developed by Dindon WS, who was previously an actor in Theater SAE, attempted to demonstrate a greater totality towards the exploration of the actors' bodies and objects, where the body becomes a weapon and a richer expression. Through extensive training, this group delved into the depths of the body and its relationship with stage objects. Some of their significant works include "Sirkus Anjing," "Tombol 13," and "Sandiwara Dol." In the performance "Sandiwara Dol" in 1998 in Jambi City, the exploration of the actors' bodies became the main strength with acrobatic movements and profound content visible on stage.

Theater Kami group, led by director Haris Priadi Bah, formed in 1989, also contributed to the development of Indonesian theater by attempting to offer something new. In their work, they applied experimentation, collaboration, and exploration as options in their creations. Through this group, intensive training was conducted to train the actors' body organs so that they could transform new meanings. This group is identified as one that explores the body in their works, such as "Metamorfosa Api" and "Percakapan Erasmus." The shared spirit to pursue novelty also created an atmosphere of excavation and experimentation in the creation of theater in several major cities that became centers of theater art in Indonesia.

Groups such as Mandiri Theater, Theater SAE, and Theater Kubur were even categorized in their time as the forefront of Indonesian theater. This statement refers to the performance patterns of Mandiri Theater and SAE Theater, which depart from a conventional script convention like the staging of realist theater scripts (Dahana, 2001). In the 1990s, the city of Bandung also contributed to the vibrant scene of modern Indonesian

theater that applied experimentation with the body. Rahman Sabur and his theater group, Teater Payung Hitam, began presenting several repertoire performances that explored the body in their shows, such as "Ritus Topeng," "Meta Teater," "Katakitamati," "Teater Musik Kaleng," "Tiang ½ Tiang," "DOM," "Kaspar," "Perahu Nabi Nuh," and "Puisi Tubuh Yang Runtuh."

Among several performances by Teater Payung Hitam, the staging of "Kaspar" by Peter Handke was particularly phenomenal in Indonesia from 1997 to 2000 and was eventually performed in several cities abroad, including in Germany. This was remarkable because Teater Payung Hitam became known for using non-verbal body language as a chosen form of communication in their theater performances. The emphasis on the actors' ability to interpret the play "Kaspar" also involved structured training methods to build resilience and elasticity in the actors' bodies, which Jakob Soemardjo described as an emphasis on creating unusual conditions (Sabur, 2004). Furthermore, Tony Broer, a senior actor in the Teater Payung Hitam group, also contributed to the exploration of theater stages in Bandung through several of his exploratory performances, such as "Tubuh Perang" and "Rajah Tubuh Lahir Perang." Using Butoh technique, Tony Broer began presenting solo performances with a focus on essential body exploration. For Tony Broer, the body is an entity capable of interpreting space, and in his training sessions, he stated that the form of his training is personal space exercises. For Tony, space and body become a unified process of growth (interview, Tony Broer, June 2011).

Forms of performance emphasizing body exploration also emerged in theater groups in Bandung in the 2000s, such as the Cassanova Bandung theater group. They began developing theater forms using actors' bodies and visual media in their performances to complement the modern theater landscape in Bandung with various theatrical repertoires. This theater group started filling the stages of Bandung theaters with their works since 2003, performing in various venues such as theater buildings, gardens, fields, bookstores, etc. Cassanova theater's repertoires using the body include performances like "Waiting for Godot," "Museum Tubuh yang Mati," "Enam Pelarian," and "Hitam Hujan" (interview, Dian Ardiansyah, September 2011).

Another theater group in Bandung that also attempted body and word experimentation is the Creamer Box group under the direction of Bob Teguh. In several of their works, they sought to showcase new possibilities by exploring movements as a language of performance communication, such as in one theater performance titled

"Prahaha Cinta Arok Dedes," which the author witnessed in the field of SOS Siliwangi Bandung in 2003.

