

## Slapstick in the Wayang Kulit Arena: Gender Domination Practices Lead to Symbolic Violence

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### Abstract

The problem of this research stems from the frequent exploitation of *pesinden* or *sinden* (female singers in Javanese shadow puppet show) by *dalang* (puppeteer) within the slapsticks during the *limbukan* (humorous interlude in the Javanese shadow puppet show), which causes symbolic violence. Generally, slapstick is considered commonplace for its entertainment purpose. In contrast according to the author, slapstick is not just entertainment since it causes various symbolic violence practices carried out by the *dalang* against *pesinden*. Therefore, this paper aims to explain various phenomena of symbolic violence of the *dalang* against *sinden* within slapstick

in the *wayang kulit* (Javanese shadow puppet) performance. Qualitative methods with a case study approach are used in this paper. Data collection is carried out through literature study, interviews, observations, and documentation both audio and audio-visual. The results of the study obtained data that there had been symbolic violence committed by the *dalang* against *pesinden* in slapstick during *limbukan* scene. The occurrence of symbolic violence is caused by the *dalang* having various capitals in him; economic, relational, cultural, and even symbolic capital. *Dalang*, through his various capitals, has the power to regulate various actions and practices in *limbukan* session through his speech. These words or speech acts can corner a *pesinden* so that her position is dominated by the power of the *dalang*. Slapstick belongs to the arena of a power struggle between *dalang* and *pesinden* for there is the dominant and dominated.

**Keywords :** Slapstick, Gender, *Dalang* , *Sinden*, *Limbukan*.

## A. Introduction

Slapstick in *wayang kulit* (Javanese shadow puppet) performance is humor performed by *sinden* (female singers in Javanese shadow puppet show), *dalang* (puppeteers), or humorous guest stars who are presented in the *limbukan* (humorous interlude in the Javanese shadow puppet show) session. The aim of the slapstick is to entertain the audience so that the atmosphere of the performance is more fluid, enthusiastic, not sleepy, and makes the audience laugh. Slapstick is also used by groups or puppeteers to show their skills in leading performances so that they continue to exist and sell well in the entertainment arts market. Slapstick makes the audience happy, laugh, feel the pleasure of entertainment for a moment from the stress of daily work in the office, rice fields, gardens and other jobs. Slapstick is the most awaited moment in *wayang kulit* performances as it shifts the function of puppet show from ritual to entertainment.

However, based on the author's observations for nearly eight years, behind the laughter of the audience during the slapstick, there is actually an inverse phenomenon when viewed from the figure of the *sinden*. *Sinden* are often cornered by the *dalang* in slapstick leaving her helpless and even seem to be humiliated in their jokes by the puppeteer. Even though the slapstick makes the audience entertained, it seems that this is not the case for the *pesinden*. The *sinden* is in a weaker position, helpless, and becomes the object of the *dalang's* joke during the slapstick. In fact, it can happen that the singer is in a humiliated position in front of the performance audience while the joke is taking place. There has been symbolic violence carried out by the *dalang* against the *sinden*. Of course, this is very interesting to ask: Why does symbolic violence occur against the *sinden* by the *dalang* in the slapstick during *limbukan*? What practices make symbolic violence possible? Therefore, the aim of this paper is to analyze why symbolic violence occurs by the *dalang* against the *sinden* and what practices cause this violence to occur.

There has been a lot of papers about slapstick, including: Prihartanti (2021) has researched the various languages used in slapstick on Ucup Klaten's YouTube account. According to her, the variety of languages used in the Ucup Klaten slapstick includes Javanese Ngoko-Krama, Javanese Krama-Ngoko, Javanese-Indonesian, Indonesian-Javanese, Javanese-English, Javanese-Arabic, Arabic-Javanese, and Javanese-Klaten dialect. The slapstick text was also researched by Prabowo (2010) with the object being Basiyo Pak Dengkek. The slapstick text by Basiyo Pak Dengkek contains a subtle appeal to Javanese people to be aware of shortcomings, arrogance, and greed which are very familiar to human life. Guntari (2023) also researched slapstick texts with the object Cak Percil. Guntari concluded that the persona deixis used in the Cak Percil slapstick is the first person singular deixis and the second person singular deixis. First person deixis is singular with the forms *aku* and *kulo* (I), while second person

deixis is singular with the forms *sampeyan*, *kowe*, *panjenengan*, and *awakmu* (You). According to him, the use of Javanese *ngoko* and *krama* depends on who the speaker is speaking to.

