

Power and Social Gap in *Gundala* Transmediality

Irish Hening
{irishhening27@gmail.com}

Universitas Indonesia, Indonesia

Abstract. For centuries, social class is still existing and has resulted the clashes between humans. Indonesian society has hundreds of millions of populations which is dominated by the working class, but a smaller number of middle classes still holds the highest power and can control all aspects in the social life. It causes various conflicts that have plagued the community. The working class is always marginalized and subordinated. Social inequality ensued and caused chaos. Sometimes people are not aware of this problem and just remain unconscious. Therefore, literary works and other cultural products are often presented as a tool to voice the opinions and describe the social realities that actually occur in our society. In 2019, Hasmi's comic *Gundala Putra Petir* was adapted into a movie also titled *Gundala: Negeri ini Butuh Patriot* which is written and directed by Joko Anwar in collaboration with Bumilangit Studio. Then Bumilangit Studio published its movie adaptation comic titled *The Official Movie Adaptation Gundala: Takdir* which is a piece of the puzzle to build the story world of *Gundala* (2019). The distribution of the *Gundala* story (2019) is not only limited to movies and printed comics, but is also presented in the online comic titled *Gundala: Son of Lightning* which is published in the online comic platform *Webtoon*. The comics are positioned as complementary which is separated from the movie. It's an effort to build the story world of *Gundala* (2019) as part of the BCU (*Bumilangit Cinematic Universe*). By using the concept of habitus, capital and field from Pierre Bourdieu and the concept of transmedia storytelling from Henry Jenkins to build the story world of *Gundala*, this paper is expected to be able to dismantle the power relations and social gap which are presented in *Gundala* (2019) transmediality.

Keywords: Transmedia Storytelling, Capital, Field, Habitus, *Gundala*, Inequality, Power relations, Social Class

1 Introduction

The term superheroes are already deeply embedded in the world's society. The presence of superheroes who always rescue the people and the entire world is a theme which is carried by the Marvel Cinematic Universe and DC Universe. Initially, the superheroes appeared in comics were published in the 20th century which were later adapted into the movies. The famous figures such as Captain America, Thor, Iron Man, Batman, Wonder Woman and Superman show the reflection of a chaos situation in the world. Indonesia itself has also raised superhero themes since the 20th century through its comics, the presence of *Sri Asih* comics as the first superhero comic in Indonesia already opened the universe of superhero themes in Indonesia. Then in 1969, Hasmi created the figure of *Gundala* in his comic entitled *Gundala Putra Petir*. At the beginning of its presence, *Gundala* comics were very well known in Indonesia. The *Gundala* comic itself carries local wisdom by taking place in Yogyakarta and the *Gundala* figure inspired by Ki Ageng

Selo, an Indonesian legend, who is able to catch lightning with his hands. The name Gundala itself is taken from the Javanese language *Gundolo* which means lightning.

The success of comics Gundala brought its adaptation to another medium which is the movie adaptation titled *Gundala Putra Petir* (1981) directed by Lilik Sudjio which is faithful to the comic story line although the background changed from Yogyakarta to Jakarta. The story of superhero *Gundala* is almost to be forgotten and seemed unheard in the 21st century. But in this disruptive era, various innovations were carried out to spread *Gundala* (2019) movies and comics. Unlike the *Gundala Putra Petir* comics by Hasmi's works which just appear in printed comics, the new Gundala comics are initiated through the *Webtoon* online platform. Gundala figure is presented again with its presence in the online comics *Gundala: Son of Lightning* which published in May through the platform of online comics *Webtoon*. Afterwards in August 2019, the movie *Gundala: Negeri ini Butuh Patriot* directed by Joko Anwar was presented in Indonesian theaters. The market about movie is very fast and spread virally on social media, websites and through the collaboration in the form of merchandises. The movie *Gundala: Negeri ini Butuh Patriot* is also presented as the opening movie of the *Bumilangit Cinematic Universe*. Bumilangit also issued a printed comic adaptation of the movie were given the title of *The Official Movie Adaptation Gundala: Takdir*. Each story which displayed in the movie, online and printed comics carries different narratives. The pieces of the puzzle are formed to build the story world of *Gundala* (2019).

