Strategy and Alignment of Players with Characters Played in the “Sembadra Larung” Play in the Wayang Orang Sriwedari Show

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Abstract

The Wayang orang show is a puppet show in which the actors or players are humans. Wayang orang performances have theoretical and concrete teachings and values of life by presenting the lives of the characters as role models. The problem of this research is the difficulty experienced by actors in playing a character in a theatrical performance. For this reason, this study aims to provide information about the player's strategy and the harmony between the players and the characters played by the Sriwedari Wayang Orang performers. Study and performance values as one of the efforts to revitalize the current generation through preservation and local wisdom to maintain and care for noble values. This study uses qualitative research with a case study approach to the Wayang Orang Sriwedari, Surakarta. The theory used in this study is the acting theory of Oscar G Brockett and Robert J. Ball. The technique of data collection in this study is using observation and interview methods. Furthermore, the data were analyzed using the theory of Milles and Huberman including data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The results of the study can be concluded that the strategies carried out by actors or performers of Wayang Orang Sriwedari include imagination created and harmonized with the real life of the players, using clothes or costumes that match the characters, dressing up according to the characters, expressions of gestures and voice, psychological preparation and emotional by actors, looking for references by studying with seniors or looking for information on social media.

Keywords: Role Playing Strategies; Character Harmony; Wayang Orang Sriwedari; Performances

1. Introduction

Wayang orang or what is known by the public as wayang wong is a performance played by humans by combining the arts of drama with dance, vocals, music, and fine arts. Performance has the meaning of carrying out, execute, or being responsible for anything (Aini et al., 2023). In this case the wayang wong performance which means a dance drama with prose dialogue using human objects as characters referring to wayang kulit stories (Ariyani & Sulastuti, 2019). Wayang wong itself is a combination of the dramatic arts that developed in the West and wayang performances that grew and developed in Java and are performed based on the story of wayang (Ariyani & Sulastuti, 2019). One of the wayang orang performances that still exists today is the Wayang Orang Sriwedari. Wayang Orang Sriwedari originates from the Surakarta area, Central Java, and is a form of cultural art in Surakarta.
Wayang Orang Sriwedari Surakarta is classified as folklore or traditional cultural expressions that must be protected (Kusharyani et al., 2016). The existence of this protection leads to the social function of wayang orang as a tool for social interaction to maintain values and social order through art and cultural media so that the pattern of life becomes more aesthetic and harmonious in living harmony (Sari, 2016).

Wayang Orang Sriwedari was formed during the Islamic Mataram Kingdom and the reign of Paku Buwana X or around 1910. Wayang Orang Sriwedari experienced ups and downs in society until it experienced a setback in the 1970s to 1980s which was caused by internal factors due to the lack of regeneration in Wayang Orang Sriwedari and external factors for the lack of support from the surrounding community. One of the decisions of the Wayang Orang Sriwedari Organization is to choose to maintain its existence even in ups and downs. Once informed by the Wayang Orang Sriwedari performers, the wayang orang audience only reached four spectators, and even the people closest to the performers. This is what strengthens the Wayang Orang Sriwedari organization itself to continue to innovate and be creative so that the show does not perish and disappear due to a lack of appreciation from the public. Strengthened by the existence of artists who have status as permanent employees of the Surakarta City Government who have creativity and innovation bring Wayang Orang Sriwedari to continue performing (Puguh, 2023).

One of the most important roles in the Wayang Orang Sriwedari performance is the wayang orang players or actors. Actors are important elements whose job is to convey the ideas of the director or playwright to the audience (Erwida, 2016). The task of the actor or player is to express the character being played and need to have fluency in body language and verbal language (Hardani, 2020). The explanation was widened by Hardani that vocals become a vehicle for imagination that will determine how the performance is conveyed or not to the audience. Of course, every actor has his own characteristics in every character role he will play. This relates to the player's relationship or relationship to the strategies he creates according to the ability level of a player. In other words, wayang orang players carry a mission through an appreciation of the role played and will affect the attitude of the players in interacting in society (Sari, 2016).

