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TRANSFORMING WAYANG FOR CONTEMPORARY AUDIENCES

Dramatic Expression in Purbo Asmoro's Style
1989–2015

PROEFSCHRIFT

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volgens besluit van het College voor Promoties
te verdedigen op dinsdag 28 juni 2016
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door
Kathryn Anne Emerson
geboren te Kalamazoo, Michigan, USA
in 1961

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	Prof. dr. J. Bor
	Dr. H.I.R. Hinzler
	Prof. dr. M.J. Klokke
	Prof. dr. Sumarsam (Wesleyan University)

Dedicated to:

my parents
Theodore Poindexter Emerson and Helen Jo Buckley Emerson
who brought me up with both the freedom to explore and the work ethic to make something of it

William W. Austin (1920–2000)
Professor Emeritus, Cornell University
for the hours of provocative discussion in class and out; his door always open, his belief in me unconditional

Purbo Asmoro
a dynamic, innovative performer and deep thinker
a dear friend and generous teacher
a greater inspiration with each year that passes

Wakidi Dwidjomartono
a source of never-ending musical inspiration, patience, and love



Figure 0-2: The opening to one of Purbo Asmoro's performances at Gadjah Mada University, Dec 2015 (photo by Djajusman).



Figure 0-3: Expressive *kayon* movements, Purbo Asmoro, Gadjah Mada University, Dec 2015 (photo by Djajusman).

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(cover and back design by Boedy Pasopati)

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My love for wayang began with three seminal moments: watching a *ruwatan*[1] outside of Solo in June 1986, hearing a dhalang sing elaborate *kombangan*[2] in the opening moments of a rehearsal in New York City in 1989, and, in 1991, being taught a *gendèr* and voice version of *Pathet Jingking* in the wee hours of the morning in a Washington, DC hotel suite. Ironically, my current experience of wayang almost never includes *ruwatan*, elaborate *kombangan*, or *Pathet Jingking*—all rare for today's purposes—yet, with those three enchanting moments, a future obsession was somehow sealed. My gratitude and appreciation go here to the many teachers, friends, mentors, family members, and performers who guided me along the way. These acknowledgements read like a chronology of my growth, resulting in the most crucial and relevant to the actual writing process itself falling toward the end. Since the path is a long and complex one, I felt this type of narrative, with acknowledgements interwoven, would be the most meaningful.

My first exposure to gamelan was through Marty H. Hatch, Professor of Ethnomusicology at Cornell University. Although I was entirely focused on Western music at the time, simply walking by the frequent gamelan performances in the Arts Quad made an indelible mark on my aesthetic psyche, and ultimately led me, five years later, to pursue Javanese gamelan studies. Thirty years later, in 2012, when I expressed dismay at the self-absorbed students just walking by Purbo Asmoro's troupe playing in a graduate hall on the same campus, Professor Hatch wisely pointed out the irony and we had quite a laugh.

Malcolm Bilson, my piano-performance professor and adviser at Cornell, taught me so much more than how to play the piano in the hundreds of hours he dedicated to me over four years. Under his expert tutelage, I learned how to practice, how to get the most out of the tone and unique characteristics of individual instruments, how to adjust technique to hand size and shape, and how to use historical context to inform interpretation. He also encouraged me to take risks as a musician, and taught me how to revel in a performance while also systematically and critically evaluating it. These are all skills I use extensively in both my gamelan performance-practice and my work in spontaneous translation for wayang.

William W. Austin, music theory professor at Cornell University, opened my eyes to a wide range of topics and viewpoints through his innovative courses and the one-on-one, provocative sessions in his Lincoln Hall studio. In our final session in May 1983, he said the following to me: "What you need is to go sit under a tree. Sit under a tree and think. There's a whole world of music, theater, expression, and creativity out there. Who knows? Who knows where you will end up? But wherever it is and whatever you do, it will always be fascinating to me. I promise you that. And it will be important." For his unparalleled expression of support over the years, I am forever grateful.

I am thankful to many other teachers: Louis Nagel of Interlochen, Phyllis Rappeport of Western Michigan University, Edith Oppens of Aspen Music Festival, and the professors at Queens College in New York, where I was exposed to the mental challenges of Schenkerian analysis and 12-tone composition. During my experience as a pianist with the

[1] A spiritual cleansing ceremony through wayang, in which the dhalang negotiates with the ogre Bethara Kala, offering him all sorts of appeasements and reciting special texts so that the ogre will allow the families, communities, or individuals requesting the *ruwatan* to live in peace and good health.

[2] Short phrases, or even single pitches, sung by the dhalang to match the melodic line of the gamelan music.

Ghoklyma Trio and a number of intensive summer chamber music festivals between 1980 and 1985, I came to the realization that I preferred ensemble work to solo playing, foreshadowing my fascination with the complex musical interactions in the gamelan ensemble. Thanks to the vision of curriculum directors at Queens College, every graduate-level music student was required to take private lessons on two non-Western instruments. After a semester of the Japanese flute (*shakuhachi)* and a semester of Ghanaian drumming, my curiosity about gamelan was piqued and memories of listening to the Cornell Arts Quad performances floated back. I joined the New York Consulate Gamelan group, studying under I.M. Harjito[3] and Anne Stebinger. This immediately led to a summer in Java in 1986.

Arriving in Solo off a night train from Jakarta, I was left by a *becak* driver at the massive doors of Joyokusuman in Gajahan (where the king of Solo used to house his elephants) at sunrise in June 1986.[4] Sitting in the *pendhapa* in a daze, with tropical gardens, birds, lizards, and frogs surrounding me, speaking very little Indonesian and not knowing a single soul in Solo, I was greeted by ethnomusicologist Marc Perlman later that morning when he awoke. That night he took me on the back of his motorcycle to the first wayang I had ever seen—a *ruwatan* by an elderly dhalang somewhere through the rice fields southwest of Solo. I would like to express my greatest appreciation to Marc for his guidance, wisdom, and friendship in the years since.

A few years later I had the good fortune to study with Midiyanto S. Putro in the Berkeley area for two years, moving there after being impressed by his abilities (including the *kombangan* mentioned above) when he performed in New York City in 1989. He not only brought me to a level on *gendèr* such that I was able to play for all-night wayang immediately upon reaching Java, but also introduced me to a number of distinguished dhalang based in Eromoko, Wonogiri, and, most importantly, to my husband, Wakidi Dwidjomartono. During the summer of 1991, I served as a guide for Sutino Hardokocarito's wayang troupe in residence at the Smithsonian Institute, under Midiyanto's direction. My deepest *sungkeman* go to all the dhalang from Wonogiri who allowed me into their world upon my move to Solo in 1991, and trusted me in the important role of *gendèr*: Sutino Hardokocarito, Suyati, Warsino Gunasukasno, Gito Brayut, Pujono, Marsono, Eko Sunarso, Lukito, and also Kasno Mudhocarito of Pajang, Solo.

I owe my gamelan playing and interpretation abilities to my original core of *karawitan* instructors once in Solo. I studied *gendèr* with Wahyopangrawit, Sukamso, and Sular (Eromoko); *kendhang* with Wakidi Dwidjomartono (a meticulous performance critic as well); *rebab* with my brother-in-law, Wakidjo Warsopangrawit, a formidable musical inspiration; and *sindhènan* with Suparni Setya Laras, Mulyani Cendhani Laras, and Darsono "édan." I am grateful to have had the opportunity to play in *klenèngan*, wayang, radio broadcasts, and rehearsals with all these masters—Suyadi Tejapangrawit and Suripto as well—for over two decades. The Pujangga Laras community has taught me about aesthetics and *rasa*, as have many other troupes, including: Dwidjolaras of Jakarta, Mayangkara, and Ngripto Raras. I am also grateful for nightly practice opportunities at Sriwedari Wayang Orang Theater, afternoons at PDMN with master pedagogue Suyatno, and the generous hearts of musicians all over Java, so open to having foreigners give it a try.

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[3] While it would be unthinkable to refer to a Javanese teacher without a title when speaking, even research in Indonesia is written up without such titles, to avoid inconsistencies, so I follow that practice here.

[4] It is amazing to consider now, that had I wandered across town to the *pendhapa* at ASKI, I might have caught a rehearsal for Purbo Asmoro's final exam, which was conducted in August 1986.

When I began a more intense focus on wayang, in 2004, I was overwhelmed by all the talents who so generously let me in on what they knew. I often spent my weekends in Solo interviewing and recording. I used to call these "genius day-tours" as I would get in the car in the morning and by the evening have been exposed to multiple sources of theory, facts, history, ideas, and inspiration without going more than a 20-kilometer radius from Solo proper. Bambang Suwarno specifically stands out in this regard—memories of dozens of visits to his colorful wayang-making studio, listening to him describe the detailed map of ideas that led to his creative innovations in wayang figures, and his role in developing *pakeliran padat*. Those who also offered invaluable insight through lengthy interviews on multiple occasions were Rahayu Supanggah, Manteb Soedharsono, Bambang Murtiyoso, Sumanto, Suyanto, Sri Dadi, Supadmi, Blacius Subono, Sugeng Nugroho, Jungkung Darmoyo, Sayoko Gondosaputro, Wahyu Prabowo Santosa, Tomo Pandoyo, Suratno, Sunardi, Toto Atmojo, Saguh Hadiraharjo, Gathot Sasminto, Gaib Widopandoyo, Hali Jarwosularso, Cahyo Kuntadi, Sigid Ariyanto, and Bayu Aji Pamungkas.

Between 1997 and 2009, I had the great fortune to work with the late Tristuti Rahmadi Suryasaputra, visiting his home on many occasions to discuss scripts and interpretation. To Kanjeng Gusti Harya Benowo (Kraton Solo) and Kondang H. Sutrisno (Head of PEPADI Pusat), two powerful wayang supporters with hearts of gold, I express my deepest thanks for their friendship and unity of purpose. Of course this list would be incomplete without a heartfelt expression of appreciation to ISI-Surakarta, as well as to former rectors Soetarno, Waridi, Slamet Suparno, and current rector Sri Rochana Widyastutieningrum. Special appreciation goes to the Pedalangan Department under the expert leadership of Sudarsono. Not to be forgotten are my talented video, translation, and live streaming documentation team of ten years: Kartiko Nugroho and Danang Susilo.

For my abilities in the Javanese language, credit is due, first and foremost, to my husband, Wakidi Dwidjomartono. He accepted a steep decline in the expressive quality of communication with his wife the day I announced, in 2004, that we would henceforth only speak in Javanese. He has been a staunch and welcome critic of my language use, finding the right time to detail my errors, post any interaction. Purbo Asmoro has been my formal Javanese teacher, of all levels and vocabulary sets from *ngoko* and *krama inggil* to Kawi and *basa pedhalangan*. He has shown immeasurable patience, openness, and generosity on a daily basis for over 12 years. Others who have guided me in Javanese are Endang Tri Winarni of UNS, every dhalang whose performances I have attended, every Javanese I have spoken Javanese with in the streets and on social occasions, and of course Ward Keeler, Bernard Arps, and Elinor C. Horne, all authors of useful grammar books to guide the Western student. I am grateful to Hardjo Susilo of Honolulu, Hawaii, for inspiring me to pursue the world of simultaneous translation. To Jennifer Lindsay and to all of the audiences reading my translations, many thanks for continued dialogue on the subject of simultaneous translation. I am indebted to John McGlynn and The Lontar Foundation for allowing me to realize my dream of publishing annotated translations in book as well as audio-visual format; the seven volumes and 33-hours of live footage in DVD-form entitled *The Wayang Educational Package* formed the seed idea for this dissertation.

Special thanks go to Stuart Frankel, who worked for over a year as copy editor of this dissertation, and would not accept a cent in return. His expertise has made me a better writer, while his clever sense of humor that infused every installment of feedback kept me going. I had a large group of friends who supported me in the work in one way or another

over the three years of dissertation writing. To Robert Cowherd in particular I will be forever grateful, as he was always willing to listen, give feedback, and be there as a friend. He had the rare talent to provide insight that went straight to the issue at hand, although wayang and gamelan are not his field. Special thanks go to Barry Drummond, who hosted me when I first moved to Solo and when I moved back to Cambridge for a year, and who has also been a great friend throughout my journey. Thanks also go to the support, feedback, and friendship I received from Sumarsam, Benjamin Brinner, Susan Walton, Marc Benamou, Alan Feinstein, Chris Miller, Sarah Weiss, Charley Sullivan, Phil Acimovic, Jon Rea, Gabriel Laufer, Carol Walker, Ellen Kampersal, and Rachel Hand. Financially, I could not have completed such an endeavor without the steady employment of Jakarta Intercultural School, as well as the administration's undying support in my pursuit of artistic activities. This included allowing me time to conduct tours, performances, and workshops related to my work with Purbo Asmoro.

The nature of my upbringing had a profound influence on my path. The type of researcher I became, as well as the lenses through which I view the artistic community in Solo, cannot be separated from the influence of my parents, Theodore P. Emerson and Helen Jo Buckley, and the nature of the small, interconnected, Solo-like community where I grew up, on Gull Lake, Michigan. My four grandparents, as well as my aunts, uncles, cousins, and my brother, Ted Emerson, also shaped who I am today, as I grew up in what was essentially a village. My husband, Wakidi Dwidjomartono, has given me so much in the time that I have been consumed by this dissertation; I can only express my eternal gratitude and love.

I could never have completed a doctorate without a program such as the one offered at the Leiden Institute of Area Studies. I was introduced to the idea by Marc Perlman and connected to the Leiden faculty by Robert Cowherd. The dream became a reality after I received the support of my promoter, Bernard Arps. I am grateful both for his time and for the time my doctoral committee spent on the reading and revision process. I appreciate all of their valuable input. Thanks also go to the PhD Council at The Leiden Institute of Area Studies, an active group that sent weekly invitations of all sorts, both academic and social, making me feel part of a community even though I was working from Jakarta.

Finally, and most profoundly, this work is shaped by the inspiring genius, Purbo Asmoro. For 12 years and counting we have conducted performances, workshops, seminars, and international tours together, as well as producing a major publication and developing plans for more projects. We have laughed, commiserated, enjoyed success, experienced loss, celebrated highlights and supported each other through hardships, shared countless precious moments, and even argued. Our working relationship and our friendship have grown with every month that has passed. Most valuable to the research specifically has been Purbo Asmoro's passion and integrity about who he is and what he stands for as a dhalang, as well as his uncanny ability to express so much, so poignantly, with such economy of words, be it in interviews, seminars, workshops, classes, or on stage.

This work is a melding of all of the influences mentioned above. However, all mistakes, misinterpretations, or misrepresentations are completely my own.

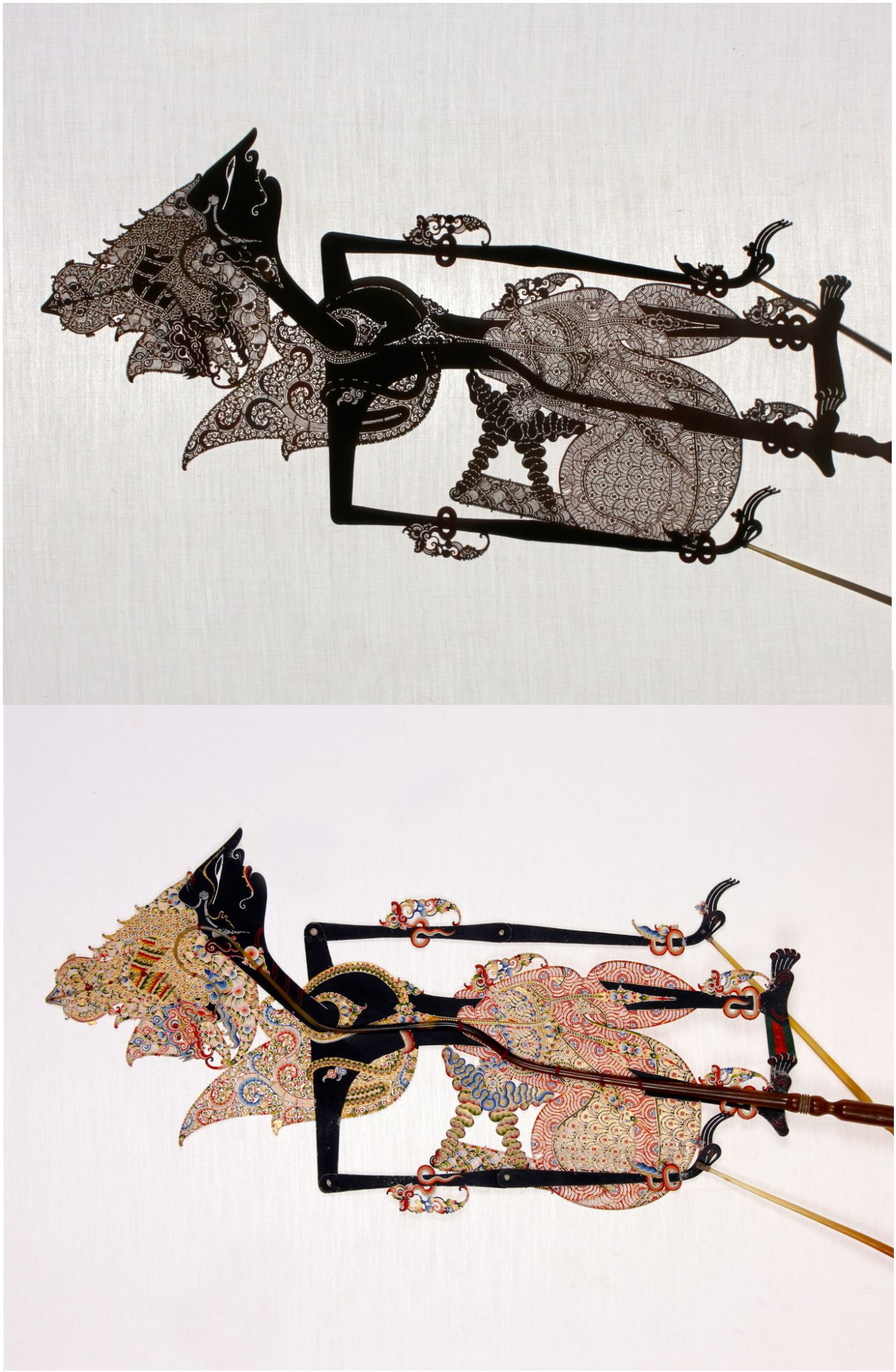


Figure 0-4: Kresna, in Purbo Asmoro's modern collection known as Kyai Bantala (photo by Kartiko Nugroho).

Wayang, *dhalang*, *lakon,* and *gamelan* will not be italicized as they are used frequently and will be assumed to be understood by readers. These and other Javanese terms may be used as singular or plural. For a complete alphabetical listing of terms and definitions used in the text, see the Glossary of Terms. For short biographical sketches of artists and scholars frequently mentioned, see Artists Cited in Text.

Wayang here refers specifically to Javanese *wayang kulit purwa*—a performance art from Central and East Java using flat puppets cut from raw water-buffalo hide (*wayang kulit*), which cast striking shadows due to their intricate carvings, and which are also elaborately painted (see Figure 0-4). "Purwa" refers to the body of stories told in this art form, based on the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* epics, as well as the *Jawa Déwa*, *Lokapala*, and *Arjunasasrabau* story cycles. Even more specifically, this publication examines the work of one artist, Purbo Asmoro, who was born in 1961 in Pacitan, East Java, but whose style is entirely based on performance practice from Surakarta (also known as Solo), Central Java and the surrounding areas: Klaten, Sragen, Wonogiri, Karanganyar, Sukoharjo, and Boyolali (see Figure 0-9). This work does not attempt in any way to comment on either the history or development of performance practice in Yogyakarta, Banyumas, Cirebon, East Java, or any other regions where *wayang kulit purwa* is performed. "Wayang" can refer to either the performance art as a whole, or to the actual puppet figures themselves.

Dhalang refers to the master performer (see cover and Figures 0-3, 0-8) who single-handedly manipulates the wayang, delivers all the dialogue and narration, and presents the unique personality, voice, gait, and point of view of every character on the screen. A successful dhalang must be a compelling actor, as well as a natural poet, gripping orator, talented vocalist, dynamic choreographer, creative scriptwriter, effective musical conductor, spontaneous comedian, astute political and social commentator, and efficient business manager. Beyond being a virtuosic manipulator of puppets and shadows, he (the vast majority are men, although there are some prominent female dhalang) must also have a deep understanding of stylized Javanese classical dance movements, and be able to make these come alive through the wayang figures. Beyond being a storyteller, he is expected to have a vast repertory of traditional plotlines at his fingertips. Beyond being a poet and script writer, he must be an expert linguist, able to handle the complexities of Javanese speech levels and vocabulary sets, from ancient to modern, while taking on the

personae of many different characters in quick succession. But most of all, he is an artist with something to say: a creative interpreter of stories, offering topical issues, moral messages, and conflict-rich scenarios for the audience to ponder through the colorful allegory of ancient tales.

Lakon are the stories as they are played out in wayang performances. These are not plays or scripts, but rather general plotlines fleshed out by the interpretation and spontaneity of the dhalang. Experienced dhalang never perform the same lakon (episode) in the same way twice. A dhalang will react to and integrate the needs of the sponsor, the situation, the audience, his own frame of mind, and current events at each performance—not just during the joke interludes, but in the way he unfolds the actual storyline itself. He will also inevitably change and grow as a performer, and over time come to present the same lakon in a multitude of ways with different twists and takes on the story.

In one authoritative encyclopedia of lakon synopses compiled in 1995 by dhalang Tristuti Rahmadi Suryasaputra, the *Mahabharata* is broken into 122 commonly performed lakon, while the *Ramayana* is broken into 26 commonly performed lakon (for summaries of these epics, see Appendix 1). Aside from these episodes, which are directly based on standard Indian or Javanese-version storylines (*pakem*), the Javanese have created hundreds of their own (*lakon carangan*), with more being created by each generation. While generally based on the same characters and overall story outcomes, *lakon carangan* explore various intrigues not existing in the older Indian or Javanese *Mahabharata* or *Ramayana*. Although there are books in which entire lakon are written out like plays—sometimes transcribed from a live performance and sometimes created by request prior to a specific performance—the most experienced, talented, and professional dhalang do not use these as scripts to be read straight through during a performance.

Gamelan here refers specifically to the musical ensemble from Solo, Central Java, which in the context of this work is used to accompany current-day wayang performances, an ensemble consisting of some 20 to 30 musicians (see Figure 0-5). Although predominantly an orchestra of bronze percussion, leadership roles are taken up by the drum (*kendhang*), and the lone bowed string instrument (*rebab*), while the vocalists are also prominent: female soloists called *pesindhèn*, and a chorus of male singers known as *gérong*. An absolutely central role in wayang is held by the *gendèr* player (see Figure 0-6), who plays almost non-stop throughout the night. She





Figure 0-5: Mayangkara gamelan troupe, Sukoharjo, 2007 (top and left) and Mayangkara *pesindhèn* section, Sasanamulya, Solo, 2008.





Figure 0-6: *Gendèr* player Bu Pringgo, also known as Bu Kris.

or he not only plays with the gamelan and during every poem the dhalang sings, but also creates a continuous musical and dramatic backdrop during dialogue and narrative sections, weaving together a polyphonic fabric of snippets and short melodies known as *grimingan*.

The Institute of Indonesian Arts in Solo is where many of the recent developments in wayang started. The performer featured in this study not only received his education there but also has been an instructor in the Pedalangan[5] Department since 1986. Thus there are frequent references to this institution. As it expanded over time it became known by three different names, corresponding to changes in its accreditation status. For historical accuracy, it will be referred to by three different acronyms (**ASKI**, **STSI**, or **ISI**) depending on the era being discussed. Unless otherwise noted, the Surakarta (Solo) branch of the institution is assumed. For more detailed information on each acronym, see the Glossary of Terms.



Figure 0-7: Purbo Asmoro in front of the main gateway of ISI Solo in 2008.

ASKI: *Akademi Seni Karawitan Indonesia* (Indonesian Academy of Gamelan Music), was founded in 1964 and known under this acronym until 1988.

STSI: *Sekolah Tinggi Seni Indonesia* (College of Indonesian Arts); this acronym was used 1988 to 2006.

ISI: *Institut Seni Indonesia* (Institute of Indonesian Arts); this acronym has been used 2006 to present.

[5] "Dhalang" is the Javanese spelling while "dalang," without the h, is Indonesian. When the prefix *pe-* and the suffix *–an* are added, the resulting *pedhalangan* refers to the field of study. Throughout this work, "Pedalangan Department" (Indonesian spelling, no italics) refers to the title of that department in a government school, whereas *pedhalangan* (lower case "p," with an "h," and in italics) is Javanese for the general field of study, thought, literature, philosophy, and performance practice involved in being a dhalang.







Figure 0-8: A few of Purbo Asmoro's facial expressions while performing (top photo by Djajusman).

ABBREVIATIONS

In the interest of allowing the titles of musical selections in the text to stand out, references to form, which traditionally accompany titles, will be abbreviated. For example, *Gendhing Cucurbawuk kethuk 2 kerep minggah Paréanom kethuk 4 kerep kalajengaken Ladrang Sri Katon katampèn Ketawang Sukma Ilang* would be written: *Gd Cucurbawuk kt 2 kr mg Parénom kalj Ldr Sri Katon ktm Ktw Sukma Ilang.* The abbreviations are listed here (for definitions, see the Glossary of Terms):

Gd – Gendhing
Ldr – Ladrang
Ktw – Ketawang
Ktw Gd – Ketawang Gendhing
Lnc – Lancaran
Jn – Jineman
kalj – kalajengaken
ktm – katampèn
mg – minggah
kt – kethuk
kr – kerep

ILLUSTRATIVE AUDIO-VISUAL EXAMPLES

There are references in the text to illustrative audio-visual examples that can be found in the commercially available Lontar DVDs (Asmoro 2014). For example, [MK-CInt 4, 12:36] means that the illustrative example can be found in the following Lontar recording: *Makutharama*, contemporary-interpretive style, disc 4, at the timing 12:36. Here is a table explaining the codes:[6]

code	lakon	style	style: English
MK-Class	*Makutharama* *(Rama's Crown)*	klasik	classical
MK-CInt	*Makutharama* *(Rama's Crown)*	garapan	contemporary-interpretive
MK-C	*Makutharama* *(Rama's Crown)*	padat	condensed
SRS-Class	*Sesaji Raja Suya* *(The Grand Offering of the Kings)*	klasik	classical
SRS-CInt	*Sesaji Raja Suya* *(The Grand Offering of the Kings)*	garapan	contemporary-interpretive
SRS-C	*Sesaji Raja Suya* *(The Grand Offering of the Kings)*	padat	condensed

[6] The timings sited are when using the application DVD Player. Slightly different timings have been noted when using other programs or applications.

VARIANT SPELLINGS

Diverse spellings are encountered whenever Javanese is put to paper, owing to a combination of many factors, such as: the shift from Javanese characters to Roman script, the influence of Dutch, Arabic, and other spelling systems, and the parallel existence in everyday life of Javanese and Indonesian.

In this work, the sounds |ɑ|, as in the *a* in father, and |ɔ|, as in the *aw* in law, are both spelled with the letter *a*. The|ɔ| sound is applied to any *a* in a final open syllable (as in *sirna,* or the second *a* in *karta*) or any penultimate open syllable where the final open syllable is also *a* (such as the *a*-s in *papa, tata,* and *krama*). This practice follows not only the *EYD Bahasa Jawa*,[7] but also publications currently coming out of ISI, as well as Purbo Asmoro's preference. This reserves the letter *o* for an entirely separate sound, as is the *o* in hope, when found in an open syllable. Hence *rosa* (physical strength) is made distinct from *rasa* (feeling); *loro* (the number two) from *lara* (to be ill); and *polo* (a crass word for the brain) from *pala* (nutmeg). The dental *d* and *t* (tip of tongue behind upper front teeth, the latter unaspirated) are distinguished from the post-alveolar *dh* and *th* (tip of the tongue curled slightly backwards, latter unaspirated). Diacritics are used to distinguish *è* and *é* from the mute *e* or schwa (*pepet)* sound, which is left unmarked. None of the older spellings for other sounds, such as *oe*, *dj*, or *tj*, are used except if as a preference in a person's name.

I attempt to spell peoples' names the way they prefer.[8] In Java, this is not always as easy as it may seem, due to uneven editing standards in some Indonesian publications, and historically a general tolerance for varied spellings when using Roman script. Many Javanese, however, prefer to spell the |ɔ| sound with an *o* when it appears in their own name. This helps guide pronunciation when the name is encountered by non-Javanese, and it reflects an Indonesian spelling of the name. Purbo Asmoro,[9] while quite strict about using *a* not *o* for the |ɔ| sound in Javanese text documents, prefers the three |ɔ| sounds in his own name to be spelled with *o*, yet it has appeared in print as both Purba Asmara and Poerbo Asmoro. Nartosabdo's name has been published by his own family members as Narto Sabdo, Nartosabdho, and Nartosabdo, while by ISI as Nartasabda.[10]

Current-day place names use Indonesian rather than Javanese spellings, so Wonogiri and Klaten, instead of Wanagiri and Klathèn. Names of characters and places within lakon though, are spelled according to the guidelines above: Abiyasa not Abiyoso, Kunthi not Kunti, Puntadéwa not Puntodewa, and the kingdom of Cèdhi, not Cedi.

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[7] *Ejaan Bahasa Jawa Yang Disempurnakan* (EYD Bahasa Jawa) is a guide to consistency in Javanese orthography developed by the Indonesian government in the 1980s.

[8] A trend in research at ISI since around 1990, is to spell the names of people still living according to their preference, but to spell the names of people passed away in accordance with EYD Bahasa Jawa, thus avoiding debates on the preferences of people no longer living. That policy was applied in the 2013 Lontar publications by Purbo Asmoro and Emerson, but not in this dissertation.

[9] The word *purba* is Javanese for "authority over," and *asmara* Javanese for "matters of love."

[10] Since *sabda* in Javanese is a literary term for "speech" and *sabdha* has no meaning, I use the "Nartosabdo" alternate. This is also upon the advice of two of his former musicians: Saguh Hadiraharjo and Gatot Sasminto.

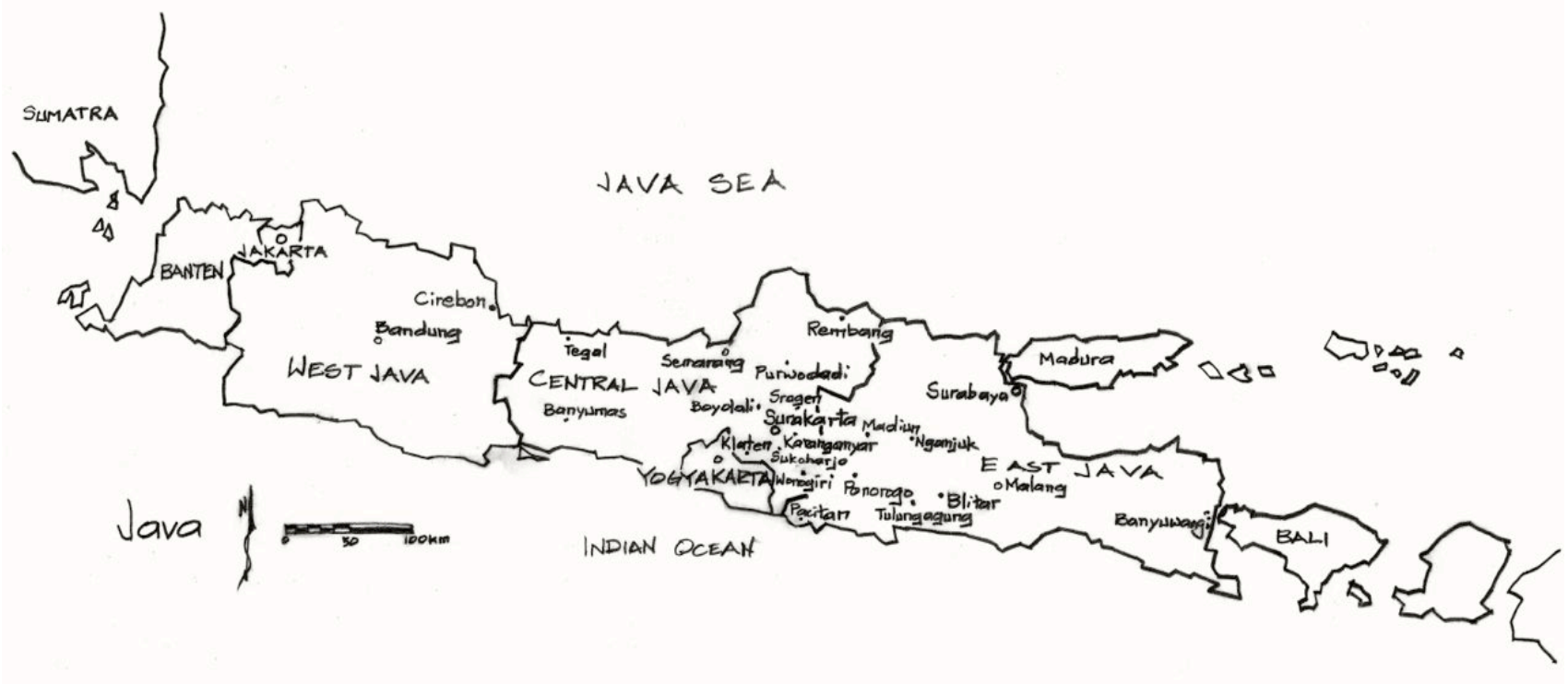


Figure 0-9:

Map of Java
Detail Map of Surakarta (Solo) and Surrounding Areas

(Maps drawn by Robert Cowherd.)



This dissertation concerns the cultural region known as "Surakarta Kota Madya" (The Greater Surakarta Area) with the city of Surakarta itself, also known as Solo, at its center. In the *pedhalangan* community this region is also known as:

Suba Suka Wana Sraten

(Surakarta-Boyolali-Sukoharjo-Karanganyar-Wonogiri-Sragen-Klaten). It does not include Yogyakarta, which is its own distinct governmental, and cultural, entity.

ONE

INTRODUCTION

> Java and wayang are two topics of discussion that surely have become quite tiresome by now. According to the annotated bibliography put together by Clara van Groenendael [in 1987], the number of works on wayang has reached more than 1,000. Can we not conclude that all issues concerning Java and wayang have been explored to a finish?
>
> I must state here that I am forced to answer this question in the negative. As long as these two entities are still with us, Java and wayang will always be in a state of change and flux and therefore will never have been explored to a close.
>
> Could we then at least say that, although they have not come to a close, the topics of wayang and Java are no longer of any importance except to wayang and Java themselves? Even in this case, I am forced to answer this statement in the negative.
>
> From an economic, political, social, and cultural perspective, Java remains a strong presence in the constellation that makes up life in Indonesia. Because of that, it holds importance as a constellation for the region as well as globally. And the reality remains that the Javanese art form of wayang continues to live for, be kept alive by, and enliven the Javanese identity to this day. [1]
>
> (Kayam 2001, 1)

Umar Kayam's *Kelir Tanpa Batas* (*A Screen without Limits*) examines the now infamous 1990s decade of wayang performance practice, dominated by superstar dhalang who were developing primarily only one aspect of wayang—wayang as entertainment. Wayang has historically held multiple functions simultaneously in Javanese life: as a ritual to forge harmony between humankind and greater forces

[1] All passages quoted from works originally in Indonesian or Javanese, and all quotes from informants in Java in a variety of situations, have been translated into English by Kathryn Emerson.

(other-worldly or natural); as a ceremony through which to mark rites of passage; as a medium through which to explore mysticism and spirituality, or even communicate with the spiritual world; as a complex aesthetic experience embedded with deep meaning ("high-brow"); as "low-brow" comedy filled with slapstick and bodily function jokes; as a medium to deliver messages, values, philosophy, history, teachings; and as entertainment, either in conjunction with or disconnected from any other functions.

In his critical look at two years in Central Javanese performance practice, 1993–1995, sociologist, novelist, and essayist Kayam describes the near "anarchy" that wayang reached during the 1990s, with the exclusive focus on wayang as entertainment. Many of the traditional practices regarding structure, storyline, and content were abandoned to offer the crowds instant gratification through popular attractions. The accepted "limits" of the world framed by the wayang screen were being pushed to the extreme in the name of entertainment. Moreover, an influential, high profile, and deliriously popular segment of the dhalang profession was responsible for exploring this direction, with the results increasingly broadcast on television.

In *Phenomenology of a Puppet Theatre* (2005) Jan Mrázek also discusses at length the dominance, expansion, and breaking of limits in the comic interludes of Solonese wayang in the 1990s. He offers extensive examples of how these entertainment scenes not only lengthened in duration, but also broadened in scope to encompass rock bands, *campursari* groups, comedians, on-stage interviews with local figures, singers and dancers standing on stage, and much more; and how, in some cases, the aesthetic of comedic attractions came to dominate the entire seven-hour performance.

In casual conversation, this era is commonly referred to by both dhalang and wayang critics as the era of *wayang hura-hura* (cheap, meaningless entertainment), *wayang néka-néka* (smorgasbord of unrelated and questionable attractions), or *wayang pantap* ("pantap" being made into an adjective, from the name of a committee, PANTAP, that sponsored many such wayang, see pages 127–134). Yet as evidenced in interviews with a myriad of dhalang across numerous affiliations and stylistic tendencies, the era is now referred to in the past tense. Whether speaking to the

middle-generation classicist Tomo Pandoyo, the elder classicist Sutino Hardokocarito, the radical classical innovator Purbo Asmoro,[2] the even more radical non-classical innovator Enthus Susmono, the young talents Sigid Ariyanto and Cahyo Kuntadi, the kings of "wayang as entertainment" Warseno "Slenk" and Djoko "Edan" Hadiwidjoyo, or the twin giants reigning over the entire wayang world Manteb Soedharsono and Anom Soeroto, the dominance of *hura-hura* performances in wayang is considered primarily over. What has taken its place? In his final words of conclusion Kayam ponders precisely this question: what direction will wayang take in the years after the publication of his book (2001, 282):

> Is this the moment for dhalang and the art of wayang to return to classicism and tradition—like that moment of transformation in so many lakon [when the mysterious, satanic imposter sheds his disguise and reveals himself to be the original, familiar main character he always was]? Or is what is normal and familiar from this point on going to be defined by the current situation, which has gone so far beyond the limits for so long that the imposter is now more familiar, and the original character would be the foreign entity?

In fact, by the time *Kelir Tanpa Batas* was published, a number of factors led to a turning back of the direction wayang had been taking in the 1990s.[3] Some dhalang returned to more classical practice, some simply softened the frenzy and extremity of their *hura-hura*-ness, and some, Purbo Asmoro in particular, began developing in other directions entirely.

Yet Another Work on Wayang?

Purbo Asmoro, a popular, albeit half-hearted, practitioner of *wayang hura-hura* in the 1990s, also devoted a significant portion of his artistic energy during that decade to developing an alternative. Throughout the 1990s he experimented with a new way to present wayang to mass audiences, and by 2000, his new style, referred to in intellectual circles as *pakeliran garap sedalu* (all-night contemporary-interpretive style or all-night *garapan*)[4] was not only the trademark of his performances, but also

[2] The distinction between innovation in the classical vein versus an innovator outside of the classical vein, was first discussed, as it relates to *pedhalangan*, in the writings of Sugeng Nugroho (instructor of *pedhalangan* at ISI) and is addressed more fully in Chapter 9.

[3] The *hura-hura* era is examined in Chapter 4.

[4] Throughout this work both phrases are used interchangeably: all-night contemporary-interpretive style and all-night *garapan* style.

beginning to spread among young, aspiring dhalang from the ISI-graduate pool. Founded upon the *padat*[5] movement initiated at ASKI in the 1970s, all-night contemporary-interpretive style was born in deliberate contrast to the direction the era of *hura-hura* was taking wayang. By 2010 all-night *garapan*, or rather some approximation of or reference to it, had become the style of choice among most popular dhalang.[6]

Not only will the topic of wayang performance-practice never "be explored to a finish" but also, as Kayam remarks, the art of Javanese wayang is in a continual state of change and flux that guarantees its remaining a topic always open for examination. Barely had his book been published when the all-night contemporary-interpretive style was born, in answer to the question Kayam posed. Did the satanic imposter (*wayang hura-hura*) win out in the end, or did wayang return to the "original, familiar character" (classical style)? Neither, it turns out. Instead, the original, familiar character was transformed in a way that, in most cases, rivaled and won out over the satanic imposter, retaining some of his classical characteristics, taking on some of the imposter's elements, but ultimately transformed.

Although Purbo Asmoro's all-night *garapan* was not the only reaction to the *wayang hura-hura* days (see Chapter 9 for other reactions) it turned out to be the most influential and most significant innovation in wayang for 25 years and counting, getting its start somewhat parallel to and then progressing well beyond the "wayang as entertainment" era. Hence, sure enough and as Kayam could have predicted, here before us lies yet another piece of writing on Javanese wayang: a work focused on all-night *garapan* style.

This work outlines the history of contemporary-interpretive style, its essential elements and identifying characteristics, Purbo Asmoro's creative processes in developing and working within this style, and the effect contemporary-interpretive style has had on other dhalang in the greater Solo area since its inception. It also explores Purbo Asmoro's musings, decisions, motives, strategies, and some of the deeper recesses of his thinking as an artist. Most importantly, this work analyzes

[5] *Padat* refers to a movement at ASKI in the 1970s to condense a wayang performance down to its essential elements. Chapter 3 explores the creation of this style in depth.

[6] This statement is based on the author's 14 years of observations at performances throughout Central Java, East Java, and Jakarta, 2001–2015. See p. 23 for more detail on the nature of these observations.

how all-night contemporary-interpretive style, in Purbo Asmoro's hands, has evolved into an entirely new system of performance practice rather than simply being stylistically innovative in a few characteristic ways.

Much of the material used to illustrate how Purbo Asmoro's all-night contemporary-interpretive style differs from what came before it comes from a project designed and conducted by Purbo Asmoro, involving six live performances over a one year period, 2007–2008. He performed two different lakon three times each: in all-night classical style, all-night contemporary-interpretive style, and condensed style. I then transcribed all the performances, translated them into English, constructed subtitles for the DVDs, and, in consultation with Purbo Asmoro, wrote extensive footnotes, appendices, and introductory material. The resulting body of work, published by the Lontar Foundation in 2013, is used here as a set of case studies to define and analyze the all-night contemporary-interpretive style, its origins in the *padat* style of the 1970s, and its predecessor in the various elements of classical style wayang.

This next section contextualizes my perspective and background as a researcher, providing an outline of how I came to the study of wayang and specifically the work of Purbo Asmoro. This is followed by a look at where this dissertation fits into the existing literature about wayang performance practice, and more about the methodology of this work.

One Student's Journey in the Early 1990s

When I arrived in Java in late 1991, I embarked on a two-year intensive journey as a *gendèr* player for a number of dhalang in the greater Wonogiri area, as well as one in Solo. The wayang in which I took part confirmed everything I had read about this art form and preceded precisely as I had been taught to expect in my private lessons in both New York City and Berkeley. As a *gendèr* player for Sutino Hardokocarito, Gita Kesowo Brayut, Warsino Gunosukasno, Suyati, Kasno Mudhocarito, Eko Sunarso, Marsono, Lukito, and Ragil Pujono, I faced significant technical, artistic and stamina-related challenges, to be sure. But the performances never presented anything foreign to the centuries-old classical tradition I had learned about before departing for Java. This would not be the case today for the vast majority of students

arriving in Solo for the first time from overseas. Assuming their preparation, like mine, was based on reading the available scholarly materials and rehearsing with their local gamelan group, most students would be in for quite a surprise upon arriving in Java.

Even back in 1991, it turned out that Wonogiri was in fact a pocket of traditionalism, as a trend had already swept across much of Central Java starting around 1990, which by 1994 hit Wonogiri as well—the trend described earlier, now referred to as the era of *wayang hura-hura*. In these various types of crowd-pleaser spectacles, a typical interlude (*Limbukan*, starting at about 11:00 PM and *Gara-gara*, starting at about 2:00 AM) lasted two hours or more, rather than the more standard 30 to 60 minutes. Stand-up comedians were invited to do long routines on stage, female singers were encouraged to stand up and dance tantalizingly before the audience, pop bands were set up to alternate with the gamelan, and various prominent guests were asked to come on stage and take turns singing or playing, regardless of talent. During battle scenes (which expanded from the typical 20 minutes to an hour or more) flashing lights, electronic sound effects, fiery sparks and other sensational devices were employed. A character losing a battle might be flung irreverently by the dhalang for effect, landing somewhere in the gamelan or even in the audience.

Although at this point I had branched out beyond my Wonogiri upbringing, I was not frequenting the fringe extremes of experimentalism, but rather still the most classically based dhalang. Yet, I once witnessed a dhalang lifting his leg up onto the banana log to smash a character with his foot. In one performance I attended, the *Gara-gara* interlude started at 1:00 AM and went to 4:00 AM, with the dhalang—a highly respected and internationally famous figure—never returning to the story. Even the 25 percent of performances that were not battle or entertainment scenes seemed vapid, and the gamelan accompaniment nothing but rough and abrasive. I took a break from wayang at this point, and turned to other gamelan studies, continuing to learn more about *gendèr* playing, and dedicating two to three years each to the study of *kendhang*, *rebab*, and *sindhènan*.

Exposure to Purbo Asmoro's Styles

A decade later, in 2004, a friend[7] gave me a recording of Purbo Asmoro performing *Banjaran Karna* (*The Life Story of Karna)*[8] from an event in Klaten the previous month. Although in fact I had recently decided to return to wayang, this time to study it through the language, poetry and story-lines, my superficial first impression was that this recording had no more potential than anything else I had been hearing around me. First of all, it did not start with the typical palace-classical opening pieces *Ayak-ayak* to *Kabor*, *Kawit*, or *Krawitan*, which I simplistically interpreted as a bad sign. *Limbukan* took up more than one entire disc, as did *Gara-gara*, another very bad sign in my mind. I had also, without really knowing a thing about it, rashly judged the condensed wayang style coming out of ISI (known as *padat*) as jolting and rushed. Many random moments I fast-forwarded to in the recording reminded me of this style. "Hmm…," I thought, and put the recording away.

Yet something did cause me to take a second look. As I listened more critically from the beginning and began to study the riveting dialogue, highly dramatic action, and meaningful structural innovations of this dhalang's performance, I came to realize that something very special was happening. This most certainly was not *wayang hura-hura*, and yet it was definitely not traditional, classical wayang either. It was also much more expansive and relaxed, not only in length but also in feel, than the condensed ISI style. I decided I needed to meet this dhalang and start attending his performances. What I was to realize much later was that although his performances were not *hura-hura*, not completely classical, and not quintessential ISI, Purbo Asmoro had in fact been all of these at one point or another. He had embarked on his professional career during the *hura-hura* era, learning to compromise his way through the quagmire of sponsor requests and audience demands challenging his principles and aesthetics. Yet he had experienced a completely classical upbringing in a long family lineage of dhalang, and had gone through his formal training during the height of *padat* exploration at ASKI.

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[7] Credit is due to Suraji, Karawitan Department at ISI Surakarta and founding member of Purbo Asmoro's troupe, Mayangkara, for his tireless attempts to attract my attention to Purbo Asmoro's performances during the period 2002–2004. This was not the first time he had tried to convince me that my studies should focus on Purbo Asmoro, but it was the only time he had enticed me with actual material.

[8] Usually, both the Javanese title and my English translation of it will be provided the first time a lakon is mentioned. Thereafter, sometimes only one or the other will be used, depending on context. A list of the title-translation equivalencies can be found in Appendix 3.

Not long after this initial exposure, in June 2004, I heard that Purbo Asmoro was performing in Lojiwetan, Solo, so I made a special trip to his house, introduced myself, and officially asked to record his upcoming performance for study purposes. To my surprise, the performance in Lojiwetan (lakon *Bima Suci* or *Bima As Sage*) turned out to be completely and utterly classical, at the request of the sponsor. It included the rarely played *Ayak-ayak Anjangmas* and *Damarkèli,* as well as extensive narration and palace *sulukan* (poems sung by the dhalang). A few nights later, I went to another performance of Purbo Asmoro's in Purwodadi (lakon *Bima Kembar* or *Twin Bimas*) and this time was able to witness the innovative structural crafting of scenes that I had noticed in *The Life Story of Karna* recording. A month later, I attended a 30-minute *padat* performance of his at ISI (lakon *Ramayana*), and was captivated by the integrity and dramatic power of his performance in yet a different format. I started to realize that this dhalang had an impressive flexibility of style.

Over the next two years, I recorded and studied over 70 of Purbo Asmoro's performances, some 50 or so in the newer style, which still mystified me, some 15 performances in classical style, and a handful in condensed style. In the weeks following each performance, I communicated at length with Purbo Asmoro about his methods, his preparation, his philosophy, and his outlook. I attended more and more performances in general and discovered that many younger dhalang were adopting his innovative techniques. I also came to understand the process by which all-night *garapan* was deliberately being taught at ISI, by Purbo Asmoro and others. This was clearly a crucial new development in wayang that needed documentation. By 2010, if one went to a month of performances in the Solo area by a random sample of dhalang, probably 90 percent would include a significant portion of the elements from the newer all-night *garapan* style and perhaps only 10 percent would be in classical, traditional style. Yet, virtually all written and audio-visual scholarly and educational materials on wayang reflected traditional, classical performance practice. Thus, as mentioned earlier, students arriving in Solo around 2010—unlike my experience back in 1991—would find wayang performances very different from what they had read and studied about in their home country. Conversely, if students had not done much reading about wayang prior to arriving and had jumped right into attending high-profile dhalang performances, they might never come to know

anything different from the all-night *garapan* style so prevalent by 2010. At this point I had also begun work as Purbo Asmoro's translator when he conducted tours overseas or performed for foreign audiences in Java. I started to feel frustrated and also took on a sense of responsibility. Although I could translate the words in his performances, I had no materials with which to help facilitate an understanding of his new style and how it diverges from what is broadly known as classical style.

A Project Takes Shape

By early 2007 I developed a plan: to record Purbo Asmoro performing a single wayang episode in classical, contemporary-interpretive, and condensed styles and then to repeat that exercise with a different lakon, and to offer up the resulting six performances (with English and Indonesian text, subtitles on the films, endnotes, and analysis) to those interested in understanding current performance practice in Solonese wayang. The Lontar Foundation in Jakarta (a publisher specializing in the translation of Indonesian works into English) took up the challenge financially and began supporting the project. It was planned like a scientific experiment: performances by the same dhalang, with the same musicians, presenting the same lakon to the same audience base (the two contemporary-interpretive wayang in Pacitan, the classical ones in Solo and the condensed performances in Jakarta),[9] so that examination of each style in isolation would be possible. Now it was up to Purbo Asmoro to choose the two lakon. After much contemplation he settled on *Makutharama* (*Rama's Crown*) and *Sesaji Raja Suya* (*The Grand Offering of the Kings)*. The recordings were conducted over one year, so as to ensure comparisons could be made among performances from the same era of Purbo Asmoro's artistic development. It is these recordings that form much of the material used in Chapters 5–7 of this work.

[9] Consideration of the audience base was a crucial factor for allowing Purbo Asmoro artistic freedom. The two classical performances had to be conducted in rather elite and protected communities in Solo (at ISI and at the home of Rahayu Supanggah, a world-renowned composer) so that the dhalang could settle in to the esoteric and slow-paced artistry without fear of audience disgruntlement or even rebellion. The two condensed stories were performed for the foreign diplomatic and Indonesian business communities in Jakarta, as is the typical venue for *padat* performances these days. The sprawling, open field of Pacitan's town square, where over 3,000 could gather to watch their superstar idol Purbo Asmoro perform in the style of "today," was perfect for the two all-night *garapan* performances.

In the chapters that follow I briefly outline the structure of a typical classical performance, even though much has already been written on this topic. Then I present the history of the condensed style that was developed at ASKI in the 1970s. Chapter 4 outlines what led Purbo Asmoro to create his all-night contemporary-interpretive style, born from the concepts of *padat.* In Chapters 5–7, I take the reader on a walk through all-night *garapan* performances and how they compare to the experience of watching a classical or *padat* version of the same lakon.

Chapter 8 explores multi-episode (multi-lakon) constructions. There are a number of different categories in Purbo Asmoro's all-night *garapan* repertory: single lakon like those used as case studies in Chapters 3–7; two or three consecutive lakon melded together over one night; or, one of his trademark specialties, examining the life of a single character by creating a new lakon from fragments of many existing episodes or lakon. This form is known as *lakon banjaran*. In Chapter 8, I address these other categories of lakon structure in all-night *garapan* style. Finally, I offer some context in Chapter 9, by briefly describing a number of other all-night *garapan* practitioners, how they differ from Purbo Asmoro, and their background or views. This chapter includes information on how ISI educates dhalang in the classical, *padat*, and all-night contemporary-interpretive styles.

The Work in Context: A Literature Review

This work takes its place next to well over a thousand writings on wayang written over the past two centuries, one of the earliest being Raffles's brief description of wayang performances in his *History of Java* (1811–1816). Since the 1800s, scholars and interested observers have examined the art of Javanese wayang from varying perspectives. Foreigners, whether as explorers, colonialists, tourists, or scholars, have offered their comments and observations on wayang through diaries, memoirs, historical and anthropological accounts, annotated lakon translations, and in-depth analyses of the art form during their era. Not surprisingly, due to their access, the Dutch dominated the field of published works on wayang for about a century (1845–1945), after which the topic opened up to a more international pool including other European researchers, as well as Americans, Japanese, and Australians.

While most of the non-Indonesian works were by scholars, most of the Javanese writings on wayang, up until the 1990s, came not from scholars but from practicing dhalang, pedagogues, writers, and storytellers. Since the mid-1990s, studies have increasingly been conducted by Indonesian graduate students and professors. The most notable of these works on Javanese *wayang kulit purwa* by Indonesians, have come out of ISI Surakarta's Pedalangan Department, Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta's Graduate Studies in Performance and Visual Arts Department, and UNS-Sebelas Maret's Javanese Studies Department.[10]

Writings exist on almost every topic imaginable in the field of Javanese *wayang kulit purwa*. For over 150 years, scholars have speculated on the origin of wayang (Hazeu 1897, Rassers 1922, Kats 1923, Ras 1976, Supanggah 2007). For equally as long, writers have engaged in discourse concerning the Indian versions of the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* versus the Javanese retellings (Cohen 1860, Sears 1996, Perlman 1991/2003), as well as the parameters that define the term *lakon carangan* (Mechelen 1879, Feinstein 1986). Researchers have examined the place wayang holds in society (Hazeu 1897, Anderson 1969, Holt 1967, Keeler 1987, Kayam 2001), as well as its religious and spiritual elements (Mangkunegara VII 1933, Sastroamidjojo 1964, Matsumoto 1975, Sears 1996, and works by the prolific pop-mystic Purwadi, 1995 to the present). They have looked into the language of wayang (Roorda 1869, Soetrisno 1976, Nugroho 1991, Harpawati 1999, Asmoro 2008), the gamelan accompaniment for wayang (Nojowirongko 1958, Plantema 1992, Brinner 1995, Mrázek 2005, Weiss 2007, Supanggah 2011), the movement techniques used by dhalang (Long 1982, Asmoro 2002), and the artistry and symbolism in the wayang figures themselves (Poensen 1872, Serrurier 1896, Mellema 1954, Mrázek 2005, Angst 2007, Katz-Harris 2010, Suwarno 2014). Authors have compiled numerous lakon outlines and synopses, from the early Dutch collections in the 1800s, to the collections by Tristuti (1980–2000), and those by Manteb Soedharsono's grassroots fan club (PSMS 2011). This particular work, however, examines specifically the creative processes and innovations of one dhalang, Purbo Asmoro. It therefore builds specifically on the work of researchers from the past 150 years who have

[10] The official name of this neighbor of ISI's, also located in the northeast corner of Solo, is Universitas Negeri Surakarta, abbreviated UNS. The university was founded on 11 (*sebelas* in Indonesian) March 1976, and so is popularly known as "Universitas Sebelas Maret." In this work it will be cited as "UNS-Sebelas Maret."

either discussed stylistics, traced the development of a particular innovation, or examined the working habits and processes of a particular dhalang. Literature from these three categories is examined in the section below.

Writings That Address Stylistics

This work discusses the stylistic differences between classical, condensed, and contemporary-interpretive performance practice, and hence stands on the shoulders of previous authors who have written about either classical, condensed, or more recent styles.

Performance-Practice Manuals

Some of the first writings to delineate classical style, were manuals meant to educate dhalang in the performance practice of the palaces. Kusumadilaga's extensive *Serat Sastramiruda* from the 1870s and Nojowirongko's *Serat Tuntunan Pedhalangan* from the 1950s are both still widely referenced among practicing dhalang today. Often a respected pedagogue would create a suggested script, which would then for generations become a kind of text and guide: *Jaladara Rabi* by Reditanaya, *Irawan Rabi* by Nojowirongko, and *Makutharama* by Wignyosoetarno are some examples from the 1930–1950s. Modern examples are the proliferation of manuals put out regularly by the ISI Pedalangan Department, such as *Buku Ajar Pakeliran Gaya Pokok V* (Sunardi, 2003) and *Buku Petunjuk Praktikum Pakeliran Gaya Surakarta* (Asmoro et al., 2006), the latter of which has the additional feature of a series of practice videos, that are now accessible on YouTube.

Lakon Translations of Study Texts

Lakon translations into Dutch, German, Japanese, and English have served a similar purpose to performance-practice manuals, but are created to communicate information about classical wayang performance-practice to a foreign audience. Such translations present examples of full performances by respected, authoritative dhalang and usually include explanatory material. The first translation of a lakon dates back some 170 years ago, when in 1846 the Dutch researcher J.A. Wilkens published a complete transcript of the lakon *Pregiwa* in the journal *Tijdschrift voor*

Nederlandsch-Indie. *Pregiwa* was reportedly recited directly to Wilkens by the dhalang Redisuto of the Karaton Kasunanan Surakarta (the main palace in Solo, referred to in this work as Kraton Solo). Wilkens then translated the transcript into Dutch and in his introduction to wayang entitled *Wajangvoorstelling*, provided commentary, information on characters, and notes on various Javanese phrases and expressions.[11]

In the 26-year period between 1872 and 1898, four more Javanese-to-Dutch translations were published, all with extensive notes and annotations: Poensen's translation of the lakon *Palasara* (1872), Humme's translation of the lakon *Abiyasa* (1878), Vliet's translation of *Pandhoe* (1879), and Hazeu's translation of *Arimba* (1898). [12] Tjan Tjoe Siem's PhD dissertation (1938) included a translation of an 1884 transcription of *Kurupati Rabi (The Marriage of Kurupati)*, and in 1976 J.J. Ras translated the 1968 study text *Sembadra Larung* (*De schending van Soebadra* or *Sembadra Floats Off*) by the pedagogue Kodiron.

Only some 50 years ago were the first complete translations of lakon into English published. James Brandon's *On Thrones of Gold* (1970 and 1993) gives an introduction to the various technical, stylistic, and structural aspects of a traditional Central Javanese wayang performance. He includes three all-night wayang "plays" in English: *The Reincarnation of Rama* (from a study text by Siswoharsoyo), *The Marriage of Irawan* (from Nojowirongko's 1976 study text), and *The Death of Karna* (created by Brandon and his colleagues from a synopsis). In 1994, Helen Pausacker also contributed to the literature with her richly annotated English translation of Wignyosoetarno's PDMN[13] study text, *Makutharama*.

None of the lakon translations above arose from actual live performances, but rather from study texts written by pedagogues. They are meant to stand as ideal examples of the art rather than as genuine representations of what was actually presented during a live performance. Their discussions of classical style differ significantly from the section on classical style in this work, which is based entirely

[11] Much of the information here on writings about wayang in the 1800s comes from Clara van Groenendael (1987). I relied heavily on her descriptions of these works. However, I did have the opportunity in March 2013, in a series of visits to the KITLV library in Leiden, to access the works and see what format they took. As for Wilkens' transcription and translation appearing in the 1846 TNI journal, I am indebted to Marc Perlman of Brown University for sending me a scan of the complete copy.

[12] All four of these titles—*Palasara*, *Abiyasa*, *Pandhoe*, and *Arimba*—are names of characters.

[13] PDMN stands for Pasinaon Dhalang ing Mangkunegaran, a court *pedhalangan* school in Solo described further on page 30.

on live performances and reflects "classical" as it is interpreted more recently, post-1985.

Lakon Translations of Live Performances

It was only some 35 years ago that the first translation was published of an actual live performance rather than of a theoretical script, allowing the foreign reader access to stylistics as they actually occurred on stage. In 1977 the German researcher Peter Wilhelm Pink translated a performance by dhalang Soetrisno (senior ASKI instructor in the Pedalangan Department) of *Gathutkaca Nagih Janji (Gathutkaca Insists a Promise Be Kept)*, conducted in Jakarta for a circumcision. Pink's German translation, *Gathutkaca fordert die Einlösung eines Versprechens*, is accompanied by a complete Javanese transcription, notes on the question of Javanese versus Indian retellings, and comments on the idea of improvisation versus preset and memorized material.