The distribution of stories in various media is known as the application of *transmedia storytelling* which was first introduced by Henry Jenkins. In the adaptation study, Jenkins [1] states that transmedia is a structured relationship between several different media platforms. In practice, it is related to works of fiction. However, nowadays the producers of fiction works have also implemented these narrative techniques with all the needed media by taking advantages of all these media to reach its target. Jenkins [2] also introduced the concept of *transmedia storytelling*. This concept is the art of creating a large world from a fictional world with richfull diversity. In addition, Jenkins [3] tells that *transmedia storytelling* is a process in which an integral element of a fiction is systematically spread across various media to create integrated and coordinated entertainment. Ideally, each media makes a unique contribution to the story development. Based on these details, *transmedia storytelling* can be defined as an effort to create a story world and transfer all its elements such as stories, adventures, characters, spaces, and culture, both 'online' and 'offline' from all types of media. In this case, in the world of transmedia there is more than one narrative. Each narrative, as part of a puzzle or piece of the big picture has a contribution to the whole. Each narration has a separate story and is part of a larger story.

Research on the figure of Gundala as an Indonesian superhero comic character has been done by Kurniawan (2019). In his thesis, he discusses the *Gundala Putra Petir* comic as an Indonesian superhero who is thought to have similarities to the figure of *The Flash* from DC superhero figure. This study offers a method of comparing the two superheroes' characters based on the psychiatric theory of character, visual characteristics and expressive attitude by Scott McCloud. In this research, Gundala can be said not to imitate The Flash because Gundala still carries local elements in him. Starting from this, the figure of Gundala which was later adapted back to being part of the *Bumilangit Cinematic Universe* also sought to show local elements in the text. The portrayal of the setting in Jakarta and the narratives that raised social and political issues in Jakarta brought the audience into the modern world of *Gundala* (2019). The dichotomy between the upper class and working-class society is presented in the text. How power relations and class conflict become the triggers of social inequality is clearly illustrated in the transmediality of *Gundala* (2019).

The social classes in the *Gundala* transmediality are shown by the relation of power in the text. With the concept of habitus, capital and field from Pierre Bourdieu, this research will show the field of power. In this theory, the actors bring their habitus and capital into the field. Based on Bourdieu in Ritzer [4], habitus basically means habit. Habitus is the “mental or cognitive structure” that actors use to confront social life. Actors are equipped with a set of internalized schemes or patterns that they use to feel, understand, realize, and value the social world. Whereas Bourdieu [5] states that capital is essentially a set of resources and strengths that a person has. This capital consists of economic capital, cultural capital, social capital and symbolic capital. Every person's capital is different so that it can be used as an indicator of social class measurement. The different forms of capital and ownership indicate a person is in a certain social class. In addition, the distribution of capital will determine the position of power relations in the field of power and determine the right strategy to use. The actors then use their habitus and capital to appear in the field. Bourdieu [6] states that field is a setting in which the actor and his social position are. Besides that, field is a network of social class (dominating and dominated parties, protagonists and antagonists, etc.). Field will become a battleground for anyone who enters it. The field of power is also a field of struggle which means it is possible to change positions.

2 Introduction Method and Concepts

This study will use qualitative research methods using the adaptation approach with the concept of *transmedia storytelling* from Henry Jenkins and the sociology of literature approach using the concepts of *habitus*, *capital* and *field* from Pierre Bourdieu. Subjects to be investigated are the movie *Gundala: Negeri ini Butuh Patriot*, online comic *Gundala: Son of Lightning* and printed comic *The Official Movie Adaptation Gundala: Takdir*. This study uses sources from printed books, scientific journals and information from trusted websites to support the research arguments.

