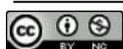


COMEDY OF CLOWNS IN WAYANG KULIT KELANTAN PERFORMANCESM. Dehghanharati^{1,*}, G. S. Yousof²¹PhD candidate of drama at cultural center of University Malaya- Kuala Lumpur- Malaysia²Professor, supervisor and researcher at cultural center of University Malaya- Kuala Lumpur- Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

Pak Dogol and Wak Long are the principle clowns in wayang kulit Kelantan (A form of Malay shadow puppet theater). The wayang kulit dalangs (puppeteer) believe that Pak Dogol is not a comic character due to his dignified background, while his companion Wak Long is mostly considered to be a clown who plays a comic role. However, in most wayang kulit performances both clowns have some comic scenes. Therefore, in this article the comic features of these clowns in wayang kulit performances are investigated. For this purpose, the comedy theories of Bergson are applied to four chosen performances, namely *Dewa Sayap Tunggal Descends the Earth*, *Missing Laksmana* (performed by Pak Rahim), *Independence Day* and *Dewek*. In brief, both Pak Dogol and Wak Long have some comic element in the performances, Wak Long more so than Pak Dogol. Most of his comic techniques are related to verbal comedy, since he does not care about hierarchy and his words and phrases are often unsuitable for the situations he finds himself in. In some cases, Wak Long likes to mock others, especially Pak Dogol, while Pak Dogol is tolerant of Wak Long's insults, further reinforcing the comedy. Furthermore, the fast movement of Wak Long's puppet makes his comic character stronger, while the slower movements of Pak Dogol's puppet provide a contrast. Generally, their comic features are classified as movement, situation and character comedy.

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1.1 INTRODUCTION

Wayang kulit Kelantan (or *wayang kulit Siam*) is a form of Malay shadow puppet theater. Traditionally, there were four forms of wayang kulit until around the mid-20th century in Malaysia—*wayang kulit Purwa*, *wayang kulit Melayu*, *wayang kulit Gedek* and wayang kulit Kelantan—the last of which has been active as a form of entertainment in its birthplace, the state of Kelantan, as well as in Terengganu and Pahang

There are two principle clowns puppet in wayang kulit Kelantan, which are called Pak Dogol and Wak Long (figure 1). Wayang kulit Kelantan is a form of Malay shadow play in Kelantan province, which is located in the North of Malaysia. Recently, wayang kulit Kelantan has rarely been performed in its birthplace of Kelantan and appears to be dying out. Pak Dogol is the master clown and Wak Long his companion. Mostly, they are presented together in wayang kulit Kelantan performances.



Fig.1. From left: Pak Dogol and Wak Long puppets and their shadows on the screen

Although both Pak Dogol and Wak Long are considered to be clowns, most Kelantan's dalangs (puppeteers) who were interviewed by the researchers of this article believe Pak Dogol is a dignified character and a high-level clown who is not comic, while his companion Wak Long is regarded as a comic character. However, in most wayang kulit performances which feature these clowns, both of them have some comic features and scenes. Therefore, this article is going to

study the comic features of both of these clowns. Most data in this research is based on observation and the aforementioned interviews with wayang kulit dalangs.

For the purpose of this research, three live performances were studied: “Dewa Sayap Tunggal Descends the Earth”, which was performed by Pak Yusuf at UITM (University Technology Mara at Shah Alam) in 2014; “Missing Laksmana”, performed by Pak Rahim in Kelantan in 2015; and “Independence Day”, performed by Pak Majid in Kelantan in 2015. In addition to the live performances, a recorded performance also forms part of this study. Entitled “Dewek”, it was performed by Pak Nasir at ASWARA (National Academy of Arts, Culture and Heritage) Kuala Lumpur in 2006. Comedy textual analysis in this research is based on the text of the “Dewek” performance.

Before undertaking analysis of the comic features of these clowns, some conventional methods used in the puppetry of the Pak Dogol and Wak Long characters must be explained. The first of these is the voices the dalang uses for the characters. There are two types of voice for Pak Dogol and Wak Long; Pak Dogol’s voice has a low, bass tone that is rough and dragging, while Wak Long possesses a swift, tenor speaking voice, giving a contrast in their voices and creating a more dramatic effect. Pak Yusuf mixes different types of comic techniques in his narration to make his audience laugh from the very beginning of his performance.

Besides the dalang’s voice, music is another effective element which helps to enhance the characters. According to Tan (2008) and Matusky (2011), a special song is played when Pak Dogol enters. This is called “Lagu Pak Dogol” (Pak Dogol’s Song). Regarding the pace of movement of Pak Dogol and Wak Long’s puppets during the performance, it should be noted that Pak Dogol mostly moves in slow motion. In his first appearance on screen, his puppet is firmly planted on the banana trunk to limit his movement, although it does increase as the performance progresses. Meanwhile, Wak Long’s puppet has a higher level of movement from the very beginning, starting with shaking hands. This signifies his impatience and constant need to interrupt. When both clowns appear on screen with the other puppets, Pak Dogol’s puppet is frequently seen behind Wak Long’s.