Still in terms of language, Setyowati (2014) researching deviations from the Curanmor joke related to the principles of cooperation and politeness. The results found that there were 40 utterances of violations of the principle of cooperation, as well as 78 principles of politeness in the Curanmor joke show on Yes Radio Cilacap. This is because slapstick is used only to create an impression of humor. Further research by Hidayatulloh (2018) discusses Gus Dur's political jokes. According to him, Gusdur's political jokes contain an inspiring meaning for everyone and contain conflict so they often get Gus Dur into political trouble. Gus Dur's jokes include political slapstick discourse that entertains changes towards reform in thawing the situation towards freedom of opinion and so on.

Based on the review of the literature above, it is recognized that there has not been a single article that discusses slapstick in wayang kulit, especially those related to gender and power relations. Therefore, this research topic is still original, it has never been carried out by previous researchers. So, this topic is very important to research and publish.

This research uses a qualitative method with a case study approach. Case studies are studies of real life cases, in contemporary contexts or settings (Yin, 2009; Cresswell, 2013). At this stage, researchers try to identify specific cases, understand specific issues, problems or concerns, have an in-depth understanding of the case, involve analysis of case units, and derive meaning from the case. (Cresswell, 2013: 137-138). Data collection was carried out through observation, interviews, documents and audio-visuals. Observations by watching shadow puppet shows in the Baciro area, Panggunharjo Sewon Village Hall, Prancak Glondong Bangunharjo village, ISI Yogyakarta, and at Yogyakarta City Hall. Indirect observations were made

by watching online media, especially YouTube channels such as: Javaja Channel, Kalungan Wayang channel, Bagong Java Intertainment, Javacover Official, Sangkanwayang, and others. Interviews were conducted with *pesinden* in *wayang kulit* performances in Yogyakarta. Data analysis is carried out through three strategies; preparing and organizing data, reducing data into themes through coding and summarizing, and presenting data in the form of charts, tables or discussions (Creswell, John W., 2013), (Creswell, 2010).

## B. Discussion

### 1. *Sinden* and *Dalang* in Yogyakarta

The discussion of the *dalang's* slapstick and the *sinden* in *wayang kulit* show cannot be separated from gender issues in it. Gender deals with psychology and culture (Oakley, 1972: 158-159). In fact, gender is not innate, but is shaped psychologically and culturally by humans themselves. Gender is a difference in behavior that is constructed through social and cultural processes. In general, gender is still understood as a system of power that prioritizes men over women, so that this understanding can be detrimental to women. Nevertheless, the existence of gender is still constructed and maintained by both the dominant and the oppressed, because both contain the values of forming personality and identity to show masculine and feminine behavior (Davis, Kathy, Evans, Mary, and Lorber, 2006). The meaning is that gender deals with masculine and feminine traits in a person. Masculine in the conventional sense is identified with a male figure who is strong in actions and behavior, although in certain cases this does not apply.

Although gender roles have changed a lot (Uyun, 2002), However, in practice, "unfairness" in gender and its roles often occurs which results in negative impacts on women (Fakih,

2013). Gender inequality cannot be separated from the views of society which often attaches sex to gender, so that women must be feminine and men must be masculine (Wahyuni et al., 2022). This has an impact on gender inequality in various jobs, so that equality is always a topic of debate (Subagja, 2022). Therefore, various actions need to be taken to elevate women in realizing gender equality (Hermawati, 2007). So, a woman must empower herself so that she is not inferior to men through various creativity and innovation (Ramonita et al., 2023).

Masculine gender roles are still considered more dominant (Syaifullah, 2016) in various aspects of life, including slapstick within *wayang kulit* show. In this case, the masculine figure of the puppeteer as a man, is always leading in determining various behaviors, actions and words presented in the *limbukan* session. This gender theory is very relevant for studying slapstick in wayang kulit in Yogyakarta.

