

MASIHKAH ADA CINTA D(AR)I KAMPUS BIRU? PLAY PERFORMANCE: AN ADAPTATION OF NOVEL-FILM AS A MANIFESTO STRATEGY

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses a descriptive qualitative study of a play performance entitled masihkah ada cinta d(ar)i Kampus Biru? produced by Teater Gajah Mada (TGM) in 2016. The focus of this paper is to present how the play performance is used as a manifesto strategy by the creators. The play performance was the result of an adaptation from two existing artworks with the same title: Ashadi Siregar's Cintaku di Kampus Biru novel and Ami Prijono's Cintaku di Kampus Biru film. The approach used in the study is formulation of several theories in a frame of adaptation; they are media transformation theory; theories which are closely related to adaptation: reception theory and intertextuality theory; and narration theories of the three media: play performance; novel; and film. The differences and changes of the adaptation process are interpreted as representation strategy, which are finally applied as manifesto strategy by the play performance creators. The play performance strategy was represented through three main elements of the story: the plot; the characterization; and the place setting. Based on the study, the findings showed that the play performance creators stated the manifesto strategy through: (1) the intertextual relation between the three media and the audience repertoire; (2) the creative interpretation of the characterization and the characters; and (3) the gallery room as a symbol of "transaction space". Another important finding was that the representation strategy of the play performance was also used as a manifesto strategy to respond to the polemic occurred before the performance.

Keywords: adaptation, *Kampus Biru*, play performance, novel, film, manifesto

INTRODUCTION

Ashadi Siregar's *Cintaku di Kampus Biru* (the following mentions of the novel-film title is abbreviated as *CdKB*) was first published in 1976. Initially, it was a serial story published by *Kompas* daily, and then was performed on stage by a theater group Teater Gajah Mada (TGM) on 11-12 February 2016. This was in Gallery Room of Pusat Kebudayaan Koesnadi Hardjosoemantri Universitas Gajah Mada (PKKH-UGM). The novel was adapted into a play performance directed by Irfanuddien Ghozali, with a new title *masihkah ada cinta d(ar)i Kampus Biru?* (the following mentions of the play performance title is abbreviated as *macdKB?*). Unlike common play performances, *macdKB?* was held in a gallery room. The number of audience was limited to about 70 people –they were invited to enjoy the show like enjoying an art exhibition. The audience was guided by the actors or other sign markers to visit one spot to the next ones.

macdKB? play performance integrated *CdKB* novel-film as a part of the performance elements (Ghozali, 2016: 106). The output was found in the actors' dialogues, video montages, reflections of film events on the gallery walls, live song singing, musical accompaniments, visual images, actor-to-actor and actor-to-audience interactions, and other

enlivened artistic elements. The narrations of *CdKB* novel-film were intertwined with other performance elements, forming a new unified event: *macdKB?* play performance.

The adaption and composition of intermedia artworks were not merely adapting novel-film narration to performance narration, but also concerning narrative and characteristics aspects of the delivery media. In a broader sense, the adaptation process frequently involved intercultural adaptation: from source culture to target culture. As a consequence, creation situation and context were involved. Thus, some differences and changes were found in media representations related to characterization and story plotting. The differences and changes, however, should be addressed with different understandings (Damono, 2014: 108).

Different expression media would always result in different interpretations and images. The verbal language in *CdKB* novel and the aural-visual language in *CdKB* film were not able to linearly and in denotative way be altered in the performance language –that shaped the event images– without diminishing its ambiance and atmosphere. Thus, an adaptation process could be oriented as creativity form of creators' interpretation of event reconstruction and re-actualization, from an artwork into a another artwork (Saputra, 2012: 48).

The primary plan was that there would be two *macdKB?* play performances. The first one was a preview performance held in December 2015 at Selasar Barat Faculty of Social and Political Science UGM. This was a part of the faculty 60th anniversary. The performance was failed because the spread of the planned poster design, that was "allegedly" participated in the campaign for LGBT-lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender. The LGBT issue was being top issue at that moment. Although there had been an official clarification from TGM on their Facebook account, the controversy of the poster remained viral. This impacted on the performance until the final seconds before the show time. Finally, in one-sided way, the production team changed the performance into a theatrical action entitled *Bongkaran Panggung CdKB* (Stage Dismantle of *CdKB*). The director, actors, and crew members asked the audience to dismantle the show property. The second performance was held in February 2016, located in PKKH-UGM Gallery Room. The second performance was successfully presented.