1.2 Bergson comedy theories

Given the clowning genre of Pak Dogol and Wak Long, Bergson's theory of comedy is applied in this research. Bergson's comic theory is derived from his article "Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic" (1914). In total, this article explains three kinds of comic element in drama and literature: 1- Comedy of manner. 2- Comedy of situation and 3- Comedy of character (Bergson, 1914).

What is common in these categories is the concept of absentmindedness, which can be seen in all the elements. An example is when someone stumbles in the street and others laugh at him. He later explains that "absentmindedness, indeed, is not perhaps the actual fountain-head of the comic, but surely it is contiguous to a certain stream of facts and fancies which flows straight from the fountain-head. It is situated, so to say, on one of the great natural watersheds of laughter" (Bergson, 1914). Absentmindedness is categorized and exemplified as follows:

- (a) Bergson explains that the more laughable will be the absentmindedness we have seen springing up and growing before our very eyes, with whose origin we are acquainted and whose life-history we can reconstruct;
- (b) The lack of tension and elasticity in movement can create comic effects;
- (c) A child-like dreamer, the best example being Don Quixote;
- (d) Vices such as moral kinks or crooked twists;
- (e) Automatism of acquired habits which is explained as "each one of us, content with paying attention to what affects the essentials of life, will, so far as the rest is concerned, give way to the easy automatism of acquired habits";
- (f) Ignoring oneself as elaborated, as the comic character is generally comic in proportion to his self-ignorance;
- (g) Social gesture in both the face and body;
- (h) Gracefulness;
- (i) Artificial machinery or anything similar to a puppet who is led by a puppeteer;
- (j) Error in body elements such as a bald head or dark skin;
- (k) Putting one on the other such as a soul in a body;
- (l) A person who is embarrassed by his body, such as one who is bashful for wearing a tied belt; and

(m) The effort of a soul (subject to no law of gravitation).

These are the ways in which a character can create comic qualities and moments of laughter. The following sections explore the ways in which comic qualities are created in selected performances.

1.3 Dewa Sayap Tunggal Descends to Earth

Pak Yousof performed this story during the second semester of the academic session of 2013/2014 at UITM theater faculty. This story narrates the origins of Pak Dogol and Wak Long. Pak Yousof borrowed the plot of this story from Pak Hamzah, who was a famous dalang in Kampung Kebakat in Kelantan. The performance begins with music and invocations that take around two minutes. In the first scene, the characters Dewi and Dewa appear on the screen. The Dewi character is presented by Laksmana's puppet and the Dewa character by Seri Rama's. It should be noted that in a wayang kulit performance, conventional puppets can be replaced by other ones.

The performance begins with Dewa's wish to return to heaven to meet his family. Dewi asks why he is in such a rush, and he replies that he wishes to reunite with them as soon as possible. Dewa bids Dewi farewell to accompanying music for two minutes. He promises not to stay there for too long, just two or three days. The dalang then swiftly shakes the pohon beringin around the screen as a symbol of changing between worlds. Dewa's family members, disguised as jinns, appear on the screen and converse with him. Since Dewa is very beautiful, they chase him everywhere and always foil his attempts to escape. Thus, in an effort to evade their attention, he decides to change himself into an ugly man. In one swift move, the dalang switches Dewa with Pak Dogol's puppet. Although Jin Anak Api recognizes him, he still calls him an ugly old man and continues chasing him.

Pak Dogol becomes furious with this situation and hides himself behind a piece of wood in the river. Jin Anak Api finds him again and, with the magic fire from his eye, burns the wood, revealing the hidden Pak Dogol. Due to the fire, Pak Dogol becomes black and decides to clean himself by a river. While washing, he wonders if he can use his dirt to create a human to be his servant. He attempts this and creates Wak Long, although the creation remains incomplete as he runs out of body dirt. Pak Dogol asks Wak Long for his name, to which he replies he has none. Thus, they decide his name over dinner. The music begins again with some ritualistic words and

movement, though the words are uttered in Kelantanese dialect and most of the audience are unable to understand them. They then leave the screen but suddenly Wak Long returns and starts singing in a funny way. At the end, the pohon beringin appears and closes the show.

1.3.1 Character Analysis

The most important performance element is the entrance point of Pak Dogol's puppet: he enters in disguise as Dewa, and the dalang shakes the puppet in a trance-like manner before switching it with Pak Dogol's. The quick change from a colorful to an ugly puppet creates a comic scene. Based on Bergson's theory, movement and form can create comedy. This comedy movement is classified as "growing before [the] eyes" and "effort of a soul", the effect of which is to make many audiences laugh. During the disguise process, the dalang uses some ritual sounds and music in a fast rhythm. After the appearance of Pak Dogol's puppet, the dalang applies the same movements of Dewa's puppet to that of the replacement.

The changing movement is missed by many of the audience, who are too pre-occupied with the music or are growing excited by witnessing such a dramatic shift in the appearance of the character. Dewa's puppet is handsome, colorful and fascinating. Another difference between them is that Dewa's has tenor voice and speaks in a smooth dialect, while Pak Dogol's voice is bass and coarse.



