

Creative Interpretation of a Performing Art Work: From Malin Kundang to Malin Nan Kondang

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Abstract

The Minangkabau Opera *Malin Nan Kondang* is a work of art that attempts to combine concepts of traditional and modern art. The traditional concept used is the Minangkabau folk theater *Randai*. The modern concept is the concept of opera which is widely used throughout the world. *Randai*, a form of traditional Minangkabau theater, is joined together in this work with the essence of opera. The circles in *Randai*, with the rhythmic *pencak* movements accompanied by singing, are reprocessed and simplified. The essence of *Randai* is adapted to fit the structure of a conventional script. A folktale is used only as the inspiration for creating an innovative work. The folktale used, *Malin Kundang*, is about a son who disobeys and betrays his mother and has a curse put on him, turning him into stone. Meanwhile, the Minangkabau Opera *Malin Nan Kondang*, tells of the romance between Malin and Nilam. Their love story involves numerous challenges but the performance has a happy ending when the two characters finally meet and live happily ever after. The method used to analyze the Minangkabau Opera *Malin Nan Kondang* is the *pamenan* method, which views the performance from the perspective of a game and something that is well-loved in Minangkabau culture. This research is founded on the method and technique of qualitative writing, which is a strategy for obtaining descriptive data or information about the meaning of an object, action, or in this case the events related to the Minangkabau Opera *Malin Nan Kondang*.

Keywords: opera Minangkabau, *randai*, *pamenan*, folk tale

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1. Introduction

The Minangkabau Opera *Malin Nan Kondang* is a work of musical theater produced by Institut Seni Indonesia (ISI) Padangpanjang. The writer of the story for the Minangkabau Opera *Malin Nan Kondang* is Edy Suisno, and the performance was directed by Wen Hendri. The Minangkabau Opera *Malin Nan Kondang* has been performed several times: *first*, at the Asean-China Theater Week in Nanjing, China on 13 September 2019; *second*, at the Dies Natalis of ISI Padangpanjang in December 2019; *third*, in the Acikita Short Study To Japan event; *fourth*, at Anjungan Seni Idrus Tintin Pekanbaru on 21 February 2021; and *fifth*, in Russia on 15 November 2021. Opera is a form of theatrical performance that first developed during the 16th century, as explained in the following statement: “Opera was born in Italy at the end of the 16th century and has since spread throughout the world, becoming one of our national culture’s most appreciated forms of art” (Petrocelli, 2019). In line with Petrocelli’s statement, Dario D’Orazio writes as follows:

The word Opera in Latin is the plural of opus, which means “act, performance”. Thus, opera means the simultaneous act of a performer—including their voice and gestures—and music. Florence and its 16th-Century cultural influences are commonly accepted as the birthplace of Opera. This kind of performance acquired a semi-public dimension, such as the Teatro Mediceo in Florence (1586). After Florence, some North-Italian courts hosted opera composers and independent architectures were opened to the ruler and the court (D’Orazio, 2020).

The Minangkabau Opera *Malin Nan Kondang* is an operatic work inspired by the folktale *Malin Kundang*. The folktale *Malin Kundang* tells the story of a boy who disobeys and betrays his mother and is turned to stone after a curse is put on him. The location of the *Malin Kundang* stone is at Air Manis Beach in the City of Padang. It is said that the stone on this beach is the figure of *Malin Kundang* who is kneeling before his mother, begging for forgiveness. The myth of *Malin Kundang* is one of the most popular folktales in Indonesia, and tells the story of a son’s betrayal of his own mother. This is described by Essy Syam as follows:

The story of Malin Kundang has become a legend that is known by almost the entire Indonesian community. This has led most people to recognize and understand the story in the same way, with the legend being understood as a means to educate children so that they do not disobey or betray their

mothers (Syam, 2014).