Teater Pictorial Bandung, directed by Irwan Jamal, in the last five years has also begun to focus on excavating and elaborating on several elements of performing arts to find new forms of expression in their performances. According to an interview with Dian Ardiansyah, a theater observer and Bandung alumnus, during his seven years in Bandung, he observed that only a few theater groups focused on excavation and experimentation with body and word. Although he noted that the era of body theater had passed in the city of Bandung and there were no longer groups experimenting with these methods, only these four groups remained focused on discovering new forms of theater that still emphasized body and word exploration as well as visual space in their performances (interview, October 2011).

The use of the body as a new form of exploration in modern theater is not limited to Java alone. In Makassar, far from Jakarta as the cultural center, Teater Kala under the direction of Shinta Febriany has its own record in filling the map of modern theater development that uses body experiments. In several of their works, they emphasize creation patterns that explore the human body in their performances.

Surabaya also contributes to the development of this form of theater. One theater group emphasizing the processing and excavation of the actor's body is Teater Api Indonesia, established since July 30, 1993, under the direction of Luhur Kayungga. Even their staging of the play "Caligula" reached cities like Padang and Padang Panjang in 2000. In this performance, the classic play "Caligula," which is colossal with many characters in the script, was played by only two characters filled with body movements and visual objects to convey the script's content.

Solo also contributes to Indonesian modern theater emphasizing processing and excavation patterns of the actor's body as their communication language. The theater group Ruang, directed by Joko Bibit Santoso, has made a name for themselves in this theater world. In a performance titled "Sang Pencinta dan Z," a deeper connection between space, body, and stage objects can be seen. This performance has a strong experimental power to find forms and styles that are free from theatrical realism conventions. In several of its acts, this group remains consistent in creating performances that rely on exploring the actor's body, such as in "Mayur" performed in 2010 at the Ruang Theater group's training venue in Solo.

Medan also contributes to the development of theater using body experiments. The theater group Que Medan, essentially powered by traditional theater and the group's strength with their traditional songs, after undergoing apprenticeship in the Jakarta theater workshop group, began performing their theater plays with the title "Dialog Kursi" in Jakarta in 2000 (San, 2006).

The Spirit of Tradition in Modern Theater of West

The theater in West Sumatra reflects the rich and diverse cultural heritage of the Minangkabau community. Although modern theater has undergone significant development in this region, traditional traditions and cultural values remain at the core of many performances. One characteristic of theater in West Sumatra is the alignment between local traditions and modern expression. Theater performances often combine traditional elements such as music, dance, and folklore with modern theater techniques such as the use of lighting and sophisticated stage settings.

The spirit of tradition is strongly felt in the themes explored in theater performances. Adapted stories often originate from myths, legends, or local history that are important to the Minangkabau community. This helps to preserve cultural heritage and local identity while providing a contemporary touch relevant to current issues. Furthermore, theater serves as a platform for local artists to express their cultural identity and strengthen pride in their heritage. By combining traditional and modern elements in their works, theater artists in West Sumatra continue to revive and develop their cultural heritage in the context of a changing world.

Traditional art forms in West Sumatra today exist as part of its society's life, yet they are not part of the ritual processes of Minangkabau society. Some traditional art forms are closely linked to the formation of the Minangkabau community's character. In fact, several traditional art forms have been familiar since childhood, playing a role in shaping their community's character and often serving as a means of instilling values.

Traditional arts such as bakaba, randai, and silat are continuously preserved by the communities that own them in their respective areas in West Sumatra. These three art forms are ingrained in the lives of the Minangkabau people, both in rural and urban settings. These three traditional art forms are reflected in the theater scene in West Sumatra from the 1970s to the 2000s. This reflects the cultural identity of theater practitioners and demonstrates contemporary offerings in their presentation. The

development of theater in West Sumatra is believed to have occurred after Indonesia's independence era, marked by the advancement of literature as the force behind the scripts of theater performances. Post-independence, the government played a role by establishing the Indonesian National Theater Academy in Jakarta in 1955, as well as ASDRAFI in Yogyakarta in 1954, alongside the establishment of the Jakarta Arts Council equipped with Taman Ismail Marzuki. Since then, theater development in Indonesia has progressed rapidly, with frequent scriptwriting competitions and theater festivals. These competitions not only brought forth prominent figures like Rendra, Teguh Karya, and Arifin C. Noer but also gave rise to new names in the theater world, such as Putu Wijaya, N. Riantiarno, Ikranegara, Wisran Hadi, Arthur S. Nalan, and others. The presence of these three institutions has greatly influenced the development of theater practitioners spreading the art of theater in Indonesia.