Basically, as a medium for conveying messages, the intelligence of an actor can be seen from his success in playing a role that is out of his original self so that the audience sees the actor as the role he is playing and not about his real self (Hayat & Martozet, 2022). In other words, if a character is fully imbued with the actor, the original personality of the actor is considered lost by society. As for examples of actors who are considered successful in creating an image or image under the character he plays, among others, Anya Geraldine is considered successful in playing a female character who snatches someone's husband. Yuki Kato in the soap opera Heart, plays a tomboyish and mischievous girl. Nikita Willy, who in his role always gets the protagonist female character and is always blamed. As for Luna Maya, she is attached to the horror character she plays Suzanna. There is Dinda Kanya Dewi who was very iconic in playing the antagonist in the early 2000s with her character Mischa in the soap Cinta Fitri. These actors get positive and negative responses from the public for the characters they play. If an actor becomes an antagonist, then the psychological readiness of the actor is needed to get a negative response from society.

This is what will be described in this study, using the theory put forward by Broscat and Ball regarding the casting and training of an actor. There are thirteen aspects in Broscott's theory including *Actor's instrument, observation and imagination, concentration, basic stage vocabulary and convention, scene study, creating the role, psychological and emotional preparation, movement, gesture, and business, vocal characterization, memorization, and line readings, refining the role, dress rehearsals and performance and thinking about the actor's work*. This aspect is used to answer what strategies are carried out by the Sriwedari Wayang Orang players and to conclude whether the character played is successful or not based on the player's response to the character played.

Departing from the difficulties of society in a theater group, the process of acting which takes a long time to get into one character makes this research interesting to study. Especially as a creator in...
playing a character, an actor or player needs to pay attention to facial expressions, gestures, and body expressions, and master dialogue. Research that is similar to this research includes research conducted by (Kurnianto et al., 2022) with the title Figure Adang in the Black Dots Manuscript by Nasjah Djamin. The similarity of this research with research conducted by Kurnianto on role-playing strategies. An actor responds to obstacles in the process of finding his character by practicing vocal, body, and taste exercises. This study uses the theory of Boleslavky by using the concept of natural acting. The difference with this research is that this study uses the theory from Brocket and Ball through wayang orang performances in the play Sembadra Larung. Other research by (Irianto et al., 2022) regarding the Role of Mr. Duran in the Script of The Planned Death by August Strinberg Translated by Joko Kurnain, explores the workings of acting as a form of characterization. Using the acting method of Konstantin Stainslavsky, the actors carry out an analysis consisting of character analysis based on the types of their positions, analysis of characterizations based on character types, and analysis of characters based on character types, relationships between characters and the relationship between characters and the structure of the play. The research also concretizes that to realize the success of role-playing, 50 meetings of the training process are needed. The difference with this study leads to an analysis of the characterizations which are carried out independently by the performers of the Sriwedari Wayang Orang without any prior training process.

Based on the description above, the formulation of the problem of strategy and harmony between the players and the characters played in the Wayang Orang Sriwedari case study is obtained. The purpose of this study is to describe what strategies are used by the players and the harmony between the original characteristics of the players and the characters or characters played, are there similarities and what is the impact of these results. For this reason, the researcher chose the title Strategy of Stage Women and Harmony of Players with Characters Played in the Wayang Orang Sriwedari Show.

2. Research Methodology

This research used a descriptive case study approach by examining the status of a group of people, an object, and a set of conditions which were carried out at the Wayang Orang Sriwedari Performance Building in Surakarta, Indonesia. This case study approach focuses on the current phenomenon regarding the strategies of female performers in Wayang Orang Sriwedari. The design of the case study approach is the single case design which emphasizes research only on a single case unit which serves the purpose of knowing the role-playing strategy and the alignment of players in real life with what kind of character is played. The techniques used to obtain data and data sources are observation techniques and in-depth interviews. After the data is obtained, the data is analyzed using the Miles and Huberman method, namely by reducing data, presenting data, and conclusions.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Performance of the Wayang Orang Sriwedari Sembadra Larung Play

Based on the research objectives, the observation was carried out by researchers on Saturday, March 11, 2023. This activity was an activity of observing and interviewing the performance or performance of the Wayang Orang Sriwedari with the play Sembadra Larung. Preparation of the wayang orang performers begins at 18.30 WIB for make-up and wearing costumes. The wayang orang show starts at 20.00 WIB. Previously, at 19.30 WIB, the players and director gathered to discuss the storyline. The director provides information regarding the course of the story and changes in movement to the wayang orang performers.