The Minangkabau Opera *Malin Nan Kondang* only uses the folktale *Malin Kundang* as a source of inspiration; it does not use the entire story. The folktale *Malin Kundang* is different from the Minangkabau Opera *Malin Nan Kondang*, which is a reinterpretation of the myth of Malin's treacherous behavior. The Minangkabau Opera *Malin Nan Kondang* tells the love story of Malin and Nilam. Malin moves away to a new place not only to improve the standard of living of his family but also to show Nilam's family that he is worthy of earning her hand in marriage. When Malin comes home, he is disappointed because Nilam has become betrothed to Datuk Kayo, a rich man in the village. Malin's mother does not wish to bear the shame of Nilam's agreement to accept the hand of Datuk Kayo in marriage. Therefore the betrayal comes from Nilam's family who are extremely materialistic. There is no mention of a child disobeying or betraying his parents, only the betrayal of a woman towards her lover. This is the basis for the creative interpretation of the folktale *Malin Kundang*, which is generally understood to be a story specifically about a son who betrays his mother, but in this case is reinterpreted as a love story of Nilam and Malin.

The Minangkabau Opera *Malin Nan Kondang* uses the dramaturgical concept of *pamenan*. The Minangkabau people use *pamenan* as a general art concept. There is a Minangkabau saying, "*duduak bapamenan, tagak baparintang*" (sitting down will find you a game, standing up will find you work), which implies that when resting from work, there is always a game to be played. Dt. Sampono Dirajo in Sahrul N explains that the word *pamenan* can mean 'game' and can also mean 'the one who is loved' (Nazar, 2018). In his article, Sahrul explains this as follows:

Pamenan as a game of words in Minangkabau, Sumatra Barat, is derived from the culture that influence the society way of thinking. The word *pamenan* is frequently used in *pepatah*, *petitih*, *pasambahan*, *mamangan adat*, etc. It shows that words are essential Minangkabau culture. *Pamenan* is not just a folk game but also functions as a thinking concept in creating arts (Nazar, 2018).

The *pamenan* that is found in the Minangkabau Opera *Malin Nan Kondang* is a function that is full of meaning and can be understood as a game. In the *pamenan* in this performance there is something that comes into play that surpasses the desire to maintain survival and puts a meaning inside it. The fact that *pamenan* has meaning implies that there is a non-material element in the essence of the *pamenan* itself.

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2. Literature Study

The paper entitled "Malin Nan Kundang: An Aesthetic Response Of The Opera Creation In Minangkabau West Sumatera", written by Pramutomo et al (2021), discusses the concept of creation of Minangkabau Opera with the title *Malin Nan Kondang*, referring to the meaning of the new composition that can be observed in looking at the typology of genre. If the genre is a group presentation, then its form is based on a number of structures of its formation. Through these elements, Minangkabau opera can be understood as the phenomenon of a musical drama plot. In the process of creating the opera, *Malin Nan Kondang* referred to the traditional Minangkabau theater form *Randai*. Through the process of formation of concept, the form of the plot was observed as the initial construction of the body of the opera. On this level, the segmentation of its formation was divided into four stages: exploration, interpretation and experimentation; formation and shaping; and presentation. This was needed for the bodily awareness when practiced as an application for the formation of concept of form or the concept of the musical drama itself.

This understanding is in line with the view of the phenomenon of the genre of Minangkabau opera which is manifested in the visualization of the performance of a work of art. It is important, therefore, to discuss the segmentation of stages within the framework of a musical drama. The visual actor is the main part of the Minangkabau Opera *Malin Nan Kondang*. The segmentation of all the stages is a representation of the ways or techniques of formation and the methods practiced from artistic research. In this formation process, the director considers form as a single unit within the proportion of standard balance in a presentation of musical drama. Hence, the illustration of the segmentation of aesthetic technical qualification in the four artistic stages can place the intrinsic factor of the text of the musical drama. The significance of understanding the texts in the genre of Minangkabau music is of course the opera itself.

The paper by (SUISNO et al., 2021) with the title "*Perancangan Pertunjukan Opera Minangkabau Malin Nan Kondang sebagai Alih Wahana Kaba Malin Kundang*" discusses comprehensively the planning or design of the Minangkabau Opera *Malin Nan Kondang*, focusing on three orientations of creativity in the manifestation of the performance or staging. *First*, the planning of the Minangkabau Opera *Malin Nan Kondang* is a display of creativity in composing a Minangkabau opera. The *second* orientation in designing the Minangkabau Opera *Malin Nan Kondang* is the consideration of cohesiveness between the idioms of traditional Minangkabau arts with idioms of opera, which representationally have been born and developed in the art of western musical

drama. The *third* orientation is the application of a change in medium which rests on the reinterpretation of the folktale (*Kaba*) *Malin Kundang*, to make it more rational, more balanced, and removed from doctrinal messages.