3 Finding and Discussion

3.1 Transmediality in the Movie, Printed Comic and Online Comic of *Gundala* (2019) and *Bumilangit Universe*

Adaptation to Hasmi's *Gundala* figure begins with adaptation to the same media, namely comics. Hasmi's *Gundala Putra Petir* comic which was published in 1969 was later brought back through *Weebtoon's* online comic titled *Gundala: Son of Lightning* which created by Is Yuniarto and narrated by Sweta Kartika. The copyright owner of this comic is Bumilangit Entertainment Corporation which later builds the universe of *Bumilangit* for comics and *Bumilangit Cinematic Universe* for its movies. This online comic is presented as the opening act of the *Gundala* story before the movie version *Gundala: Negeri ini Butuh Patriot* is released. The main character is still Sancaka who has an alter ego *Gundala*. Sancaka in this online comic is an adult and works as a security guard in a chemistry lab. The other characters who involved with Sancaka in this online comic also different from those in the movie. In this comic, Sancaka must fight Dwara and Shamani who are creating a sect group to overthrow the government. It is also interesting in the current version of *Gundala*, the place background is Jakarta as the

capital of Indonesia and the main center of production of the new version of Gundala from the universe of *Bumilangit* which pictured by the presence of *The Jakarta Times* newspaper. In addition, Gundala's origins are explained in his online comics that he is an incarnation of the Krons King from the kingdom of lightning. This is based on ancient manuscripts that the name Gundala revealed by Anwi Anjaya who is a cosmological crypto expert. This information cannot yet be found in the movie and printed comic adaptation of the movie. Shortly after the emergence of it online comics in May 2019, the movie was released in August 2019 with a different story from the early comic *Gundala Putra Petir* by Hasmi (1969) and *Gundala's* online comic by Is Yuniarto and Sweta Kartika.

The movie, still revolves around Sancaka's life. The narration in the movie is different from the Gundala narration in its online comics. In this movie the audience can also see the life of Sancaka from childhood to adulthood. Nevertheless, both online comics and movies are in different era. In its official *Facebook fanpage*, *Bumilangit* divides several eras in the universe of *Bumilangit* into four eras, namely the Legend era, the Jawara era, the Patriot era and the (R)evolution era. The Legend Era tells the beginning of the presence of the superheroes that began from the eruption of Mount Toba in 75,000 BC to the last ice age in 20,000-5,000 BC. In Sundalandia in 15,000 years ago, humans have managed to escape extinction and build a civilization to stand with three Kingdoms in the Tatar Great Sunda Wiba Kingdom, Godam Kingdom and Rawaya Kingdom. At this time, there were three major kingdoms namely the Wiba kingdom which had expertise in the field of technology with the figure of leader Aquanus, the Rawaya kingdom which focused on the spiritual realm and was led by Sri Asih and then the kingdom of Godam whose military was very conspicuous and led by Godam. Then came the era of Jawara when three kingdoms were drowned by a great flood and finally a new civilization emerged marked the presence of the Majapahit kingdom in 1500 to the presence of Dutch East Indies colonialism in the 1800s. Godam was still present at this time by bequeathing the ring and Sri Asih also incarnated his messenger at this time. Warriors such as the Mandala Siluman Sungai Ular and Si Buta dari Gua Hantu were also present in this era. Then the presence of the Patriot era began since the emergence of the World War in the 1900s until the tempest in 2015. In this era Gundala, incarnation of Godam and Sri Asih, as well as other superheroes. Then came the era (R)evolution starting in 2017 until now. Gundala reappears, Sri Asih then incarnates her descendants, and other superheroes emerge. Gundala in the movie is from Patriot era, meanwhile the online comic is in (R)evolution era.

In the movie, Sancaka is an adult working as a security guard and part-time mechanic in a printing factory. The development of Sancaka's life from childhood to adulthood is clearly illustrated. In this movie, there are various deviations carried out by corrupt government officials. The corrupt legislators are also controlled by a cruel mobster named Pengkor. This figure is the super villain of Sancaka. The first problem caused by Pengkor occur in which he make a plan to give poison to the national rice supply and spread hoaxes about the danger of the poison to the fetus. He created this plan to make a lot of riots. In addition, Pengkor led an army of orphans who had been raised as murderers and called him "Father". They have a window-shaped tattoo which is a symbol of Pengkor's orphans. It related to their online comics, the figures of Dwara and Shamani also have this symbol. In other words, the story in the Gundala online comic is a small part of the crime which is also caused by Pengkor as the super villain.

