

Sinden-Pangreman Staging Style in Wayang Jek Dong Performance of Pandhawa Laras Group

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Abstract

Pandhawa Laras is a group engaged in the field of performing arts, especially East Javanese shadow puppetry (Jek Dong), which was founded on May 13, 2009. Pandhawa Laras means Pan "Panjak," Dha "Dalang," and Wa "Waranggana," and Laras means that these three aspects become a unity in a harmonious performance. Pandhawa Laras was founded when there was already an existence of Remo dance, both male Remo dance and female Remo dance, in shadow puppet shows. Through the years, the female Remo dance has shifted to the male Remo dance. The male Remo dance in the Jek Dong puppet show of the Pandhawa Laras group is danced by Sinden (Pangreman) with male-like makeup. This research will discuss the staging style of Sinden-Pangreman. The study of this research leads to the theory of staging style with a descriptive qualitative approach. By utilizing data collection techniques such as observation, interviews with relevant sources, literature study, and documentation, Furthermore, data analysis is carried out through data reduction, data presentation, and finally drawing conclusions or verifying valid data. Based on the research results of the Sinden-Pangreman staging style in the Jek Dong puppet show of Pandhawa Laras Group, the men's Remo dance in the Jek Dong puppet show is performed during the pre-event by the puppet Sinden, who also acts as Pangreman. This is evidenced by the presence of two wayang kulit Sinden who, before climbing the puppet stage, will dance the Remo putra dance in the Malangan style. The performance is accompanied by two kidungan sessions, with the second kidungan referred to as Kidungan Jula-juli. This research shows that in the Sinden-Pangreman staging style there are supporting elements in the actors in performing the Remo putra dance and as a wayang kulit sinden, including dance movement, dance style, kidungan, makeup, and the interaction process in the performance.

Keywords: *Kidungan, Staging Style, Sinden-Pangreman, Wayang Jek Dong.*

Citation :

Inggar Belzky Tosabila., & Purnomo, R. 2024. Article Writing Instructions. *MSJ: Majority Science Journal*, 2(3), 115-123.

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1. Introduction

Remo dance is one of the dances originating from East Java, Indonesia. East Java has diverse subethnic cultures. The diversity of cultures owned by each community illustrates the cultural characteristics of its society. The resulting cultural products are the creativity of the community and artists in the form of fair art as an expression of the cultural characteristics of the community. Each sub-ethnic culture in East Java has Remo dance with the characteristics of its region. Remo dance has experienced a very long journey until now; its existence is very much needed in the midst of the supporting community. The function of Remo dance is currently a traditional regional dance identity that is used in a series of mass ceremonial events and performances on the outskirts of villages or cities, especially in East Java. This is proven by the existence of several Remo dance styles, such as *Jombangan* style, *Malangan* style, *Surabayan* style, and *Madura* style. The Remo dance performance in the community has many versions in its presentation. Some of them are, namely, the Remo dance performance in Ludruk, Remo dance in a loose form presentation, and Remo dance *in wayang kulit*. Remo dance in shadow puppet (*wayang kulit*) shows has a presentation that is not only focused on movement techniques but also on creativity on stage in processing and creating flavors in its presentation to attract the audience (Wibisono 2015: 5,30).

Remo Dance is a traditional dance originating from East Java, Indonesia, and reflects the cultural diversity of the sub-ethnicities in the area. Each sub-ethnicity, such as *Jombangan*, *Malangan*, *Surabaya*, and *Madura*, has its own unique style of Remo Dance, showcasing their respective local characteristics. The dance has undergone a long evolution and now serves as