This reinterpretation emphasizes the new paradigm that the disobedience or bad behavior of a child is not always the child's own fault but is also due to the parent's failure to intensify the child's education, as well as the result of the environmental mainstream which measures everything only on the basis of material objects. Umar Junus explains that this reinterpretation emphasizes the spirit that every story will change, whether it is written in print or even more so if it is a folktale that exists in the oral world. Therefore, there are always changes in the folktales published originally by the Grimm brothers. It is these changes that give life to the folklore (Junus, 2001).

The concept of *pamenan* is a concept that belongs to the Minangkabau people and is a part of their art activities. Navis writes that *pamenan rakyat* (folk games) in Minangkabau is a form of folk art that is open, by the people and for the people, in accordance with the democratic social system which supports the philosophy of equality and togetherness of the people. As a result, art in Minangkabau changes easily due to its contact with other cultures. This change can also be understood to mean developing, enriching, or propagating (Navis, 1984).

The essence that is hoped for in the Minangkabau Opera *Malin Nan Kondang* is the value of Minangkabau culture itself. This includes *pamenan*. *Pamenan* has begun to disappear in the midst of today's society, and the young generation have a lack of understanding of the traditional values belonging to their culture (Zaitun et al., 2022). The concept of *pamenan* is beneficial in order for the values, ways of thinking, and philosophy of Minangkabau culture to be preserved. This is a cultural wealth that can compete with other cultures.

The philosophical values formulated have a cultural connection with modern opera and Minangkabau tradition (the folktale *Malin Kundang*). This is manifested perfectly by the hands of the writer and director in the style of *Malin Nan Kondang*. Fundamentally, the concept of *pamenan* leads to the desire for human beings to free themselves from excessive vitality, the desire to imitate, satisfying the need for entertainment, teaching self control, teaching to compete, as well as enabling the channeling of imagination which ultimately shows personality. In the Minangkabau Opera *Malin Nan Kondang*, there is a need for a form that displays the existence of Minangkabau culture itself.

Huizinga states that the function of a game is to free energy, to release tension, to prepare oneself, to gain compensation, in the form of practice and mechanical reaction alone. Games even offer people suspense, excitement, and fun (Huizinga, 1990). Huizinga does not make games a culture. Huizinga's opinion is a comparison for looking at the general association of games with *pamenan* that belongs to the Minangkabau culture and is found in the Minangkabau Opera *Malin Nan Kondang*.

The term *pamenan mato*, for example, has a broad meaning, namely beauty visible to the naked eye and beauty behind what is seen. Visible beauty has a variety of meanings, depending on the perspective from which the beauty is seen. The visible beauty of art has an effect on the true essence of beauty of the art itself. An example is the skill of the *Randai* actor, who indulges the eyes of the audience so that they enjoy the game.

The affirmation of traditional ethics in the face of change for the sake of "progress" is one of the values that continues to be preserved by the Minangkabau Opera *Malin Nan Kondang*, a production of Institut Seni Indonesia (ISI) Padangpanjang. Preserving should not be understood as guarding a tradition of the past but as discovering the appropriate moral of the tradition. The attempt to introduce a Minangkabau folktale (*kaba*) is needed as a bridge for the young generation to look to the future. Since former times, Minangkabau has been known for its oral tradition, and this is portrayed in its *kaba*, traditional philosophy, *petatah petiti* which depart from the oral tradition, and have been widely practiced by the Minangkabau people over the generations (Afrizal, H, Yusril, 2020). Minangkabau exists as a formation of old values and the current generation can take wisdom from these values. The application of these values must also be adapted to the present day, in accordance with the saying "*ambiak sajo nan paguno*" (just take what is useful), which means that tradition is something that can be actualized.

3. Method

This paper is related to the concept of *pamenan* in the Minangkabau Opera *Malin Nan Kondang*. The dramaturgy of *pamenan* in the Minangkabau Opera *Malin Nan Kondang* is the aesthetic essence of opera. A qualitative method is used, wherein the method and technique are strategies to obtain descriptive data or information about the meaning of an object, action, or in this case the events related to the Minangkabau Opera *Malin Nan Kondang*. In practical terms, this article is based on four stages: preparation, data collection, processing, and writing the journal (Hanafie, 2007).