The fact that *macdKB?* poster design raised polemic showed an evidence of power relation in academical context. This premise was also found in the performance, the novel, and the film: Anton-Yusnita relation; and Anton-the Dean relation. The absence of security guarantee for the preview performance –from the campus bureaucracy– influenced TGM's representation strategy choices in the subsequent works two months later. This was an elegant choice from a theater group to express its aspirations through performing art media. After all, any piece of arts (including performing arts) as a social practice was always ideological and having a particular interest in the practice of its creation and representation (Salam, 2012: 202).

All great potentials of media migration process –adaptation of *CdKB* novel-film into a *macdKB?* play performance –were the means which would be investigated in this adaptation study. In this study, the aesthetic elements of an artwork were maintained without neglecting how ideologies penetrated into several forms. Particularly in an intermedial situation when a form underwent a transformation into another form, or when a form was internally built by multimediality (Buchanan, 2012: 19; Budiman, 2014: 7).

From this background, the question in this paper is formulated as: How is manifesto strategy conducted by creators of *masihkah ada cinta d(ar)i Kampus Biru?* play performance as an adaptation of *Cintaku di Kampus Biru* novel-film?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Adaptation as Reception and Intertextuality

Adaptation as one of the 'concrete' conceptions—concretization in Vodicka terms—from readers to what they read, can be divided into three possibilities. Firstly, an artwork can be affirmative-normative, that is to define and strengthen the structure, norms and the value of society. Secondly, an artwork can be restorative, that is to maintain norms that have been faded or disappeared, or no longer applicable in society. Thirdly, an artwork can also be innovative and revolutionary, that is to reform the established value and norms in society (Pradopo, 2010: 223; Teeuw, 1984: 204).

Adaptation also relates to the study of intertextuality, when it departs from the basic assumption that it is impossible that an artwork is born in an empty culture. It is always related and bound to situation, context, history and culture when and where the artwork is created. There are always traces of existing born texts. Then, a text can be said to be mutation result of other texts; intersecting and mutually neutralizing each other (Abrams & Harpham, 2011: 401; Culler, 2004: 163; Hutcheon, 2006: 7–8; Junus, 1985: 87; Kristeva, 1980: 36; Teeuw, 1983: 11, 1984: 46). Therefore, artworks born from adaptation work almost certainly have an intertextual relation with the source artworks, although the appearance of original texts may not always as a whole artwork.

Adaptation as Strategy of Representation and Creativity

As a performative disclosure, literary work requires strategy. Strategy can be defined as 'tactics' or 'stratagems' to achieve the expected goals and missions. One strategy is chosen based on certain considerations to be well targeted. For Iser (1987: 86–87), strategy is not only a framework or foundation for meeting between elements of a repertoire and its readers, but also setting conditions when a text is communicated. Strategy allows structures to have certain impacts on the readers, with one of its primary functions is to de-familiarize the familiar elements. Any of creators' strategy will, in the end, participate in directing the audience' process of meaning acquisition. It is not only a mean of transporting from message 'sender' to message 'receiver', but also to determine how the message is acceptable.

Various strategies are chosen by creators as a form of creativity they offer through their artworks. This is conducted to indicate that their artworks are different from the existing artworks. This distinctive concept is what creators always pursue in their artworks, although this is such an "arduous" quality to achieve. These apprehensions become a challenge for creators in the process of creating and composing artworks, particularly in terms of adapting an existing artwork into a new artwork.

Creativity refers to all ability and power to create new works or new ideas. The creation will be gained when humans have learned or mastered existing ideas (Sumarjo, 2000: 80–81). Creativity refers to three things: novelty; value; and clarity (Hausman, 1981: 77). Creativity integrates two ways of thinking, aesthetic and analytic. Human aesthetic thought evokes hypotheses, while analytic ability tests the hypotheses (Edwards, 2010: 4).

