

## EMOTIONAL AND PHYSICAL DYNAMICS IN MONOLOGUE PERFORMANCES: A STUDY OF THE ACTING PROCESS IN THE MONOLOGUE "PIDATO" AT THE 2023 AP3SENI FESTIVAL

Yoga Yan Wardana<sup>1</sup>, Arif Hidajad<sup>2</sup>, Syaiful Qadar Basri<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>State University of Surabaya, Surabaya, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup>State University of Surabaya, Surabaya, Indonesia

<sup>3</sup>State University of Surabaya, Surabaya, Indonesia

Email: [yoga.21010@mhs.unesa.ac.id](mailto:yoga.21010@mhs.unesa.ac.id)

**Abstract:** This study examines the dynamics of emotions and the body in the acting process of Putu Fajar Arcana's monologue speech, which was performed at the AP2SENI 2023 Festival at Padang State University. The focus of the study is on the actor's strategies in managing body language and emotions to build dramatic intensity in a monologue that is laden with socio-political content. This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method, through direct observation, performance documentation, rehearsal notes, and in-depth interviews with actors and mentors. The results of the analysis show that the success of the actors' performance is determined by their skills in internalizing the character's inner conflict, mastery of vocal and gestural techniques, and imaginative space management. Stanislavski techniques, such as emotional memory, tempo-rhythm, and inner action, are used to build stable emotional continuity during the performance. The creation of a symbolic relationship with the audience is an important aspect in maintaining the energy of a monologue with minimal direct interaction. These findings emphasize the importance of acting as a creative process that holistically integrates the body, emotions, and social awareness. This research contributes to the development of monologue acting practices and provides pedagogical references for performing arts education, particularly in the processing of scripts with high dramatic intensity and reflective social criticism.

**Keywords:** Monologue acting, emotional dynamics, body expression, Stanislavski, political speeches, contemporary theater performances, AP2SENI

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Theater is a medium of cultural expression that not only conveys aesthetic value but also serves as a space for reflection and critique of social reality. In contemporary performing arts, the monologue holds a special place because it demands a high degree of emotional depth and physical mastery from a single actor. The monologue is not merely a one-voice narrative form, but an intense vehicle for presenting psychological, ideological, and emotional tension through the actor's body, which becomes the absolute center of dramatic representation (Pavis, 1998; Schechner, 2002). The performance of \*Pidato\* by Putu Fajar Arcana at the AP2SENI Festival 2023 serves as a concrete example of how the monologue is utilized as a densely meaningful tool for social critique, while simultaneously demanding a complex and layered acting performance.

However, academic studies examining the acting aspects of monologue performances in Indonesia, particularly from the perspective of emotional dynamics and bodily expression, remain very limited. Previous research has largely focused on script content analysis

(Widianto, 2022) or the socio-political context of the performance (Jani, 2023), without delving deeper into how the actor's body and emotions work simultaneously to convey a dense internal narrative. This gap highlights a significant lacuna in the study of Indonesian performing arts, where the actors' bodily experiences and emotional labor in monologue performances have not yet been extensively examined as the focal point of meaning production.

Theoretically, this study draws on Stanislavski's approach, which emphasizes the integration of emotional honesty and physical action in the acting process (Stanislavski, 2008), and enriches it with elements from Meisner and Brecht that highlight improvisation, spatial tension, and the actor-audience relationship as integral parts of performance dynamics. Empirically, the "Speech" monologue presents an intriguing case because it features a character grappling with moral responsibility in delivering a political speech, thereby demanding that the actor build inner intensity and precise gestures while alone on stage. This phenomenon is relevant to the Indonesian social context, which is marked by the dynamics of public communication and issues of leadership ethics.

Against this backdrop, this study is designed to answer the following question: How are emotional and physical dynamics constructed and manifested by the actor in the monologue performance of \*Pidato\* by Putu Fajar Arcana? The objectives of this study are: (1) to analyze the actors' performance strategies in simultaneously building emotional continuity and the power of bodily expression, and (2) to examine how actors manage space, sound, and imaginative contact with the audience in a solo performance that is thematically and emotionally complex.

This research contributes to the development of acting studies within the context of contemporary Indonesian performing arts, both theoretically in terms of understanding the concept of embodied acting, methodologically through a qualitative approach based on observation of the creative process, and practically as a pedagogical reference in performing arts education. Furthermore, this study reinforces the position of the monologue as a strategic performance form for voicing social criticism, fostering reflective awareness, and expanding theater practices rooted in the body, space, and emotional relationships.

## 2. METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using the case study method, as it focuses on an in-depth analysis of acting practices in the monologue performance \*Pidato\* by Putu Fajar Arcana at the 2023 AP2SENI Festival. This study positions the actor as the primary subject who embodies the dynamics of emotion and the body in a monologue theater performance, which is rich in socio-political content and demands high aesthetic standards. This approach is relevant in the study of performing arts, as it allows for a comprehensive exploration of creative processes and artistic strategies that are contextual and subjective.