The primary data in this paper is the recording of the Minangkabau Opera *Malin Nan Kondang* that was obtained through a documentary study. Other data included the script for the Minangkabau Opera *Malin Nan Kondang* which was used as reference for the performance. The work step of data analysis related to the output of the writing was carried out with three interrelated systematic steps, before, during, and after the data collection. These three systematic steps were the data reduction, presentation of the data from the results of the

analysis, and the drawing of a conclusion. In the data reduction stage, an observation was carried out of the audio-visual recording of the Minangkabau Opera *Malin Nan Kondang*. The results of the observation then used expert opinions to filter the data related to the concept of *pamenan*. The data presentation was done descriptively and chronologically. The data was presented descriptively using diagrams or tables (due to the complexity of the data that needed to be summarized) and chronologically, in particular in relation to the verbal statements. The conclusion was drawn by analyzing the results of the findings about the dramaturgy of the Minangkabau Opera *Malin Nan Kondang*.

4. Discussion

The visual aesthetic or *pamenan mato* is related to the games that are seen on the performance stage. The aesthetic of the creative concept that is directed towards the game observed involves elements of words or utterances, story, characters, costume, movement, staging, music, and lighting (Sahrul N, 2015). Form theatre Postmodernism was born as an antithesis to modernism which was considered no longer relevant to the constellation of contemporary life (Afrizal et al., 2019). *Pamenan* in the Minangkabau Opera *Malin Nan Kondang* is an activity that is meaningful and functional on a social level. Supporters of opera attempt to understand the game as something that is primary from the picture of a certain reality and a particular illusion so that the opera becomes a picture of the cultural life of society in general.

The Minangkabau Opera *Malin Nan Kondang* in general departs from the events that are taken from a legend which has developed in society, namely the legend of *Malin Kundang*. This legend is processed using a play on abstract words that contain metaphors. Two worlds (the concrete reality and the reality of legend) are manifested in expressions of operatic reality that are full of words. This is what is known as *pamenan kato* (a word game). Iswandi et al explain this as follows:

Minangkabau Opera *Malin Nan Kondang* is a new work of art as a form of transfer from the *Malin Kundang* folklore, which is designed in an opera performance by referring to the principles of musical drama. Opera performance is a type of theater performance that initially only recognized dialogue in the form of singing. The characters convey all utterances by singing a song, the lyrics which contain the impressions and desires of the characters towards other characters (Iswandi et al., 2021).

The use of a legend for the purpose of this opera is something that has in fact also been done by other forms of traditional theater in Indonesia, such as *wayang* in Java (Soetarno, 2010). Edy Suisno et al affirm this as follows:

Kaba Malin Kundang is not only the inspiration for the art of storytelling but is also the starting point for creating new works, both in the form of other literary genres or in the form of artworks resulting from a shift in medium (SUISNO et al., 2021).

The Minangkabau Opera *Malin Nan Kondang* in terms of its staging presents activities that “pretend” (*pamenan*) to manifest something or imagine something in an expression of play. In *Randai* it can be seen that when a player is called mother, it will be agreed that she is a mother even if her acting, makeup, and other performance elements do not support this. An old person in *Randai* does not need to stoop, they need only to state that they are old. The world of Minangkabau opera is only a world of pretence, not a world of becoming something real. The context of performance of *Malin Nan Kondang* departs from the spirit of *Randai*, which is described by Pramutomo as follows:

West Sumatra has a traditional theatre form known as *Randai*. *Randai* is one of the traditional games in Minangkabau which is played in groups by forming a circle, then slowly stepping away, while telling stories in the form of singing in turns. Art elements contained in *Randai* art are drama, sound art, dance, traditional music and also martial arts. The source of the story in *Randai* comes from *aba* or folklore with the themes of character, decency and education. In this sense, *Malin Kundang*'s text in the folklore tradition has become a conceptual choreographic text of *Malin Nan Kundang* (Pramutomo et al., 2021).