Fig.2. Moment of disguise

Around 13 seconds after Pak Dogol's puppet appears on stage, he meets a jinn and they kick each other. The jinn chases Pak Dogol, which is quite amusing in performance since Pak Dogol tries to pretend he is not Dewa. This reaction from Pak Dogol can be analyzed according to "self-

ignorance” as a movement comedy technique. After succeeding in running away, he stands in the center of the screen and talks to himself to try to find a solution. All the while, the dalang uses a comic tone resembling foolish speech to evoke laughter from the audience. During the soliloquy, Pak Dogol becomes worried and wonders why he is so ugly that his shop receives no customers. The reaction is perceived as the element of “a person embarrassed by his body” in Bergson’s theory. While in most of his encounters with the jinns Pak Dogol tries to uphold his dignity, some humble yet comic elements in his manner create amusing situations which contrast with his original character. Pak Dogol’s hiding from his family can be taken seriously since he is constantly escaping from a problem. While the dalang uses this process to create a funny chase scene, Pak Dogol still remains calm despite his worries. This chase scene is the same as the “child-like dreamer” in Bergson’s theory of movement comedy.

While trying to find a safe hiding place, Pak Dogol hides behind the pohon beringin puppet. The pohon beringin is a sign of nature and the universe, and is shown at the beginning of a performance.



Fig.3. Pak Dogol hiding behind the Pohon Beringin

In some cases, especially in the hiding scene, Pak Dogol’s long nose forms an erotic figure beside the ugly shape of his belly. However, Pak Yousof denies attempting to create such an impression. This comic scene can be referred to as “coincidence in our imagination” and “a person embarrassed by his body” in Bergson’s theory.

As the story continues, Pak Dogol washes himself by a river and creates Wak Long in the process. Therefore, a new ugly character immediately appears on the screen, which is a scene of comic movement. This comedy element is referred to as “springing up and growing before our eyes” and “effort of a soul”. Furthermore, it can refer to a situation comedy element such as a “snowball situation”, as it emerges as the result of Pak Dogol’s disguise. Pak Dogol’s disguise is already a comic scene, and the subsequent appearance of Wak Long creates more comedy. The first conversation between Pak Dogol and Wak Long is important since it refers to an old belief about the origin of the latter, and his first word is “Hey” repeated three times. Pak Dogol warns him not to talk that way. This way of talking from Wak Long can be described using two comedy elements: first, it is a “moral kink”, because the audience knows about the divinity of Pak Dogol and when audiences see and hear this informal speech, they laugh at him. Moreover, Pak Dogol is shocked by Wak Long’s manner of speech. Second is the “repetition element” in situation comedy, because Wak Long repeats this word three times. Of course, the verbal proficiency of Pak Yousof makes the scene funnier. Wak Long’s answer shows his desire to possess a name.



Fig.4. First meeting between Pak Dogol and Wak Long

Wak Long is already a servant of Pak Dogol. Most of the audience already knows what he is called, even before Pak Dogol mentions that they are going home to find him a name, leaving the story open-ended without actually announcing one.

1.4 Independence Day

As the title indicates, this story was performed on Malaysia's independence day or Hari Merdeka on 31st August 2013 by dalang Mohamad Nizam Othman in Kota Raya, Kelantan. This story begins in a country called Tanah Jawa, whose king is Seri Rama. One day, the prince, Lakjuna, asks his permission to leave the palace to celebrate Tanah Jawa's independence day with Pak Dogol and Wak Long. After Seri Rama agrees, they head to a place called Kuala Kerai. During their journey, they meet people and ask how their life is in this country. They then continue their journey with Said and Samad to the celebration venue, filled with happiness and enthusiasm.

At the same time, there is another country called Gerta Pura that is ruled by a strong king named Sang Singit Irabaung. He summons his army and all his ministers, and orders an attack on Tanah Jawa. All of Gerta Pura's army then march towards Tanah Jawa. During the journey, the army meet Lakjuna, Wak Long and PakDogol. Lakjuna asks them about their reason for going to Tanah Jawa, to which they relate their king's orders to attack the country with the end result of expanding Gerta Pura's territory.

Wak Long advises the army and, later, their king to cancel their attack on Tanah Jawa. Lakjuna, Wak Long and PakDogol happily continue their journey to celebrate their independence day. The moral of this story is how war does not benefit any country or its people. This story also delivers elements of comedy and advises younger audience members to appreciate the true meaning of independence. There is a dikir barat song (a traditional music of Kelantan) played during the performance to attract the audience's attention. Its lyrics contain the themes of peace, comic spirit and nationality. To cheer up the audience for independence day, the dalang tries to create funny situations among the characters, especially Pak Dogol, Wak Long, Said and Samad.

1.4.1 Character Analysis

Since this performance was carried out for a private event, the dalang makes a special effort to satisfy his patrons. Dalangs usually evaluate their performances based on the satisfaction of the audience. In this story, most of the clowns and jokers are present from the beginning, when the two clowns appear on the screen beside the pohon beringin.