The Sembadra Larung play has 3 backdrops or screenplays, the first screenplay with Tablo Bolong Ijo as the background with the addition of Ireng screen and Taman screen. Furthermore, the second color is Datulaya Madukara with the group Gisiking Bengawan, Marga, and Gisik Bengawan. In the third screen using the Wana screen. The players in the Sembadra Larung play are divided as follows.
Table 1. Names of players and Characters played in the Sembadra Larung play

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Characters Name</th>
<th>Players Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Burisrawa</td>
<td>Billy Aldi Kusuma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Durga</td>
<td>Harsini</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Sembadra 1</td>
<td>Erma Widyastuti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Sembadra 2</td>
<td>Mila Restu W, S.Sn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Janaka</td>
<td>I Rizal Suryanto, S.Pd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Kresna</td>
<td>Tri Ageng Giyanto Mukti, S.Sn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Kunthi</td>
<td>Sri Lestari P, S.Sn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Srikanthi</td>
<td>Rahma Putri P, S.Sn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Larasati</td>
<td>Titik Wibowo, S.Sn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Nakula</td>
<td>Andika Fery A, S.Sn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Sadewa</td>
<td>Kristianto, S.Sn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Puntadewa</td>
<td>Kolik Kusbandoro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Gathutkaca</td>
<td>Mahesani Tunjung Seto, S.Sn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Setyaki</td>
<td>Abi Baskoro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Werkudara</td>
<td>Sukoco Yulianto, S.Sn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Semar</td>
<td>Zamrud Hardjo Jekti W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Gareng</td>
<td>Heru Purwanto, S.Sn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Petruk</td>
<td>Risang Janur Wendo, S.Sn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Bagong</td>
<td>Perdana Pandu Kumara, S.Sn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Antasena</td>
<td>Guntur Kusumo Widegdo, S.Sn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Sembadra Larung play was directed by Dhestian Wahyu Setiadi, M.Sn. Based on the results of interviews with the director, the core story of Sembadra Larung tells the story of Burisrawa's love for Sembadra. Burisrawa's love or obsession with Sembadra and Sembadra's loyalty to Janaka resulted in Sembadra's death at the hands of Burisrawa. Burisrawa infiltrated the Madukara Knights and forced Sembadra to accept his love. Sembadra's refusal made Burisrawa's eyes even darker so he became very rude and scared Sembadra with a dagger. He threatens to scratch Sembadra's face so that Janaka doesn't like him anymore and divorces him.

Figure 1. The act of Sembadra forced to accept Burisrawa’s love
Source: Personal collection, 11 Maret 2023
Sembadra felt pressured by this, and in the end, Sembadra chose to commit suicide by striking the dagger in Burisrawa's hand. After the incident, Sembadra was floated into the river by orders from Yudhistira. After Sembadra was abandoned, Kresne, as Sembadra's older brother, ordered Gatutkaca, who was Sembadra's nephew, to watch over Sembadra and monitor who killed Sembadra. As soon as Gatutkaca left, it coincided with Antasena who was on his way to the Kingdom of Amarta. Antasena saw the crate/boat carrying Sembadra, and Antasena then approached the crate. He saw a woman sleeping in the coffin, and it turned out that the woman had not fainted, but had died.

Antasena's conscience tapped and he sprinkled the Tirta Mustikabumi Magic water on Sembadra's body. Instantly Sembadra came back to life and at the same time, Gatotkaca launched from the sky and attacked Antasena. The two fight each other. Finally, Sembadra separated the two and asked Antasena's origins. Sembadra and Gatotkaca are happy because Antasena is the son of Wrekudhara, which means Gatotkaca is Antasena's younger brother and Sembadra is his aunt. From that meeting, the three had an idea to frame who made Sembadra die. Finally, with the Kawistrawam chant, Antasena changed his form like Sembadra.