According to Kernodle, structure is the form of the drama at the time of the performance, while texture is what is experienced directly by the observer. According to Aristoteles, structure in a theater performance consists of three dramatic values: plot, character, and theme (Kernodle, 1978). The three dramatic values contained in structure are all interrelated (Harymawan, 1993). The Minangkabau Opera *Malin Nan Kondang* is a performance which combines elements of music, voice, dance, visual art, and dialogue. The fusion of these elements is manifested through silat movements, singing (*gurindam*), and dance.

The plot is the regulation of the events in the drama that takes place on the stage. The exposition is the first stage of the description of the situation in the opera. The exposition stage is marked by the introduction of previous events, current events, or events being experienced by the character to the audience. The exposition in the Minangkabau Opera *Malin Nan Kondang* is a description of the childhood memories of *Malin* and *Nilam*. *Malin* tells about his dream of making a palace for his mother. *Nilam* doubts *Malin*'s aspirations. *Nilam* is afraid because as far as she knows, people who live in a palace are proud. *Nilam* fears that when *Malin* achieves his goals, he will leave her and forget the promises they have made to one another. *Malin* promises *Nilam* that he will never become proud and will never forget their promises, and says that he will marry her when he has

become a successful, rich man. The game (*pamenan*) in this event is seen in the audio visual illustration shown at the beginning of the performance, which shows Malin and Nilam making their promises to one another in the past.

The complication is the stage that follows on from the exposition. The complication stage is also known as the first conflict of the plot which is already leading to the climax of the story. The complication in the performance of the Minangkabau Opera *Malin Nan Kondang* is marked by the matchmaking between Nilam and Datuk Kayo. Nilam is forced to accept Datuk Kyo's proposal because her parents owe him a lot of money. This event is similar to the story of Siti Nurbaya. The difference with Siti Nurbaya is that Nilam runs away on the night before the wedding and tries to remain faithful to Malin. The same thing happens to Malin in the new place where he is living. Malin is proposed to by his boss, who wants him to marry his daughter, Puan Hamidah. Malin firmly refuses the proposal to marry Puan because he too still remembers the promise he made to Nilam. Both Malin and Nilam are punished for their actions. Nilam is accused of being a traitor and Malin is fired from his job. In these difficult times, they long to be together so they meet in secret and renew their vows from the past.

Nilam has changed somewhat as she feels guilty for accepting the hand of Datuk Kayo, even though she ran away from the wedding. Malin feels Nilam is hiding a problem from him. This is when the climax occurs. The climax in the Minangkabau Opera *Malin Nan Kondang* takes place when Mandeh (Malin's mother) does not agree for Malin to marry Nilam, since she has already made a promise to Datuk Kayo. Mandeh does not want Malin involved in Nilam's problems. Nilam takes offence and decides to go away and leave Malin.

The resolution is the denouement of the building conflict. This stage describes the way out of the conflict that is taking place or has taken place. In the Minangkabau Opera *Malin Nan Kondang*, the resolution occurs when Malin's uncle discovers that Mandeh opposes the relationship between Malin and Nilam. Malin's uncle explains that Nilam accepted the proposal of Datuk Kayo only because she wanted to save her family from their debts. In the conclusion stage of this work, Malin and Nilam find a way out of the conflict that has taken place. The Minangkabau Opera *Malin Nan Kondang* ends when Nilam explains to Malin what she has experienced while he was far away. Mandeh then apologizes to Nilam for her insults and accusation, and says she understands the reason for Nilam's actions.

The characters are one of the main elements whose role is to move the plot along from one event to another. Meanwhile, characterization is the role assigned to the writer with regard to the characters. In short, a character is a living figure whose job is to convey the message of the writer through the dialogue, and characterization is the nature or features the writer gives to the characters. Malin is the protagonist in the Minangkabau Opera *Malin Nan Kondang*. The figure of Malin plays the main role and is the center of all the problems throughout the entire story. Malin's role is to overcome the problems that arise when he tries to reach a particular goal. Malin is referred to as a protagonist because he is the one who drives the line of the plot in the Minangkabau Opera *Malin Nan Kondang*.

Malin is the lover of Nilam and the character who dominates the performance of the Minangkabau Opera *Malin Nan Kondang*. The figure and character of Malin are explained through singing (*gurindam*). The harsh life in his village make Malin determined to move away to the town of Malaya. Malin's decision to leave makes Mandeh worried because Malin is her beloved son. Malin attempts to convince Mandeh to let him go and promises that he will make her happy when he returns home.