Fig.5. Pak Dogol and Wak Long figures at the beginning of the performance

They begin talking about their next journey until Wak Long talks about avoiding this tripto remain faithful to his beloved, since he has a talent of attracting admirers. Wak Long's puppet depicts his excuses and his disobeying of Seri Rama's orders by constantly staying next to the pohon beringin. His struggle is classified as having a "tension and elastic" element of movement comedy, which creates comic qualities. He strongly insists on his unwillingness for another important mission, though he ultimately agreeesto go on the journey.

Continuing their journey, they meet some people and ask them about their problems and challenges in this land. In this scene, Lakjuna's puppet stays between those of Pak Dogol and Wak Long, as in most performances Pak Dogol and Wak Long follow their master. However, they are servants and must guard their master so Wak Long's puppet is positioned before Pak Dogol's because Pak Dogol is his master and should support him. Also, Wak Long mostly has the role of talking and communicating with people on behalf of the group. The puppets of Said and Samad, who are also known as clowns, are positioned before Wak Long's puppet, and they represent the people. Lakjuna's puppet stands between the four clowns. Here, the dalang's skill is extremely significant since four different clown voices are used. The mood is humourous and endearing. Later, Said and Samad accompany Wak Long and Pak Dogol to gather some information. This consensus between Pak Dogol, Wak Long, Said and Samad refers to an element of comedy of character called "isolation". However, they all leave for an important mission despite holding foolish ideas about the situation.

Pak Dogol and Wak Long perform their main role as consultants and establish good communication with people. They meet a villager whose character is depicted by a clown puppet. His big problem is that his two wives exiled him from the house, and he asks for advice on

managing both wives. Once he talks about his problem, Pak Dogol, Wak Long and the audience start laughing.



Fig.6. Talking with villagers

Wak Long and his companions proceed to advise the villager, who shows his appreciation and satisfaction by singing with a funny voice and dancing. In this comic scene, Pak Dogol and Wak Long are meddlers, and are referred to as creating a “mediator” element in the situation comedy. Moreover, their “distance effect to create comedy” is also an element of situation comedy. However, in Malay culture, it is common in some areas for a man to have multiple wives and this comic scene is familiar to the audience. In brief, both Pak Dogol and Wak Long show their competence in representing the Malay people, or the *rakyat*. Next, Wak Long appears on the screen and advises his people to pay attention to their culture as the best solution for human problems. He gives his advice like a moral lecturer, which contrasts with his own character, creating more humour. This comic scene can be classified as “mechanical behavior” in movement comedy.

During the journey, they later encounter the army marching to invade Seri Rama’s kingdom, though the most interesting thing is that they do not have any specific reason for their invasion, confusing Pak Dogol, Wak Long and Lakjuna.



Fig.7. Talking with commanders

In order to convince them of their illogical behavior, Wak Long compares their decision with Israel's invasion of Palestine, as many Malaysians are against the Israeli occupation. With this reasoning, they are convinced to change their decision. The situation is related to the comic element of "distance effect to create comedy", and many audiences laugh at this reasoning.

1.5 Laksmana is Chased

This story was performed by Pak Rahim (Hamzah's son) in Wakaf Baru Tumpat, Kelantan. The story begins when Pari, who should never be involved with a human, goes on a journey to Gunung to find a future human husband. As she is walking, she meets Gergasi Putih (White Giant) at a cave. She requests him to help find her a suitable husband. After Gergasi Putih performs a soothsaying ritual, he informs her that Laksmana is the best man to be her husband. However, he tells her that she must do something to chase Laksmana away from Seri Rama's palace because Seri Rama will never consent to their relationship. With this knowledge, Pari begins her journey to find Laksmana. The destination is far away so Pari changes herself into a bird and flies there.

Upon arrival, Pari uses a perfume to attract all the people and make it easier for her to enter the palace. Pari finds Laksmana sleeping in his bedroom chamber. Again she transforms herself, this time turning into a white mouse and climbing onto Laksmana's body. Laksmana loses his memories and his body is controlled by Pari. Pari uses this control to make Laksmana become attracted to Siti Dewi. Laksmana searches for Siti Dewi and asks her to marry him. Siti Dewi

becomes angry at Laksmana and relates the incident to Seri Rama, who becomes furious with Laksmana. Wak Long tries to block Seri Rama from attacking Laksmana, causing Seri Rama to become angry with him as well. Pak Dogol tries to advise Seri Rama, but the king decides to exile Laksmana and Wak Long from the palace and the country.

Laksmana and Wak Long leave and go to the forest, while Pak Dogol remains in the palace with Seri Rama. However, Pak Dogol knows that Seri Rama's anger is temporary. Once Laksmana leaves, Seri Rama becomes lonely and sends Pak Dogol to find him. Pak Dogol finds Laksmana and Wak Long in the forest and invites them to come back. Meanwhile, before Pak Dogol arrives, Laksmana discovers that he was tricked by Pari.