*Wayang kulit* performances are closely related to the terms of *dalang* and *sinden*. *Dalang* is the director or the one who guides the flow of the story or play, while the *sinden* is the soloist (usually) the female in the presentation of *karawitan* (Javanese musical group). *Sinden* is a term that refers to the person or main vocalist in a musical performance, also usually called *waranggana*, *swarawati*, *female singer* (now male too) (Jazuli, 2009). *Sinden* is very closely related to the female gender. Women really need a role in all aspects, education, social, economic, legal, political, arts and culture, etc (Wahyudi, 2019), (Huda & Mukti Wibowo, 2018). Women not only play an active role in domestic matters; taking care of children, husband, cooking, sweeping, washing and so on, but also active in the society (Muflihah, 2013). Apart from being supported by lifestyle needs (Utomo & Pawito, 2017), the matter is also influenced by society's demands to provide space for women to actualize themselves in social life, changing from the domestic to the public environment (Intan, 2014). *Wayang kulit* is one of the spaces given to actualize a woman's self in the

society. In this case what is meant is *sinden*. *Sinden* is currently an attraction that can captivate and entertain (Munawir, 2011) performance lovers, including *wayang kulit*.

The *sinden* figure has an important role in *wayang kulit*. The *sinden* essentially has a musical role in the accompaniment of shadow puppets. The *sinden*'s job is to accompany the puppetry scenes through vocals in the musical performances according to the needs of the story created by the *dalang*. The presence of a *sinden* is one of the determining factors for success in a performance (Budiarti, 2013, 148). Through his qualities and professionalism (such as character, charisma, and attractiveness), a *sinden* seems to be the soul who is able to enliven the show (Rosyadi, 2015). The presence of *sinden* in musical, dance and shadow puppetry tends to attract audiences to performances. For this reason, *sinden* can become an attraction by becoming a *sinden*-dancer and being a *sinden*-singer (Isneni, Ayu, Widodo, Aan, Meilina, 2014).

As time goes by, *wayang kulit* experiences changes both in terms of function, performance regulations, appearance and accompaniment, which adapt to the conditions of the society. The function of *wayang*, which was once a ritual art, has become an entertainment art (Mulasno, 2013). This has consequences for additional duties for *sinden*. Apart from serving the performance accompaniment, *sinden* are currently required to take part in entertaining the audience so that the atmosphere of the nighttime performance is more cheerful. One of the things *sinden* must do is performing slapstick with the puppeteer in the *limbukan* session. The appointed *sinden* must follow the *dalang*'s requests. *Sinden* is usually asked to sing a song that the *dalang* wants, while standing and even dancing. Not only singing, *sinden* are also involved in slapstick with *dalang* using speeches or words, even using their body gestures.

## 2. Slapstick in *Wayang Kulit* Show

Slapstick is a humorous show in the *wayang kulit limbukan* session. The *limbukan* session is also filled with chats or jokes between the *dalang* and the *sinden*, the *dalang* and the *pengrawit* (musician), sometimes the *dalang* responds to the audience. This happens because *limbukan* does not follow the storyline or play that is being developed in the *wayang kulit* play scene, so its position is free from the story. This session gives freedom for the *dalang* and *sinden* to be creative so that the audience can be entertained. For this, the *dalang* is usually willing to invite a limited number of *sinden* from outside the group to perform the slapstick. A *sinden*, which initially serves to perform song lyrics or vocals in *wayang kulit* accompaniment, turned into an entertainment object which included body shamming and speech or words performed to the audience.

The *dalang's* slapstick with *sinden* is usually the most expected by the audiences. The interaction between them occurs directly with various plays on words or speech acts. This can also fill each other in on a song, or the *dalang* asks the *sinden* to sing a song. Apart from that, *limbukan* is also filled with mocking each other using direct and free language which is sometimes inappropriate for a young *sinden* to say things that are considered disrespectful towards the *dalang* who tends to be older. However, that is the fact of the slapstick in the *limbukan* scene which often occurs in *wayang kulit* performances.

In slapstick, sometimes *sinden* becomes the object of exploitation by the *dalang*, in the sense of being the joke of the *dalang* which leads to impolite words or even physical exploitation. A *sinden* certainly doesn't stay quiet as she tries to match the words of the *dalang* with all her abilities. A *sinden* matches with speeches or words, gestures, and other practices. Of course, for *sinden* who are the same age as the *dalang* or has the same experience and habits, this is not a problem because it

looks simple. However, what happens mostly is that the *sinden* is younger than the *dalang*, both in terms of experience, serving time, age, and capital ownership. A young *sinden* is trying to keep up with a senior *dalang* is certainly something that is considered lacking in ethics or impolite. This is the dilemma of a *sinden*, to match the *dalang's* words is considered impolite, but if she doesn't match, then she will forever be dominated as material for the *dalang's* exploitation.