an important traditional dance identity in various mass ceremonial events in villages and cities. Performance versions of Remo Dance vary, including in ludruk-the traditional East Javanese theater that combines dance, music, and drama-as well as freelance presentations and in wayang kulit. In the context of wayang kulit, Remo Dance not only emphasizes movement techniques, but also creativity in creating an interesting atmosphere for the audience. The diversity and adaptation of Remo Dance shows how this dance remains relevant and respects tradition while innovating according to the times. In addition to Ludruk performances, Remo Putra dance is now also developing in various spheres of the performing arts community, one of which is the Wayang Jek Dong performance at the Pandhawa Laras Group in Sidoarjo with a display of Malangan-style Remo dance. Wayang Jek Dong is an East Javanese shadow puppet with a distribution area of Arek culture: Sidoarjo, Surabaya, Gresik, Lamongan, and Mojokerto. The spread of the Arek cultural area and this development then brought the existence of Remo Putra dance to a wider and more frequent performance with various types of events. Pandhawa Laras is a group engaged in the performing arts of shadow puppetry, especially East Java or Jek Dong since May 13, 2009, founded by Ki Toro (Subiyantoro), who has a background as an East Javanese traditional music artist from Jember. Pandhawa Laras means Panjak Dhalang Waranggana, and Laras means that the three-word combinations have a harmonious meaning in the performances that are shown to the general public. This group stands with various types of performing arts branches; in addition to Wayang Jek Dong, there is also *Kentrung* Panji Kelana and *Ethno-Contemporary* Gamelan, managed by Ki Toro. The term Jek Dong in Wayang Jek Dong, namely the word "Jek," is an expression of the sound of the puppeteer's *keprak*, which is kicked or a kind of banging on the puppet box using the puppeteer's foot so that the sound of "Jek" is often heard during the puppet show. While the word "Dong" has the meaning of a Gong blow on the wayang music accompaniment. The Remo dance presentation in the Wayang Jek Dong show is usually used for community celebrations, such as the independence stage, wedding celebrations, circumcisions, village cleanings, and *ruwatan*. This Remo dance presentation is performed as an opening dance or pre-event in a series of Wayang Jek Dong shows. The opening of Ludruk and Wayang Jek Dong performances is usually filled with Remo dance performances, both Remo in male style and female style.

The existence of female and male Remo dances as the opening of East Javanese puppet shows, or Wayang Jek Dong, functions as a dance of respect for the audience and guests present. The presentation phenomenon displayed by the Remo Putra dance in the East Javanese puppet show has differences with the presentation of Remo dance in Ludruk performances and the presentation of loose forms. Remo Putra dance in the Wayang Jek Dong show of Pandhawa Laras Group features Malangan style along with Malangan style Kidungan. The presentation of Remo Putra dance among the pangreman of Wayang Jek Dong is called Remo Putra dance in Malangan style. Remo Putra dance in Wayang Jek Dong performance is presented in two performances, the first for the opening as a welcome dance and the second, the presentation of pangreman as sinden chanting sindenan interacting with the audience. In Wayang Jek Dong performances, which are often staged by the Pandhawa Laras Group, the Remo Putra Dance features a distinctive Malangan style. The performance is complemented by Kidungan Malangan, a traditional chant that accompanies the dance, giving it an authentic local touch. Remo Putra Dance in the Wayang Jek Dong performance is presented on two different occasions. First, it is performed as an opening act, serving as a welcome dance to respectfully greet the audience and guests. Secondly, it appears as a pangreman, which is a part of the performance featuring sinden or traditional singers who interact with the audience through sindenan, or sinden singing, to add richness to the atmosphere and audience involvement.

The fundamental difference between Remo Putra dance in Wayang Jek Dong and Remo dance in ludruk lies in the presentation style and context. In ludruk, Remo dance is often presented with a looser approach, while in Wayang Jek Dong, the presentation is more formal and integrated with more structured musical and dramatic elements. This diversity in presentation shows how Remo dance adapts to various traditional performance forms, while still maintaining its essence and characteristics. The existence of Remo Putri and Putra dances

in Javanese wayang orang performances, especially in Wayang Jek Dong, has a significant role as a form of respect for the audience and guests present. Remo Putra dance, in the context of Wayang Jek Dong, is different in its presentation compared to Remo dance in Ludruk performances.

Although the performances performed have different ways of presentation, the roles of pangreman and sinden are related to each other. This is certainly interesting to study because the presentation of pangreman-sinden in Wayang Jek Dong performances has unique characteristics and is different from the presentation of pangreman in Ludruk performances or others. Based on the explanation of the background phenomenon and the reasons for interest in the material object and formal object, the researcher is interested in studying Remo dance in Wayang Jek Dong shows (East Java). The aspect of the research study focuses on the Sinden-Pangreman staging style in the Wayang Jek Dong performance.

