

Representation of Javanese Women Symbolic Violence in Serial Movie Gadis Kretek

Trias Widha Andari ¹

Athika Dwi Wiji Utami ²

¹ Departement of Visual Communication Design, Nahdlatul Ulama Sidoarjo University, Jl. Lingkar Timur KM 5,5 Rangkah Kidul, Kec. Sidoarjo, Kabupaten Sidoarjo, Jawa Timur, 61234, Indonesia. E-mail: trias.dkv@unusida.ac.id

² Departement of Visual Communication Design, Nahdlatul Ulama Sidoarjo University, Jl. Lingkar Timur KM 5,5 Rangkah Kidul, Kec. Sidoarjo, Kabupaten Sidoarjo, Jawa Timur, 61234, Indonesia. E-mail: athika.dkv@unusida.ac.id

Abstract

The practice of symbolic violence is common in the social dynamics of society. Symbolic violence, according to Pierre Bourdieu, has different meaning from actual violence. Symbolic violence is caused by the subordination of an individual to an individual or other group that dominates. The analysis of symbolic violence is not in spite of the concept of habitus, arena, and the capital that was presented by Bourdieu. The study is discussed about symbolic violence to women who were represented by Serial Movie Gadis Kretek. This research uses a qualitative approach with a method of discourses analysis. Serial Movie Gadis Kretek main character, Dasiyah, is a representation of symbolic violence carried out in the social order of society. The result of this research is symbolic violence, in Serial Movie Gadis Kretek, starting from the smallest organization unit in the social structure, main family. Symbolic violence is prone in traditional patriarchal culture, believed by peoples, by means of the dominant role of men toward women.

Keywords

Gadis Kretek, symbolic violence, Javanese woman

Corresponding Author:

Trias Widha Andari

Email:

trias.dkv@unusida.ac.id

Article History:

Received: August 3, 2024

Accepted: December 5, 2024

Published: December 5, 2024

Publisher:

LPPM Institut Bisnis
dan Informatika
Kwik Kian Gie

Selection and Peer-review
under the responsibility of the
Editor Team of Jurnal
Komunikasi dan Bisnis.

 OPEN ACCESS

INTRODUCTION

This research discusses the representation of Pierre Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence in modern films which carry the theme of Javanese women's lives at the beginning of Indonesia's independence period. The discussion begins with theories regarding habitus, arena and capital which give rise to the concepts of domination and subordination in the realm of symbolic violence.

Bourdieu was an anthropologist and sociologist who was born in Denguin, a small village in France (Schirone, 2023). Bourdieu's interest in the world of sociology is related to his experience in 1956 while serving in the military in the French Commonwealth country, namely Algeria (Jenkins, 1992; Schirone, 2023). Therefore, some of Bourdieu's thoughts were influenced by his experiences while in Algeria (Krisdinanto, n.d.). Bourdieu conducted ethnographic research on the lives of Algerian people after the war of independence (Schirone, 2023), one of which was among Kabyle farmers in Mahgreb which resulted in the book *The Algarians* (Adib, 2012) and researched poor urban communities in other regions of Algeria (Jenkins, 1992).

Bourdieu has different thoughts from Weber and Durkheim who tend to separate individuals from structures. According to Weber, the agent influences the structure, whereas according to Durkheim, the structure influences the agent. Bourdieu put forward a theory that resolved this debate by arguing that structures and individuals have a dialectical relationship (Özpolat & Arap, 2023). This thinking underlies three concepts in social science, especially culture which are quite well known, namely habitus, field, and capital (Schirone, 2023; Siregar, 2016; Yang, 2023).

Bourdieu's thinking can be linked to culture reflected in the media. One of Bourdieu's works on media is entitled *Sur la television* or *On Television* (Agustin, 2016), although it is not specific to films such as those discussed in this article. Bourdieu criticized other sociologists at the beginning of the emergence of television who argued that television would become a mass communication medium, producing an undifferentiated mass (Harrison, 2022). According to Bourdieu, this statement is the same as underestimating people's ability to fight through their own efforts (Agustin, 2016).