The interesting thing is, even though there is a dilemma as explained above, the results of the slapstick can actually increase market purchasing power because the group is increasingly selling to customers in providing entertainment for the audience. The slapstick becomes a means of entertainment and a source of laughter for the show's audience and even group members. They are entertained by *dalang* and *sinden* slapstick so that the audience can be happy again to enjoy *wayang kulit* shows until midnight and even early in the morning. *Dalang* and *sinden* slapstick ultimately becomes the main attraction for the success of *wayang kulit* performances so that puppeteers do not hesitate to invite *sinden* from outside their group to create these jokes. The slapstick in the *limbukan* session has become very common, accustomed, and has become a tradition in every *wayang kulit* performance in Yogyakarta. Slapstick eventually became an inseparable part of *wayang kulit* performances in every stage.

However, the slapstick is not always smooth because at certain moments, the *sinden* becomes the object of exploitation for various jokes done by the *dalang*. The *dalang* exploits *sinden* using verbal and nonverbal language. The inability to sing a song, the use of harsh language, slightly dirty language, exposing a *sinden's* past, even the physical shortcomings of a *sinden*, usually often become material for the *dalang's* exploitation of *sinden* or in general terms, material for creation. The aim is simply to entertain the audience so they can laugh when the atmosphere is already a bit sleepy before the midnight performance. It's just there seems

to be an imbalance in position between the *sinden* and the *dalang* so that the *sinden* becomes the object of exploitation. Women who are identical to the politeness do not deserve to receive or utter insults and harsh words, even if it is just a joke. *Sinden*, who should be a subject or performer of art who is appreciated and able to give a positive aesthetic expression to the audience, appears to be “inferior” in front of the performance audience. In fact, she seems to be suffering, in a helpless position amidst the laughter of the audience. This of course becomes a question, why this situation could occur, why there was exploitation of *sinden* by the *dalang* in the *limbukan* scene.

To uncover this problem, the author uses Bourdieu’s concept of habits and arena. Bourdieu stated that each individual will not live alone but needs other people so that relations occur between the individual and the community outside them in an arena. The occurrence of relations between subjects in an arena is essentially a form of struggle to gain domination and power (Bourdieu, 1993). The interaction that occurs is a relationship of domination which results in the emergence of a ruling culture or class that is considered dominant. Ownership of habits and control of the arena is the key to success in winning a fight. Victory in an arena is determined by how someone has capital and what strategy is used to utilize that capital to win the arena. This capital is of course not only focused on economic ownership status but also cultural capital. So, economic, cultural, social and symbolic capital are the keys to a person’s success in winning a battle (Haryatmoko, 2016). Anyone who has these four capitals, supported by ownership of habits and control of the arena in a practice, is the one who has domination and legitimacy of power. This dominance can sometimes lead to symbolic violence if it goes too far (Bourdieu, 2010a).

Based on the statement above, the slapstick of *dalang* with *sinden* can be said to be a struggle to fight for the legitimacy of power in the *wayang kulit* arena, especially in the *limbukan* session.

Both of them want to get perception and appreciation from the audience of the show. The relationship between the two in the joke forces them to use their respective capital according to their habits and arena. Different capital ownership between the two is a source of exploitation which results in symbolic violence.

### 3. Slapstick of a Struggle Arena

The arena in *wayang kulit* show is not just a performance stage, but a place for agents to gain power (Bourdieu, 2010: 22). The arena is a place for agents to establish relationships in distributing power through the various capital they own (Bourdieu, Pierre dan Wacquant, 1992). The arena is a place of efforts, fighting, and struggle for power among agents with different habits. Arena as a place of legitimate struggle to gain power. Arena is also defined as a space formed from dominant and subdominant relationships, or a space of agent relationship structures that have different capital. Arena is relatively autonomous within itself (Swartz, 1997), so it will be revealed who dominates and who is dominated. Agents use various capital and strategies to dominate the arena. An arena is a type of competitive open market, where various types of capital are used and distributed. Arenas generate hierarchies as a form of power relations and help structure all other arenas (Ritzer, 2012).