1.5.1 Character Analysis

Pak Dogol and Wak Long's puppets appear after Pari disguises herself as a white mouse and enters Laksmana's body. When Seri Rama calls them, their puppets appear in a standing position with Wak Long in front of Pak Dogol. Before seeing Seri Rama, they argue about what happened in the palace. Wak Long scolds Pak Dogol for mocking him by repeating what he says. This is because Wak Long wants to become as close to Seri Rama as Pak Dogol is, even changing to a more bass voice to emulate his creator. Here, the dalang's skill is highly important. He should deliver Wak Long's voice in a way that the audience completely understands is not actually that of Pak Dogol, but is Wak Long's imitation. The characters' comic features appear as "comic parody" and "humor" in situation comedy.



Fig.8. Pak Dogol and Wak Long in the Palace

In one scene, Pak Dogol tries to prevent an argument but Wak Long becomes humorously aggressive. Pak Dogol whispers something in Wak Long's ear and he keeps calm. They then go before Seri Rama, who wants them to find a solution for Laksmana's problem. When Wak Long mentions some embarrassing details, Seri Rama attacks him and Wak Long immediately pretends to faint, falling down and not speaking. Both Seri Rama and Pak Dogol become worried when Wak Long mumbles incoherently. This creates a strong comic scene and makes the audience laugh. Due to his misbehavior, Wak Long is exiled with Laksmana from the palace. However, Pak Dogol stays under Seri Rama's shelter, though he wants to see Wak Long again. This desire causes the return of Wak Long and Laksmana to the palace.

1.6 Dewek

Dewek is performed in the Kelantanese dialect of Bahasa Melayu (Malay Language), and for this research was translated into English by Ruby Jusoh, a Kelantanese lady who lives in Kuala Lumpur. Seri Rama decides to prepare his son, Lak Juntan, to become a knowledgeable person as the next king of his land. Since it is difficult to find a good teacher in the land, he decides to send him on a journey to learn from the world. Before his journey, he completely changes his son's physical and mental states. He also employs Pak Dogol to use his extraordinary power to reform Lak Juntan into a new person named Dewek. Initially, Dewek speaks very unclearly and Pak Dogol is the only person who understands him; this makes for comic scenes in which Pak Dogol acts as Dewek's interpreter to Seri Rama.

Seri Rama sends Dewek with Wak Long and Wak Yah (two clowns) on a journey to find a good teacher and acquire knowledge. He also gives his son a magic stick to use in times of danger. Much of this journey is portrayed as a comical adventure since Dewek speaks very unclearly and Wak Long and Wak Yah exchange comical remarks all the time. They eventually reach the city of GuaBarasap. This city suffers from a major problem: an enormous bird flies into the city and kills people. As a result, the city's king is looking for someone to kill the bird. Upon seeing them, the king requests Pak Long, Wak Yah and Dewek's help, and promises his daughter's hand in marriage should they succeed. This offer is met with laughter and mockery. However, Pak Long, Wak Yah and Dewek are unable to kill the bird and they ask for Hanuman's help. They ultimately kill the bird using the magic stick and go to the king's palace for the reward. However, the king and his vizier have changed their minds about their reward and, instead, decide to kill

them and take the magic stick in order to be able to fight and kill Seri Rama. They steal the magic stick and feed Dewek to a giant snake while Wak Long and Wak Yuh are fed to two giants.

With the help of Pak Dogol and his acquaintances, Said and Samad, they form a funny and interesting plan to save these their comrades and to return the magic stick. Said and Samad change their appearances using wigs and go to the king's house as servants, managing to steal the magic stick while Pak Dogol, with the help of Hanuman, saves Wak Long and Wak Yoh.

1.7 Character Analysis

The general structure of the story is based on the comic elements personified through the characters of the two clowns, Pak Dogol and Wak Long. Both are portrayed as comic characters in this story, though more in "situation and word" than "movement and form". The story is told in a linear manner, beginning in the court of Seri Rama, and explores the theme of a journey to find their true self. Like many other traditional stories, one theme in this story is Dewek's intention to find himself, although many other social sub-themes can be seen throughout the dialogue.

There are both major and minor characters in the story such as Seri Rama, Dewek, Wak Yah and Patih Derma Wigara, though the focus is on Pak Dogol and Wak Long and the way they are presented as being functionally different compared to other *cerita-cerita ranting*. Both of these characters help enormously with the creation of comical effects in the story. According to Bergson, Pak Dogol's character can be further analyzed based on "form and behavior" as well as "situation and word". On the other hand, Wak Long's comedy is more in his character, as well as his behavior and words in different comic situations. When Wak Long first sees Dewek, he asks Seri Rama if he has another wife who bore him a new child; this shows his naïve nature in asking questions that seem silly. The full analysis of the two clowns based on Bergson's theories is as follows:

For Bergson, there is always a priority of movement over the things that move; the thing that moves is an abstraction from the movement. That means the action itself is important simply because it is presenting something. In characterizing Pak Dogol (PD), movement creates the most comic effects. The first command that Pak Dogol goes through by the command of Seri Rama (SR) is when he is asked to use his supernatural power to change Seri Rama's son, Lak Juntan

(LJ), into an ugly person. However, his supernatural power is usually used to create something better and more beautiful and this lack of harmony creates comic effects:

PD – When can I perform your command, my King?

SR – Not in front of me.