Serial Movie *Gadis Kretek*, based on a novel with the same title, tells the story of the life of a woman named Dasiyah who lived in the 90s, several years after Indonesia became independent. The character of Dasiyah is played by a top Indonesian actress, namely Dian Sastro. Dasiyah is the first daughter of a kretek cigarette factory owner who lives amidst strong Javanese culture. At that time, the kretek cigarette industry was considered a field of work carried out by men, while women only played roles as workers in the industry. Dasiyah is a representation of the subordination of women with identity conflicts formed by norms that develop in society.

Based on the background that has been explained, this research discusses the symbolic violence experienced by Dasiyah in the Kretek Girl Film Series. Reading the meaning of the film uses the discourse analysis method by reading the communication messages visualized in several scenes.

METHODS

The type of approach used in this research is qualitative to describe the symbolic violence against Javanese women found in Serial Movie Gadis Kretek. The analytical method used is discourse analysis by reading the 'text' displayed in Serial Movie Gadis Kretek based on the context of Javanese women's lives.

The data collection technique in this research uses the visual analysis method found in Serial Movie Gadis Kretek. The film consists of five episodes which will be broadcast in 2023. The visualization that is the subject of analysis in this research is a scene that represents symbolic violence in the main character, namely Dasiyah.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Serial Movie Gadis Kretek

Serial Movie Gadis Kretek tells the story of a Javanese woman named Dasiyah who is the daughter of a leading cigarette businessman in City M. The story of Dasiyah or often referred to as Jeng Yah begins with an old man named Raja who asks his son, Lebas, to find a woman. named Jeng Yah. The storyline goes back to the 1990s where at that time, Jeng Yah and Raja were still young. Jeng Yah and Raja were a pair of lovers who experienced complicated life's problems due to social inequality, business competition, struggles over ambition, and the heated political atmosphere during the early days of Indonesian independence (Hakim et al., 2024).

Not only focusing on the love story of Jeng Yah and Raja, this film tells the story of the efforts of a woman who is underestimated in the kretek cigarette industry in Indonesia to find her identity. This film provides a lesson about the polemics of Javanese women who live in a strong patriarchal culture and their efforts to maintain their ambitions as successors to the family's cigarette kretek business.

Subordination of Javanese Women

A woman from the perspective of Javanese society should have four things, namely being able to be tolerant, surrendering to her nature, having a gentle and pure soul, and always being alert and accepting destiny from God (Nugroho, 2019). The Javanese female identity attached to Dasiyah in the film Kretek Girl makes her grow into an individual who accepts her nature as a child who is obedient to her parents (Hardiyanti & Nugraheni, 2018). In the context of Bourdieu's

thinking, the figure of Dasiyah represents how women are shaped by the values and norms that apply both from the family environment and society. Dasiyah's closed and gloomy nature cannot be separated from the teachings instilled in her family, which is classified as a respected family. The way Dasiyah looks and behaves seems to want to show that she is different from other women who come from the working class or what Bourdieu calls distinction, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Dasiyah in Serial Movie *Gadis Kretek* (Source: Netflix, 2023)



In the concept of habitus, different conditions of existence can change individual behavior systematically (Bourdieu, 1984). Dasiyah received different treatment from her father compared to her other siblings. Dasiyah, who has been involved in the kretek industry since childhood, has an interest in the cigarette production process. Dasiyah's father, who saw his daughter's potential, then began to give Dasiyah space, starting from her involvement in supplying tobacco raw materials, designing marketing strategies, to making kretek cigarette sauce.

Dasiyah fought in the arena of the traditional kretek cigarette industry in Indonesia in the 1990s by proving that she was able to mix kretek sauce with a distinctive taste. Dasiyah uses economic capital through her father's clove cigarette factory as the daughter of a factory owner. However, this economic capital does not necessarily mean that Dasiyah is free from being looked down upon as a Javanese woman. Dasiyah's abilities are often doubted by the men who work in the kretek cigarette industry, even by her father's employee.