Figure 2 & 3. The scene before Sembadra is floated and the scene when Sembadra is floated
Source: Personal collection, 11 Maret 2023

Figure 4. The scene of Sembadra and Antasena planning to change form as Sembadra and trap them to find out who killed Sembadra.
Source: Personal collection, 11 Maret 2023
The fake Sembadra sang a song on the boat until it was heard by Burisrawa. Burisrawa approached him and apologized to Sembadra. Sticking to his belief in love, Burisrawa invites the fake Sembadra to continue to accept his love. Without thinking twice, Sembadra agreed to his invitation with the condition that he would make up his hair by taking the lice that had nested in Burisrawa's hair. It was then that the fake Sembadra took the opportunity to press Burisrawa's head until he almost fell. Burisrawa was shocked and this was repeated by Sembadra. In the end Burisrawa felt suspicious, and that's when the fake Sembadra changed back to his true form, namely Antareja. Simultaneously, Antareja beat Burisrawa and was assisted by Gatotkaca.

3.2 Discussion of Player Strategy and Alignment with the Characters Played in the "Sembadra Larung" Play

The theory (Brockett & Ball, 2004) has several stages in the acting process, namely actors' instruments which include the body, voice, imagination, concentration, and psychological response. Brockett and Ball explained that the instruments that actors need to have in all their parts have continuity. The actor's body has a soul or spirit that will carry out his will in imagining, remembering, and managing emotions (Widyastuti, 2008). Research (Supartono, 2017) says that the process of actors carrying out their bodies to enter into a character is carried out through body training by communicating with objects outside their bodies, or those around them, including the bodies that are around them. surroundings, and the application body process, the actor is declared ready to give birth to his body on the street or stage. This is useful for an actor to control himself through his voice and body to enter the desired character. It is clarified through research (Agustino et al., 2021) which considers this a communication of expression as a form of communication conveying meaning or feeling from a message with facial expressions or body movements.

In the theory put forward by Oscar G Brockett and Robert J. Ball, an actor will experience a psychological condition that can create tension before entering into a character. Then was explained by Brockett and Ball that "actor has been through improvisational theater games designed to break down inhibitions, build confidence, and foster trust in fellow performers". In the case of the Wayang Orang Sriwedari performers, this has been done by the Wayang Orang performers. Actors maintain healthy patterns in their bodies and maintain their vocal quality. This was conveyed by the actors who play the play Sembadra Larung that who maintain the quality of their voices by maintaining their diet and avoiding drinks or food that are not good for the health of their throats. The informant also added that the vocals and body health of the wayang orang performers play an important role in the continuation of the performance. This was also confirmed by other informants when the body is not ready to accept a character, it will affect the character itself. He added that being a wayang orang player requires readiness from within oneself both internally and externally. Especially in the Sriwedari Wayang Orang performance, there is no training before or after the performance, so the readiness of the individual performers is needed. For this reason, awareness of protecting an actor's body with awareness and sincere intentions must be carried out by the actor as a form of commitment to the process being carried out (Zulfajri, 2017). Regarding this matter, improvisation by wayang orang players is very necessary. The existence of confidence and cooperation between wayang orang players can reduce the occurrence of obstacles when staging. The Wayang Orang Sriwedari players in each performance improvise and cooperation between players and make agreements for each scene before the performance begins. Not only that, the junior players have more dialogue with the senior players to learn and gain knowledge to play a character. This collaboration, coupled with improvisation between players, can cover up stage play errors by actors (Agustino et al., 2021).