The first English translations created from transcripts of live wayang performances emerged only in the late 1990s. In 1998–1999, the Lontar Foundation published a five-book series of live performance translations, one of which was by a Solo-style dhalang: Klaten performer Gaib Widopandoyo's *Gathutkaca on Trial* (*Gathutkaca Dakwa*), translated in 1999 by Gloria Soepomo Poedjosoedarmo. As Suyenaga comments in the Editor's Note to the translations: "This series reflects wayang as it is actually performed, not as a pristine script. These performances are complete with interruptions, mistakes, and casual banter between performers."

In 2007, Jennifer Lindsay and Amrih Widodo completed a translation of *Mayat Miring*, based on a transcript by Roger Long of a 1967 live performance by Panut Darmoko of Nganjuk, East Java. The thoughtful and unique translation focuses on language stylistics. Lindsay accessed a wide variety of English language prototypes in an attempt to replicate the wayang experience of mixing archaic, modern-literary, and modern-everyday language. This work was not published. In 1991 Daniel McGuire and Lukman Aris worked on a translation of *Kilatbuwana* from a 1984 live performance by Tristuti Rahmadi Suryasaputra, but this was never published.[14]

[14] The titles *Mayat Miring* and *Kilatbuwana* are names of characters.

Studies meant to document stylistics were made ever more effective with audio documentation, and later on visual as well. In 1995, a three-CD set came out of sections from Anom Soeroto's 1987 performance of *Déwa Ruci* in Amsterdam, which was the first published audio documentation of wayang with extensive notes. The three-and-a-half hours of audio footage are accompanied by a 30-page booklet of introductory information and synopsis by Bernard Arps. In *Tall Tree, Nest of the Wind* (2016), Arps provides a complete translation of the performance in English, with extension annotation through a philological lens.[15]

Discussions of *Pakeliran Padat* Stylistics

A number of works have briefly mentioned the evolution of *pakeliran padat* (condensed style) at ASKI in the 1970s. The ultimate authority on this style is considered to be Sudarko's *Pakeliran Padat: Pembentukan dan Penyebaran* (2003), as Sudarko was a student during the creation of the *padat* form in the mid-1970s. Arps offers a history of stylistic developments in his article "Volkstradities en instituties in het middenjavaanse wayangtheater" (1985), with a large section on *pakeliran padat* and the way it differs from classical wayang performance practice. Brinner describes differences in interaction between musicians and dhalang in *pakeliran padat* in his article "Performer Interaction in a New Form of Javanese Wayang" (1992). In 2000, the first audio-visual documentation of wayang with English subtitles was made available, when Gelar-Senawangi published a *padat* version of *Déwa Ruci* by Manteb Soedharsono. This recording does not have any supplemental materials however, and does not include a transcription, or any commentary or analysis.

The Lontar Project: A Precursor to This Dissertation

Purbo Asmoro and Kathryn Emerson's seven-volume and 21-DVD (33 hours of live footage) *Wayang Educational Package*, published by Lontar in 2013–2014, is the most

[15] Weintraub's detailed examination of dhalang Asep Sunaryo's style in *Power Plays: Wayang Golek Puppet Theater of West Java,* and Lysloff's *Srikandhi Dances Lènggèr: A performance of music and shadow theater*, a detailed look at the style of Banyumasan legend Sugino Siswocarito, fall out of the scope of this work as not Solo-style. Both, however, contain audio material as well as transcripts and translations, both focus on one dhalang's stylistics, and both reflect a close relationship between dhalang and researcher, as is the case with this work. Hence Weintraub's study of Asep Sunaryo's Sundanese style, Lysloff's study of Sugino Siswocarito's Banyumasan style, Arps's study of Anom Soeroto's classical performance, and this study of Purbo Asmoro's Solonese contemporary style, will form a useful quartet for researchers.

recent examination of stylistics to be published, and forms the basis of this dissertation. The intent of the Lontar work, and of this dissertation as well, is manifold: to explore the term "classical" and offer a current interpretation of the term that includes palace-style, village-style, and Nartosabdo-style; to present a detailed timeline of how the condensed style developed at ASKI in the 1970s; to document the emergence of the *hura-hura* era of wayang; and finally, to analyze how Purbo Asmoro, affected by all these styles and movements, came to develop his all-night *garapan* style. Unlike previous works on style, both the Lontar project and this dissertation are comparative studies, since they arose during an era in which at least four broad categories of styles co-exist in performance practice: classical, condensed, *hura-hura*, and contemporary-interpretive. The Lontar books and DVDs offer complete Javanese transcripts, full translations of six performances into both English and Indonesian, uncut audio-visual material of all six performances (with subtitles in both languages) and extensive introductory, appendix, and footnote material. While the *Wayang Educational Package* is 90% raw material and 10% analysis and commentary, this dissertation offers a more highly detailed history and analysis of Purbo Asmoro's all-night *garapan* style. It benefits from the extensive collection, exploration, and discussions of material that occurred between Purbo Asmoro and this author in the seven years the Lontar project was coming into being.

Writings Focused on the Dhalang

The dhalang himself has not often been at the center of previous discussions or documentations of classical or condensed style. In the lakon translations listed above, only McGuire and Lukman had extensive consultations with the dhalang, Tristuti. Although Gaib Widopandoyo, Panut Darmoko, Anom Soeroto, Manteb Soedharsono, and almost all of the *pakeliran padat* practitioners, are still alive and well, it was not a priority of the translators and authors mentioned to consult with them. In this dissertation, as well as the Lontar material that preceded it, I chose to place a high priority on direct consultation with Purbo Asmoro. My intent from the beginning has been to present his all-night *garapan* style as he sees it, to translate his words with the meaning he feels he is conveying, and to comment on other practitioners and future developments through his critical lens.

Clara van Groenendael's landmark *The Dhalang Behind The Wayang* (1985) was the first major work to examine each aspect of wayang through the perspective of the dhalang himself, his place in society, and the specific challenges and pressures he faces. Her work, to this day, is the most-quoted foreign work among Javanese dhalang themselves. This is perhaps because it is readily available in Indonesian, or alternatively, maybe the Indonesian version is so prevalent because of its importance. Her perspective that the dhalang is the primary creative force behind wayang and that the history of wayang is the history of the dhalang's creativity, obviously rings true and has become a source of pride for Javanese dhalang and wayang scholars.

The only other work to date that has focused solely on the general "idea" of the dhalang himself is the prolific Bambang Murtiyoso's master's thesis: "Faktor-faktor Pendukung Popularitas Dhalang (Factors Affecting the Popularity of a Dhalang)" from 1995. This much-quoted work is a cynical, tongue-in-cheek, yet realistic, look at all the factors that influence a contemporary dhalang's rise to stardom aside from talent. Items on the author's list of necessary qualities are frequently referred to among members of the Solonese artistic community, as a way of explaining a particular dhalang's success.

While not focusing exclusively on the dhalang, there are authors that view their material through that context. Feinstein et al. presented a detailed examination of *lakon carangan* in 1986, which was based on interviews with 46 Javanese dhalang. It includes complete transcripts from eight live performances by eight different dhalang, presenting a total of three different *carangan* in their entirety, as well as short synopses of 116 distinct *carangan*. In the introduction to the three-volume set, the authors focus on the many different interpretations throughout history of the term *lakon carangan*, primarily from the viewpoints of practicing dhalang.

Umar Kayam's *Kelir Tanpa Batas*, quoted at the beginning of this work, examines the wayang scene from 1993 to 1995 through the artistry of the dhalang and the choices he must make. By speaking with and observing the experiences of high-profile dhalang from that decade, Kayam analyzes the career pressures and sponsor-dhalang conflicts that can arise in a new era of wayang performance-practice.

All the above works, like this one, present the dhalang himself as a profound force in determining the direction of performance practice. Rather than an undefined presence behind the screen, carrying out a generic ritual following a prescribed format, the dhalang is presented as central to creativity and change. This work focuses on one dhalang in detail, tracing the development of his creative processes and examining the choices he has made in facing the uniqueness of his era. Similar stylistically focused biographies have been made of Nartosabdo, Tristuti Rahmadi Suryasaputra, Manteb Soedharsono, Gandadarman, and Enthus Susmono, all in the context of their considerable innovations, as described in the next section.

Writings on Innovation in Wayang

Wayang performance practice has always been in a constant, fluid state of innovation. Some innovations can be termed as large-scale, such as when: the arms of the wayang figures became moveable, the *pélog* gamelan tuning was added to the existing *sléndro*, animal figures were introduced, the scene structure started reflecting the protocol of a Central Javanese court, the *keprak* was invented, or the electric bulb replaced oil and flame.[16] Small innovations have happened routinely throughout history, such as when a dhalang weaves a new version of a standard tale, uses a new gamelan piece, or engages with his female singers in a different way, and it catches on in his locality. As Mrázek states at the beginning of his chapter on innovation (1995, 363):

> I will be discussing some extreme innovations, but one must keep in mind that in different performances, and in different parts of a performance, innovation is present to different degrees, and in all cases the newness is only one aspect of the performance. Moreover, as we will see, past and innovation are relative, because wayang has been constantly developing—there are newer and older innovations (as well as innovations that are not new anymore and thus do not feel like innovations).

Innovations since the 1990s have spread in a unique way due to the presence of video documentation, radio and television broadcasts, and the internet. The discourse on these innovations has been particularly vigorous among scholars since 1990.

[16] I do not attempt to cite a year, as dating these innovations is controversial and beyond the scope of this work.

Writings on Substantive Innovations

Since the late 1990s, scholarship at ISI Surakarta has produced a number of works addressing the substantive stylistic innovations and influences that specific dhalang have introduced within the *pedhalangan* community. By "substantive" I am referring to innovations in the presentation of the lakon, not in the shape or content of the entertainment interludes. An example of a work on substantive innovations is Sugeng Nugroho's master's thesis (2003), which discusses in detail the new paradigm in wayang performance practice forged by Tegal-based Enthus Susmono. Another example is Edy Sulistyono's 1996 examination of Sragen-based Gandadarman, who was widely popular in the 1980s, focused on innovations in movement technique and dramatic structure. Purbo Asmoro's master's thesis (2004) delineates the pronounced effect Tristuti Rahmadi Suryasaputra's writings had on the Solonese *pedhalangan* community in the 1990s.

Other works include ISI professor Sumanto's biography outlining the major innovations of Nartosabdo (2002), former ISI rector Soetarno's study on revered classical dhalang Pujosumarto with stylistic comparisons both to Nartosabdo and post-Nartosabdo performers (2002), ISI professor Bambang Murtiyoso's biography of Anom Soeroto (2008), and the official biography of Manteb Soedharsono and his role in the *pedhalangan* world by Wahyono (2008). This dissertation, similarly, chronicles a specific dhalang's effect on the community, by describing how Purbo Asmoro created a new style, which is now imitated in some way by the majority of younger dhalang.

A detailed examination of all-night *garapan* is conspicuously absent in the research though, and is vital to understanding performers of Purbo Asmoro's generation and younger. There are a number of recent works coming out of ISI that include Purbo Asmoro in the analysis, without addressing the truly radical new style within which he is working. Sunardi, in his PhD thesis entitled "Nuksma dan Mungguh" (2012), compares the aesthetics of six dhalang: Nartosabdo, Harjoko Joko Pandoyo "Mokaton," Gandadarman, Anom Soeroto, Manteb Soedharsono, and Purbo Asmoro. He looks specifically at whether their characterizations are believable (*nuksma*), and their story interpretations appropriate to the dramatic context (*mungguh*). It is a fascinating comparative study, yet it misses the stylistic

context unique, among those six dhalang, to Purbo Asmoro's work. Sugeng Nugroho is the first researcher to examine the form known as *banjaran* (biographies of wayang characters that span cross-sections of traditional lakon), in his PhD thesis (2012). He describes and compares the techniques of constructing *banjaran*, using case studies from four performers: Nartosabdo, Anom Soeroto, Manteb Soedharsono, and Purbo Asmoro. This is a pioneering work in an era where *banjaran* performances are becoming more and more commonplace. But because it skirts the question of stylistics entirely, there is an incomplete picture of why and how Purbo Asmoro does what he does in *banjaran*, and how, by extension, younger dhalang also approach the form.

While informative and thoughtful, much of the work so far out of ISI takes as a given the radical shift from classical style to all-night *garapan*. Even the dozens of ISI Pedalangan students who have written master's level analyses of individual all-night *garapan* performances by Purbo Asmoro have examined the chosen performance in isolation from the wider style that Purbo Asmoro created. The Pedalangan Department research at ISI through 2014 takes the shift to all-night *garapan* style as a given, and starts from there, without an examination of this shift. This work fills the gap, by focusing exclusively on Purbo Asmoro's shift from classical to contemporary-interpretive style, via concepts introduced in the condensed style.

Entertainment and Special Effects

A large portion of scholarship on wayang since 1990 has focused on the entertainment interludes or the use of special effects. This is typically viewed as a deteriorating situation. Umar Kayam's *Kelir Tanpa Batas* (2001), ISI instructor Kuwato's master's thesis on the large-scale productions of the *hura-hura* era (2001), and Supanggah's thoughtful book of essays, *Dunia Pewayangan di Hati Seorang Pangrawit* (*The World of Wayang From the Heart of a Musician*, 2011) use the state of the entertainment interludes as the primary barometer to judge the state of contemporary wayang. Mrázek's (2005) attention to new trends is focused in one lengthy chapter entitled "Gara-gara! Or wayang in the time of comedy." Suratno examines the stylistic differences of the *Limbukan* interlude among Anom Soeroto,

Purbo Asmoro, and Warseno Slenk in his recent book *Kajian Sosiopragmatik Tindak Tutur Adegan Limbukan* (2013), also an examination of the entertainment section of contemporary wayang.

Another work to mention is a fascinating compilation of 23 essays, by as many authors, entitled *Contemporary Puppet Theater in Indonesia: New Approaches to Performance Events* and edited by Jan Mrázek (2002). The contributing authors are experienced in the field and from a variety of nationalities. Each examines a narrow topic and offers a unique perspective in this collection of snapshots of various types of contemporary wayang across Indonesia. Australian dhalang Helen Pausacker explores contemporary changes in the portrayal of the queen's maid servants, Limbuk and Cangik. Two of the essays touch on a specific Central Javanese dhalang's work: Suratno's essay on the popularity of Warseno "Slenk" in "Saya Lebih Suka Nonton Kamu," and Curtis's essay on Enthus Susmono's appeal to the masses through wayang. Both are primarily focused on how the entertainment interludes are shaped by these performers.

The present work offers a look at innovation in contemporary wayang that is entirely separate from any major consideration of the entertainment interludes. While changes in these interludes since the late 1980s are extreme and shocking to many, they are no longer innovations but have been around for some 25 years now. The length, format, and various elements have either become the norm or, in some cases, have died out. Either way, their introduction to audiences was in the *hura-hura* era and has been well-documented by researchers. Purbo Asmoro's contemporary-interpretive style is a phenomenon of innovation within the lakon itself, not the entertainment interludes—until this dissertation, a stylistic innovation undocumented in the scholarly world.

Insider versus Outsider

Many of the works cited here were written by insiders who absorbed the wayang tradition through years of exposure and study, who are native speakers of Javanese, and who indeed are both themselves dhalang and come from dhalang families. They display all of the virtues and drawbacks of the insider viewpoint: on one hand, deep knowledge of, and insight into, every aspect of wayang, and

sensitivity to its subtlest nuances; on the other hand, less of a contextual or global view, and heavy reliance on the reader's prior knowledge.

One dissertation to mention here, written by an outsider, is the first so far to dedicate space to Purbo Asmoro's career by a non-Indonesian. Sadiah Boonstra's "Changing Wayang Scenes: Heritage formation and wayang performance-practice in colonial and postcolonial Indonesia" (2014, University of Amsterdam) focuses on the global dimension, specifically UNESCO's 2003 declaration of wayang as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, using Purbo Asmoro, Manteb Soedharsono, and Enthus Susmono as case studies. This work displays the virtues and drawbacks of the outsider viewpoint. The subject of heritage formation is timely, and has started to attract attention from anthropologists, ethnomusicologists, folklorists, and other scholars. As one of the first dissertations to bring this perspective to Indonesian culture, Boonstra's work is useful relevant. The second half, where the author discusses wayang performance practice, dhalang innovation and creativity, and audience-sponsor-performer dynamics, is perhaps less useful. Due to a limited period of fieldwork and a lack of the technical, linguistic, and cultural background knowledge these complex topics demand, the author's sections on both Purbo Asmoro and Manteb Soedharsono contain a number of factual inaccuracies, then leading to fragile conclusions.[17]

The work at hand, examines the development of Purbo Asmoro's all-night *garapan* style from an outsider's inside view. Written by an outsider, of course, yet with significant insider opportunities as a result of consistent access to informants and performances, decades of experience and study, a spouse of 12 years who is a respected Javanese drummer, Wakidi Dwidjomartono, and a significant level of working knowledge in Javanese, wayang traditions, and gamelan. The question for most foreigners who last saw an all-night wayang in the early 1990s, or earlier, and

[17] As a side note: I was involved in Boonstra's fieldwork as a liaison with the dhalang community, and for Purbo Asmoro in particular. I accompanied her to many of Purbo Asmoro's performances where I translated the narration and dialogue into English. Boonstra writes in her 2014 dissertation (p. 156) that I left out all the entertainment interlude material in the Lontar project (Asmoro 2013), and concludes that this reflects colonial and post-colonial tendencies. In fact, every word of Purbo Asmoro's six performances was published in full in the books (Javanese, Indonesian, and English volumes) and the DVDs. Both Purbo Asmoro and I made public speeches outlining our philosophy on unabridged documentation at a partial launching of the translations, which Boonstra attended, in Solo on 23 July 2010.

return to Java in 2015, is inevitably, "What happened? Where is wayang as I once knew it?" A superficial and partial answer lies in addressing the entertainment interludes. This has been addressed extensively in the literature. Far more profound, however, is how dhalang are radically altering the way the actual lakon portion of the performance is presented. In this regard, understanding Purbo Asmoro's development of all-night *garapan* is key to understanding "What happened?"

The Dhalang as an Informant

A portion of the data I have collected has been the result of simply attending wayang with a fully present ear, heart, and mind, and proficient *basa pedhalangan*—the unique mix of Javanese language levels, vocabulary sets, styles, and figures of speech used in wayang. Since 2001 I have not only lived permanently in Java, but have focused on the study of Javanese and wayang. While working fulltime in Jakarta, I have managed to attend a steady rate of over 80 *wayang kulit purwa* performances per year for 14 years. I do not just stop in to performances. The vast majority of the time, I arrive before the wayang begins, sit right behind the dhalang near the *gendèr* and *rebab* players, stay all night, audio or video record, follow the lakon with intense focus, and communicate with the dhalang at some point afterward regarding the performance. Although about 65 percent of these performances have been by Purbo Asmoro, the other 35 percent have been by some 30 to 40 other dhalang. I have taken extensive notes and kept close records of these activities in a series of small books familiar to anyone who has been to one of these events with me, or seen me on stage. Many observations throughout this work regarding trends, 2001–2015, are backed up by this obsessive record-keeping. However, most important to this study of Purbo Asmoro's distinctive style has been my access to Purbo Asmoro himself, and his creative processes, as tricky as this sometimes is.

> Javanese dhalang are as wise, talented, and inspiring a group of human beings as exist, but proved to be enigmatic informants. They are storytellers, creators, authors, and entertainers.
>
> Laurie Sears
> (1996, xiii)

Surely this statement will ring true to anyone who works with dhalang. Dhalang are brought up from a young age to be dramatic "storytellers, creators, authors, and entertainers" and many seem to feel they are expected to be such when approached by a researcher as well. This can be both a stumbling block and a pleasure to anyone working in the world of wayang. One is sure to receive a wondrous and detailed story in response to any inquiry, because the dhalang will create it for his audience without hesitation out of bits of truth, personal perspective, and storyteller's embellishment. Common among dhalang is for most any question regarding the origin a performance element or point of interpretation to come down to some version of "I created that," "My father created that," "My grandfather created that," or, at the very least, "I popularized that." This is particularly true among superstar dhalang, and is not in line with the general Javanese distaste for overt self-recognition. Similarly, a request for an opinion will often quickly transform into an impassioned soliloquy—dhalang of course not having any problem with talking for long periods of time uninterrupted. This is what we love about dhalang, this is what we need and expect from dhalang, and yet this is the major challenge when using their input during research.

Although I feel I have a special relationship with Purbo Asmoro, and although I have been communicating with him on a daily basis for 12 years, I am certainly not immune to the pitfalls the quotation above warns of, as really no one is. Being a Westerner, a woman, and a non-dhalang has certainly had both its limitations and its benefits in terms of forging closeness to an enigmatic Javanese male dhalang. However, I have learned over time that openness, neutrality, professionalism, modernity, and integrity are hallmarks of Purbo Asmoro's character, and he is unique in this combination of qualities for a dhalang of his stature and fame. Partially this is a result of his extended educational background, through which he has learned to examine issues in a more scholarly way. As Felicia Katz-Harris, Curator of Asian Folk Art at the Museum of International Folk Art in Santa Fe, New Mexico, marveled during her work with Purbo Asmoro on *Inside the Puppet Box*: "That man is a scholar. No question about it. A dhalang, yes. But also, most certainly, a scholar." Time and time again over the past decade I have been able to confirm the accuracy of his acclamations or verbal citations, far beyond what is

often the case with these enigmatic informants. Sometimes it has taken years, sometimes only months, but what he claims as his during an interview or brief interaction, truly does eventually come to light as being true. At the same time, when he has adopted something through exposure to someone else's work he is always the first to articulate this. He is both humble and yet willing to distinguish clearly and accurately his own innovations from those of others.

While most researchers in Java work with their informants through scheduled interviews, and some through time in residence with the artist in question, my access to Purbo Asmoro's thought processes has been through seven different types of interaction, in this descending order of frequency: text messaging, informal group gatherings, one-on-one casual conversation, monologues during *Limbukan* or *Gara-gara*, seminars or other formal settings, phone calls, and, finally, formal interview sessions. With all many other informants involved in this dissertation, I collected what I needed either from formal, planned interview sessions or from listening to them speak at seminars.

On a daily basis over 12 years, Purbo Asmoro has been open to discussion of issues of all kinds through text messaging. This method of communication seems to fit his personality best, in that he prides himself on being accurate and to the point, while being on the move, modern, and a multi-tasker. He is also an extremely private and quiet man when not on stage. Hence text messaging works for him, being a written communication, directed to only one person and almost diary-like. If he thinks of something to add, hours or even days later a message will appear with his revised thoughts. His musings or challenges before performances, his self-evaluation after a performance, his observations during other peoples' performances, his reaction to criticism, his reflections on all-night *garapan* have all come to life for me daily, over a decade, through the unlikely medium of shorthand text messages in Javanese that resemble a semi-private diary when collected.

Second in frequency have been informal, fortuitous gatherings of the artistic community in Jakarta or Solo. A small group of eclectic artists (dhalang, musicians, critics, composers, writers) might lounge around for hours on the porch of my house in Jakarta, savoring the rare access to Purbo Asmoro's thinking during his stay in connection with a performance. A group of trusted friends may have gathered in the

pavilion of Purbo Asmoro's Solo home, while he somewhat holds court on whatever issue is discussed. These, on average, monthly happenings have been rich sources of stories, data, and anecdotes from Purbo Asmoro.

Third in frequency have been one-on-one casual interactions—conversations on 16-hour cross-continental flights for a tour, in airport waiting rooms, in taxis, or at restaurant tables, all have been intensely focused on *pedhalangan* topics over the years. The most unusual method has manifested itself when, after posing a question earlier in the week, I find myself at a wayang performance only to hear Purbo Asmoro address the issue in an extensive monologue during *Limbukan* or *Gara-gara*. Finally there are the more traditional methods of gathering information: phone calls, listening to him speak on panels and at seminars, and, of course, the formal interview session, all of which I have experienced in plenty over the last decade.

There is no doubt in my mind, closeness and relationship longevity aside, that Purbo Asmoro has only let me in on precisely what he intends to, and there is much that remains closed about his creative process. I often tell him that I would give anything to examine up close the mass of papers and tidbits that cover his seated area during any performance. He usually responds simply with a secretive smile. On one occasion, when he happened to mention feeling like he owed me a favor, I joked that all I wanted was to peek into his mysterious briefcase before a performance and read all the bits and pieces he was about to weave into an inspired creation: handwritten poetry from past performances, torn bits of old publications from his father's collection, photocopied extracts of lakon publications, ideas jotted down in the car on a piece of cardboard on the way to the event, well-kept notebooks of his collected tidbits, messages from the sponsor. Since then, he has granted me an upclose look at bits of treasures here and there, but of course ultimately he is always in control of what to filter through.

Enigma, mystery, and professional secrets aside, the focus of this work in general, remains a personal study of Purbo Asmoro's creative processes, both when initially developing the contemporary-interpretive style, and through to the present day as he prepares to perform. It is a necessarily personal perspective: a look at how Purbo Asmoro created what is now the most influential style among the younger generation of Solonese-style dhalang.

TWO

CLASSICAL STYLE

What is Meant by a "Classical" Wayang Performance?

In order to fully appreciate the radical nature of the developments in all-night wayang performance practice forged by Purbo Asmoro in the 1990s, it is first necessary to explore the idea of what is currently[1] meant by a "classical"[2] all-night wayang performance. There is great debate among the artistic community in Solo as to how to even refer to this style of yore, let alone how to define it, now that distinctions must be made between classical style and recent innovations. Yet it seems that everyone in the wayang world today—from professional dhalang to highly informed observers to the general populace; and whether from village, town, or teeming metropolis—speaks in terms of classical versus contemporary style, while assuming a common standard or at least a vague mutual understanding. Some

[1] Relative terms such as "current," "recent," "now," and "today," refer approximately to the 15-year period, 2000–2015. Purbo Asmoro's all-night contemporary-interpretive style was in its embryonic stage for roughly 10 years, 1989–1999, and ever since then has influenced wayang performance practice enough to create a palpable distinction between "now" and "back then." This study will refer to, in varying amounts of depth, a number of junctures in the history of wayang at which "now" and "back then" reigned particularly distinctly. But the most recent "now" being referred to ranges from 2000 or so to 2015.

[2] Throughout this work, "classical" is intended as a translation of the Javanese use of the word *klasik*, "traditional" as a translation of *tradisi*, "contemporary" *kontèmporèr*, and "modern" when *modèrn* was used by the Javanese informants I was working with. So it is a kind of double translation—with the Javanese borrowing those foreign terms, developing their own unique definitions and connotations, and then my reverting back to the English term rather than struggling with italics and the grammatical difficulties faced if I were to use the Indonesian/Javanese loan words in English sentences. Hence, when "classical," "traditional," "modern," or "contemporary" is discussed, this is only in the context of how the Javanese have used these terms, separate from any general, worldwide academic discourse related to their use.

of the frequently heard chatter in the wayang community today: "Is the wayang tonight going to be classical or contemporary?" "Oh, that dhalang is a real pioneer of new styles." "Where do I go if I'm yearning for a classical wayang these days?" "The wayang last night was contemporary in the first few sections, but then totally classical after about 2 AM." "In that village, if the wayang is not in a more modern style it is difficult to hold the audience."

What exactly is meant by "classical" these days? What is meant when contrasting it to "modern" (*modèrn*), "contemporary" (*kontèmporèr*), and "new" (*baru*)—terms currently thrown around somewhat interchangeably on stages, among audiences, within intellectual circles, and through social media exchanges in Java?

The Semantics Debate

Whether speaking in Indonesian or Javanese, the perceived English loan[3] *klasik* seems to satisfy most people engaged in casual comparisons and referring nostalgically to a style dominant in the past. However, once the discussion moves onto the ISI campus, or some other more formal and deliberate forum, a semantics debate ensues. The official ISI position, developed since 2000 or so after a number of seminars, is to reserve the term *klasik* for performance practices coming out of the royal courts in wayang, dance, or concert music (Suraji, interview 2012). The term *tradisi*, also perceived to have been borrowed from English, is applied by ISI to village performance practice traditions, or, city-based traditions not mirroring the courts. The term *garapan* is used for most contemporary interpretations in wayang and dance performance-practice, a movement that arose among the intellectual and academic sphere beginning in the 1970s, and that forms the focus of this study. *Konvènsi*, felt by Javanese to be from the English conventional, is used as the over-riding category to encompass both *klasik* and *tradisi*, and as the antonym to *garapan*.

[3] As I am reminded by Bernard Arps, the terms in this paragraph (*klasik, tradisi, konvènsi*) originally come from Dutch. However, interviewees discussing these terms consistently attribute them as English terms, not Dutch. One of many examples is the arts critic and composer Supanggah speaking at a seminar in Solo in May 2013: "Klasik menika sanès basa Indonesia, sanès basa Jawi. Menika basa Inggris." ["*Klasik* is not Indonesian, nor is it Javanese. It's English."] He then goes on to say the same for the term *tradisi*, and also discusses *konvènsi* in the same context. This is a common perspective, due to the dominance of English in academic circles, and the acceptance of English as the international language.

Suraji, head of the Karawitan Department at ISI Surakarta since 2008, emphasizes these distinctions often in public forums.

Outside of the ISI circle, other terms are used. Sometimes one hears the term *biasa* (ordinary) to refer to classical wayang practice. This is most often in the context of how much rehearsal or planning will be needed for an upcoming wayang by the musicians or the dhalang. "Oh, it will just be *biasa*," meaning no need to rehearse special accompaniment or prepare unique narrations or map out a new dramatic structure. In this context, the connotation of the term though, to strengthen the ISI distinction, is that the most rarified of classical treatments coming out of the courts, will also not be used. The musicians and dhalang in a *biasa* performance will neither craft a new interpretation, on the one hand, nor polish up obscure classical court pieces and narrations on the other hand. They will simply play in *tradisi* style, a hallmark of which is ease and spontaneity between musicians who may not even know each other, but who have committed a common repertory to memory. Then there is the term *cekèk* (village dialect for pure, original, old-style), which has been bantered around by a small circle of dhalang in Solo recently, simply in search of a term not perceived to originate from English.

Cara mbingèk (village dialect for *cara mbiyèn*, meaning "the way it was done in the old days") is a phrase Purbo Asmoro often introduces in public forums that have gotten caught up in the semantics debate.[4] It appears to skirt the connotations inspired by the various other terms mentioned. It also lends a casualness to the conversation, and garners a chuckle due to its provincial feel, which somehow encourages the semantics embroilment to lighten up. Still, undeniably, one hears *klasik* in the vast majority of conversations. Neither the semantics distinction prescribed by ISI between *klasik*, *tradisi*, and *konvènsi* nor the quaint terms *cekèk* or *cara mbingèk* have gained much, if any, foothold in the wider community.

Yet whether we use the term *klasik*, *tradisi*, *konvènsi*, *biasa*, *cekèk*, or *cara mbingèk* two questions spring quickly to mind: Do most people pretty much agree as they are

[4] The Pacitan-Wonogiri area from where Purbo Asmoro hails is known for a unique vocabulary set and drawl used among certain segments of the population. According to him (personal communication, April 2014) both the terms *cekèk* and *cara mbingèk* come from this dialect. Both have the connotation of something being untouched by modernity. *Cekèk*, according to Purbo Asmoro, is a variant of *jekèk*, with *cekèk* being the more common pronunciation.

watching a particular performance, whether it falls into the broad category of "classical style" or not? What are the criteria?

Palace-Classical, Village-Classical, and Nartosabdo-style

Aside from the staunchest critics in the *pedhalangan* world, I would venture to say from my observations that most dhalang today, as well as most audience members,[5] cast a wide net when defining what they consider to be a classical performance. Faced with the reality of the *hura-hura* trend in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and challenged by the all-night *garapan* revolution of the 1990s and 2000s, the bottom line of what is considered classical appears to have relaxed and broadened significantly from what it was before 1990. Since I arrived in Java in 1991, the label *klasik* in reference to a wayang performance (ISI semantics excluded) could refer to an all-out, faithful palace treatment, a variety of lively village styles, or to a performance highly influenced by the style of the late Nartosabdo. Before getting into some specific criteria, first some background to these three general categories: palace-classical, village-classical, and Nartosabdo-style.

Palace-Classical

Among the numerous milestones in the development of *pedhalangan*, surely the year 1923 stands out in importance, as this was the year the first court school for dhalang was founded. Known as Padhasuka (*Pasinaon Dhalang ing Surakarta*, or Surakarta Dhalang Course) this school was opened by King Pakubuwana X of Kraton Surakarta. It was housed in the Radya Pustaka Museum, adjacent to what is currently the Sriwedari amusement complex.[6] A few years later in 1931, PDMN (*Pasinaon Dhalang ing Mangkunegaran*) was created at the smaller palace of the Regent Mangkunegara VII in Solo. Similar schools also sprung up at the courts in Yogyakarta (Clara van Groenendael 1985).

[5] All general statements encapsulating audience impressions are based on attending over 800 wayang performances since 2004 by over 40 dhalang and subsequently engaging in critical discussions during and after almost every performance. "Audiences" are represented through the comments of numerous dhalang, educated wayang observers and critics, avid hobbyists, sponsors of various events, and also through social-media banter.

[6] In 2004, the term Padhasuka was revived, but as an abbreviation of "Paguyuban Dhalang Surakarta" (Surakarta Dhalang's Association). This group of renowned dhalang from Solo, founded by Gusti Benawa, Anom Soeroto, Manteb Soedharsono, Sayoko Gondosaputro, and Purbo Asmoro, puts on a series of free performances every fasting month.

The schools in Solo were founded with the specific intent of setting and assuring standards for dhalang, creating a repertory of uniform materials and techniques and, hence, reducing differences between court and village performances. As described in considerable detail by Clara van Groenendael, these schools were born of a general dissatisfaction on the part of the artistic elite of the day: "a dissatisfaction with the quality of the performances of many dhalang as a result of their lack of education and the failure of dhalangs' presentations to keep up with social developments; and hence their declining power to fascinate more intellectually inclined Javanese." (1985, 30)

Sears comments that this court-school phenomenon was "a culmination of a process that had begun in the late nineteenth century under the influence of Prince Kusumadilaga" (1996, 148). In his *Serat Sastramiruda* (1870s), Kusumadilaga sets out rules for "correct" performances. The court schools, open to both village and Solo-city dhalang, had the effect of creating an in-the-know artistic elite, by determining rules and defining parameters that had not existed previously. Specifications were laid out for the use of musical selections, *sulukan* melodies and texts, narrations, and dramatic structure. Dhalang back then who did not take part in this educational system supposedly "looked all the more uneducated, uncouth, and rough around the edges," (Sutino Hardokocarito, interview 2009). Ironically, decades later, non-court-trained dhalangs' unique and creative performance practices are now highly sought out by students, professional dhalang, and researchers. For some forty years (1935–1975) the relatively minute distinctions between Padhasuka and PDMN style were reportedly hotly debated in Solo, rather than the current, broader distinctions of court versus village styles (Hali Jarwosularso, instructor at PDMN, interview 2007).

Jumping ahead 80 years from the opening of Padhasuka, the *Buku Petunjuk Praktikum Pakeliran Gaya Surakarta* (Guidebook for the Study of Surakarta-style Wayang Performance Practice), published in 2006 with Purbo Asmoro as head editor, is now a basic text for dhalang students in their first two years of study, as they attempt to master the "classical style." This compact guidebook for beginners presents a mix of what is now casually referred to as "Radya Pustaka" style (referring to Padhasuka's location) and "Darsanan" (referring to one of the main

teachers at PDMN, Darsamartana). The introduction to the text lists the following as primary sources, demonstrating that "classical" style as taught by ISI to first and second-year students is a mix of court styles:

1. *Serat Tuntunan Pedhalangan Tjaking Pakeliran Lampahan Irawan Rabi*, M.Ng. Nojowirongko, 1958 (Padhasuka)
2. *Diktat Pedhalangan Ringgit Purwa Watjutjal Lampahan Wahju Pakem Makutarama*, Ng Wignyosoetarno, 1950 (PDMN)
3. *Jaladara Rabi*, Reditanaya (1930s), 1978 transliteration from the Javanese script, PDK (Padhasuka)
4. *Palasara Krama*, K.P.A. Kusumadilaga, written mid-late 19th century, 1981 transliteration from the Javanese script, PDK

Sutino Hardokocarito, born in 1925 in Wonogiri, prides himself on knowing both the PDMN and Padhasuka guidelines, although he only attended PDMN. When performing once in Solo near the Kraton in 1993, he whispered to his *gendèr* player (myself) with a touch of mutiny in his eyes, "*suluk* Darsanan"—meaning he would follow the melodies, texts, and usage prescribed by PDMN that whole night, regardless of the performance's proximity to the Kraton. While this seemed a virtual revolt in the heart of Sutino, by the *hura-hura* days of the mid-1990s most wayang fans in Solo would have gone home and reported with either relief or boredom, "It was a totally classical performance," simply meaning no rock bands, no stand up comedians, and no wayang being flung from the screen off the stage. The distinction between PDMN and Padhasuka, by the 1990s, was one that only a tiny sliver of the dhalang community continued to consider.

PDMN is still open and running, a relatively new academy opened up about a decade ago (ASGA, Akademi Seni Mangkunegaran), and there are still strict Kraton-style *pedhalangan* teachers and studios around here and there.[7] However, palace-classical style today is primarily passed down through an education at ISI, which provides a fusion of Radya Pustaka and PDMN styles and references. Lontar's palace-classical performance of *Makutharama* by Purbo Asmoro (2013), for example, refers heavily to the PDMN lakon text by Wignyosoetarna, but utilizes Radya

[7] Such as Sunarno at Balé Agung, who also teaches at the High School of Performing Arts, and Bambang Suwarno's various informal rehearsal sessions and performances from his home.

Pustaka-style *sulukan*. Aside from these few distinctions in *sulukan* and, at times, specifics of lakon treatment, the two styles have basically melded into one under the umbrella "palace-classical style."

Village-Classical

To return to the question of what is currently meant by a "classical" performance, as opposed to two alternatives, *hura-hura* and *garapan*, there is no question that the definition is currently far more flexible than just adherence to the standards laid out by Radya Pustaka or PDMN. Although court-style classical tradition is what is taught as a base for beginning students at ISI, more advanced and talented students are highly encouraged to explore the village traditions throughout Klaten, Kartosuro, Boyolali, Sragen, and elsewhere as a way of spicing up their classical repertory (Purbo Asmoro, interview 2011).[8] In fact, most of the more talented and advanced students come from dhalang families in these areas.

In the 1990s, according to my observation, PDMN and Radya Pustaka influence, with its accompanying superiority complex, was still relatively prevalent in Solo and throughout Wonogiri. At the same time, dhalang in Klaten and Boyolali were, for the most part, regaling in their strong, individual village traditions with pride—"Manjungan" referring to specific movement techniques from a region of Klaten,[9] "Penggingan" to storylines and wayang-figure design from a region of Boyolali, and "Gombangan" to the dramatic style of the late Mujoko Joko Raharjo. To this day, the term "Sragenan" when applied to *pedhalangan*, refers to the spunky, creative, and individualistic Gandadarman. All these sub-styles fall into the broad category of "classical" for today's wayang community.

The stylistic traditions of village dhalang in general have been almost exclusively passed down through observation and apprenticeship, and little has

[8] Wonogiri is often left off lists of village-classical traditions. Although there are some traditions specific to Wonogiri, overall this regency was historically quite bound to the palace tradition, and specifically to PDMN. Sukoharjo and Karanganyar are also often left off such lists, perhaps due to their proximity to Solo culturally. Klaten appears to boast the most robust and widest variety of traditions in wayang treatment, followed by Sragen (due to the dominant influence of Gandadarman) and Boyolali.

[9] Particularly movements borrowed from the *topèng dhalang* tradition used in *kiprah* and *tayungan* sequences, according to Joko Santosa, practicing dhalang from a long line of Manjungan artists, and an adjunct instructor at ISI.

been written about them. As Lysloff (2009, 101) notes in his fascinating documentation of the work of Banyumasan master Sugino Siswocarito:

> …most Western ethnomusicological research in Java tends to reinforce the notion of a monolithic culture that is organic, ancient, and unchanging, and most have focused on the court gamelan traditions of Yogya and Solo. Few have explicitly acknowledged the importance of regional diversity, of individual artists whose idiosyncratic ideas have had a broad impact on other artists, and of performers that self-consciously draw from local elements.

While numerous treatises have been written on *pedhalangan* from the point of view of the palace styles—from Kusumadilaga in the mid-nineteenth century to Nojowirongko in the 1950s and ISI's *Buku Pertunjuk* of 2006—only a few sources, whether Javanese or foreign, are based on village tradition. In 1983 Tristuti compiled the "Ngasinan" (an area of Klaten) versions of lakon synopses in his 11-volume *Serat Pustaka Raja Purwa*. The three-volume *Lakon Carangan* by Feinstein, et al. (1986) offers a look into some 50 different dhalang, many from village traditions, and their opinions and contributions with regard to newly created lakon. A few pieces of research have come out of ISI, such as Supanggah's work on village *sulukan* and Edy Sulistyono's biography of the highly influential, Sragen-based Gandadarman.

At a seminar in Solo in May 2013,[10] Bambang Murtiyoso, senior instructor in *pedhalangan* at ISI Surakarta, referred to the talent of village dhalang:

> This discussion of palace versus village styles has gone on for ages. But in fact it is the village styles that have always been the strongest. The palace style is represented by a stagnant text. It stops there, in those written documents. But in the villages, the dhalang are truly creative and have always adjusted their ways to the needs of the times.

Composer, musician, and arts critic Rahayu Supanggah made this comment at the same seminar:

> Wayang has seen much more development outside the palace walls. Although the palace is seen as the center of culture, my own observation is that 99 percent of dhalang have always come from the villages. The talented village dhalang were then recruited to come to the Kraton, to receive the stamp of palace teaching, and then become "Kraton Dhalang." But they came from village traditions.

[10] On 13 May 2013, I organized, in conjunction with Lontar's book launching, a seminar at Gramedia Bookstore, Balai Soedjatmoko, in Solo, with the title "*Pakeliran Garap Sedalu*: How has it progressed and what is its future?" This featured a panel discussion with: Supanggah, Bambang Murtiyoso, Bambang Suwarno, Purbo Asmoro, Sigid Ariyanto, and Setyaji. Herein this seminar is referred to as "Balai Soedjatmoko."

In Lontar's village-classical recording of *Sesaji Raja Suya* (Asmoro 2014), Purbo Asmoro borrows from the traditions of Klaten in the areas of dramatic structure, musical accompaniment, movement, and narrative techniques. He also heavily imitates the style of the late Gandadarman in places. The recordings, translations, and endnotes of this village-classical documentation offers insight to how this style-set contrasts with palace-based style.

Nartosabdo-style

Nartosabdo (1925–1985), although technically a "village dhalang," in fact manifests a category all his own due to his legendary fame and influence. Born in Wedi, Klaten, Nartosabdo spent much of his adult life in the capital of Central Java, Semarang, as he was drummer and dhalang for the Ngesti Pandawa Wayang Orang Theater. Nartosabdo's style is probably the single most influential force in *pedhalangan* from about 1975 through to the present. He was a prolific composer of both original gamelan pieces and new vocal parts to traditional works, many of which were composed for use in specific scenes in wayang. Nartosabdo popularized the use of regional variant repertory among Solonese dhalang (primarily works from Yogyakarta and Banyumas). He is credited with altering the position of the female singers, who were traditionally nestled in the gamelan behind the *gendèr* player and in front of the drummer, so that they lined up facing the dhalang, perpendicular to the screen. Nartosabdo is credited with making popular the current structure and function of the *Gara-gara* interlude, as well as the practice of lively and flirtatious interaction between dhalang and female singers. He also was the first dhalang to string a number of lakon together into one performance (see Chapter 8), although this is not where his fame lies.

According to reports from numerous elderly dhalang and musicians, it is only very recently that someone imitating the style of Nartosabdo would be considered "classical." From 1975 to about 1995, taking on the innovations of Nartosabdo placed a dhalang firmly in the category of a "pop" dhalang. Over the past twenty years, however, Nartosabdo's respected place in history has grown. He is the most widely recorded dhalang ever, and the most widely broadcast on radio stations. With time,

and in comparison to other developments emerging, he has come to be considered a classical dhalang of great stature by most performers and wayang critics living today, and certainly the vast majority of audience members.

Elements of "Classical" Treatment

There have been numerous structures or rubrics posed throughout history to categorize, analyze, and evaluate the elements and aesthetics of a dhalang's performance for discussion purposes. As Prince Kusumadilaga laid out toward the opening of his *Serat Sastramiruda* (1870s), a dhalang needs to have mastery in the following nine areas:[11]

1. *amardawagung* (gamelan accompaniment and *sasmita*—signals for *gendhing*)
2. *amardibasa* (language levels, idioms and intonation characteristic to each character)
3. *awicarita* (lakon, storylines)
4. *parama kawi* (knowledge and appropriate use of Kawi vocabulary in a performance and the ability to translate it for the audience)
5. *parama sastra* (fluent in reading Javanese so as to access the stories via sources)
6. a dhalang must remain loyal to the story, have enough to say and know the stories well, pace himself, and not go past daybreak
7. a dhalang must not step out of the context of the performance, must not tell dirty and inappropriate jokes, and must not shock his audiences
8. *renggep* (the energy of the performance must remain stable, and no one wayang figure should become the object of excessive emotion)
9. *sabet* (technical virtuosity in movement of the wayang figures, including the skill of never touching the actual leather)

A popular saying among dhalang in Wonogiri in the 1990s was that, aside from the physical and literary requirements of the job, a dhalang must also embody five qualities (presented in the kind of catchy, alliterative list that one finds often in Java):

[11] Paraphrased from *Serat Sastramiruda*, Kusumadilaga, transliterated from Javanese script by Hadisutjipto, Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, Jakarta, 1981, p. 176.

1. *gendhung* (charisma and self-confidence)
2. *gendheng* (ability to be one with the characters and story, even to obsession)
3. *gendhing* (musically talented and able to direct the gamelan)
4. *gandhang* (a clear, distinct, authoritative, and resonating voice)
5. *gendhèng* (serving as a "protective roof," a virtuous and inspiring example)

This quintet of terms was also used often by the late Gandadarman to sum up the profile of a successful dhalang (Purbo Asmoro, personal communication, 2013).[12]

But probably the most accepted categories currently in use to structure evaluation, emerging from ASKI, are these six categories used by most any *pedhalangan* school today. Instructors, wayang observers, fans, and fellow dhalang alike tend to refer to the quality of a performer's:

1. *adegan* (dramatic structure)
2. *iringan* (musical accompaniment)
3. *catur* (narration, dialogue, monologue)
4. *sabet* (movement techniques)
5. *tokoh* (characterization)
6. *sanggit* (story details)

These categories will be useful in examining the criteria for what is currently meant by a "classical" performance, be it palace, village, or Nartosabdo-style classical.

Unquestionably, one of the major factors identifying a performance as "classical" these days, is that it follows a specific dramatic structure, formalized by the court schools of the 1930s. This structure is laid out in detail in Brandon (1993) but based on his fieldwork in the 1960s in Yogyakarta. Almost all of the literature on wayang has referred to this structural outline on some level, as it is one of the most characteristic elements in the experience of viewing, performing, or understanding a classical wayang. A revisit of the dramatic framework, specifically through the lens of classical performance practice in Surakarta from 1990 to the present, is useful if we are to compare what is currently thought of as a classical to the contemporary-

[12] These five terms are also outlined in Probohardjono's 1966 *sulukan* and general *pedhalangan* handbook, translated by Walton: Becker and Feinstein 1984, 512–513, as well as referenced in Arps 1985, 41. An exhaustive inventory of these talent or aesthetics rubrics in *pedhalangan* can be found in Nugroho 2003, 67–100.

interpretive style. Hence, all the comments below reflect not a theoretical structure determined by the past, but actual current performance practice in Solonese classical style.

Patalon ("Talu")

The Overture

Classical wayang performances begin with an overture, lasting 30 to 40 minutes. Depending on the village and the era, the dhalang could be sitting in the audience during this overture, sitting among the musicians, or already be up at the screen, facing the gamelan listening. In many villages, specifically in Klaten, the dhalang might play *kendhang* (the drum) for this overture, if he is capable. Structurally, the overture suite encapsulates almost all the forms that will be played throughout the wayang, moving from the most refined and stately of *mérong* to an *inggah*, *ladrang*, *ketawang*, *ayak-ayak*, *srepeg*, and finally a pulsating and tension-filled *sampak*. The latter part of this sequence ushers the dhalang's move from the musician or audience area up to his place before the screen. Each of these forms (see Glossary of Terms for details) presents a shorter and shorter cyclical unit, such that the underlying anticipation is palpable by *ayak-srepeg-sampak*. An extraordinary dramatic experience, not to mention a marathon, is about to unfold.

While the typical overture played is the *Cucurbawuk* suite (*Gd Cucurbawuk-mg Paréanom-Ldr Sri Katon-Ktw Sukma Ilang-Ayak-Srepeg-Sampak*), many other choices have been popular since my time in Java, all in *sléndro manyura*, and almost all with pitch 2 for the opening gong. The more obscure *Rembun* (the national radio station in Solo's signature suite for wayang broadcasts from 1980–2000), and the challenging, irregularly shaped *Montro Madura* (opening gong 3), can be heard as alternatives among Solo's most elite of musicians, as can the lively and lengthy *Lambangsari* suite. *Widasari* and *Banthèng Warèng* suites were popularized by Nartosabdo. But whatever the suite, the moment that the dhalang turns around to take his position at the screen, hands the *kendhang* over to someone else to depart for the screen area, or walks up on stage from the audience, is one of tremendous anticipation for wayang enthusiasts, even if much of the general audience may be chatting, eating, moving around, or not even in attendance yet.

Pathet Nem
Act One

Classical wayang are organized in three parts after the overture: *Pathet Nem*, *Pathet Sanga* and *Pathet Manyura,* all of which refer to modes in the *sléndro* tuning of the gamelan. The pitch focus rises progressively as one moves through these three modes, so that the overall feeling is of increasing dramatic tension. The *kayon*, placed in the middle of the screen between scenes throughout a wayang, is tilted to the right to signal scene changes in *Pathet Nem*, placed straight up during transitions in *Pathet Sanga*, and tilted to the left throughout scene changes in *Pathet Manyura.*[13] Performances in the past traditionally ended with the first hints of sunrise and the initial cuckoos of roosters, around 5:45 AM. In the 1990s Sutino Hardokocarito still routinely went until sunrise and even beyond, much to the exasperation of his musicians. However, in my experience, whether classical or contemporary, performances since 2000 rarely go past 4:30 AM, and usually are over by 4:00 AM or even before. It is also considered crucial to maintaining harmony in the community now, that a wayang be over by the time the morning mosque calls to prayer begin to sound.

Pathet Nem is the longest section of the wayang, lasting usually about four hours, at least half of the performance, from 9:30 PM to about 1:30 AM. Many texts, some specifically on wayang and some only mentioning wayang in passing, refer to a performance being divided equally into three sections—nine to midnight, midnight to three in the morning, and three to six. I have never in my 24 years in Java, attending over 1,000 all-night wayang performed by dozens of different dhalang, seen a wayang with this kind of even distribution between the three sections. In fact, without fail, not only is *Pathet Nem* the longest of the three sections,

[13] All mentions of wayang figure positions on the screen refer to the dhalang's left and the dhalang's right, since "left" and "right" are relative—reversed if one is viewing from the shadow side. This sequence of *kayon* position over the course of the performance is a Mangkunegaran/PDMN tradition. At the Kraton Surakarta, the sequence was, historically, reversed: *kayon* tilted to the left for scene changes in *Pathet Nem*, straight up during *Pathet Sanga*, and tilted to the right for scene changes during *Pathet Manyura*. Reportedly (interviews with Bambang Suwarno and Purbo Asmoro, Jan 2016) this difference was due to the fact that the Mangkunegaran pavilion faces south, while the Kraton's Sitinggil pavilion faces north. The pathway of the *kayon* from *Pathet Nem* to *Pathet Manyura*, according to this rather obscure concept hardly put in practice today, should follow the direction of the sun from after sunset (when the performance begins) to sunrise (when the performance ends) in each of the two respective venues. Mangkunegaran/PDMN tradition has virtually taken over, however, and I have only seen two dhalang ever use the Kraton model on this (interestingly, both performing in a space where the screen was facing north though, at Purbo Asmoro's home).

but the other two acts, *Pathet Sanga* and *Pathet Manyura*, usually last half as long or less.[14] In the classical recordings for this study, the distribution was as follows:

	Pathet Nem	*Pathet Sanga*	*Pathet Manyura*
Makutharama palace-classical	3 hours 56 minutes	1 hour 50 minutes	2 hours
Sesaji Raja Suya village-classical	3 hours 48 minutes	1 hour 52 minutes	1 hour 50 minutes

This reflects the general shape of most any classical wayang I have attended in Java even though, to be sure, Purbo Asmoro is known to have a highly attuned and more modern sense of time and proportion, hence the numbers are uncannily similar between performances. Slightly different proportions than this will be revealed in the discussion of contemporary wayang.

Most of the scenes in a classical treatment of *Pathet Nem* are elaborate, formal court scenes set among kings, queens, ministers, armies, or advisors in one kingdom or another, with only small bits of plot development, which are revealed gradually. There is also one major battle scene and one interlude.

Jejer Sepisan (Opening Court Scene) [MK-Class 1, tr 1] and [SRS-Class 1, tr 1]
[*Jejer* refers to a formal court scene in wayang. *Sepisan* means first.]



Figure 2-1: Astina Kingdom, King Duryudana (right) and his court, *Rama's Crown*.

[14] I have witnessed two traditional dhalang from Klaten (Tomo Pandoyo and Suwarno "Parno" Hadi Harsono) who have reached *Pathet Sanga Wantah* precisely at the strike of midnight on one or two occasions, but this was just as often not the case in the half-a-dozen other performances by them I saw. Even then, in no case was *Pathet Sanga* three hours long.

No matter what the story, the first hour of a classical wayang takes place in the Audience Hall of one of the major kingdoms (earthly or heavenly) from the *Mahabharata*, *Ramayana* or other story cycles (see Figure 2-1). Members of the court are brought onto the screen in stylized movements, to the accompaniment of one of three refined classical gamelan pieces: *Kawit* (for the Pandhawa's Amarta Kingdom, or for the heavens), *Kabor* (for Astina Kingdom) or *Krawitan* (for all other kingdoms). The dhalang recites an extended and primarily generic literary passage glorifying the kingdom and sings two long poems (*sulukan*). Characters then greet each other in elaborate and formal language, followed by some small talk and banter between the king and major members of his court. After another, shorter *sulukan*, some 30 to 40 minutes into the wayang, the king or one of his court members finally reveals a crucial issue the kingdom is facing, and the plot begins. It is only at this point that wayang enthusiasts can be heard whispering amongst themselves, trying to speculate which part of the epic is to be performed tonight. Because up to this moment—given this kingdom, ruled by this particular king (or god), and during the era that this particular minister was in charge—the lakon could be any one out of many dozens of lakon.

Dhayohan or Babak Unjal (A Guest Arrives) [MK-Class 1, tr 2] and [SRS-Class 1, tr 2]
[*Dhayoh* is low Javanese for guest. *Babak* refers to a small, mini scene in wayang. *Unjal* means to retrieve something, referring to one of the court members being asked to summon someone into the court.]

At a certain point in the discussion, someone new often joins the court members in the Audience Hall, offering his or her contribution or challenge to the issue being faced (see Figure 2-2). This guest could be a protagonist ally of the court, a well-known enemy of the court, a complete stranger, or an imposter posing as any of the above. They could be from any stratum of the social hierarchy: a family member, an underling from within the court structure, a commoner, a jester who has been granted admission under unusual circumstances, a minister from another kingdom, or someone of a status rivaling the king himself such as a spiritual advisor, a messenger from the gods, or the king's mother or father.

In this scene in the *Rama's Crown* palace-classical performance, Sangkuni is asked to retrieve Prince Karna and bring him into the court, as King Duryudana has determined him worthy of pursuing the boon to be handed down from the gods in a



Figure 2-2: Bima arrives in Dwarawati Kingdom (from right to left) two maid servants, King Kresna, Bima, Baladéwa, and Setyaki, *The Grand Offering of the Kings*.

nearby forest. In *The Grand Offering of the Kings* village-classical recording, Bima arrives unexpectedly in the Kingdom of Dwarawati, just as King Kresna is expressing his concern that neighboring King Jarasandha's aggression is getting out of control. Bima notifies Kresna that his brother Puntadéwa has plans to put on a special and highly elaborate blessing ceremony and needs Kresna's support. Although not all lakon require the introduction of a new character during this scene, many dhalang will nonetheless craft such a moment, as it has the potential to add dramatic interest, a variety in character presentation, and often some sort of intrigue (Purbo Asmoro, interview 2011). According to Purbo Asmoro, the term *babak unjal* refers specifically to the flurry of activity that occurs when a court member is asked to greet a guest, usually accompanied by *Srepeg, sléndro nem*. The scene as a whole, *Dhayohan*, includes this *babak unjal* activity. Not all dhalang make such a distinction though, and many say the terms are interchangeable.

Bedholan (Court Dispersal) [MK-Class 1, tr 3] and [SRS-Class 1, tr 3]
[*Bedhol* means to extract something from its lodged position, in this case referring literally to pulling the wayang figures out of their stuck position in the banana log, thereby dispersing the court scene.]

After exploring the issue to be faced, court members disperse with a directive from the king. The dispersal of the court occurs just as elaborately as the opening, characters taking their leave with both stylized language and movements. As the king himself leaves his Audience Hall to go visit the queen, he pauses at the gateway to the Queen's Quarters (see Figure 2-3). There can be an extended literary passage describing the beauty of this gateway, known as *Gapuran* [MK-Class I, tr 4], or the king can simply pass through, but either way the gateway is depicted through use of the *kayon* and a maidservant waiting by the archway. The *Gapuran* narrative passage

was standardized by the court schools of the 1930s and is accompanied at PDMN by a special piece known as *Ayak-ayak Anjangmas* (interview with Hali Jarwosularso, 2005). According to Purbo Asmoro, village dhalang would generally not use a narrative passage here, and therefore also not use *Ayak-ayak Anjangmas*, unless they had training at court schools.



Figure 2-3: King Duryudana, pausing at the gateway to the Queen's Quarters. A maid servant is awaiting his directive (left), *Rama's Crown*.

Kedhatonan (In the Queen's Quarters) [MK-Class 1, tr 5] and [SRS-Class 1, tr 4]
[*Kedhaton* is the name of the Queen's Quarters (the women's quarters) in the palaces of Solo.]



Figure 2-4: Queen Jembawati with her maid servants, Cangik and Limbuk, *The Grand Offering of the Kings*.

In stridently classical performances, be they village or palace-based, there would now be another lengthy, prescribed, musical selection. This brings on the queen's servants Cangik and Limbuk, accompanies the appearance of the queen herself, and finally supplies background music to a generic narration describing the queen's beauty (see Figure 2-4). Eventually the king enters and relates what occurred in the Audience Hall, for the queen's benefit. This is also for the benefit of any audience members who may have just arrived, may have not been paying attention before, or who may find the language between spouses easier to understand than that used between members of the court in the opening scene. The inclusion of this scene is now considered to be the sign of a *klasik deles* performance—*deles* meaning pure, authentic, or ultimate. One even sees classical wayang enthusiasts exchanging looks of wonder when they see a dhalang proceed with this scene, as it is more than often than not left out in current-day classical performances, let alone contemporary-interpretive.

Limbukan (Comic Relief Interlude) [MK-Class 2, tr 1] and [SRS-Class 2, tr 1]
[*Limbuk* is the name of one of the Queen's—any queen, any kingdom—servants.]



Figure 2-5: Limbuk, left, and Cangik, right.

The king and queen retire to the inner chambers, while the queen's servants entertain each other outside with light songs, banter and joking. Historically, this interaction was so short, encompassing one or two songs only, it was simply considered part of *Kedhatonan*, and was not a separate scene. Since 1990 or so, and particularly since the days of *wayang hura-hura*, it has expanded into its own entity. The scene is universally expected, and accepted, even in otherwise completely classical performances. In *Limbukan*, the dhalang speaks through the voice of the elderly female servant, Cangik (see Figure 2-5). Cangik announces the occasion for the wayang, extends

accolades to the sponsors for their dedication to the arts, and praises the community, family, or organization for their collaborative skills in successfully staging such a grand event.

As recently as the early 1990s it was reportedly still considered bad form, and even vulgar, for a dhalang to glance to the left or right during a performance, as his world was to be focused forward to the screen. But the wide net mentioned earlier as to what is currently tolerated and still referred to as "classical" applies even to antics in *Limbukan*. Although a dhalang may turn and face his female singers to flirtatiously interview them (a practice started by the late Nartosabdo); might invite guests from the audience to come sit on stage and be roasted; and perhaps may have the gamelan play some raucous selections in Banyumas or Indian pop-based *dhangdhut* style, in the end the label "classical" may still apply to his performance, as long the opening Audience Hall scenes were intact. It is only if the dhalang goes so far as to employ stand-up comedian routines, Western electronic instruments accompanying pop songs out of the gamelan idiom, and night-club style singers clad in slinky dresses, that most observers today would be hard pressed to retain the label "classical" when referring to the performance.

Paséban Njaba (In the Outer Audience Hall) [MK-Class 2, tr 2] and [SRS-Class 2, tr 2]
[*Séba* means to be in audience before the king, *paséban* being the noun form. *Njaba* (*njawi* in high Javanese) refers to outer, or outside, meaning a smaller audience in the courtyard outside of the main Audience Hall.]