To apply the principle of *transmedia storytelling*, *Bumilangit* also published the printed comic *The Official Movie Adaptation Gundala: Takdir* which has a storyline that is almost similar to the movie. However, the story in the printed comic tells the story of Pengkor, the opposition party who is gathering a new family based on the forecast of 12 guards. He wanted to invite Sancaka to enter his new family. Through this comic, we can see how the Pengkor

struggle who was born from a rich family and then became poor until eventually became the figure who has a great power and the super villain of Gundala. In this printed comic, a brief story about the 10 orphans of Pengkor who also fought Sancaka was introduced, namely Kamal Atmaja the Prompter, Tanto Ginanjar the Forge, Jack Mandagi the Chef, Sam Buadi the Carver, Mutiara Jenar the The Model, Cantika the Nurse, Adi Sulaiman the Composer, Desti Nikita the Student, Swara Batin the Dancer, and Kanigara the Painter. In the movie, their story is not presented at all. In the printed comic, their stories are displayed more clearly. All of the Pengkor orphans were appointed by him for various reasons. They are all victims of injustice, social inequality and suffering lives. In this printed comic, an explanation of the riots that occurred in the city of Jakarta was also inserted. Starting from the inauguration of members of the House of Representatives who reaped the controversy and alleged acts of corruption and collusion, riots in the Kota Lama with so much looting, the Kota Lama market that was burning with the alleged interests of the authorities who want to replace traditional markets with large grand malls for the benefit of the upper class, the emergence of poisoned rice that is suspected to have dangerous content for the fetus which then viral on social media and make citizens worried. This explains that the spread of the story of Gundala (2019) is not only focused on one media, but also in other media.

One of the applications of *transmedia storytelling* was also done by Bumilangit is to insert a short narrative in mid-credit in a movie. In the mid-credit scene, Gundala meets Ridwan Bahri on the roof and thanks him for his upgraded and more sophisticated costume. In addition, there was also the presence of Sri Asih in the mid-credit, signifying the presence of other superheroes who would influence the story of Gundala in the next movie. This mid-credit application is also an additional marketing tool to promote the *Bumilangit Cinematic Universe*.

3.2 Power Relations and Social Gap

Power comes with existence of the dominating and subordinated parties. In essence, this is related to differences in social class of the community which consists of the upper classes and the working classes. These social classes create social inequalities between the people and cause polemics in society and then becoming a chaos. In the narration of the story of *Gundala* (2019) there is so many various practices of power relations and social inequality. In the movie and printed comic adaptation, the narratives that are displayed are exactly the same although the storyline and perspective of the narrator is different. Sancaka figures are shown as figures from the lower classes or workers. Sancaka lives with a poor and simple family. Sancaka's father is a factory worker and his mother is just a housewife. Even so, the Sancaka family still provides proper education to Sancaka. In the movie, Sancaka goes to school which means he has already obtained cultural capital for education. The Sancaka family also supports Sancaka's ability to repair electronic devices. Sancaka's ability to repair is related to his latent ability to control lightning. Poor life has become a sanctuary habitus until his adulthood. In Sancaka's life, there is no change in social class in the economic capital.

Sancaka is different from his rival namely Pengkor. Pengkor was born from the upper class. His father is a farm owner and employs many workers. However, in contrast to Sancaka, Pengkor underwent fluctuating class changes. After the death of his father who was killed by his workers, Pengkor was put in an orphanage. In that place, he joined the other orphans and lived in misery because he was always tortured by orphanage officials. At its peak, Pengkor who has good oration skills have invited friends in the orphanage to fight the injustices that occur in the orphanage by killing people who have tortured them. In his printed comic, it was explained also after Pengkor left the orphanage he lived in the streets with the orphanage

children and formed a new family on the street with his friends. It was there that the new Pengkor's habitus was formed and he maintained his habitus about his fondness of reading. Although the field where Pengkor is located has changed, he still maintains his habits. Together with his friends, he collects trash and used goods. Pengkor also continues to prioritize education for himself and his friends which indicates he is still maintaining cultural capital in his life. As an adult, Pengkor reaches the upper-class position again.