In their journey, theater figures in West Sumatra from the 1970s to the 2000s also had encounters with these three institutions. Even theater figures like Wisran Hadi, the founder of Bumi Teater group, who received theater education at ASDRAFI Yogyakarta, and BHR Tanjung, who graduated from ATNI Jakarta (interview with Syuhendri, April 2011). The Bumi Teater group, formed in 1976 under the leadership of Wisran Hadi, played a significant role in contributing to this development. Almost all theater directors in West Sumatra who emerged in the 1990s were members of this group. Young directors produced in the 1990s included Asbon Budinan Haza, Aswendi Dahdir, A. Alin De, Herisman Is, Zirmayanto, Zaifan Merry, Indra Nara Persada, M. Ibrahim, Agusfian Iskandar, Desvita Wardhini, Raffendie Sanjaya, Syarifuddin Arifin, Armeind Sufhasril, Syafril, and Yusril. (Sahrul & Azwar, 2005). Furthermore, in their performances, Bumi Teater always addresses shows that counterpose the myths of the kaba-kaba living within Minangkabau society. The spirit of tradition in the form of modern theater in West Sumatra is also reflected in the works of other directors, such as in the theater production of Dayung-dayung under the leadership of Alin D, as well as the works of directors Hardian Radjab and BHR Tanjung up to the 1990s.

Traditional art forms such as randai, bakaba, and silat, which are integral parts of Minangkabau culture both in form and essence, have been used as new sources of inspiration in the creative process of theater directors in West Sumatra during that period. This is inseparable from the growth and development of these traditional arts, which are closely related to the lives of theater directors in West Sumatra.

Exploration of the Body in Modern Theater Groups in West

As a characteristic of modern theater that developed in the city center of governance, the forms of theater in West Sumatra initially also developed in the city center of Padang. This is in line with the notion that modern theater in Indonesia is a product of urban dwellers, created by and for urban populations (Jakob, 1992). This shows that this form of art has been striving to introduce itself to the people of West Sumatra to this day. The characteristics of theater performances that developed in West Sumatra in the 1970s are as follows:

Classification	Finding	Period 1990-2010s
Stage	Staged in special buildings	v
Script	Scripted drama	v
	From a specific poem or theme	v
Adaptation	Local drama script and translated script	v
Theme	challenging local myths	v
Scenography	Strengthening the background, time, and setting of the events.	v
Spectacle	Exploration of space utilization	v
	Diverse sources of creation	v
	The plot is not always linear	v
Characterization Tokoh:	Loss of character forms	v
Emphasis	Exploration of movement forming patterns of composition	v
	Utilization of dance technique	v
Exploration	Still in the preliminary stages	v
	Not related to any specific ritual ceremony	v
	Wordplay, or patterns of play in randai and silat patterns.	v
	The body's strength in interpreting the text of a play	v

Table 1. Classifications

The theater group known as Bumi Teater was founded in 1976 under the leadership of Wisran Hadi. They performed theater works until the 1990s, carrying themes that

countered the myths of kaba in Minangkabau. The group relied on the power of literary texts in their performances. A special characteristic of several theater directors originating from Bumi Teater is their ability to incorporate aspects of play inherent in Minangkabau society into wordplay.