Brocket and Ball's next theory is that actors need to do "observation and imagination". Brocket and Ball added, in their explanation of observation and imagination are used by actors to develop behavior patterns of characters or characters to be played and imagined by determining and feeling the way of life experienced by the characters. Actors can determine the basic things that are attached to a character, for example, what his physical characteristics are like, his style or style of dress is like, and the
things that will become the image of a character. In addition, the main character or character traits also need to be considered by wayang orang players. The character of Putri Oyi and Putri Lanyap will have different characteristics. In practice, the Sriwedari Wayang Orang performers apply this the day before the performance is held. The day before, after the player gets a list of player names or dhapukan from the director, the player prepares himself to enter the character. The results of the interviews that the researchers got, the Sriwedari Wayang Orang performers made observations by reading literature about wayang characters and watching wayang orang or shadow puppet performances to get references about a character. In addition, in the process of imagination, the Sriwedari Wayang Orang performers have their ways. There are several players who, after making observations, then carry out their imagination by writing down what characteristics or characters they will play and visualizing it in their minds. As for some wayang orang performers, they do their imagination when they are already wearing costumes and make-up that are following the characters being played. According to wayang orang performers, make-up and costumes greatly influence the players to get into a character. According to him, the new appreciation starts after the player starts the make-up of a character. As for other theories from Brockett and Ball regarding "concentration, basic stage vocabulary and conventions, scene study, creating roles, psychological and emotional preparation, movement, gesture, and business, vocal characterization, memorization, and line reading, dress rehearsals and performance and thinking about the actor's work in performance has been fulfilled by the Wayang Orang Sriwedari performers. This becomes a strategy for wayang orang players as their contribution to the success of the performance. The results of interviews with several players in terms of concentration were carried out by the players in earnest before the performance and during the performance. The players have a character understanding of the puppet characters of the players since childhood. It can be explained that wayang orang performers are people who have been engaged in the arts of dance, music, fine arts, and drama since childhood. This has an impact on the understanding of the players to summon or restore their memories to enter into a character. Similar to the concentration part of the Wayang Orang performers, the basic vocabulary and conventions are also owned by the Wayang Orang Sriwedari performers. The performance of the Sriwedari Wayang Orang uses Javanese Krama or Krama Madya language, all players have received this provision. The players as a whole come from the Surakarta area of Central Java and some of the players are descendants of senior players who have retired in Wayang orang. It is not surprising that the Javanese Krama language has been attached to and mastered by the Wayang Orang Sriwedari performers.

In the problem of harmony between the original nature of the players and the characters or characters being played, it is the director's job to determine the suitability of the players playing the characters. The results that the researchers obtained by interviewing several Wayang Orang Sriwedari performers regarding the differences between the players and the characters or figures played were that the overall result was that the players had harmony with the characters played. One of the Sembadra actors in the Sembadra Larung play has a soft, gentle, patient character, keeps promises, is a devoted wife even though her husband has disappointed her a lot, and forgives easily. The role that the player gets is in harmony with the character of the puppet player himself. The similarity between the original characteristics of wayang orang performers and the play being played was validated by informants that the informant's character had a refined character with a gentle and patient stature. This has an impact on the difficulty level of players in playing the Sembadra character. Back to the director's role in choosing a suitable role for the player. The results of interviews with the director on character selection in Wayang Orang Sriwedari found that the assessment of gestures and facial expressions determines the character to be played. The director as a leader and owner of creative ideas in a show has full responsibility for selecting players for a character. The director needs to be thorough and sensitive and approach the body posture and character of the players based on a detailed analysis of the play (Sutrisno, 2020). Continuing with the actor's duties as the person chosen by the director, namely having the task of realizing the role concept that has been determined by the director, the two of them work together.
Conclusion

The strategy of playing wayang orang played by female players obtains conclusions or conveys meaning regarding the forms carried out by the players to achieve the goal of success in performance or performance. This is due to the changing roles or characters that are played every day, the strategy carried out by the players can be used as a benchmark for other actors to use it. As in the results of the discussion above, the Sriwedari Wayang Orang performers have a strategy by first imagining a role to be played. This is reinforced by psychological and emotional concentration and preparation by emptying himself first to get into character. Observations were also made by wayang orang performers by utilizing social media YouTube to explore a character. The players usually browse YouTube by looking for the desired character which includes makeup, movement, and kind of character voice. Before the wayang orang performers appear, they discuss how to determine the movements and carry out rehearsals together to achieve the success of a performance. One more thing, the players feel like entering into a character when the players have started dressing up and wearing costumes according to the characters. It should be underlined, the performers of Wayang Orang Sriwedari are performers who have been practicing dance, music, vocals, and visual arts since childhood, so that the performers are equipped with provisions from the start before they enter the world of Wayang Orang Sriwedari performances.

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