Figure 2-6: Sangkuni (right) gathers some of the troops, Durmagati (center) Dursasana (left), *Rama's Crown*.

The minister of defense gathers his trusted underlings and explains the directive from the king (see Figure 2-6). This is thus the third time the discussion from the first scene is repeated, again in a slightly different language style and context. The audience would not expect to hear anything new in this scene regarding plot, but rather would simply experience both the language and the interchange specific to the status and character of the various members of the army.



Figure 2-7: A soldier departs on horseback.

Budhalan

(The Troops Depart) [MK-Class 2, tr 3] and [SRS-Class 2, tr 3]

[*Budhal* means to depart, with *-an* forming a noun or intransitive verb.]

In a magnificently grand visual and musical collage, troops depart on horseback, elephant, and carriage or even through the clouds in flight. There is a specific repertory of pieces currently expected in a classical wayang for this scene, such as: *Lancaran Singanebah*, *Lancaran Tropongbang*, or a number of pieces created by Nartosabdo, such as the *lancaran*-form pieces *Gambuh*, *Wrahatbala*, or *Maésa Kurda* with his new vocals. There is also a series of expected gestures from the troops, as they are seen adjusting their uniforms, gathering their strength, or calling to other troops to join. The scene inevitably includes one soldier departing on his horse (see Figure 2-7), followed by, depending on the lakon and relevant characters, Baladéwa on his elephant, Karna by carriage, or Gathutkaca through the clouds. The movements are somewhat set in a classical treatment, and require a repertory of stylized patterns that must be mastered by both the dhalang and drummer.

Ampyak-ampyakan (Clearing the Way) [no example in these two recordings]

[*Ampyak-ampyak* refers to a throng of people acting recklessly, in this case the army blindly making its way through brush.]



Figure 2-8: A forest hunter, Sarapada or Cekruk Truna, helps clear the way. Purbo Asmoro, UGM, Dec 2015.

The departure may also include an extended clearing of the path, forest brush, or other obstacles, known as *Ampyakan*. In some village traditions, the *Ampyakan* scene also includes the unusual, multi-jointed Sarapada (also known as Cekruk Truna, see Figure 2-8). He is a comical forest hunter who aids the troops by taking on various wild animals in their path with his spear, often to the accompaniment of the song *Walang Kèkèk*. Manteb Soedharsono re-popularized this "old"[15] tradition, which requires a high level of technical skill, and for decades has used it in many of his performances. Other than the *Ampyakan* scene, which may include a generic descriptive narration of the obstacles, this entire troop departure scene is primarily devoid of *catur*, be it narration, monologue, or dialogue.

Adegan Sabrang (Across the Sea In a Foreign Land) [MK-Class 2, tr 4] [SRS-Class 2, tr 4]

[*Sabrang* refers to a foreign place, the connotation here being an overseas kingdom.]



Figure 2-9: *Adegan Sabrangan Alus*, Priest Késawasidi (right) and his apprentices, Anoman (center) and Jajalwreka (left) *Rama's Crown*.

[15] No one I spoke with wanted to venture an estimate as to how old this scene is, but the Sarapada shown in Figure 2-8 is fashioned after the pre-World War II era (1920s or 1930s) sample in Purbo Asmoro's Kyai Maruta collection. Purbo Asmoro made a replica of the figure, as the one in his antique collection is inoperable.

Some two and a half hours into the performance, it is about midnight. Western theater performances would be nearing an end. But at this point, knowing only one small aspect of the basic conflict, we move away from the opening kingdom for the first time. A secondary kingdom is introduced, and usually a completely different plot line. The kingdom might feature a refined prince or heavenly characters (*Sabrangan Alus*), a rough and aggressive but princely kingdom (*Sabrangan Gusèn*), or an ogre kingdom (*Sabrangan Buta*). The scene proceeds in a similar way to the opening Audience Scene: a stylized entrance of the characters to the accompaniment of a relatively large and refined piece; followed by narration, *sulukan*, formal introductions, and finally the issue to be discussed (see Figure 2-9). The narration introducing the scene, however, will be less generic because the situation and characters depend on the lakon. Although there are certain pieces associated with certain types of kingdoms, and although in a strict palace treatment the musical selection would be largely prescribed, in practice there is considerable freedom here musically. Often, depending on the lakon, this scene includes an abbreviated departure scene of its own, this time featuring ogres and various other unusual allies of the troops, such as spirits and wild animals.

Prang Gagal (A Series of Inconclusive Battles) [MK-Class 3, tr 1] and [SRS-Class 3, tr 2]
[*Gagal* refers to something that has not succeeded or has not turned out as one expected.]



Figure 2-10: Anoman versus Aswatama, *Makutharama*.

In the evening's first scene of combat, the two opposing sides of the conflict meet and battles ensue (see Figure 2-10). The series of conflicts progresses gradually, starting with the facing off of tertiary characters, then secondary characters, and finally the primary aggressor and protagonist. In between the secondary and primary face-offs there is often a comic interlude, offering the audience a series of slapstick battles between an incompetent ally of the antagonist and a fairly serious protagonist. Gandadarman popularized this interaction, using the comic *sabrang* troop member known as Genthong Lodong (or Jayalodong or Potrotholo), who goes forth in battle against formidable opponents such as Baladéwa and gets trampled. A Chinese priest, created by Gandadarman and named Li Ceng Swi,[16] offers the wounded Genthong Lodong numerous and questionable traditional remedies (see Figure 2-11). When nothing works, Li Ceng Swi himself enters the fray. The slapstick can continue for as long as 20 minutes or more before the serious battles begin again (SRS-CInt 3, tr 1). [17]



Figure 2-11: Genthong Lodong, left, with Li Ceng Swi, right.

In the end, neither side is victorious, but there is often some sort of climactic moment at the end of the battle that moves the plot forward, adds a twist or complication, or in some way forms a hallmark of the lakon. An example of this is the highly awaited battle between Karna and Anoman in *Rama's Crown*. While neither side is victorious (and of course neither Karna nor Anoman is going to be killed in this lakon) there is a pivotal moment when Anoman is able to intercept Karna's beloved amulet, the *wijayandanu* arrow. The story does not return to the fate of Karna and his *wijayandanu* until hours later, hence the battle is inconclusive both

[16] For an explanation of the name Li Ceng Swi, see *The Grand Offering of the Kings*, Asmoro 2013, 389.

[17] Although Purbo Asmoro uses this routine in one of the all-night *garapan* recordings rather than the classical ones, it is considered a traditional sequence, ever since the days of Gandadarman's popularity (1970s–1980s). It is not influenced by either the *hura-hura* days or *padat* principles.

in that neither side won and also in that the *wijayandanu* subplot will be left unresolved for a number of hours.

Magakan or Adegan Sabrang Rangkep (Transitional/Second Foreign Court Scene)

[MK-Class 3, tr 2] and [SRS-Class 3, tr 3]

[The term *magakan* is rather mysterious. In everyday speech, *magak* can refer to being almost all the way to one's destination. *Magak* also refers to a drum and dance pattern that is placed toward the end of the gong cycle. Hence, perhaps this is a reference to being almost to *Pathet Sanga*. *Rangkep* means double, this being a second foreign-kingdom scene.]

Sometimes there is another court scene at this point, although its usage is variable. In Solo this somewhat rare scene is often referred to as *Sabrangan Rangkep* or *Sabrangan Kalih* (*kalih* means two in Javanese), and its existence depends on the lakon. Purbo Asmoro uses the term *Magakan* for this scene, which he says originates from Klaten, and perhaps Yogyakarta as well. In both places the scene is much more common than in Solo-proper, almost regardless of lakon. Purbo Asmoro rarely performs a lakon without including this scene, whether in classical or contemporary-interpretive style. In classical performances, this scene follows again the same basic format as the opening Audience Scene and the Foreign Kingdom scene: major musical selection, narration, *sulukan*, formal introductions, and then the issue to be discussed.

Pathet Sanga
Act Two

Pathet Sanga usually lasts from about 1:30 to 3:15 AM. Unlike the regal *Pathet Nem*, it takes place mostly in the forest and concerns journeys, meditation, introspection, personal suffering, and individual trials or sacrifice. Even the one major battle scene can be interpreted as a metaphorical struggle in which a lone prince battles for control over his desires and emotions. There is one interlude, during which the jesters are present to distract the prince from his despair and troubles. *Pathet Sanga*, like *Pathet Nem*, also reveals only small bits of plot development.

Adegan Pandhitan (Hermitage Scene) or
Adegan Satriya ing Wana (A Prince in the Forest) [MK-Class 3, tr 3] and [SRS-Class 3, tr 4]
[*Pandhita* is a sage, and *pandhitan* the actual hermitage. *Satriya* is a prince, and *wana* means forest.]

A prince either consults his elder in a hermitage, often regarding the problem stated in the first scene, or is in the forest meditating. His four loyal jesters (the *panakawan*: Semar, Garèng, Pétruk, Bagong) try to cheer him up, distracting him with light songs and jokes (see Figure 2-12).



Figure 2-12: Arjuna meditating in the forest, with his jesters (from left): Bagong, Pétruk, Garèng; and his adviser, Semar, *Rama's Crown*.

Often there is an extended comedy sequence featuring the *panakawan* while the prince meditates or retreats with his elder, which is sometimes called *Adegan Pétruk* [MK-Class 4, tr 1]. This entire scene can also be referred to as *Adegan Bambangan* when certain types of younger princes are featured, or *Adegan Pertapan* (Meditation Scene).

Old Style: Gara-gara = Chaos
Immediately after the signature *Pathet Wantah* in *sléndro sanga*, which begins the second act of the wayang, the dhalang might open with a short narration describing chaos and tumult in the world or in the heavens, instead of beginning with the hermitage scene. Some flurried movements of the *kayon* accompany the narration. In old-style, this depends on the lakon, however. For example, in the lakon *Ciptaning*, Arjuna's strong and focused meditation is causing great havoc among the gods, hence *Pathet Sanga* opens with a description of this *gara-gara*, without Arjuna present. The *panakawan* enter and engage in a bit of humorous banter with some

light songs. They then depart to catch up with their prince in meditation or on his way to the hermitage to the accompaniment of an appropriate piece such as *Gambirsawit*.[18] In this rather antiquated style, rarely found today but still practiced by a few very traditional dhalang, only certain lakon would feature the *gara-gara* narration and *kayon* theatrics before the meditation scene.

Nartosabdo Style: Gara-gara = A Comic Relief Interlude [SRS-Class 4, tr 1]



Figure 2-13: ***Gara-gara***

The relatively short, lakon-specific tidbit known as *Gara-gara* has now, even in classical performances, been completely replaced by a new paradigm, inspired by Yogyakartan practice, popularized by Nartosabdo, and universally applied to all lakon. In this relatively newer Solonese model of some 50 years ago, *Pathet Wantah, sléndro sanga* is followed by an *ada-ada* and a short narration describing general chaos and tumult, which sometimes ends in the utterance "Gara-gara!" This is followed by any one of many light, popular, gamelan tunes, to which the *panakawan* enter and a lengthy joke interlude starts, lasting anywhere from 30 minutes to an hour (see Figure 2-13). "Gara-gara" thus no longer refers to the narration of chaos in the universe caused by something lakon-specific, but is now synonymous simply with the second comedy interlude. It was this newer model that was extended even further, both in terms of length and antics, in the *wayang hura-hura* days of the 1990s. It is also this newer model that can be found in both of the contemporary-interpretive performances of this work. Often in this model, the meditation or hermitage scene is only referred to quickly in a narration, and dhalang

[18] Sutino Hardokocarito of Eromoko, Wonogiri, following a common tradition of the past in certain villages, would follow the opening *Pathet Wantah, sléndro sanga* with an *ada-ada* in *sléndro manyura*, joltingly up a pitch from what would be expected at this point, and then recite the chaos narration over *gendèr* accompaniment in *sléndro manyura*. This would be followed by *Sampak, sléndro manyura,* as the *panakawan* entered. He would then slip back down a pitch with an *ada-ada* or a *pathetan* in *sléndro sanga*, and offer some jokes and light songs before the *panakawan* departed for the hermitage.

move straight from *Gara-gara* to *Alas-alasan*. Just as with *Limbukan*, performances labeled as "classical" will not lose that label just because the *Gara-gara* interlude is in this newer model, and even though it might last for as long as 90 minutes.

Alas-alasan (Traveling through the Forest) [MK-Class 4, tr 2] and [SRS-Class 4, tr 2]
[*Alas* means forest.]

Once the prince has decided he is ready to act on whatever the issue is, he mobilizes his companions and starts down the mountain, out of the hermitage, through the forest, and across remote villages among rice fields. In a classical performance, audiences would expect a short *ketawang*-form piece (traditionally *Subakastawa* but *Kasatriyan* and other Nartosabdo pieces such as *Kaduk Rena* are common now). Specific drumming patterns accompany the idiomatic movements of the prince and the *panakawan* on their way out of the forest. There are a number of classically based narrations that describe the villagers' reactions to seeing the prince and his entourage from afar (*Rama's Crown*, p. 87), or that describe the dangers of the forest. There are stylized slapstick routines that involve the *panakawan* managing to fit through small passageways, cave-like obstacles, or up difficult inclines *(The Grand Offering of the Kings*, p. 105).

Prang Kembang (A Battle in the Forest) [MK-Class 4, tr 3] and [SRS-Class 4, tr 3]

As the prince completes his travels in the forest, he meets up with the fierce and wiry ogre Cakil, and is challenged to a virtuosic battle of skill and focus (see Figure 2-14). After Cakil's inevitable death, other comedic ogres follow, challenging the prince in more ridiculous ways. The battle with Cakil is ultimately a metaphorical one, and symbolizes the prince's uncontrolled desires and emotions, which he must bring under control if he



Figure 2-14: Arjuna and Cakil, *Rama's Crown*.

is to continue on with his mission in life (Purbo Asmoro, interview 2010). Depending on the lakon, Cakil and his cohorts may also be actual characters with names, specifically members of the army from an ogre kingdom. This is one of the more popular scenes with audiences, due to both the skill displayed in the struggle, and the slapstick comedy that follows.

Why this scene is referred to as *Prang Kembang* is a matter of great debate. *Kembang* can simply mean flower, but also implies embellishments, ornaments and floridity. This is the most technically difficult of all the battle scenes in wayang, so some say *kembang* refers to the floridity of movement. The term may also refer to the development or revelation (flowering) of the prince's confidence in facing his fears (Purbo Asmoro, interview 2010). The movements of Cakil are highly stylized and set, while being extremely challenging. Because of Cakil's position on the dhalang's left side, many of the movements have to be mastered with the left hand. Some 40 years ago and earlier, it was common for a confident dhalang to showcase Cakil's complete set of movements first in one hand and then in the other—showing off an ambidextrous ability to do every type of movement with either hand (Wakidi Dwidjomartono, interview 2007). The prince's movements, while extremely refined, are no easier. During this battle and no other, the dhalang is required to use a technique known as *gendiran*, in which the prince's arms are flicked one at a time, gently but with precision, so that they make a full circle over the prince's head and strike Cakil from above. There will often be a small exodus of audience members once this highly entertaining battle is over around 3:00 AM, leaving only the true wayang zealots to stick it out until the end.

Sintrèn (A Palace or Forest Scene)

[MK-Class 4, tr 4]

Often there is one more palace or forest scene in this section of the wayang, known as *Sintrèn* (see Figure 2-15), but its occurrence depends on the lakon and on



Figure 2-15: *Sintrèn*, Sembadra in the forest meditating, visited by the God Naradha.

interpretation by the dhalang.[19] This scene's narration, in the 1980s and 1990s, was most often accompanied by *Gd Renyep* followed by *Sendhon Rencasih*—a *sulukan* with a mixed *sanga* and *manyura* feel. Most of my sources did not have a theory on why the scene is called *Sintrèn*. However, PDMN *pedhalangan* teacher Suyatna Wignyasurana once told his students during a class in 1981, that *sintrèn* evokes *sintru*, meaning lonely and melancholy, in reference to the dead of the night atmosphere when this scene takes place, around 02:00 AM (Nugroho 2012, 90). Revered Solonese musician Tukiman Wahyopangrawit, felt there was something special tonally from this point in any wayang through to *Pathet Manyura*. In my *gendèr* lessons on *grimingan* (1992) he would insist that, from the *Sintrèn* scene through to *Pathet Manyura*, all snippets should be taken from *Rencasih* to help the dhalang stay oriented to this "hazy, half-*sanga*, half-*manyura* territory."[20] Like all other court scenes, this one follows the same format: extended musical selection, narration, *sulukan*, formal introductions, and finally the issue to be discussed. My own personal observation and data is that this scene often focuses on a female character, although no one I mentioned this to registered interest in that theory. After *Sintrèn*, there may also be various other small scenes, unique to the lakon, to finish off *Pathet Sanga*.

Pathet Manyura
Act Three

This last part of the wayang currently runs from about 3:15 to 4:30. *Pathet Manyura* is where the plot finally unfolds, in a series of *candhakan*: the rapid meeting up of various characters for plot-specific purposes, without the structure of an elaborate court scene. There might be one full court scene (*Adegan Manyura*), but for the most part the action in *Pathet Manyura* is lakon-specific and has no set structure. As Purbo

[19] Sembadra's scene in the forest with Naradha in palace-classical *Rama's Crown* should have been named *Sintrèn*, but is referred to in the Lontar publication simply as "*Candhakan*: Sembadra in the Forest." At the time, there was some debate among people consulting on the project as to whether a *Sintrèn* scene needed to be in a court, but the subsequent concensus among my informants is that clearly it does not.

[20] Edy Sulistyono, a teacher at the current PDMN, claimed to have read references in old sources to a *Pathet Sintrèn* between *Pathet Sanga* and *Pathet Manyura*, and a *Pathet Lindur* between *Pathet Nem* and *Pathet Sanga*, but was unable to direct me toward anything specific. Wahyopangrawit was also specific about playing the *céngkok* in *Gd Renyep* as a mix of *sanga* and *manyura*, rather than strictly *sanga*—the piece most often used in the 1980s–1990s to accompany the *Sintrèn* Scene.

Asmoro remarks in his master's thesis (2004), *Pathet Manyura* is really where the *inti lakon* lies—the essence of the lakon's meaning and plot. After numerous formal court scenes, and numerous stylized and fairly generic visual attraction scenes such as *Budhalan*, *Prang Gagal*, *Prang Kembang*, and *Alas-alasan*, the pace of the plot moves into high gear in *Pathet Manyura*. Aside from one court scene that may occur at the beginning of the act, there is very little narration but rather mostly dialogue and action. Sometimes, depending on the lakon, there will be a major and important philosophical scene, where a teaching or amulet is finally granted or where advice is given to a chosen one finally identified.

Prang Tandhing→Tayungan (Grand Final Battle→Victory Dance)

[*Tandhing* means a faceoff.] [MK-Class 5, tr 7] and [SRS-Class 5, tr 3]

There will ultimately be a climactic battle at the end, between the major forces in the lakon. This is a vital element in a classical performance. Whether the nature of the lakon in fact requires a final battle or not, it is considered necessary to have a symbolic meeting of left and right, dark and light, antagonist and protagonist at the end. This is followed by a victory dance, known as *Tayungan*, by a protagonist such as Bima (see Figure 2-16).



Figure 2-16: Bima's victory dance. *Rama's Crown*.

Tancep Kayon (The End)

[*Tancep* is the opposite of *bedhol,* and refers here to positioning the *kayon* in the banana trunk at the end.]

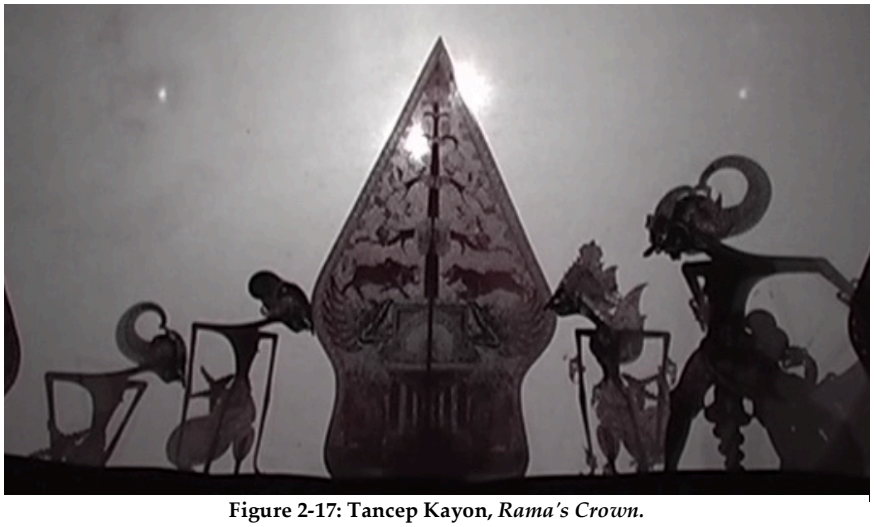


Figure 2-17: Tancep Kayon, *Rama's Crown*.

Characters gather in a final and short court scene, capped off with the placement of the *kayon* in the middle of the screen to signal the end. The dhalang may end

with words of wisdom through advisor characters such as Semar, Bisma, and Matswapati, or, he may offer a summation or final statement as the dhalang. The gamelan closes off the performance with some sort of *Ayak-ayak* in *sléndro manyura*: *Ayak-ayak Pamungkas* if the group is aligned with the national radio station, *Ayak-ayak Kaloran* at the Mangkunegaran Palace, *Ayak-ayak Umbul Donga* at the Kraton, *Ayak-ayak Mijil Larasati* for groups associated with either the High School of Performing Arts or ISI, or an entirely different closing piece specific to the gamelan troupe (the latter a tradition started by Nartosabdo). Remaining audience members quietly gather their belongs and start wandering home anywhere from the moment the victory dance starts to the very end (see Figure 2-17).

Completing the Profile of Classical

The dramatic structure and musical accompaniment employed by a dhalang are the most telltale elements identifying a performance as either classical or contemporary in the minds of the wider community of wayang fans. In order to be labeled as "classical" in casual conversation, a performance is expected to begin with a grand court scene and long opening narration. Audiences, in general, expect well-timed, gradual entrances of each character and accompaniment taken from either the Solo court repertory or the Nartosabdo repertory. They expect to see most of the scenes described above unfold over the evening and into the morning. But the other elements (listed on p. 37)—*catur, sabet, tokoh*, and *sanggit*—also come into play when an audience is considering whether a performance feels classical or contemporary.

With regard to *catur* and *sabet*, most audiences still await the rich metaphors, puns, and figures of speech that make up *basa pedhalangan*, and expect to see a particular repertory of movement techniques historically connected to each character. They assume they will hear the idiosyncratic voices and witness the etiquette prescribed over the centuries between characters; the somewhat set lines of debate and humor, or generic philosophical passages. These techniques of *catur* and *sabet*, quite different in classical and contemporary performances, require more educated and discerning judges than simply the general populace. However, there are "bottom line" behaviors. If the dhalang purposefully employs Indonesian, Arabic, or English, or disregards the traditional etiquette or hierarchy required

among characters, his performance will usually be referred to as *kontèmporèr* (or, at times, depending on the observer, *keladuk* or "over the line").

Differences in classical and contemporary *sanggit* and characterization are harder to identify and would, for the most part, only be definable by dhalang or highly informed wayang enthusiasts. In order to be deemed "classic," however, a dhalang would have to stick to the broad range of plotlines and character interpretations generally accepted over time. He would need to perform using the traditional stage set up, instruments, and wayang figures to be considered classical.

Naturally, what one person considers to be a classical performance might feel contemporary to another, and vice versa. What one might name "contemporary innovation," another might protest as no more than *hura-hura*. Is a performance "classical" if it takes place in an air-conditioned theater, with no clove cigarettes, no mosquitos, no humidity, and no traditional herbal drink sellers? Is "classical" intertwined with offerings and ceremonies? Is a performance "classical" that is projected through mega sound systems and over the internet? Perhaps yes, perhaps no in all cases, but in this work, the focus is on dramatic structure, interpretive details, characterization, and technical elements such as oration, movement, and accompaniment techniques. In general, most audiences still define a "classical" performance as one that follows the dramatic structure, musical accompaniment, movement, and narration practices outlined in this chapter.

Although in the 1970s and 1980s Nartosabdo was considered a radical innovator, by the year 2000 his recordings were held up as one branch in the broader category of classical performance-practice. *Klasik* include performances reflecting palace traditions, village traditions, the idiosyncratic contributions of Gandadarman, and the legendary innovations of Nartosabdo. These tend currently to be united under one large umbrella, and referred to as one, in contrast to all-night *garapan* (or *kontèmporèr, modèrn, padat sewengi, pakeliran baru, pakeliran konsèp)*. All of these are placed in contrast again to an extreme *hura-hura* event, which might simply be referred to as: *rusak* (ruined), *keladuk* (gone way too far), or *néka-néka* (questionable). This concept of all-night *garapan* is best explored first and foremost from its roots in the condensed style of wayang performance practice (*pakeliran padat*) that was developed at ASKI in the 1970s, which is the focus of the next chapter.

THREE

CONDENSED STYLE

The History of *Pakeliran Padat*

A Kernel of an Idea

In the early 1950s, Sedyono Djodjokartika "Gendhon" Humardani (1923–1983), a dancer and choreographer who was at the time also a graduate-level medical student in anatomy, began to publically express his belief that wayang was in desperate need of innovation, as well as his dissatisfaction with the direction dhalang were taking the art form. In a variety of public appearances in his role as founding head of Pedalangan Studies of the Student Arts Association at Gadjah Mada University (UGM) in Yogyakarta, Central Java, he cited the frills, fillers and repetitive material in wayang. He marveled at how it was exactly these places that were currently being favored and extended by dhalang.[1] In his view, long battle scenes, extended slapstick routines and endless joke sequences were getting excruciatingly longer; the formulaic repetition of material from scene to scene was a concept long out of date; and the generic narrative passages of the past had nothing to say to modern audiences. Although not a performing dhalang himself, Humardani was embarking upon what was to become a lifelong crusade as a critic and innovator within the world of *pedhalangan*.

[1] Little did he know what was to come 40 years later in the days of *wayang hura-hura*. Nonetheless, his is not an unusual perspective throughout the history of wayang. The various palace schools in the 1920s and 1930s were founded on the basis of similar dissatisfaction, as were, in fact, the innovations by Purbo Asmoro in the 1990s that form the focus of this work.

In 1953, soon after he founded the UGM Student Arts Association Pedalangan Studies branch, Humardani proposed to his student colleagues that they develop a new form of wayang. In this new style, the authors[2] would identify an essential issue (*gagasan pokok*) of a particular lakon. The process would start there, with a single theme, message or central conflict, and the lakon would be built around this theme. Rather than content being subservient to structure, structure would become nothing more than an instrument to sculpt the content. Instead of beginning from the assumption that a dhalang must fit his interpretation of a lakon into a traditional schema of scenes and employ a traditional repertory of pieces, movement techniques, and literary passages, the writers would begin with questions such as: "What do we want to say?" "What is the main conflict in this lakon?" "What is the central message or essential issue to be explored?" Then scene structure, gamelan accompaniment, literary passages, and movement sequences would follow as necessary to support the essential theme, while non-essential material would be discarded.[3] At the outset, Humardani named this new form *pakeliran baru*, "baru" meaning new and "pakeliran" referring to a wayang performance.[4] Twenty years later, in the mid 1970s at ASKI, this concept would be renamed *pakeliran padat*, referring specifically to the dense and compact (*padat*) nature of the form, with all elements focused on the essential message to be conveyed.

First Attempts at a Condensed Wayang

Humardani's first *pakeliran baru* was attempted on the occasion of UGM's Sixth Founder's Day in 1955 with the lakon *Kangsa Léna (The Death of Kangsa)* performed by a fellow UGM student, the dhalang Sri Mulyono.[5] Humardani, who gave the pre-performance speech as head of the Student Arts Association, took the opportunity to give this description of his new concept:

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[2] As is explained later, it was not necessarily the dhalang who would put together the lakon in this new style, and certainly not spontaneously at the screen; rather it was a collaborative effort that resulted in a script.

[3] Much of the information in this section is taken from ISI Pedalangan instructor Sudarko's book, *Pakeliran Padat: Pembentukan dan Penyebaran*, 2003. Sudarko was in the first graduating class of ASKI's Pedalangan Department and was one of a tight-knit group of Humardani's *pedhalangan* protégés in the mid-1970s, including Bambang Suwarno, Sumanto, Bambang Murtiyoso, and Marwanto.

[4] *Kelir* means screen in Javanese. The *pa-* prefix and *-an* suffix make a new noun out of the base word, which refers to a performance taking place at the screen.

[5] Humardani and Sri Mulyono also created a *pakeliran baru* version of *Rama's Crown* in 1955, according to protégés Sumanto and Bambang Murtiyoso, but not much information is available on this performance.

> By adopting a viewpoint of modernity in the arts, we are encouraged to craft the elements [of wayang] into a new shape, creating a new performance style that is balanced, its elements all completely in line with the essence or main point of the story.
>
> The basic equipment, the symbolic elements, the main scenes and the relationship between modes of a traditional performance will be in tact. Also, the expressive idioms specific to wayang will not have been done away with—such as the types of movement techniques and the styles of speech a dhalang uses to paint the scene. The poetic songs and gamelan accompaniment will still be the norm, as in traditional all-night wayang.
>
> But absent will be scenes not relevant to the content or main point of the story. Also missing will be gamelan accompaniment that is only meant for relaxed filler. The gamelan accompaniment will serve to add meaningful background. It will support the atmosphere of the scene and infuse soul into the dramatic aspects of this "pakeliran baru." Also important to this new form will be the absence of scenes dictated by the time of night or required by beliefs concerning the role of [wayang in] the macrocosmos.
>
> The shape of such a "pakeliran baru" as outlined above will only become a reality through hard work and dedication. In addition, it will require a cool head in the face of the inevitable attacks that will surround it. With hard work and dedication we hope to achieve a form that is ever more satisfactory [than tonight's trial]; a form that is truly new. New not only for the sake of new, and not with the connotation of destroying the old, but rather new in the sense of developing the art form; a new that is *mentes*: full of meaning, but without filler.[6]

Over the next four years, until he graduated from the medical school at UGM in 1959, Humardani honed his ideas and tirelessly spoke out in public forums. In his speech before the Indonesian Pedalangan Congress in Surakarta, August 1958, he attempted to clarify his concept further, introducing two phrases that caught on and continue to be widely quoted to this day. One regards function and one compares form and content.

Function: "Crucial Spiritual Matters"

Humardani was passionate that the function of wayang should be returned to what he saw as its original purpose: exploration of "crucial spiritual matters" (*nilai rohani yang wigati*). Bambang Murtiyoso paraphrases Humardani as saying, "The entertainment world already has its comedians, the educational world its teachers, and the government its ministers to disseminate information. The purpose of wayang should be focused not on any of these matters but rather on the exploration

[6] This speech can be found in the 20-essay collection, Humardani 1991, 138.

of crucial spiritual matters."[7] Humardani's proposal to identify an essential issue in a lakon, craft all elements to support exploration of this issue, and remove all elements not related to it, was in service to this idea of focusing on *nilai rohani yang wigati*. The choices made when creating a *padat* lakon were judged in decades to come by this commonly repeated pillar of thought: Is the focus on the exploration of "crucial spiritual matters" with all else subservient, or is the performance bound by tradition (or, worse yet, audience taste) to the detriment of the main message.

Form and Content

Also in this 1958 speech, Humardani introduces his characteristic challenge regarding whether the format and the contents of a wayang performance are aligned (Humardani 1991, 123):

> As we work toward a new form of *pedhalangan*, or "pakeliran baru," our attention is directed mainly toward the integrity and harmony of the content itself, as well as the manner in which the content is treated. Primarily one needs to ask, are the contents and the manner in which the contents are developed appropriate and compact? In other words, does the format of the performance assure presenting the content in a fitting and compact manner? If in fact ritual belief ceremonies in this modern era (not the beliefs themselves but the ceremonies) no longer fall within the realm of the arts, then having to follow the traditional all-night format of a wayang is no longer a requirement. And hence the *pedhalangan* profession should leave behind the premise that the all-night format is necessary to bring the lakon into oneness with the cosmos (the grand universal rhythm).
>
> Therefore, the duration of a wayang performance could be condensed to anywhere from, say, two to four hours. But it must be noted, that the resulting duration of the performance is only a side effect. The condensing of the format and contents of a wayang performance may result in a shorter duration but this has no connection to matters of health, stamina, having to get up early the next morning, or other such excuses. It also is not done so as to make the performance more befitting for foreigners, nor for other reasons of scheduling or limited available time.

This discussion of form and content, over the next two decades, transformed into a celebrated metaphor that was to become forever tied to Humardani and *pakeliran padat*, that of *wadah* and *isi*: literally, the container and its contents. Humardani often referred to the all-night form of a wayang as a container (*wadah*) that was not in proportion to its contents (*isi*), as though one had a huge container with only a

[7] In *Nilai Rohani Yang Wigati*, 1987, Bambang Murtiyoso explores the meaning of this phrase in depth, and Humardani's frequent use of it.

shallow layer of water in it. His *pakeliran baru* concept encouraged dhalang to look at the amount of "water" the lakon required and make sure the container was just the right size and no bigger.

Although Humardani continued to work with the dhalang Sri Mulyono even after leaving UGM in 1959, he was never satisfied with the results of their collaboration, or with the reaction to his ideas in general within the UGM community. He complained that their experiments had simply been abbreviated performances (*pakeliran ringkas)*, but not truly conceptual pieces that were reorganized around his innovative principles of function, form, and content. He judged the proposed *pakeliran baru* as only in its formative stages, and not yet satisfactory.[8]

Pakeliran Ringkas or *Pakeliran Baru*?

The truncated performances (*pakeliran ringkas)* that Humardani was referring to had existed for some time, and arose simply out of a direct need or conscious desire to shorten wayang. As far back as the early 1920s, European members of the Java Institute and Javanese members of the Mardiguna Arts Association in Surakarta had invited discussion and lectures on the advisability of shortening wayang performances for practical reasons.[9] Around the same time, King Pakubuwana X (reigned 1893–1939) encouraged dhalang in the Solo palace community to create performances five hours in length. His son, Pembayun, was an avid wayang fan while still in school and his father was concerned about Pembayun's attention to his formal studies. Evidently, for a short period and among a small circle, this became a trend.[10] Scene structure was kept intact, but each section of the wayang was significantly abbreviated, slicing three to four hours off the total length. During the Japanese occupation (1942–1945) there was a midnight curfew and wayang performances had to be cut short. This was also done by truncating scenes, but not in

[8] Humardani's dissatisfaction was repeatedly quoted in interviews with five of his closest protégés from ASKI: Bambang Suwarno, Sumanto, Sudarko, Bambang Murtiyoso, and Suratno. They each described how Humardani consistently referred to the disappointing and unsuccessful collaborative efforts at *pakeliran baru,* 1954 to 1974.

[9] Clara van Groenendael, 1987. 1.) Kunst, *De kunst ondergeschikt aan de eischen der maatschappij; Verkorte wajangduur* 2.) Kats, *Verkorting van den duur der wajang-koelit-voorstelling*.

[10] This anecdote is related by Sudarko in his book, *Pakeliran Padat: Pembentukan dan Penyebaran*, 2003, and other ASKI students, including Purbo Asmoro, report hearing it from their professors.

any way changing structure or approach.[11] Many sources have stated that *pakeliran ringkas* took its format from tradition in Klaten, in which afternoon wayang ran only from noon to 5:00 PM, again through a shortening of the traditional scenes.[12]

Humardani had a very different vision: the complete re-conceptualization of the basic elements of wayang—interpretive details, characterization, scene structure, movement techniques, gamelan accompaniment, and narration—around a main theme. Since this meant avoidance of generic, repetitive, or traditionally obligatory material, a shorter duration would be inevitable. As Bambang Suwarno proposed in an interview at his home in 2013, "A *padat* performance could theoretically last anywhere from ten minutes to seven hours, as long as every moment is dense, meaningful, and focused on the theme. Of course no one has ever done a seven-hour *padat* performance yet. Whoever could accomplish that would really show themselves to be an extraordinary dhalang."[13]

The Next Stage of Unsuccessful Attempts

After continuing his anatomy studies in London for a year (1960–1961) and then moving to the USA to study ballet and modern dance in New York and at the University of California in Los Angeles (1961–1963), Humardani returned to Indonesia ever more inspired to follow through with *pakeliran baru*. After being exposed to Western dance forms and Western theater aesthetics Humardani would not give up on his new form of wayang.[14] Although not yet developed or realized to its full potential, he continued to insist that his vision was profoundly different from simply shortening a wayang performance, and that it started from a completely alternative conceptual premise. It was just that no one seemed to be quite able to put into practice what he envisioned.

[11] Sudarko explains this but it was also mentioned in one of my interviews with dhalang Sutino Hardokocarito (born 1925).

[12] Gaib Widopandoyo (dhalang), Bambang Suwarno (dhalang), Blacius Subono (dhalang), Soewito Wito Radyo (musician), all of Klaten, in interviews.

[13] This emphasis on *padat* referring to the density of the treatment rather than necessarily shortening a wayang is important, as Purbo Asmoro's contemporary-interpretive style was inspired by the potential of extending a *padat* performance all night.

[14] See Humardani (1991) for his impressions of Western aesthetics in the essays: "Ballet dalam Perkembangan Tari Kita" and "Menonton Ballet di Covent Garden."

In the early 1960s, Humardani tried to take his new concept to a wider circle of dhalang, particularly in villages throughout Klaten via the various local Cultural Offices (*Kantor Kebudayaan*). Bambang Suwarno remembers his father, the respected dhalang Padmatjarito of the village Gemolong, coming home one night from one of these meetings. That night made a big impact on the adolescent Bambang Suwarno, because his father came home with a fascinating strip of paper outlining Humardani's key philosophical concepts regarding *pakeliran baru*. Inspired by the meeting to attempt a script, Padmatjarito subsequently created the three-hour *Wahyu Sih Nugraha (The Boon of Compassion and Favor),*[15] which Bambang Suwarno performed in the public town square of Klaten soon after. To this day, he laments having lost track of the historical piece of paper passed out that night.

A few years later, in 1966, Humardani conducted a tour of Jakarta, which included performing for then President Soekarno and at various foreign embassies. He took a crew with him, including 15-year-old Bambang Suwarno, and they attempted *pakeliran baru* versions of *Lahiré Gathutkaca (The Birth of Gathutkaca)*, *Gathutkaca Krama (The Marriage of Gathutkaca)* and *Makutharama (Rama's Crown)*, with a variety of dhalang. Evidently the results still did not match his vision, according to what he would tell his protégés in the years to come.

From 1969 to 1974, Humardani brought the concept to the newly formed Central Javanese Arts Center in Solo (*Pusat Kesenian Jawa Tengah* or PKJT) in his role as director. PKJT was located on the grounds of a small complex known as Sasanamulya, within the main palace environs in Solo. Historically, Sasanamulya was where the crown prince lived when he was in training to be the future king, as well as a venue for weddings and funerals. During the tumultuous and chaotic period surrounding 1965, it was used as an interrogation camp for suspected and accused communists. In late 1969 it was transformed into an idealistic hub for exploration of the arts, where not only instruction, rehearsals, and performances took place but also where many of its students and teachers, as well as its director, Humardani, lived.

[15] This lakon, a *carangan* many decades old, focuses on Nakula, who receives a gift from the gods providing him strength and compassion in life.

In late 1969, one of Humardani's first activities at PKJT was to organize a gathering of respected, elderly dhalang to once again start up discussions concerning *pakeliran baru*. Marwanto, later on to become one of Humardani's protégés, was an observer and wrote about the seminar in his essay *Evaluasi Perkembangan Pakeliran Padat*.[16] "I remember that Ki Nyotocarito, Ki Pudjo Sumarto, Ki Warsino, Ki Sutrisno, Ki Marsa Carito, Ki Samsudin, and Ki Probohardjono (heavy-weight classicists of their era) were in attendance, among others. Who knows if in their hearts they were grumbling, but on the surface participants seemed not opposed to the idea."

The meeting ended by appointing Ki Nyotocarito to the task of creating a *pakeliran baru* version of the same story Humardani had attempted in 1955 at UGM, *Kangsa Léna (The Death of Kangsa)*. It appears that by choosing the same lakon, Humardani may have been hoping for a clear comparison to his collaboration with UGM's Sri Mulyono—perhaps hoping that a master elder like Ki Nyotocarito might be more up to the task.[17] The three-hour script that emerged months later, however, also did not match his vision. It turns out that Humardani did not find a meeting of the minds by reaching out to elderly and experienced dhalang in Solo. He once again insisted that the results were only abbreviated and not truly dense or newly conceptualized. Since his own abilities as a dhalang were limited, he himself was unable to act out the vision and continued, now 20 years later and counting, to be frustrated by the results.

ASKI and PKJT at Sasanamulya

In 1974 Humardani finally found the collaboration he was looking for to make his new concept a reality, through the merger of ASKI and PKJT on the Sasanamulya grounds. While from 1969 to 1973 Sasanamulya housed only PKJT, a performance-oriented institution, in 1973 the academic and teaching institution ASKI joined in. Founded in 1964, ASKI had been located on the High School of Performing Arts campus across town and consisted of only two departments: Gamelan Music (Karawitan) and Dance. Once ASKI moved to Sasanamulya, Humardani became

[16] This essay was written for a seminar on *pakeliran padat* at ASKI in 1987, and is included in Sugeng Nugroho's personal collection of bound essays entitled *Bunga Rampai*: *Makalah Seni Pedalangan, Vol II.*

[17] We can only speculate on Humardani's choice of lakon, since Marwanto, Humardani, and Nyotocarito have all long passed away, and I found no one else able to speak in such specific terms about this assignment.

joint director of both institutions. It took him only one year at ASKI to push forward the creation of a Pedalangan Department in 1974. By 1975 he had gathered together an elite group of talented protégés to work on his beloved concept of *pakeliran baru*. By all accounts, some 20 years after his initial idea, he had finally found just the right mix of open minds, new talents, rich artistic backdrop, and "buzz" to realize his vision.

The unique buzz that Sasanamulya created for artists is fondly remembered to this day by many of its alumni. Supanggah describes what it was like to be a part of this inspiring and innovative place (2003, 98–104):

> All forms of workshops, rehearsals, seminars, performances, exhibitions, courses—traditional or modern, theatrical or literary, performance art or visual art, fusion or pure, on iron or bronze, auditory or visual, aural or written—contributed to a constant opening of our eyes, ears, thinking, and emotions as artists. There was not a moment void of artistic activity. Everyday, starting at five in the morning and going way past midnight, there were rehearsals, performances, and exhibitions; individuals practicing their dancing, singing, gamelan playing, text recitation, wayang movements.
>
> From the rooms in the back one could hear Sundanese music, from the spaces on the west side gamelan accompaniment, wayang texts, *keprak* signals, and from the inner quarters the gentle sounds of classical Javanese gamelan mixed with shouting and various instructions by Pak Gendhon. From the *pendhapa* one could hear the archaic gamelan set *cara balèn*, and from the other side recordings being played of *srimpi* pieces for rehearsals. Since the rooms at Sasanamulya were not designed to be soundproof, the resulting noise truly resembled a night market in the middle of the day, or even a mental institution. Add the sound of the spoon clanging against a bowl by the meatball soup seller in front of the *pendhapa*, the rings of the telephone, the clicking of the office typewriter, and you have the vibrant and uncontrolled Sasanamulya buzz.

It was within this atmosphere in early 1974 that the Pedalangan Department was formed. A handful of interested students from the Karawitan Department, some having only completed a semester in *karawitan* and some more, moved over to become *pedhalangan* students: Bambang Suwarno, Bambang Murtiyoso, Sumanto, Sudarko, Suratno, Kuwato, and Marwanto. According to all interview accounts, Bambang Suwarno and Sumanto quickly became favorites of Humardani, with

Bambang Murtiyoso serving as a *tukang omong*[18] and the others, at the time, taking more of a back seat.[19]

Bambang Suwarno had been a golden child of Humardani's since he was 15, as mentioned earlier, and was considered an expert in the area of dramatization through movement. Sumanto reports experiencing a kind of meeting of minds with Humardani while taking his Philosophy of the Arts and Arts Criticism classes at ASKI. He subsequently became known as a master writer in the area of narration, dialogue, and debate. Bambang Murtiyoso was an older student and not a practicing dhalang, having already earned a liberal arts undergraduate degree before attending ASKI. He was interested in the field of journalism and criticism, and respected for his interpretive story details, characterizations, and general impressions of the conceptual whole. It was this group of students who, over the next decade or so, went to work on Humardani's *pakeliran baru* and finally began producing results that he referred to as *mentes*.[20] It was also at some point around this time that the new form of wayang was renamed *pakeliran padat*.[21]

The First *Pakeliran Padat* Scripts

The first *pakeliran padat* script to come out of ASKI was the two-hour lakon *Rama* in 1975, primarily written by Bambang Suwarno under the supervision of Humardani and with informal support from his fellow protégés. One year later this script was used to tour Europe, with Bambang Suwarno as the dhalang. Focusing on the hero Rama, this overview of the *Ramayana* combined multiple all-night episodes. It started with Sinta's kidnapping and progressed through the death of Rahwana and

[18] Sudarko used this term in an interview, meaning that Bambang Murtiyoso was the commentator and critic of the group's work. Bambang Murtiyoso's own term in an interview was "bagian crèwèt," a coarse, but endearing, way of declaring himself as annoyingly nagging and critical.

[19] There is surprising consistency on this hierarchy in individual interviews with each of these protégés, all still living except for Marwanto. It is important to note that the Karawitan and Dance Departments also had their favored Humardani protégés, most notably Supanggah and Wahyu Santosa Prabowo, respectively, but they did not work specifically on *pakeliran baru* teams, hence are not immediately relevant here.

[20] A Javanese term, meaning: dense, heady, full of meaning and integrity. This is often chosen as the Javanese equivalent to the connotation intended in the Indonesian word *padat*.

[21] I was unable to ascertain exactly when this change was made, but the term *pakeliran padat* can be found in ASKI lakon scripts as early as 1975, while *pakeliran baru* was still used as late as 1971 in essays by Humardani. *Padat* is Indonesian and therefore spelled without an *h*, although Javanese pronounce it "padhat." According to Sugeng Nugroho (personal communication, 2011) it was chosen by Humardani's team over Javanese terms (such as *padhet* or *mentes*) "so as to lend a modern, cosmopolitan feel."

the fall of the Alengka Kingdom. Marwanto created a similar version, inserting the Sugriwa-Subali episode (feuding monkey brothers) into the middle, thus providing background as to how the monkey army came to be so dedicated to Rama.

As Marwanto describes in his essay *Evaluasi Perkembangan Pakeliran Padat*, this first *padat* experiment was already marked by the characteristic team effort that would become so common in the creation of *padat* scripts. Once the group left for the three-month tour of Europe, with nothing to do each day but perform or travel, they spent hours reworking the material. During these reworkings the discussions focused on how to make the content even more compact and dense—how to trim, clip, clean up, and make all transitions more efficient and to the point. The group re-examined and re-evaluated each element as to its purpose: did it move the story forward, contribute to characterization or theme, or was it merely a traditionally required element? Through these sessions the two-hour original was paired down to two versions: one 90 minutes long, and one slightly longer that included the Marwanto insert. At this point the script was the result of a group effort.

During the initial nine years or so of *pakeliran padat* exploration at ASKI, until Humardani's death in 1983, some basic principles were developed and refined through a flurry of informal discussions, seminars, script-writing competitions, and curriculum work. There were extensive seminars on *pakeliran padat* at Sasanamulya in 1977, 1980, 1981, and 1983; *padat* script-writing competitions judged by Sasanamulya instructors in 1979, 1980, and 1983; workshops and community *pakeliran padat* rehearsals set up in Solo, Karanganyar (at the home of dhalang Manteb Soedharsono) and Sragen (at the home of female dhalang, Suharni). But probably generating the most lasting influence was the requirement by the Pedalangan Department, from the first graduating class of 1978 until 2010,[22] that a candidate create or perform a *padat* script in order to graduate.

Regulations have changed over the years, sometimes as often as every year, but from the late 1970s up until 2010 students were been required to either create a *padat* script to be performed by someone else, perform a *padat* script already existing from a given list of accepted titles, or both create and perform a new script. Many *padat* scripts were created in the early years, all under Humardani's supervision. To

[22] As of 2010, students have been free to choose any format for their final exam—*pakeliran padat*, *ringkas*, *tradisi*, *wayang sandosa*, *kréasi*, or any other option that is approved in their initial, pre-exam evaluation (see Chapter 9).

this day, these works, and their subsequent multiple versions circulating in later years, are highly quoted, frequently referenced, heavily studied, and consistently reworked at ISI; they serve as milestone texts in the repertory:

- *Alap-alapan Sukèsi* (*Sukèsi's Hand in Marriage Contested*) by Sumanto, 1977
- *Ciptaning* (*Arjuna In Meditation*) by Bambang Suwarno, 1979
- *Bisma Gugur* (*The Death of Bisma*) by Sumanto, 1980
- *Narasoma-Pujawati* (*Narasoma and Pujawati*) by Sumanto, 1981
- *Salya Gugur* (*The Death of Salya*) by Sumanto, 1982
- *Déwa Ruci (The God Ruci)* by Bambang Suwarno, 1982

"We were the Gendhon club," commented Sumanto in an interview regarding those early years. At the 30-year commemoration of Humardani's death, held at Sasanamulya in 2013, Supanggah expressed a similar sentiment, "The first *padat* scripts, and future works out of ASKI in general, had the idiosyncratic 'made in Sasanamulya' trademark." By the early 1980s the concept of how to craft the elements of a *padat* performance were formalized and a vocabulary developed. New Humardani protégés sprouted up, most notably Blacius Subono, followed by Dedek Wahyudi, both in the area of gamelan accompaniment innovation. The all-important term *garapan* emerged, with a new and ASKI-specific definition. What exactly is it that determines the "trademark," or represents the "Gendhon club," or defines *garapan* in ASKI terms?

Garapan: Crafting Elements Anew

In order to fulfill the ASKI vision of a *padat* performance, the script-writers had to face the challenge of identifying an essential message or theme, and then deliberately and meticulously crafting the following elements to serve that main message:

- *garap lakon* (the crafting of main story threads and plot details)
- *garap tokoh* (the crafting of character development and motive)
- *garap adegan* (the crafting of scene structure)
- *garap catur* (the crafting of narration, description and dialogue)
- *garap sabet* (the crafting of expressive movement to represent meaning)
- *garap iringan* (the crafting of musical accompaniment)

Hence, this conscious crafting and thoughtful interpretation of elements to serve the main theme, as opposed to being in service to a traditional structure, came to be referred to as *garapan*. Historically in gamelan and wayang circles, *garapan* simply refers to treatment or interpretation. Every performance is of course an interpretation, as every performer, from classical to contemporary, interprets how they will treat the material. But in *pedhalangan* circles in the ASKI community, the term *garapan* came to refer specifically to this deliberate freeing of oneself from the constraints of structure and consciously recreating each element of one's performance according to the needs and defined theme of the lakon. In traditional *pedhalangan* circles, interpretation details specific to one dhalang are referred to globally as *sanggit*, but the ASKI *pakeliran padat* approach is more deliberate, and breaks *sanggit* down into these six areas to be consciously crafted.

Aside from the groundbreaking ideas concerning how structure, characterization, musical accompaniment, literary devices, and movement techniques must be subservient to the *gagasan pokok*, what was revolutionary about these works was the process. *Padat* creations, to this day, start out as scripts. These scripts, often written collaboratively by small committees, provide not only all the narration and dialogue but also prescribe every musical selection, down to details on how much of the selection to use before making a transition. The scripts also include exacting stage directions concerning dramatic gestures and movement techniques. Then the script is subjected to intense rehearsals with the writers, the dhalang, the musicians, and invited senior advisers from the conservatory staff. Changes, additions, deletions—some minor and some quite broad—are made in this collaborative process over 10 to 20, or more, rehearsals. The exam candidate is required to submit a bound volume that includes introductory analysis, the original script, the rehearsal schedule, and personnel details. The original script is not formally revised to reflect the final product, however, so one needs to attend the performance or obtain a recording to learn what the final consensus was. The point is to remain entirely focused through a dense and efficiently planned package. The dhalang is expected to adhere to the script and all final revisions when performing a *padat* wayang, lest he revert to digressions or confuse his gamelan musicians, who will be working from a tightly-set score.

Kunthi Pilih: A Case Study

Each year as students prepare for their final performance exam in *pedhalangan*, a list of approved scripts is provided for those deciding not to create a script but rather to realize an existing one. This list goes through a strict process of approval by instructors. In 1987, for example, these were the approved scripts, some from the early days and some new:[23]

- *Alap-alapan Sukèsi* by Sumanto, 1977
- *Ciptaning* by Bambang Suwarno, 1979
- *Déwa Ruci* by Bambang Suwarno, 1982
- *Rama Tundhung* by Suyanto, 1983
- *Durgandini* by Puthut Gunawan, 1984
- *Suryatmaja-Surthikanthi* by Dwiyono, 1985
- *Gandamana Tundhung* by Sukatno, 1985
- *Tresna (Samba Juwing)* by Purbo Asmoro and Harbono, 1986
- *Kunthi Pilih* by Sukardi Samiharjo, 1986

One *padat* script, *Kunthi Pilih (Kunthi's Choice)* by Sukardi Samiharjo, will be examined in depth in the next section, to illustrate how the concept of *garapan* was realized in *pakeliran padat* performances by 1986. I chose this script from the above list for a number of reasons. First, although *Tresna* was Purbo Asmoro's own final exam script and therefore obviously of great interest, the final script approved by ASKI with all the accompaniment choices and stage directions has been lost, while Sukardi's *Kunthi Pilih* final script is in tact. But the most important factor in choosing *Kunthi Pilih* as a cornerstone text here, is that it was the very script that inspired Purbo Asmoro to create his all-night *garapan* style. It will therefore be examined again from a different angle in Chapter 4.[24]

Kunthi Pilih also goes by the more generic titles *Alap-alapan Kunthi* (*Kunthi's Hand in Marriage Contested*), or *Pandhu Rabi* (*The Marriage of Pandhu*)[25] and is a

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[23] From Sinarto's 1987 ASKI exam book, *Naskah Pakeliran Padat: Ciptaning*. Sinarto chose Bambang Suwarno's *Ciptaning* to adapt, analyze, and perform as his final exam that year. In the introduction to his exam book he explains the concept of the official, approved list of scripts.

[24] Many thanks to Sunarno, instructor at SMKI, for the Harbono script from his collection; to Juworo Bayu Kusuma for uncovering the audio recording during his own *Samba Juwing* exam process; and to Purbo Asmoro for preserving his handwritten script rough draft for over 25 years. Although in the end I decided not to use this script as a main example, having the handwritten original and the audio recording enhanced greatly my understanding of the era and brought all the scripts to life in a way that exam books do not.

[25] There is a reference to an 1877 dance "based on a battle within the wayang *purwa* lakon *Alap-alapan Kunthi-nalibronta"* in Florida 2000, 2:441. A reference to *Serat Pandhudéwanata Rabi*, 1877, is found Florida 2000, 2:311. But

complex lakon. It primarily concerns the story of the double marriage of Pandhu of Astina to both Kunthi of Mandura and Madrim of Mandaraka. Embedded within the story, however, are five important subplots: Kunthi's out-of-wedlock pregnancy resulting in the birth of Karna, the marriage of Narasoma (later in life known as King Salya) to Pujawati, the passing of ogre king Bagaspati's amulet to the future King Salya, the marriage of Gendari to Dhestarata, and Sangkuni's decision to move to Astina. Karna, Salya, Gendari, Dhestarata, and Sangkuni are vital characters throughout the *Mahabharata*, so these subplots are not insignificant.

Given the number of important milestone events that occur in this lakon one might think it to be popular, but in fact it is rarely performed by classical dhalang. In the 1990s and 2000s, I only saw it performed twice, both in classical style, and heard of a third performance by Nyi Suharni at RRI Solo. Among the over 240 all-night wayang recordings on the comprehensive website www.indonesiawayang.com, representing the repertory of three dhalang superstars Nartosabdo, Anom Soeroto, and Manteb Soedharsono, there is not a single recording of this lakon. Purbo Asmoro speculated in an interview in 2012 that this was due to a number of unfortunate events within, that make it simultaneously undesirable for weddings, birth celebrations, or circumcisions: the birth of a famous character out-of-wedlock who is subsequently abandoned (Karna), the murder of a priest at the hands of his own son-in-law (Narasoma's murder of Bagaspati), and a great prince (Pandhu) entering a marriage competition but bringing three young brides (Gendari, Kunthi, Madrim) home instead of one.

However, it happened to be the story that inspired a celebrated *pakeliran padat* script by Sukardi, as *padat* lakon to be performed in an academic setting are somewhat immune to the superstition concerning their use in a private home or village. That in turn went on to inspire the kernel of a new style by Purbo Asmoro, which forms the focus of this work. Sukardi, a 1986 graduate of the Pedalangan Department of ASKI and by all accounts an expert, particularly in the area of gamelan accompaniment, never knew that his script was to become so influential.[26]

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aside from these references, which help confirm a 140-odd-year history of the lakon, all the information here on classical treatment of the lakon comes from recent, personal experience watching performances in the 1990s by Sutino Hardokocarito and Sukasno Mudhocarito, as well as reading a synopsis (Tristuti 1995).

[26] Born in Baki, Sukoharjo in 1944, Sukardi was a graduate of both Konservatori and eventually ASKI. I tried to interview him on several occasions from 2009 to 2014, but his former colleagues, teachers, and students said he

In the next section, we will examine how Sukardi approached re-conceptualization (*garapan*) of each of the six elements in this lakon. This examination will both illuminate how a *padat* construction differs from a classical construction, but will also lay the groundwork for understanding (in Chapter 4) how Purbo Asmoro used Sukardi's *padat* script to create his first all-night *garapan* experiment. (Readers may find it helpful to be familiar with the classical treatment plot synopsis of *Kunthi Pilih* in Appendix 2 before continuing.)

Examining the Six Elements of *Garapan*
Kunthi Pilih by Sukardi, 1986

1. Garap Lakon: The Crafting of the Story

As is required by the ASKI *pakeliran padat* process, the writers craft the story around a main theme or message. While classical-style dhalang most certainly think about big issues and surely always have, they do not always start with these. Even if a classical dhalang has a theme or main over-riding message in mind, it would be highly uncharacteristic for him to be explicit about it in his planning, quite unusual for him to expect the audience to necessarily take it on, and unheard of to sacrifice all other elements to presenting such a theme.[27] Sukardi begins his 1986 exam booklet, *Kunthi Pilih*, with the following:

> Wayang addresses the conflicts faced by humans in life. Through the performance, a dhalang explores the nature of these conflicts, both physical and spiritual. It is hoped that as a result of his presentation, the viewer feels inspired to think about such matters…. Through this particular work now before us, I strive to explore the true nature of women and the reality of their stance in the world. Every woman, anywhere, eventually feels a deep love in her heart for a man. She will do anything in order to attain the object of her love…. In her struggles to find a partner, every woman has a different fate. Some find love by chance, some plan the path, some are influenced by something out of their control, others are driven by the love of the man to love him in return, and there are many other possibilities. It is this *gagasan pokok* that I will address, in the form of a wayang performance, via the lakon *Kunthi Pilih*.

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had been suffering for about a decade with severe withdrawl from society. On 14 February 2015 I visited his relatives, together with Bambang Suwarno, and left the Lontar books with his family, but Sukardi would not come out of the back room to greet us.

[27] In fact, as the elderly Sutino Hardokocarito said in an interview in 1997 at his home in Eromoko, Wonogiri: "The main principle of *pedhalangan* is '*médhang miring,*' which means everything should be slightly mysterious, vague, indirect, and refined so as not to be obvious."

As a result of this focus, Sukardi's entire composition hones in on the plot elements involving four women finding husbands: Kunthi, Madrim, Pujawati, and Gendari, and specifically Kunthi's love affair with Pandhu. He gives no weight to the male-based subplots concerning Narasoma and his amulet, Karna's fate as the abandoned son of a god, Sangkuni's decision to move to Astina, or Dhestarata's choice of Gendari, in what is usually the dramatic final scene of a wayang. The ogre Bagaspati's death does not even enter into his script, even though this is a renowned moment in classical wayang repertory. The role of the God of the Sun in fathering Kunthi's child is not addressed. We also never hear about who adopted Karna. Discarding entire elements of the traditional story is not only allowed but even encouraged in *padat* creations if the section in question does not develop the main focus. The *pakeliran padat* artist first forms his focus and then determines which elements of the story will be highlighted, which will not, and which will be left out entirely. He will also return to a consideration of his *gagasan pokok* when crafting each of the five elements below.

2. Garap Tokoh: The Crafting of Characters

Once the main theme or *gagasan pokok* is determined, the *padat* practitioner looks at characterization. As Blacius Subono explained in an interview at his home in 2012:

> I think of Arjuna in *Ciptaning* as a prince who truly becomes one with the environment and the elements through his meditation. I don't just tell the story as prescribed by tradition but rather want to try to enter Arjuna's thoughts and feelings as he is struggling with the elements on that mountaintop. And what about Wisrawa in *Alap-alapan Sukèsi*? A priest. A priest who has succumbed to temptation. This is where the interest lies. Let's try to get inside his mind. Let's try to make everything at that moment—the music, the movements, the narrations—aid in exploring that temptation.[28]

[28] There are certain lakon: in particular *Rama*, *Ciptaning*, *Alap-alapan Sukèsi*, and *Dèwi Ruci*, but also to a lesser degree *Kunthi Pilih*, *Bisma Gugur*, *Salya Gugur*, and *Samba Juwing* that have repeatedly captured the imagination of *padat* practitioners from 1975 to 2015. There is a clear preference in the community for the challenge of reworking one of these and giving it a new stamp, rather than always exploring a lakon completely new to the *padat* repertory.