In West Sumatra, alongside realistic theater performances using scripted plays, there are also forms of shows resulting from experimental processes. These performances incorporate local idioms and Minangkabau traditional arts such as kaba, randai, silat, and dendang. This theater form does not prioritize audience marketability like realistic theater does. In the 1990s, the emergence of a new theater tradition among modern theater groups in West Sumatra can be predicted, starting with young directors such as Yusril with the Hitam Putih Community, Prel T with the Experimental Theater group, and Zurmailis with KSST Noktah. The works produced by these groups can be considered the beginning of a new tradition in theater creation through experimentation.

In 2000, several forms of theater emerged introducing the use of new language in their performances, especially involving body language and objects. The movements generated, especially created through body and object exploration, contributed to the development of new works different from those of Yusril, Prel T, and Zurmailis. These works reflect the unique style of each director, as seen in performances such as Keluarga Mahasiswa Teater Padangpanjang, Teater Sakata, Teater Katarsis, and Teater Tambologi. Additionally, Teater Rumah Teduh, Teater IAIN Imam Bonjol, Ranah Teater, Afrizal Harun from the Hitam Putih Community, and Syuhendri from KSST Noktah also contributed creatively.

In terms of quantity, modern theater in West Sumatra appears prominent in creating these works compared to other provinces in Sumatra such as Lampung, Jambi, and Riau. The forms of modern theater performances in West Sumatra from the 1990s to 2010 are highly varied, showcasing various forms and styles. Currently, the tradition of modern theater in West Sumatra is beginning to show diversity with the presence of young directors who are more daring to experiment with actor movements and objects on stage.

Over the past 20 years, the achievements of modern theater in West Sumatra have shown a movement of new modern theater traditions that seek to find their place amidst the changing currents in society and the global theater development. Theater performances presented in West Sumatra have been recognized in various areas such as Medan, Bengkulu, Jambi, Lampung, and Pekanbaru. However, for national and international scales, theater performances that successfully carry out touring programs

are very rare. This is due to cost constraints and the lack of mass media to publicize the groups, as well as the lack of popularity of these groups in Java as a center of art.

For the Sumatra region, theater groups from West Sumatra have shown quality on par with the gradual development of quality. The spirit of theater groups in West Sumatra is reflected in their efforts. It is very rare for experimental theater performances involving the body and actors to be presented in several cities outside of Sumatra. Only a few performances have the opportunity to be shown outside of Sumatra, and this is influenced by the high production costs incurred when performances are held outside of Sumatra.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

In the early development of theater in West Sumatra before the 1970s, Teater Kota Padang emerged as a pioneer that initiated the development of performing arts in the region. Although performances in this early period were of low quality and sporadic in nature, they laid the groundwork for further development. Significant contributions came from the Bumi Teater group in the 1980s and 1990s, led by Wisran Hadi. This group played a crucial role in advancing modern theater in West Sumatra. Bumi Teater gave birth to several young directors in the 1990s, such as Asbon Budinan Haza and Aswendi Dahdir, who later formed new theater groups.

In the 1990s, there was a paradigm shift in the world of theater in West Sumatra towards experimentation. Directors such as Yusril, Prel T, and Zurmailis began creating performances without overly considering the audience market. Body experimentation became the main focus, marking a new era in theater creation in the region. Between 2000 and 2010, theater groups in West Sumatra further experimented, mainly triggered by activities such as the National Student Experimental Theater Meeting (PTEMN).

Starting in the 2000s, theater performances in West Sumatra showcased experimentation with the body and objects on stage. Performance styles shifted with a more prominent use of body movement language and objects. Theater groups like Keluarga Mahasiswa Teater Padangpanjang, Teater Sakata, and Tambologi became pioneers in creating experimental works that combined various art elements. Classification of performance forms in this era included freer use of stage space, the use of drama scripts derived from poetry or themes, and an emphasis on more creative creation sources and movement exploration.

Theater performances from West Sumatra began to be recognized and known at the

regional and national levels during this period. Although theater groups in this region demonstrated quality on par with theater groups in major cities in Indonesia, challenges arose regarding the dissemination of performances outside of Sumatra. High production costs became one of the obstacles in efforts to expand the reach of experimental theater performances from West Sumatra.

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