Creativity is also called as a communication experience that involves a relational conception about what to achieve. Communication experience is circular, from experience to narrative and back to experience again. The more new experiences are created, the more resonance and social value will be. The experience of communicating always requires addressing of 'basing upon', recipients, and disclosure of experiences that occur between them (Negus & Pickering, 2004: 24). Addressing is needed to understand how far an adapted artwork is different from the existing one.

RESEARCH METHOD

The type of this study is qualitative descriptive study. Qualitative descriptive study is employed because the data and analysis are presented in form of word description, not a set of numbers explanation. The study is conducted by employing some theories framed in an adaptation theory: a study to deconstruct the adaptation of one artwork into another artwork. In accordance with the focus of the study, the process of adapting *CdKB* novel-film into *macdKB?* play performance along with the adaptation consequences will be interpreted as the creators' manifesto strategy.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

macdKB? play performance was a refined artwork and re-interpretation of *CdKB* novel-film. As it was created from two different 'media sources', there had been adjustments here and there on production process, and were inseparable from the current cultural context. Furthermore, it was a manifesto towards all confusions as well as the appeared controversy. The manifesto of the play performance was conducted through three strategies: story plotting, characterization, and place setting.

Manifesto Through Story Plotting: Intertextuality of 'Popular' Story and Repertoire of 'Contextual' Audience

Adaptation, as an intertextual process, assumed that in a text, there were almost always traces of other existing texts. A text was a mosaic of quotations and the result of mutation of other texts which are intersecting and mutually neutralizing (Culler, 2004: 163; Hutcheon, 2006: 7–8; Kristeva, 1980: 36). The *macdKB?* play performance as a result of adaptation had to have an intertextual relation with the *CdKB* novel-film. The play performance was a mutation between novel text and film text which was intertwined in one performance event.

TGM opted to have *CdKB* novel-film as "fundamental material" and realized it as "potential capital" for the *macdKB?* play performance. Ashadi Siregar's novel had its own emotional bond for the readers who had become UGM academic citizens, which became the main segment of TGM audience. Likewise, *CdKB* film was popular and was one of the bestselling novel-adapted film created by Indonesian filmmakers (Ardianto, 2014: 18).

The text of *CdKB* novel-film was acquired by reading process done by *macdKB?* play performance creators. The play performance creators were lovers of existing artworks, either from performing creators or films. All efforts were made to approach the two objects that will be adapted and at the same time interpreted into a performance artwork: *macdKB?*. In such situation, the interwork intertextual relation occurred (Worton & Still, 1990: 1–2).

The audience of *macdKB?* play performance, who had read *CdKB* novel or watched *CdKB* film, would try to confirm the reading or the watching in their process of enjoying the performance. On the other hand, those who had not read the novel nor watched the film, would capture a new reality that had never been in their mind. When later they read the novel or watch the film, indirectly, they would base their readings on the play performance. Several differences on how to respond to a text proved that an artwork lived in a community. The artwork dynamically developed and was adjusted to the social-cultural environment of the community.

There were several questions to raise about the adaptation phenomenon of the *CdKB* novel-film into a *macdKB?* play performance. Why did the relationship of Anton and Yusnita become the performance main plot focus? Why didn't the relationship of Anton and Erika? Or why didn't the relationship of Anton and Widyasari? Or why didn't the relationship of Anton, Kusno and Handoko?

The creation context which was different but "alike" occurred between the three artworks. The unintentional events happened to TGM, especially the poster design polemic, might be a cliché situation experienced by Ashadi Siregar before creating *CdKB* novel. Or, Malari 1974 incident which inspired Ami Prijono and was reflected through *CdKB* film.