Character Development

In his introduction, Sukardi describes his intent to focus most of the interpretive details on Kunthi, and to portray Kunthi and Pandhu as young adolescents, deeply in love. While in traditional performances Pandhu wins Kunthi by battling the only other acceptable competitor, Narasoma, this battle does not even occur in Sukardi's version. Kunthi and Pandhu come together at the end through a meeting of their souls in the heavens. No one approves the match-up, no one announces it officially. Kunthi and Pandhu escape the whole rigmarole of the competition, meet up as souls in another world, and make the decision to be dedicated to one another always. Sukardi crafts every other element focused on the romantic nature of their love.

Wayang-Figure Development

Not insignificant to the *garap tokoh* process is the way *padat* script creators explore the actual wayang figures themselves. Traditionally known as *wanda*, there can be a number of versions of certain wayang figures, particularly of the more popular characters. While developing the main characters in their minds, *padat* script creators often come up with ideas for new *wanda*. The inspiration for new *wanda* started with master wayang designer Bambang Suwarno (Figures 3-1 to 3-4).



Figure 3-1: *Kayon Hakékat* (The Essence of Truth *Kayon*)—Debuted for use in Sukardi's *padat* performance in 1986, to symbolize a blanket covering up Kunthi's pregnancy. Today, this is the most commonly used of Bambang Suwarno's dozens of innovative *kayon* figures (photo by Kartiko Nugroho).



Figure 3-2: Kunthi and Pandhu when newly in love (left) and, (right), after her giving birth to Karna (photos by Kartiko Nugroho).



Figure 3-3: *Kunthi Garbini* (Kunthi Pregnant)—A special version of Kunthi, in which she appears full-bosomed and more round, although not obviously pregnant. Her hair is let down freely to her ankles, to symbolize that she has not gone out for weeks (photo by Kartiko Nugroho).



Figure 3-4: *Bayi Basukarna* (Baby Basukarna)—A special baby wayang figure, designed to look particularly handsome and "prince like;" asleep,wrapped up in a batik cloth, and with the markings of the God of the Sun's lineage (photo by Kartiko Nugroho).

Throughout the history of *padat* creations, this thought toward new *wanda* has been an important element. Bambang Suwarno outlines more than 30 new figures that he designed (1975–1997) for use in new *padat* performances in his 2005 article: *Kemauan, Kemampuan, Keberanian: Dasar Kreativitas Seni* (*Having Determination, Competence, and Guts: The Basis of Artistic Creativity).*

3. Garap Adegan: The Crafting of Scene Structure

As is typical of all of the approved scripts by ASKI from the 1987 exam list, Sukardi does not present the scene structure as if it falls into any *Pathet Nem-Pathet Sanga-Pathet Manyura* sequence of three acts. He does not use scene titles familiar to classical wayang, such as *Jejer, Adegan Sabrang, Adegan Manyura*. He simply notifies his readers that he plans to tell the story in this series of seven scenes, as though they are independent of any pre-existing, historical format for wayang. Sukardi lays out the following scene structure in his introduction:

1. *Pambuka* (Opening)
2. *Paséwakan Mandura* (Mandura Court)
3. *Keputrèn Mandura* (Mandura Female Quarters)
4. *Adegan Plasajenar* (Scene in Plasajenar)
5. *Adegan Pandhu-Kunthi* (Pandhu-Kunthi Scene)
6. *Adegan Mandura* (Scene in Mandura)
7. *Sayembara Pilih* (Competition in Which a Choice is Made)

However, as is also true for all the approved scripts in the list, the scenes do in fact fall loosely within a classical structure: 2 is an opening court scene in *Pathet Nem*, 3 a female quarters scene in *Pathet Nem*, 4 a foreign kingdom in *Pathet Nem*, 5 a forest scene including princely battles in *Pathet Sanga*, 6 a court scene in *Pathet Manyura*, and 7, some final battles, also in *Pathet Manyura*. While the order of scenes is similar to classical style, the way the scene unfolds and the weight of the scene in each case is significantly different. As Bambang Suwarno explains in the introduction to his script *Ciptaning* (1987):

> The organization of the story into scenes in *pakeliran padat* does not follow any prescribed format but rather depends on the whole picture, what main underlying theme has been chosen and how the characterization will be portrayed. We are allowed to expand, alter, or develop any section and start anywhere, as long as what we do is aligned with the content and message we wish to present.

The Prologue

Arguably the most dramatic scene innovation in *pakeliran padat* performances is the addition of the prologue. To begin a wayang performance with anything other than the centuries-old *Jejer Sepisan* (Opening Court Scene) in which members of the court are brought out ceremoniously with slow, stylized movements to the accompaniment of *Kabor*, *Kawit*, or *Krawitan*, was truly revolutionary in the 1970s and 1980s. *Pakeliran ringkas* performances open in the traditional way but the first scene is truncated to some 10 to 15 minutes by reducing the amount of music, the extent of the greetings between characters, and the length of the narration describing the kingdom. Conceptually, *pakeliran padat* performances require an entirely different sort of opening, working from the aesthetic of exploring the theme and character issues from the very beginning.

Sukardi's script, for example, starts with a freeform love scene between Pandhu and Kunthi, bringing the audience in touch from the beginning with the theme that Pandhu and Kunthi are deeply in love. Kunthi's struggles lie not with what her choice will be or leaving the decision to fate, but with assuring that Pandhu wins the competition. Prologues are the most freeform part of *pakeliran padat*, in that they do not fit any idiom that previously exists and that would determine how characters enter and leave the scene or greet each other. The gamelan music, movement, and narrative techniques are entirely open to the dhalang's creativity. By the 1990s the term *prolog* was used exclusively, but the scripts of the 1970s and 1980s sometimes use the terms *pambuka* (opening) or *bedhol jejer* (prelude to the court scene) or *tablu*, from the French *tableau*, referring to the freeform, introductory, overture-like nature of these scenes.[29] Some scripts, such as Bambang Suwarno's *Rama* from 1975, have no prologue, but almost all scripts from 1979 onward do.

[29] I was not able to determine how this term came in to practice, but have noticed that *tablu* is used primarily in *wayang orang* and dance dramas, and only in *wayang kulit* when the choreographer comes from those

Subsequent Scenes Weighted by Dramatic Need

Sukardi's love-scene prologue is followed by a short formal court scene in which Kunthi's father announces the competition for her hand. The next major real focus is on the scene in the female quarters, in which Basudéwa tries to find out what is wrong with Kunthi. This scene is eight pages long in his script, while the court scene was only two pages long. Female quarters scenes in classical wayang are usually redundant, simply repeating material from the main court scene, yet this is an elaborate and extended scene. Every element (narration, gamelan accompaniment, movement) is crafted to focus on Kunthi's despair at being with child, her interactions with her spiritual teacher Druwasa, and the whole heart-breaking scenario that leads to her having to abandon her out-of-wedlock child.

A nine-page scene in the forest later on in the story, focuses on Pandhu's interactions with Madrim, Pujawati, and Gendari. The final competition scene in Mandura places weight not on stylized battle scenes with various opponents, but rather on the compelling ending, when Kunthi and Pandhu meet up in the spiritual world, take themselves away from the entire formal competition and profess eternal love in their hearts.

One strict requirement of the *padat* scripts, from the early days through to the present, is that there be no comic interludes—no *Limbukan* and no *Gara-gara*. Comedic dialogue related to the plot is allowed, but not to excess. Long, extended, generic battle scenes (such as the traditional *Prang Gagal* and *Cakilan* sequences) are also to be avoided in the name of keeping the focus on the specific plot at hand.

4. Garap Catur: The Crafting of Literary Elements

Once theme, characterization, and scene structure have been considered, the *padat* script writer can begin fleshing out the scenes with description, narration, dialogue, and monologue. The classical-style dhalang Catur Tulus of Kartosuro (active as a performer in the 1960s and 1970s) grouped the types of oral recitation that a traditional dhalang has mastery over into four categories (1987):

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backgrounds. Since I first started attending Sriwedari Wayang Orang theater in 1991, the term *tablu* has been used for a short prologue before the audience scene.

- description (*janturan*): generic and lakon-specific
- narration (*pocapan*): generic and lakon-specific
- expressions of etiquette (greetings between characters)
- dialogue and monologue[30]

The language used in wayang (*basa pedhalangan*) is full of generic and idiomatic phrases, similar in function to "Once upon a time…" and "They all lived happily ever after." While these are the only two I can come up with in English, *basa pedhalangan* has a repertory of hundreds of such pat literary phrases descriptive of kingdoms, lakes, mountains, hermitages, strong princes, beautiful goddesses, perfect sons and daughters, rough ogres, battle scenes; and pat literary bridges used to narrate action and move the plotline forward.

One of the main distinctions between a *padat* performance and a classical performance is the avoidance of these formulas, both descriptive (*janturan*, usually with soft gamelan accompaniment) and narrative (*pocapan*, usually with no gamelan accompaniment). The *padat* practitioner is encouraged to write new descriptions and narrations and employ literary techniques such as riddling (*purwakanthi*) and alliteration. Narration and description should enrich the scenes that deal with the main theme or character, rather than formulaically falling in traditional places.

Sukardi's script, for example, contains four major narrations: one describing Kunthi's state of mind when she is alone and pregnant in the female quarters, one humorous in nature describing King Gendara's aggressive nature using riddling, one alliterative passage describing Pandhu's longing for Kunthi as he travels through the forest to get to the competition, and a final one describing the tension in Mandura on the day of the competition. All are newly composed and avoid the pat phrases common in wayang. Conspicuously missing, for example, is the typical elaborate description associated with the opening kingdom (in this case Mandura), some version of which dhalang have had to commit to memory for generations.

Sukardi's script is also light on the use of greetings. Unlike a traditional treatment, there is little ceremony at the opening or closing of each scene and characters get right to the point. Dialogue, monologue, narration, and description

[30] As phrased in Catur Tulus's article, respectively: *Janturan (blangkon, baku), pocapan (blangkon, baku), udanegara (bagé-binagé), ginem (sendiri dan bercakap-cakap).*

are specific to the lakon as much as possible. As Bambang Suwarno explains in his 1984 article on *padat* principles:

> Dialogue, description, and narration should utilize new forms and new techniques, avoiding the use of generic phrases (*klise, blangkon*).[31] Elaborate introductions that are not necessary should be done away with, and descriptions of a place that is not central to the plot should be left behind. We do not need to start every narration with generic phrases like: "lah ing kana ta wau, anenggih, wauta" [And thus it was, Therefore, And so it was] but rather can jump right into the action of the lakon. The dhalang should not use dialogue that spells everything out but rather should design dialogue that delivers the essence quickly to the heart of the viewer.

Sumanto is considered a master in his literary *garap*. His scripts, such as *Alap-alapan Sukèsi*, are lauded for their level of innovation and their lack of clichéd phrasing. He also shows a preference in his *pakeliran padat* scripts for the more democratic structure of debate sequences between one character and another, rather than one-sided teachings (*wejangan*). He consciously refers to this construction as an example of *garap catur*.

5. Garap Sabet: The Crafting of Movement Techniques

Expressive movement techniques specific to *pakeliran padat* were developed in the earliest years of the *padat* work at ASKI. These idiomatic techniques, now also known in ISI circles as *sabet tématik* (or sometimes *sabet tématis)*, were created almost exclusively by Bambang Suwarno who has a passion for this area, and are still in use today.

A main principle of *pakeliran padat*, as stated by Sumanto in his recent guide for freelance wayang teaching studios (2014), is that there is "not a moment empty of meaning, not a moment of repetitive or generic material." Bambang Suwarno felt this idea of filling every moment with expression specific to the plotline and characters, needed to be applied not only to literary, structural, and gamelan accompaniment techniques, but also to the movement vocabulary of the *pakeliran padat* practitioner.

[31] The common reference to generic narration or descriptive phrases as *blangkon* is a reference to the traditional batik cap worn by dhalang when performing. If one is using these phrases, one is speaking the idiomatic language of the dhalang, or the one who wears the *blangkon*.

> *Sabet*, meaning the movements of the wayang figures, need not be virtuosic or acrobatic. The important thing is that the movement of the character speaks to the drama or the message in the moment and is full of meaning—expresses strength, authoritativeness, heartbreak, happiness, sexual attraction, sadness, and so on. The weight and satisfaction of the movement does not lie in its complexity or difficulty, but rather how the movement is used to get something much more important across (Suwarno 1984).

Bambang Suwarno's pioneering script from 1979, *Ciptaning*, set the standard for these expressive movement techniques. The entire first three pages of the script are dedicated to detailed movement instructions for the *Bedhol Jejer* (later known as the Prologue). This movement sequence with no text at all is aimed at communicating Arjuna's despair at the state of the world and his decision to meditate in search of an answer. Bambang Suwarno spoke in 2013 at an interview in his home about these techniques: "The concept of *padat* is applied to movement. I look for more effective ways, denser ways, to express emotions than long dialogue sequences where characters simply say what they are feeling and we're supposed to believe them. This movement vocabulary is a kind shorthand, a *padat* expression of what was traditionally related through narration or dialogue." *Padat* practitioners, teachers, and frequent audience members, in time, come to understand the new movement code, for example:

- A *kayon* figure pressed against the screen at the tip, forming a kind of tunnel, signifies emotional upheaval.
- Characters held close to the light, with their shadows overlaying the characters on the screen, are communicating from another realm.
- Two characters on either side of a *kayon*, alternatingly rising up and down like a balance in the dhalang's two hands, signifies flirtation or sexual engagement between the characters.
- Characters shown through one of Bambang Suwarno's innovative *kayon* figures, such as *Kayon Hakékat*, are going through some sort of physical transformation.
- General *kayon* activity around a character always symbolizes something, and it may mean the character is having a dream, a flashback, or a vision during meditation.

In Suwarno's prologue to *Ciptaning*, there is no dialogue. By bringing Arjuna out with one arm over the shoulder (a classical code also, for sadness), then showing turmoil through the *kayon* movements, followed by a transformation through the *Kayon Hakékat*, and finally a new Arjuna *wanda* emerging with his hair down, the dhalang shows that Arjuna has given up on the world and decided to meditate to find an answer. Sukardi's *Kunthi Pilih* script (1986) also starts with a three-page Prologue, and no speaking at all, during which the audience is meant to realize that Kunthi and Pandhu are deeply in love. Every movement is highly scripted:

> Princess Kunthi appears from the right, travels to the left, enters under the *kayon* shadow that is poised, tip underturned, on the upper left. From this upper left position Kunthi turns suddenly to face right, then turns left again, and disappears to the left, as does the *kayon*. The accompaniment switches to *Ladrang Gadhung Mlathi*, in *irama dadi*, with a special treatment by playing the first and second *kenongan* very loudly. Pandhu enters, traveling backwards from the left, Kunthi enters to face him. The dhalang uses his left hand to hold Pandhu, the right hand to hold Kunthi. Once they travel all the way over to the left, the dhalang switches hands, Pandhu in the right and Kunthi in the left. They then embrace. With the *kayon* in the middle, the dhalang alternates Pandhu and Kunthi rising up and down, opposite each other.

This kind of description go on for three full pages. Surprisingly, having seen these performances multiple times, I can say that many dhalang still follow the instructions in such *padat* script passages to the letter in their performances, like a choreographed ballet. The point though, according to Bambang Suwarno, is to both shorten the scene and intensify audience understanding of the relationship between the characters, by using movement packed with symbolism and meaning.

6. Garap Iringan: The Crafting of Gamelan Accompaniment [32]

Blacius Subono, a composer, classical gamelan musician, and dhalang who in the early 1980s became one of the last generation of Humardani protégés, was the first to

[32] There is significant debate at ISI as to how to refer to the gamelan music used in dance and wayang performances. Some feel that it should be referred to as *karawitan pakeliran* or *gendhing pakeliran* for wayang, and *karawitan tari* or *gendhing tari* for dance. In the early 1970s, the term *iringan* (accompaniment) was coined at ASKI, but a significant segment of the ISI Karawitan Department faculty feels this belittles the role of the gamelan music. Many others however, Purbo Asmoro included, say they use *iringan* because it is a less formal, one-word solution, and can be applied to either dance or wayang. As for the English translation, surely the most appropriate word is "accompaniment." Just as in ballet accompaniment, operatic accompaniment or piano accompaniment, the term serves to accurately differentiate these functions from concert music. Hence, following Purbo Asmoro's own practice and with no belittling intended, the term *iringan* is used in these writings.

examine the crafting of gamelan accompaniment to *pakeliran padat* in detail. In *Iringan Pakeliran Padat*, his 1981 undergraduate thesis from ASKI, he explains:

> The purpose of the gamelan accompaniment is obviously to support what is being accompanied. Therefore the *iringan* designer does not need to stick to a limited repertory but can take from wayang music, concert music, dance music, processional music, or the repertory of other regions…. We should avoid endless repetitions of the basic traditional building blocks of wayang accompaniment—*ayak, srepeg, sampak.* We can change the form of a traditional piece, alter its introduction, do away entirely with the introduction, truncate the middle of the piece, bypass the ending by jumping right into something else, or even overlay one piece with another.

The first *pakeliran padat* scripts were quite conservative with regard to gamelan accompaniment. In fact, of all the elements to be crafted, the gamelan accompaniment was the least revolutionary in the early attempts. Bambang Suwarno's *Rama* from 1975, for example, starts with the traditional *Ktw Gd Kabor*.[33] In this script, he uses only the following pieces, which all come from the traditional repertory, remain in the traditional mode placement, utilize traditional tempo structures, and primarily have the same traditional scene association from previous centuries.

PATHET NEM
Ktw Gd Kabor mg Ldr
Ldr Diradameta
Ktw Kinanthi Sandhung
Palaran Durna
Ayak-ayak
Srepeg
Sampak

PATHET SANGA
Ktw Pangkur Dhudhakasmaran
Embat-embat Pinjalin
Ayak-ayak
Srepeg
Sampak

PATHET MANYURA
Ldr Sumirat

[33] By 1986 this would have been considered a tame opening for a *padat* script. However, given that his first scene is Ayodya Kingdom, dhalang of the day performing in strict, palace, classical style would have used *Ktw Gd Krawitan*. His use of *Kabor* instead—and from *buka gendèr* instead of from *Ayak-ayak*—was an innovative gesture aimed at getting to the point more quickly. But it is viewed now as a *pakeliran ringkas*-esque presentation, with no prologue and no opening focus on the theme at hand.

Ldr Kandhamanyura
Kodok Ngorèk
Ktw Sinom Wènikenya
Ayak-ayak
Srepeg
Sampak

He does, however, pioneer a number of techniques in *Rama* (1975) and *Ciptaning* (1979) that have entered the permanent repertory of *pakeliran padat* practitioners, and it is these techniques that led to more revolutionary thinking with future scripts:

- Using only the end tag (*ompak*) in place of an entire *sulukan*, and choosing or creating vocal texts relevant to the plot.
- Interrupting one piece in the middle with another piece, or with a *sulukan*, with no formal transition and no warning.
- *Sulukan* sung by a female soloist instead of the dhalang, representing the female character "talking" rather than an omnipotent dhalang voice singing something removed from the plot.
- Alternatives to "endless repetitions" of *sampak* during battles. Bambang Suwarno debuted the concept of choosing and reserving an alternative for the final battle in wayang (which Supanggah had previously debuted in the dance drama world), such as the final battle, Rama versus Rahwana, accompanied by *Kodhok Ngorèk*.
- Poetry from repertory not characteristic of wayang (*sekar ageng, sekar tengahan*) sung in unaccompanied chorus by the *gérong*, with texts written especially for the lakon.

By the time of Sukardi's *Kunthi Pilih* script years later, much more extreme accompaniment choices were being employed. Sukardi's script is praised by many as exquisite in its marriage of drama with musical accompaniment. In his score, and others of this era, there are many techniques that further remove the pieces used from their traditional placement or function. Pieces are cut short, form, tempo sequence or mode altered, and then pasted together again to create a unique "film score" for a particular lakon. Some of the techniques used, in addition to those mentioned above:

- Freeform accompaniment in the prologue—anything goes in terms of form or mode. For example, *Kunthi Pilih* begins with the *gendèr* introduction to *Ldr Gadhung Mlathi* in *sléndro sanga*, followed by the *ladrang* being played in an untraditional loud style.
- *Sulukan* are sung not only by *pesindhèn* now, but also by *gérong* chorus, or a single male vocalist rather than the dhalang, depending on the intended effect. They are meant to be story specific, and often feature newly created, lakon-specific texts.
- Plot-related dialogue is spoken over *sulukan* to avoid an empty moment or drop in the action.
- Recitation by the male gamelan musicians is used for dramatic effect, such as rehearsed and timed expressions of surprise during the story, for example an expression of surprise in chorus: "LHO!"

This film score approach requires numerous rehearsals and agreement by all parties not to alter what has been preset. By 1986, *padat* scripts that were submitted for the exam requirement included a listing of the dates and personnel of the numerous rehearsals. Dhalang and musicians would go into a performance with no question as to what was going to be played, and with no room for spontaneity. The role of the traditional signaling system between dhalang and musicians was altered and in some regards defunct (Brinner 1992). All these issues are explored in more detail in Chapter 5, where Purbo Asmoro's specific *iringan* style and rehearsal process is examined.

Reaction to *Pakeliran Padat*

In a short 12 years, from 1974 to 1986, a truly new form of wayang had emerged, developed by the "Gendhon club" of Humardani protégés at ASKI. The process of identifying a theme and then crafting plot details, scene structure, characterization, literary techniques, movement vocabulary, and gamelan accompaniment had been practiced by dozens of script artists, in consultation with their rehearsal teams. This produced a significant repertory of dense, *mentes*, lakon scripts, with new creations assured every year due to the graduation requirements. From the outset, when the

kernel of an idea had emerged in 1953, *pakeliran baru* had never been driven by commercial purposes, foreign tour needs, or to solve practical matters related to time constraints. It was a conceptually based alternative and challenge to the format wayang had taken for centuries. It stood its ground in the name of specific artistic ideals regarding the function of wayang in the modern world, and an aesthetic that the container and its contents be in balance. Unlike *pakeliran ringkas*, *pakeliran padat* was founded upon a utopian vision of how to use a lakon to explore a theme in the most driven, focused, meaningful, relevant, and concentrated way, regardless of resulting duration.[34]

From 1953 to 1986, this artistic journey included little to no discussion concerning the success or popularity of *pakeliran padat* among the Javanese people or non-ASKI dhalang. However, in 1987 a seminar was held at ASKI to reflect on the state of *pakeliran padat*. It turned out, perhaps surprisingly, that there were few voices of praise to be heard, either from within ASKI or outside of ASKI. The lectures and papers were unanimously pessimistic, negative, and critical. Humardani was praised for the concept; the process and aspirations were described as admirable. But there was an overwhelming, self-reflective "nay" to the reality of how this form was received by audiences and traditional dhalang.

Bambang Suwarno's *Pakeliran Padat Masih Belum Memasyarakat (Pakeliran Padat Has Not Yet Entered Society Effectively)* and Bambang Murtiyoso's *Pakeliran Padat: Antara Harapan dan Kenyataan (Pakeliran Padat: Our Hopes Versus the Reality)* raised similar points, which are summarized here:[35]

- The process of creating and then following a *pakeliran padat* script is complicated and intellectual, and not every dhalang will be up to it.
- *Padat* performances require a great deal of rehearsal, collaboration, and therefore funding and support.
- The audience has to pay attention all the time or they will miss crucial parts, and this is not an aesthetic natural for wayang viewers.
- The dhalang has to have a lot of experience and understanding of life to deal so intimately with themes and messages, rather than being able to depend to

[34] Brinner touches on this distinction between *pakeliran padat* and *pakeliran ringkas* in his 1992 article.

[35] Articles from the 1987 seminar by Marwanto, Sugeng Nugroho, Soetarno, and even Sri Mulyono from the early UGM days unanimously express similar sentiments. Sugeng Nugroho saved and bound all these papers into a self-published volume he entitled, *Bunga Rampai: Makalah Seni Pedalangan*, Volume II, ASKI (no date).

one degree or another on crowd-pleasers such as comedy, or traditional visual attractions.

- Sponsors have voiced concerns that they are "not getting their money's worth," because the performance is over in two hours but requires the same setup, preparation, and funding. What is more, villagers love their all-night wayang.
- The movement techniques are like obscure riddles that not everyone gets, and give the impression that there is a secret ASKI language, coming across as self-involved and alienating.
- All of ASKI's efforts at instruction, competitions and rehearsals off-campus have been fruitless, as the resulting substandard scripts by non-ASKI participants at various competitions have proven. *Pakeliran padat* is obviously a difficult concept to grasp.
- The *padat* process requires teamwork and collaboration and this is not the norm for the typical dhalang who enjoys his independent, kinglike status, and values guarding his performance secrets up to the very end.

Mujoko Joko Raharjo (1940–1992), at the time a popular dhalang from Gombang, Sawit, Boyolali, submitted a paper for the seminar as well. This was the only time in anyone's living memory that Mujoko ever put his thoughts to paper for such an event, hence one can assume he felt passionate about the issue. An occasional visiting studio instructor at ASKI, he was not formally educated and was basically an outsider. He starts by criticizing the movement vocabulary of *pakeliran padat*:

> When a plotline is represented only in movement, this is difficult for the audience to follow, especially for those not students or instructors at ASKI. And also for those who are not familiar with the storyline at all. To the point that the question will surely emerge in their minds, "What is going on and why is the dhalang doing that?" For example a *kayon* that is folded at its tip against the screen, or the reverse when the dhalang pulls the tip into a fold and covers a wayang figure. Those who already know the story can connect the dots, even though they will still be wondering why the meaning has to be represented in such a way. But there will be everyday types there, who mostly do not want to be required to think so hard because they just are looking for some entertainment. There are those who might be attending because of a personal or social obligation, and do not wish to be forced to connect meaning in that way.

He then comments on the fact that the audience has to be so intent on watching:

> Quite often I see audience members appear tense, because they have to follow the story constantly. To the point that they cannot drink anything, eat anything, or smoke because there is no opportunity to do so, lest they miss an important phrase or a movement that represents an event. Forced to not eat or drink? To the point that they feel tortured.

In fact, Sumanto relates the anecdote of an elderly dhalang, Ki Marmanto, who complained bitterly to him after an ASKI *pakeliran padat* performance of *Ciptaning*, "I took one bite of my damn *lemper* and missed the whole transformation of Arjuna from prince to meditator—what kind of a wayang is that?"

Rahayu Supanggah presents a challenge to *padat* practitioners in his *Salam Terkasih Pakeliran Padat (My Fondest Respects to Pakeliran Padat)*, also from the 1987 seminar. He uses highly expressive, coarse Javanese terms to describe the feeling of most *padat* performances, in his view:

- *pating cruwil*—Fragmented, due the incessant cutting up and truncating of so many of the gamelan pieces, poetic songs, scenes, and narrations.
- *suk-sukan*—Rushed and frenetic, due to the fast tempos, loud dynamics, absence of down time, and dearth of material that is familiar and comfortable.
- *wijang*—which he rephrases as "overdosis," and has since referred to as *krajingan sampah* (garbage can) in various seminars, because so much is thrown in at once from all regions, from all styles, from all tempos and modes, all attacking the listener at once.

Supanggah challenges *padat* practitioners to ask themselves: Must everything be cut off, fragmented, crashed into, shortened, rushed, loud, "efficient," and without any humor, break, reflection, visual attraction, or musical filler? He also comments that the process is now the reverse of the original intent, according to his observation. Practitioners start with the idea that everything must be cut off, loud, and fragmented, and then later down the road try to decide and explain why. He even speculates that some dhalang are finding it convenient to break off the gamelan piece just anywhere, because they do not have command of proper transitions. He concludes with the observation that *padat* was intended as a minimalist philosophy, one that did away with elements not directly necessary to the support the theme. But

instead, by 1987, *padat* creators seem to think that they need to impress their audiences. They borrow from as many different techniques as they can, from as many different regions as they can, and with the loudest, biggest, and grandest of instrumentation and stage set-up, with little justification. Supanggah expresses his great reverence for innovation in general, for the ideals of *padat*, and for the original scripts of the 1970s and early 1980s. But he feels that by 1987 the form had taken a turn for the worse.

Pakeliran padat study and exploration continued after the highly critical 1987 seminar, and continues to this day at ISI. However, there is no question that the 1987 critics were partially correct in their evaluation. *Pakeliran padat*, as of this writing, has never caught on with the general Javanese community, is not popular with sponsors, and has not sparked inspiration in dhalang outside of the environment of academic institutions for the very reasons cited in the 1987 essays. It did, however, have at least one profound influence, as will be seen in the next chapter.

It is in this atmosphere of idealistic development and subsequent harsh self-reflection at ASKI that the focus of this study, Purbo Asmoro, entered artistic life in Solo. Graduating from ASKI in 1986 and stepping out into the performing world in 1987, he was most certainly a product of the ASKI *pakeliran padat* generation, although not a direct protégé of Humardani. The next chapter will explore his coming into being as a performer and his own personal passion for a new approach. A new approach which, it turned out, had at its core the concepts of *pakeliran padat*, recrafted into yet again a different package.

FOUR

BIRTH OF AN IDEA: ALL-NIGHT CONTEMPORARY-INTERPRETIVE STYLE

In 1989, a short three years after graduating from ASKI, the 27-year-old Purbo Asmoro [1] premiered a radical, new concept in all-night wayang performance practice, at the most respected gathering of dhalang, wayang critics, and *pedhalangan* educators in Solo. He borrowed from the concepts of *pakeliran padat*, reshaped them, and wove them back into an all-night format, for a historic performance at the home of Anom Soeroto. Over the next decade, Purbo Asmoro further developed and refined this new package, referred to within academic circles as *garapan sedalu* (all-night *garapan)*, and by 2000 had crafted it into a style that has become his trademark. This chapter takes a look at the artistic atmosphere surrounding the 1989 premiere, what this first attempt at all-night *garapan* looked like, and what factors shaped Purbo Asmoro's continued exploration of the style. In order to understand the truly revolutionary step Purbo Asmoro took with his debut in 1989, we will first take a

[1] Purbo Asmoro was born 17 December 1961, so on the date of this debut was still 27 years old.

look at his upbringing, and the situation in the greater *pedhalangan* world when he emerged from ASKI, ready to start his career.

Purbo Asmoro's Upbringing and Training[2]

Purbo Asmoro was born in 1961 in the small village of Dersana, Pacitan, in East Java, as the eldest of six children. His great-grandfather Krama, grandfather Suradi, and father, Damiri Soemarno, were all modest but established local dhalang from the Pacitan area. The lineage of dhalang in the family reportedly stretches back seven generations. Dersana, in the remote West Pacitan county of Pringkuku, was a harsh place to grow up. This tiny enclave trapped within the stark, boulder-stridden mountains above the southeastern Java coast, inaccessible to vehicles larger than a motorcycle, and where fresh water was scarce six months of the year during the dry season, felt even more remote than its 120 kilometers from Solo. As Purbo Asmoro describes it:

> I am village-born. Not only village-born but from the mountains—and not only that, but from the dry peaks. If you saw this place from the sky, you would say to yourself, "Do people actually survive there?" It's truly not fit for man. Truly not fit. The southern mountains—limestone chalky constructions, with bare boulders strewn every which way. And yet it was there that, from a very young age, my daily life became forever one with the arts.

Purbo Asmoro's father was not only a dhalang, but also a teacher in local Dersana schools. He owned one of the few gamelan sets in the village. Even though it was a simple iron set, his was the only collection that boasted both the *sléndro* and *pélog* tunings.

> In those days, in a village like that, gamelan was it. Every day after school my friends and I would first gather wood, then gather food for the goats, and finally get to go play on the gamelan. And when it was time for bed, my father would tell me wayang stories. He would start with the *Ramayana* and then move on to the *Mahabharata*. He would often fall asleep while telling an episode and I would wake him up, "Hey, hey, Pak! You weren't finished! How did it end?" I definitely learned wayang stories from my father's bedtime tellings.

[2] Most of the information and all of the direct quotes in this section, are taken from Purbo Asmoro's informal chatting session (*sesi ngobrol*) on 16 October 2010 at Sanggar Suket, the home and studio of the late Slamet Gundono, in Mojosongo, Solo. This was part of a routine series in which experimental performance-artist Gundono invited local renowned figures to share their life stories with a small, intimate group of neighbors, friends and colleagues. Purbo Asmoro confirmed this information repeatedly at numerous venues between 2007 and 2014, but he was especially detailed and eloquent on that occasion.

Purbo Asmoro received accolades in his primary school days. This sign of potential, together with him being the eldest and most independent son, led his father to send him away for his middle-school years to the "big town" of Pacitan. Purbo Asmoro describes being quite unhappy during this time:

> I was still so young [12 years old] and yet was expected to go off on my own. I had to walk down the mountain to school once a week, 30 kilometers by foot, and then walk back up to Dersana, 30 kilometers, every Saturday. And not only walk, but also carry my food supplies for the entire week on my back. I did just fine in middle school but did not graduate with any honors, as I was unhappy and felt torn from my family and from my life in Dersana.

After Purbo Asmoro graduated from middle school, his father had great dreams for his eldest son.[3] He was to be the first in the extended family to attend school in Solo, at the famed High School of Performing Arts (Konservatori, also known as SMKI).[4] Purbo[5] reports having no interest in being a dhalang at this point. "I had seen my father's life as a dhalang and decided it was way too difficult a profession, so I decided to enter the Karawitan Department." After one semester, however, he felt "less than satisfied," and moved to the Dance Department. "But I found the long sequences of movements I had to memorize too taxing, so I decided to give *pedhalangan* a try." After one semester in the Pedalangan Department, Purbo Asmoro was restless and wanted to move again, perhaps back to music or dance, but his advisor told him he was not allowed to. "I told myself, 'You need to be at peace with your decision. You need to focus and dedicate yourself to this.' And so I did. And that's how it started."

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[3] Purbo Asmoro has one younger brother, Bambang Tri Santoso, also known as Bambang Asmoro, who is a dhalang and works for the Department of Communication and Information in Jakarta. He has four sisters: Esti Setyowati, married to the highly-regarded, Semarang-based dhalang, Mulyono Harjowidodo and an occasional practicing *pesindhèn*; Eni Pujiastuti, a professional caterer; Anis Lukitasari, a *pesindhèn* with Mayangkara; and Rina Anggraini, married to Mayangkara *gérong* singer, Wiji Santosa, and a non-practicing *pesindhèn*.

[4] Founded in 1950, Konservatori Karawitan Indonesia di Surakarta (formally shortened to KOKAR but more popularly known in the community as "Konsèr") is the oldest high school-level arts academy in the country. In 1976, the year before Purbo Asmoro enrolled, the government upgraded its status, renamed it SMKI (Sekolah Menengah Karawitan Indonesia), and opened the Pedalangan and Dance Departments. It took a decade or so before the name SMKI caught on, and then, in 1997, it was renamed SMK (Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan) Negeri 8. It is located in the center of Solo, in the Kepatihan neighborhood.

[5] Indonesians often have only one name, and there is not a tradition of given name followed by family name. When Indonesians have two names, either of the two could become the primary one a person goes by—in Purbo Asmoro's case, Purbo being the primary name (although he went by "*Mas* As" at one point in his younger years). For variety here, I use both "Purbo Asmoro" and "Purbo," although it would be unthinkable for me, when speaking Indonesian or Javanese, to omit a title before his name: *Pak* Purbo (elevating my respect for him when speaking in public), *Mas* Purbo (as we are friends and of the same generation), or *Ki* Purbo Asmoro, *Ki* being a dhalang's title as a performer and important figure in society.

The program at Konservatori was four years long and Purbo Asmoro had already spent a year moving departments, so it took him five years to graduate from high school. During that time he moved from boarding house to boarding house and only went home to Dersana for holidays. By his second year, his father was unable to support his tuition, room, and board, so he went through a period of extreme poverty:

> I was destitute for a full year at Konservatori, as my father, it turned out, could no longer finance me. I remember distinctly a full week that I did not eat from one Wednesday to the next Wednesday. Oh it wasn't a form of asceticism, I just was flat broke. There was not a scrap for me to eat. It turned out I didn't drop dead though, now did I? Turns out you can be pushed quite far and you won't perish. I remember I would go to the well, hold the dipper to my mouth and drink and drink as much as I could, until I felt full. I was in a boarding house in Danukusuman at the time and had to walk to school and back every day [about three kilometers one way].

After the experience of starving for a full week, Purbo Asmoro decided he could not be on his own anymore. He heard of an elderly dhalang, Gandamargana, in Gumpang, Kartosuro, some 10 kilometers from SMKI, who was willing to take in an apprentice. Although he had to walk to school and back, Purbo spent a year with Ki Gandamargana, learning how to carve and paint wayang, and how to make and mix paints from natural materials. But by his third year at Konservatori, he moved back to Solo due to the long distance to get to school. He was starting to perform a fair amount, mostly as a gamelan musician for his elder *pedhalangan* classmates, and could earn small chunks of money that got him through.[6] His last two years in high school were highly successful both academically and artistically, and in 1982 he not only graduated with honors but was asked to take up an entry-level teaching position at Konservatori. Purbo Asmoro wished to continue his education however, and instead enrolled in ASKI's Pedalangan Department, and was given a teaching-assistantship that covered all his expenses.

So it was that Purbo Asmoro's talents were further honed in the cauldron of artistic innovation at ASKI-Sasanamulya from 1982 to 1985, and then for his final

[6] Purbo Asmoro's first all-night performances were in villages around Pacitan through family connections, with the very first in 1982. His first performance in Solo (1981) was an abbreviated version (*ringkas*, not *padat*) of the lakon *Arjuna Piningit* (*Arjuna is Hidden Away*), and was broadcast on SMKI's dedicated radio station, Radio Konsèr.

year, 1985 to 1986, on the newly built Kentingan campus in the northeastern corner of Solo. The atmosphere at ASKI during these years of exploration under the direction of Gendhon Humardani was described in detail in Chapter 3. Purbo Asmoro was influenced every day by the whirlwind of ideas and experiments that were taking place, from new interpretations of dance dramas (*dramatari*) to the recently invented *wayang sandosa*,[7] and, of course, continuing developments with *pakeliran padat*. He never had any direct interaction with Humardani, who passed away in 1983, but remembers seeing him from afar on campus a number of times, and has described him as having "an imposing, scary, and strict presence."

Among Purbo Asmoro's *pedhalangan* professors at ASKI were the well-respected traditionalist pedagogues Padmatjarito, Pringgosatoto, Soetrisno, and Darsomartono, the performer and guest-pedagogue Naryocarito, and founding members of the Gendhon "club": Bambang Murtiyoso, Bambang Suwarno, and Soemanto. The composer Supanggah, although away in Paris attaining his PhD for most of Purbo's time at ASKI, had left his legacy in provocative dance drama scores still being used throughout the Dance Department. Some of Purbo's elder classmates, most notably Blacius Subono (graduated in 1984) and Sukardi Samiharjo (graduated in January 1986), were busy exploring gamelan accompaniment that strayed much further from tradition than any of the early *padat* scripts. Also, Subono and his colleagues were immersed in debut performances of *wayang sandosa*, many of which Purbo participated in.

At that time, the first five semesters of a dhalang's training were steeped in palace-classical performance practice, with each semester focusing on a different set of scenes from an all-night wayang. Purbo reports his 1st and 2nd semester course schedule as below, all in conventional performance practice:

[7] *Wayang sandosa* was first developed in 1982 at ASKI, by a team of Gendhon Humardani followers. In this form, an extra wide screen is used (hence also known as *Pakeliran Layar Lebar*, or Wide-Screen Wayang Performance). A team of dhalang manipulates the wayang figures—standing, crouching, moving, and swaying—with the audience only viewing the wide-screen shadow side, in a theater venue. Some of the figures are oversize but most are traditional figures simply given extra length by wooden extensions on their sticks. The entire text is in Indonesian, and in fact the name "sandosa" comes from a compressing of the two words *bahasa* (language) and *Indonesia*. Gamelan accompaniment for *wayang sandosa* uses the same *garapan* concepts as *pakeliran padat*, and *wayang sandosa* practitioners have been even more consistently radical in this regard. Performances are from 30 minutes to an hour long. For more details, see Sunardi, 2005.

- *Pakeliran* (Performance Studio), 4 times per week
- *Catur* (literary techniques), 2 times per week
- *Sabet* (movement techniques), 2 times per week
- *Suluk/Dodogan* (*sulukan*, *cempala*, and *keprak* techniques), 2 times per week
- *Iringan* (gamelan accompaniment), 2 times per week
- Theory and History of Pedalangan, 2 times per week

His 3rd, 4th, and 5th semesters were similar, with the addition of courses once a week in Yogya-style wayang, *wayang golèk*, and a sung-poetry class (*Tembang*) taught by *pesindhèn* pedagogue Supadmi. But aside from his intense work at ASKI during this time, Purbo Asmoro was also soaking in all he could from the entire *pedhalangan* scene throughout the greater Solo area:

> So, coursework started. Yes. And it was here that I was trained rigorously. All I have attained at a conceptual level about the world of *pedhalangan*, and the arts in general, comes from my work at Konservatori and then ASKI. What I got from my instructors and professors reached deeper and deeper as the semesters went on. If I think about it though, what I got from my schooling and what I got from outside ASKI was actually of 50-50 proportion. If I had only cared about coursework I would never have become what I am now, and yet if I had only known the performing world and nothing else, my vision would be limited. I studied both—I apprenticed with performers, yes, I performed myself, and I applied myself to my courses as well.

During those years at ASKI, semester-six students took both theory and practical courses on how to create a *padat* script, and then in their last two semesters registered for a single studio course with their adviser, which they used to prepare for their final exam. For his final exam, Purbo Asmoro created an innovative, highly conceptualized *padat* script of the traditional lakon *Samba Juwing* (*The Mutilation of Samba),* which he entitled *Tresna* (*Love*). In this lakon, Samba is brutally murdered by his half-brother Boma, because he and Boma's wife, Hagnyanawati, are in love. Purbo reconceptualized the lakon away from the traditional focus on fate, destiny, and a face-saving murder, into a humanistic, tragic love story. The original plan for the exam was as a team—his classmate Harbono would write the script and Purbo would be the dhalang. When he ended up doing all the work, both script-writing and performing, one of the alterations he made was to change the title to *Tresna*, as a

way of "marking it as his own" (interview, 2014).[8] After a highly successful exam performance, Purbo Asmoro graduated from ASKI in 1986 with honors,[9] and struck out into the professional performing world to build his career as a dhalang.

Forging a Career among Giants

When Purbo Asmoro graduated in 1986, the *pedhalangan* performance world in Central Java was dominated by two formidable giants: Ki Nartosabdo who had just passed away the year before, and Ki Anom Soeroto, who was 38 and already a superstar.

Ki Nartosabdo

Born in Wedi, Klaten in 1925, Soenarto (his birth name) relocated early in his musical career to Semarang, on the north coast of Java, to be the drummer for the *wayang orang* troupe Ngesti Pandawa. Relatively late in life, around his early thirties, Nartosabdo decided to become a dhalang, and at that point had settled permanently in Semarang. In 1971, when Purbo Asmoro was 10 years old, the first wayang cassette recording ever was produced by the Lokananta Studio in Solo: a recording of Nartosabdo performing *Banowati Janji* (*Banowati's Promise*). Although Purbo Asmoro only had the chance to see him perform live on three occasions, all during his years at Konservatori or ASKI, he grew up listening to Nartosabdo's eventually dozens of recordings over the radio. While Nartosabdo's movement techniques were known to be somewhat basic, he was a master of drama, oration, characterization, and story telling, as well as a prolific composer of pieces and vocal texts to support certain scenes. He brought a new structure into the *Gara-gara* interlude (from Yogya-style practice) and initiated the practice of inserting this feature into every performance. He shaped both *Limbukan* and *Gara-gara* into extended attractions,

[8] During this interview, Purbo Asmoro adamantly denied any connection between this title choice and his name (*asmara* and *tresna* are synonyms for love). Still, one has to wonder if it was a kind of *sandisastra* (embedded literary code) that perhaps he feels hesitant to admit now? It is a highly unusual, one-word title, synonomous with his name, which he created while on the surface allowing Harbono to be credited with the script. At any rate, in 1996, Harbono circulated an altered version, under his own name, with the title *Tresna Mawa Prahara (Love Brings Destruction)* for use at SMKI where he was an instructor at the time. Although I was able to obtain most of the artifacts of this process—Purbo Asmoro's hand-written *padat* script, an audio recording of his performance at ASKI in 1986, and Harbono's 1996 reissued script—still, examination of the *Samba Juwing→Tresna→Tresna Mawa Prahara* process did not fit directly into this dissertation.

[9] Among his graduating class he was given the honor of *Siswa Teladan*, or Most Exemplary Student.

interacted with *pesindhèn* through direct dialogue, and composed new, light, pop songs in a variety of styles (*dhangdhut*, *jaipongan*, Balinese) to be showcased during these interludes. Nartosabdo became the first dhalang superstar, eventually garnering the highest fees ever heard of at the time. He had a troupe of gamelan musicians and singers whose name, Condhong Raos, became a household word in artistic circles by the late 1970s.

Ki Anom Soeroto

Anom Soeroto, born in Bagor, Juwiring, Klaten in 1948, was a rising star by the time Purbo Asmoro was only 10. He started recording for mass distribution soon after Nartosabdo, also at Lokananta, and gained popularity quickly in the 1970s. Having been accused of dangerous political ties during the tumultuous mid-1960s, Anom Soeroto unabashedly and completely associated himself with the ruling Golkar Party in the 1970s and 1980s. He became a spokesman for the government through wayang, and his career skyrocketed. According to Kuwato (2001, 61), an instructor and researcher at ISI, the seeds for this association started as early as 1969:

> One stipulation in the Orde Baru's ["New Order" of the Soeharto reign, post President Soekarno] Development Plan, announced 1 April 1969, was specifically that dhalang were to be used to spread information about development plans through wayang performances…. Ganasidi, or the Lembaga Pembinaan Seni Pedalangan [Institute for Development of the Art of Pedalangan], founded in July 1969, was created for this purpose … and later solidified official ties with the Golkar (Golongan Karya) party of Soeharto…. Various functionaries and officials within the Golkar party in effect created Anom Soeroto's success, leading up to the 1971 elections.

Regardless of how his fame started, Anom Soeroto was gifted with a gorgeous voice, record-breaking breath support, and a gracious, eloquently strong, classical aura at the screen. He had captured the respect and awe of wayang fans all over Central and East Java by the 1980s, and he was also an occasional visiting instructor at ASKI when Purbo Asmoro was in school.

Both of these superstar figures contributed to the images in Purbo Asmoro's mind of what a dhalang's life and influence could be like, and were a vital part of his mental landscape upon graduating. However, even more influential to his

development was an event that Anom Soeroto hosted each month at his home, known as Rebo Legèn.

The Rebo Legèn Community

In 1979, Anom Soeroto was asked to perform the lakon *Pandhawa Matirta* (*The Pandhawa Purify Themselves*) for the Javanese lunar calendar New Year's celebration (*malem Satu Sura*, falling on 20 November of that year) in the outdoor courtyard of the Main Legislative Building in Jakarta. He did not know the lakon and had no idea where to start with his preparations. Already relatively well-off and living in a substantial home in the Notodiningratan neighborhood of Solo, he decided to invite a senior dhalang, Sujarno Atmagunardo of Baturetno, Wonogiri, to his house to make a study recording. Since his monthly Javanese birthday fell on Rebo Legi,[10] he decided to do the recording on Rebo Legi Eve, 6 November 1979, and invite the greater Solonese dhalang community for a discussion as well. After a few similar and successful events, always falling on Rebo Legi, Anom Soeroto decided to hold the gathering on a routine basis every thirty-five days. This was the beginning of a tradition that continued, rarely interrupted and despite Anom Soeroto's various moves to new homes, through to about 2010 when some health problems and other changes in his family caused him to temporarily suspend the event.[11]

Purbo Asmoro began attending Rebo Legèn from its earliest stages in 1980, while a third-year student at Konservatori, and described this monthly happening in an interview in 2011:

> We had the chance to see all the great dhalang perform by going to Rebo Legèn. The great Klaten masters who were all still alive back then like Mbah Tukas, Pak Tikna "Karungtalun," Pak Joko "Mokaton," Mbah Ganda "Maktal," Pak Gaib, and of course most of all Mbah Darman—oh he was probably called on to perform a

[10] The Javanese traditional calendar has five days: Kliwon, Legi, Paing, Pon, Wagé. These five days are superimposed on the seven-day Western calendar, resulting in a 35-day cycle. Each single combination, such as Wednesday-Legi (or Rebo-Legi in Javanese) occurs every 35 days. Many traditionally minded Javanese know what combination of days they were born on, and some observe the occurrence every 35 days with fasting, offerings, or even an event. Many artistic events in Solo, to this day, are determined by the confluence of the five-day and seven-day calendars. Rebo-Legi is the day, while Rebo Legèn refers to the event itself.

[11] In February 2016, Anom Soeroto started Rebo Legèn back up again as a forum and gathering place for dhalang, although not yet with any featured performances.

> hundred times or so.[12] Pak Mujoko, Mas Sri Joko, Mbah Jarno, Mbah Panut—too many to name. And the atmosphere was so alive, with everyone there—Pak Kasno, Pak Sayoko, Mbah Warsino—everyone gathered there together every month, ranging from dhalang friends to musician friends to ASKI friends.

This large gathering of dhalang egos in one spot resulted in some interesting performance-practice traditions, specific to Rebo Legèn. I attended four or five events in the early 1990s and another dozen or so in the 2000s, and would agree with this description by Sears of Rebo Legèn performances in the mid-1980s (1996, 240):

> These performances differ from other wayang performances, as they gather a number of puppeteers from different areas in one place…. Since so many well-known puppeteers attend these events, performers are often thrust into a position of wanting to amuse their friends and make fun of their host through friendly but pointed humor. Thus a style of flashy puppet movements, suggestive humor, and the breaking of conventions has become dominant in these performances.

She goes on to describe some of the "breaking of conventions," which I would concur with having witnessed this gigantic peanut gallery of esteemed dhalang:

> There is often interaction between the audience and the puppeteer, and on occasion the puppeteer will turn around and say something to the host or to a heckler…. Often the puppets are thrown off the screen or onto the screen in unconventional and abrupt ways. Fights take place between characters who would never fight in more conventional performances, and the jokes often begin in the first audience hall scene, a place where the humor is usually banned.

For Purbo Asmoro, a young and talented dhalang from Dersana, Pacitan, this was a phenomenal opportunity. He was able to attend performances by a large variety of senior dhalang, while sitting among other senior dhalang, as well as critics, sponsors, and pedagogues. This exposure went on every month for years; it was an easy twenty-minute walk from Konservatori to Anom Soeroto's house. In the case of a few of his favorites—Gandadarman, Tikna "Karungtalun," Mujoko Joko Raharjo, Kasno— Purbo Asmoro would then search out opportunities to see them perform in other venues, at more traditional and typical occasions across the greater Solo area.

[12] According to Bayu Aji Pamungkas, Anom Soeroto's son and a popular, virtuosic dhalang himself, there are over 100 recordings of Gandadarman from the Rebo Legèn days, although others doubt there could be that many. Bayu is, as of this writing, digitalizing, cataloguing, and backing up all the recordings, which have been entrusted to him. He reportedly has plans to build a "listening and viewing library" at the Anom Soeroto family mansion in Timasan, Sukoharjo.



Figure 4-1: Tristuti Rahmadi Suryasaputra at a panel discussion in Solo, 2008.

Tristuti Rahmadi Suryasaputra

Tristuti (see Figure 4-1), a dhalang, scriptwriter, and elder of the Rebo Legèn community since its inception, requires special mention here, as he had a direct and tangible influence on Purbo Asmoro from around 1980 to his death in 2009. Born in 1939 of dhalang lineage from Jombor, Klaten, Tristuti grew up in Grobogan, Purwodadi, and lived much of his later life in Mojosongo, Solo. An up-and-coming dhalang with a promising career ahead, he was suddenly imprisoned without charges in 1965. Fourteen years later, after being held as a political prisoner on the remote Buru Island and elsewhere, Tristuti was released but banned from taking on public engagements as a dhalang, since the new Soeharto government accused him of having ties to the Communist Party.

Anom Soeroto had seen Tristuti perform *Udawa Waris (Udawa Receives an Inheritance)* in 1963 at Sriwedari in Solo when he was only 15, and had never forgotten the power of his performance. Tristuti was released from prison in 1979, and in April of 1980, during the first full year of Rebo Legèn events, Anom Soeroto invited him to perform. Because of Anom's strong government ties and the fact that this was not really a public event in the strictest sense, Tristuti felt it safe to perform, and prepared the lakon *Gandamana Sayembara (Gandamana Puts on a Competition)*. Purbo Asmoro describes what Tristuti once told him about his preparation for that night (Asmoro 2004, 31):

> As this was a major opportunity and he had not performed in so long, he intended to put forth a dramatization that would truly strike right to the heart and touch the audience. In order to do this, he gathered up all the experiences in his soul and went all out in the areas of story interpretation and narration. He used many new narrative techniques, and many new poetic phrases in the dialogues and monologues. Anom Soeroto was completely taken by the performance.

Three months later, in July 1980, Anom Soeroto was to perform *Déwa Ruci* (*The God Ruci*) in Malang, East Java and asked Tristuti to create the narration for the Tribrasara Forest scene in which Bima has been rendered paralyzed. While in traditional versions Bima is paralyzed as a result of being cursed by forest spirits, in Tristuti's version he has simply been bitten by the deadly *lemut gangga*. In Tristuti's realistic version, this is the final strike in a whole series of discomforts Bima faces in the forest, from poison ivy to diseased mosquitoes, infectious worms, and insidious bloodsuckers. Cloaked in a striking poetic style, the content of Tristuti's narration was taken directly from his own experiences in prison. The language borrowed no phrases from the stock literary language of classical wayang.

After that night, Anom Soeroto invited the destitute Tristuti (who had been working on construction sites to make ends meet since being released) to come live with him in Notodiningratan, writing narrations, dialogue, and debate sequences for specific scenes in exchange for room and board. This relationship continued for seven years, and it was during this time (1980–1987) that Purbo Asmoro came to know and admire Tristuti, 22 years his elder, each month at Rebo Legèn. Purbo observed Tristuti's innovations in the areas of literary techniques and story interpretation from afar, as well as his presence as essentially a court poet and *pedhalangan* tutor in the "kingdom" of Anom Soeroto.[13]

Ki Manteb Soedharsono

While Nartosabdo, Anom Soeroto, and the entire Rebo Legèn community were legendary before Purbo Asmoro had even graduated from ASKI, one more element to the backdrop of Purbo Asmoro's early development was Manteb Soedharsono. Born in Jatimalang, Mojobalan, Sukoharjo, in 1948, the same year as Anom Soeroto, Manteb was extremely popular in the outlying areas when Purbo was at SMKI, but he was not a superstar yet. By the late 1970s he was gaining a name as an extraordinarily talented *dhalang sabet*, with clean, precise, subtly complex

[13] There is more regarding Tristuti's influence on Purbo Asmoro in this and subsequent chapters. In 2004, Purbo Asmoro received his master's degree in Performance Studies from UGM in Yogya, writing his thesis on the effect that Tristuti's scripts had on the *pedhalangan* community of the 1990s (Asmoro, 2004). The information in this section comes from this thesis, but has almost all been confirmed in private conversations with Tristuti as well, whom I studied from, 1997–2009.

movements infused with a certain soul, weight, and timing that made the wayang figures truly come alive on the screen.

From 1979 on, Manteb had shown an interest in the *pakeliran padat* movement and, although holding only one year of conventional high school education and no academy training,[14] he was fascinated with the developments going on at ASKI. He could frequently be found on campus in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and was considered a drop-in student of both Gendhon Humardani himself and the Gendhon apprentices. In 1981 he won first place in the Central and East Java Regional *Pakeliran Padat* Competition with the lakon *Jaka Maruta* (also known as *Kangsa Adu Jago*, or, *Kangsa Stages a Match*—in other words the favored *padat* lakon from 1955). The performance was prepared collaboratively, with ASKI literary talent Sri Sadhono Amongrogo (Sri Dadi) of Kartosuro preparing the script, Bambang Suwarno consulting on expressive movement techniques, and Blacius Subono arranging the gamelan accompaniment (Subono, interview 2015).

It was in 1987, however, the year Purbo Asmoro was just setting out on his career, that Manteb Soedharsono rose to superstar status. He was hired by the non-profit organization Rara Wilis in Jakarta, working together with the Suara Karya newspaper and Bentara Arts Association, to perform 12 episodes over one year, covering the story of Bima's life.[15] The performances would be held once a month at Balai Sarbini in Central Jakarta, under the artistic directorship of Soedarko Prawiroyudo, then head of the central branch of PEPADI.[16] Because this was an important contract and Manteb was so busy with other nightly engagements, these monthly events featured, for the first time in all-night wayang performance history, a small committee of artists with individual responsibilities: script writers, gamelan

[14] This is typical of traditional Javanese artists from his generation and previous, such as Anom Soeroto and many old-style musicians. Formal government schooling was expensive and time-consuming and not considered essential for a performer. In fact it could be a hindrance, with time better spent apprenticing, practicing, and performing from a young age. Dhalang might attend the various *pedhalangan* schools associated with the palaces, as Anom Soeroto did, but formal government-school education was not a priority for artists before the establishment of Konservatori and ASKI.

[15] The twelve episodes of the *Banjaran Bima* series, spanning from his birth through to his death, were, in order: *Bima Bungkus*, *Balé Sigala-gala*, *Gandamana Sayembara*, *Babad Wanamarta*, *Déwa Ruci-Bima Suci*, *Sesaji Raja Suya*, *Pandhawa Dhadhu*, *Wiratha Parwa*, *Kresna Gugah-Kresna Duta*, *Dursasana Jambak*, *Duryudana Gugur*, and *Pandhawa Muksa*.

[16] PEPADI stands for *Persatuan Pedalangan Indonesia* (Indonesian Puppeteer's Alliance) and is an organization, founded April 1971 in Yogyakarta, which brings together dhalang from all over Indonesia. Each town has its own branch. The various PEPADI branches, some more active than others, meet regularly and put on conferences, seminars, festivals, performances, and competitions.

accompaniment arrangers, light and sound directors, wayang figure designers, and Soedarko heading up a committee that discussed lakon interpretation (*sanggit).*

The performances were expected to be varied and of high quality, so Tristuti was brought in to write the scripts for the *Banjaran Bima* (*The Life Story of Bima*) series. Anom Soeroto had let Tristuti go earlier in the year, as he was running for public office and could not be seen to have a direct connection with a former political prisoner. Tristuti started writing for Manteb Soedharsono with the *Banjaran Bima* contract, and continued for 12 years, until 1999. Unlike his work with Anom Soeroto in which Tristuti was only asked to write snippets of narration or bits of crucial dialogue, for Manteb Soedharsono he composed entire scripts (Asmoro 2004, 36). This ensured that although Manteb might perform some 20 times in a month, all of them broadcast on radio or even television, there would be substantial depth, beauty, and variety to every performance.[17] After the success of *Banjaran Bima*, the contracts continued, with the influential Soedarko securing almost monthly performances in Jakarta at various departments and ministries for a number of years. Between this and his strong team of writers, musicians, and technicians by his side, Manteb's fame skyrocketed as of 1988.

Purbo Asmoro's Start, 1986–1989

So it was, with awareness of all the giants in his midst, that Purbo Asmoro set off on his career. He had no dearth of tools or inspiration:[18] Nartosabdo's legacy, Anom Soeroto's eminence, Manteb Soedharsono's newly attained frenzy of fame, the Rebo Legèn community's depth of experience and talent, his entire conceptual education

[17] It must be noted that Manteb Soedharsono insisted in an interview at his home in 2014, that even from the early days he substantially altered Tristuti's scripts and they only had minimal influence on what he actually used on stage. Tristuti, in an interview in 2008, stated emphatically that for the period 1987–1999 Manteb used predominantly his scripts, often verbatim. Copies of the original *Banjaran Bima* series scripts all existed in Tristuti's library when Purbo Asmoro catalogued his life's work in 2004, and when I inventoried his personal library after his death in 2009. What is clear though, is that by 2008 or so (according to Purbo Asmoro's observations) Manteb was no longer using snippets of Tristuti scripts in any capacity in his performances. A week before his death, Tristuti willed his scripts to Purbo Asmoro while at the same time agreeing to sell them to the University of Washington in Seattle for a considerable fee. On his deathbed, when asked to clarify, he said: "They go to Purbo. And to that university that wants them." In the end, the originals went to Seattle, with Purbo Asmoro making photocopies before they were sent. (Purbo Asmoro and I were both witness to this whole process. We were at the bedside of Tristuti, together with Tristuti's wife, on three occasions within a month of his death.)