Capital includes a collection of sources of strength and power for agents to achieve a position (Bourdieu, 1996). This capital includes economic, cultural, social and symbolic. Economic capital is an agent's ownership of flexible means of production, materials and money. Cultural capital is intellectual qualifications produced through formal education and family inheritance. Cultural capital requires a learning process, so it is not easily given to others. Social capital is the relationship or network that an individual or group has with other parties who have power. Symbolic capital, namely all forms of prestige,

status, authority and legitimacy that accumulate as a form of symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1986); (Haryatmoko, 2003).

Ownership of various capital can determine hierarchy in social reality, even to gain power. Ownership of symbolic capital is most sought after, because the true struggle in the arena is not a physical struggle, but a symbolic struggle (Bourdieu, 2010). Symbolic power is almost like magic, because it has power equal to economic, power that is linked between those who exert power and those who submit in the structure of the arena where beliefs are generated and reproduced (Bourdieu, 1995). The possession of this symbolic power is referred to by Bourdieu as “doxa”, which is a set of beliefs that do not need to be reaffirmed in the form of explicit and self-conscious dogma. “Doksa” takes the form of symbolic power constructed by the accumulation of various capital to gain legitimacy. “Doksa” becomes a symbolic form of power that requires submission without questioning the legitimacy of those who use it (Grenfell, 2010).

The *limbukan* session is not actually a place of entertainment only but an arena of struggle to gain legitimacy for the power of both the *dalang* and the *sinden* (Swartz, 1997). The jokes between the puppeteer and the *sinden* is in fact fighting over their legitimacy to gain perception and appreciation from the performance audience. They, with their respective capital, try to maximize their skills and potential to gain this legitimacy. The jokes in the *limbukan* session is where they act to support each other’s abilities, and it could also be the other way around; they can bring each other down depending on what story is being built in the joke. This session will reveal who dominates and who is dominated. This symbolic domination is usually acknowledged to be known and recognized by both those who dominate and those who are dominated (Piere Bourdieu, 2010, 2).

*Dalang* with their power often use *sinden* as entertainment material by testing their singing skills. This is a form of test for

*sinden* and also a tool for the puppeteer to show his power on stage. For *singers* who are ready with their skills, of course this test is a tool to improve their reputation. *Sinden* who are able to sing the songs given by the *dalang* to the fullest, of course get appreciation from the audience of the show, either with applause, admiration, or shouts of praise as part of the *sinden* fans. However, the opposite can happen, for singers who are not yet skilled in their singing skills. This could be a threat/a downfall to their reputation because they are unable to follow the wishes of the *dalang* in voicing the song. As a result, it is common for a *sinden* to be humiliated on stage, with a bright red face and even receive ridicule from the audience and the *dalang* for not being able to sing the song as requested by the *dalang*. This is symbolic violence carried out by the *dalang* against *sinden* because of his dominance on the stage. This violence is carried out subtly and considered normal so that it is not felt either by the *dalang* who dominates or by the *sinden* who is dominated (Bourdieu, 2010a); (Haryatmoko, 2010: 5).

Symbolic violence against *sinden* is not only in terms of singing, but physical *sinden* can also become material for *dalang*. A *dalang* sometimes takes advantage of a singer's physical shortcomings to make jokes that even end in insults. Every part of the *sinden*'s body becomes the subject of jokes by the *dalang* so that at certain times the *sinden* becomes cornered, silenced, and speechless. *Sinden*, in this position, becomes material for the *dalang*'s exploitation with his various words. In other words, the *sinden*'s body is completely "exploited" in a slapstick show with a *dalang* to get entertainment and laughs from the audience of the show. This is of course part of the suffering of a *sinden* in a *wayang kulit* show because she seems powerless to fight or win the battle for dominance.

Apart from the above, the *dalang* also sometimes utters verbal language that is unethical to be heard by both the audience and the *sinden* herself, who is essentially a woman. Words that

are a bit harsh, dirty, are often shown in *dalang* jokes with *sinden*. Of course, this is done so that the stage atmosphere is more fluid and cheerful, so that the audiences don't get sleepy. However, the audience's laughter turned out to be inflicting *sinden's* suffering. *Sinden* who experience something like this usually pretend to be immersed in the situation, as if they are contributing to the atmosphere to keep the audience entertained. She conceals feelings of sadness because she felt humiliated in public. She has received impolite body or verbal language, so that after the performance a *sinden* could cry at home because of the treatment she received on stage (Interview with Kinkin, March 16th, 2019). Of course, this incident was very worrying because she suffered for the *dalang's* power even while the audience laughed.