PD – My Prince, I wish you no harm. I am only performing my royal command.

LJ – It is alright. Even if I lose my memories, I embrace my fate.

PD – Your Majesty, I shall now change the form of the Prince before you.

Dalang – Pak Dogol casts his spell on Prince Lak Juntan to change his physical form and also his memories.

This is the beginning of introducing Pak Dogol as a comic character but, as Bergson discusses, comedy can be created by characters who are embarrassed by their bodies, and Pak Dogol is a good example of such a character.

The next element in the case of comedy of form and movement is the mediator. Bergson uses this element not only for marriage proposal, but also for solving a problem between two people. The first example is between Sri Rama and Dewek, in which Pak Dogol wants to teach Dewek how to correctly bow in front of his father:

PD – You have to bow to him. He is a king. His name is King Seri Rama, ruler of this country.

DW – Have to bow?

PD – Yes, bow.

DW – How do I bow to him?

PD – Put your hands together and lift them to your forehead and bow.

DW – Can't I lift my hands like this? (Carelessly lifts his hands over his head)

PD – Cannot! This kid... what nonsense! Bow before him with your hands to your face.

DW – Harap ampunnnnnn beribu ampunnnnnnnnn (terms said by the Malay ruler’s subject to the ruler, which literally means ‘begging for your thousands of forgiveness’) *DW delivers the words in a supremely funny voice*

The next example is the disguising of Said and Samad, so that they can go to the kingdom of Gua Berasap to take the magic stick:

PD – You must obtain the magical stick from Princess Mayang Sari, Princess of Gua Berasap.

SD – Who?

PD – You.

SD – What if I die or go crazy? I don’t want to go crazy.

PD – You go buy a wig, wear a baju kurung or dress and pretend to be a lady.

SD – Oh, like that... can!

SM – What about me?

There are plenty of incidences in the story in which Pak Dogol is presented as a comic character through his words. He connotatively refers to some contemporary issues, like when he jokingly mentions that to acquire knowledge it is better to go to Akademi Seni Kebangsaan although he knows what Dewek is trying to find cannot be found there: “There are many types of knowledge. If the knowledge is about culture, dance and traditional dances, you can go to the Akademi Seni Kebangsaan”. There are also references to his mindset on marriage, such as in the scene where he is trying to understand Dewek’s reason for not being married yet. He ends by saying, “Yes, married. Real marriage, not the fake pretend-pretend ones”, which reveals his understanding on the true ideal of marriage.

Moreover, in the scene where Pak Dogol asks Said (SD) and Samad (SM) to pretend to be husband and wife in order to penetrate the palace and steal the magic stick despite both being men, the exchange creates a very witty scene:

PD – I thought I heard a fly. Samad, you go and pretend you are Said’s husband. As if the two of you are husband and wife.

SM – Said is a man!

PD – Only for pretence. Seri Rama, please retire to your bedchamber. I'll discuss these matters with Said and Samad.

SM – Is Said pretty enough to be my wife?

SD – (dressed like a woman)

SM – Aik, if like this... I am willing to be a real husband. Hahaha.

PD – Cannot, Samad. That is Said, not a lady. Both of you go to the kingdom and pretend to find work. Just say that you wish to be a farmer, planter.

SM – Then, my wife?

PD – Ask your wife to be kind and helpful to the Princess. Then, she can steal the magical stick.

SM – Darling?

SD – Darling, my foot! This is only pretense, you stupid!

SM – Pak Dogol is very clever. I thought his stomach is full of useless things, turns out it is full of knowledge.

SD – Samad?

SM – Yes?

SD – You need to promise. When we are in the kingdom, we must sleep separately. I don't want to sleep with you either.

SM – Of course, of course.

SD – Hopefully, my wig doesn't fall down. Why is it so pretty? I should consider dressing like this all the time.

SM – Said, Said...

SD – Don't call me Said. Call me Siti.

SM – Hahaha. What about me?

SD – Just call Samad.

They enter the palace.

One of the main comic scenes in this story is when Pak Dogol requests Hanuman's son(PR) for his saliva to gain power and fight a serpent. While Pak Dogol refers to himself again as an old man, he thinks, "It is better if I seek help from PR, I want to give the divine saliva I've obtained earlier" before he obtains and drinks PR's saliva.

PR – I do feel stronger now.

PD – However, the portion is not enough.

PR – So?

PD – If you really want to kill the monster cobra, you must swallow my saliva.

PR – What? It is smelly!

PD – You must try.

PR – What is the magic in your saliva?

PD – Just open your mouth. If you truly want to save your family.

PR – Okay, just spit towards me.

Pak Dogol reads a spell before spitting at PR. PR's strength then becomes almost invincible. The Prince then heads towards the mountain where Dewek is battling the serpent. PR meets with Hanuman, who is coincidentally also in the jungle, on his way there.

As mentioned earlier, one of the main functions of Pak Dogol is his role as a meddler. The notion of being a go-between is what Bergson means as a way to create comedy. Bergson explains that "if you reintroduce the idea of absentmindedness, which acts as a go-between, you will see this profound comic element uniting with the most superficial type".