The research was conducted at the AP2SENI 2023 Festival venue held at Padang State University in July 2023, and was expanded to include the preparation phase at the FBS Theater Studio at Surabaya State University, where the rehearsal process took place. The primary research subjects were the solo actor portraying the character

“Meller,” as well as the performance director, as parties directly involved in the artistic process. Subjects were selected through purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in the production process and in-depth knowledge of the staged work.

Data collection techniques were carried out through:

1. Direct participatory observation during rehearsals and performances to document body language, emotional shifts, blocking, and the actors' relationship with the space and the audience.
2. In-depth interviews with actors and directors to explore acting strategies, the process of character internalization, and reflections on the challenges of the monologue.
3. Documentation in the form of video recordings of performances, rehearsal photos, script notes, and blocking sketches.
4. Literature review of relevant sources, including the Speech script, Stanislavski's acting theory, and references on vocal techniques and physical expression in monologues.

The collected data was analyzed using a dramaturgical and phenomenological interpretive approach. Dramaturgical analysis was employed to examine narrative structure, emotional rhythm, and the integration of body, voice, and space in building dramatic tension. Meanwhile, the phenomenological approach was used to understand the actor's subjective experience in shaping the character emotionally and physically, as well as the meaning generated from the creative process. To ensure data validity, this study employed methodological triangulation (observation, interviews, and documentation) as well as source triangulation through data confirmation from the actor and the director. Validation of the results was conducted through member checking, which involves clarifying the findings with the informants to ensure the accuracy and representation of their experiences. The researchers also engaged in ongoing critical reflection to avoid subjective bias in the interpretation of data. Throughout the research process, all procedures were conducted in accordance with research ethics principles, including obtaining consent from informants, maintaining the confidentiality of personal information, and respecting the cultural values inherent in the performing arts practices under study. The researcher also provided the subjects with the opportunity to review and approve any quotations or interpretations of their statements in this publication.

#### 1. Research Design

This study employs a qualitative approach using the intrinsic case study method, as the primary focus is on gaining a deep understanding of the acting process within a specific performance: the monologue \*Pidato\* by Putu Fajar Arcana, staged at the AP2SENI Festival 2023. An intrinsic case study was chosen because the research object possesses unique artistic and conceptual value, rather than merely serving as a representation of a general phenomenon. This study emphasizes a contextual analysis of the solo actor's experiences and strategies in managing the body and emotions within a performance space characterized by minimal interaction.

#### 2. Research Subjects and Locations

The primary subjects of this study are the solo actor portraying the character “Meller” in the monologue \*Pidato\*, as well as the performance coach who guided the creative process from the script analysis stage through to the performance. Subjects were selected

through purposive sampling, based on their direct involvement in the artistic process.

The research locations are divided into two:

- a. Rehearsals took place at the FBS Theater Studio, Surabaya State University, where the actor intensively prepared for the performance.
- b. The performance took place at the Theater Building of the Faculty of Arts and Design, Padang State University, as part of the AP2SENI 2023 Festival series.

### 3. Data Collection Techniques

To obtain accurate and in-depth data, this study employs four primary techniques:

- a. **Direct Participatory Observation**  
Conducted during the rehearsal and performance processes. The researcher documents body language, vocal techniques, gestures, blocking, and emotional dynamics.
- b. **In-Depth Interviews**  
Conducted with the director and mentors to explore acting strategies, performance challenges, and reflections on emotional and technical experiences during the creative process.
- c. **Documentation**  
Includes photos of rehearsals, video recordings of the performance, script notes, blocking diagrams, and relevant production artifacts.
- d. **Literature Review**  
Includes studies of the Speech script, acting theories, and previous research on monologues, acting, and social criticism in theater.

### 4. Theoretical Framework

This study draws on a multidisciplinary and contextual framework of acting theory, including:

- a. **Stanislavski's Acting Theory.**  
It emphasizes a realistic approach with a focus on emotional memory, tempo-rhythm, inner action, and the circle of attention. This concept is used to analyze how actors bring characters to life through the integration of authentic emotions and physical actions.
- b. **Meisner Theory**  
Although better known in terms of actor-to-actor interactions, Meisner's principles of "being present" and "emotional preparation" are used to examine how actors respond to space and situation in a monologue, without a scene partner.
- c. **Brecht's Theory (Verfremdungseffekt)**  
Used to examine how actors create an aesthetic distance between themselves and the character to evoke critical awareness in the audience regarding the political speech being delivered.
- d. **Dramaturgical Approach (Erving Goffman)**  
Helps explain how actors manage their "social performance" on stage as a representation of the ideologies, public roles, and moralities they aim to critique.