Based on the description above, the *dalang's* jokes with *sinden* are not only done with verbal words, but also are carried out using body language as a means of communication with the audience. The use of body gestures as a language of communication can be classified into the meaning of body language, although the meaning can contain abstract meanings, of course there will be various reasons for interpreting it (Bimantoro, 2005: 35). The body or verbal language used by the *puppeteer* to offend the *sinden's* physical appearance certainly gives rise to a negative interpretation of the *sinden*. The function of *sinden*, which originally had a musical role, has shifted to become a performance setting in order to achieve audience satisfaction in watching *wayang kulit*. Not only that, *sinden*, who seemed to be laughing on stage, turned out to be suffering because of the various words she received on stage. This is a form of symbolic violence carried out by puppeteers against *sinden* in the shadow puppet stage in Yogyakarta.



Picture 1. Sinden listens to the *dalang*'s instructions (Photo: Aris, 2019).

#### 4. Market Orientation as a Shaper of Change

As part of a culture that is easily changed, the existence of *wayang kulit* is not only static, but dynamic, continuing to follow the developments of the times it has passed. *Wayang kulit* experience various changes following the times and periods of their support. The artist's idealism has finally undergone changes in various aspects of performance in plays, working on musicals, and working on wayang, as well as how to work on the entertainment elements (Saepudin, 2016). These various changes were made as part of the artist's strategy to maintain their existence in the performance market. This change is a characteristic of a culture that ends with "order", namely leading to a process of "new order". This is also what causes the image of *sinden* to be ignored because it becomes entertainment material in the *limbukan* scene. This is the position of "new order" which is a process of change that continues without interruption. Culture finally appears "stable" and "strong", as well as flexible. *Sinden* as material for entertainment exploitation becomes legitimate,

commonplace, normal, no problem, in order to achieve audience satisfaction in enjoying the show. This is certainly a change and new order in today's global market world.

Cultural changes, especially new elements, experience a process of being accepted and rejected by cultural users. Acceptance and rejection of new elements will depend on the point of view from which people will see the new elements. Today's free market competition usually has an impact on changes in various aspects of life, including aspects of shadow puppet performances. Market demands are one of the factors causing the phenomenon of the *sinden* image to change at this time. Market demands are the basis for the acceptance of *sway* in *limbukan* as a new cultural element. What this means is that market tastes which are considered as culture are what encourage a *dalang* to change pre-existing traditional rules according to market needs.

However, not all *wayang kulit* performances experience a process of exploitation of *sinden*. Some *dalang* also place *sinden* in musical roles only. This is to make the function of *wayang kulit* performances as a guide so that the changes that are currently occurring, such as singing while standing and assisting seem to be considered a departure from existing traditions. It's just that the intensity is very little because it bears the consequences of being left behind by the show's audience because they are deemed not to follow market tastes.

Nowadays, it cannot be denied that the era has changed to meet the demands of people's tastes so that the *dalang* are finally willing to change the standards of previous traditions. The most important thing is that the performance that night was successful because it was able to fulfill the wishes of the audience and sponsors (customers). The important thing nowadays is how strategies are developed so that artists are able to maintain their existence in front of performance audiences with high selling points. The demands of market tastes sometimes make artists

forget that there are ethical and moral principles that must be upheld in order to maintain the level of artists and performers themselves (Interview with Titik, March 26th, 2019).

Market orientation means that audiences and artists only emphasize the function of art as entertainment. In fact, wayang actually has an educational function or character and moral development. Performing arts themselves have a role in conveying cultural values and embodying aesthetic-artistic norms that develop according to the times, and the region in which the form of performing arts grows and develops. A performing art is considered beautiful not only because of its ability to entertain a large audience, but it should be able to give a positive impression and message to the audience. It's just that all of these moral messages only have a small portion in today's *wayang kulit* shows. This is none other than because many *dalang* are more oriented towards market tastes so that the entertainment element takes priority over the moral message element. The slapstick in the *limbukan* scene is one of the results of works that are oriented towards market tastes with various consequences, including causing symbolic violence by the *dalang* against the *sinden*.