From the very beginning, Pak Dogol is called to stay between Seri Rama and his son and to use his supernatural power to reinvent Lak Juntan. As the story progresses, any scene dedicated to him is full of his advice and problem-solving skills.

PD – I am here, Your Majesty.

SR – Pak Dogol, I hereby command you to change the form of Prince Lak Juntan.

PD – I am listening, Your Majesty.

SR – Royal Nanny, hear me.

PD – Yes, Your Majesty.

SR – I wish the prince could be more aware of the world. It is my least wish that he grows up to be arrogant and careless. I seek for your help, change his form – not just the physical form but also his memories.

PD – Your wish is my command.

SR – Do you hear the command, my prince?

LJ – Yes, I did. I will remember.

SR – Do you understand what I am trying to do? My command is clear and obvious. I wish to change your form for a reason. Do you wish to know? In this world, there is not one teacher who is unwilling to educate you. No spiritual leader unwilling to pass their knowledge to you. I am a great king, conquerer of 40 countries. I wish you to seek knowledge. I fear that my life would end and what is to happen to you? Life is unpredictable.

LJ – Then, it is up to you, dear father.

SR – I called upon you, Pak Dogol. Now you know I summon only the two of you today in court.

Although the majority of Pak Dogol's comic parts come from the comedy of movement, the character also makes use of situational comedy and wordplay. One element which is often used is repetition. Pak Dogol has two types of repetition (same word, different word and same idea), especially in his interactions with Dewek:

DW – What are all these beautiful things? (he says this in an undecipherable manner since he replaces the first syllable of every word with a pronunciation of 'rh').

PD – Come again?

DW – What are all these bbbbeautifullll things?

PD – Again?

DW – BBBeautiful, pghhhetty.

PD – Oh, beautiful and pretty.

DW – Are you giving me the stick?

SR – Yes, I am. Here is the stick.

DW – It is so pghetty.

SR – What?

DW – Pghetty.

PD – What?

DW – Pghetty.

PD – Oh, pretty.

DW – And then, this one side is red in colour. The other side is green.

And another example:

DW – Okay, so the stick – Your Majesty is giving it to me?

SR – Yes, I am giving it to you but you must guard the stick very carefully because even the original owner of the stick never used the stick before.

DW – Kindddd.

PD – Come again?

DW – Kind. Kinddd.

PD – Come again?

DW – This person is so silly. Kind!

PD – Oh, kind.

DW starts saying things that cannot be understood.

SR – What do I do? I cannot understand.

PD – Yes, yes, the King is kind.

In the last example, Pak Dogol enjoys repeatedly asking for clarification of Dewek's unclear words in order to create a funny scene. The next example is the repetition of a different word but the same subject:

DW – Yes, beautiful and pretty. Do you have a wife? (keeps repeating the same question in a manner PD cannot understand).

PD – Goodness sake! Even I have a problem understanding him!

DW – This silly man! Do you have a wife? Are you married?

PD – Oh, am I married?

DW – Yes! Are you married? Are you married?

PD – Oh, married.

DW – Yes, married. Real marriage, not the fake pretend-pretend ones.

PD – Oh, real marriage, not the fake one.

DW – Oh, you understand me!

PD – Not that I understand you very well but it's difficult to listen to you talking properly.

DW – Who is this?

PD – You have to bow to him. He is a king. His name is King Seri Rama, ruler of this country.

Pak Dogol does not have a wife, but he wants to continue this conversation as he enjoys hearing about marriage. Furthermore, the audience find Pak Dogol's mention of fake marriage very funny.

Wak Long is the master of speech and creating comedy through words. There are plenty of references in which Wak Long shows himself to be both an independent and comic character. The first encounter of Wak Long with Dewek is highly comical, as Wak Long is not only fascinated by his existence but confused as to whether Seri Rama has another wife.

WL – Whose son is this?

WY – You had a woman and you kept it a secret, did you, Seri Rama? Which woman did you marry to get this child?

WL – Can you look at my face before you joke around like that? I haven't eaten anything since morning.

WY – Try looking at your face and his face. Look the same!

WL – Yes, the face is similar.

SR – It is like this, Wak Yah. His name is Dewek.

WL – Dewek?

SR – Yes, Wak Yah.

WL – How strange... Looks like the world is at its end.

WY – What is it, Wak Long?

However, Wak Long can be very serious when people talk about his appearance. He does not like anyone describing his nose as duck-like. This anger, which is not in harmony with his characterization, creates comic effects. When Wak Long suggests killing Dewek in front of Seri Rama because Dewek fearlessly called him ugly, his seriousness and insistence that he is beautiful is very comical:

WL – How can he say that I'm an idiot?

DW – Want to fight? Fight me, fight me!

WL – This kid! Your Majesty, hold me, hold me!

SR – Why?

WL – I want to slap this kid!

DW – You want to slap me? Can you see my moves? Can you? Can you?

WL – What is that?

DW – This is what I called my Nose-cutting steps!

WL – To cut people’s noses?

DW – Yes, to cut people’s noses. Because your nose is so ugly.