Nilam is the deuteragonist in the Minangkabau Opera *Malin Nan Kondang*. She is referred to as the deuteragonist because she is on the same side as the protagonist. Nilam strives to maintain her loyalty and sacrifice to Malin. Nilam is always present in every scene. The figure of Nilam plays a part in resolving the problems faced by Malin. Nilam is the reflection of a Minangkabau girl who is obedient, loving, and willing to make sacrifices for her family. She is also the figure of a woman who is strong when encountering the trials (debts) that her family faces. Nilam works hard to pay off her family's debts. The perfection of Nilam's character makes her a popular figure with numerous men who are seeking a wife, as well as with some men who are already married. Nilam's loyalty is often tested by these various proposals which she always refuses politely. The case of Nilam being forced to accept the proposal of Datuk Kayo shows Nilam's wish to save her family from the bondage of debt to Datuk Kayo.

Mandeh (Malin's mother) is a figure who can be grouped as an antagonist since she opposes the wish of the main character, Malin, to marry Nilam. In fact, Mandeh is very fond of Malin and wants Malin to be happy. Datuk (Malin's uncle) is a tritagonist figure. He is a figure who is highly respected and serves as a role model who often gives advice to Malin about the steps he should take. Datuk Kayo is a proud, ruthless figure. This is proven when he forces Nilam to accept his hand in marriage. Datuk Kayo threatens Nilam, saying that money is a tool to solve problems. Puan Hamidah is a utility figure, or a figure who does not have much influence on the plot of the Minangkabau Opera *Malin Nan Kondang* because she is only present in the story when Malin's loyalty is being tested. The figure of Puan Hamidah is only introduced to test Malin's fidelity.

The plot answers the question 'how' in the opening scene of a performance, while the theme answers the question about what is happening. The theme is connected to the mandate or message. There can be more than

one message in the drama as long as they are all related to the theme. The message is in line with the technique of searching for the theme. The theme in the Minangkabau Opera *Malin Nan Kondang* can be seen in the scenes presented. The message we can understand from the first scene is that Malin and Nilam hold firm to their promises. The message that appears in the second scene is Mandeh's advice to Malin that he should not take anything that rightfully belongs to someone else. In the third scene, Datuk (Malin's uncle) advises Malin never to take advantage of another person's limitations and always to remain faithful and decent. The fourth scene shows Nilam's determination being tested by Datuk Kayo who tries to seduce her. In the fifth scene, Malin and Nilam send letters to each other. Malin's loyalty to Nilam is also tested when Puan Hamidah falls in love with him. Malin refuses her advances and remains faithful to Nilam. The sixth scene contains the climax, when Mandeh forbids Malin to continue his relationship with Nilam. The seventh scene is the moment when Malin and Nilam are able to find a way out of their problems. The essence of the problem in the Minangkabau Opera *Malin Nan Kondang* is the fidelity and sacrifice of the characters (Malin and Nilam) who promise always to remain faithful until their death. Maintaining a relationship is of course full of obstacles such as those encountered by Malin and Nilam.

The texture of the performance of the Minangkabau Opera *Malin Nan Kondang* is related to what is heard (the dialogue) and seen (the spectacle), and what is felt (the mood). The dialogue in this performance is also presented through *gurindam* (singing) in the form of songs known as *dendang*. In an opera performance there are numerous events, and every event is closely related to the *gurindam* sung. The rhythms and content of the *dendang* match the different moods of the Minangkabau Opera *Malin Nan Kondang*. The first *dendang* (song) describes Malin and Nilam as children. Malin's ambition is to make his mother happy and to remain faithful to Nilam. The *dendang* also shows Malin and Nilam meeting when they are adults. Each new scene begins with a *dendang*.