2. Method

In this study, the researcher conducted data collection, analysis, and verification from empirical activities in the field. The data obtained related to the research object "Sinden-Pangreman Staging Style in the Wayang Jek Dong Performance by the Pandhawa Laras Group" in Sidoarjo uses a qualitative research approach. The required data sources for this research on Sinden-Pangreman Staging Style in the Wayang Jek Dong Performance by the Pandhawa Laras Group include written literature such as journals, articles, and relevant previous theses, books, and electronic media, as well as oral sources and documentation that can be discussed according to Soedarsono (2011:126). The analysis process involves the researcher collecting and organizing all data based on the focus or problem being addressed to reach a conclusion. Then, the data is reduced by selecting and sorting so that it can be presented. In qualitative research, data presentation most often uses descriptive text (Sugiyono 2017:249).

Inferences are drawn in the form of descriptions that previously the data was still not clear, so after data reduction and data presentation, the research results will become clear (Sugiyono 2017: 252). The use of source triangulation in this study is used as a need to check the data and associate the source with the data used in the study, with the hope that the data source can help researchers as a reference and comparison and associate the data source with the results of the research conducted by researchers. The use of source triangulation in this study is used for the purpose of checking data and linking sources with the data used in the study, with the hope that data sources can help researchers as a reference and comparison and linking data sources with the results of research conducted by researchers. Three sources of triangulation to support the validity of the research data on Sinden-Pangreman Staging Style in the Wayang Jek Dong Performance by the Pandhawa Laras Group are used according to Sugiyono (2017:274).

3. Results and Discussion

The Remo men's dance is performed by sinden-pangreman of Wayang Jek Dong of Pandhawa Laras group. Remo dance is presented at the beginning of the show before the performance of campur sari. With makeup and clothing resembling a man. Wayang Jek Dong shows are now starting to develop and have many series of performances before moving on to the puppet show. Some of these series include Remo Men's Dance by sinden-pangreman wayang kulit (Jek Dong), Campursari, and sometimes there is also a lawak show or a kind of comedy show on stage by certain groups that also appear. However, lawak is not always presented, and it is only optional from the stakeholder. Currently, the Wayang Jek Dong show by the Pandhawa Laras group features Remo men's dance and campur sari in its series of performances. The pangreman is also the sinden of wayang kulit, especially in East Java.

Staging style is a presentation of all the preparations behind the stage in a performance art for the audience. This means that a performer, artist, or pangreman who will be the executor in the presentation of a performance will go through a process for his appearance both individually and in groups and consider the conditions of the performance environment. The men's Remo dance staging style in the Wayang *Jek Dong* show series is

different from the Remo dance performance, which has been arranged in such a way by a person or agency with certain suits or quality rules both in makeup, costumes, body shape, dance style, and estimated performance time. Meanwhile, the staging style of *Sinden-Pangreman* in *Wayang Jek Dong* shows is more flexible in terms of time, make-up, and clothing and is not always fixed on certain standards of body movement quality. This certainly affects the staging style of *Sinden-Pangreman* differently from Remo dance performances on other stages and can be classified according to the presentation or style of each *Sinden-Pangreman*.

Sinden-Pangreman's staging style as Pangreman can be identified from the dance style they perform while dancing on stage. The staging style can be formed from previous pioneers who have learned, also influenced by Pangreman's personal style in dancing and responding on stage. The creation of a staging style in this performance is the development of Remo dance as it should be organized in a certain standard, then developed from the previous generation who built the characteristics of the performance that can now be enjoyed on the stage of folk performances identical to *Terob* to the next generation (hereditary). It becomes one of the factors of the staging style built by individual Sinden-Pangreman and the audience. The discussion can be related to Caturwati (2011: 243), who explains that the emergence of the most important problem in folk performing arts is the change between artists and the public that exceeds the limit. Remo dance, which is currently in a series of *Wayang Jek Dong* performances, is entertaining and relaxed. Soedarsono (1998: 108) classifies performing arts into a performance function as entertainment, which greatly affects the impression of the (audience).