[18] See Appendix 6 for a complete, annotated list from 2008 of what Purbo Asmoro described as his "top 100 influences," as well as the anecdote of how the list came to be.

at ASKI, and his rigorous, skill-based classical training at both Konservatori and ASKI. Also ever present as an influence were his early struggles and harsh beginnings in the limestone, dry mountains of Dersana. The economic growth of the 1980s, a relative, imposed stability in Java, and a golden era of wayang sponsorship enveloped and supported him as well. It was a time of great opportunity and potential for dhalang. Manteb Soedharsono commented in an interview at his home in 2014: "There has been no decade like the 80s in *pedhalangan* in our lifetime. Not just for me—for anyone who was out there performing at that time. People were sponsoring wayang left and right, and there was huge and substantial government support." Purbo Asmoro made a conscious decision at this point in his life, one which he often speaks of to this day: to start out by being a "parrot."

> After watching so much wayang and so many dhalang while in school, I realized at one point, "Well, there are endless approaches among the elder dhalang. So-and-so does it like this and so-and-so does it like that, while so-and-so does it a different way. Then there is Pak Narto, the master of drama and oration (*dhalang sanggit*), Pak Anom the master of vocal technique and stage presence (*dhalang kung*), and Mas Manteb the master of movement techniques (*dhalang sabet*).[19] Who will I be?" I decided I'd be a parrot first. Just like a parrot. In other words, just imitate. "So be it. That's what I'll do—I'll just imitate others first. At some point I'll find my own identity. But I need to start by imitating."
>
> I got a hold of a recording of Pak Mujoko Joko Raharjo—*Kresna Gugah*—and I imitated it down to a tee, down to his vocal quality. Down to his literary passages. Then I watched Mas Tikno "Karangtalun" perform and I imitated everything, down to his *sulukan*. Down to the exact manner with which he removes a character from the scene. I was a parrot. For anyone. I listened to recordings of Pak Hadi Soegito [Yogya] and I imitated him. His texts, his *sulukan*. All of it. I imitated Mbah Nartosabdo and lakon *Kresna Duta*—ah, that was the be-all and end-all of interpretations. The way Salya argues with Karna—I imitated it. Mbah Darman, anyone. I showed up at any wayang of Mas Manteb's that I possibly could. I tried to imitate everything.

[19] It is a common tradition in *pedhalangan* for performers to be referred to using a two-word phrase: dhalang _____, with the second word meant to encapsulate their claim to fame. Aside from *dhalang sanggit*, *dhalang kung*, and *dhalang sabet*, I have heard *dhalang ndhagel* (a dhalang who tends to prioritize comedy), *dhalang édan* (Djoko Hadiwidjoyo received this label for his outrageous and crazy stage behavior), *dhalang sastra* (a highly literary dhalang, such as Sutino Hardokocarito), *dhalang kethèk* (Warsino Gunasukasno held this title, as he specialized in virtuosic manipulations of monkey figures), dhalang Bagong (Nyotocarito held this title as he specialized in the gait and voice of the figure Bagong), *dhalang sétan* (referring to Manteb Soedharsono and his formidable stamina as a dhalang), *dhalang ngruwat* (an elder dhalang who no longer performs all-night and only does shorter cleansing ceremonies known as *ruwatan*), and *dhalang Baratayuda*. There have also been political references, which tend to have slightly accusatory connotations: dhalang GOLKAR, dhalang PKI, dhalang Orde Baru, dhalang Reformasi. For a list of the labels given to Purbo Asmoro over the years, see the opening of Chapter 8.

Among the loftiness and idealism though, it was also time to settle down and earn a living. Purbo Asmoro was already married at this point, to Sudi Rahayu, a dance graduate of Konservatori. His first child had been born during his graduation year at ASKI, Indhung Prabancana, a boy, born 20 March 1986. Immediately after graduation Purbo had been taken on as a paid instructor in ASKI's Pedalangan Department. He welcomed this job as a honor and took it seriously. However, not only was the salary not enough to support a young family, but Purbo was also passionate about his performing career.

He started receiving invitations to perform, most often in the Jatipuro region of the district of Sragen, northeast of Solo, due to some connections he had there. Little by little he received jobs in other outlying areas all over Sragen, and then in Karanganyar, Klaten, Wonogiri, Boyolali, Sukoharjo, Solo, Jakarta, and across East Java. For a few years, he kept a small book with his performance records (see Figure 4-2), where he jotted down the location, event, and fee. Not all the entries in the book are in order, as he made the entry when he was paid, hence the signature. By looking through the pages, a somewhat complete replica of his schedule can be reproduced, for example, the month of August 1987:

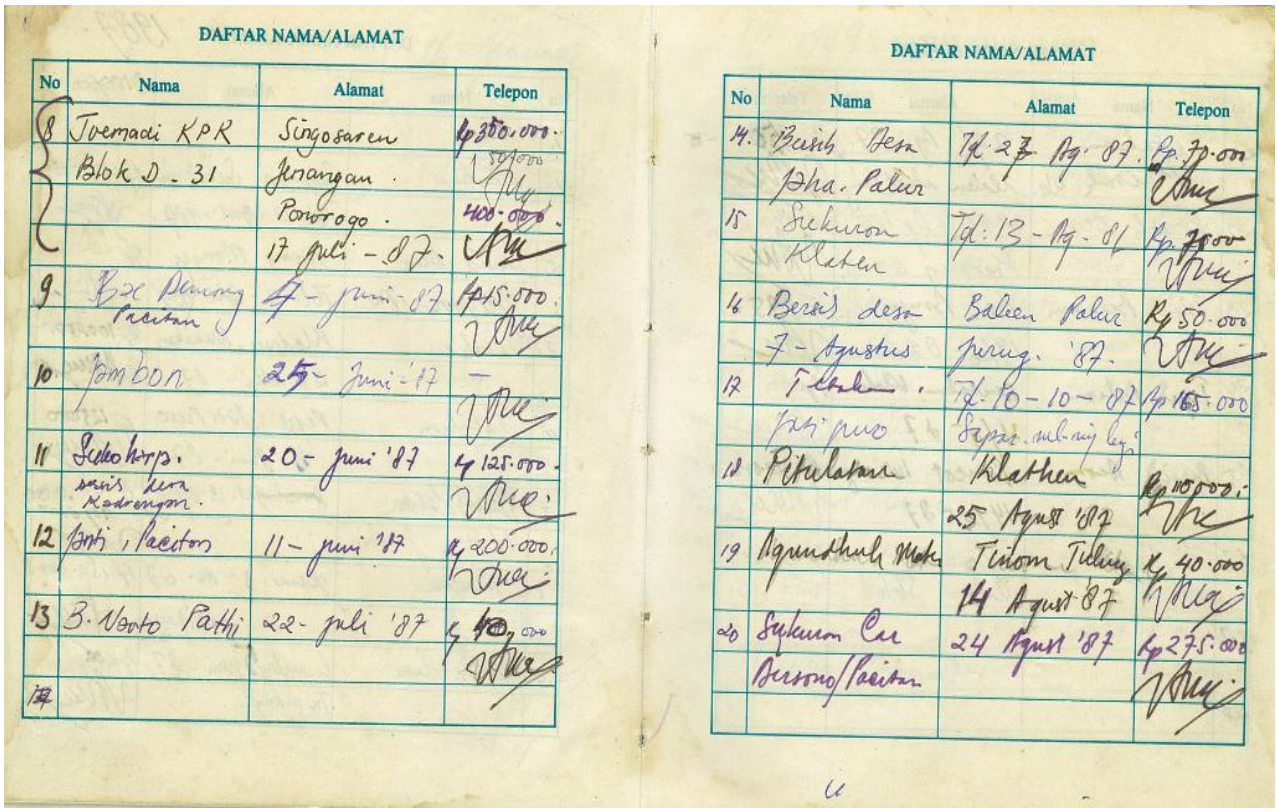
3 August 1987, Jatipuro, a wedding party at the bride's home (*mantu*), Rp. 150,0000
7 August 1987, Palur, a village cleansing (*bersih désa*), Rp. 50,000
13 August 1987, Klaten, a blessing ceremony (*sokuran*), Rp. 75,000
14 August 1987, Tulungagung, a wedding party at the groom's home (*ngundhuh mantu*), Rp. 40,000
18 August 1987, Jakarta, a village cleansing (*bersih désa*), Rp. 300,000
19 August 1987, Banjarsari, Solo, an Independence Day celebration (*pitulasan*), Rp. 175,000
22 August 1987, Krisak, Wonogiri, a circumcision (*tetakan*), Rp. 275,000
25 August 1987, Jambon, Klaten, an Independence Day celebration (*pitulasan*), Rp. 205,000
27 August 1987, Palur, a village cleansing (*bersih désa*), Rp. 70,000
28 August 1987, Karangasem, a village cleansing (*bersih désa*), Rp. 100,000
31 August 1987, Klaten, an Independence Day celebration (*pitulasan*), Rp. 180,000

Assuming he did not neglect to jot down any performances, Purbo collected a gross total of Rp 1,620,000 that month (in 1987 equivalent to US$982, at $1 = Rp 1,650) by performing about one out of every three nights. Out of that gross total though, he would have had to pay his musicians and singers, and perhaps provide for and transport some of the necessary equipment.[20] Since he did not note any of these

[20] Mayangkara was not formed yet, and at that time Purbo Asmoro's troupe was named Asmorolaras. It consisted of mostly ASKI studio musicians, recently graduated students, and other local players.

details in his book, it is impossible to determine his net profit. Purbo estimates today that perhaps he finished a month like that with about Rp 400,000 (in 1987, US$242), after expenses.[21] This was a good income for a young dhalang just starting out.

For about two years, 1986 to 1988, life for Purbo Asmoro was focused on being the best dhalang he could. He presented a basically traditional, all-night style, using all the inspiration and teachings he had garnered. There were a few innovative pieces of *sanggit*, a few Tristuti texts, a spattering of new ideas here and there, but these probably went over everyone's head except for a few discerning musicians or friends in the audience. Everything was focused on gaining a fan and sponsor base, little by little, throughout Central Java, parts of East Java, and Jakarta, supporting his young family, and saving up for a simple house and perhaps some gamelan instruments or wayang figures.



DAFTAR NAMA/ALAMAT

No	Nama	Alamat	Telepon
8	Jumadi KPR Blok D. 31	Singosaren Jenangan. Ponorogo. 17 juli - 87.	Rp 350.000. 400.000.
9	Pak Dalang Pacitan	7 - juni - 87	Rp 15.000.
10	Jombon	25 - juni '87	—
11	Sekolah Orps. sanis kera Kedrongan.	20 - juni '87	Rp 125.000.
12	Pasti, Pacitan	11 - juni '87	Rp 200.000.
13	B. Narto Pattni	22 - juli '87	Rp 150.000
14			

DAFTAR NAMA/ALAMAT

No	Nama	Alamat	Telepon
14.	Balai Desa Dha. Palur	Tg. 27 Ag. 87.	Rp 70.000
15	Sekuron Klaten	Tgl: 13 - Ag - 87	Rp 75.000
16	Balai desa 7 - Agustus	Balean Palur jurug. '87.	Rp 50.000
17	Tlatar. Pasi puro	Tg. 10 - 10 - 87 Sapar. mlm rij kg?	Rp 165.000
18	Pitulatan	Klathen 25 Agust '87	Rp 110.000.
19	Agustusan Mole	Tirtom Tilung 14 Agust '87	Rp 40.000
20	Sukuran Cor Bersono/Pacitan	24 Agust '87	Rp 275.000

Figure 4-2: Two pages out of a small book where Purbo Asmoro kept a record of his performances in the late 1980s.

[21] By contrast, in 2014, during a typical month, Purbo Asmoro probably was able to net a profit of about Rp 200,000,000, or US$17,391 (US$1 = Rp 11,500) after performance expenses, while scheduling only an average of five choice engagements per month. Hence his earnings have gone up by some 200 times in 27 years, or about an average 7–8 times increase in earnings each year over 27 years, while his frequency has about halved. He is no longer a typically paid dhalang, but rather one of the three or four top-paid dhalang in the world (after Anom Soeroto and Manteb Soedharsono, rivaling Enthus Susmono).

In 1989, however, Purbo Asmoro received an invitation that changed the direction of his career and, ultimately, the direction of wayang performance practice.

A Historic Rebo Legèn

The Invitation and the Idea

Nine years had passed since the first Rebo Legèn, and over 100 dhalang had performed at Anom Soeroto's routine event in Notodiningratan, Solo. Purbo Asmoro had been a loyal member of the audience, attending every month as long as he himself was not performing elsewhere. Then, during one of the events and to his astonishment, Anom Soeroto approached Purbo and invited him to perform at a Rebo Legèn a few months to come. Purbo Asmoro was taken aback, since there had only been two other ASKI-affiliated dhalang ever to perform in this venue. Around 1987, Bambang Suwarno had been asked to present his famous *padat* version of *Dèwa Ruci* for an informal discussion session on *pakeliran padat*. While this event fell on Rebo Legèn, it was a completely different situation from the typical all-night crowd. Blacius Subono had also been invited by Anom to perform at Rebo Legèn, a few months before Purbo's invitation, but had used the opportunity to "prove to the Rebo Legèn community that an ASKI graduate can also be entirely classical, and with grace" (interview with Blacius Subono, Jan 2015). Subono prepared a strictly classical version of *Séna Gugat (Bima Rebels)*, a *lakon carangan* by his father, a well-known dhalang from Klaten. Anom Soeroto's son Bayu Aji Pamungkas explained in an interview (Jan 2015):[22]

> I recall my father saying something to me about how he had invited Pak Bono for "some variety," hoping and assuming he would present ASKI-style innovations. When he performed entirely classically my father enjoyed the lakon but was a bit disappointed by the fact that it had been done in traditional style. He decided to give Pak Purbo a try a few months later. Remember that Father was a guest instructor at ASKI at that point, and knew about the developments there.

[22] Bayu Aji Pamungkas was born in 1984 and was only five years old when Subono or Purbo performed at Rebo Legèn. He was obviously just repeating a story he remembered being told, but it does make sense. Much of Bayu Aji's time these past 10 years has been spent pouring over the Rebo Legèn-recording archives, and this has sparked many a conversation with his father on the various performances. Unfortunately, although I tried persistently over a one-year period, Anom Soeroto himself was unavailable for an interview.

Purbo Asmoro became obsessed after receiving the invitation. He consulted with friends and colleagues every chance he got, protesting that he had nothing to offer the Rebo Legèn community and nothing that would be of any interest or note. Subono remembers, with his characteristic chuckle, Purbo coming to him to ask his advice: "Actually I said to him, 'Don't do anything crazy, just perform using the traditional style and you'll be fine.' Well, he didn't listen, did he? Ha, ha, ha, ha." Finally, an idea came to Purbo, which he has described on many occasions since 2006.[23] Here he is waxing nostalgia, speaking through the character Pétruk, during the *Gara-gara* scene of a performance in Pekalongan, Central Java, 16 March 2014:[24]

> **Pétruk**: Ah, I was still young, still a kid. I knew that my knowledge was deficient, my character lacking, my vision still leaving much to be desired. Yet I was asked to perform for that community of respected elders. Mbah Gandadarman, Pak Suti—the point is, esteemed dhalang all of them. Back then the most junior dhalang to be found was the likes of Mas Kasno. Now, why me? What did I have to offer? Clearly if I were to perform in a conventional way, like all those revered types, I would pale in comparison. I would be nothing next to their abilities. So I had an idea. What if I took the concepts of *pakeliran padat* and applied them all night, all the way through to the ending. It seems that no one else has ever done that? That's it. That's what I'll do.

After some input from his former teacher Bambang Suwarno, Purbo Asmoro decided to take the *Kunthi Pilih* (*Kunthi's Choice*) script Sukardi Samiharjo wrote for his own final exam at ASKI Pedalangan in January 1986 (see Chapter 3 for extensive information on this script) and adapt it for an all-night performance. Purbo Asmoro had been one of the gamelan musicians in Sukardi's exam performance, had attended a dozen or more rehearsals in preparation, and had always admired the script, the interpretive details, and especially the *iringan*. He called together a gamelan troupe made up of many of the same musicians who had played for Sukardi's exam, and organized two or three rehearsals. Supadmi, a respected performer and ASKI pedagogue, was the only *pesindhèn* he brought with him, and he knew that there would be three or four *pesindhèn* supplied by Anom Soeroto on

[23] In 2006, on a tour to the USA, Purbo Asmoro came across a video of the Rebo Legèn performance that Jody Diamond had made while studying in Solo. In January 2009, Diamond sent him a copy of the recording, and ever since he has mentioned it in a number of public venues.

[24] I had mentioned to Purbo Asmoro about an hour before the performance, that this month was the 25th anniversary of the Rebo Legèn performance, which had taken place in March 1989.

the night of the performance. Subono was on drum, and ASKI studio musicians Muryana and Nartosindu played *rebab* and *gendèr*, respectively. Supadmi recalled with nostalgia during an interview at her home in January 2015:

> Of course I was the *pesindhèn* chosen. At that time I was even known by the nickname "*sindhèn Kunthi Pilih*," because I had been in every single performance of that lakon *padat* by Pak Kardi. Nak Purbo was one of the most talented students I had. He had been in my *tembang* class at ASKI. He knew how important the vocal parts were in that script, and therefore entrusted part of the success of the performance to me. The emotion of the opening *macapat Kinanthi céngkok miring*, with Kunthi lovesick over Pandhu and despairing about the upcoming competition for her hand in marriage—oh, that must be performed in a heart-wrenching manner [she beats her chest]. The audience was struck silent from the very opening.

Subono also uses the image of an audience struck silent:

> The evening was phenomenally successful. The audience was struck silent. Silent. Intense attention to the screen. I'm sure many were thinking along the lines of, 'What is this ASKI kid doing bringing this *padat* stuff here—is this performance going to be all-night or not?' [chuckles] but whatever they may have been thinking, he was ultimately capturing their attention alright. And when Mas Purbo got to the debate between Basudéwa and Kunthi, oh my, I got goosebumps. That part was not in Pak Kardi's script but was one of the ways Mas Purbo developed and filled out the interpretation. We didn't hear it during the rehearsals. I'm telling you, I got goosebumps.[25]

So how exactly did Purbo Asmoro shape this first attempt at what is now called *pakeliran garapan sedalu*, or *garapan* for short; contemporary-interpretive style, or all-night *garapan*? The next section will examine how Purbo Asmoro crafted the *padat* script into an all-night wayang for that historic performance on 28 March 1989 at Rebo Legèn.

Before the Performance

It was nine o'clock on a clear night in late March, and about 200 guests were already gathered,[26] as had been the case every month on Rebo Legi at the home of Ki Anom

[25] This is a meaningful compliment, as there has been a fair amount of professional competition between Blacius Subono and Purbo Asmoro, off and on over the years.

[26] This description of the pre-wayang atmosphere is possible because Jody Diamond's video recording started 30 minutes before the actual wayang, and caught many the comings and goings of guests. Since I have been in Anom Soeroto's Notodiningratan home many times, I was able to interpret and infer from the shots. Even details like whether or not it was raining that night can become clear from keen observation if you have lived in

Soeroto for over nine years. The screen and gamelan were set up in the large open common space, which one reached immediately upon entering. One could watch the shadows by walking all the way around and further into the house, but there was only space there for about 20 viewers. The unspoken rule was that this was reserved for the dhalang community and regulars "in the know."[27] Revered elders such as Kesdik Kesdolamono of Klaten, middle generation dhalang such as Kasno and Mujoko, influential wayang supporters, and any wayang enthusiasts with confidence enough to consider themselves guests of Anom Soeroto, had all found their way to a comfortable sitting position on the floor. The gamelan had been playing for 30 minutes already—*Ldr Wilujeng*, followed by the classical overture suite *Gd Cucurbawuk kt 2 kr mg Paréanom kalj Ldr Sri Katon ktm Ktw Sukma Ilang*. Wayang-figure designer and *pakeliran padat* expert Bambang Suwarno was visibly harried up at the screen—the only one on the slightly-raised platform, wearing everyday clothes—making sure his former student had all the special *wanda* prepared for this debut, in the correct position to the left and right of the dhalang's platform. More members of the ASKI community were in attendance than usual, since one of their own was performing, but other than that the atmosphere was typical.

Suddenly and ceremoniously at about nine-fifteen (according to the video camera timings) there was a rustle of activity from the host, the host's staff, and a number of regular photographers, when, to everyone's surprise, the Governor of Central Java arrived. Governor Muhammad Ismail, who had been in office for three years, had received invitations to attend Rebo Legèn in the past whenever Anom Soeroto ran into him. Although there were plausible rumors on a number of occasions that he was to show up, this was the first time he had actually attended. The gamelan musicians greeted his entrance spontaneously with the obligatory and patriotic *Lancaran Identitas Jawa Tengah (Central Javanese Identity*) by Nartosabdo, the vocal text of which praises national principles and the culture of Central Java. Finally

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Java and know what to look for, so the video was a goldmine of information even beyond the details of the performance itself.

[27] This is according to both Subono's description of Rebo Legèn in the mid and late 1980s (interview, Jan 2015) as well as my own personal observation from the 1990s. Although Sears mentions in her book (2005) that the shadows were not on display, this must have only been during a limited period when she attended. For most of the years referred to in my interviews, and from the 1990s to the present, the shadow side was viewable to the host and his special guests and colleagues, much like at a village event.

Anom Soeroto came forward and, standing with Purbo Asmoro next to him, made his traditional welcome speech, perhaps a bit more formally than normal due to the presence of Governor Ismail.[28] When the speech was complete, Purbo Asmoro made his way back to the screen, supported by the gamelan playing another abbreviated overture of *Ayak-ayak-Srepeg-Srepeg Banyumas,* and finally *Sampak* as he got settled. His brother, Bambang Asmoro, took a place right behind him to assist with the wayang figures. The audience was relatively silent in anticipation after the reverberation of the last *gong* of *sampak* died away. The dhalang looked ready to start, but then a gecko started in, loudly calling out in a series of five barks from somewhere very near the stage platform (*èk-ok … èk-ok … èk-ok … èk-ok … èk-ok*), so Purbo slightly and quietly readjusted a few wayang figures until the lizard fell silent.[29] Then the performance began with a pattern of *dhog*-s from the dhalang's *cempala* against the wooden wayang box, as wayang performances have for centuries.

A Startling Opening

The opening, when it finally came, surely startled most of the audience. The series of *dhog* knocks on the box played by Purbo Asmoro was not the signal to the traditional *Ayak-ayak* in *sléndro manyura*, but rather was the rhythm signaling an instrumental introduction. This in itself was not particularly unusual yet, as the audience could reasonably expect the *gendèr* introduction to *Kabor*, *Kawit*, or *Krawitan*—these being the only alternatives to using *Ayak-ayak* in the history of Rebo Legèn and almost every wayang for a century or more in Central Java. Or, the signal could have been followed by a *rebab* introduction to the handful of alternative opening *gendhing* used by Nartosabdo from the early 1980s, such as *Mégamendung* or *Pujangga*. Or even, at the outer limits, audiences could perhaps expect a lively *bonang* introduction to *Béndrong* or some other *lancaran*. This would accompany an ogre dance (*kiprah*) to

[28] This ended up being quite a career boost for Purbo Asmoro. Ismail was the governor of Central Java for 10 years, from 1983 to 1993, and supported Purbo Asmoro in many ways throughout his career. He passed away in 2008, so I was unable to interview him for this research.

[29] These lone, rather large, male lizards, known as *tokèk*, are usually not easily visible, but call out from their position on the wall or in the garden in a short series of three, four, five, or sometimes more, "barks." Javanese often chant a wish on the series (similar to the daisy-petal plucking "loves me, loves me not"): "rich, poor, rich, poor…." It would have been in bad form to start before the *tokèk* was finished, as he lent a kind of approval from nature that the time was right to begin this potentially auspicious performance.

stir things up a little before slipping into a completely classical treatment, reflecting Gandadarman style and *wayang orang* style.

Instead, the space was filled with the spiritually-laden *gendèr* introduction to *Ldr Gadhung Mlathi* in *sléndro sanga*.[30] These ethereal pitches accompanied the appearance of an innovative *kayon* figure by Bambang Suwarno, and a single female presence, Kunthi (see Figure 4-3). Granted, every well-known member of the audience, and perhaps some 75% of the total audience, was familiar enough with the 14-year old *padat* movement at ASKI to immediately identify the style affiliation this represented. Yet the effect would still be shocking on a number of levels: this being an all-night wayang, before an audience well-established in their classical tastes and direction, combined with the extreme nature and extent of this particular presentation. A lone, strong, female main-character boldly cast against the expressive movement of an unusual *kayon* was the first image on the screen, as opposed to the expected two, small-frame, anonymous maid servants demurely skittering across the lower part of the screen. What is more, the initial musical orientation was in *sléndro sanga*, the single mode out of six that is exclusively reserved for the middle of the night. Even a perusal of 20 *padat* scripts from the ASKI era, shows not a single one that opens in *sléndro sanga*, except this one by Sukardi.

Then without any formalities or stock phrases, before any utterance from the dhalang, and a mere 20 seconds into the performance, the audience was thrown immediately into the raw emotional content of the plot. Kunthi's reaction to the competition for her hand in marriage was exposed using a newly composed poem sung solo by the *pesindhèn* Supadmi, to an unorthodox melody, with a highly-charged emotional content (*sekar macapat Kinanthi, céngkok barang miring*):

[30] It is considered risky, by some traditional spiritualists in Java, to play this lengthy *gendèr* introduction in its entirety, and continue on to the *ladrang*, without the proper offerings. The piece is believed to summon the spirit of the Queen of the South Seas (Ratu Rara Kidul), who may wish to snatch up mortals from this world to use as her servants. My own *gendèr* teacher, the late Tukiman Wahyopangrawit, would not play the *buka* in its entirety, even for study purposes. When I recorded it in 1991 he played short bits only, stopping in between to wipe the nervous sweat off his brow (and this is a man who never sweated in public). Some more moderate traditionalists feel that playing the *buka* through to the *ladrang* is perfectly safe, as long as it is not followed by the entire *Gadhung Mlathi* suite. Some are brave enough to attempt the entire suite, but with substantial spiritual guidance. In Sukardi's version the *buka* is followed by an ASKI-esque, brash, loud entrance of the *ladrang* (already breaking tradition, so perhaps not invoking Ratu Rara Kidul's attention), and then only a fragment of the *ladrang irama wilet* is used before it is cut off. Still, the audience would have no way of knowing from the opening where this was leading. At any rate, it is impossible to over-emphasize how unusual the use of this piece is to start a wayang, for these multiple reasons.

Oh gods in the heavens, great powers that be,
You have broken your promise,
In deep misery and utterly heartbroken,
All is crushing in around me,
Should it come to pass that I am to be married,
I would choose instead to end my life.



Figure 4-3: The very first scene of *Kunthi Pilih*, March 1989 (video by Jody Diamond).



Figure 4-4: Pandhu and Kunthi's love frolicking, first minute of the Rebo Legèn performance, March 1989 (video by Jody Diamond).

One minute had transpired, and was followed by six more minutes of prologue in which not a word from the dhalang was spoken. Purbo Asmoro led the audience through a movement montage of Kunthi and Pandhu's frolicking, flirtations, love play, all to unusual accompaniment fragments in *sléndro sanga* and taken in its entirety from Sukardi Samiharjo's *padat* script from 1986 (see Figure 4-4). Then suddenly Pandhu pulls away and departs, to the accompaniment of another Sukardi-composed solo sung by the *pesindhèn*, this time to the rarely heard poetic form *sekar tengahan Balabak*:

Princess Kunthi is left by her lover Pandhu, oh the pain;
Her heart restless, lifeless, lusterless, and so it seems;
Unsettled, disturbed, and out of control, become her actions.

Kunthi's father, King Kunthiboja of Mandura, enters (see Figure 4-5). Visions of the 1,000 foreign kings who have already lined up to take on the challenge for his daughter's hand in marriage haunt his psyche, as depicted through mime play.



Figure 4-5: King Basudéwa, distressed by the foreign kings applying to marry Kunthi (video by Jody Diamond).

Finally as part of this vision, his daughter's lover, Pandhu, shoos all the competitors away with a single arrow. This arrow flies through the air, pierces a *kayon*, and thus metaphorically transforms the scene to the official court audience scene in Mandura Kingdom. The prologue is over, and the gamelan players move from *Sampak Tlutur*, *sléndro sanga*, at pitch 6, into the familiar *Ktw Gd Krawitan kt 4 kr* in *sléndro nem*. A traditional opening court scene appears to be ahead.

One can only imagine that a majority of the guests may have sighed with relief as they heard the familiar opening to *Krawitan* and saw King Kunthiboja again, this time with his two demure maidservants entering in a classical manner. The emotionally and intellectually challenging prologue over, their focus could relax a bit and the evening would now move into the traditional, beloved, familiar wayang structure they knew how to interact with. This young upstart from ASKI had made his point, and now it was time to get on with it. The seven-minute prologue would have been revolutionary enough for the Rebo Legèn community, and for any all-night wayang at that point. Purbo Asmoro, however, had much more in store for the audience and was going to ask much more of them before the night was over.

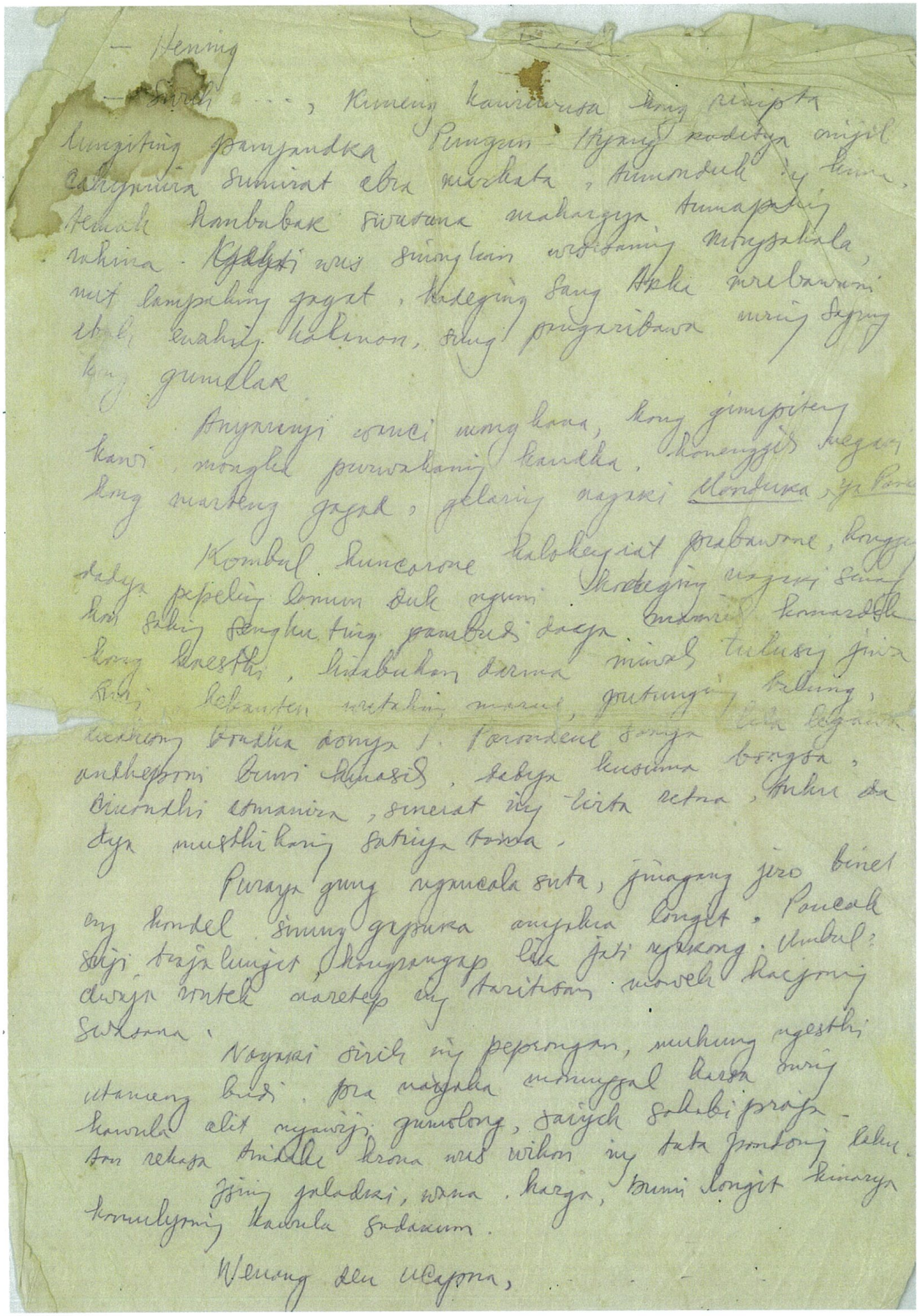


Figure 4-6: Purbo Asmoro's handwritten manuscript of the opening narrations for the *Kunthi Pilih* performance, 28 March 1989, at Rebo Legèn.

Padat Structure Embedded Into All-Night Wayang

In this first attempt at a new style, Purbo Asmoro started with a fully developed *padat* script. This is not the modus he used once he continued to pursue this style, but it was nonetheless an interesting, and perhaps essential, transitional method before settling into his more complex current process, discussed in Chapters 5 to 7. He retained the *padat* structure of the Sukardi script in its entirety, embedding its scenes into an all-night structure as points of intensity and focus within tradition. The original *padat* script is limited to the following scenes of approximately the following durations, for an estimated total length of one hour 45 minutes:

1. Prologue (7 minutes)

PATHET NEM (40 minutes)

2. Court Audience Scene: Mandura Kingdom (6 minutes)
3. Kunthi's Quarters (27 minutes)
4. Overseas/Foreign Court Scene: Plasajenar Kingdom (7 minutes)

PATHET SANGA (42 minutes)

5. A Meeting up in the Forest: Gendara-Madrim-Pujawati (11 minutes)
6. A Prince in Meditation: Pandhu (15 minutes)
7. Gendara Battles Pandhu (16 minutes)

PATHET MANYURA (16 minutes)

8. The Competition: Mandura Kingdom (16 minutes)

Each one of these scenes is highly *garap*ed in the Sukardi script, meaning, again (see Chapter 3), that: story details are presented in unorthodox ways, characters are developed in new ways, scene structure is altered from tradition, literary passages are newly-composed, dialogue is to the point, innovative movement techniques reveal emotion as much as dialogue does, and the gamelan accompaniment tightly fits the needs of the dramatic structure. Focus at all times is on Kunthi, her struggles, and the nature of the difficult choices she faces in her life. Dialogue or scenes not directly addressing this theme were discarded by Sukardi.

Purbo Asmoro kept this structure, and all of these scenes, complete with the density, meaning, innovation, and focus on theme developed in Sukardi's *padat* version, and complete with reconceptualizing all six of the main performance elements. The scenes are dispersed, however, across seven hours of the all-night version. Aside from dispersing the scenes across seven hours, Purbo Asmoro did three further things that transformed the *padat* version into an all-night version: he reintroduced a second plotline that had been removed from the *padat* version; he deepened and thickened the *padat* scenes themselves with more character and interpretive detail; and finally he added attractions from traditional all-night performance-practice that the *padat* structure had no room for.

Adding Back a Second Plotline and Theme

In the *padat* version, Sukardi eliminates the plotline concerning the Priest Bagaspati (see the traditional version lakon summary, Appendix 2). We never meet Bagaspati, and never experience his tragic death at the hands of his own son-in-law, Narasoma. Narasoma's sister, Madrim, and his wife, Pujawati, do get accosted by ogre King Gendara while traveling alone in the forest. In Sukardi's version, however, this encounter is present only to develop the heroism of Pandhu, who saves two women he does not know, out of pure chivalry. There is a brief mention of how the two women are trying to catch up with Narasoma, but only to emphasize how fatefully wrong Kunthi's first choice of Narasoma is in the competition, and to show how Madrim becomes Pandhu's wife only out of circumstance and not love. Every snippet of the plot connects to Sukardi's professed theme for the lakon, concerning the nature of love and women's choices.

In Purbo Asmoro's all-night version for Rebo Legèn, the Bagaspati tale is told in full, in a separate plotline with a separate focus. In fact, Purbo spends a heavy 109 minutes on it. He first develops Narasoma's rebellious and slightly cocky character in a 23-minute *Sabrangan Alus* scene with the servants Togog and Bilung. He then, symmetrically, develops Pujawati's character in a 23-minute scene with her father, Bagaspati, in the Arga Belah Hermitage. There follows a 23-minute love scene between Narasoma and Pujawati, and then a 22-minute death scene in which Bagaspati sacrifices his life so that his daughter and son-in-law may be the next king

and queen of Mandaraka. This is followed by an 18-minute scene in which Narasoma goes back to his father's kingdom but is rejected due to the disgrace of Bagaspati's death. This tragic sub-tale, told in 109 minutes right in the middle of the lakon, is symmetrical not only due to the balanced durations of the subscenes but also in the way it mirrors the length of the dispersed *Kunthi Pilih padat* scenes, 104 minutes. Although this second plotline is intensely dramatic, and surely would bring tears to many in the house, it is not *garap*ed in the ASKI *padat* sense of the word. Purbo Asmoro uses traditional *iringan*, literary passages, and movement techniques. It is as if the *garapan* were reserved that night for the sections that came directly from the *padat* script, spread out throughout the performance, with a somewhat more classical second plotline of approximately equal length stuck in the middle.

Deepening and Extending Padat Scenes

Obviously Purbo Asmoro does more than simply present the *padat* version and add the classically treated Bagaspati tale in the middle, or the performance would not have lasted all night. He also deepens and extends a number of the *padat* scenes, in particular the Mandura Kingdom audience scene and the scene in Kunthi's quarters.

While in the *padat* version, the Mandura Kingdom scene is only a brief five minutes of functional dialogue, it is a well-developed 45-minute scene in the all-night version. Purbo writes his own opening narration (see Figure 4-6). He also takes the opportunity to add in an extended *wejangan* (set of philosophical teachings) from King Kunthiboja to his son Basudéwa, on the nature of a first-born son's responsibilities to himself and others. Purbo also adds a scene in which Kunthi's chambermaid, Nyai Sedhah Mirah, is called in to report on Kunthi's condition. This adds color, variety, and comedic relief to the scene.

While the scene in Kunthi's private quarters is a substantial 27 minutes in the *padat* version, the most elaborate scene in the performance, it is a full 71 minutes in the all-night version. Purbo adds an extended explanation from Kunthi's teacher, Druwasa, as to how Kunthi came to be with child. This is mostly humorous, but quite literary in nature as well. He also adds much more of Kunthi's emotional reaction to having to part with her child, as well as a more extended debate with her

brother, Basudéwa (the one that gave Subono goosebumps). This will come to be quintessential Purbo Asmoro-style in the years to come: extended reflections by characters, *wejangan*, debates between characters, and the revealing of the contents of a character's heart through heart-wrenching monologues and dialogue. In this way, Purbo Asmoro actually rejects both the "efficiency" of *padat* and the generic nature of classical plotline. He develops his own lengthy, expansive, psychological explorations of characters and their motives in all-night *garapan*.[31] He takes the *padat* scenes and extends their depth and intensity even further.

Traditional Popular Scenes

The second 109-minute plotline, and the extended character development and debate embedded in the Mandura court scenes (84 minutes) add about three hours to the *padat* version, for a total of four to five hours. This brings the all-night version to about three hours longer than the *padat* version. But the performance lasted about seven hours. The remaining time came from popular scenes brought back from the traditional all-night wayang:

- a 9-minute *Limbukan*
- a 10-minute *Pasében Njaba* (Outer Audience Hall Scene)
- a 19-minute *Budhalan* (Troop Departure Scene)
- a 35-minute *Sabrangan* (Foreign Kingdom Scene, King Gendara's Plasajenar)
- a 23-minute *Prang Gagal* (Plasajenar versus Mandura Kingdoms)
- a 22-minute *Cakilan* (Pandhu versus Cakil and other ogres in the forest)
- a 20-minute humorous interaction between Kunthi, Madrim, and Pandhu (such extended humorous scenes are not condoned in *padat* treatment)

In summary, Purbo Asmoro's all-night *garapan* debut consisted of the entire *padat* script but spread out throughout the night (104 minutes), a fully-developed second plotline (109 minutes), a deepening and enriching of the *padat* scenes using philosophical teachings and more detailed character development (84 minutes), and the insertion of beloved attractions from the traditional all-night style (118 minutes).

[31] This is explored in more detail in Chapter 7.

This is akin to the way his performances were to look in future years, with a few important differences: the second plotline will come to be equally as *garap*ed as the main plotline, many of the traditional popular scenes will be more heavily *garap*ed, and the starting point in terms of preparation will not be a *padat* script per se.

Elements of *Garapan* prior to 1989

Purbo Asmoro has always expressed certainty that Rebo Legèn was the first all-night *garapan* performance in the history of wayang, and no one I have spoken to has able to offer any earlier examples. But in October 2008, preparing to write the Introduction to the Lontar translations, I decided to organize a panel discussion at the home of Rahayu Supanggah in Benawa, on the eastern outskirts of Solo, to explore this further (see Figure 4-7). My intention was to invite discussion on two points:

1. What were some of the earliest examples of what ASKI calls *garapan* that occurred in otherwise traditional all-night wayang: examples of flashbacks, daydreams, visions, alternative gamelan accompaniment, prologues, montages, non-traditional character development.

2. What/when was the first performance to use a *garapan* approach throughout every important moment in the evening, rather than just a single special moment? If I did not get much response I planned to present this question: Is it possible that Purbo Asmoro's Rebo Legèn performance on 28 March 1989 was the first one? I would challenge participants to come up with performances before this one, would show them the video to get reactions, and in general hope to encourage a discussion.

The invited discussion members were:

- Rahayu Supanggah
- Tristuti Rahmadi Suryasaputra (who passed away a few months later)
- Toto Atmojo (an elderly, village dhalang from Sukoharjo)
- Bambang Murtiyoso
- Bambang Suwarno
- Jungkung Darmoyo (a non-ASKI trained younger dhalang and the late Mujoko Raharjo's son)
- Saguh Hadiraharjo (an elderly musician who played with the late Nartosabdo)
- Soewito Wito Radyo (a middle-aged musician with wide experience across much of Klaten)
- Suratno (a musician from Kartosuro and the late Naryocarito's son)
- Prapto Panuju (from PEPADI in Jakarta)
- Kuwato, author of a master's thesis on the *hura-hura* era in wayang (2001)
- Purbo Asmoro
- (Manteb Soedharsono and Anom Soeroto were invited, but declined)

I visited each participant in the months before the seminar, interviewed them alone, and notified them of the topics to be covered when we all gathered in October. Some



Figure 4-7: Panel disucssion on *garapan* elements from the past, Benawa, Oct 2008.
TOP (left to right): Suwito, Prapto Panuju, Kathryn Emerson, Purbo Asmoro, Saguh.
MIDDLE (left to right): Bambang Murtiyoso, Suwito, Kuwato, Purbo Asmoro, Saguh, Bambang Suwarno, (Danang–video), Suratno, Toto Atmojo, Prapto Panuju, Jungkung Darmoyo, Tristuti.
BOTTOM (left to right): Suratno, Toto Atmojo, Prapto Panuju, Jungkung Darmoyo, Tristuti, Bambang Murtiyoso, Suwito.

ended up arriving with written responses (Bambang Murtiyoso, for example) and some with notes (Purbo Asmoro), but most arrived empty-handed yet full of ideas. It was unanimously agreed, after very little discussion, that Purbo Asmoro was the first to employ *garapan* principles all night, across an entire performance on that night at Rebo Legèn, which almost all of them had attended. But there were most certainly predecessors in the process, and these were the bulk of what became the subject of rich discussion over the three-hour get-together.

Mujoko Joko Raharjo, RRI Solo, 1984

In 1984, Mujoko Joko Raharjo of Gombang, Sawit, Boyolali, brought an innovative *garapan* technique into the mainstream spotlight during an all-night performance of *Sesaji Raja Suya* (*The Grand Offering of the Kings*) at the national radio broadcasting station in Solo. During the *Pathet Nem* section after *Budhalan*, as Kresna, Arjuna and Bima discover the wailing drum at the entrance of Jarasandha's kingdom, Mujoko moved suddenly and shockingly into a flashback.[32] Over the next hour and a half, he played out the birth of Jarasandha to explain the wailing drum, rather than simply having Kresna describe it. Having a character describe such events from the past is the traditional way of inserting them into a performance, and is referred to as *pagedhongan* (essentially, storytelling). A *pagedhongan* that is played-out on the screen, rather than simply narrated, is referred to in *garapan* circles now as a *sisipan*: the insertion of a major event from a prior lakon within a lakon.

Mujoko's ninety-minute flashback cleverly took the perfect shape of the scenes it replaced, although in the context of a flashback. The *sisipan* started with what was, in effect, an *Adegan Sabrang Alus*, when Jarasandha's father, Brihadrata, received a visit by the god Naradha. Although all a flashback, this is in fact precisely where the structure had stopped when the flashback started, just before *Adegan Sabrang*. This was followed by a scene similar to *Prang Gagal*, when Naradha and his troops battled Jarasandha's father when he would not relent in his demand to be granted a child. The *Prang Gagal* concluded with a climactic event, as is typical: Naradha giving Jarasandha's father the magical mango. This was followed by what could be viewed as a *Magakan or Sabrangan Rangkep* scene, when Brihadrata returned

[32] Readers may find it useful to consult the summary of *Sesaji Raja Suya*, found in Appendix 2.

to his kingdom, and Jarasandha was born. When the flashback was over, Mujoko moved seamlessly into *Pathet Sanga* and returned to the main story where it left off. Hence, it was revolutionary in that it was a flashback, but the sequence fit without a hiccup into the traditional order or scenes. (Recording in Purbo Asmoro's collection as of 2010, courtesy of RRI Solo.)

Twenty-five years later, the Solo artistic community still talks about this amazing night, as many were either in the audience, listening on the radio, or had heard subsequent rebroadcasts of the performance throughout that year. When I interviewed the Lontar panel discussion participants in 2008 to ask their opinions on the beginning of *garapan* techniques in all-night wayang, more than half of the interviewees quoted this flashback or *sisipan*. Mujoko was a visiting instructor at ASKI and was quite familiar with the *padat* movement, although he had no taste for this new development, as evident from his comments documented in Chapter 3. Whether his creation of the flashback as a *sisipan* was inspired specifically by *padat* techniques, by something else, or from his own creativity shaped unconsciously by the times, his performance has become a *garapan* milestone in the minds of Solonese artists.

Twenty-three year old Purbo Asmoro, although not in the audience that night, heard about Mujoko's innovative technique and had the opportunity to witness it later that same year at a performance of *Sesaji Raja Suya* by Mujoko in the general Solo environs. At one point shortly after, he even acquired a recording of one of the performances, studied it for a bit, but then lent it out and it was never returned. However, 25 years later, he chose *Sesaji Raja Suya* as one of the lakon for this project partly based on his memory of the performance he saw that year and—like his development of Sukardi's *Kunthi Pilih*—his desire to further explore the *garapan* potential of this lakon while building on something already started.

Other Early Examples of Garapan

For over a century now, there has been a practice in Klaten of combining a number of Baratayuda War episodes into one all-night performance for annual village-cleansing rituals. Because many episodes are combined into one, the traditional structure of a wayang performance must be altered. Hence there is a deliberate *garap*

adegan, which strays from tradition by combining lakon, and also because characters are not present as traditionally expected. On the battlefield there is no Queen's Quarters scene, for example, and the troops are not only already dispatched but also waning in number, so a typical, showy, grand, *Budhalan* would be ludicrous. The traditional narrations must be discarded as well, since opening scenes take place on battlefields rather than in palaces. Hence we find some of the first *garap catur* with narrations created solely for the dramatic purposes of a single performance. Many dhalang have cited the creativity and innovation found within this Klaten Baratayuda tradition as an example of *garapan* long before its days at ASKI (Soewito Wito Radyo, interview, June 2011). [33]

Tristuti Rahmadi Suryasaputra introduced what would now be labeled as *garapan* elements into his performances as early as the mid-1960s. He recalls that many performances during that tumultuous time took place after extended political speeches and many nights he found himself unable to start the wayang until 11:00 PM or even later. He recounts sitting in a chair waiting during the speeches, while planning a creative solution to the dilemma. He did not want to start with a lengthy court scene, and he did not find simply shortening everything in equal proportion (like a *ringkas* performance) an interesting prospect. So he tells of how he routinely started with a prologue, developed in his mind during the one- to two-hour wait before the performance. He needed to somehow engage the audience in the story with dramatic flair from the beginning, grabbing their attention so they did not just leave, exhausted after the political meeting (Tristuti, interview 2007). Hence although his motives and circumstances stemmed from different principles, he was developing prologues a decade before the *padat* movement at ASKI.

There are many examples of bits of ASKI-style *garapan* in an all-night format (whether actually ASKI-influenced or not) among creative dhalang of the past. Purbo Asmoro tells of watching performances by Gandadarman in which he began with *kiprahan* as a prologue (usually an antagonist type of character dancing an arrogant show of his prowess) to entice audiences. Supanggah tells of an inspiring dhalang by the name of Mintaraga from Nganjuk, who as far back as the late 1950s and early 1960s was employing various *garapan*-like elements, straying dramatically

[33] The *Baratayuda* lakon, as the first example of a multi-episode construction, is explored further in Chapter 8.

from tradition and rejecting generic scene structure, narration and accompaniment choices. Bambang Murtiyoso remembers a performance in the late 1970s by Naryocarito of Kartosuro (lakon *Prabu Nausa*, or *King Nausa)*, which began with a prologue that visually encapsulated the entire story. Who influenced whom and for what purpose will never be known, but what is generally agreed upon in the community is that Purbo Asmoro was the first to universally, consciously and somewhat rigorously apply all elements of *garapan* to the all-night format.

Wayang Hura-hura: 1990–1998

After the revolutionary debut at Rebo Legèn in 1989, one could easily assume that Purbo Asmoro simply returned to his slowly building career, performing small-scale wayang for village cleansings, weddings, and circumcisions, receiving modest fees, and attracting relatively contained audiences in the hundreds. It would be hard to imagine when he would have the opportunity for showcasing, let alone further developing, something as thought- and rehearsal-intensive as the all-night *garapan* style, and where an appreciative audience would come from. But Purbo Asmoro's performance had made an impression on Governor Ismail who, along with a committee of Ganasidi officers (see p. 99), was concocting a plan to "spectacularize" wayang. Ironically, this would lead to giving Purbo Asmoro a platform and the authority from which to convert audiences over to his new style—meant not to spectacularize wayang, but to deepen and further enrich its dramatic content using innovative and dynamic techniques, appealing to contemporary audiences.

The New Order's Vision for Wayang

The ruling Golkar Party that had supported Anom Soeroto's rise to fame in the 1970s, continued to see great potential in the power of wayang in the late 1980s and early 1990s. As Kayam comments (2001, 75):

> … compared to their attention to other art forms, the attention the New Order paid to wayang was huge, both economically and politically. To go even further, wayang could be referred to as the ultimate "New Order art form," or the official art form of the party ... even to the point that New Order influence came to dominate and regulate almost all aspects of *wayang kulit*.

Kayam continues with the observation that, during the 1980s, wayang was still a mystical and spiritual happening when in the realm of the palaces, while in the villages it remained a harmonizing force between man, society, and nature. In academic institutions it had firmly been declared as an aesthetic, artistic, and intellectual endeavor, while the superstar dhalang of the age, such as Nartosabdo, Anom Soeroto, and Manteb Soedharsono were approaching wayang as story-telling mixed with a heavy dose of entertainment. Now, the New Order proposed that wayang could be, more than ever before due to mass broadcasting media such as radio and television, a tool for informing and controlling the masses. This was repeatedly expressed in a phrase coined by Harmoko, President Soeharto's Minister of Information from 1983 to 1997,[34] that wayang should be: *tontonan, tuntunan, dan tatanan* (attractions to watch, lessons to learn from, and a sense of order to live by). Kayam notes that this seemingly innocuous catch phrase was in fact emblematic of the way the regime manipulated the art form for its own good. "The powers of the New Order tended to mobilize the authority of other idioms [wayang] and then manipulate and misuse them for their own purposes and interests (Kayam 2001, 71)."

Sudjadi and Wayang "Spektakulèr"

Along this vein, Sudjadi, a career politician from Yogyakarta and the head of Ganasidi, began plans in 1989 for expanding the use of wayang as a communication tool for the government. Together with colleagues, a program was designed to put on a large-scale, *wayang spektakulèr* on Central Javanese Governor Ismail's monthly Javanese birthday (Thursday-*Legi*). But this event had to be different from all others, and colossal. They would use two extra-wide screens instead of one, and hire flashy, glamorous dhalang. Two dhalang, one at each screen, would alternate scenes or at times create a scene together. Sometimes a third or fourth dhalang would be included. There would be special lighting effects, and massively powerful sound systems. For the *Limbukan* and *Gara-gara* interludes the committee would invite comedians (either famous stand-up comedians or clowns from the *wayang orang* tradition) and *dhangdhut*, *kroncong*, *campursari*, or rock bands. These performers

[34] A position interpreted by many as "Minister of Propaganda."

would be given their own separate platform or space, usually to the dhalang's left, opposite the wayang box. The interludes would run well over an hour each. This would ensure enough time for the *tontonan*, while still giving the dhalang plenty of opportunity for *tuntunan* and *tatanan*: to pass on messages from the government about birth control, farming techniques, new programs, impending dangers (such as if there had been an outbreak of counterfeiting) or other matters deemed important. A huge awning, taking more than three days to set up and secure against the wind and rain, would cover not only the entire dhalang, screen, gamelan, and comedian-band stage area but also the rows of plush, satin chairs for honored guests. Everything down to the carpet on the stage, the dhalang and musicians' jackets, and the singers' and comedians' outfits would be Golkar Party golden-yellow.

None of these ideas were new, in and of themselves. Multi-screen, multi-dhalang experiments had been explored in the 1960s by the artist league, Communist Party-linked Lekra Association. Supanggah recalls the power of some of these experiments. The intention there, however, was to use the multi-screen space for pointed story-telling and aesthetic reasons, rather than to turn wayang into a Las Vegas spectacle (interview, 2008). [35] As for the interludes, Nartosabdo had already extended and adopted the *Gara-gara* scene, as mentioned previously, in the 1970s. He was reportedly the first to interact with *pesindhèn* during *Limbukan* and *Gara-gara*, and started the tradition of actually turning in their direction to interview, heckle and joke with them. In 1975, a separate platform had already been used for guest stars, when the comedy troupe Srimulat had their anniversary celebration in Solo. They invited the star *kroncong* singer Waldjinah to join the wayang by Ki Nartosabdo, setting up a designated platform for her to stand on during the interludes. Nartosabdo continued this practice in later performances and it caught on in some circles. Manteb Soedharsono had also been showcasing Waldjinah since 1983, complete with keyboards and viola for *campursari* selections on her own platform. He had also been using a bass drum and trumpets for departure scenes, and flashing, colored lights with sound effects for battle scenes since the early 1980s.

[35] For example, Supanggah told of getting goosebumps when he witnessed a troop departure scene in a Lekra wayang using three screens and three dhalang, in which a soldier on a horse started from the screen on the left and continued seamlessly through all three screens. This was meant to evoke the impending horror of war, as the horse picked up intensity approaching his destination. Another scene in the same *Baratayuda* lakon performance featured one battle on one screen, alternating with another battle from another front on the other screen.

In fact, the dhalang Harjunadi, from Nganjuk, East Java, had been using a clarinet, bass drum, and snare drum for departure scenes as early as the 1960s, according to Bambang Murtiyoso, a native of Nganjuk (interview, 2008). What was new was to intentionally put all these elements together in one package, institutionalize it as policy for each monthly event, and proudly identify the events with the labels *spektakulèr* and *kolosal*.

The first of these monthly *wayang kolosal* took place on 10 March 1990, in an indoor, air-conditioned theater at Gedung Wanita in Manahan, Solo. It featured two superstars, the Solonese Manteb Soedharsono and Banyumasan Sugito Purbotjarito, and one up-and-coming Golkar favorite, Djoko Hadiwidjoyo from Semarang, known as Djoko "Édan" ("Crazy" Djoko) for his irreverence on stage. The lakon, meant to be determined and fleshed out by Sudjadi's committee in order to align with party motives, was *Baladéwa-Balarama,* concerning an imposter posing as Baladéwa. This first event was held to celebrate the 11 March 1966 anniversary of Soeharto's taken over from Soekarno. The official monthly birthday celebrations for Governor Ismail began in May of 1990[36] and from then on, all of the events were held in the courtyard of the Semarang National Radio Station (RRI Semarang).

Purbo Asmoro Joins Wayang Spektakulèr

After four successful monthly *spektakulèr* birthday events in Semarang, Governor Ismail requested that the young, talented dhalang he had seen at Rebo Legèn perform. On 19 September 1990, Purbo Asmoro presented the lakon *Bima Suci (Bima as Sage)* in a two-screen *spektakulèr*, together with senior female dhalang Suharni Sabdowati of Sragen. On 28 November 1990, Purbo was invited again, this time performing with Crazy Djoko, presenting the lakon *Sirna Satru Bebuyutan (The Death of Evil Enemies)*. Hence, Purbo Asmoro was chosen by Governor Ismail, Sudjadi, and the general committee, to perform for two of the first eight occasions. As the events progressed, the glitz of the format increased. It came to include officials being invited on stage by the dhalang to offer speeches or songs, as well as crowd-gathering gimmicks such as lucky draws for the audience to receive prizes (fans, kitchen appliances, bicycles, even motorcycles) during the interludes.

[36] A wayang was not held in April 1990, due to the Islamic fasting month, Ramadan.

The exposure Purbo Asmoro received as a result of these *spektakulèr* engagements was incomparable with anything he would have previously dreamed possible; it included not only mass promotion of his talents before audiences in the thousands and high-ranking officials by the dozens, but also instant radio and television fame. By mid-1991 his popularity surged, he was able to increase his fees exponentially, and he was on a track to superstardom only a short two years after the Rebo Legèn debut.

Purbo had yet to find another opportunity to experiment with all-night *garapan* style though. He was obligated to follow the *hura-hura* format designed by the Sudjadi team in the various government-sponsored wayang he performed, and he continued to offer primarily traditional performances in more modest situations. Nonetheless, Purbo also continued his more aesthetically minded endeavors. In 1990 he won first place in the Central Javanese Dhalang Competition, presenting a slightly revised version of the lakon *Kunthi's Choice*. He continued teaching at ASKI, which in 1988 had been elevated to an official higher education institution and renamed STSI (Sekolah Tinggi Seni Indonesia). Through STSI, he was sent on his first overseas tour as a dhalang in 1990, with performances in London.

In 1992, due to his rising popularity and need for a consistent group he could depend upon, Purbo Asmoro formed his own performance troupe, known to this day as Mayangkara (*Mangèsthi Wayang Kagungan Rahayu*, "Dedicated to Wayang as a Source of Wellbeing"). The famed Mujoko Joko Raharjo had passed away suddenly in February 1992, and Mayangkara was made up of about half of his musicians, who previous to playing for Mujoko had been members of Nartosabdo's troupe. The other half were STSI studio musicians, colleagues of Purbo's on campus each day. His second son, Kukuh Indrasmara, had been born on 25 March of 1991, and Purbo had also moved into the first home that he owned.

At age 30, two years after the radical debut at Rebo Legèn, Purbo Asmoro had toured overseas, won first place in a major, region-wide *pedhalangan* competition, become a favorite of the government-sponsored *wayang hura-hura* trend, and formed his own gamelan troupe made up of highly knowledgeable musicians. He was positioned to move only one place, and that was up. But so were Crazy Djoko and a

number of other young dhalang. The question for this work is: when did he return to developing the style that became his trademark?

Wayang PANTAP

In 1993, Muhammad Ismail had completed two terms as governor of Central Java and Suwardi took office. Sudjadi and his colleagues, still in charge of Ganasidi, and still representing the Golkar ruling party, maintained their interest in increasing the scale and influence of government-sponsored wayang. The Governor's office, together with other influential figures, created a funding organization known as PANTAP (*Panitia Tetap Apresiasi dan Pengembangan Seni Pedalangan*, The Committee for the Appreciation and Development of the Art of Pedalangan). They continued the large-scale monthly wayang events through ever-stronger sponsorship. Governor Suwardi chose to hold the events not on his monthly birthday but rather on the monthly Independence Day Eve, the 16th of each month. He also decided to hold them in the courtyard outside the Governor's Office in Semarang rather than at the radio station. Because there was an extensive commemoration of Indonesian Independence every 17th, the events had to end at 2:00 AM in order to give facilities teams time to set up for the 6:00 AM patriotic ceremonies. So wayang were truncated to approximately five hours: one hour of *Limbukan*, one hour or more of *Gara-gara*, one full hour involving flashy battle scenes with light, sound, and visual effects, and two hours remaining for the dramatic unfolding of the lakon.