## 5. Unbalanced Capital

At first glance, the *dalang*'s slapstick with the *sinden* in the *limbukan* scene is a form of effort to equalize the *dalang* with the *sinden* in today's era. In this case, the *dalang* tries to no longer be the owner of full power but tries to be more fluid with the actors, including the *sinden*. However, in fact, the *puppeteer's* slapstick with *sinden* in the *limbukan* scene remains an arena for unequal struggle, giving rise to domination and even ending in symbolic violence and mental violence. This occurs because of the imbalance in capital ownership owned by the *dalang* and the *sinden*. A *dalang* usually has an established habits and arena of

puppetry, long experience, and may even be inherited, so that he has a variety of capital at his disposal; economic, cultural, social and even symbolic capital (Grenfell, 2010). As for *sinden*, generally they have quite a lot of cultural capital and the skills they have only. On the basis of ownership of this capital, it can be seen that the *sinden* in *wayang kulit* actually has a position dominated by the *dalang*. The *dalang* still has the power to determine, use, invite, dismiss, and even pay the *sinden* concerned. So, the power of the *dalang* is still stronger in this case.

Based on the above explanation, of course the *dalang*'s joke with the *sinden* in *limbukan* is an unequal struggle for legitimacy, giving rise to the impact of domination and symbolic violence. However, the *sinden* is in a powerless position to balance/fight the power owner in *wayang kulit*. This is of course very unlikely to win or even just to keep up. It takes more radical courage for a *sinden* if she wants to fight and have the same legitimacy as the *dalang* during the slapstick scene in the *limbukan* scene. In this case, the *sinden* must also try to have the same capital or at least not too far away from the *dalang* so that she has a position that is not too different so that the joke performed with the *dalang* feels balanced.

In Yogyakarta, the presence of *sinden* Elisha Orcarus Allaso (hereinafter referred to as Elisha) (Fitria et al., 2021) who is famous for her outspokenness has actually made the world of *wayang kulit* fresh. Shee is a phenomenal and brave *sinden* figure whose innocence matches the *dalang*'s slapstick on stage. Her presence on stage made the atmosphere fluid, passionate and cheerful because Elisha's figure seemed to be trying to match the chatter, jokes and even ridicule of the *dalang*. Ownership of capital is of course what makes Elisha able to balance the power of the *dalang* in the *limbukan* session. Apart from being able to sing, she is also a *dalang* as his capital. In fact, the figure of Elisha is a *sinden* who received higher education at S1 (under graduate), S2 (post graduate), and even S3 (doctorate program).

This is the cultural capital that Elisha has (Haryatmoko, 2016, 45). Of course, this ownership of capital makes Elisha able to balance and even compete with the *dalang* as group leader and even as his joke partner.

Another advantage is that the figure of Elisha is a *sinden* who is not a native Javanese but comes from Sulawesi, so her innocence, outspokenness, and even ignorance of the Javanese language is very understandable for Javanese people and is a blessing for her because it is the characteristic of her slapstick. Even though there are many wrong Javanese words, it turns out that *wayang kulit* activists and lovers in Yogyakarta don't take issue with it, let alone protest against it. This announcement turned out to be a blessing for Elisha because in the end she became a *sinden* figure who was loved by the audience with his outspoken jokes in the shadow puppet scene.

Elisha's situation will of course be a little different from most other native Javanese *sinden* who have been using Javanese language rules for a long time. A *sinden* who understands Javanese language rules will be a little awkward to be radical in countering the puppeteer's slapstick because she understands the function of Javanese language rules. This has the effect of making the joke look undone, a little stiff, and even seems forced. *Sinden* is like this because it is burdened by the meaning of Javanese words or language which are often used in slapstick performances. In fact, distorting the meaning of words from the real thing (misheard) is usually the capital of *dalang* and *sinden* for their slapstick scenes in *limbukan* scenes. This is of course different from a *sinden* who has full courage and tries to balance the babbling and jokes of the *dalang*. The joke that occurs certainly looks fluid, not stiff, complements each other and even overrides or contradicts the words of the *dalang* even though the language she uses is harsh language that is inappropriate for a puppeteer who is older. In this case, the professionalism of a *dalang* and *sinden* in the world of entertainment is very necessary. This is

a professional demand, a demand for market tastes that cannot be rejected because it follows public tastes, of course with the consequence of breaking the norms of existing traditions, both *wayang* traditions and Javanese language.