Pengkor also builds social capital by building relationships with members of council. In this social relationship, Pengkor also has symbolic power. The members of the council did not dare to fight Pengkor and treated Pengkor well, even though he was not a member of the council. The reason is because Pengkor has strong economic capital and social capital. Pengkor's symbolic power was not only reflected between himself and the council members, but also among his 10 orphans. All Pengkor's adopted children obey all of the Pengkor's instructions, through this it can be seen how the Pengkor's power works towards many people. Pengkor is considered to be the most meritorious for all of their lives and they will do anything for all of his interests. Pengkor's symbolic power over the 10 orphan children is no longer based on the economic capital owned by Pengkor. The beliefs of Pengkor's adopted children towards Pengkor were formed since they were young. In the printed comic, the story of the background of the children of Pengkor is described. Pengkor has good speaking skills is able to make the adoptive children follow Pengkor. In addition, the way Pengkor has built social capital with their children is done in a smooth manner without coercion.

Both in movie and printed comics, Pengkor and Sancaka are victims of social inequality in society. Sancaka's father is killed during a demonstration regarding rising labor costs. Sancaka's father led his fellow workers in a protest against the factory owners and demand a salary increasing. In the case of Sancaka's father, there were factory officials who had the highest authority with economic capital. The group of demonstrators led by Sancaka's father met with armed guards and turned into riots. In the second protest, Sancaka's father was betrayed and stabbed by his colleagues who had been bribed by the factory owner and died. A year later, economic problems also affected Sancaka's life because Sancaka's mother (Marissa Anita) went to another city to look for job. She promised to return in the next day, but she never returned. It also happened in Pengkor's life; his parents were killed by workers who were holding a demonstration for a raising salary. Clashes between classes, namely between the capitalist and workers, in fact also have an impact that is not only detrimental to the working class. In the case of Sancaka, the victim falls on Sancaka's father who is a worker, in the case of Pengkor the victim actually falls on Pengkor's father who is the upper class. Through this matter, it can be seen that the war of position among the people does not merely cause casualties just to the working class, the upper class can also become victims. All of these things occur due to high economic inequality between people. In the printed comic it also shows that Sancaka was struck by lightning, while Pengkor was on fire. Both are fellow children who experienced the same dark period even though they came from different social classes.

In its online comics, Sancaka does not deal with Pengkor. Sancaka experienced an opposition warfare with Pengkor's people, Dwara and Shamani. Habitus Sancaka isn't different from the one in the movie and the printed comic. Sancaka lives modestly. Sancaka, as a working class, live in a small apartment room and used to live on the streets. The interesting thing in this comic, class conflict seems to be also presented in the form of symbolic capital created by Dwara and Shamani to influence the lower classes of society. They do provocation and incitement to the lower classes who suffer. He gives them potions to forget their pain, so they can easily follow what they want. He wants to make changes in the society and overthrow the government. In carrying out the action, they hypnotized the lower-class people to create riots by looting the

logistical transport trucks at the port. Through this matter, it can also be seen that the actors of poverty, society suffering, hunger, misery make it easier for them to be easily provoked by a group of sects who against the governmental order. Dwara's incitement that the basic food ration for the poor people had been corrupted by government officials who lived in and partied in luxurious buildings. Presented figures such as street children, market thugs, motorcycle taxi riders and poor people show a high social gap in the society.

4 Conclusion

Movies and comics become media that can visually portray reality in society. In *Gundala's* (2019) commercialism, comic and movie media are not just standing alone to spreading the narratives. Each media has an important contribution to build the pieces of puzzle in the story world of *Gundala* (2019). The story world of *Gundala* (2019) itself is part of one universe which is *Bumilangit Cinematic Universe*. The narration presented in the text is regarding to the description of social disparities and power relations that exist between the people. The social disparity and power relations can be seen from the various conflicts that are present in the community and how it triggers the various problems that exist. Social class differences also make it easy for riots and incitement to society which are actually used as tools for political interests of the authorities. These things have shown that social inequality and power relations have led to strong social gap within society in the text of *Gundala* (2019).

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