This framework allows researchers to analyze the acting process not only from a technical perspective but also in terms of the representation of social discourse and political performativity embodied by the actor.

### 5. Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was conducted thematically and interpretatively, following these steps:

- a. Data Transcription and Coding  
Data from interviews and observation notes were transcribed, classified, and coded into themes such as: physical movement, emotional regulation, acting strategies, and political meaning.
- b. Dramaturgical Analysis  
Used to examine how the structure of the performance and the actors' actions build dramatic intensity and convey social messages to the audience.
- c. Phenomenological Interpretation  
Applied to understand the actors' subjective emotional experiences, including strategies for overcoming technical and psychological challenges in solo performances.

The entire analytical process is conducted reflectively and iteratively to capture the complex dynamics between the body, emotions, text, and social context.

#### 6. Research Validity and Ethics

To ensure data validity, the following strategies are employed:

- a. Methodological Triangulation: A combination of observation, interviews, and documentation is used to confirm findings.
- b. Source Triangulation: The perspectives of the actor and the mentor are compared to verify the creative process and interpretations.

This study employs a qualitative approach using the intrinsic case study method, as it specifically focuses on gaining an in-depth understanding of acting practices in the staging of the monologue \*Pidato\* by Putu Fajar Arcana. This case was selected not as a general representation of monologue performances, but because it possesses distinctive artistic and thematic value—namely, an intense fusion of emotion and the body within the context of a political speech—making it worthy of in-depth examination. The case study approach allows the researcher to explore the complexities of the artistic process within a real, reflective, and contextual framework.

The primary subjects of this study are the sole actor portraying the character “Meller” in the production of \*Pidato\*, as well as the performance director actively involved in the rehearsal process and conceptualization of the work. Subject selection was conducted purposefully, considering that they possess authority and direct involvement in the artistic process from the initial stages through to the conclusion of the performance. The research locations involved two main sites: first, the FBS Theater Studio at Surabaya State University as the location for the actor's intensive rehearsals, and second, the Theater Building of the Faculty of Arts and Design at Padang State University as the venue where the monologue performance took place during the 2023 AP2SENI Festival. These two locations provide distinct yet complementary contexts: one as a space for the creative process, and the other as a space for artistic expression in front of an audience.

Data collection was conducted using four main methods: observation, in-depth interviews, documentation, and literature review. Observations were conducted directly by the researcher during rehearsals and performances, noting details of physical expression, vocal techniques, gestures, blocking, and the emotional dynamics displayed by the actors. Additionally, in-depth interviews were conducted with actors and directors to explore acting strategies,

psychological challenges, and technical approaches used in shaping characters and performances. Documentation, including photos of the rehearsal process, performance videos, blocking diagrams, and the performance script, was used to enrich the analysis. Meanwhile, the literature review included references from works on acting theory, the monologue script \*Pidato\*, and relevant prior research in the fields of performing arts and monologue theater.

As a conceptual foundation, this study employs a multidisciplinary theoretical framework, drawing on the ideas of Stanislavski, Meisner, Brecht, and Goffman's dramaturgical approach. Stanislavski's theory serves as the primary basis for understanding how actors authentically bring characters to life through the techniques of emotional memory, inner action, tempo-rhythm, and the circle of attention, all of which appear significant in building the inner tension of the character "Meller." Meanwhile, although Meisner is better known in the context of dialogue between actors, the principles of "being present" and "emotional preparation" are used to analyze how the actor remains responsive and alive within the quiet, monologue-driven space with minimal feedback. From a Brechtian perspective, the presence of the *verfremdungseffekt*—or alienation effect—is also considered to assess the extent to which an actor creates distance between themselves and the character, thereby fostering a space for critical reflection among the audience. A dramaturgical approach serves as an analytical tool to unravel the relationship between the body, space, and meaning within the framework of social communication, where the actor's body functions as a medium for ideological representation.

The collected data was analyzed thematically and interpretatively. First, all observation and interview results were transcribed and coded into themes such as physical movement, emotional control, spatial management, and acting strategies. Dramaturgical analysis is used to examine how the narrative structure and action blocks within a monologue build dramatic tension, as well as how the actor's body serves as a semantic center that conveys social messages. Additionally, a phenomenological approach is employed to understand the actor's subjective emotional experiences, such as how they cope with self-doubt, role pressure, and emotional transitions during the performance. This interpretation allows for a deeper understanding of the relationship between inner intensity and physical gestures in the acting process.