The PANTAP wayang started on 16 September 1993, and they continued for five years, every single month except during Ramadan. Purbo Asmoro estimates that in the five years of PANTAP (covering 55 wayang, once a month for 11 months each year) he was asked to perform some 20 times or more, or about 36% of the time, with countless related engagements also coming his way via PANTAP connections. At the time, as a young dhalang with a wife and two children to support and an interest in a rising career, there is no question that the opportunity was unparalleled. But Purbo reflected in an interview at his home in 2010:

> PANTAP equals the age of *wayang hura-hura*. Those performances had very little lakon development and basically were a series of attractions mixed with the government agenda. PANTAP started during, and ended with, the New Order. I

> knew it at the time. I kept my integrity in tact as best I could though. I was compromising between an opportunity and what my heart was telling me. This was not the art of wayang as I saw it. This was not my vision. But it was there before me.[37]

History has not been kind to the memory of PANTAP, with many commentators bemoaning its effect on wayang throughout the 1990s and beyond. Supanggah had this to say (Kuwato 2001, 215):

> It is a shame that something with such potential, done at such a great financial cost, would produce a product that is not of a serious nature and has such little artistic value—something that can even be said to deteriorate the meaning of an artform that was once intended to develop spiritual values but now has moved into the arena of cheap entertainment. … all in the name of "creativity," in the name of building a market and an audience, without regard for the true essence of creativity or even the true meaning of "market value."

Bambang Murtiyoso expressed his opinion as below (Kuwato 2001, 214):

> Unfortunately, Ganasidi's program to create "wayang fever" among the young has succeeded; while the aspect of the program intended to create something of quality centered around first-class dhalang can be judged a failure. Dhalang raised in the PANTAP model of performance have turned in the direction of vulgar entertainment. This only widens the discrepancy between what is appreciated by the youth and the potential aesthetic depth of wayang.

While Sudjadi himself countered (Kuwato 2001, 217):

> I am quite certain that the large majority of wayang fans are looking for entertainment, not philosophy. I'd be willing to bet on it. It has long been a fact that audiences wait for *Gara-gara* and what does this say? Don't force all audiences to be like those who really understand wayang. Sure, messages and philosophy are important but it depends on the dhalang and his abilities, too.

The final PANTAP wayang was held on 16 August 1998, featuring four female dhalang, Suharni Sabdowati, Suparsih, Isti Sabdarini, and Sudarmi, after which, as abruptly as the New Order ended in May 1998, PANTAP events also were

[37] In 2013, Purbo Asmoro was performing in Pati on the north coast of Java. I was on stage sitting with Mayangkara while some local bands played before the wayang started. Purbo Asmoro was in one of the plush seats up front with the sponsors, awaiting the speeches. An elderly, well-dressed man walked on stage, grabbed one of the singer's microphones, and joined in with a *campursari* song during the pre-show, to the applause of the seated officials. I received a text message from Purbo a few minutes later: "That's Sudjadi standing there on stage. If you're looking for what ruined wayang in the 1990s, look no further. There he is in front of you."

over. But because PANTAP performances had been televised on local stations and broadcast nationally on radio, they had become a kind of standard for wealthy people planning to put on a wayang. Although multi-screen and multi-dhalang events were rare outside of PANTAP, many of the other *spektakulèr* elements caught on. It became the norm for high-profile wayang performances throughout the 1990s and early 2000s[38] to feature 60 to 90-minute *Limbukan* and *Gara-gara* scenes, a plethora of guest stars on a separate platform (generic comedians, *wayang orang* comedians, *dhangdhut* singers and dancers, *campursari* bands, rock bands), and extended battle scenes with special effects. These PANTAP-esque wayang, sponsored by officials or those wealthy enough to afford the *kolosal*, took place in massive venues similar to Sudjadi's events. While traditional wayang performances were still to be found in villages across Central and East Java, *wayang hura-hura* became the trend in the 1990s for those able to afford it. Even for those unable to afford something of this scale, elements of *wayang hura-hura* that could be integrated for no extra budget, such as encouraging dhalang to extend *Limbukan* and *Gara-gara* interludes and hiring a few local, stand-up *kroncong* or *campursari* singers and bands, found their way more and more into even the modest village performances (personal observation, 1995 to about 2000).[39]

Purbo Asmoro Makes a Career Choice

As of the formation of Mayangkara in 1992, Purbo Asmoro returned to his experiments with all-night *garapan*. Strengthened and supported by his group of experienced musicians, and wishing to separate himself from what was happening

[38]Many of these *hura-hura* elements are in fact the norm through the writing of this work (2015) but the post-2000 era is more complicated and involves Purbo Asmoro's all-night *garapan* influence, which is described in the following chapters. NOTE: This is also the era during which audiences came to sit exclusively on the dhalang-gamelan-color side of the screen, as the nature of the attractions and the "superstar dhalang" phenomenon encouraged this perspective.

[39] For an extensive account in English of the *hura-hura* style of wayang performance in the 1990s, see Mrázek (2005, 359–536). He even includes excerpts from newspaper accounts reporting on that first wayang *spektakulèr* of 10 March 1990 (463–466). Mrázek and I were both living in Solo during this period, in fact for some of the time even in the same boarding house. While I was intent on avoiding *hura-hura* performances (as described on page 6), he was fascinated with documenting them. The accounts, observations, and conclusions in his chapter entitled "Gara-gara! Or wayang in the times of comedy," are strikingly accurate. In this work I have centered my brief account on the specifics of Sudjadi, Governor Ismail, and the formation of PANTAP because this is the connection between *wayang hura-hura* and Purbo Asmoro.

with PANTAP, Purbo used his newly found platform of popularity to try elements of all-night *garapan* in his performances (interview, June 2010).

> You know, I don't even really remember how it began exactly—after Rebo Legèn and winning the competition in Semarang for sure, and after forming Mayangkara. It was slow, gradual, and not on purpose or all at once. But as I started to get more engagements, in fancier venues, with bigger audiences and higher fees—which gave me the room to fund rehearsals—I found myself gravitating toward the all-night *garapan* model. And I didn't want to just use an *atraksi* at the beginning, like *kiprah*, and then revert back to a traditional performance. I truly thought about how to reconceptualize each scene, up through the very end. I thought about how to craft each important moment in the lakon. I thought about what I wanted to say—what my main themes or messages would be. Basically, I found myself thinking like a *padat* practitioner. It was just what suited me. It was not only my training, but also what I came to think of as the best practice. And most certainly it was my chance to offer something in contrast to what I was involved with in PANTAP. But it wasn't always possible, practical, or well-received. So it started slowly, when I could get away with it, and kind of built from there. It depended on the venue, the lakon, the sponsors, the situation, the budget, and also whether I had Mayangkara with me or not. Sometimes I would have one plan upon leaving for the performance, but after sizing up the audience, venue, and sponsors would end up doing something more traditional, or sometimes something a bit more *néka-néka*.

As mentioned, author Umar Kayam's *Kelir Tanpa Batas* (*A Screen without Limits*) describes in detail the situation in wayang performance practice from 1993 to 1995. He focused his observations in Central Java on five dhalang: Anom Soeroto, Manteb Soedharsono, Crazy Djoko Hadiwidjoyo, Purbo Asmoro, and Warseno "Slenk" (Anom Soeroto's younger brother, and a popular *hura-hura* dhalang to this day, see Chapter 9). He describes how Purbo Asmoro approached PANTAP-like requests when faced with an engagement in which he had more control of the situation (Kayam 2001, 125):

> Purbo spoke with me in an interview about a performance in Prambanan for which he was asked to bring a band and singers because, according to the sponsor, the audiences in that region liked that sort of thing. Purbo was reluctant to fulfill this request, because he was not accustomed to using these elements in his own [non-PANTAP] performances. He did not see how his performance would be enhanced with these added attractions, but he went ahead and fulfilled the request for the band and singers. However, he delayed use of the band as long as he could, trying to prove to the audience that his performance would be interesting enough without these external elements. Finally, when it was truly time for the band and singers to be showcased, the audience rejected them and

> requested that the performance continue as it was progressing.[40] But because he felt obligated to his friends in the band who had rehearsed for the opportunity, he gave them a short chance to perform.

Then, after mentioning the Rebo Legèn debut, he shares his observations of Purbo Asmoro's performance style from 1993 to 1995 (Kayam 2001, 212-213):

> Purbo has been consistent in his application of *padat* principles to all-night performances, at least through the time of this research. He consistently focuses on a clear theme or message, then crafts the lakon in an efficient and effective way, and discards cliché forms and expressions that could be regarded as meaningless and without purpose—even though this requires considerable rehearsal and preparation beforehand. Although most dhalang during this period from 1993 to 1995 were trying all sorts of gimmicks to become popular, Purbo has held on to his principles. This does not mean, however, that he is not looking for popularity and a large market base. He sticks to his principles consistently because he is certain that performances in this style will garner their own segment of the market.

Purbo Asmoro often comments that he experienced his busiest schedule around 1995. My own observation is that there is usually a time in any superstar dhalang's career during which the hunger of audiences for the newness of his performances is not hindered yet by out-of-reach fees. During this intersection of growing fame with fees that are significantly lower than the established superstars', these young talents' schedules fill up. For Purbo Asmoro, the mid-1990s was this time, and he describes often being too exhausted to even think, due to the number of engagements. But he also reports attempting all-night *garapan* more and more often, regardless of his fatigue.

From 1994 to 2000 Purbo Asmoro received at least four especially notable opportunities, free of all external market pressures, to create "all-out" *garapan* pieces rivaling the opportunity he had with his Rebo Legèn debut. The first was through the television station Indosiar, where in 1995 he was asked to perform for a live broadcast, and he chose the lakon *Ramabargawa.* This is a pre-*Ramayana* story relating the tragedy and subsequent disillusionment that befalls a young prince, causing him

[40] Audiences will boo, shout out, and generally pass on their reaction in a number of ways that the dhalang can read, even though his back is to them. I once attended a performance by Jungkung Darmoyo in Klaten, where he had brought *campursari* singers for *Limbukan*. After two *campursari* selections, a segment of wayang-savvy spectators starting loudly singing fragments from a specific *ada-ada* ("kukusing dupa kumelun") that often is used to start the scene after *Limbukan*. As their numbers increased and some heckling and shouting even started (*Wis!* meaning "Enough!") finally the dhalang took the hint and told the singers they were finished.

to retreat to the forest and become the angry yet wise hermit, Ramabargawa.[41] Purbo described the importance of this broadcast to his career in an interview (Jan 2013):

> I went all out. All-out *garapan*. More than *Kunthi Pilih*, the *Ramabargawa* treatment was truly all mine. And that performance was replayed countless times on television. I would say it was what really launched my career in some ways, because the Rebo Legèn audience was an elite and defined one. The Indosiar broadcast threw my performance [of this style] into the mass public and mass media's attention.

The second opportunity was soon after, in July of 1995. Ganasidi, the same organization that was organizing the monthly PANTAP wayang, put together 50 nights of wayang to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Indonesia's independence. This "Festival Greget Dalang" was held in Solo, and the performances were in the grand, open gathering hall of the Kraton Solo, known as Pagelaran. Purbo Asmoro was invited to perform on the fourth night of the 50-night series, on Tuesday, 18 July 1995. The lakon were assigned, with episodes selected chronologically in order from the *Arjunasasrabau* through the *Ramayana* and finally the *Mahabharata* story cycles. Purbo Asmoro was assigned *Sumantri Ngèngèr* (*Sumantri Apprentices*) from the *Arjunasasrabau* cycle. This lakon tells of the tests the hermitage-born Sumantri must go through in order to apprentice under the revered King Arjunasasrabau of Maèspati Kingdom.

In a new move, Purbo went to Tristuti Rahmadi Suryasaputra for consultation and ended up asking him to write the all-night script. Tristuti, writing regularly for Manteb Soedharsono at the time, had authority and prestige. It seems that Purbo was trying out the idea of following in the footsteps of Anom Soeroto and Manteb Soedharsono during this busy time in his career. Although he ended up using much of the themes, debate, and dialogue from the resulting script, he revised the scene structure, arranged the *iringan* entirely on his own, and inserted expressive movement techniques from his *padat* training, creating another all-night *garapan* masterpiece. In the closing ceremony for the festival, Purbo Asmoro received the honor of being officially named one of the top five performers out of 50.

[41] He repeated his performance of *Ramabargawa* at Rebo Legèn on 11 April 1995.

Ten days before the Pagelaran performance, Hari D. Utomo, reporter from the newspaper *Kedaulatan Rakyat* made this commentary as Purbo was preparing to perform for the Yogya Performing Arts Festival (8 July 1995):

> At a glance one would never guess that this particular young man holds within him such extraordinary talent and potential. His everyday demeanor is unassuming and introspective. Yet this man of few words undergoes a complete transformation once on stage, sitting behind a shadow-puppet screen. Aside from the poetic language that suddenly flows with clarity and grace, his talented hands manipulate battle scenes with virtuosic skill and entertainment scenes display clever humor without venturing into the lewd, cheap jokes currently popular. This particular figure, popular on the scene today, is often pointed out as being singularly capable of one day taking over the status of the two kings of shadow puppetry, Ki Anom Suroto Lebdocarito and Ki Manteb Sudarsono. Most would agree it is no exaggeration that this man, born December 17, 1961 in Pacitan surpasses others in his field in a myriad of ways. His dialogue and drama are outstanding, his movements accomplished, and the messages and philosophy he espouses in his performances effective without being condescending.

In 1998, Purbo Asmoro received yet another Rebo Legèn invitation from Anom Soeroto for which he chose to perform the philosophically complex story of Dasamuka's birth, commonly known as *Alap-alapan Sukèsi* (*Sukèsi's Hand in Marriage Contested*). Once again, he explored the idea of starting with a *padat* script, in this case the celebrated 1977 Soemanto version from the early days of *padat* work at ASKI. Although this script inspired him in some ways, he did not end up basing his all-night performance on it in the same way that he did with Sukardi's *Kunthi Pilih* in 1989. This was partially because by now he was more experienced at creating all-night *garapan* without a *padat* script as a starting point, but also simply because the 1977 work was not as globally innovative as Sukardi's 1986 script had been (interview, Jan 2013).

On this occasion, Purbo again approached Tristuti to write the all-night script for him. After receiving the finished work, however, he found himself straying from it at every turn, and finally discarded it completely to create his own. While there must have been places in which the Tristuti script influenced Purbo, the finished product shows little to no resemblance.[42] In the end, Purbo Asmoro gave the lakon a

[42] I feel fortunate to have had access to many of the artifacts in this case: Soemanto's *padat* script, Tristuti's all-night script from 1995, and an audio of the Rebo Legèn performance. I am therefore to be able to confirm Purbo Asmoro's report of the development of his version. The audio recording came to me courtesy of Sri Joko Raharjo, Purbo Asmoro's nephew, who tracked it down from radio stations in Solo. Purbo Asmoro commissioned Tristuti

new title: *Mélik Nggéndhong Lali* (*Yearning Carries with it Misjudgment*). He developed an intensive all-night *garapan* version, which has since become one of his landmark creations.

In 2000, Anom Soeroto moved from Notodiningratan to a new home in Timasan, Pajang, Sukoharjo, on the southwestern outskirts of Solo proper. For the opening of his new home and arts complex, he asked Purbo Asmoro to perform for a fourth, and it turns out final, to date, Rebo Legèn. After the single-lakon *garapan* milestones of *Kunthi Pilih* (1989), *Ramabargawa* (1995), *Sumantri Ngèngèr* (1995), and *Mélik Nggéndhong Lali* (1998), Purbo Asmoro tried a new concept by combining three lakon into one. This compilation told the story of the fall of the Astina Kingdom during the Baratayuda War through the birth of Parikesit, heir to a new era. He wove together *Duryudana Gugur* (*The Death of Duryudana*), *Pandhawa Boyong* (*The Pandhawa are Brought to Astina*), and *Aswatama Nglandhak* (*Aswatama Digs a Tunnel*) and entitled the work *Sumilaking Pedhut Astina* (*The Dark Cloud Over Astina Lifts*). This was, by all reports, a breath-taking masterpiece of all-night *garapan* (see more details in Chapter 8). Prapto Panuju, Jakarta wayang critic and commentator, once said during an evening of chatting between friends at my home in Kemang, South Jakarta (February 2009):

> There isn't a soul in the community who doesn't remember that amazing piece of work, either from attending, listening to rebroadcasts, or somehow getting ahold of the recording. And there isn't a soul in the community who doesn't have every scene emblazoned in their memory—dramatically, viscerally, musically. It was dynamic beyond imagine. And so new in every way. So new, yet so deeply classic. A quilter. That's what Mas Purbo is, an ingenious quilt-maker. The new. The old. This little piece from here. That little piece from there. Vignettes of *garap*. But seamless. Absolutely seamless. And the end result is not new, old, here, there, *garap* this, *garap* that. The result is Ki Purbo Asmoro. [43]

As of this debut, there was little question as to Purbo Asmoro's position in the world of *pedhalangan* as a pioneer, and so far the only practitioner of a new style

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to write scripts for him on a total of four occasions: for the lakon *Anggada Balik* (*Anggada Switches Loyalties*) in 1994, *Sumantri Ngèngèr* in 1995 discussed earlier, *Wahyu Darma* (*The Boon of Enlightened Conduct*) in 1997 for a performance at Pondok Tingal in Borobudur, and this final one for Rebo Legèn.

[43] A small group of friends had gathered at my house that night to discuss an upcoming performance by Purbo Asmoro, in which we had control over the choice of lakon. Interestingly enough, Panuju made this comment to support his argument against choosing *Sumilaking Pedhut Astina*, because he felt it was untouchable and somehow not possible to replicate the magic or historic nature of that Rebo Legi performance in 2000.

being referred to more and more as *garapan*. He continued to develop and hone the style in the years to come. Between 1998 and 2004 Purbo was hired frequently by the wayang philanthropist Kondang Sutrisno (who in 2015 was elected the head of PEPADI) in venues throughout Jakarta, for both mass and elite audiences. From 2004 to 2007 he performed in the Rejoso, Nganjuk area of East Java over 50 times, almost always on a Saturday night and before village audiences in the thousands, under the sponsorship of wayang enthusiast Joko Suprapto. From 2004 through to this writing he has performed half a dozen times per year in artistic-community venues in Solo such as the palaces, ISI, SMKI, and TBS (Taman Budaya Surakarta), under either my own sponsorship or with various overseas or publication-related projects. All of these bouts of frequently performing in one location, for the same sponsor, over a long period have challenged Purbo Asmoro to vary his *garapan*, and constantly be on the search for new lakon, new ways to perform standard lakon, and new content and commentary to insert into any lakon. Purbo commented on the contribution to his thinking this type of long-term, routine contract has had (Sanggar Suket, Oct 2010):

> I once faced a test from a friend from Nganjuk in which I performed almost every Saturday night in the same place before the same audience. For some 50 wayang performances or more.[44] In the same place—like some sort of *kethoprak* troupe in residence. If that doesn't challenge your brain. Think about it. Hard, right? But, thank goodness, I was able to come up with, for example, a complex treatment of the story *Lairé Semar* (*The Birth of Semar*) because of that. I was at a loss, as the audience was the same over and over again, and such a massive audience at that. And they didn't change, just the same audience showing up for each wayang. I had to face the challenge.

In early 2006, Purbo was approached by the Lontar Foundation to document the all-night *garapan* style that he had made his trademark. The next three chapters use illustrations from the resulting recordings, to explore the specifics of Purbo Asmoro's style from 2005 to 2015 with regard to three aspects: the new vocabulary of *iringan* that supports every dramatic moment in his work (Chapter 5), the function and shape of Purbo Asmoro's prologues (Chapter 6), the way in which traditional, *padat*, and *hura-hura* material is woven into his all-night *garapan* performances to

[44] The data I mentioned previously—about 50 times between 2004 and 2007 and almost always on a Saturday night—is from my detailed records. Purbo had estimated the correct total in his spontaneous comment (50 times) but was a little off on the "every Saturday night," although there were times where he performed for two or three Saturday nights a month and then not the next month.

highlight poignant moments and a new kind of dramatic hierarchy (Chapter 7). This chapter has traced the development of Purbo Asmoro's contemporary-interpretive style (*pakeliran garapan sedalu*), which arose from his work with condensed style (*pakeliran padat)* during his time at ASKI. We will end here with Purbo's summary of this phenomenon (Balai Soedjatmoko, May 2013, Figure 4-8):

> As my teacher Pak Bambang described earlier [concerning Rebo Legèn], we took *Kunthi Pilih* by Bapak Kardi, in *padat* form, and made it all-night. *Disewengèkaké*. I am quite certain that all-night *garapan* style started there, with my performance as the first one ever. Although there had perhaps been some uses of contemporary *garapan* before, these were placed in the opening of a wayang, the beginning. But as for going all the way to *tancep kayon*, my performance that night was the first. After the days of Pak Gendhon, as the concepts of *pakeliran padat* were being explored, we never paid much attention to what it could all be used for. But it turns out, even though we are in a very different era, and even though perhaps *pakeliran padat* never became popular in society, implementation of its concepts has been very effective. No denying it. Basically—and you should believe me here, no question—the concepts of *padat* have turned out to be highly effective when used in today's performances. In fact, truly extraordinary. [45]



Figure 4-8: A seminar held on all-night *garapan* style at Balai Soedjatmoko, Solo, May 2013. From left to right: Purbo Asmoro, Sigid Ariyanto, Setyaji, Bambang Suwarno.

[45] The original reads: *Sudah ta. Pokoké penjenengan kudu percaya teng kula, pun, konsep pakeliran padat itu jitu dilakukan sekarang. Memang luar biasa.*

FIVE

IRINGAN GARAP
A NEW VOCABULARY FOR WAYANG ACCOMPANIMENT

It is 8:00 PM on Friday, 28 November 2014, the evening before Purbo Asmoro is to perform for the 809th founding anniversary of Tulungagung, a major regency of East Java. This annual event is a coveted invitation for dhalang each year. Some six thousand wayang fans will gather in the huge public town square to enjoy local arts troupes, witness fireworks, wait patiently through speeches, and finally revel in the all-night performance featuring a dhalang of superstar status. Not only will the wayang be broadcast live on numerous radio stations, but it will also be video-documented by at least two studios, relayed live on local television, and, more and more frequently, live-streamed internationally over the internet. This type of mass celebration in vast, outdoor spaces across East or Central Java and Jakarta is typical of some 50 percent of Purbo Asmoro's performances.[1]

[1] According to my own records, about half of Purbo Asmoro's performances from 2004 to 2015 were sponsored by regencies, principalities, governmental departments, ministries, public companies, private businesses or factories in massive public squares. About another 35 percent were for weddings or other milestone events at private homes or small neighborhood gathering places, and about 15 percent were for academic or arts institutions on campuses or school grounds.

The committee in charge of the wayang, in consultation with the Bupati of Tulungagung, has requested the lakon *Kresna Duta* (*Kresna as Emissary*) and they informed the dhalang of their choice about one month earlier. This lakon is a basic requirement of any dhalang's repertory—although not frequently performed and not particularly auspicious, given that the failure of Kresna's negotiations marks the beginning of the Baratayuda War. Purbo Asmoro would have seen it a number of times throughout his youth, and reports having practically memorized the celebrated Nartosabdo recording of it from the late 1970s. He performs parts of the lakon a few times a year in one context or another, but usually only snippets of it or references to it woven into other episodes. It has been five years since Purbo Asmoro has performed a full, all-night *garapan* version. Since receiving news of the story choice, thoughts about specific points of interpretation will have inevitably been swimming around in his mind amidst his other performance engagements, his teaching load, the final exam responsibilities at ISI, and various artistic events he has attended this month.[2] He only sits down to officially prepare, however, on this, the eve of the performance.

It so happens that the *klenèngan* group of elderly Solonese masters known as Pujangga Laras has scheduled their monthly get-together in the *pendhapa* of Purbo Asmoro's private home this same evening. A loosely-knit group of some 50 musicians will be playing relatively long, classical pieces with very few breaks, from 8:00 PM to 2:00 AM. On the one hand, this monopolizes the dhalang's evening just when he needs to work. However, on the other hand, it gives him a built-in excuse and mental space, free from other distractions and responsibilities, to plan tomorrow night's performance. Over the six hours, he alternates between jotting notes while sitting by himself against one of the elaborately carved pillars in the back, and entering the private quarters of his home to continue to work when he needs to consult references.

[2] Purbo Asmoro is often viewed as an introvert. Over the years, I have become convinced that what can appear as brooding is actually his internalizing of the discussion and general affect in the moment, making note of human behavior and character in his midst, or ruminating over current events or personal interactions, all for use later as material. I believe that he is always, in some way or another, preparing for his upcoming wayang performances through his keen observation skills.

He passionately describes the process as I wander over to his pillar to disturb him for a few minutes just before midnight:[3]

> I know that I want to start with the dilemma in Kresna's mind as to his role in the negotiations. I need to focus on Kresna, his character, and the issues he is weighing. Drupada has tried his hand as an emissary and failed; Kunthi has tried hers and failed. Kresna is the last chance to negotiate a truce, but he is unsure as to whether he will take on the role. Drupada [Purbo makes a motion in the air from the left to show that Drupada will appear as a vision, half-covered by a *kayon*] will make his plea, then Kunthi [the same motion from above-right] with her plea. The *iringan* [gamelan accompaniment] is already in my head. I don't have the narrations or dialogue yet. The *iringan* comes first, after the scene configuration. We'll see how it goes during the rehearsal. For now this is what I have [he shows me his scribbled notes, not yet the rewritten version shown in Figure 5-1].

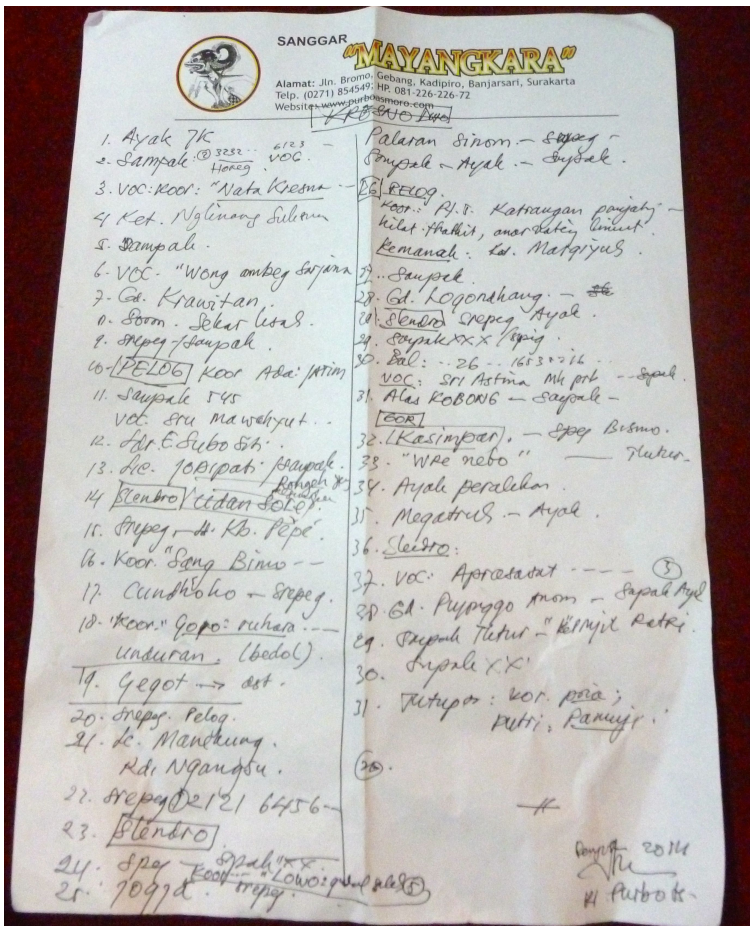


Figure 5-1: Purbo Asmoro's *iringan* schema for *Kresna As Emissary*.

[3] Over the past 12 years that I have been following Purbo Asmoro's artistic development, I have had the privilege of being privy to the whole process literally hundreds of times (as of this writing having attended 563 performances of his): the frequently convoluted story behind the invitation from the sponsor, Purbo Asmoro's artistic preparation, Mayangkara's rehearsal, the resulting performance, audience and sponsor reactions, and Purbo's post-performance reflections. He knows that I am always in the midst of some sort of project, and that the thoughts he shares will inevitably make it onto paper somewhere, so he tends to be explicit about his process.

The next day his troupe gathers for another familiar 22-hour adventure: a two-hour rehearsal, five-hour road trip to Tulungagung, three-hour preparation on the site, seven-hour performance, and five-hour return trip. Purbo Asmoro has completed the schema of pieces for the performance. The two interludes (*Limbukan* and *Gara-gara*), which have nothing to do with the lakon itself, are not included in either the schema nor important to the rehearsal. During the rehearsal, changes are made. During the performances even more spontaneous alterations happen. Suyatmi, a *pesindhèn* in Purbo Asmoro's group for over 25 years, commented in an interview in 2008:

> You really have to be on your toes to perform with Pak Purbo. Although there is a rehearsal or two for each *garapan* performance, there are always changes at the last minute. You have to be able to follow the story. You have to be concentrating on what is happening on the screen. You have to know what section he may have skipped, added or decided to change, or when suddenly he will want to use a vocal introduction for something that wasn't planned.

A relaxed spontaneity is the norm in classical performances, but to be spontaneous in a fast-paced *garapan* wayang is extremely demanding for gamelan musicians, as they cannot rely on traditional scene structures, certain signaling systems, or classical repertory. Even so, Purbo Asmoro has rehearsed Mayangkara less and less frequently over the 12 years that I have been following his process. In an informal interview (May 2010) he described why:

> I don't like to over-rehearse Mayangkara. In the old days, we might have had as many as three or four half-day rehearsals to prepare for an all-night *garapan* version of a lakon. And for *padat* performances at ISI with ISI studio musicians? They might rehearse some 30 times for a 45-minute performance. But I am not out to create *komposisi*, or a set packet of gamelan accompaniment resembling a film score. What I am hoping, is for Mayangkara to eventually work fluently within a new vocabulary of accompaniment repertory and techniques. I want them, over time, to learn to predict, interpret and even second-guess my intentions in a way similar to how classical accompaniment works. The gamelan accompaniment needs to cater to the new needs of the new dramatic structures, but still be fluid and spontaneous in its own way. It should be intimately connected to the drama on the screen, but subordinate and flexible. It's new, but a new system, not new, individual scores for each lakon. Mayangkara has been working some 20 years now within this new system and has been able to get by with fewer and fewer rehearsals, since the understanding is ever more in place.

Of all the elements rethought when creating an all-night *garapan* performance, the resulting newly-crafted gamelan accompaniment is probably the most striking, obvious, and, to some fans of tradition, the most jolting. While it may take more extensive background knowledge to detect innovation in other areas, the new gamelan accompaniment is a first and easy entry point to innovation. Although, particularly for Purbo Asmoro, all six of the elements to be *garap*ed (interpretive details, characterization, scene structure, narration, movement, and accompaniment) are of equal weight in the success of the final product, the area of *iringan* requires special examination as there are extensive new techniques and terminology. Purbo Asmoro considers *iringan garap* to reflect a flexible new musical vocabulary rather than a just file of individual lakon scores and he often starts with bits of accompaniment ideas when planning. For these reasons, we need to explore this new system at the start of our examination of his all-night *garapan* style.

Educated observers have had varying perspectives on the nature of Purbo Asmoro's gamelan accompaniment. "It's like a film score, with everything chosen or created to fit the moment at hand," praised Sarah Weiss, ethnomusicologist with over 30 years of experience in wayang, after her first experience watching an all-night performance by Purbo Asmoro. "But I miss the classical pieces, and there is so little I can latch on to," added an equally knowledgeable Western gamelan player, in an informal critique session after a 1996 performance of *Sumantri Ngèngèr (Sumantri Apprentices)* in Eromoko, Wonogiri. Sugeng Nugroho, on the other hand, classifies Purbo Asmoro's *iringan* as "innovation within a completely classical vein," (2012, 453) while Rahayu Supanggah estimated off the top of his head, "Oh, some 90 percent of the gamelan music in his performances is directly from Nartosabdo," (Balai Soedjatmoko seminar, 2013). As we examine the repertory and techniques used by Purbo Asmoro in his all-night *garapan* style it will become clear that all four of these impressions, commonly voiced by other observers, are both justified and misleading at the same time, and herein lies the complexity of Purbo Asmoro's new system of *iringan*. We will first survey his repertory of material, then examine the musical techniques he uses to sculpt this material for a particular scene. Finally, we will look at how Purbo Asmoro prepares and interacts with his own troupe,

Mayangkara, and other random troupes he may find himself performing with out of circumstance.

Purbo Asmoro's *Iringan* Repertory

Purbo Asmoro arranges the gamelan accompaniment for his performances exclusively on his own, having no dedicated score arranger, as most modern wayang troupes do, and not even an informal head of *karawitan* like many wayang troupes historically had. From a very young age, Purbo Asmoro was a proficient musician in the village of his birth, Dersana, Pacitan in East Java. He immediately gravitated toward the study of *gendèr*, which in wayang supports the dhalang all night from directly behind, playing not only with the gamelan but also playing *grimingan*.[4] To this day, when the Solonese superstar dhalang community organizes their annual fasting month performances, in which they serve as musicians for each other, Purbo Asmoro is consistently chosen as the *gendèr* player. Once he reached SMKI he learned to play *rebab* and *kendhang* as well, through listening and example, without any direct lessons. Both as a studio instructor at ISI (see Figure 5-2) and as the director of Mayangkara, he often takes the helm at the *kendhang* to illustrate a tricky transition.



Figure 5-2: Purbo Asmoro plays *gendèr* and *kendhang* during his courses at ISI, 2015 (photo by Kartoka Nugroho).

Purbo Asmoro has a keen ear and is renowned for his ability to remember something he heard only once, perhaps decades ago. He frequently corrects his musicians during a performance by subtly readjusting the singer's starting pitch for

[4] *Grimingan* refers to the *gendèr* player's continuous musical and dramatic backdrop during dialogue and narrative sections, in which he or she weaves together a fabric of snippets and short melodies to reflect the emotional and dramatic content of the moment. See p. xxi for a photo of the *gendèr* and a *gendèr* player.

the correct mode,[5] or cleverly covering up a drummer's mistaken transition. I have seen him create entire accompaniment schemata off the top of his head at a rehearsal, complete with rare texts and unusual vocals, yet with no reference to notation. Although his musicians are some of the most talented in the wayang world, he is steadfast in his belief that only the dhalang himself can arrange the gamelan accompaniment effectively.

The gamelan accompaniment in the two all-night *garapan* performances being used as examples for this work: *Makutharama* (Pacitan, October 2007) and *Sesaji Raja Suya*, (Pacitan, November 2007), both typical and representative of Purbo Asmoro's *garapan* practice, present four categories of source material:

- traditional Solonese wayang material (19%)
- material by Nartosabdo (23%)
- material from regions of Java outside the greater Solo area[6] (11%)
- ASKI/*padat* style-inspired material (47%)

This is quite different from the two parallel classical performances of *Makutharama* (Benawa, October 2008) and *Sesaji Raja Suya* (ISI Solo, March 2008). For Lontar's palace-classical recording of *Makutharama*, Purbo Asmoro employed 100 percent traditional Solonese wayang material, while for the village-classical performance of *Sesaji Raja Suya*, he added in a bit of Nartosabdo and regional variety, making the total, combined percentages of these two recordings:

- classical, traditional Solo-palace wayang material (87%)
- material by Nartosabdo (8%)
- regional material, but within the greater Solo area: Klaten, Sragen (5%)

Below is a brief examination of how Purbo Asmoro utilizes each of the four categories of repertory in his all-night *garapan* performances.

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[5] A clear example of this can be heard during a transition in *The Grand Offering of the Kings* [SRS-CInt 1, 1:25:40] when Purbo Asmoro alerts the singers that they started the passage an entire step too low by singing the correct pitch over them immediately after they start. This is an impressive moment, in that it shows how the tonal orientation is ever present in his ears, even more than in the singers' ears, whose sole job this is, although he has nothing to ground him here but the *grimingan*.

[6] The "greater Solo area" is culturally thought of as the city of Solo together with the regencies of Sukoharjo and Wonogiri to the south and southeast, Klaten to the southwest, and Boyolali, Karanganyar, and Sragen fanning out across some 50 kilometers to the northeast and northwest. Material outside this area could come from Yogyakarta, Cirebon, Banyumas, East Java, West Java, "Pesisir" (Central Java northern coastal areas), and even as far flung as Bali (see Figure 0-9, Map of Java, p. xxv).

Traditional Solonese Wayang Material

Purbo Asmoro in no way abandons traditional Solonese wayang material played in conventional ways during his all-night *garapan* performances. Nineteen percent of the material in the two representative recordings falls in this category. Most of the pieces he chooses to retain from traditional Solonese wayang performance-practice are the *gendhing lampah* (generic, functional pieces that serve as the basic building blocks for all wayang accompaniment): *ayak-ayak*, *srepeg*, and *sampak* in each mode. He also uses a few sorrowful (*tlutur)* versions of these forms, a *srepeg* from Klaten, a *srepeg* from Sragen, and a *gangsaran*. These pieces serve throughout the seven-hour performances as familiar, neutral, functional adhesive; used to get characters from A to B when the dramatic tension is at its lowest, or to initiate battle scenes that have not yet approached a climax. Of the total 117 distinct musical selections in the two all-night *garapan* recordings, 15 are traditional Solonese wayang *gendhing lampah*. However, they are repeated frequently throughout the performance, totaling 126 instances of the 15 pieces. Since, for the most part, the other 102 of 117 distinct musical selections are only used once each, the traditional *ayak-srepeg-sampak* repertory stands out prominently in its role as adhesive. Because this repertory is ubiquitous throughout every scene, some observers, such as Sugeng Nugroho, mentioned above, reasonably come to the conclusion that the overall feel of Purbo Asmoro's gamelan accompaniment is "innovation within a completely classical vein."

Nartosabdo Material

Purbo Asmoro often replaces the longer, more subtle, classical Solonese pieces used for main scenes in kingdoms and hermitages with shorter *ketawang* and *ladrang* composed by Nartosabdo. Or, he may use the repertoire of *ketawang*, *ladrang*, or *gendhing* originally from Solo, to which Nartosabdo simply added vocal chorus parts. Either way, the selections Purbo Asmoro chooses are not generally among Nartosabdo's most widely known pieces and do not usually come from the group of pieces that became integrated into Solonese *klenèngan* (concert music) practice back

in the mid-1980s. Hence when these selections appear, there is a distinct Condhong Raos feel to the moment.[7]

Purbo Asmoro cites a number of reasons for his use of these pieces for court and hermitage scenes (interview, April 2014). First of all, they are simply shorter than the traditional choices, hence the narration spoken over them can be abridged and the dhalang can get straight to the dialogue, debate, and point of the matter at hand. A concept more difficult to pinpoint, relates to *rasa*.[8] In general, when asked about his gamelan accompaniment choices, Purbo Asmoro repeatedly uses two terms to explain his decisions: *rasa* and *instinkt*. Most of Nartosabdo's compositions feature a fixed, unique chorus melody with a set text, rather than the more classical, *sindhèn-gérong* (female soloist-male chorus) realization of a melody with a free choice of text within limitations of form. For the most part, Nartosabdo created his pieces for programmatic purposes to be used in wayang, and occasionally in wedding or dance sequences. Hence, while some Solonese musicians may despair that there is little left to the interpretive mind when playing his compositions,[9] this is in fact the point for a dhalang wanting to use them for a specific dramatic purpose. A dhalang does not employ this repertory with an interest in the potential breadth of *rebab*, *gendèr*, or vocal interpretation, but rather for the *rasa* of the composed choral melody and the meaning behind the text.

One example is *Ketawang Citramengeng*, describing the beauty of a hermitage and the meditative power of its priest-leader in a regal chorus melody. This is used in *Rama's Crown* for the scene in which Wibisana decides to remove himself from the worldly realm [MK-CInt 3, 38:02]. *Ketawang Kasimpar*, in calm *sléndro sanga* patterns, with its text depicting a fresh garden in the afternoon and the interaction between bees and flowers, is used in *The Grand Offering of the Kings* to introduce King

[7] Condhong Raos was Nartosabdo's performing troupe, made up of mostly musicians from the Boyolali and Klaten areas but based, during Nartosabdo's career, in Semarang on the north coast. It has a legendary reputation as one of the best wayang accompaniment troupes in history, with a style distinct from classical Solonese troupes. This style is characterized by their alternative repertory, choice of tempos, methods of navigating musical transitions, and the stylistic idiosyncrasies of certain individual star performers in the group (such as Sri Moro on *kendhang*, Mujoko on *rebab*, *gérong* singer Suparno, and *pesindhèn* Tantinah, Ngatirah, and Suyatmi).

[8] Marc Benamou (2010, xiv), in his detailed examination of *rasa,* supplies the following English words which, combined, help to give an approximation of the meaning of this complicated concept: affect, mood, feeling, intuition.

[9] For an example of this, readers can refer to the comments from Supanggah cited by Marc Benamou (2010, 162), which have commonly been echoed by others in the Solo *klenèngan* community over the years.

Brihadrata and his two beautiful wives [SRS-CInt 1, 15:32]. *Ketawang Pangkur Kawedhar*, full of references to philosophy and featuring an awkward and eerie chorus, is perfect for the scene in *Rama's Crown* in which Semar meets up with Arjuna to give him advice [MK-CInt 1, 11:50]. Purbo Asmoro describes picturing the scene in his head when planning, and these pieces automatically occurring to him as the appropriate choices, from his mental library of some hundreds of *ketawang*, *ladrang*, and *gendhing* (interview, December 2014).

> Again, *rasa* and instinct. Maybe it's because they were composed specifically for wayang, but often the Nartosabdo pieces just feel right for certain scenes. The length, the vocal texts, the shimmery and bright feel of the choruses just fit the atmosphere and support the drama. Also, so many of the key musicians in Mayangkara played with the late Nartosabdo or with the late Mujoko, who also used a lot of this material and was one of his musicians, so a number of them are at their best with this repertory. Also, the court scenes in my performances do not occur at the very beginning of the wayang, but after a prologue lasting some 45 minutes to an hour. The energy would really drop if I were to use traditional Solo court scene pieces at this point in the wayang. That's why I often segue from the end of the prologue into a vocal chorus like *Udan Soré* or *Logondhang* for the entrance of the court. Even when we used *Téjanata* for the court scene in *Sesaji Raja Suya*, although that happened to be a true Solo *bedhayan* version, it was chosen in the same spirit as when we use Nartosabdo choral text pieces in scenes like that—used for the sense of grandeur, fullness, and bustle it lends the scene, coming after the prologue.

The Nartosabdo repertory is often placed during the important, plot-heavy court or hermitage scenes, hence the impression among some observers (such as Supanggah's 90% off-the-cuff estimate, even though the accurate figure here is 23%) is that Purbo Asmoro's gamelan accompaniment is primarily from Nartosabdo. But this impression dismisses all of the connecting, default, adhesive material (traditional Solonese) and, most importantly, the ASKI-inspired material used for climatic and particularly poignant moments.

ASKI-Inspired Material

While 43% of the pieces used in these two performances is either from traditional Solonese repertory (generic movement of wayang figures from one place to another and low level battle scenes) or Nartosabdo repertory (court and hermitage scenes), a significant 46% emerges directly from the influence of the *padat* movement at ASKI

in the 1980s. *Padat* practitioners by the mid-1980s, when Purbo Asmoro was exposed to the movement, used very little completely traditional, unmodified Solonese wayang material and virtually no material by Nartosabdo. Characteristic ASKI *padat* trademark material falls into these five categories:

1. Klenèngan (concert music) repertory, not traditional to wayang

The entire range of Solonese *klenèngan* repertory was opened up to the *garapan* practitioner as a result of the principles of the *padat* movement,[10] which encouraged the priority of dramatic needs over traditional rules or boundaries determining gamelan accompaniment. This includes pieces not normally associated with wayang, such as illustrative, light *jineman*, *dolanan*, *andhegan*, and various elaborated *ayak-ayak* in stretched-out densities such as *Ayak-ayak Gadhung Mlathi* or *Ayak-ayak Mijil Larasati*.

In *The Grand Offering of the Kings*, Purbo Asmoro uses the *andhegan* (vocal solo) in *Ktw Brangta Mentul*, and later on the song *Jineman Klambi Lurik*, to illustrate the love and devotion of Brihadrata's two wives [SRS-CInt 1, 17:36]. He uses the vocal solo of *Gd Gandrung Manis* to enhance the atmosphere of the love scene between Rantamsari and Arjuna [SRS-CInt 4, 42:57]. The lullaby *Lédhung-lédhung* is played when the forest ogress Nyai Jara comforts the baby Jarasandha [SRS-CInt 1, 44:47]. Although not included in the two sample recordings, Purbo Asmoro frequently shapes narration and dialogue around the use of an abridged *Ayak-ayak Sanga Rangkep*. Characters enter to the initial *Ayak-ayak Sanga*, and the gamelan is signaled to *sirep* (play quietly) after going into *rangkep* (a stretched-out density) so that a narration can be recited or a dialogue started between the characters. The gamelan stops at for the vocal solo just as an important point or question is being posed in the dialogue or narration. During the musical silence before the vocal solo starts, the answer or opinion is expressed, after which the gamelan comes back up to full volume.

Purbo Asmoro has expanded this entire concert music category to include *klenèngan* repertory from Nartosabdo as well. For example, he uses the vocal solo to *Gonjang-ganjing Lik 'Tho* to underscore Semar's advisory role toward Anoman [MK-CInt 5 10:30] and Nartosabdo's song *Dhayohé Teka* to enliven the scene when

[10] See Subono's comment, p. 85.

Dursasana is chiding Karna for losing hold of his special heirloom weapon [MK-CInt 3 34:40]. About 11% of the ASKI-inspired material represented in the two performances being analyzed comes from concert music repertory, brought into Purbo Asmoro's wayang practice as a result of his *padat* training. Although these pieces are from the traditional Solonese or Nartosabdo concert music repertory, their placement and their use is clearly ASKI-*padat* treatment inspired, and the moments in question feel far from classical in nature. These pearls of *garap* (special interpretive treatment) add weight to poignant interactions in a way that classical treatment does not have a vocabulary for.

2. Ceremonial repertory from the palaces

Ceremonial repertory from the palaces of Solo, useful in supporting dramatic moments, is fully integrated into Purbo Asmoro's wayang repertory, as it was among *padat* practitioners in the 1980s. This includes *bedhayan*, *gendhing kemanak*, *Monggang*, *Kodhok Ngorèk*, and *Sekatén*. *Bedhayan* are pieces dominated by vocal choruses, used to accompany sacred court dances. *Gendhing kemanak* are *bedhayan* choruses accompanied only by a pair of *kemanak*—banana-shaped bronze bells with slits, tuned closely together—drum, *kenong*, and gong. The terms *monggang* and *kodhok ngorèk* refer to ancient gamelan sets that play ceremonial pieces made up of short, repetitive, drone-like patterns. *Sekatèn* repertory is played on the special, large-scale gamelan belonging to Kraton Solo and only used in the austere, religious month of Mulud for ceremonial purposes. All these ceremonial forms, once relegated to palace use only, are now considered available to the *garap* practitioner.

Purbo Asmoro illustrates the final ceremonial gathering of priests and kings in *The Grand Offering of the Kings* with *Anglir Mendhung* in *kemanak* style, starting with a lengthy *sekatènan* introduction on the *bonang* [SRS-CInt 5 1:22:10]. Although not represented in these recordings, he often uses *Kodhok Ngorèk* for marriage scenes, as it is traditional in Javanese weddings, or for a final battle scene (a practice started by Supanggah in the 1970s dance dramas). Purbo underscores the ancient, timeless authority of Semar by using *Monggang* [MK-CInt 1 10:25]. While traditionally there was a strict, and in some cases superstitious, divide between wayang and ceremonial palace material, *padat* practitioners of the 1980s broke down those barriers. About

20% of the ASKI-inspired material represented in the two performances by Purbo Asmoro comes from this category.

3. Solonese *klenèngan* or wayang repertory, modified

The two categories above dealt with repertory being used without substantial modification, aside from simple abbreviation. From the *padat* days, Purbo Asmoro has continued the practice of also using Solonese pieces with modifications to fit the dramatic needs. About 12% of the ASKI-inspired material represented in the two performances being analyzed falls in this category. Pieces typically in *gendhing* form may show up as shorter *ladrang* (*Ldr Bang-bang Wétan*) or as more lively *lancaran* (*Lnc Bondhèt*); pieces strongly associated with one scale may appear in a different scale (*Lnc Tropongbang* in *sléndro sanga*), and pieces associated with certain speeds or densities may be altered, for example *Ayak-ayak Anjangmas* at breakneck speed, with none of the typical transitions, and used in a variety of settings.

It was characteristic during the height of *padat* development in the 1980s to abbreviate traditional Solonese pieces in order to fit the more truncated scenes. Only a few lines might be used of substantial, classical pieces such as *Laler Mengeng* (Puthut Gunawan's *padat* script, *Durgandini* 1984), *Ela-ela Kalibeber* (Suyanto's *padat* script, *Rama Tundhung* 1986) before they were cut off to move on to something else. Sometimes musicians would be instructed to start the piece from the second line rather than from the beginning, or to start right at the *inggah* instead of from the *mérong* (Bambang Suwarno's *padat* script, *Ciptaning* 1979, *inggah Malarsih*). This truncating or presenting only a segment of a classical piece is the one modification that Purbo Asmoro stays away from as much as possible. The *padat* movement was highly criticized for the practice and Purbo Asmoro, frankly, being a more accomplished musician than the original Gendhon *pedhalangan* apprentices, considers it a personal challenge to find an alternative to this approach (interview, Feb 2010).

> If I know that I only need a few *kenongan* of something, why not choose a piece or compose a snippet that is the appropriate length, instead of using only a segment of a longer piece? If I decide to use a piece like *Ela-ela Kalibeber*, I'm going to respect the authority of the piece, and use it purposefully—use it for a reason,

> which means taking advantage of its *garap* in full.[11] Now, I may use a snippet of a classical piece, on purpose, because I want to encourage a quick, almost subconscious association between the meaning of that piece and the scene. And I always reserve the right to cut off a piece because the drama in the moment suddenly requires it. But that's different. Why plan, consciously and ahead of time, on using just the *inggah* of *Gendhing Malarsih*? What's so special about the *inggah* of *Gendhing Malarsih* that something else couldn't have been chosen? Sometimes I think it's all a private joke and a challenge to the audience to guess the ways in which the arranger has cut up, altered, and sewn back together familiar pieces at a breakneck speed. To me, this is not the purpose of the accompaniment—to cleverly disguise material in order to quiz your audience, or to use it in what could be called flippant ways simply for the flippancy.

4. Stock ASKI material from the early days of *garapan*

There are a number of benchmark works that, in their day, made a profound influence on gamelan accompaniment practices across ASKI,[12] in both the dance and the wayang departments. The now standard *Sampak Galong Solo* (6666 5555 3333 2222) is attributed to Martopangrawit, and was first used in his dance drama *Bangun Majapahit* (late 1970s). *Sampak Kebumèn* (6666 6662) was brought into the repertory after Subono heard it a festival in Tegal in 1979 (Asmoro, *Gamelan Scores*, 394). The practice of interrupting phrases of a *palaran* with insertions of a *sampak* or other *balungan*-focused compositions [MK-CInt 1, 20:50] was first used by Supanggah in *Ranggalawé Gugur*, as was *Srepeg Grandhèl*. These are all standard building blocks of Purbo Asmoro's repertory.

Purbo Asmoro also has a number of elements in his repertory that were created by Sukardi in his milestone *padat* script from 1986, *Kunthi Pilih*. One common

[11] In July 2014, Purbo Asmoro did just that. He crafted an entire scene around the *garap* of *Ela-ela Kalibeber*, in his debut of the lakon *Drupadi*. In perhaps the most essential scene of the lakon, Drupadi meets with Semar in the forest and receives some advice. The *mérong* goes into *sirep* for a lengthy but meaningful narration composed by Purbo Asmoro, and the gamelan is signaled to come back to full volume when entering the *inggah*. After a short while the *inggah* goes into *sirep* for some essential dialogue between Semar and Drupadi, with the playful, characteristic *gendèr* patterns of the *inggah* forming a duet to reflect Semar's utterances. The gamelan comes back up in volume precisely at the complicated transition at the end, supporting a rise in the tension of the scene as Drupadi prepares to make a decision.

[12] *Ayak Hong*, by Blacius Subono, is the one major example from the early ASKI days that does not appear in these two recordings. This elaborate suite of pieces is used for the opening court scene in any kingdom as a replacement for the palace-classical options: *Ayak-ayak→Ktw Gd Kawit*, *Ayak-ayak→Ktw Gd Kabor*, or *Ayak-ayak→Ktw Gd Krawitan*. It has become so popular that it is thought of as standard at this point. Once when he was performing in Balikpapan, Kalimantan, I heard Purbo Asmoro leave it up to the musicians as to how to start the performance. The drummer in the group (in his 50s) said, "Oh let's just do the whole thing classical style. Let's use *Ayak Hong*."

example is a transition he regularly uses to move from *Pathet Sanga* into *Pathet Manyura* or into *pélog barang:*

from *Ayak-ayak Sanga, irama lancar*:

.2.1 .2.1 .3.2 .6.5
i656 5356 5356 3565
3235 3235 i656 5321
2321 2321 3212 56i6 →(transition phrase) 2626 3216 356i 6532→ *Ayak-ayak manyura*
→(transition phrase)2626 3276 3567 6532→*Ayak-ayak pl barang*

Purbo Asmoro also uses a few snippets or entire pieces from Blacius Subono and Dedek Wahyudi. Altogether, about 16% of the resulting gamelan accompaniment in these two performance examples, again, quite representative of Purbo's practice in general, comes from this category of ASKI-based compositions from the early *padat* days.

5. Material composed during Mayangkara rehearsals

Characteristic of Blacius Subono and Dedek Wahyudi's work at ASKI in the 1980s, and carried on by Purbo Asmoro, is the practice of composing new material on the spot during a rehearsal. Dedek Wahyudi, an internationally recognized composer who works mostly in the Dance Department at ISI Solo but who also worked for many years with Mayangkara, expressed the same frustration as Purbo Asmoro with arrangers who chop up and modify classical Solonese compositions to create accompaniment for *padat* performances. He finds the alternative entirely lies in composition (interview, May 2009). Blacius Subono, a composer, dhalang, and senior instructor in the Pedalangan Department at ISI Solo, has focused his career on creating through-composed accompaniment scores, resembling film scores but developed in the moment, during rehearsals.

Purbo Asmoro borrows a practice from both of these innovators that he calls *garap balungan*. These are *balungan*-focused melodies, often with irregular *kenong, kempul,* gong, and *bonang* parts, used as an alternative to *sampak* to support certain dramatic and climactic moments. Many *iringan garap* experts (Subono, Dedek, Purbo Asmoro) compose these spontaneously during a rehearsal, either for wayang or for dance. They are created somewhat collectively but with an identifiable leader

providing the kernel of thought. Often they catch on and are used in subsequent performances, but sometimes they fall into disuse after one performance. Subono, one of the most longstanding and prolific *iringan garap* craftsmen in wayang, has never formally collected his own dramatic kernels of *garap balungan* into a book of notation. He does not give them specific names and assumes they will never be used again after a performance. In fact however, over time, his groups do develop a repertoire and reuse these kernels, as do Dedek Wahyudi's and Purbo Asmoro's groups, collectively retrieving existing kernels by memory during a rehearsal, or creating new ones when a particular dramatic need arises.

Since *garap balungan* typically have no titles, Purbo Asmoro often refers to these in his performance preparation notes simply as *garap balungan* or sometimes *balungan*, and then quotes the first few notes to remind himself and the musicians which one to use. In order to identify them in the recordings, they have been numbered: *Garap Balungan I, Garap Balungan II,* and so on. In the four recordings for this project using *iringan garap* (the two all-night and the two *padat* performances), there are a total of 20 different *garap balungan*:[13] 13 which have no specific name and thus number up through *Garap Balungan XIII,* and seven which are referred to by the nickname they have managed to garner from the musicians over time (*Gegilak*, *Sampak Pi-Ma*). A hefty 35% of the ASKI-inspired material represented in the two all-night *garapan* performances was composed either by Purbo Asmoro or members of Mayangkara during rehearsals. Earlier we saw where Sugeng Nugroho and others may have developed the impression that Purbo Asmoro's accompaniment is entirely grounded in the classical, and how Supanggah could make the estimate it was primarily from Nartosabdo repertory. Now it becomes clear how, for the two Western observers mentioned earlier who had not lived in Java since the early 1990s, Purbo Asmoro's *iringan* seemed not only unfamiliar but also tightly scored.

Regional Material

About 11% of the material Purbo Asmoro uses in the two all-night *garapan* performances documented for this work, comes from regions outside of the greater

[13] See *Gamelan Scores* (Asmoro 2013) for notation and background to every *garap balungan* fragment in the Lontar project recordings.

Surakarta area. This practice was first popularized by Nartosabdo, who integrated various *gendhing lampah* (*ayak-ayak*, *srepeg*, *sampak*) from Yogyakarta and Banyumas into his performances, apparently only in the name of variety. The practice was continued at ASKI during the years of *padat* development. Pedalangan Department students from Purbo Asmoro's time to the present have been required to take courses in Yogyanese ("Mataraman") and *wayang golèk* Kebumen styles. They also have courses available to them in various Sundanese, East Javanese, and Balinese practices as well, all taught by instructors from those regions. Many of the techniques and material from these classes were brought into the creative process of developing gamelan accompaniment for *padat* wayang, and Purbo Asmoro has continued this for his all-night *garapan* performances. His use of these selections is examined later in this chapter. In summary, Figures 5-3 and 5-4 provide two tables summarizing the breakdown of Purbo Asmoro's gamelan accompaniment repertory, and which forms tend to be represented more in which style.

Figure 5-3: Purbo Asmoro's repertory for all-night *garapan* performances:

Solo wayang tradition	Nartosabdo	regional	ASKI *padat* style-inspired material
20 percent	23 percent	11 percent	46 percent: • 35% composed by Mayangkara • 20% Solo ceremonial snippets • 16% compositions from ASKI • 12% modified Solo repertory • 11% concert music snippets • 6% modified regional material

Figure 5-4: Purbo Asmoro's repertory, broken down to the form level:

	all-night classical, 2 perf: *Makutharama*, *Sesaji Raja Suya*	all-night garapan, 2 perf: *Makutharama*, *Sesaji Raja Suya*
Gendhing kt 4 kr	4 pieces	0 pieces
Gendhing kt 2 kr, no bedhayan	8 pieces	0 pieces
Gendhing kt 2 kr, bedhayan	0 pieces	4 pieces
Ladrang	6 pieces	13 pieces
Ketawang	1 piece	13 pieces

Lancaran	4 pieces	10 pieces
Ayak-ayak	6 types (nem, sanga, manyura, Anjangmas, Tlutur, Pamungkas)	11 types
Srepeg	6 types (nem, sanga, manyura, Martana, Kedhung Banthengan, Klatenan)	15 types
Sampak	4 types (nem, sanga, manyura, Klatenan)	19 types
Jineman/dolanan/andhegan	0 pieces	10 pieces
New compositions, free form	0 pieces	17 pieces
Other: Kemuda, Gangsaran, Monggang	0 pieces	5 pieces
TOTALS:	39 distinct pieces	117 distinct pieces

Tracing Garapan Repertory

In the endnotes to *Gamelan Scores* (Asmoro, 2013), I make an attempt to trace the origin of the elements of gamelan accompaniment found in the Lontar all-night *garapan* and *padat* performances, item by item. The reader should reference there for more details on any of the selections mentioned in this chapter or found in any of those recordings. In short, however, this sort of tracing is extremely difficult. Solo is a relatively small town, but the richness of the exchanges, influences and cross-collaboration among sectors of the artistic community from the 1970s to the present with regard to *iringan garap* is mind-boggling. Innovations in the Dance Department at ASKI in the 1970s spilled over into the Pedalangan Department and vice versa, with many of the same musicians accompanying exams and performances in both departments. Elements of ASKI *padat*-inspired gamelan accompaniment are generally not notated, and collaborative revisions during rehearsals are the norm. This combined with a general culture of not attributing authorship to creative works makes unraveling the origin of the various key elements tricky, even though it is only a 30-year-old tradition and almost all of the main artistic figures are still alive.

A dizzying array of influences have melded together to form the repertory for *garapan* practitioners: Dedek Wahyudi's compositions in the Dance Department at

ISI; Blacius Subono's compositions in the Pedalangan Department at ISI; regional pieces brought into the repertory by the Cirebonese, East Javanese, Balinese, Sundanese, Banyumasan and Yogyanese practitioners at ISI; ceremonial forms from the palaces in Solo which were brought to the Karawitan Department at ISI by Mloyowidodo and others a few decades ago; village traditions, from Klaten in particular; the repertory of *wayang sandosa*, mostly by Blacius Subono; dance drama accompaniment from the late 1970s by Martopangrawit and Supanggah; innovations by Sukardi (an influence specific to Purbo Asmoro); and, in the 2005–2015 decade, compositions by Lumbini in the Dance Department and Setyaji in the Pedalangan Department.

Purbo Asmoro has been in the middle of this cauldron of artistic development almost since its inception. As a student at the High School of Performing Arts (1977–1982), then at ASKI/STSI (1982–1986), and subsequently a studio instructor in the Pedalangan Department at STSI/ISI, he experienced the development of *garapan* accompaniment from its inception. For over 25 years now, he has been present on campus each day, teaching students, administering examinations, organizing performances, planning artistic debuts, observing rehearsals, taking part in curriculum planning, and collaborating with the Dance and Karawitan departments. While many of Mayangkara's older members are former Condhong Raos performers, a large percentage of the younger ones are studio musicians at ISI and they bring this wide experience to each rehearsal; hence the collaboration is never static.