The Pandhawa Laras group was originally formed when the existence of campur sari and male-style Remo dance was already widely presented in shadow puppet (*wayang kulit*) shows, for example in the *Wayang Jek Dong* art community using a version of the Malangan-style Remo Putra dance. The dance is performed by a woman who is decorated like a man. According to Sri Mulyani, interview, June 15, 2024, a style can be created according to the creativity of a dance stylist even though the movement framework already exists. For example, Remo dance, which until now has been taught in art education environments, studios, art communities, and so on. The existence and diversity of a group or community in the region can affect the style of dance. For example, Remo dance is currently taught in art education, studios, art communities, and so on. The existence and diversity of a group or community in the region can influence dance style. This is certainly because each trainer has a different style or way of teaching, so it does not rule out the possibility that the style can be created. Here is an example of the quality of Remo dance in art community education (dance studio):



Picture 1. An example of motion quality in dance studio education.
Source: Data Processing

Like the Remo dance performed by Sinden-Pangreman in the *Wayang Jek Dong* performance, the Pandhawa Laras Group has a style that has been formed from the expertise of the Sinden-Pangreman. The skills honed during the process of Sinden-Pangreman practicing using cassettes and being taught by someone until now can shape the character of the movements performed from stage to stage. The process teaches and becomes a habit (culture) that is ingrained from generation to generation. The following is an example of the quality of Remo dance movements performed by Sinden-Pangreman in the *Jek-Dong Wayang* performance:



Picture 2. An example of motion quality in a *Remo* dance performance on the Wayang *Jek Dong* stage.
(Lingga Organizer documentation, 2023)
Source: *Data Processing*

The same with art education, which has quality standards for the quality of dance techniques. A trainer or teacher who plays a role has a teaching style; it will become a habit that will shape the character of students. Dance styles in art education will be different from dance styles in folk performing arts groups or communities. Where both will indeed function as a performance, but in art education such as schools, campuses, studios, and so on, it does not require members (students) to be able to perform *Remo* dance as in the Wayang *Jek Dong* performance. Then the style is explained by Sumaryono (2011: 84) regarding the style, which is divided into two: 1). *Assertive Style*; 2). *Emblemic Style*. *Assertive style*, has an individual nature that contains cultural heritage in it as a reinforcement of individual identity. Although in the world of dance a dancer will find his own style in presenting a dish, he will still be coated by traditional cultural elements that freely emit his style of expression. *Emblemic style* is a style that is expressed with awareness for unity in a group that feels it has a common identity and is owned by the group.

Dance is a form of artistic presentation through body movement. The movements created and performed by a dancer or choreographer carry meaning, symbolism, or are simply abstract in their expression. Wibisono (2015:30) states that the *Remo* dance has accumulated a repertoire in its presentation. The movement patterns of dangdut music also add a new dimension to the *Remo* dance itself. For example, the more agile movements (*gecul feel*) are not random like those performed by dangdut enthusiasts but represent an adaptation of the dangdut dance style combined with traditional *Remo* dance movements. The presence of the *Remo* dance in the Wayang *Jek Dong* performance can enhance the overall experience. Movements in the dance, characterized by their clarity, precision, strength-weakness, and abruptness, reflect the dancer's inner quality (Wibisono 2015:57). The movements in the *Remo* dance, which evolve on stage, can be spontaneously executed and inspire the movement of body parts. These movements emerge when paying attention to the rhythm of the music (*kendangan*), which can introduce variations in movement, including pose, trajectory, hand techniques, and the height of the body.

In the performance of *Sinden-Pangreman* during the *Remo* dance with its *kidungan*, the chants include verses of goodwill as a form of respect and opening prayers for the audience. During the *kidungan*, in addition to traditional *gending* (songs), new creative *gending* or songs are also performed, accompanied by the Slendro or Pelog gamelan, whether created by other artists or composed by a particular group (Encyclopedia of Regional Music and Dance Arts 1986:261). The *kidungan* and *gending* presented in the *Remo Putra* dance performance on the Wayang *Jek Dong* stage by the Pandhawa Laras group each hold their own distinct position. The *kidungan* occurs twice during the *Remo* dance performance and is a necessary component. This requirement ensures that during the first *kidungan* (*kidungan wiled rangkep*), which serves as an opening salutation, it conveys implicit meanings and acts as a gesture of respect to welcome the audience to the stage area, with the rhythm slightly extended by the *Pangreman* while chanting the lyrics. The second *kidungan* in the Wayang *Jek Dong Remo* dance performance is called *kidungan jula-juli*, which is accompanied by additional *gending* or extra *gending* such as *Ricik-ricik Banyumasan*, performed as a duet by the *sinden-pangreman* and one of the male musicians to signal social interaction and invite the audience to engage on stage. This is interpreted as the beginning of interaction (*saweran*) in the *Remo* dance performance (Ki Toro interview, March 5, 2024).