To ensure data validity, this study employs methodological triangulation and source triangulation. Methodological triangulation is conducted by combining observation, interviews, and documentation as a means to verify findings from various perspectives. Source triangulation, meanwhile, was conducted by comparing narratives from the actor and the director to obtain a more holistic view of the staging process. Validation of the results was also carried out through member checking, which involves seeking confirmation from the research subjects regarding the researcher's interpretation of the data to prevent misrepresentation. This research was conducted in accordance with ethical principles, including obtaining verbal and written consent from informants, maintaining the confidentiality of personal information, and respecting cultural and artistic values within the context of the performing arts under study.

With this detailed methodological framework, the research is expected to make a methodological contribution to the study of monologue performance in Indonesia, as well as provide a solid foundation for the development of practical and pedagogical approaches to performing arts education more broadly.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1 Results



Figure 1 Emotional memory and inner action

The results of the observation indicate that the actor integrates acting techniques based on emotional memory and inner action (Stanislavski) to express the psychological dimensions of the character "Meller." This is evident in the actor's emotional control, which evolves in tandem with the character's development, as well as the use of the body as a medium for expression and narrative, where physical gestures reflect the character's feelings and inner journey (e.g., anxiety and moral uncertainty).



Figure 2 Artistic use of empty space through blocking strategies

Although the stage space was minimalist, the actors successfully utilized the empty space through carefully planned blocking. Shifts in stage positioning and the use of a podium created visual transitions that illustrated the character's crisis of legitimacy. An imaginative connection with the audience was established through eye contact and pauses, compelling the audience to think critically rather than simply getting lost in their emotions.

### 3.2 Discussion



Figure 3 The use of makeup as a means of visualizing the character "Meller"

The analysis reveals that the dramaturgical structure of this monologue is divided into three emotional phases—conviction, internal crisis, and reflective acceptance—marked by shifts in vocal intensity and body movement. The transitions between these phases, from a dramaturgical perspective, utilize changes in the actor's rhythm and body gestures, altering posture as a symbol of the character's inability to control their words and the situation. This demonstrates that the body also functions as a narrative-regulating element in theater, confirming the theory of performativity that links body movement to social and dramatic meaning.



Figure 4 The use of changes in an actor's rhythm and body language

This monologue is also highly relevant to Indonesia's socio-political context, particularly regarding public distrust of authoritative figures and the manipulative communication practices of the elite. Through the medium of monologue theater, this work serves as a critique of a style of public communication that has lost its connection to the truth, reflecting post-pandemic anxieties regarding the use of digital platforms by public figures to deliver ambiguous speeches that fail to address the realities of society. This demonstrates the relevance of monologue theater in the current socio-political context as a space for reflection and critical engagement with discourse.

### 4. CONCLUSION

This study synthesizes the dynamics of emotion and the body in the acting practice of the monologue performance \*Pidato\* as a form of solo performance rich in reflective and social-critical content. The study's findings indicate that the process of portraying the character "Meller" is achieved through the integration of Stanislavski's acting techniques—such as emotional memory, inner action, and tempo-

rhythm—which are intensively developed in the rehearsal space and manifested through the body as the primary medium of dramatic communication. The body is not merely a channel for emotional expression but serves as a narrative construct that conveys psychological conflict, social tension, and political irony in a symbolic and transformative manner.

The Speech Performance asserts that within the context of contemporary Indonesian monologues, the actor functions as both a sole narrator and an interpreter of social discourse through a performance that unites personal consciousness, collective emotion, and public critique. Techniques of spatial management and gesture are strategically employed to forge an imaginative connection with the audience, creating an aesthetic distance (Brechtian) that invites critical reflection. In this regard, the performance not only voices the character's anxieties but also serves as a representation of society's anxieties regarding the language of power and the crisis of public communication.

Conceptually, these findings enrich the discourse on monologue acting in Indonesian performing arts by emphasizing the importance of body-conscious and socially contextualized acting in the development of a single character. Methodologically, this study demonstrates that case studies based on creative experiences and direct documentation of the rehearsal process can serve as an effective approach to understanding contemporary acting practices. Meanwhile, its practical contribution lies in strengthening performing arts education, particularly in acting instruction that emphasizes the unity of emotion, body, space, and social context in the theater creation process.

This study has limitations regarding its narrow scope, focusing on a single monologue performance within a single festival, thus precluding generalization to other forms of monologue performances set in different contexts or employing distinct approaches. Furthermore, this study focuses more on the actor's perspective and has not yet systematically addressed audience perceptions. These limitations open opportunities for broader follow-up research, such as comparing acting styles in monologues across regions, exploring audience reception, or conducting interdisciplinary studies linking acting, political communication, and local cultural practices.

Thus, this study is expected to serve as a foundation for further research on monologue performance practices that are more contextual and reflective, and that contribute to strengthening Indonesia's performing arts ecosystem amid ever-evolving sociocultural dynamics.

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Yoga Yan Wardana as the author of the article  
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