These influences, mixed with a good dose of his classical upbringing as the descendant of generations of dhalang from Pacitan, East Java, his great admiration for the traditions of dhalang from Klaten, his own innovative talents, and his emphasis on spontaneity, combine to form Purbo's characteristic repertory of *iringan garap*. In the end, the observer is left with a grand quilt of influences, performance "happenings," and historical artistic interactions not easy to trace precisely, even after consultation with Purbo Asmoro himself.

An exchange with Dedek Wahyudi when, on the third occasion I interviewed him regarding fragments, I finally pressed him on the origin of some of the

composed snippets in Purbo Asmoro's performances, sums this phenomenon up well (interview, March 2011):

> **Kathryn Emerson**: This *garap balungan* is a mysterious one, and none of my sources agree. Some say it was written by you. Others have been certain it is by Pak Bono. He says it's not his, although it is similar to many things he has written. Some say it is not new at all, but originally from Kebumèn tradition. [I then play the recording for Dedek to listen to.]
>
> **Dedek Wahyudi** [after listening intently to the recording]: Well, it's certainly not mine. But why can't it be in a way from all three, and yet at the same time from none? We have all created this together. And good luck to anyone trying to figure it all out in a linear way.

How Purbo Asmoro Shapes the *Iringan* Material

Purbo Asmoro arranges the gamelan accompaniment for his all-night *garapan* performances while balancing four main considerations: affect, contrast, timing, and meaning. These are not his categories explicitly, but I have placed his comments over the years into these four main groups.

1. **Affect**: The material must fit the feeling and mood of each scene. Purbo Asmoro chooses material based on his own instinct, intuition, and experience rather than traditional rules guiding gamelan accompaniment for wayang, as discussed in the above section. The entire gamelan repertory is available to him, including not only wayang but also concert music, dance, and ceremonial selections, as well as new compositions.
2. **Contrast**: This relatively simple principle, challenging to apply, is often behind Purbo Asmoro's gamelan accompaniment choices. He tries to avoid what he refers to as a feeling of "monotone." The seven-hour performance should be full of contrast: in tempos, dynamics, vocal and instrumental timbres, orchestration, regional styles, performance styles. There should be a contrast with pieces used in the same venue previously, contrast with how the lakon was treated in the past, and contrast with how the lakon is typically treated now, by other dhalang.

3. **Timing**: The material must be tailor-made: molded and chiseled so that it fits the timing of the dramatic action as precisely as possible, even if this alters traditional treatment of the material.
4. **Meaning**: The material should, as much as possible and particularly in key places, support the meaning held in the scene, either through the text or the connotations, associations, and contexts of the pieces chosen.

While the concept of affect was covered in detail in the examination of Purbo's repertory choices and the concept of contrast is fairly straightforward, the treatments of timing and meaning require further detail.

Timing

Padat practice consciously avoids lengthy musical selections during which nothing is happening on the screen. Purbo Asmoro continues to follow this practice in his all-night *garapan* performances, for the same reasons regarding dramatic tension as in condensed practice. Aside from avoiding such static moments simply by choosing pieces whose length better matches the scene, the *garapan* practitioner also further sculpts the material to the desired length. In classical practice, a gamelan piece is usually played through to its natural end, even if this means that the action on the screen is dormant for an extended period of time, but this is not the case in a *garapan* performance. A number of new techniques are applied to achieve this, described below.

Ditabrak—Crashed Into

This technique was developed at ASKI in the 1970s, in order to do away with stagnant moments on the screen. Traditional transitions and ending patterns are avoided, and pieces or songs may be cut off at any moment necessary rather than waiting for the appropriate moment. *Tabrak* is Javanese meaning "to run into something suddenly." *Ditabrak* is the passive form, meaning that something has been crashed into. So for example, *Ktw Mijil ditabrak Sampak* would mean that there is no traditional transition from the *ketawang* to *sampak*, but rather the *ketawang* is crashed into or cut off suddenly, with no concern for the standard places or the standard

signals in such a transition. *Iringan garap* practitioners affirm that this technique is not used in the interest of saving a few minutes here or there. The *ditabrak* technique is used for dramatic power.

Another example is found in court scenes. Once the narration is finished the dhalang can simply give the signal to stop with one knock on the wooden box. The music stops in its tracks and the dhalang begins his *sulukan*. A clear instance can be found in *Rama's Crown*, when the narration describing Arjuna's despair is "crashed into" by Semar's sudden entrance, to the accompaniment of *Monggang* [MK-CInt 1, vocal starts at 08:45, *ditabrak Monggang* at 10:25]. This is not a lack of care on the part of Purbo Asmoro, who would have no trouble extending his narration to fit the length of the previous *Ktw Durma Rangsang*. Rather this is a dramatic technique that places priority on highlighting Semar's sudden entrance rather than a musically proper ending to *Ktw Durma Rangsang*.

Although the *ditabrak* technique seems to go against traditional practice, it has existed in at least two instances for a long time. The *Gapuran* scene, in which the king admires the beauty of the gateway on his way out of the Audience Hall and into the Queen's Quarters, is sometimes accompanied by *Ayak-ayak Anjangmas*. The basic *Ayak-ayak* moves into a special elaboration melody known as *Anjangmas* as the gateway is being described. Although there is a somewhat prescribed place and manner to make the transition from *Anjangmas* back to regular *Ayak-ayak,* which might be used in concert music, it is expected that a dhalang will end his narration at any point, and with a simple signal on the box cut straight back to *Ayak-ayak*. In other words, the *Anjangmas* melody, whether it has come to completion or not, is *ditabrak* by *Ayak-ayak*. This is an example of something being *ditabrak* that existed more than 50 years before the creation of *iringan padat* techniques. Bambang Suwarno also cites a common practice in classical wayang during *Pathet Manyura* in which any piece can be cut off with a sudden entrance of a character: "*Piyak*, *piyak*!" ("Make way, make way!"), using knocks of the *cempala* to signal an immediate *sampak*.

Irama Nyeklèk—Abrupt Transition

Irama nyeklèk (from the base word *ceklèk* meaning "to break something off") is a *padat* technique in which the tempo suddenly cuts from *irama tanggung* to *irama dadi*

without any sort of gradual bridge. Dedek Wahyudi says he specifically remembers Humardani wanting his team to create some sort of transition which would feel like "a city bus suddenly stopping just anywhere to pick up a passenger." The actual creator of this transition and the drum signal for it was Supanggah (interviews with Dedek, 2009, and Supanggah, 2014). Subono comments that this type of sudden transition already exists in Balinese music. Again, doing away with a gradual transition is not in the interest of saving time, which in this case would only be a few seconds, but rather for dramatic intensity. An example of *irama nyeklèk* can be heard in *Ldr Wirangrong* [MK-CInt 2, 1:17:20].

Suwuk Mronggol—Sudden Halt

Mronggol in Javanese means "to break something off very suddenly," while *suwuk* is "ending." While *tabrakan* and *irama nyeklèk* were developed in the Humardani days and appear in the earliest *padat* scripts, *suwuk mronggol* is a technique developed more recently. A piece is simply broken off and stopped in its tracks, with none of the traditional types of ending preparations and signals, and with no regard for the traditional places a piece might end. Unlike the *ditabrak* technique, nothing else follows it; just dead silence. This practice is used for the most intense of dramatic effects. When Jarasandha finally encounters the father he has desperately been searching for, the accompanying piece comes to a sudden halt, resulting in a shocked silence on the screen as the two stare at each other [SRS-CInt 1, 52:23]. When Dursasana is chiding Karna for being so foolish as to have lost his weapon to Anoman, Karna whips around in fury to swear at him and Dursasana's dancing to comes to a sudden halt, again, with piercing silence on the screen until Karna yells, "You bastard!" [MK-CInt 3, 35:15].

So, the shape and timing of tight-fitting gamelan accompaniment is thus achieved by choosing an appropriately shaped piece of appropriate length, and then further whittling it into shape using these techniques: *ditabrak*, *irama nyeklèk*, and *suwuk mronggol*.

Meaning

Avoiding Generic Function

A basic tenet of *iringan garap* is to prefer specific pieces rather than generic pieces and to emphasize meaning rather than tradition. In traditional, classical wayang, aside from full-fledged scenes, most of the action is held together with the previously referenced *gendhing lampah*: *ayak-ayak*, *srepeg* and *sampak* in each mode. When the gamelan follows the principles of *iringan garap*, there are many more varieties of *ayak-ayak, srepeg*, and *sampak,* depending on the content of the scene, and they become less generic in nature. Instead of the three classical Solonese *ayak-ayak* (one for each *pathet*), the recordings in this project present 12 different types: *Ayak-ayak Mijil Layu* for moments of despair, *Ayak-ayak Anjangmas* for any expanding any narration, *Ayak-ayak Sinom* for love scenes, *Ayak-ayak Rangu-rangu* for slightly cocky moments of victory, and so on. The recordings present 15 different types of *srepeg*, the classical three with the addition of: *Tlutur, Kalatidha, Banyumas, Klathèn, Madiun, Galong Semarang, Manyuri, Grandhèl, Durma, Pinjalan, Galong Yogya* and *Aprèsiasi*. There are 13 types of *sampak* in the recordings, the classical three and 10 others: *Galongan, Tlutur, Gosongan, Mataraman, Kebumènan, Jèkdongan, Cekak, Orèk-orèk, Pi-Ma* and *Manyuri*, which reflect varying degrees of tension, humor, sadness, foreignness, victory, or eeriness.

These choices are all based on instinct and *rasa*. In Purbo Asmoro's 2014 debut of *Drupadi*, he searched his mind and heart for just the right selection to accompany the fateful dice game between the Pandhawa and Kurawa. As the devious Sangkuni rolls the dice each round, and the audience awaits the winner—well-aware of the heavy bets on both sides—he needed a piece with a suspenseful and yet tentative and mischievous feel. He settled on *Srepeg Pinjalan* in *sléndro nem*, with its syncopated rhythms. This has no connection to the way this piece is used in classical repertory, as a court dispersal piece. While most dhalang would simply use *Srepeg*, *sléndro nem* in between each bet, Purbo Asmoro searched for something that would support the moment musically, yet through a meaning that he himself infused the piece with, applying his own *rasa* (observation during *Drupadi* rehearsal, July 2014).

Regional Repertory Infused With Meaning

The *iringan garap* practitioner, following the lead of Nartosabdo decades ago, is also free to borrow from all regional repertory: Semarang, Banyumas, Kebumen, East Java, Yogyakarta, Bali—as long as these are explicitly referred to as imitations: *Sampak Kebumènan*, *Srepeg Banyumasan*, *chorus Semarangan*. The *–an* denotes "in the style of," and is a caveat already existing but formalized by Rahayu Supanggah at ASKI a few decades ago, to acknowledge the approximation on the part of the musicians. Purbo Asmoro speaks very deliberately about his use of regional repertory and can always justify it. Mataram variants are used to accompany Kresna's shenanigans as they have a mischievous, slightly humorous feel to him. "It always feels a little tongue-in-cheek to me" (interview 2010), while East Javanese pieces and *sulukan* might used for characters further flung geographically, such as Supala, Sangkuni, Jarasandha, and Jayatséna.

Meaning Via Historical Connotations

Purbo Asmoro creates meaning by taking advantage of the strong connotations some pieces have in the classical tradition. For example, *Kabor* is traditionally used to accompany the opening Astina Kingdom court scene. Dhalang debate whether *Kabor* is connected to Astina Kingdom in general, or to the reign of Duryudana specifically. However, the majority of dhalang in Solo today associate *Kabor* with Duryudana only, and use a different piece when Astina is ruled by Pandhu, Dhestarata, or Parikesit. Hence the connection between Duryudana and *Kabor* is strong. In *Brubuh Astina* (*The Fall of Astina*), Purbo Asmoro brings out a desperate Duryudana, livid about the death of his son Lesmana in the Baratayuda War, and at the end of his rope as to what strategy to try next. Many in the audience know that this is the last court scene (actually in a tent on the battlefield) ever to be conducted by Duryudana, as he will die later in the lakon. A strange yet familiar *lancaran* accompanies Duryudana's fretful and uncontrolled emotion as he paces. Some in the audience may sing it to themselves, trying to figure out what it is. Perhaps 10 percent are visibly moved as, one by one, they realize it is *Kabor*, but set to a pulsating *lancaran* form, at breakneck speed, and full volume. The effect is powerful beyond description, due to the historical connotation of this piece.

A similar example is found in Purbo Asmoro's 2014 version of *Kresna Duta* for the Tulungagung performance described in the beginning of this chapter. Early on in the prologue Kresna appears on the screen, followed by Semar, to the melody of a familiar, large-form *gendhing*, yet using an unfamiliar vocal chorus melody. Since 90 percent of pieces used for such interactions in prologues are short *ketawang*, this is unusual. As Semar's advice to Kresna proceeds, some audience members may start to recognize the piece as *Ktw Gd Krawitan*, traditionally used for any court audience scene not set in the Pandhawa, Kurawa, or heavenly kingdoms. Of all the possibilities for kingdoms set to *Krawitan*, Kresna's Dwarawati is by far the most common. As with the *Kabor* example, Purbo Asmoro is using the historical connotation of the piece to move audience members and underscore the connotation of the piece. Kresna's final decision as king of Dwarawati will be whether or not to go forward as an ambassador, so a final rendering of *Krawitan*, as unusual as its use is in a prologue, and altered through the addition of a vocal chorus, infuses the scene with meaning.

In Purbo Asmoro's 2013 fully *garap*ed performance of the *madya*[14] lakon *Sudarsana Kethok* (*Sudarsana Amputated*) Sudarsana's father tries to inspire his son in his moment of need by taking him to a temple of their Pandhawa ancestors. While at the temple, Sudarsana's father explains the philosophical basis of the Pandhawa's leadership. The entire scene progresses to the accompaniment of *Kawit* in *pélog nem*. As with the above examples, it may take audience members a few minutes to make the connection since *Kawit* is usually in *sléndro*.[15] But this is another potentially striking moment, with the weight of the Pandhawa ancestorship supported by the use of the Pandhawa signature piece, *Kawit*.

[14] *Wayang madya* is a type of wayang *kulit* developed by Mangkunegara IV in the late 1800s, which fictitiously connects the Pandawa lineage to the tales of Javanese kings up through about 1100. Almost completely extinct, *wayang madya* lakon were done in *sléndro* at the Mangkunegaran, and then imitated later in *pélog* at the Kraton Solo. A related form, *wayang gedhog*, was created earlier, by Pakubuwana III in the late 1700s, developed at the Kraton Solo, and entirely in *pélog*. *Wayang gedhog* lakon tell of the famed Prince Panji of East Java (interview with Bambang Suwarno, April 2009).

[15] In fact, *Ktw Gd Kawit* in *pélog nem* is from the traditional accompaniment to *gedhog* and *madya* stories for the *Sabrangan Alus* scene, according to Purbo Asmoro, which was another reason for his choice (interview, June 2013). However, whether interpreted by audience members as traditional *madya* material, or *purwa* material altered in scale, the use of the piece to accompany a trip to the Pandhawa temple in this lakon is original to Purbo Asmoro.

Dedek Wahyudi tells of his visceral reaction to hearing *Lnc Tropongbang* in new contexts during Purbo Asmoro's performances, and how use of the piece somehow strengthens the significance of the moment solely due to the connotations it conjures up in the listeners' ears from the classical context. Used in traditional troop departure scenes, Purbo Asmoro often chooses this *lancaran* for moments when there is an attack on a hero, but one that leads to the betterment of the character, such as in *Rama's Crown* when the *garudha* bird tests Arjuna's worth as a vessel of the boon [MK-CInt 5, 02:25]. Dedek observes that "we associate *Tropongbang pélog* with danger and impending violence, yet it has a more cheery countenance when in *sléndro*. We could not write something new that would so quickly engender the same heroic associations for wayang-goers" (interview, 2007).

In Purbo Asmoro's contemporary-interpretive version of *The Grand Offering of the Kings* the imposing antagonist Jarasandha enters his court in *Pathet Manyura* with a lively *kiprah* dance, full of arrogant show. For discriminating audience members there is an added dimension to the arrogance, if they recognize the accompaniment. The refined *mérong* (the A section, or opening) to *Gd Bang-bang Wétan* accompanies Jarasandha's arrival, yet he appears to be oblivious to all etiquette, with the melody played in a breakneck speed, *kébar,* and never slowing down to its traditional tempo structure [SRS-CInt 4, 49:50]. This is yet another moment during which, for some of the viewers, an added layer of meaning enriches the scene, through historical connotations tied to the accompaniment. Purbo could have chosen any piece from any repertory for this moment. He chose the one piece commonly used for the final *Adegan Manyura*, which this scene is, yet in disguise—in *kébar* to mirror the arrogance and impetuousness of Jarasandha.

Meaning Through Hierarchy and Poignancy

When Purbo Asmoro crafts a performance with *iringan garap*, he considers which moments are particularly poignant or crucial and need special musical treatment. Thus the music supports a dramatic hierarchy in a manner unlike that of a classical performance. For example, in a classical wayang many repetitions of *sampak* will be capped off simply with one more *sampak* at the climactic moment, but Purbo Asmoro, while still using *sampak* for the many repetitions, will devise something

special for the climactic moment. This is different yet again from other *iringan garap* practitioners, who have so many newly composed elements, all rather fast and pulsating, that there is often no clear hierarchy (see Chapter 9). Purbo Asmoro creates this hierarchy by deliberately juxtaposing the classical with the new in a highly selective manner. In his performances, many small, poignant moments which would largely go unaccompanied in classical performances are supported with musical selections. Adding a musical element to a small moment enriches the emotional content of a scene and lends weight to the interaction. Both constructing hierarchy and enhancing poignancy are explored in more detail in Chapter 7, as these are defining concepts of Purbo Asmoro's all-night *garapan* style across every element, not just the *iringan*.

Sulukan in Garapan Performances

The role, orchestration, and repertory of *sulukan* in all-night *garapan* performances by Purbo Asmoro differ considerably from classical treatment, and resemble *padat* performance practice. There are three types of *sulukan*: *pathetan*, *ada-ada* and *sendhon*. *Pathetan* are in general calm and stately melodies, and are accompanied by *gendèr*, *rebab*, *gambang* and *suling*. *Sendhon* are similar to *pathetan*, but are pensive, nostalgic and somewhat melancholy. They are accompanied by *gendèr*, *gambang* and *suling*. The absence of the *rebab,* along with an optional, kind of pulsating, fluttery *gendèr* technique known as *pipilan*, lends a lonely and sparse feeling to them. *Ada-ada* have more energy and tension and, with the exception of the very first *ada-ada* in a classical performance, are used in moments of anger, confusion and tumult. They are accompanied only by *gendèr*.

In all-night *garapan* performances, the factors of affect (*rasa*), timing, meaning, and contrast all come into play in the construction of *sulukan* for a performance. Borrowing from *padat* tradition, *sulukan* can be sung not only by the dhalang but also by either a single *gérong* singer, a *pesindhén*, or a *gérong* chorus. In the two *garapan* recordings being examined for this work, there are 43 distinct *sulukan* in total, using the following orchestration:

- 28 *sulukan* sung by the dhalang (some of these are repeated a number of times)
- 14 *sulukan* sung by a *gérong* chorus (each a single incidence)
- 1 sung by a *pesindhèn*

Sometimes the decision of who will sing the *sulukan* is made on the basis of meaning (a *pesindhèn* because the story context is a woman speaking, for example), sometimes on the basis of affect and *rasa* (the male chorus singing the *sulukan* in rhythm fits a loud, furiously active section of the wayang), sometimes out of practicality (the dhalang wants the *sulukan* to be sung over an active battle scene but both his hands are busy and this affects his breath supply), and sometimes simply for contrast. One new technique from the 1970s is when the *gérong* chorus actually shouts out the final line of a *sulukan* for dramatic impact, such as the line from *Ada-ada Palaran, sléndro sanga*: "Her call as loud as a roaring lion!" used to illustrate Nyai Jara's emotional intensity as she melds Brihadrata's deformed babies together (SRS-CInt, 1 44:25).

The timing of the *sulukan* is also different from that in classical wayang. There tend to be fewer extended *pathetan* in particular, and the *sulukan* are in general shortened. While traditional practice included long (*ageng*), medium (*wantah*) and short (*jugag*) versions of many *pathetan*, *garapan* practitioners use mostly extra-short (*cekak*) versions. *Sulukan* can be *ditabrak* (either crashed into or crashed out of) at any moment.

In traditional practice, *sulukan* are mostly from *sekar ageng* or *macapat* poems from a relatively limited number of texts.[16] *Garapan* practitioners take the texts of the *sulukan* from a wider variety of sources than in classical practice, such as the ones found in these recordings from *sekar ageng Kilayunedheng*, *sekar ageng Nagabanda*, or Ranggawarsita's *Sekar Kalut*. Programmatic meaning is more important in *sulukan* and vocal texts than it was in classical practice, particularly at key dramatic moments. Purbo Asmoro composed a number of the texts for these recordings, and they support crucial moments in the dramatic structure (Purbo Asmoro, interview, October 2007):

[16] Emerson, 2013, Sulukan Appendix, *The Grand Offering of the Kings*, 407/*Rama's Crown*, 431.

> Choosing to latch on to meaning more directly in the *sulukan* adds weight and focus, and helps to squeeze the dramatic potential out of every moment. That's what it's all about in more contemporary performances. But traditionally this was not the purpose of the *sulukan*. I enjoy working in both realities.

Purbo Asmoro also employs a number of regional *sulukan* not used in classical practice, such as selections from Kebumèn, Banyumas, East Javanese Jèkdongan tradition, or Yogyanese *sulukan* that are lesser known in the Solo area.

Ditumpangi—Riding Atop Of

One new technique used in *padat* performances and developed at ASKI in the 1970s, is to add a vocal melody or *sulukan* (solo or chorus, male or female) over a piece of music, as a new way of supporting a chaotic, eerie mood. *Tumpang* is Javanese meaning "to put something on top of something else; to ride something." *Ditumpangi* is the passive, meaning " to be topped with." So, *Srepeg ditumpangi vokal Pangkur* would mean that *Srepeg* is being played with a *Pangkur* text overlaying it, two separate pieces occurring at the same time. In this practice, the piece of music and the text act as two separate entities that do not go together but are happening simultaneously. For example, when Arjuna views the destruction of natural disasters before him, *Sampak Tlutur* is played, with a *Pangkur Macapat* vocal text sung atop it, not in rhythm with it, and not matching it in pitch [MK-CInt 1, 08:00]. This reflects the aura of chaos happening on the screen, while at the same time the text holds a meaning important to the scene. Or in a death scene, a chant might be sung atop: not a matching vocal part but a separate one.

In summary, there is nothing simple about *iringan garap*. A wide range of repertory is chosen by *rasa* and instinct and with high regard for affect, dramatic need, and contrast. Then timing of the material is molded through new techniques, including techniques that apply to *sulukan*. Creating a kind of film score of this compilation, rehearsing it intensely, and then repeating it each time the same lakon is performed, would be relatively easy. Purbo Asmoro, however, prefers to remain spontaneous and insists that Mayangkara use everything they know about the new repertory and the lakon to, in the end, follow his lead, making each performance of the same lakon different.

Rehearsal and Communication

Rehearsal for Classical Style Performances

When Purbo Asmoro performs in classical style, he does not rehearse his gamelan troupe, Mayangkara. Rather, his musicians rely on their collective experience of classical wayang tradition, and spontaneously follow the dhalang's various traditional, standard cues. Even when performing in classical style with a group of musicians other than Mayangkara, Purbo Asmoro does not hold rehearsals. Often he can be seen simply passing a scrap of paper to the *rebab*, *kendhang* and *gendèr* players (who in turn pass it to the vocalists) some 30 minutes before the performance, with scribbled notes alerting them to the major pieces he might use. More often than not, even this attempt at a plan changes at the last minute.

Most dhalang in the past did not hold rehearsals for a specific performance. They often supported a routine weekly or monthly rehearsal for their troupe, which the musicians would use to keep up their repertory, at times adding new elements to what they were collectively capable of under the direction of a revered musician among the group. The dhalang was usually not even present at these rehearsals, or was in and out, attending to other matters. Rehearsals for specific performances were unnecessary due to the elaborate cueing system and standard repertory. Setting the musical schema was in fact not particularly desirable anyway, as the spontaneity and inspiration of the dhalang was paramount. It was an important part of the dhalang's mystique not to be too explicit. Also, it was often not even possible to hold rehearsals for specific performances, as the story was frequently decided upon between dhalang and sponsor, hours or even minutes before the performance.

Some current-day gamelan troupes will hold rehearsals for a specific classical performance coming up for a number of reasons: most musicians are more out of practice than in the past, it is less common to hold routine weekly rehearsals due to people's time constraints, and usually the story is determined well in advance of the performance. Also, since strictly classical performances are somewhat rare now, celebrated troupes such as those of Anom Soeroto (ABDI), Manteb Soedharsono (Sanggar Bima), and Purbo Asmoro (Mayangkara) will often prepare diligently in order to showcase an all-out classical (*klasik "deles"*) performance. Similarly, the

performances of *Rama's Crown* (palace-classical style) and *The Grand Offering of the Kings* (village-classical style) were rehearsed, even though Mayangkara does not generally do this, simply to ensure the best recordings possible for the purposes of documentation. Yet still, no notes or summary sheets of any kind were prepared by Purbo Asmoro for the musicians.

Rehearsal for All-Night Garapan Performances

Unlike classical wayang, *garapan* performances almost always require some sort of rehearsal. Whenever Purbo Asmoro develops an all-night *garapan* version of a particular lakon for the first time, he prepares a summary sheet for himself and the musicians to follow during the performance. He also holds at least one large-scale rehearsal. As mentioned in the opening of this chapter, the summary sheets start as handwritten notes (see Figures 5-5 and 5-6 on following page). During rehearsals the musicians collaborate among themselves and with the dhalang, changes and additions are made, and then the notes are rewritten, or sometimes typed up, to reflect the more-or-less final musical sequences.

For future performances of the same lakon (months, years or even decades later) Purbo Asmoro will pull out the original summary sheet from his well-organized records, and plan an abbreviated rehearsal to review and, inevitably, revise the musical treatment. Changes might be made to improve the original plan for variety, or because the performance venue or sponsor presents unique requirements.

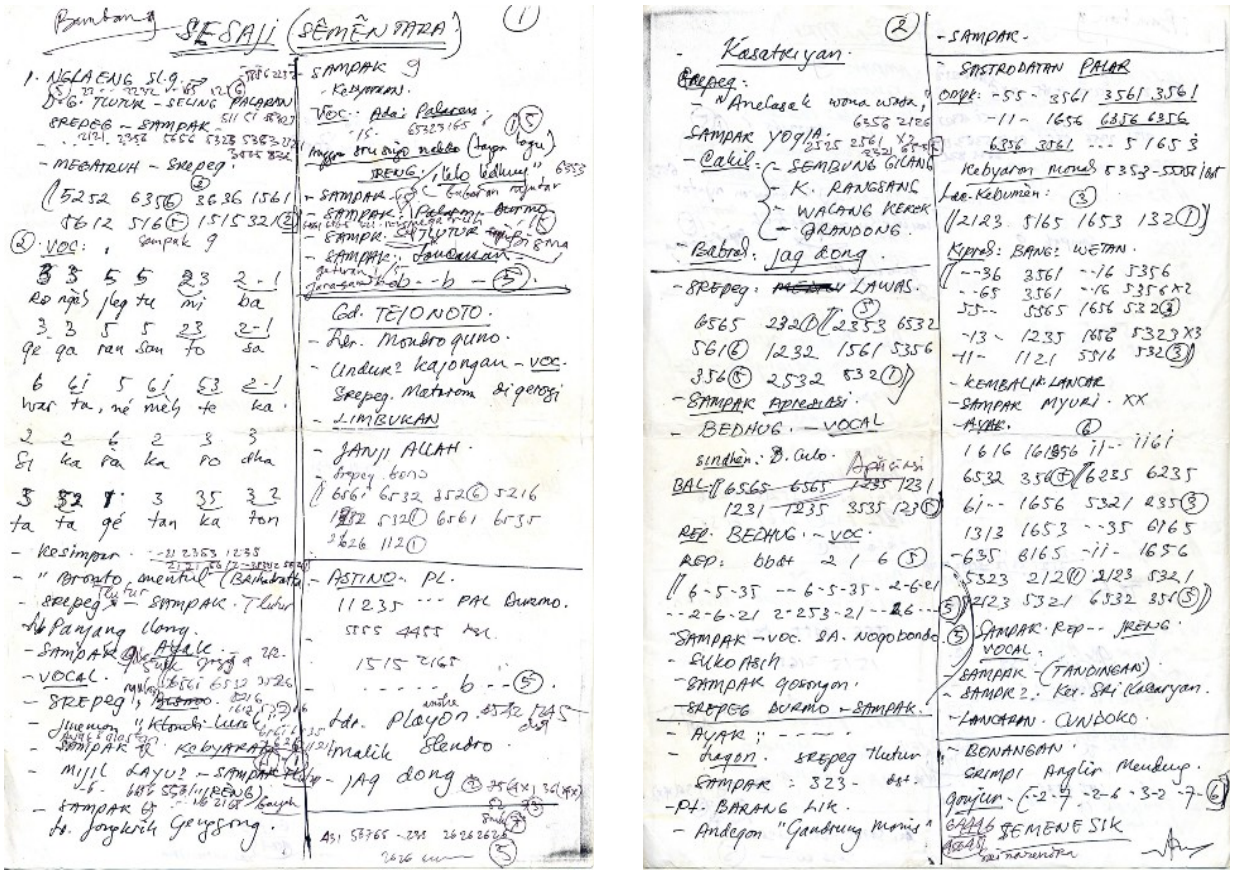


Figure 5-5: Purbo Asmoro's hand-written summary sheet for *The Grand Offering of the Kings*, all-night *garapan* style, version 1.

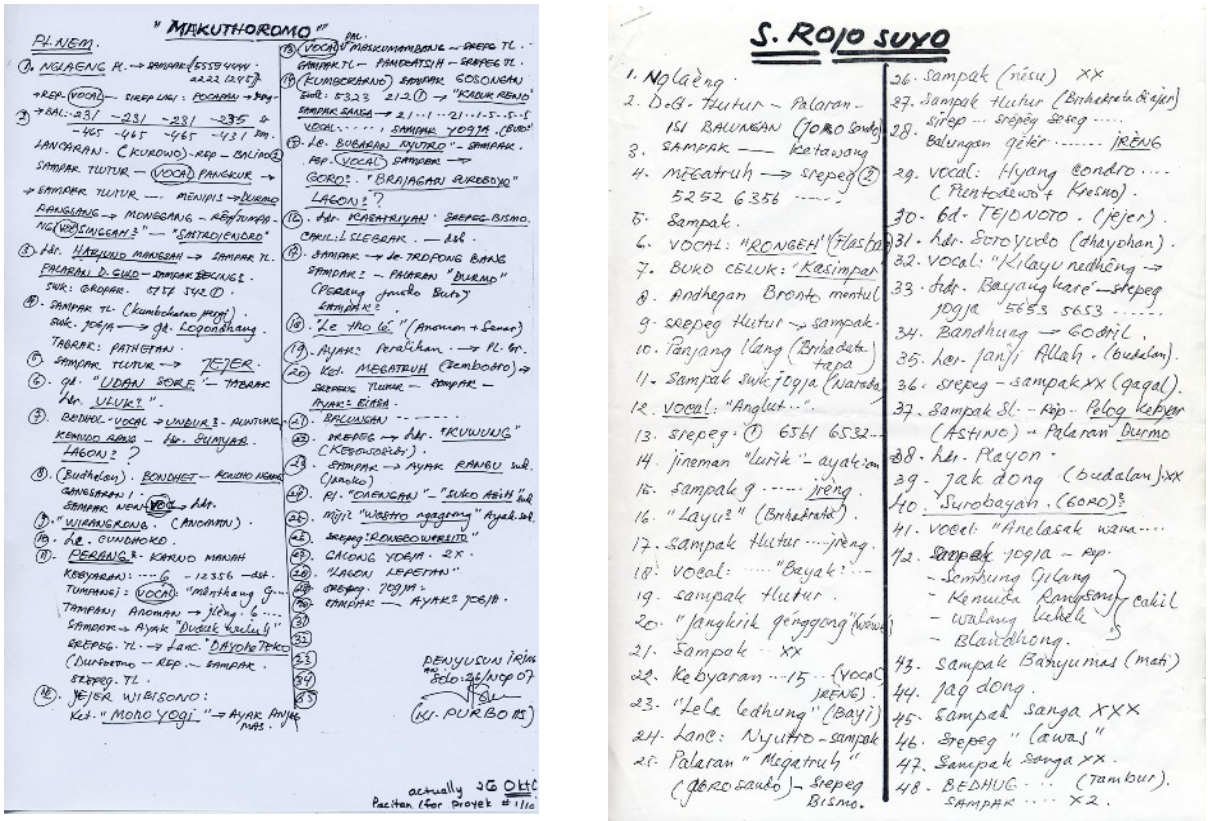


Figure 5-6: Purbo Asmoro's final summary sheets, *Rama's Crown* and *The Grand Offering of the Kings*.

Subtly Evolving Signaling Systems

With the development of a new vocabulary of gamelan accompaniment for all-night *garapan* performances, conventional signaling systems in wayang are evolving, although only subtly and to a limited extent. There are five traditional methods of communication from a dhalang to his musicians:

1. spoken literary riddles known as ***sasmita***
2. rhythms the dhalang executes with a wooden hand-knocker (***cempala***) against a large wooden box to his left
3. percussive signals from a set of metal plates (***keprak***) played with the dhalang's right foot against the wooden box
4. ***kombangan*** or other sung cues from the dhalang
5. the positioning or movement of **wayang figures** to signal certain intentions

Sasmita

Sasmita are short phrases, ranging from relatively direct requests to obscure riddles cloaked in poetic language. These are used to communicate what piece should be played to accompany a major court or hermitage scene. For example, *kaya pandam kéntir ing warih* is a standard phrase used to signal the introduction to *Gd Damarkèli kt 4 kr mg 8* [MK-Class 1, 1:08:05]. *Pandam* matches *damar*, being synonyms for an oil lantern, while *kéntir* parallels *kèli* as synonyms for something swept away by the current or in a flood.

> *Lah ing kana ta wau, wus lumarap lampahira nyai emban, unjuk uninga mring ngarsaning Sang Ayu Banowati. Nengna kawuwusa, ganti ingkang winursitèng kawi, ora kaya ingkang mapan ana ing gupit mandragini, kaya pandam kéntir ing warih.*
>
> And so it was that the entourage of female servants made their way swiftly to Her Majesty Banowati with the announcement of his arrival. Now all stands still there, while our poetic tale shifts to none other than she who resides in the royal sleeping chamber. Like a bright oil lamp taken away downstream.

In the two classical-style recordings documented in this work, there are a total of 16 instances of *sasmita*: six in *The Grand Offering of the Kings* and 10 in the more strictly palace-classical *Rama's Crown*. This includes every court, hermitage or forest scene that was set to a *gendhing*.

In all-night *garapan* performances, Purbo Asmoro still believes in employing *sasmita* even though the pieces, for the most part, have been set and everyone is following the summary sheets (interview, May 2009).

> I like to retain the technique of a literary invitation from the dhalang to the musicians for these scenes, when I can. I still need to signal the *rebab*, *gendèr*, or *bonang* player as to exactly when my narration is finished and I am ready for the piece to start. So why not keep the aesthetic of the literary riddle instead of just *dhog-dhog dhog* from the *cempala*? And, don't forget, the *sasmita* is a way of confirming where we are in the summary sheet. Confirming that I haven't changed my plan. And lastly, what if I have in fact changed my mind? So I like that my musicians still follow *sasmita*.

That being his ideal position on the subject, there are, in fact, no *sasmita* signals in the all-night *garapan* performances of either *Rama's Crown* or *The Grand Offering of the Kings*. Every court, forest, or hermitage scene piece is part of a string of preset consecutive pieces, or uses a sung snippet from the vocal section or the dhalang himself as the introduction. However, I have witnessed Purbo Asmoro's frequent use of *sasmita* in other *garapan* performances over the years, depending on how set the accompaniment is. Nevertheless, of the five traditional signaling systems, *sasmita* is definitely the one that falls into the most disuse in all-night *garapan* style, if for no other reason than so many of the transitions into court and hermitage scenes are musical segues and do not begin with a narrative passage.

Cempala and Keprak

Signals from the *cempala* alert the musicians, and most importantly the drummer, when to start, stop, speed up, slow down, and play softer (*sirep*) or return to a normal volume (*udhar*). A variety of short rhythmic signals from the *cempala* also serve as the *buka* to each *gendhing lampah*: *ayak-ayak*, *srepeg*, *sampak*, or *kemuda*. For other forms, a series of *dhog*-s from the *cempala* delineates the end of a *sasmita* and notifies the players that it is time for the introduction. A single *dhog* precedes a *sulukan*. Cadences in narrative passages are shaped with *cempala* punctuation, and the dhalang also communicates to the *gendèr* player how energetic the *grimingan* patterns should be via the density and volume of *cempala* taps during a narration.

The *keprak* is arguably the most important and most idiomatic of the dhalang's signaling equipment. With both hands quite often in use, as well as dialogue, narration, and *sulukan* to execute, a fully expressive cueing system from the foot is obviously the most practical. Every function of the *cempala* can be played from the *keprak* if the dhalang's hands are busy. Signals from this set of plates also demarcate battle patterns, letting the drummer know how to support weighty moments and important moves. Hints from patterns on the *keprak* can also signal to the drummer the type of movement that will be used next, so that he can execute characteristic patterns accompanying the gestures and gait of characters.



Figure 5-7: Purbo Asmoro at the *keprak*, the *cempala* nearby on the floor.

The *cempala* and *keprak* are central to a dhalang's craft (see Figure 5-7). Even with the advent of a new system of gamelan accompaniment, I have seen no changes in Purbo Asmoro's *cempala-keprak* signals, and have never heard a commentator speak of a reduced role in this complex and fully embedded system as a result of the new *iringan* systems.

Kombangan and Sung Cues

Dhalang also use sung cues to signal transitions. *Kombangan* are single pitches or short phrases the dhalang sings while the gamelan is playing, which serve as an added dimension to the various melodic lines going on, with text taken from snippets of *sulukan* texts. Most of the time the *kombangan* simply embellish and enhance the melodic lines. But at key points, a *kombangan* can be used to signal the gamelan to move to a different section of a piece, such as the *ngelik*, or into a different piece, such as the characteristic *kombangan* that signal transition into an

ayak-ayak form. Although there is less use of decorative *kombangan* in *garapan* performances, due to the decrease in extended musical filler, the use of signaling *kombangan* has remained the same. The dhalang's use of vocal introductions to *ketawang*, *ladrang*, and *gendhing* choruses has dramatically increased due to the increasing use of these forms. In a *garapan* performance where musicians are following a summary sheet, the *pesindhèn*, *gérong* section, or single male vocalist will normally sing these openings, but if they neglect to, the dhalang will step in and sing the introduction in order to retain the dramatic rhythm.

Signals From Wayang Figures

A final method of signaling is the use of the wayang figures themselves. During a battle, departure, or comic scene, characters appear on the screen with a purposeful posturing of the arms in a way that communicates to an experienced drummer exactly what accompanying pattern is desired. This type of signal has become even more prevalent in *garapan* performances. Purbo Asmoro's musicians know that he will use repetitions of *sampak* for the initial battles in a final match-up but that for the final blows there will be something special. As the last battle approaches, the dhalang pauses for a moment and poises characters in a way that sends his drummer a visual cue. Another example of this is Purbo Asmoro's preference for regional pieces as accompaniment for characters from more exotic origins than the Pandhawa and Kurawa. He will often position these characters in a deliberate way so as to communicate to his musicians, for example, "chose something regional," and his experienced players will know the intent.

Mayangkara is expected to follow the story during a performance. Vocalists, as reflected in Suyatmi's comment at the beginning of this chapter, cannot function professionally in *garapan* performances by simply following the summary sheet or they will miss crucial introductions and be late coming in to choruses. They need to follow key places where Purbo Asmoro has crafted special poignant moments and expects sustained dramatic tension without empty moments caused by confused singers. *Pesindhèn*, except for those invited only as attractions during the interludes, must know when a solo vocal introduction is approaching, as well as which one to choose. The *gérong* section is responsible for coming in at key moments with a wide

variety of choral *sulukan*. Purbo Asmoro rarely appears frustrated on stage, but it is when the singers come in late, miss a vocal introduction entirely, allow the dramatic thread to be dropped because of delay, or shuffle through their notation to no avail, that he has been known to give an exasperated look to his right.



Figure 5-8: Mayangkara's *balungan* section—players highly knowledgable about lakon, as most are dhalang themselves.

Not only the singers but also *balungan* players have more responsibility in *garapan* performances than in classical. Aside from the regional selections mentioned, when they see the story approaching a particular compelling moment, they need to find non-verbal ways to communicate which *garap balungan* from the Mayangkara repertory could be used. Sometimes this is determined by the summary sheet. If not, one lead *balungan* player will either make a directional motion with his mallet indicating the topography of a characteristic snippet, hover over a determining opening pitch, play the first phrase alone, or, least successful of all, mouth a title or clue to the other musicians. The originating signal, in any case, will come from Purbo Asmoro positioning a key character in a purposeful way on the screen, a sort of metaphorical winking of his eye. Obviously this requires tremendous knowledge, experience, and flexibility on the part of the *balungan* section who, in classical style, do not have such a role. As in the *sasmita* to a *gendhing*, the choice might not have been what the dhalang had in mind, but everyone works with it. This situation only presents itself about once a performance, and only in performances where Mayangkara has not been highly rehearsed, but it occurs in the most climatic and dramatic of moments and is a crucial responsibility (see Figure 5-8).

In summary, the traditional signaling system has actually changed very little in Mayangkara's *garapan* performances. Purbo Asmoro does not want his gamelan accompaniment to function as a through-composed film score. He retains *sasmita* as

much as he can, out of both aesthetic principle and also a desire to retain the potential spontaneity of the performance. The *keprak* and *cempala* signaling system is in place as it always has been. *Kombangan* functioning as signals are retained, and vocal-snippet introductions are far more prevalent in *garapan* performances. The greatest difference in signaling systems between classical and *garapan* performances is the high level of responsibility the senior vocalists, both male and female, have to follow the story, and the amount of both responsibility and authority a lead *balungan* player has to choose how the most dramatic of moments will be shaped musically. Ultimately, the path gamelan accompaniment takes is shaped by these signals, not the summary sheets.

Performances Without Mayangkara

When performing with musicians other than Mayangkara, Purbo Asmoro never presents complete *iringan garap*, but rather what he calls *iringan setengah garap* (halfway *garap*ed) That's not to say, however, that his performances as a whole in these cases are not considered all-night *garapan* style. The elements that depend entirely on his own abilities, and not those of the musicians, may very well be entirely *garap*ed (recrafted scene structure, characterization, lakon interpretation, movement and narrative techniques). But they may rely on traditional repertory and treatment for the gamelan accompaniment. In this case, he need only scribble some notes to the *gendèr*, *kendhang*, or *rebab* player in order to get them started, and from there cue primarily traditional selections.

For example, he may ask them to start the performance with the *gendèr* introduction to *Ldr Éling-éling*. This is a classical piece in any gamelan musician's repertory, but not one musicians would expect to use to begin a wayang. It can be used to craft a prologue. Or he may quickly teach the group a very simple and repetitive *garap balungan* (1613 1216 is one often used, from Subono's *Ayak Hong*) to use as a backdrop to his opening. Depending on the group and how much he knows about their background and abilities, he may add some non-classical selections to the scribbled note, but he does not stray far from traditional repertory. Purbo Asmoro is well respected for his ability to be flexible in this way. He performs with beginners' gamelan groups from Kalimantan to Sumatra to Seattle to the accompaniment of only *ayak-ayak, srepeg, sampak* and one or two traditional *ladrang*

and *lancaran*. Yet he will continue to employ entirely new concepts in the areas of lakon interpretation, scene structure, movement, characterization, and literary techniques.

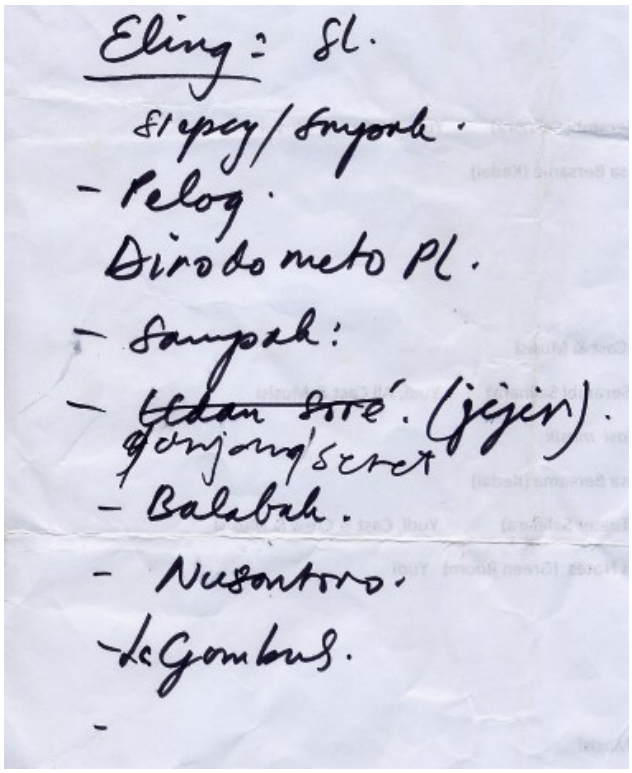


Figure 5-9: Purbo Asmoro's scribbled notes to musicians before a performance in Sragen, 2009.

An example can be seen on a scrap of paper where Purbo Asmoro scrawled a plan for a local gamelan troupe in Sragen to follow, when performing without any rehearsal in 2009 (see Figure 5-9). The musicians were an elderly, experienced, semi-professional group. He jotted these ideas down at 8:45 PM for a 9:00 PM start. The abbreviated language on the paper tells the group to start with *Ldr Éling-éling* in *sléndro*, which will be followed by repeated *srepeg* and *sampak*. It is unclear from the paper whether the *gendhing lampah* will be in *manyura* or *nem* in this opening, and it could go either way cued by the dhalang's *kombangan*. Then the plan shows a moves to the *pélog* scale, an important red flashing light for the *gendèr* player—hence prominent on the plan with the word "pélog"—who should be the first one to switch, in order to cue the other musicians. Later, the group will need to be ready to play *Ldr Diradameta* in *pélog* (the *rebab* or *gendèr* player will probably want to mentally prepare for the introduction), followed by many repetitions of *sampak* (repetitions signaled by the use of the colon, as with Western score notation).

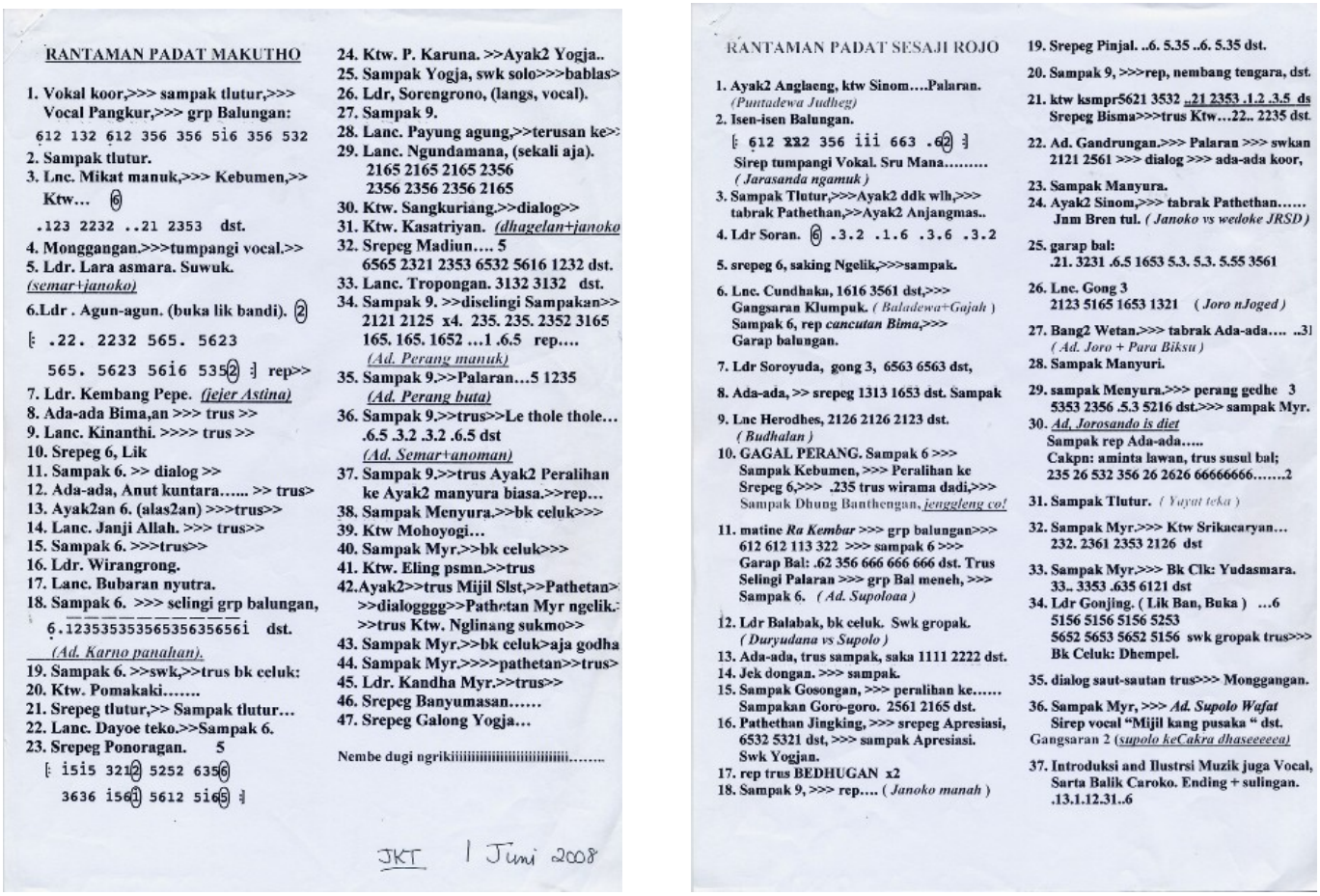
We can see that Purbo Asmoro's original plan was to use *Gd Udan Soré* in *sléndro* for the opening court scene (*jejer*), but he decided against it, noting *Ldr Gonjang Sèrèt* instead. *Gonjang Sèrèt* is a much more popularly known piece than *Gd Udan Soré*, and also much shorter. Did Purbo Asmoro change his plans because he wasn't sure if the musicians could handle *Udan Soré* with no notation and no rehearsal, especially the vocalists, since this would have been done with vocal

chorus, Nartosabdo style? Or did he just want a shorter selection? Or was there was something in the vocal text or dramatic feel of *Gonjang Sèrèt* that made it more appropriate? It turns out it was none of the above (interview, May 2009), but rather it was because of the nature of his preferred transition from *sampak* in *pélog* to *Udan Soré* in *sléndro*, which is complex and needs rehearsal and coordination. *Gonjang Sèrèt* would simply involve *sampak* ending in *pélog*, and then Purbo Asmoro singing a *sléndro* vocal introduction to *Gonjang Sèrèt*, putting the responsibility on him for the transition. The word *jejer* though, is the most telling word on the entire paper, as from that the musicians immediately knew that Purbo Asmoro would be performing a prologue, and not starting with a court audience scene.

Musicians could infer, from conventional practice, that "*Balabak*" (*Ldr Balabak* in *pélog* by Nartosabdo) would be used for dispersal of the court, and *Ldr Nusantara, pélog*, would open the *Limbukan* scene. "*Lc Gambuh*" refers to a troop departure piece, *Lancaran Gambuh* in *pélog*, which would follow *Limbukan*. Evidently at this point, which would be about 12:45 AM, Purbo Asmoro planned to use simple, common pieces, needing no more special notes.

Padat Performances

Padat performances require intense rehearsal. In fact, *padat* performances theoretically require the most rehearsal of all, since all dramatic elements are densely packed, no time is "wasted," and transitions are fast-paced and tight with cueing systems pared down to a bare minimum. When musicians at ISI Surakarta are preparing a *padat* performance, they hold some 20-30 rehearsals for a 45-minute performance. Again, Purbo Asmoro avoids too many rehearsals when preparing for all-night performances, but has often commented that *padat* performances do need to be tightly orchestrated and require the most rehearsal of anything. From the summary sheets for the two *padat* performances in this documentation (see Figure 5-10), we can see that the number of special pieces is basically the same in these two-hour performances as in the all-night performances.



RANTAMAN PADAT MAKUTHO

1. Vokal koor,>>> sampak tlutur,>>>
Vocal Pangkur,>>> grp Balungan:
612 132 612 356 356 5i6 356 532
2. Sampak tlutur.
3. Lnc. Mikat manuk,>>> Kebumen,>>
Ktw... 6
.123 2232 ..21 2353 dst.
4. Monggangan.>>>tumpangi vocal.>>
5. Ldr. Lara asmara. Suwuk.
(semar+janoko)
6.Ldr . Agun-agun. (buka lik bandi). 2
.22. 2232 565. 5623
565. 5623 56i6 5352 rep>>
7. Ldr. Kembang Pepe. *(jejer Astina)*
8. Ada-ada Bima,an >>> trus >>
9. Lanc. Kinanthi. >>>> trus >>
10. Srepeg 6, Lik
11. Sampak 6. >> dialog >>
12. Ada-ada, Anut kuntara..... >> trus>
13. Ayak2an 6. (alas2an) >>>trus>>
14. Lanc. Janji Allah. >>> trus>>
15. Sampak 6. >>>trus>>
16. Ldr. Wirangrong.
17. Lanc. Bubaran nyutra.
18. Sampak 6. >>> selingi grp balungan,
6.12353535356535635656i dst.
(Ad. Karno panahan).
19. Sampak 6. >>swk,>>trus bk celuk:
20. Ktw. Pomakaki.....
21. Srepeg tlutur,>> Sampak tlutur...
22. Lanc. Dayoe teko.>>Sampak 6.
23. Srepeg Ponoragan. 5
i5i5 3212 5252 6356
3636 i561 5612 5i65
24. Ktw. P. Karuna. >>Ayak2 Yogja..
25. Sampak Yogja, swk solo>>>bablas>
26. Ldr, Sorengrono, (langs, vocal).
27. Sampak 9.
28. Lanc. Payung agung,>>terusan ke>>
29. Lanc. Ngundamana, (sekali aja).
2165 2165 2165 2356
2356 2356 2356 2165
30. Ktw. Sangkuriang.>>dialog>>
31. Ktw. Kasatriyan. *(dhagelan+janoko*
32. Srepeg Madiun.... 5
6565 2321 2353 6532 5616 1232 dst.
33. Lanc. Tropongan. 3132 3132 dst.
34. Sampak 9. >>diselingi Sampakan>>
2121 2125 x4. 235. 235. 2352 3165
165. 165. 1652 ...1 .6.5 rep....
(Ad. Perang manuk)
35. Sampak 9.>>Palaran...5 1235
(Ad. Perang buta)
36. Sampak 9.>>trus>>Le thole thole...
.6.5 .3.2 .3.2 .6.5 dst
(Ad. Semar+anoman)
37. Sampak 9.>>trus Ayak2 Peralihan
ke Ayak2 manyura biasa.>>rep...
38. Sampak Menyura.>>bk celuk>>>
39. Ktw Mohoyogi...
40. Sampak Myr.>>bk celuk>>>
41. Ktw. Eling psmn.>>trus
42.Ayak2>>trus Mijil Slst,>>Pathetan>
>>dialogggg>>Pathetan Myr ngelik.
>>trus Ktw. Nglinang sukmo>>
43. Sampak Myr.>>bk celuk>aja godha
44. Sampak Myr.>>>>pathetan>>trus>
45. Ldr. Kandha Myr.>>trus>>
46. Srepeg Banyumasan.....
47. Srepeg Galong Yogja...
Nembe dugi ngrikiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiii.....
JKT 1 Juni 2008

RANTAMAN PADAT SESAJI ROJO

1. Ayak2 Anglaeng, ktw Sinom....Palaran.
(Puntadewa Judheg)
2. Isen-isen Balungan.
612 232 356 iii 663 .62
Sirep tumpangi Vokal. Sru Mana.....
(Jarasanda ngamuk)
3. Sampak Tlutur,>>>Ayak2 ddk wlh,>>>
tabrak Pathethan,>>Ayak2 Anjangmas..
4. Ldr Soran. 6 .3.2 .1.6 .3.6 .3.2
5. srepeg 6, saking Ngelik,>>>sampak.
6. Lnc. Cundhaku, 1616 3561 dst,>>>
Gangsaran Klumpuk. *(Baladewa+Gajah)*
Sampak 6, rep *cancutan Bima*,>>>
Garap balungan.
7. Ldr Soroyuda, gong 3, 6563 6563 dst,
8. Ada-ada, >> srepeg 1313 1653 dst. Sampak
9. Lnc Herodhes, 2126 2126 2123 dst.
(Budhalan)
10. GAGAL PERANG. Sampak 6 >>>
Sampak Kebumen, >>> Peralihan ke
Srepeg 6,>>> .235 trus wirama dadi,>>>
Sampak Dhung Banthengan, *jenggleng co!*
11. matine *Ra Kembar* >>> grp balungan>>>
612 612 113 322 >>> sampak 6 >>>
Garap Bal: .62 356 666 666 666 dst. Trus
Selingi Palaran >>> grp Bal meneh, >>>
Sampak 6. *(Ad. Supoloaa)*
12. Ldr Balabak, bk celuk. Swk gropak.
(Duryudana vs Supolo)
13. Ada-ada, trus sampak, saka 1111 2222 dst.
14. Jek dongan. >>> sampak.
15. Sampak Gosongan, >>> peralihan ke.....
Sampakan Goro-goro. 2561 2165 dst.
16. Pathethan Jingking, >>> srepeg Apresiasi,
6532 5321 dst, >>> sampak Apresiasi.
Swk Yogjan.
17. rep trus BEDHUGAN x2
18. Sampak 9, >>> rep.... (*Janoko manah*)
19. Srepeg Pinjal. ..6. 5.35 ..6. 5.35 dst.
20. Sampak 9, >>>rep, nembang tengara, dst.
21. ktw ksmpr5621 3532 ..21 2353 .1.2 .3.5 ds
Srepeg Bisma>>>trus Ktw...22.. 2235 dst.
22. Ad. Gandrungan.>>> Palaran >>> swkan
2121 2561 >>> dialog >>> ada-ada koor,
23. Sampak Manyura.
24. Ayak2 Sinom,>>> tabrak Pathethan.....
Jnm Bren tul. *(Janoko vs wedoke JRSD)*
25. garap bal:
.21. 3231 .6.5 1653 5.3. 5.3. 5.55 3561
26. Lnc. Gong 3
2123 5165 1653 1321 (*Joro nJoged*)
27. Bang2 Wetan.>>> tabrak Ada-ada.... ..31
(Ad. Joro + Para Biksu)
28. Sampak Manyuri.
29. sampak Menyura.>>> perang gedhe 3
5353 2356 .5.3 5216 dst.>>> sampak Myr.
30. *Ad. Jorosando is diet*
Sampak rep Ada-ada.....
Cakpn: aminta lawan, trus susul bal;
235 26 532 356 26 2626 66666666.....2
31. Sampak Tlutur. *(Yuyut teka)*
32. Sampak Myr.>>> Ktw Srikacaryan...
232. 2361 2353 2126 dst
33. Sampak Myr.>>> Bk Clk: Yudasmara.
33.. 3353 .635 6121 dst
34. Ldr Gonjing. (Lik Ban, Buka) ...6
5156 5156 5156 5253
5652 5653 5652 5156 swk gropak trus>>>
Bk Celuk: Dhempel.
35. dialog saut-sautan trus>>> Monggangan.
36. Sampak Myr, >>> *Ad. Supolo Wafat*
Sirep vocal "Mijil kang pusaka " dst.
Gangsaran 2 (*supolo keCakra dhaseeeeea*)
37. Introduksi and Ilustrsi Muzik juga Vocal,
Sarta Balik Caroko. Ending + sulingan.
.13.1.12.31..6

Figure 5-10: Purbo Asmoro's summary sheets for the Lontar project *padat* performances of *Rama's Crown* (left) on 1 June 2008, and *The Grand Offering of the Kings* (right) on 31 May 2008, at Dharmawangsa Hotel in Jakarta.

Iringan Not the Determining Factor

Despite spending so many pages on the new vocabulary of gamelan accompaniment before examining other elements, and despite the fact that Purbo Asmoro himself designs the gamelan accompaniment early in the process of planning a performance, this element is not in fact the determining factor for him, in defining a performance as *garapan*. As described above, Purbo Asmoro has executed what he would refer to as *garapan* performances with groups from Balikpapan to Seattle with the accompaniment of barely more than the most basic of *gendhing lampah*. As long as the story has been consciously crafted to focus on a theme or conflict, and as long as scene structure, narration, movement techniques and characterization have been rethought beyond the constraints of traditional interpretation, rethinking of the

accompaniment can be compromised or sacrificed if the gamelan troupe is of limited ability. Purbo Asmoro still refers to these performances as *garapan*.