The polemic taken place before the *macdKB?* preview performance enriched the repertoire owned by the performance creators and audience. For the creators, the polemic strengthened their assumptions and interpretations of the major conflict choices from *CdKB* novel-film. For the audience, the polemic was reflection means of the reality they faced in real life after interpreting *macdKB?* performance in PKKH-UGM.

macdKB? play performance as a TGM's concrete reception form of *CdKB* novel-film had the potential to transcend beyond two possible forms—which, according to Teeuw (1984, p. 214), there were three possible forms. First, the performance was affirmative-normative toward the source artworks. *macdKB?* performance was re-establishing and reinforcing the existing norms in both existing artworks, as well as the repeated cultural situation of the factual reality surrounding the artwork. Second, the performance was innovative and revolutionary towards *CdKB* novel-film as well as the contextual situations TGM faced in case of the poster design polemic. It was innovative when viewed from the artistic choices that TGM raised in the performance and it was revolutionary when viewed from the content of the story carried on during the performance.

Manifesto Through Characterization: Creativity of Characterization Interpretation

The play performance stage is the most sophisticated real-world miniature of literature and film, not in its whole universe, but only parts of it, in the form of fragments of events. In the play performance stage, there is only a here-and-now event. It will never be able to repeat whenever and wherever. The play performance stage becomes the keeper on the continuity of how humans view the world. Likewise the characterization of the play performance stage, the actors (humans) who play a certain role is something unique, which may very well deviate from the common image, from the real world that becomes their universe (Hae, 2006: 17–18).

As a result, character Anton in *macdKB?* play performance was not Anton that Ashadi represented through *CdKB* novel text or Roy Marteen in *CdKB* film. Anton had been "borrowed and taken" from his native world, was rewritten based on the interpretation of the play performance creators, and was moved into a new world in a new context: *masihkah ada cinta d(ar)i Kampus Biru?* play performance. Likewise other characters, such as Marini, Yusnita, Kusno, the Dean, and Gunawan. They transformed into audience's unexpected situation, before and during the performance. Anton, during the performance, could be anyone with any gender. He was free from the labeling of society social construction: men and women.

Characterization in a play performance was an essential attempt to share actors' experiences about the perception they had digested when dealing with a source artwork. They conducted a series of self-recognition and/or potential efforts, self-experience or their potential experience, self-reality or potential reality around them. One of the actions was by formulating equivalence between the source language and the target language (Kuncoro, 2006: 30). In *macdKB?* performance context, all of the efforts were conducted by the actors to sharpen, enlarge, interpret and share the experiences they acquired and internalized from Marini, Yusnita, Kusno, the Dean and Gunawan characters to the audience of *CdKB* novel-film. In a similar situation, the performance director might have different address toward the

"accomplishment" of verbal language in *CdKB* novel and the aural-visual language of *CdKB* film.

Series of meticulous work were carried out by the play performance creators to adapt *CdKB* novel-film. They were regular rehearsal by the actors which took up considerable time and exploration from other working groups such as lighting designer, sound director, decoration and dress code designer, and managerial team which packed the works up as a distinguished commodity overture. Those efforts reflected and returned to a play performance as an act of communication with the audience. If the verbal-spoken acting done by the actors had not been able to "hit" the audience, other elements of the performance "intervened" as a tactic to break the resonances, on which the basis was the equivalence of the source artwork and the target artwork. The combination of those elements ultimately formed a "language" convention as a play performance which was expressed through its representational strategy.

Being asked by Pajimas.com, Ghozali said that in traditional performing art, it was common that an actor plays the opposite sex, and he mentioned *Ludruk* (traditional drama of East Java) as an example. "In traditional art, acting like that is common, like *Ludruk*," he said.

The same answer was conveyed by Angin (female), cast as Anton. "Yep it was like what's been mentioned earlier, in traditional performing art, it is common, like *Ludruk*," she replied. Angin admitted that this was the first time for her playing an opposite sex role (Pajimas.com, 2015).

Resonance which might be a suspicion coming from potential audience caused by the poster design polemic was a proof of their passivity toward the working area of the play performance creators. The assumption of accusation and disinterest of the performance reality dominated their minds toward the unproven reality. Basically, they were not "foolish" in giving these judgments. They were just less flexible in accepting the aesthetic conventions of *macdKB?* performance creators.