The mood serves to build the atmosphere on the stage. The atmosphere is portrayed from the events with a dynamic tempo. A different mood is presented in every scene, including restlessness, sorrow, longing, and joy. In the Minangkabau Opera *Malin Nan Kondang* the first scene portrays restlessness. Malin is anxious that his fate never seems to change. Moving away from home is the only way to change his fate. A mood of sorrow is felt when Malin asks Mandeh's blessing on his decision to leave the village. Mandeh is sad but seeing Malin's determination, she gives her blessing and lets him go in spite of her tears. Meanwhile, Datuk (Malin's uncle) bids farewell to Malin, wishing him success wherever he goes. Malin's promise to Nilam binds them together in their longing for one another as they carry on with their lives. The trials faced by the two characters are just "trinkets of life" and they will manage to get through them. A mood of joy surrounds the two characters when they meet again in a scene of love and affection. They build a happy family together (a happy ending).

The spectacle (*mise en scene*) includes all the audio visual elements involved in the performance. The presence of the spectacle on the stage has an effect on the audience. The elements of the spectacle are the artistic layout, lighting, costume, properties and hand properties, *tapuak galembong*, and dance. The lighting supports the atmosphere of each scene. This includes the lighting resulting from the bias of the visual art which changes in every scene.

The costumes of the characters in the Minangkabau Opera *Malin Nan Kondang* suit the roles played by each of the characters. All the costumes portray Minangkabau culture. Malin wears black and red, a shirt and baggy trousers (*celana galembong*), and a piece of batik cloth as a belt. His golden yellow *sesampiang* and red trousers symbolize a man who is noble and courageous. His loose black shirt with gold edges symbolizes a rich man and the black color symbolizes determination. Nilam's costume is a *baju kurung basiba* with a cream color and *songket*. The loose-fitting dress is knee length and has a *sibaup* to the armpits. The long sleeves stretch down to the wrists, depicting a kind of woman who is obedient and every man would wish for.

The figure of Mandeh wears a blue and peach colored *baju kurung* and a batik skirt, as well as a *tikuluak*, the symbol of an older woman in Minangkabau. Her dress symbolizes a woman who is strong and loves her son deeply. The figure of Datuk wears the costume of a local Minangkabau leader. Puan Hamidah wears traditional Melayu clothes with a *baju kurung* and *songket* made into a black dress, a small gold ornament on her head, a red *salengadang songket* decorated with gold thread, and a gold necklace. Her clothes symbolize a rich, hardworking woman. The red color of the *songket* symbolizes determination and strong belief in herself. The makeup in the Minangkabau Opera *Malin Nan Kondang* is makeup for beauty, not character makeup. The performance of the Minangkabau Opera *Malin Nan Kondang* takes place on a proscenium stage, the performance style is realism, and there is a space between the players and the audience.

Style, according to Letwin, is a particular way of expression of a person, nation, or period of time. The way an artist manages their dialogue or chooses a color, the way a writer puts together words and phrases, the way an actor moves and wears their costume - all of these can create an effect that is different from another style (Letwin et al., 2008). The performance of the Minangkabau Opera *Malin Nan Kondang* is in a romantic style because of the storyline which tells us of the romantic struggles of Malin and Nilam. The characteristics of a romantic style, according to Harymawan, are: 1) freedom of form, 2) fantastic, often illogical content, 3) material

that involves killing, shouting in the dark, the victim of a murder coming back to life, sentimental characters, 4) importance of the beauty of language, 5) emphasis on the visual side in the directing, 6) acting that is passionate, bombastic, with exaggerated facial expressions (Harymawan, 1993). The performance of the Minangkabau Opera *Malin Nan Kondang* also has the characteristic of highlighting the beauty of language, which is manifested through the dialogue between the characters. In this performance the theme is one of faithfulness and sacrifice of the characters Malin and Nilam who are deeply in love with each other. In addition, the poetic words have the ability to hypnotize the audience and also to develop the feeling of love and affection of the characters.



Figure 1: one of the scenes in the Opera *Malin Nan Kondang* (photo: Iswandi)

5. Conclusion

The Minangkabau Opera *Malin Nan Kondang* produced by Institut Seni Indonesia (ISI) Padangpanjang presents an innovative performance which combines the concept of traditional art with the concept of modern art. The Minangkabau Opera *Malin Nan Kondang* contains a message of the love between two human beings. It is a sentimental, thrilling, and heartwarming story which arouses the emotions of the audience. This performance presents a particular perspective which makes the audience feel the romance, emotion, and tension created by the problems that occur. The Minangkabau Opera *Malin Nan Kondang* is accompanied by illustrations of traditional Minangkabau music, Melayu dance, and *Randai* movements.

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