Dasiyah was considered out of step with the 'normal' Javanese woman, even by her own mother (Hardiyanti & Nugraheni, 2018). However, the figures of the three men in the film, namely Dasiyah's father, Suraja, and Seno, actually give Dasiyah space to develop her abilities. Although in the end it was discovered that there were other interests behind the support of the three men. Dasiyah's father wants his clove cigarette factory to develop in the hands of his own descendants.

Meanwhile, Suraja, apart from wanting to win Dasiyah's heart, also has an interest in becoming a kretek cigarette entrepreneur. Seno, who gave Dasiyah the opportunity to mix kretek sauce after his father left him and after being betrayed by Suraja, had the desire to marry Dasiyah.

In Serial Movie *Gadis Kretek*, the distinction between social classes based on economic capital is clearly visible. One of the male characters named Soeraja, who is described as having no economic capital, initially did not receive approval to marry Dasiyah because he was considered poor and had a different social class from Dasiyah. However, Soeraja proved that he had high knowledge and education as cultural capital which made Dasiyah's parents ignore Soeraja's lack of economic capital.

Through Serial Movie *Gadis Kretek*, lessons can be learned that cultural capital has a dominant role and if used well can increase ownership of economic capital. Economic, cultural, social and symbolic capital influence each other and shape individual habitus (Piotrowska, 2019). Dasiyah, who has had high economic capital since childhood, was able to obtain a decent education and have an upper class lifestyle. On the other hand, Soeraja, who was provided with a wealth of cultural capital by his parents, was able to build good social relations so that he could improve his economic status and reputation. Capitalizing on Soeraja's intelligence and social relations, he was able to devise a strategy to control the kretek cigarette factory by marrying the factory owner's daughter so that ownership of the kretek cigarette factory could be passed on to him.

Serial Movie *Gadis Kretek* gain a positive response from the public and was widely discussed, especially on social media. Social media users, especially women, then flocked to create content about changes in behavior before and after watching Serial Movie *Gadis Kretek*. If we adapt Bourdieu's thoughts about arenas, Serial Movie *Gadis Kretek* can be categorized as a new arena that influences changes in attitudes internalized by those who watch the film.

Symbolic Violence on Javanese Working Women

Bourdieu wrote that patriarchy is something that is considered normal in society (Mussarofa, 2019). In this case, physical differences in gender can be seen, resulting in the emergence of symbolic violence by men against women, including in Indonesia, especially among Javanese women who live under male domination.

As a Javanese woman, Dasiyah's interest in kretek is considered to be contrary to her nature even though Dasiyah always wears Javanese women's attributes such as kebaya and jarit cloth. If we use Bourdieu's terms, Dasiyah is a heterodoxa that opposes male dominance (doxa) in its arena (Purwosautro & Maryanto, 2022). Dasiyah's opposition did not only come from men, but also from women, namely her mother and sister (orthodoxa) who believed that women should have expertise in domestic household work, not be involved in work outside the home.

Moreover, in the early days of Indonesian independence, the thinking of traditional Javanese society was still influenced by myths that had long developed.

The lives of the women in Serial Movie *Gadis Kretek* are a depiction of symbolic violence committed by men. Women are symbolized as helpless objects whose existence depends on men, both fathers and husbands. This helplessness is natural and seems to be done voluntarily. Javanese women in the film do not have room to develop according to their wishes. Women's lives at that time were filled with rules and norms that developed in society (Saptiyakananta et al., 2023).