*Mengayuh Bagya dumateng para rawuh sedaya, (*Gong)
Mangga pinarak langkung sekecho,
Amirsani kesenian Kula. (*Gong)*

In this opening *kidungan*, it can be chanted twice by one *Pangreman* and then twice again by the other *Pangreman*. It doesn't always have to be exactly two times; sometimes it might only be three times (rotations). The turn to perform the *kidungan* is usually agreed upon by both *Pangreman*, determining who will perform the *ngidung* twice and who will conclude it. The *kidungan* is performed twice during the Remo Putra dance; after the first *kidungan*, the performance moves into the *jogedan* section, which is followed by the second *kidungan*, known as *Kidungan Jula-juli*, which contains *wangsalan* or *parikan* (rhyming couplets). Here is an example of the lyrics from the second *kidungan* in the Remo Putra dance performance on the Wayang Jek Dong stage:

*Kembang mlathi kembang kenanga, di dhekek nak pinggir sumur
Amiwiti Kidungan kula, seni budaya Jawa Timur
Wis wayahe parak isuk, unine manuk pating kemruyuk
Golek ngelmu nganti kepethuk, digawe sangu lek tuwa mbesuk*

Makeup and costumes do make the dancer or performer experience a momentary change from the usual visual conditions to become more sparkling on stage in order to give the impression of amazement to the audience because makeup and clothing are one of the supporting factors in presenting a performance art. Rusinaingsih's opinion can be discussed in the male Remo dance danced by *Sinden-Pangreman* Wayang Jek Dong, who makes up according to the character of male dance styles and movements, and the clothes worn also depict a man. According to Harymawan (1998: 134), (Rusianingsih 2023: 39), makeup is an art that uses cosmetic materials that are used to realize the character of a cast or actor by giving a touch of makeup or change to the actor on the appropriate stage. If the performance of Remo Putra dance was originally presented with the emotional expression or skill of a *Sinden-Pangreman*, besides that, an artist is also deemed necessary to decorate himself as a form of respect for himself and the audience.

Make-up and costumes on *sinden* have also become mandatory and absolute things when the *pesinden* perform. Performing on stage, in addition to requiring expertise in the vocal field, also requires expertise in the fields of makeup and clothing. The makeup used by *sinden* is to give the impression of being beautiful and attractive and is supported by clothing that indicates that it is the charisma of a *sinden*.



Picture 3. Makeup and Fashion of Remo Putra Dance.
(Inggar documentation, 2023)
Source: *Data Processing*



Picture 4. Makeup and Fashion of Sinden in the Wayang Jek Dong Performance by the Pandhawa Laras Group. (Inggar documentation, 2023)
Source: Data Processing

The performance of Sinden-Pangreman when changing into *Sinden*, Lasri, and Novi (*Pangreman*) tends to sit more on both feet with a short chair. Both do not have certain specifications that make a difference on stage, especially during *Gara-gara* or *Limbukan*. This is because they function as seated sinden, but they play a big role in the Jek Dong puppet show. Both accompany the Wayang Jek Dong performance with *gendings* that are fairly difficult for beginners. During the gara-gara, if there is a request for a song that the other *sinden* cannot sing, then sometimes the puppeteer immediately gives the choice to one of the two, and the other sinden is usually asked to *mbeksa* or accompany by standing and dancing. Sinden-Dancer on and off stage (2011: 264) that Sinden are not just sitting and can play multiple roles. As in this study, Sinden can also be a Pangreman at the beginning of a wayang performance, but for other sinden (not Pangreman) they can stand and dance at certain times, or *Gara-gara* and *sinden* (as Pangreman) are prioritized to remain seated.