Anton was a part of every human being in all genders. He was a part of our youth time on campus. When it was taken outside of university realm, the reality was inverted to the fact of freedom for creating artwork and the right to explain an argument. What made me reflected as an audience toward the incident of Anton and Yusnita and Anton with the Dean on the novel was to recite Ashadi's quest: *masihkah ada cinta d(ar)i Kampus Biru?* (is there still a love from/in Kampus Biru?) (Soemarno, 2016: 64–65).

What the performance creators tried to build through the role of being free from gender constructions had actually been conducted by many "traditional" artists in Indonesia. For example, what happened to the uniqueness of *ludruk* performances. Some female roles were played by male actors (Damono, 2014, pp. 68). Furthermore, the play performance creators tried to break the established rule, that was the strong male dominance in mainstream performing artworks. The creators offered how men and women were equal in true sense. Female actors who were often positioned as "always silent", were transformed into playing balanced role with male actors. Women and men had equal position as part of the universe (Guhathakurta, 1997: 239).

Manifesto Through Place Setting: Gallery Room As A Symbol of "Transaction Space"

PKKH-UGM Gallery Room was chosen as the venue for *macdKB?* play performance. This was the creators' strategy in carrying out several missions, such as: (1) creativity overture; (2) stage aesthetic strategy; and (3) symbol game of gallery room as "transaction space".

Firstly, *macdKB?* play performance as an "art" could not be separated from the creators' tendency. As creators of performing arts, they strove to generate creative power in transmitting ideas and concepts to their audience; in this process, they were equipped with learning or mastering the existing ideas (Sumarjo, 2000: 80–81). Unlike the common play performances, *macdKB?* chose to set in a gallery room as a performance "stage". The gallery room was the creators' overture in exploring the alternative space of a common play performance venue which only set in existing conventional show houses and stages. The play performance held in the gallery room was to abolish the boundary between the actors and the audience. The audience could actively participate in consuming the stage. They could be positioned parallel to other performance elements. They finally became inseparable element of the play performance context. They were able to influence the story line of the on-stage performance.

Secondly, the use of the gallery room could not be separated from the *macdKB?* performance creators' efforts in dealing with stage aesthetic. The stage aesthetic adapted from the novel-film aesthetic had to be interpreted into a new medium: a play performance. The narrative choice of *CdKB* novel-film in the form of fragments was the main reason of presenting it in a gallery room. The complexity of *CdKB* novel-film narration with its each media was tackled by different staging conventions by *macdKB?* performance creators, by cutting stories into fragments. Nevertheless, the story logic remained maintained.

Thirdly, the use of PKK-UGM Gallery Room as *macdKB?* performance venue was the creators' strategy in playing the symbol game of "transaction space". Gallery room which was "identical" as fine art exhibition space could not be separated from its main function: as a meeting point between producers (fine artists) and consumers (collectors, buyers, etc.). PKK-UGM Gallery Room was one of the gallery spaces known by Yogyakarta people as a symbol of the pretension.

Kampus Biru as a "campus for all people" had changed and improved. The campus had shifted away from the "nickname" it had been attached to. The Single Tuition System known as *Uang Kuliah Tunggal* which was increasingly not affordable for lower-middle class was one strong proof of the shifting. The accelerated study period made the students inevitably had to obey the rule. There was only limited time for them to develop and to dwell in the process of contributing the capacity to empower their people (community). Alumni who were taught and prepared as "ready-to-work graduates" were away more shifting the main function of *Kampus Biru* as a forging arena for all scientific concepts. *Kampus Biru* recently was the *Kampus Biru* inspired from *Kampus Biru* in Ashadi Siregar's novel.

The "transaction space" symbol game would not work if *macdKB?* performance was set in other show houses or venues. Even, if the place setting was in a conventional show house, there would be found several negations on the audience's meaning acquisition. However, a room (a performance place setting) affected the performance presented in it (Gay McAuley via Ba'asyin, 2016: 23). The room was not only a space for a performance, but rather a space for audience to acquire meaning.

CONCLUSIONS

From the findings and the discussion above, it could be concluded that *macdKB?* performance was TGM's representation strategy. The performance was not only limited to "debt repayment" for the failure of *macdKB?* preview performance, but also TGM's political strategy in stating its stance. The strategy appeared in the representation elements presented in the performance; through the plot; the characterization; and the place setting.

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