Women workers in Serial Movie *Gadis Kretek* are depicted as cigarette 'rolling' workers who work in groups and are in a non-strategic position in the business. This work seems to imply that women are actually born to be patient, painstaking, thorough, and receive a meager salary. However, behind that, the position of rolling workers is one of the spearheads of traditional kretek cigarette production, because the neatness and speed possessed by female workers can improve the quality of the cigarette product itself. This job position is different from Dasiyah who wants herself to determine the taste of the cigarettes produced by her father. Dasiyah even saved her father from being cheated by a tobacco supplier who sent dried tobacco of a different type than the previous order. As a result of her foresight, Dasiyah received unpleasant words from a tobacco supplier who said that women should not get involved in the kretek cigarette industry.

Once it was said that Dasiyah carried out experiments on mixing kretek sauce in a special room secretly. Dasiyah's actions were discovered by the father and the sauce maker (male) who believed that if a woman entered the sauce room, something bad would happen. Dasiyah also received criticism, even the sauce room that Dasiyah entered had to be 'cleaned' using certain rituals. This action seems to exclude women's ability to work because they are deemed unfit to occupy equal positions, even superior to men.

Dasiyah fought back by proving that she was able to make kretek sauce that was superior to others. In the midst of the kretek industry crisis, Dasiyah's father finally had the courage to produce kretek cigarettes using Dasiyah's concocted sauce. Dasiyah's efforts have borne fruit, the kretek cigarettes produced with the sauce she mixes have many fans. Unfortunately, this fame did not last long, Dasiyah and her family received slander from fellow kretek cigarette business competitors which resulted in Dasiyah's father dying. Dasiyah was arrested and imprisoned for some time because she was considered a rebel.

When she was released from prison, Dasiyah came home to find her father's house and clove cigarette factory gone. It didn't stop there, Dasiyah was also abandoned by her lover, Suraja, who was caught in the deception of Dasiyah's father's kretek cigarette business competitor. Even Dasiyah's secret sauce recipe was stolen and produced on a large scale by Suraja. Some time later, Dasiyah's mother died, so Dasiyah lived alone with her younger sister. Seno, the son of a cigarette

businessman who is Dasiyah's father, secretly still has a crush on Dasiyah after their previous marriage was canceled. Seno also made a secret room equipped with equipment for making kretek sauce and promised to keep this a secret from other people. Dasiyah tried to remember the recipe for the sauce that had been stolen by Suraja, but repeatedly tried, the result still failed because Dasiyah's emotional condition had not been separated from the tragedy that befell her. Seno then proposed to Dasiyah and gave Dasiyah happiness. Dasiyah was finally able to make a special sauce using her own authentic recipe.

Based on this story, symbolic violence occurred when Dasiyah voluntarily accepted Seno's proposal which she had previously rejected. This acceptance cannot be separated from Seno's role which is considered to provide freedom of expression for Dasiyah, so Dasiyah exchanges it by being willing to married by Seno. The next conflict occurred when Seno died when Dasiyah was pregnant with their first child. Dasiyah seemed to have lost hope for the second time. Dasiyah then started spending hours a day mixing sauces and forgetting about her sadness.

The female figure described by Dasiyah seems to be helpless without her husband by her side. Dasiyah then accidentally meets Suraja again, who invites her to reunite and leave Suraja's wife and three children. However, Dasiyah never arrived on the promised day to meet Suraja because Dasiyah had died due to her illness.

The figure of Dasiyah in Serial Movie Gadis Kretek represent that Javanese woman's existence depends on a man. When unmarried, Javanese women depend on her father. After marriage, Javanese women depend on her husband. This submission is carried out of awareness of the position of men who are higher than women and is a representation of symbolic violence within the family sphere.

CONCLUSION

The concept of symbolic violence explained by Pierre Bourdieu can be used to analyze the occurrence of symbolic violence that occurs as a result of patriarchal practices in society. Javanese women occupy a position as a party dominated by men due to the differences in gender and social abilities that exist between the two. This is considered normal and common in society because it has been done for generations. Serial Movie Gadis Kretek is a representation of symbolic violence carried out in the social order of Javanese society. Symbolic violence, in this film, even occurs in the smallest organizational unit in the social structure, namely the family.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research was supported in part by the Institute for Research and Community Services at the Universitas Nahdlatul Ulama Sidoarjo, Indonesia. Researchers would like to thank to Visual Communication Design Department of Universitas Nahdlatul Ulama Sidoarjo.