WL – This kid! Your Majesty, please send other attendants to accompany this kid. Since little, I have never met anyone who dares to insult my nose. Other people told me that my nose is beautiful.

DW – Beautiful?

WL – Yes!

DW – Which part of it is beautiful? Nobody on earth has a nose like you!

WL – Nose like what?

DW – Nose like a duck!

WL – Damn you!

SR – What is the matter, Wak Long?

WL – He said that my nose is like a duck. Do you think my nose is like a duck, Your Majesty?

SR – It is like this... it is quite funny. Go take a mirror.

WL – It is alright.

SR – Yes. You must know I have advised him – must help the needy, must assist the poor. Wak Long, you must bring as many amenities as you can.

WL – Yes, Your Majesty. Thank you. (Proceeds to take the amenities)

There are other scenes where Wak Long speaks like Dewek without having the desire to do so despite nursing Dewek’s back pain (Bergson’s notion of absentmindedness). He also once mentions that he is so afraid of ghosts that the last time he watched a ghost in the cinema, he urinated in his pants.

One of the most comical scenes is when Wak Long is chased by a tiger but starts talking about Chinese New Year tangerines instead:

WL – Now it is only you and me who are left. I will go insane today, it seems. Usually I can ask Wak Yah if I can't understand him. A tiger!

WY – What? A tiger? (Jumps in fear)

WL - Were you pretending to be dead?

WY – If it is tangerine, I am not scared. If it is tiger, I am scared. (Tangerine – limau is similar to tiger – harimau).

WL – During the last Chinese New Year, did you take any boxes of tangerines from the Chinese schools?

WY – Yes. I took two boxes.

Or the time that their conversation about Dewek's way of talking ends up with farting:

WL – It's okay. You can sit under my armpit. (This is a Malay idiom which means being very near and attached to someone).

DW – I don't want to. Your armpit is smelly!

WL – I've put deodorant on already! Four times a day. Sit here!

DW – Smelly!

WL – You smell it?

DW – So smelly!

WL – Wak Yah, you want to try a new perfume?

PDW – Excuse me, I wish to ask all of you a question.

WL – Sit behind me, Dewek. (He turns to face Patih Derma Wigara).

DW – Don'tttt faghtttt when I sitttt behind you.

WL – What?

DW – Don'ttttt fart.

WL – Oh, you don't want me to fart?

DW – Yes, don't fart. If you fart, it is going to be smeeellyyyy.

WL – Worry not! I am not going to fart.

Dewek's story has more room for Wak Long to be seen as an independent character. He acts most of the scenes without the presence of Pak Dogol, and the comic features of his character are noticed without being in the shadow of the other puppet.

1.8 SUMMARY

Pak Dogol and Wak Long are well-known clown characters who are also known to be venerated in the opinion of both the dalangs and the audience. However, the comic elements used in their characterization are not in contrast with this veneration. The characters have high levels of wisdom when it comes to solving problems. Although they are the servants of Seri Rama, it seems that their attempts to solve problems are not only to follow his orders but also to follow their own nature. Moreover, much of the funniest dialogue is performed when Pak Dogol and Wak Long talk to each other. The comic moments in the scenes containing Pak Dogol and Wak Long are credited more to the latter as he is the one whose humor makes the audiences laugh. Pak Dogol's comic scenes mostly happen in situation comedy, which is mostly created based on the effort of soul, his bodily embarrassment and the distance effect. Furthermore, the grotesque body shape of Pak Dogol reinforces the comic situation.

In performances, Wak Long has more comic scenes than Pak Dogol, which include the comedy of situation, movement and character. The most comic elements are "tension and elasticity, isolating, mediators, distance effect to create comedy, mechanical behavior, comic parody and humor" (Idenlou, 2009). Most of his comic techniques are related to verbal comedy, since he does not care about hierarchy and his words or phrases are unsuitable for the situations he finds himself in. In some cases, Wak Long likes to mock others, especially Pak Dogol, while Pak Dogol is tolerant of Wak Long's insults, further reinforcing the comedy. Furthermore, the fast movement of Wak Long's puppet makes the comic side of his character stronger, and the slower movements of Pak Dogol's puppet provide a nice contrast.

Wak Long mostly uses verbal humor. In the case of the aforementioned performances, Wak Long regularly performs the most entertaining scenes, such as when he calls Pak Dogol "big buttocks"

or “paunchy”, causing the audience to laugh. On the other hand, “in order to determine the correlation of different humor varieties, one must first empirically investigate these flavors in the general population” (Kaufman & Kozbelt, 2009, p. 3). It is clear that the globalized media enables people to enjoy the same humor. This is obvious in recent wayang performances. Therefore, it is quite difficult to distinguish the Malay comic trends in the comic scenes of wayang kulit. Due to globalization and the closeness of cultures, wayang kulit nowadays is more understandable for people around the world, but at the same time is losing its local flavor.

One comic function of the clown characters in wayang kulit is verbal comedy. The most significant humor is between Pak Dogol and Wak Long, and Pak Dogol’s reactions reinforce this feature. In brief, Wak Long provides the foundations for comedy and humor, while Pak Dogol is the comic booster and reinforcer.

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