The existence of sinden and *karawitan* is the breath of the shadow puppet show. The sinden's vocals or voice support the atmosphere of the wayang kulit performance. Sindenan is a form of song that determines the harmony of the music. According to Prasetyo 2015:12, in the course of the sindenan rhythm by *waranggana* (pesinden), it is not bound by a steady tempo (beat), but at the end of the song sentence that is chanted is the accuracy of taste on kenong or kempul. In Prasetyo's understanding (2015:16), it is because the scene is presented when it is at the peak of *pathet wolu* or at the beginning of *pathet sanga*, which can be attached with various *gending* that are entertainment and informative. In relation to that, interaction can happen anywhere and anytime. Performing arts is one of the spaces that has many social opportunities, one of which is interaction. The scope of a performing arts group can blend into harmony because of an interaction carried out by artists or performers through their work.

This can be discussed with George Herbert Mead's Symbolic Interactionism theory translated by Hadi (2012: 104) that creating a performance art by an artist or art creator is interpreted as a stimulus with a symbol to interpret an art symbol that has been created. This means that the art symbols are created by artists who are not only based on interpreting their own uniqueness or advantages but refer to the interpretation of certain conditions where the performance will be communicated to the public (audience). During the performance of Remo Putra dance, the presentation is not only focused on the movements and how the pangreman dances them, but also on how a pangreman can bring the atmosphere of the community or audience into the dimension where the interaction occurs. To understand this, the action theory by Parson (Hadi 2012: 93) on performing arts related to society is a view that considers the creator as an active-creative actor taking action to determine ways and various alternatives to achieve the goals of the performing arts.



Picture 5. The Sinden is asked by the puppeteer to stand up and dance accompanied by the seated pesinden and musicians during the Gara-gara scene.
(Pandhawa Laras documentation, 2023)
Source: Data Processing



Picture 6. The Sinden-Pangreman performs kidung jula-juli as a greeting to the audience.
(Pandhawa Laras documentation, 2023)
Source: Data Processing

4. Conclusions

This research is based on the author's concern about the staging style of the Remo dance performed by the Sinden in the Wayang *Jek Dong* performance, specifically focusing on the Pandhawa Laras group. The Remo dance is known to have many versions depending on the region. The development of the Remo dance becomes more varied when it features pioneers with distinct movement styles and characteristics. The Remo dance in the Wayang *Jek Dong* performance (East Java) uses the Malangan style of Remo putra, which is also known as Remo Tembel, within the context of the Wayang *Jek Dong* performance. This represents an interaction between the artists and the community. The performance of the Remo dance has the same objectives as the general Remo dance, but the Remo dance in the Wayang *Jek Dong* performance has distinctive features compared to official stages. The Remo dance performed in the Wayang *Jek Dong* performance is danced by the Sinden (Pangreman). The *Sinden-Pangreman* performances in Wayang *Jek Dong* shows are indeed two different ones. The two performances are performed by the same person with different performances in terms of dress and appearance (makeup) but are still continuous with each other. As is the case, the Remo dance performance is served with *gending-gending* that are also sung during the Wayang *Jek Dong* performance.

This writing is expected by researchers as a form of appreciation for artists, folk performing arts, the reading public, fans, audiences, and connoisseurs as preservers of the nation's culture and disseminators of knowledge, and this writing is expected to be a view for further researchers to be more perfect. For people who are active in the field of performing arts and the younger generation, it is hoped that they can provide more space for their experiences in the world of performing arts so that it is preserved from time to time and provide creative input that can build performing arts. For researchers who are willing, want, and have curiosity about the performing arts, so that this research becomes something useful and provides knowledge about the performing arts, especially the male Remo dance in shadow puppets (*wayang kulit*) performances.

Thank-you note

Thank you to God, who has blessed the author with the presence of people who are very dear to the author. This research is dedicated to everyone who has helped and supported the author, especially family and parents, friends, and someone special who has always accompanied the author all this time. The author would also like to express gratitude to Surabaya State University, especially the Department of Sendratasik class of 2020.

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