## 6. Slapstick and the Image of Sinden

As explained above, slapstick in contemporary *wayang kulit* performances has become a part of *wayang kulit* performances that cannot be changed, let alone eliminated. Slapstick continues to be created, maintained and reproduced by *dalang* to maintain its existence in this global market world. Even slapstick in *limbukan* can be said to be an icon in *wayang kulit* performances to increase the group's reputation in meeting market tastes. It's just that the delivery of slapstick in *limbukan* needs good packaging so that it can raise the image of *puppeteers* and even *sinden* in the world of *wayang*. Wiranata says:

Image can take the form of positive responses in the form of support, participation, active roles and other positive actions and negative responses in the form of rejection, hostility, hatred or other negative forms. The image itself will be attached to each individual and institution, positive or negative responses depend on the process of formation and the meaning of the target object of image formation. Also, everyone has the right to interpret their personal and institutional image (Wiranata, 2017: 8).

Women play a very important role in building character and morals in social life, so how can a *sinden* become an artistic subject who is able to give a positive aesthetic expression to the audience. The slapstick that is created should be able to show the quality of a *sinden*, not the other way around making *sinden* an object of exploitation/entertainment material which in the end can "degrade" the image of the *sinden* itself. However, the concept of Javanese women in terms of image, role and status has been regulated by culture. Being a Javanese woman means

being gentle, identical to the Javanese culture which is refined, quiet and calm, and upholds family values. (Krismawati, 2018, 316).

Image is a belief, idea and impression received by someone regarding a particular object. Image is something that is abstract because it is related to beliefs, ideas and impressions obtained from a particular object, whether perceived directly, through the five senses or obtaining information from a source. A person's image will emerge in accordance with the formation and meaning of every attitude, body and verbal language that is carried out or uttered. If it is related to the issue of the puppeteer's slapstick using unethical words thrown at him, then there will be an opinion that the image of the *sinden* is "degraded" during the *wayang kulit* performance.

A *sinden* should be able to provide a positive image through the quality of her voice. *Sinden*'s vocal chants accompanied by *wayang* actually convey moral messages both personally and universally. *Sinden* should play a role in actualizing oneself as an artist who provides positive aesthetic expression. As for a *dalang* as director in a *wayang kulit* performance, there needs to be a balance between ethical responsibility and idealism in leading the performance. How a *dalang* needs to maintain the existence of his art so that it remains impressive in the hearts of his fans to keep it entertaining but without ignoring existing ethics and morality. The *dalang* should consider how to create the performance, especially in the *limbukan* scene, by considering polite body or verbal language so that audience entertainment can be achieved while maintaining ethics and morality. What efforts are made to ensure that *wayang kulit* performances are not only a spectacle (entertainment) but also a guide (lesson) (Nurgiyantoro, 2011: 26).

*Wayang kulit* is one of the performing arts that is rich in noble values that should be preserved. *Wayang* has many good values which are reflected in the characters, the story, the artist,

and various other supporting elements. How each element of the story and characterization can be conveyed to the public by building a positive image of both the *dalang* and the *sinden*. Performance innovation in the *limbukan wayang kulit* scene is very important to follow market tastes, but how can this innovation uphold tradition and maintain the ethical and moral rules that exist in Javanese tradition in order to build a better national character? It is necessary to think about how the power and dominance possessed by the mastermind can operate openly, fluidly and not give rise to symbolic violence.

### C. Conclusion

The symbolic violence perpetrated by *puppeteers* against *pesinden* in *wayang kulit* is due to several factors, including: *dalang* has various capital; economic, relational, cultural and even symbolic capital; changing the function of *wayang kulit* from ritual to entertainment so that it prioritizes market orientation and unbalanced capital causes *sinden* to become a subdominant position controlled by the *mastermind*. The slapstick ultimately becomes a means of fighting over the power of the *puppeteer* as someone who is masculine against the *sinded* who plays a feminine position. The *dalang*'s practice of symbolic violence against the *sinden* is generally carried out through speech or words that can corner the *sinden*'s position while on the performance stage.

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