REFERENCES

- Adib, M. (2012). Agen dan struktur dalam pandangan Pierre Bourdieu. *BioKultur*, 1(2), 91–110. <http://madib.blog.uniur.ac.id>
- Agustin, G. (Ed.). (2016). *New uses of Bourdieu in film and media studies*. Berghahn Books.
- Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste*. Harvard University Press.
- Hakim, L. N., Rosario, T. M., Farady Marta, R., & Panggabean, H. (2024). Wacana multimodalitas budaya: Tautan peran gender dan akomodasi komunikasi dalam film serial *Gadis Kretek*. *Jurnal Riset Komunikasi*, 7(1), 57–71.
- Hardiyanti, D., & Nugraheni, Y. (2018). A critical discourse analysis of gender discrimination on Ratih Kumala's *Gadis Kretek* novel. *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*, 184–189.
- Harrison, S. (2022). The radical ambiguity at the heart of Pierre Bourdieu's critique of journalism. *SN Social Sciences*, 2(9). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s43545-022-00485-7>
- Jenkins, R. (1992). *Key sociologists: Pierre Bourdieu*. Routledge.
- Krisdinanto, N. (n.d.). Pierre Bourdieu, sang juru damai. [No further publication details available].
- Mussarofa, I. (2019). Pemikiran Pierre Bourdieu tentang dominasi maskulin dan sumbangannya bagi agenda pengarusutamaan gender di Indonesia. *Kafa'ah Journal*, 9(1), 34–49. <http://kafaah.org/index.php/kafaah/index>
- Netflix. (2023). *Gadis Kretek*. <https://www.netflix.com/id/title/81476989>
- Nugroho, Y. E. (2019). Represi dan representasi perempuan Jawa dalam Serat Piwulang. *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Pascasarjana UNNES*, 950–961.
- Özpolat, G., & Arap, İ. (2023). A synthesis at the crossroads of sociological thought: Bourdieu's intellectual dance with Marx, Weber and Durkheim. *Sosyoloji Dergisi*, 46, 191–220. <https://doi.org/10.59572/sosder.1335308>
- Piotrowska, M. (2019). Pierre Bourdieu on art as social practice: The defence of the concept of the autonomous field of cultural production. *Art Inquiry*, 21, 69–83. <https://doi.org/10.26485/AI/2019/21/5>
- Purwosautro, S., & Maryanto. (2022). Analisis konstruksi kekerasan sosial menurut pemikiran Pierre-Felix Bourdieu. *Majalah Lontar*, 34(2), 55–66.
- Saptiyakananta, D., Fiona, E., & Martshelia, N. (2023). Kajian feminisme dan nilai-nilai pendidikan dalam novel *Gadis Kretek* karya Ratih Kumala. *Journal of Creative Student Research (JCSR)*, 1(6), 10–18.
- Schirone, M. (2023). Field, capital, and habitus: The impact of Pierre Bourdieu on bibliometrics. *Quantitative Science Studies*. https://doi.org/10.1162/qss_a
- Siregar, M. (2016). Teori “gado-gado” Pierre-Felix Bourdieu. *An1mage Journal of Social Knowledge (AJSK)*, 1(2), 79–82. <http://journals.an1mage.net/index.php/ajsk>

Yang, L. (2023). Internal migration, stepping into the academic field, and talking to Pierre Bourdieu: A critical autoethnography. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01425692.2023.2287962>

EDITORIAL NOTE

This article is the result of collaboration between Jurnal Komunikasi dan Bisnis and Universitas Ciputra at the Konferensi Nasional Ilmu Komunikasi (KONAIKOM) 3.0 Communication Shift in the Digital Age 2024.