However, non-traditional gamelan accompaniment seems to be the deciding factor in what is considered *garapan* by much of the public and many beginning dhalang. Although the initial *padat* scripts employed mostly traditional accompaniment, the opposite seems to be more prevalent in current practice, with a general consensus that the term *garapan*, first and foremost, relates to the gamelan accompaniment. In fact, many observers judge a performance as *garapan* solely on the basis of unusual gamelan accompaniment, even if the dhalang has not reworked any of the other elements. As we have seen in this chapter, and will see in Chapters 6–8, Purbo Asmoro has different standards for himself (interview, 2009):

> It's not a *garapan* performance just because it opens with something other than a classical *gendhing* and is full of startling, new accompaniment choices. What is important is that every single dramatic element of the performance has been conceptualized anew by the dhalang, based on the idea of focusing in on theme, character and message. Conceptualization and special crafting of every element is the key. And that can be done to the accompaniment of *Ayak-ayak* frankly, although of course ideally the *iringan* has to be conceptualized anew as well.

SIX

PROLOGUE

Let's say it's a wayang done in classical style. *Pak Camat* and *Pak Lurah*[1] arrive during Talu, stay for an hour or so, accompany their wives home, and then decide to come back to the wayang site. When they return, the first court scene narration hasn't even finished yet! And if they decide not to return? What have they gotten from the performance? If this is the way the performance precedes, by the time it's midnight what have we accomplished? And these days, people watching wayang only last until about midnight. Truly. Almost any region you go to, this is true. People can manage to stay only until about midnight. After midnight they will start to leave—some may go to the little *warung* and have something to drink but then they will go straight home, and the like. When we realize this we have to ask ourselves, if up to midnight is the window when the audience is the freshest, why not turn things around and make use of that time, so that when they go home they have gotten something out of the performance, and have experienced—even if only a little bit—each of the different elements of wayang? (Purbo Asmoro, Balai Soedjatmoko, May 2013)

[1]The provinces of Indonesia, each led by a governor, are broken into regions called *kabupaten*, and then further divided into districts called *kecamatan*. *Kecamatan* are divided again into *kelurahan* and/or villages. *Pak Camat* is the generic name for the appointed head of a *kecamatan*, and *Pak Lurah* the appointed head of a *kelurahan*. At a wayang, they would sit up front as VIP guests, and would have been involved in either the sponsorship or the permissions for the wayang. When *Pak Bupati* let along *Pak Gubernur* are in attendance it is an unusual honor for the dhalang.

This chapter will examine the structure of prologues, as crafted by Purbo Asmoro for his all-night *garapan* performances over an 11-year period, from 2004 to 2015. As we will see, Purbo Asmoro crafts prologues with two main intents: to offer audiences as much storyline and variety as possible before midnight, and to firmly define his themes for the episode from the start. We will begin by examining the prologues to *Rama's Crown* and *The Grand Offering of the Kings* (Asmoro 2013) and then look briefly at a wide variety of other performances' prologues in order to draw broader generalizations about dramatic function and Purbo Asmoro's processes.

What Do We "Get" in 30 Minutes?
Rama's Crown

Classical Opening

What would audiences experience in the first half-hour of a classical performance, as opposed to a contemporary-interpretive performance? If we take the palace-classical performance of *Rama's Crown* as an example, in the first half-hour we have the opportunity to enjoy a beautiful gamelan piece (*Kabor*) and hear a familiar, standard poetic narration for the first audience scene. This is followed by two expansive *sulukan*, and elaborate greetings between the characters [MK-Class 1, tr 1]. Yet up to the half-hour mark (29 minutes to be precise, in this recording) we find out nothing specific about the lakon to be performed, beyond the information that it is from the *Mahabharata* story cycle and takes place during King Duryudana's reign in Astina Kingdom. As Purbo Asmoro alluded to in the above quote (exaggeration about the actual length of the narration aside) the *camat* and *lurah* officials are perhaps ready to go home at this point and yet, so far, the performance is identical to any of the 100 or more lakon that take place during Duryudana's reign.[2]

In the following transcription and translation of the opening narration to *Rama's Crown*, classical version, sections are highlighted that are specific to Astina Kingdom. If the audience scene took place in any other earthly kingdom, everything except the highlighted sections would be much the same. Of course the exact

[2] It is impossible to name an exact number, as there are so many *lakon carangan*, with more appearing every decade. Lakon taking place during King Duryudana's reign in Astina Kingdom are the most commonly performed, and form the bulk of the standard, Central Javanese wayang repertory.

language of this standard narration varies among regions and among individual dhalang. But the same dhalang, performing two different lakon on two different nights in traditional style, would only need to adjust the highlighted sections to fit the kingdom in question, and would have committed this narration to memory early in his career. What is more, there are no phrases, or even single words, specific to this particular lakon in the entire excerpt.

Jejer Sepisan: The Kingdom of Astina

[The *kayon* is removed from the middle of the *debog* (banana log), twirled, brought lightly to the dhalang's face in reverence, and placed to the far right.]

→*buka gendèr, Ketawang Gendhing KABOR, kethuk 2 kerep, sléndro nem*

[Enter two maid servants, King Duryudana, Durna, Sangkuni, and Kartamarma.]

(*Kabor*, **the gamelan comes down in volume**.)

NARRATION: From a vast and silent emptiness emerges existence. Which land is it, the place deemed *kaéka adi dasa purwa? Éka* meaning one, *adi* exalted, *dasa* ten, *purwa* beginning. Although the gods' creations are many, each sheltered by the arch of the sky, supported by the weight of the earth, and nestled in by ocean shores—and although many stand alone in their excellence—none are equal to the kingdom of Astina, also known as Liman Benawi. Thus it serves as the opening of our story. Search one hundred countries you will not find two, nor among a thousand, ten, to match this one.

The old adage is fitting: *panjang punjung, pasir wukir, loh jinawi, gemah ripah, tata tur raharja. Panjang,* as in far and wide its reputation; *punjung,* as in noble its name. *Pasir,* as in oceans; *wukir,* as in mountains. For it is an expansive country with mountain ranges as backdrop, rice fields to one side, planted fields to the other, and a great port as its entrance. *Loh,* for fertile is its soil; *jinawi,* as goods are readily available to all. *Gemah*, meaning the prosperity of trading continues unceasingly day and night, as there are no dangers of any kind hindering its path. *Aripah,* being a kind of bustle, reflected in the merchants from all over who flock here in search of opportunity, crowding together in harmony. Their roofs touch, their walls meet, making wide spaces feel cozy, so prosperous is the land. Livestock and fowl are tended in open fields untethered; by the day scattered about the fields grazing, while at dusk returning to their respective pens.

Palace, state and justice officials, every one is a pillar of wisdom and good judgment, eternally dedicated to the prosperity and health of the kingdom. This allows the tillers of the land to feel safe, reassured, and able to concentrate their efforts on the practice of farming. A kingdom considered to be an inspiring flame, a focus of light; firmly established, its fame widespread. Those nearby bow down in respect, while those from afar bend down in homage. Those in deference however, are not only from within Java but from across the sea as well. Numerous foreign kings profess allegiance to Astina, not because they have been defeated in battle, but simply because they are taken with the ideals of the kingdom. They even offer young maidens into the king's service, and in the appropriate season each year, pay annual tribute in the form of taxes and tokens, along with finery and filigree, raw goods, finished goods.

Who is the one holding the title Ruler of Astina? He with the right to be referred to as King Duryudana the Great; also known as Kurupati, Jakapitana, Anggendarisuta. "Duryudana" meaning a king extremely talented in battle. "Kurupati" as he heads up the entire lineage of the Kuru family. "Jakapitana" because when His Majesty was crowned king he was still a bachelor,

had not yet entered into marriage. And finally "Anggendarisuta" as His Highness is, of course, the eldest son of the revered Queen Gendari.[3]

It is said that King Duryudana is famous the world over as a generous and giving ruler, who enjoys distributing charity and serving the poor, yet at the same time is not well versed in matters of discipline. He indulges the every whim of his one hundred siblings residing with him in the palace. As a result, his brothers go overboard in their arrogant displays of power, position, and pride, and are forever cultivating their closeness with the king.[4] Yet, to describe the breadth of the colonies or the glory of the kingdom would take an entire night without stopping. Thus, we had best bring the narration to an end here. It is now Monday, and the king has appeared to hold court in the tiled Audience Hall, sitting on an ivory throne embossed in gold and bedecked with stones and gems. Under the throne lays a soft, luxurious carpet that exudes the scent of musk and is sprinkled with flowers. From left and right the king is being fanned with peacock plumes, causing his fragrance to waft all the way through to the outer courtyard.

There is a striking silence, with not even the sound of a cricket chirping; the leaves are motionless, the wind lifeless. All that can be heard is the lilting sound of the court gamelan, complimented by the chattering of the birds perched in the banyan tree, together with the sounds of the court's craftsmen—brass workers, goldsmiths and blacksmiths—all busy at work. Heard from inside the king's Audience Hall—"cling, clang, cling, clang"—their rhythm interlocks in a pattern resembling gamelan, enhancing the air of beauty that takes hold over the Audience Hall. The courtyard is packed with flying pennants, large parasols, and ceremonial umbrellas, making it seem almost overcast and dark. Officials appearing to pay homage before the king overflow like a rising tide, reaching all the way to the rear gate of the palace grounds.

Now who is he, sitting respectfully alongside the king? He is the court tutor, the priest Durna, also known as Kumbayana. And sitting cross-legged, with his head bowed in humility before the ruler, we see the Chief Minister, Sir Sangkuni. Not to be forgotten is Prince Kartamarma, the court keeper of records, who is poised, ready to be directed. After all have been in position for some time, prepared for the audience, the king gives a signal to his chief minister that he is ready to speak.

In summary, 87% of the 1,046 total words are entirely generic, 13% are specific to any lakon opening in Astina Kingdom, and are highlighted here, and none of the words are in any way specific to this lakon. A signal is then given for the gamelan to come up in volume, which has been playing the first section *(mérong)* of *Kabor* softly. The musicians then move on to the second section of *Ktw Gd Kabor (inggah ladrang),* which, depending on what treatment is used, could result in a musical interlude lasting anywhere from two to five more minutes.

After two lengthy, atmospheric poems (*sulukan*) are sung by the dhalang, the members of the court exchange the formal greetings below. These greetings are specific to the relative position of each of the characters present, so the highlighting

[3] Although this section is specific to Astina, the exact same general format would be followed for any kingdom: a list of the many different names of the king.

[4] This section is rather unusual in its criticism of King Duryudana, and reflects a more modern realism, to be discussed further in the next chapter. Purbo Asmoro took this section from *Pakem Pedalangan Lampahan Makutharama,* Siswoharsoyo, 1979. It is the only passage that actually addresses Duryudana's character. In a typical palace-classical narration more praise for the king would be in its place. Sometimes it was difficult for Purbo to consistently stay within the restraints of palace-classical style for this project, and his *garapan* approach seeps through, even in this performance.

technique above is not applicable. The exchanges would not be repeated verbatim in another episode, as one or two of the characters might be different, but the general wording, type of greeting, and spirit of the content would be the same. This type of dialogue simply communicates an elaborate show of respect between one character and another, extreme humility on the part of court members, and a bit of small talk, with nothing specific to the lakon.

DURYUDANA: My respects Durna, beloved elder. I greet your arrival in the Audience Hall with open arms and the greatest of deference.

DURNA: Ah well, my, my, yes, Your Highness. My heart is overflowing with joy to be here. I accept this greeting, and can only hope that I may live up to the expectations. As your elder from Sokalima, I offer my deepest prayers and wishes in the name of His Highness, the King.

DURYUDANA: I hold your good wishes in the highest esteem and consider them to be a precious amulet; may they enhance my strength and steadfastness. My elder Durna, perhaps it comes as a surprise that I sought you out and asked you to appear before me today.

DURNA: Because of the urgency of the summons by Your Imperial Highness, I traveled the entire way from the hermitage to the Audience Hall in the greatest strides possible. Even if my garments got torn a bit on the way, I paid no heed. Does His Majesty require my expertise with regard to the secrets of success in life, the key to power of the spirit, or how to attain physical resilience and strength? If so, I am more than ready and willing, right here and now, to impart this knowledge to His Highness.

DURYUDANA: I feel the strength from the magical *tala* oil that was applied to my entire body those many years ago has served me well enough in those areas. I apologize dear Durna, my elder, please be seated comfortably.

DURNA: Ah well, my, my, yes, whatever you wish. Nothing is lacking with regard to my comfort here, Your Highness.

DURYUDANA: Uncle Sangkuni, do I understand correctly that it engendered a sense of nervousness in your heart when I called upon you to appear in the Audience Hall?

SANGKUNI: I am your humble servant. I answered His Majesty's summons in extreme haste, and as I was waiting outside it was as if my chest were tight with concern. I felt an ominous and unsettling premonition in my depths. But now that I am in the presence of His Majesty the Great, a sense of calm has taken over my heart. It is as if I have been washed over by fresh morning dew drops, and all apprehension has vanished.

DURYUDANA: How is that the case Uncle? Please do explain further.

SANGKUNI: Ah yes, you see I feel as though my very existence is protected by being before Your Highness, Great Ruler on this Earth. Thus I urge His Majesty to employ me as you wish. Hand me the most difficult of missions and the most far-flung of tasks. If I meet with injury find a way to use that to your gain, or cast me out without a care and continue on. I am completely at Your Majesty's beck and call.

DURYUDANA: Don't misunderstand your situation, Uncle. I would never order your punishment or pain. If you were to experience death or serious harm, it would only be as a result of your bravery in all matters, and your great sense of responsibility, which enables you to engage

> in the most complex of problems. Now Uncle, what is the current situation across my kingdom, the land of Astina?
>
> **SANGKUNI**: Ah, yes, yes, well, the people are in complete solidarity with your reign. Their hearts are joined and they work with one intent and purpose, which is to strive day and night to enhance His Majesty the King's wellbeing.
>
> **DURYUDANA**: Excellent, I am thoroughly pleased to hear that, and express enthusiastic approval. Now, I ask of you respected elder, dear Durna, please come forward a bit and take a seat, as there is something troubling me that I would like to explain at this time.

These greetings (known as *bagé-binagé*, or exchanges of acknowledgement) are followed by another shorter *sulukan*. At the half-hour mark, Duryudana finally brings up a dream he had, in which a boon is to be handed down to a worthy mortal by the gods.

Pak Camat, Pak Lurah, and their wives, if for any reason asked about the lakon's plot upon returning home after 30 minutes, could only offer the information, "He was doing one of those *wahyu* (boon from the gods) stories and it started in Duryudana's kingdom." Even the one detail about the *wahyu* became clear only in the last few seconds of their time at the wayang.

Contemporary-Interpretive Opening

By contrast, how much of the plot would Pak Camat, Pak Lurah, and the audience have gotten out of the contemporary-interpretive performance of *Rama's Crown* in the same 30 minutes?[5] Below is a summary of the first half-hour, followed by a word-for word transcript in English [MK-CInt 1, tr 1]:

> **Prologue Part A: *Gara-gara Kayon* Narration[6]** (8 minutes)
> All sorts of natural disasters are ravaging the land in ever increasing frequency. Those hardest hit by these tragedies are women, children, and the poor. Arjuna appears distressed by the suffering. The Kurawa brothers dismiss the plight of the victims as not their concern, and embark on a 40-day, 40-night orgy of gambling and drinking.

[5] This is a comparison of the unfolding of the plotline only. It is meant to support Purbo Asmoro's own comments in seminars, interviews, and performances about how he strives to offer audiences more storyline than just a standard, generic narration by 10:00 PM. Classical performances are profoundly beautiful aesthetic experiences, and these comparisons are not meant to challenge that.

[6] These sub-headings for sections of the prologue are mine, not Purbo Asmoro's, and are explained later in the chapter. I include them here so they are available for reference later, after the categories have been explained.

Prologue Part B: A Protagonist and His Adviser (11 minutes)

As Arjuna turns to meditation for an answer, his adviser and loyal companion Semar appears from above. Semar encourages Arjuna to take a step toward action, even if he may feel helpless to face such overwhelming obstacles alone. He praises Arjuna's feeling of uncertainty, explaining that humility is a positive quality. He reminds Arjuna that he must always strengthen his spiritual and intellectual understanding in life, while seeking balance and perspective. Finally, Semar tells Arjuna about the boon, known as the Legacy of Rama's Crown, to be handed down by the gods to a worthy mortal, and encourages Arjuna to try to attain it. Arjuna departs.

Prologue Part C: An Ogre Antagonist (9 minutes)

Kumbakarna, from the days of the *Ramayana*, appears. He is restless and being pursued by his older brother Dasamuka. They are caught up in a kind of ill-defined middle-world hell, with no chance of a peaceful afterlife. Dasamuka feels perfectly happy to live there, as he has secured a position as ruler. Kumbakarna, on the other hand, refuses to accept this eternal damnation. He knows this has happened because of his association with Dasamuka's criminal deeds in life, but he plans to strive for a way out.

Prologue Part D: A Love Scene (10 minutes)

Kumbakarna takes off in search of redemption, and is visited by the spirit of his wife, Kiswani. [This is the half-hour point. The full prologue lasts for eight more minutes, during which Kiswani and Kumbakarna express their eternal love. She assures her husband that the answer lies in finding his little brother Wibisana, who is still living, and asking his advice about achieving peace in the afterlife.]

Prologue Part A: *Gara-gara Kayon* Narration[7]

Ayak-ayak Anglaèng, pélog lima
As a sacred and powerful mantra says,
"Om … may there be no obstacles to our entreaty,"
Wellbeing to all before us,
As the powers that heal come forth,
Maladies among us are snuffed out,
The death of all maladies leads to wellbeing,
Wellbeing for all the living.

[The three *kayon* are removed from *debog* (banana log) in various combinations, and twirled.]

→*Sampak Galongan, pélog lima*

[7] The following transcript may be a lot to digest, but really that is the point of inserting it here in full. I want the reader to sense the dense, fast-paced, transition-filled nature of some sections of the prologue, and yet the philosophical nature of other sections. I mean to point out the specificity (lack of generic content) in the vocal and narrative texts, and the vast contrast between this 30 minutes and the first 30 minutes of the palace-classical performance. To get an idea of how this prologue represents aspects of the entire plotline, read the classical version summary in Appendix 2.

[The flame sides of the *kayon* face forward, depicting destruction caused by natural disasters.]

(*Sampak Galongan*, **sirep)**[8]

→male chorus sings an *ada-ada* **over** *Sampak Galongan***:**
The land in chaos, the tumult horrifying,
Ravaging destruction, all is as if swept away,
Great suffering takes hold, finding its end in death.

(*Sampak Galongan,* **udhar then sirep)**

NARRATION: The universe is aging. Disasters rock the earth. Violent earthquakes; landslides; volcanoes erupting, spitting out oozing hot magma that envelopes the villages. Tempests sweep away all foliage from the earth. The ocean waters are rising, rolling over the coastline. Hot mud springs up and spills out from the center of the earth. Lava overflows, boulders overturn. Only the chaos of death, and the multiple cries of the victims.

(*Sampak Galongan***, udhar)→***Garap Balungan Tiga-Perempat, pélog lima*

[Villagers are portrayed as victims of the natural disasters.]

VILLAGERS: Help! Help! Oh my, what's to become of me!

(*Tiga-Perempat,* **sirep)**

[Arjuna hears the cries.]
(*Tiga-Perempat,* **udhar)**

[Dursasana appears.]

→crashed into by *Lancaran PANCER PAPAT, pélog lima*

DURSASANA: Ha, ha, ha. Ha, ha, ha, ha. Come on guys! Ha, ha, ha, ha,ha.

[The Kurawa are seen passing through the village.]

SANGKUNI: Let's go my friends, keep it flowing!

KARTAMARMA: Hey, bring that bottle too. And the flask, the flask. Don't leave that behind either.

DURMAGATI: Don't forget the gin rummy, the gin rummy. And the poker cards, and the rummy cards. Hey, are you playing against me?

(*Pancer Papat*, **sirep)**

DURSASANA: Ha, ha, ha, ha. Uncle, ha, ha, ha, ha, don't just stand there, come on! Let's keep the party going for 40 days and 40 nights.

---

[8] *Sirep* is a musical command referring to when the gamelan comes down in volume so that the dhalang's voice, (or, in some more contemporary treatments like this, the musicians' voices) can be heard over the instruments. In addition to reducing volume, the louder instruments like *demung*, *saron*, *peking*, and *bonang* drop out temporarily, and the drummer often leads the musicians into a more relaxed tempo. The opposite of *sirep* is *udhar*, when the gamelan comes back up to normal volume, instrumentation, and tempo. The dhalang gives a signal to the drummer from the *keprak* or *cempala*, who in turns passes on the *sirep* or *udhar* signal to the musicians. "Over" in these transcriptions is a translation of *ditumpangi*, "crashed into," for *ditabrak*, "sudden halt," for *suwuk mronggol*.

SANGKUNI: Yeah, yeah, I'm all for that. Sounds good.

DURSASANA: Don't pay attention to all those screaming, starving masses. Ha, ha, ha, ha. If they don't eat today that's their problem. What's all our wealth for anyway if we don't take advantage of it? Why should we put it toward handouts for the rabble?

SANGKUNI: Yeah, that's right. Anyway there'll be someone to take care of all those disaster victims. And if not, let them find their own refuge or something, it's not our concern. Come on, let's get back to the festivities.

DURSASANA: That's right. After you.

(*Pancer Papat,* **udhar)**

SANGKUNI: Don't stop now my friends. Even if you have to find a dark, secluded place, keep it up!

→*Garap Balungan Tiga-Perempat, pélog lima*

[Villagers are portrayed again, victims of the disasters.]

VILLAGERS: Oh no. Now a fire has engulfed everything! We're done for. Oh no! Where will we go now? My child, my child is dead!

→*Sampak Tlutur, pélog lima*

[Arjuna is seen inspecting the destruction in the village.]

(*Sampak Tlutur***, sirep)**

→**male chorus sings the melody** *Pangkur Macapat, pélog lima* **over** *Sampak Tlutur*

Enflamed in devastating havoc,
Everything strewn helter-skelter,
Ablaze, smoldering, burnt to ashes,
Arjuna looks on with concern,
As he asks for the protection of The All Powerful,
In his heart focusing his prayers …

→**crashed into by** *Sampak Tlutur***, sirep**

Prologue Part B: A Protagonist And His Adviser

[Arjuna appears alone, in great distress.]

→*Ketawang DURMA RANGSANG, pélog lima*

(*Durma Rangsang***, sirep)**

NARRATION: An overcast sky hangs darkly over the earth, as an even deeper blackness tightens its hold from all directions. The brightness of the Sun God fades in sorrow, like looking into the eyes of one in mourning. Anguish and hopelessness mix with despair, filling Prince Dananjaya's heart. He reflects on the situation in the world: the breakdown of meaning in life, the loss of compassion. Advisor Semar, the Venerable Badranaya, senses his troubles and appears at his side.

→**crashed into by** *Monggangan***, sirep**

A solo male vocalist sings the melody *Pangkur Gedhong Kuning, pélog lima* **over** *Monggangan* **as Semar appears:**

May all evil spirits be warded off,
All in service to Durga-Kala be pushed aside,
Those with heads and those with feet,
Those not visible to the eye,
Those with throats, with hair, or with shoulders,
May they be pushed aside,
To the very depths of the ocean.

→*Ketawang PANGKUR KAWEDHAR, pélog lima*

(*Pangkur Kawedhar,* **sirep)**

SEMAR: Ah, ah, ah, ah, *mbegegeg ugeg-ugeg hemel-hemel sadulita*. Oh, my lord, my Prince. You look so confused. The world is different now. Things have changed.

ARJUNA: Yes, my elder, Semar. I just can't stand to watch all the destruction. Why is it that over and over again, the victims are the poor and disadvantaged? Why does life have to be like this, my elder?

SEMAR: It's very rare you know. Very rare that a prince such as yourself takes these things to heart. Usually once someone is in control of a kingdom—whether in the role of leader, member of the army, or prince—they forget where they have come from. They forget that everyone has their roots somewhere as a commoner. My lord is a true protector.

ARJUNA: My elder Semar, it is as though my innards have been ripped to pieces or my heart cut in half. These disasters continue unabated. As if month after month there is no end to them. It pains me to watch the lives of everyday people as they limp through life. Living as refugees and having to search for every small handful of food. Sweating from head to toe in their efforts and weeping as they travel from place to place, yet still faced with new disasters everyday. And then there are those who simply look on, smiling and laughing. Capable of coming to their assistance, but not willing to lend a hand to the poor. Is the world simply beyond hope? Are we faced with a culture of contemptible attitudes, a weakening of truth and idealism, and a basic loss of confidence, which is causing humanity to leave its integrity behind?

SEMAR: Yes, you're not mistaken. What you say is completely valid, Janaka. Overturn any piece of land and look under any parcel of the sky; it's not easy to find someone who can truly empathize with the feelings of the commoners. It's quite rare. As time goes on I just keep coming back to the old phrase: *tunggak jarak mrajak, tunggak jati mati*. Meaning, those of inferior quality are a dime a dozen, and those of high quality few and far between.

ARJUNA: My elder Badranaya, I do plan to act, but it's as if I'll be all alone.

SEMAR: There's no reason to feel helpless, my Prince. If we start from what we ourselves are each able to do, it will always be of use to society at large. Look, here is some advice. Wise elders of the past used to say: Whoever feels he is the best will inevitably reach a dead end. Whoever feels he has gathered plenty of wisdom will eventually start slipping. Whoever feels he is cleverest of all is only proving that he is in fact quite stupid. And lastly, whoever feels that it is only he who is truly perceptive is quite definitely blind.

ARJUNA: Your advice is profound if one really thinks about it, my elder Semar.

SEMAR: Alright, alright my Prince. But I hope you will hold these ideas deeply to your heart, so they may be of use in your work to improve this nation and its people. So that you may offer your

opinions and put forth your effort. But now is the time to act. The first key is to strengthen your spiritual side. Next, you should continue to search out knowledge to enrich your understanding. Thirdly, live your life in balance and with dedication to society. It's admirable to have high ideals and goals, but you must work toward achieving them patiently. And lastly, remember where life is going in the end. If people would just keep in mind that eventually we all return to where we came from and our life on Earth will come to an end, there wouldn't be so many taking the wrong turn.

ARJUNA: Then let's get on with it, my elder. Please stay by my side though.

SEMAR: Actually there is some light at the end of the tunnel. The Creator of the Universe is planning to hand down a great gift: the basic principles of thought that the leaders of yore lived by, known as the Legacy of Rama's Crown. This will be bestowed from above by a chosen representative of the Great God in the Heavens who has been appointed to hand down this legacy. And hence my Prince, I urge you to go forward. Because whether your country and its people are facing enlightened times or times of darkness, the only way to fix the problems of the world is to start with yourself. This is the moment. The time has come my Prince, to start your quest to become the holder of the Legacy of Rama's Crown.

→**crashed into by** *Ladrang RONING TAWANG, pélog lima,* **loud style**

[Arjuna and Semar depart.]

→**crashed into by** *Sampak Tlutur, pélog lima*

Prologue Part C: An Ogre-Antagonist

Tawang Gantungan: The World of the Afterlife

[Kumbakarna enters.]

KUMBAKARNA: Oh dear gods in the heavens, dear gods.

→*Palaran Dhandhanggula, pélog lima* **sung by a solo male vocalist:**

There is yet another outstanding example,
The great prince of Alengka,

[Dasamuka appears.]

Known by the name of Kumbakarna,

→**alternate back to** *Sampak Tlutur, pélog lima*

DASAMUKA: Hey Kumbakarna! You bastard! Where are you going?

→**alternate back to** *Palaran Dhandhanggula, pélog lima*
What's more he is of ogre form,
Although with noble aspirations,
Back during the great war in Alengka,
He held a vow,
That he would not oppose his older sibling,
Dasamuka holding fast to his dictate,
To fight against the monkey troops.

DASAMUKA: You devil, get back here! Don't you dare leave!

(*ompak Palaran***, crash ending)**

Ada-ada Sanga Jugag, pélog lima
Leng-lenging driya mangu-mangu,
Mangun kung kandhuhan rimang,
Lir léna tanpa kanin.[9]

KUMBAKARNA: Why are you following my every step, never letting me out of your sight Dasakumara?

DASAMUKA: Cursed spirit! Where do you come off not enjoying life here in Tawang Gantungan? This is the parcel of heaven I am in charge of, I'll have you know.

KUMBAKARNA: You are sadly mistaken in your perception. Your soul may experience this as heaven, but actually this is clearly a place for the damned. Oh my dear brother, my dear brother. From when we were tiny tots through to our days as men living in the same kingdom, I never dreamed that in the afterlife I would end up in this hell hole because of my association with your sins.

DASAMUKA: Hey! Shut your mouth, you insolent lowlife! What do you take me for? Who said I am a sinner? The fact of the matter is, I feel proud of my life here in Tawang Gantungan. I continue to have the status of a leader. I live here in the role of king. If necessary I still have the capability to take over the entire universe. Don't you see that?

KUMBAKARNA: Yeah, yeah, keep it up, keep it up. If that's what you've set your mind to do—indulging your every desire—I won't stand in your way. But understand this, my brother. Every living thing on Earth, whether it walks, crawls, or flies, will eventually have to answer to He Who Created the Universe. You need to understand that there are three types of death, the first being a disgraceful death. Those who end their own lives: stab themselves, hang themselves, or in some other way commit suicide. This kind of death is not allowed in the eyes of He Who Created the Universe, and leads you to hell. That's one type. The second type is an ambiguous death. This is when you die because you have fallen ill. The fate of those who die from an illness depends on how they have lived their life. If they lived a good life and followed pure and virtuous practices they will go to heaven. But if they paid no attention to righteous teachings, they will certainly be damned to hell. And the final type of death is martyrdom.

This is what I have striven for since the days of Ngalengka and it's the death the brave and courageous wish for. Why is that? When a priest dies in meditation, when a soldier perishes defending his country, when a person dies in the pursuit of a promise they have made—one that reflects princely principles—this is the type of death that leads one directly to heaven. And yet, although I fought for Ngalengkadiraja and defended my country and people using princely ideals, it turns out I still ended up tainted by your heinous character and depraved nature.

If you're planning on taking over the world, that's your prerogative and your choice. But you are dragging me—an innocent victim who has not sinned—down with you. I'm being thrown into the same despicable pot as you. I can't take it here anymore. Instead of rising to heaven I am to become one with the rocks and the trees. The superstitious will chant before me once a month on an auspicious Friday, like some sort of sacrificial temple offering. Forgive me my brother. This is no heaven to me but rather a place of torture. You go ahead and continue your endless pursuit to claim the reincarnation of Widawati as yours, but I have no intention of aligning myself with you anymore.

[9] Just as was the practice in the Lontar publication (Asmoro 2013), any *sulukan* that serve a conventional function and for which the meaning is not directly tied to the dramatic action are not translated in the text. This is meant to reflect how a typical audience member would experience such *sulukan*—as atmospheric.

Sampak Tlutur, pélog lima

DASAMUKA: You bastard! Get back here Kumbakarna!

[Kumbakarna departs and is intercepted by his wife, Kiswani.]

(*Sampak***, Yogya-style ending)**

Prologue Part D: A Love Scene

→*mérong Gendhing LOGONDHANG, kethuk 2 kerep, pélog lima, garap koor Semarangan*

(*Logondhang,* **sirep)**

KISWANI: The truth is, for some reason wherever I may be, I sense that my esteemed husband Kumbakarna is trapped in some sort of perilous place.

KUMBAKARNA: That's right Kiswani. It's amazing that even though you are in heaven you can still sense what your husband is going through. That's the proof of a completely dedicated spouse: one who stays loyal through and through, from life on Earth through to the afterlife. The thing is, I'm being damned under the same umbrella because of my brother Dasamuka's evil actions. Regardless of my attempts to behave in accordance with all guidelines of princely behavior, this seems to be the fate that has befallen me. You don't know how much I appreciate it Kiswani, that you are here and can empathize with my suffering.

KISWANI: The sign of a loyal spouse is not only support when things are going well, but also when the road gets difficult, my husband.

KUMBAKARNA: Oh my dear wife. You're right, and your words fill my heart.

KISWANI: I resolve not to return to heaven until I know my esteemed husband has found his rightful place in the afterworld.

Logondhang **crashed into by** *Pathet Jugag, pélog lima*

KUMBAKARNA: I cherish your words so, my love. Imagine if one overturned every piece of land or looked under every parcel of the sky and were able to find even just three other women like you, my dear Kiswani. Tranquility could be achieved for all. No wonder that a spouse can also be called a soul mate. Many refer to their wife as their soul mate, since the love of a wife toward her husband has to be as great as the love she holds toward herself. There are also those who refer to a wife as their ultimate companion, which means the wife will be completely faithful to her spouse in every way. When a husband has met with good luck and success in life, the wife befriends him in his happiness. But when the husband is suffering in some way, the wife acts as a motherly caretaker, trying to cheer him up.

KISWANI: My deepest respect my husband. But you know, something has come up that is very possibly a way out of your suffering.

KUMBAKARNA: How's that my dear?

KISWANI: The gods in the heavens are planning to reveal the principles by which Sri Rama lived in generations past. As we speak, a priest has taken up residence in Swélagiri, in the Duryapura Forest. This chosen one will hand down the gift leading to world peace. I think it would be best, if my husband agrees, for you to go find your little brother Gunawan Wibisana, who has also recently taken on the personage of a priest. Gunawan, ever since the early days, apprenticed under

His Highness King Rama the Great. That's why I believe that your little brother could be the vehicle through which you may find a solution.

KUMBAKARNA: Oh my ...

Sampak Sanga, pélog lima

KUMBAKARNA: Oh my dear Kiswani I can't thank you enough, as you have reminded me to request help from my sibling. Of course, of course. I ask for your good wishes Kiswani, so that I might find a way to enter heaven.

KISWANI: My deference will accompany your travels, my esteemed husband.

Sampak Sanga, pélog lima
[Kumbakarna departs, scene disperses.]

Clearly Pak Camat, Pak Lurah, their wives, and the audience, would have experienced a dense and meaningful (*padat*) 30 minutes in the contemporary-interpretive opening. They come away after the first half-hour knowing, as in the classical version, that the lakon is *Mahabharata*-based, takes place during King Duryudana's reign in Astina, and concerns a boon to be handed down from the gods, but they know much more about the boon than in the classical version. They also find out that Arjuna will play a major role as the protagonist for the night, rather than Bima, Puntadéwa, Kresna, Gathutkaca, Abimanyu, Wisanggeni, Srikandhi, or any number of other common protagonist figures during the Duryudana era. In addition, they have learned that this lakon will concern a number of *Ramayana*-based figures and specifically Kumbakarna, who is on a mission to find a way out of middle-world hell, and into an eternity of peace. But the 30-minute prologue offers much more than that, as described below by taking a look at each individual performance element.

Scene Structure

The classical version presents only one scene: the Astina Kingdom court audience scene. Even at that, by the first half-hour, the court audience scene has simply been set up, with discussion barely poised to begin.

In the contemporary-interpretive version, the audience experiences four types of scenes in 30 minutes: a highly dramatic depiction of the contrast between the Pandhawa and Kurawa characters' reactions to tragedy, a philosophically-based dialogue in which Semar gives advice to Arjuna, the distraught and emotional state

of the ogre Kumbakarna and his brother Dasamuka's rough and flippant response, and finally a touching love scene between Kumbakarna and his wife, Kiswani. The four small-scale scenes within the prologue, each offering a different emotional profile, are only 8, 11, 9, and 10 minutes long respectively, as opposed to 30 minutes spent simply setting up a court scene in the classical version. Purbo Asmoro crafts the scenes (*garap adegan*) with a concern for both content and variety, rather than a concern for regulations and traditional structures. He also considers the rhythm needed to keep the audience "on the edge of their chairs" from the opening, yet rejects relying exclusively on ogre-dance or battle attractions, as many prologues from the *hura-hura* era did. As Purbo Asmoro often comments in public, an altered aesthetic, differing audience expectations, and the fast pace of modern life all demand a new approach to the rhythm and timing of the scenes in a performance. He describes this in *Limbukan*, during a performance in Eromoko, Wonogiri on 19 March 2014:

> **LIMBUK**: Don't the elder dhalang get angry with you? You're destroying the patterns in a wayang performance!
>
> **CANGIK**: It's not destroying anything, my dear, we're in different times. We're in global times. The world has become one, time goes by faster, people insist on everything coming their way instantly, ever faster, clearer, matter of fact, to the point. They aren't interested in all that time spent on etiquette-determined rules. But that's not to say that conventional practice is bad, not at all—we preserve it and do our own thing at the same time, going in parallel. Which parts do we take, which parts do we like. Wayang in the Kraton style is my everyday job. My everyday job in the sense that I work with that style every single day on campus. *Kabor* for Astina Kingdom, then *Damarkèli*, *Titipati*, *Kedhaton Bentar*, *Semukirang*.
>
> **LIMBUK**: Oh, I see.
>
> **CANGIK**: My daily bread.
>
> **LIMBUK**: Oh.
>
> **CANGIK**: So there is no way someone like me is going to change the structures of the elders and our ancestors, but I myself, as a dhalang, am facing a different era.
>
> **LIMBUK**: Yeah.

> **CANGIK**: Just think about it. Imagine the wayang started late due to too many speeches and such, like tonight,[10] and then I start with an audience scene, maybe *Krawitan*, that long piece, do you know it? What's more if I decide to stick with all the formal introductions, all the regulations from tradition. It would eat up an entire hour just to get that far. It's too long, too long.

Theme and Character

As described in Chapter 3 on *pakeliran padat*, a *garapan* practitioner begins his planning by choosing a focus, theme, or message that will determine how other elements are treated throughout the lakon. As noted also in Chapter 3, this is not a priority of the classical tradition, and certainly not in the first half-hour of the performance. In the all-night *garapan* performance of *Makutharama*, there are strong hints right in the prologue as to what the two themes will be. In an interview in October of 2007, Purbo Asmoro described his vision of the theme for the *padat* version of *Rama's Crown*:

> Great and virtuous leaders can in fact overcome the suffering of the people. A great leader can and does make a difference. Moreover, the actions of one person—starting from their own internal process, their own behavior—can change the world. In short, we all make a difference by setting an example, but for a virtuous leader it is absolutely a priority.

In an interview in January of 2014, Purbo elaborated on his focus for the all-night version:

> Well the primary theme still concerns leadership, how great leaders do make a difference, and individuals do make a difference. Arjuna will make a difference, as long as he starts from inside and works to change the world starting with himself. But in the contemporary-interpretive performance, there is time to devise a second focus and a second theme: Kumbakarna and Wibisana, and the nature of death. This sub-plot is going on entirely separately from Arjuna's process of growth as a leader. Kumbakarna needs to reconcile his decisions in life and what they mean for his eternal existence. Wibisana needs to examine his life and whether he is prepared for death—what do we leave behind, what do we take with us, how does it affect those still living? At the same time that the legacy of Rama's wisdom is to be handed down to a worthy future leader, other major figures from the *Ramayana* are dealing with the nature of death.

[10] This is a definite jab at the officials, who had subjected the mass audience, eager for wayang, to an endless line of speeches that night, during this, an election-season wayang.

In the first 30 minutes of the all-night *garapan* performance, audience members will have gained some insight into both of these themes. Arjuna appears within the first four minutes of the wayang, and Kumbakarna within the first 20 minutes, bringing the central characters to the fore and into the consciousness of the audience immediately. Not only are the characters introduced early on, but their aspirations, fears, strategies, and the rationale for their struggles are all touched upon in the first half-hour. What is more, the theme is presented in the context of relevant, current issues: the natural disasters raging Java in the years preceding the Lontar recording.[11]

By contrast, in the classical version, the first sighting of Arjuna is over five hours into the eight-hour performance [MK-Class 4, 1:04:00]. This first appearance occurs during an exquisitely artistic but highly generic set of scenes, lasting a total of an hour: Arjuna's meditation in the forest with the *panakawan (Adegan Satriya ing Wana)*, his departure down to the valley from the mountains (*Alas-alasan*), and his meeting up with ogres challenging him along the way (*Prang Kembang*). We understand nothing specific about his attitude toward the boon until over six hours into the performance, when he is challenged by one of Anoman's allies guarding access to the boon, the *garudha* bird Mahambira [MK-Class 5, 14:00].

In an informal chat with *pedhalangan* friends at my home in Kemang, South Jakarta in May 2013, Purbo shared another reason why Arjuna should be brought to the forefront from the beginning of the wayang, namely character and plot development:

> In *Makutharama*, is Janaka [Arjuna] just suddenly going to get the *wahyu* in the end? Get to Priest Késawasidi's place and just that's it, there you have it? If it's like that, then Késawasidi is clearly discriminatory [*diskriminatif*]! Karna appears and is turned away, but as soon as Janaka shows up, "Here you go" hands it over? It doesn't make sense. A person comes to achieve something through a process that is truly extraordinary, and needs to be developed. That's my thinking.

[11] In the years previous to this 2007 recording, an unusual number of natural disasters had struck Indonesia. Some of the disasters include the earthquake and Indian Ocean tsunami that destroyed much of Northern Aceh (December 2004), an intense volcanic eruption of Mount Merapi (2006), the earthquake that devastated Yogyakarta and Klaten (May 2006) and the eruption of an underground mud volcano in Sidoarjo, East Java that caused oozing mud floods and devastation (2006). Many of Purbo Asmoro's narrations around this time were influenced by these current events. Even the very structure of his performances (what he chose as a focus in prologues such as this one, for example) reflected his concern over these tragedies. Many Javanese believe that such events are the result of human failings, building up over time.

Wibisana appears for the first time in the classical version over three hours into the wayang [MK-Class 3, 23:00] and Kumbakarna a bit later, almost four hours into the performance [MK-Class 3, 45:00]. Hence the theme of death and eternal perfection is first discussed at about 1:00 AM. Classical wayang-goers expect this of course—that the second theme or sub-plot will be introduced during *Adegan Sabrang* or *Sabrangan Rangkep*. Purbo Asmoro, however, is intent on bringing both themes and both subplots in before midnight, and in most cases within the first hour during the prologue.

What Do We "Get" in 56 Minutes?
The Grand Offering of the Kings

Classical versus Contemporary Opening

Contrasting the village-classical and contemporary-interpretive performances of *The Grand Offering of the Kings* offers an even more extreme example of the effect and function of Purbo Asmoro's prologues. Audiences staying only for the first half-hour of *The Grand Offering of the Kings* [SRS-Class 1, tr 1] would know nothing more about the episode than, "He was doing an episode from the *Mahabharata* and it started in Kresna's kingdom of Dwarawati." In fact in the case of this performance, it will take 52 minutes before audiences will know anything specific about the lakon—before they find out that there is a major threat to world peace, King Jarasandha, who is ravaging neighboring kingdoms. By contrast, in the 56-minute prologue of the contemporary-interpretive performance [SRS-CInt 1, tr 1], audiences not only find out about the threat of Jarasandha, but also learn that the Pandhawa are planning a cleansing ritual known as *sesaji raja suya* to counter this threat. What is more, audiences are given insight into the background of Jarasandha's hatred of the world, and experience the entire story of his birth, played out dramatically on the screen.

Scene Structure

The first 52 minutes of the village-classical performance are spent setting up the Opening Audience Scene in Dwarawati Kingdom. King Kresna is visited by his older brother King Baladéwa of Mandura. His son Samba and cousin Setyaki are also present. A few of these 52 minutes include cursory references to the threat of

Jarasandha. The bulk of the scene, however, is taken up by refined entrances of characters, elaborate greetings, expansive *sulukan*, and the same lengthy opening narration we heard for the Astina Kingdom, with a few substitutions to fit Dwarawati.[12] There are four minutes dedicated to compelling and profound advice from Baladéwa to Kresna, but this is a standard element in every Dwarawati scene attended by Baladéwa. Any experienced dhalang will vary the content of the advice from performance to performance, but the actual advice itself has little or nothing to do with the lakon and is a highly predictable feature of a Dwarawati court scene.

While in the classical performance 52 minutes are used to set up the Dwarawati Kingdom scene, the opening of the contemporary-interpretive performance is a 56-minute prologue, consisting of seven small-scale scenes, summarized here:[13]

> **Prologue Part A: A Protagonist's Troubled Introspection** (4 minutes)
> King Puntadéwa of Amarta Kingdom appears, visibly troubled. The vocal text tells of his loneliness and heavy heart. The remaining four Pandhawa brothers join him, but he still feels profoundly alone in his responsibilities. He has a nightmare vision of King Jarasandha of Giribajra Kingdom, ravaging neighboring lands and kidnapping friendly kings.
>
> **Prologue Part B: A Protagonist and His Adviser** (10 minutes)
> King Kresna of Dwarawati befriends Puntadéwa, encourages him out of his brooding, and tries to comfort him. Kresna assures Puntadéwa that his outlook, intentions, and strategies have all been in the right direction, and that he should have confidence in himself. Puntadéwa explains that he feels unworthy as a king, having allowed this violent force to grow under his leadership. He will attempt to stage a sacred offering ceremony, *sesaji raja suya*, as a counter to Jarasandha's threat. Kresna warns that before taking Jarasandha on, Puntadéwa should understand who he is dealing with and should understand the depth of Jarasandha's anger and hatred for the world.
>
> **Prologue Part C: A Flashback of Jarasandha's Birth (42 minutes)**

[12] The Dwarawati narration in this recording differs more significantly from the Astina narration than might normally be the case when comparing one single dhalang's narrations, as Purbo Asmoro was attempting to be two different types of performers—palace-classical for *Makutharama* and village-classical for *Sesaji Raja Suya*—hence his sources were different. But as readers can see from comparing them, they are still much the same. For an English translation of the Dwarawati narration, see Asmoro, *The Grand Offering of the Kings* (2013, 5-15).

[13] For a full English translation, see Asmoro, *The Grand Offering of the Kings* (2013, 137-156). For a classical treatment of the plotline, see the summary in Appendix 2.

Flashback Scene 1—A Love Scene (7 minutes)

A flashback to the days of King Brihadrata and his twin wives, Retnadi and Retnadati in the kingdom of Giribajra. Their lives are happy and harmonious in every way, except that neither wife has been able to produce a child. King Brihadrata decides it is time to meditate in the forest, and vows not to come back until he has an answer.

Flashback Scene 2—A Protagonist and His Adviser (7 minutes)

King Brihadrata meditates and is visited by the god Naradha, who gives him a magical mango. He promises that if one of Brihadrata's wives eats the mango before love-making, she will become with child. Brihadrata returns to the kingdom, elated.

Flashback Scene 3—Plotline (11 minutes)

When the king returns, his wives argue over who will eat the mango, and thus conceive Brihadrata's child. Since Brihadrata cannot decide, his wives split the mango in half, and each in turn has relations with their husband. They both become pregnant. When the day comes, each give birth to half of a baby: one emerges head to waist, and the other waist to feet. Brihadrata is enraged and throws the babies into the forest, to the despair of his wives.

[In the classical version, audiences would still be watching the setting up of a generic court scene in Dwarawati, with no idea yet what the lakon was. To the end of the classical version at sunrise, audiences might have heard this story of Jarasandha's birth in an abbreviated narration, but would never have seen it played out on the screen.]

Flashback Scene 4—An Ogre Antagonist (12 minutes)

A forest ogress named Jara comes across the two babies. She decides to meld them together as one, using her special powers. She then washes the resulting whole baby in magical water and this causes him to immediately transform to an adult. She names him Jarasandha. He asks who his father is and when she explains that he was discarded near Giribajra Kingdom, Jarasandha is furious.

Flashback Scene 5—A Battle (5 minutes)

Jarasandha takes off for Giribajra Kingdom and kills off every minister and soldier in his path until he finally comes across King Brihadrata. After lecturing Brihadrata on how a father should love his child no matter what, Jarasandha chillingly vows never to have empathy or love for any creature on Earth, since he himself was brought up with none. He then kills his father, rips off his skin, and makes a drum out of it that will be used to guard his kingdom.

Theme and Character

In an interview at his home in April 2008, Purbo Asmoro described the theme he wished to communicate in his *padat* performance of *The Grand Offering of the Kings*:

> True leaders have a responsibility to address evil forces at play, both by doing their part to forge goodness and unity in the world and also by coming to better understand the said evil forces. There is surely both a history and a set of reasonings (however faulty the other side may find these) behind any violent force, and these should be understood.

As with *Makutharama*, in an informal chat in Kemang, South Jakarta in May 2013, Purbo expanded on his intent with this theme in the all-night version:

> I thought to myself, "Jarasandha … where will I start? What is this lakon really about? *Sesaji Raja Suya*—where is the inner meaning?" And I realized it would work if I connected it to what was happening in the world today. That the entire world is under the grip of an incredible force right now, and that there is a foreign nation, a *superpower*, planning to cause tremendous destruction. Puntadéwa is worried. This can be how I work in the *raja suya* ceremony. Because otherwise [it would be so simplistic]: "And thus, with the attainment of this new kingdom known as Indraprastha, created from the spirits of the forest and made of heavenly gold, we plan to call forth the priests and put on the ceremony, alright?" "ALRIGHT!" Ah, if you present it like that you're done, easy. But better that we find a way to connect it to what is happening today. A world that is falling apart because in fact there really is a certain force that truly is threatening the world—terrorists [*teroris]* and their senseless violence. Hence I decided to create the debate between Jarasandha and Kresna about radical beliefs, and for me at the time, Jarasandha was the manifestation of this radical belief system.

Jarasandha's character is thus developed early in the all-night *garapan* version. His initial appearance is less than four minutes into the performance, when he is shown violently kidnapping mass numbers of kings. Of the 56-minute prologue, 42 minutes are dedicated to playing out the story of Jarasandha's birth, culminating in the chilling murder of his father. We come to understand his despicable nature, and hear his vow to refuse empathy for all living creatures for the rest of his life. In the classical version, although there are frequent references to Jarasandha throughout the night, he does not make an actual appearance until 45 minutes before the end of the seven-hour performance. Even then, he is given only 25 minutes of screen-time. While one could argue that this delay effectively builds suspense and a dramatic

sense of dread for his eventual appearance, clearly Purbo Asmoro feels he cannot afford, in this day and age, to introduce the primary antagonist at 3:30 AM.

Narration, *Iringan*, and Movement Techniques

While what stands out most about Purbo Asmoro's prologues is the recrafting of scene structure—the way a number of small scenes are structured to develop theme and character from the start, as well as aesthetic and emotional variety—there is also substantial special treatment (*garapan*) of narration, gamelan accompaniment, and movement techniques in the prologues.

Dialogue, Narration, and Text

The prologues consist exclusively of lakon-specific narration, description, and dialogue, with generic language at a minimum. In other words, there is almost exclusively *catur baku* in the first 30 minutes to an hour, rather than the almost exclusively *catur blangkon* one hears in the first 30 minutes of a classical performance (see Catur Tulus's categories from Chapter 3, p. 80). This follows the concepts of *padat* practice, by which cliché (*klise*) language is to be replaced with situational, emotionally-specific, newly thought-out texts written by the dhalang. In this way, prologues present a blank slate in the dhalang's planning not only in terms of scene structure, but also with regard to the use of language.

In the classical performance of *Rama's Crown*, the opening contains a total of 1,046 words of narration, 87% of which could be repeated verbatim for any episode starting off in an earthly kingdom. Only 13% of the expressions are even specific to Duryudana's Astina Kingdom, and not a single one is specific to this episode. The rest of the initial 30 minutes takes the form of stylized greetings between the characters. The same general proportions would be true for the opening to the village-classical performance of *The Grand Offering of the Kings*.

By contrast, the very first words heard[14] in the contemporary-interpretive performance of *Rama's Crown*, were written by composer Dedek Wahyudi in the

[14] "Heard" in the sense that they are sung in a clear, exclamatory manner, meant to be attended to. This is a different aesthetic from the very first words "heard" in the classical performances, which would be the first *wangsalan* the *pesindhèn* sings. The *pesindhèn* line is meant to be heard as woven into the other melodic lines, and her text is simply part of the idiom of the human voice, chosen for its poetic meter rather than any intrinsic meaning.

1990s and serve as a standard opening to many of Mayangkara's performances. The sung text is a meditative wish for the wellbeing of all those in attendance. After this one-minute opening, the next words uttered are sung in choral *ada-ada* style by the *gérong* section and were written by Purbo Asmoro, specifically for this performance (although they have been used often since):

> The land in chaos, the tumult horrifying,
> Ravaging destruction, all is as if swept away,
> Great suffering takes hold, finding its end in death.

This is followed by the first utterance from the dhalang, a narration written by Purbo Asmoro for this performance (see English translation, p. 192):

> Jagadé wus tuwa. Horeg bumi gonjing, lindhu prakempita, gunung jugrug njeblug, muntah lahar mblabar nrajang padésan. Angin lésus nyapu tanem tuwuh. Toyaning samodra mumbul gumulung hangelem dharatan. Endhut panas mubal saka telenging bumi, banjir ladhu walik watu gègèr kepati pating jalerit ngungsi urip.

Purbo Asmoro wrote the passage using a couplet technique he often employs, in which adjacent pairs or trios of words have similar sounds (underlined): *jugrug-njeblug*, *lahar-mblabar*, *tanem-tuwuh*, *mumbul-gumulung-hangelem*, *banjir ladhu-walik watu*, *kepati-pating-jalerit*.

This is followed by interchanges in low Javanese among the Kurawa army members, who scoff and show no care for the suffering of the people. In a classical treatment, it could be an hour or more into the performance before such common language was heard, usually during the Pasében Njaba scene. The next literary passage is another vocal text written by Purbo Asmoro, in the poetic form of *macapat pangkur*, and focused on the evening's hero:

> Enflamed in devastating havoc,
> Everything strewn helter-skelter,
> Ablaze, smoldering, burnt to ashes,
> Arjuna looks on with concern,
> As he asks for the protection of The All Powerful,
> In his heart focusing his prayers,
> For health and prosperity.

This male chorus is crashed into (*ditabrak*) by *Sampak Tlutur*, which then leads into *Ktw Durma Rangsang*, and a second narration by Purbo Asmoro. In this

passage, Purbo uses another technique he employs often, in which a short series of words, rather than just a pair or trio, shares similarity in sound, underlined below.

> Mendhung tumiyung, cemeng hanggembuleng ireng, ke-ket ngèbegi ké-blat ing awiyat. Sirating Sang Hyang Arka anglayung lir soca ingkang karuna karantan. Rudah rurah rinoban rungsiting raos karanta Risang Dananjaya, anggènira maspaosaken kawontenaning bawana, risaking tata panguripan, sirnaning raos kamanungsan.

The phrase climaxes in the double-underlined phrases using yet another technique, in which Purbo Asmoro juxtaposes phrases with parallel syllable and sound structure:

risaking tata panguripan
sirnaning raos kamanungsan

Both phrases have a total of nine syllables structured 3 + 2 + 4, and in both the third syllable is *ing* and the final syllable *an*. This narration helps to support the main character of the lakon. Purbo could have written a narration for the entrance of the Kurawa, or concerning Semar, but he consciously chose to "thicken"[15] the moment Arjuna first appears with a short, precise, meaningful and poetic narration. Whenever coupling techniques like this are used that play with parallel structure and sound, audience focus tunes in more on the text, and it is no coincidence that the only texts built this way by Purbo Asmoro, concern the main theme or protagonist.

Semar greets Arjuna to the accompaniment of another unique text, *singgah-singgah* (authorship unknown) and the conversation turns into an extended *wejangan*, or philosophical teaching. Semar's words of wisdom, on humility, on having the courage to act alone, on the state of the world today, were written by Purbo Asmoro at various times in his career but not specifically for this prologue. They appear on scraps of paper all over his lap when he performs, and anyone nearby can see him exchanging one for another at the last minute as he makes split-second decisions on which to use. One example is Semar's advice to Arjuna:

[15] Purbo Asmoro frequently speaks of his intent to "ngandeli" (thicken) a moment. Another factor that just happens to help to thicken this moment in the video, is how Lontar's studio editor Nanang Hape (Nanang Henri Priyanto), a former student of Purbo Asmoro's and a dhalang himself, chose the one shot here that focused in, up-close on Arjuna.

> Wise elders of the past used to say: Whoever feels he is the best will inevitably reach a dead end. Whoever feels he has gathered plenty of wisdom will eventually start slipping. Whoever feels he is cleverest of all is only proving that he is in fact quite stupid. And lastly, whoever feels that it is only he who is truly perceptive is quite definitely blind.

The Kumbakarna scene opens with a text by Mangkunegara IV, from *Serat Tripama* (circa 1878). This is a poem in *dhandhanggula* form comparing the heroism of three figures from three eras: Sumantri of the Arjunasasrabau era, Kumbakarna from the *Ramayana*, and Karna from the *Mahabharata*. Again, it serves as an example of the crafting or, in this case, selection of new or unusual texts in order to thicken the entrances of the main focus figures:

> There is yet another outstanding example,
> The great prince of Alengka,
> Known by the name of Kumbakarna,
> What's more he is of ogre form,
> Although with noble aspirations,
> Back during the great war in Alengka,
> He held a vow,
> That he would not oppose his older sibling,
> Dasamuka held fast to his dictate,
> To fight against the monkey troops.

After fierce debate between Kumbakarna and Dasamuka, the scene transitions into the love scene, and appropriate language of love, between Kumbakarna and his long-lost wife, Kiswani.

Hence we can see that the opening of a classical performance is primarily clichéd, generic, memorized text. The prologue of the contemporary-interpretive performance contrasts a number of different, albeit already existing, literary techniques: coupling, alliteration, symmetrical phrases. The language also serves a number of different purposes—description, everyday dialogue, philosophical teaching, vocal text, fiery debate, and love. Purbo Asmoro avoids clichés as much as possible, and selects carefully which moments to thicken with special texts.

Iringan

The gamelan accompaniment for Purbo Asmoro's all-night *garapan* performances was discussed in detail in the previous chapter, but it is interesting to briefly

compare the openings with regard to *iringan*. The 38-minute prologue to *Rama's Crown*, contemporary-interpretive style, is entirely in *pélog lima*, while the 56-minute prologue to *The Grand Offering of the Kings* is entirely in *sléndro sanga*. Of course neither of these is typical, as a traditional-style wayang begins in *sléndro nem* and remains in this mode for some four hours. While Purbo Asmoro's prologues usually contain a number of separate small scenes, they are almost always tied together under a single mode, most often either *pélog lima*, *pélog nem*, or *sléndro sanga*. The wide variety of forms, techniques, and sources is striking in comparison to a classical performance, as laid out in Figures 6-1 to 6-4, below:

Figure 6-1: First 38 minutes of music in the classical performance, *Rama's Crown*.

FORM	TITLE	COMPOSER
ketawang gendhing	Kabor	traditional
pathetan	Nem Wantah	traditional
ada-ada	Girisa	traditional

Figure 6-2: The 38-minute prologue to *Rama's Crown*, contemporary-interpretive style.

FORM	TITLE	COMPOSER	ERA	TECHNIQUE
ayak-ayak	Anglaèng	Dedek Wahyudi	1990s	vocal chorus
sampak	Galongan	Purbo Asmoro	2007	ditumpangi
garap balungan	Tiga-Perempat	Purbo Asmoro	2007	_____
lancaran	Pancer Papat	Purbo Asmoro	2000s	_____
sampak	Tlutur	traditional	_____	ditumpangi
ketawang	Durma Rangsang	Nartosabdo	1970s	vocal chorus
monggangan	_____	traditional	_____	ditumpangi
ketawang	Pangkur Kawedhar	Nartosabdo	1970s	vocal chorus
ladrang	Roning Tawang	traditional	_____	soran
palaran	dhandhanggula	Mangkunegara IV	1878	garap balungan
sampak	Sanga Pélog	traditional	_____	_____
ada-ada	Sanga Jugag	traditional	_____	_____
pathetan	Pélog Lima Jugag	traditional	_____	gérong chorus

Figure 6-3: First 56 minutes of the classical performance, *The Grand Offering of the Kings*.

FORM	TITLE	COMPOSER
ayak-ayak	manyura	traditional
ketawang gendhing	Krawitan	traditional
pathetan	Nem Wantah Lawas	traditional
ada-ada	Girisa Lawas	traditional

Figure 6-4: The 56-minute prologue to *The Grand Offering of the Kings*, contemporary-interpretive style.

FORM	TITLE	COMPOSER	ERA	TECHNIQUE
ayak-ayak	Anglaèng	Dedek Wahyudi	1990s	vocal chorus
ketawang	Dhandhanggula Tlutur	traditional	_____	ktw to palaran
garap balungan	"V"	Lumbini	2007	
sampak	Sanga	traditional	_____	_____
ketawang	Megatruh	Nartosabdo	1970s	_____
srepeg	"Madiun"	regional	_____	_____
ketawang	Kasimpar	Nartosabdo	1970s	_____
andhegan	Brangta Mentul	traditional	_____	_____
srepeg	Tlutur	traditional	_____	_____
sampak	Tlutur	traditional	_____	_____
ladrang	Panjang Ilang	traditional	_____	_____
srepeg	"Klathènan"	traditional	_____	_____
jineman	Klambi Lurik	traditional	_____	_____
ayak-ayak	Sanga	traditional	_____	_____
ayak-ayak	Mijil Layu	Nartosabdo	1970s	
ladrang	Jangkrik Génggong	traditional	_____	_____
garap balungan	"VI"	Lumbini	2007	ditumpangi
jineman	Lédung-lédung	traditional	_____	_____
pathetan	Jugag	traditional	_____	_____
pathetan	Anglut	ASKI	1970s	gérong chorus
ada-ada	Greget Saut	traditional	_____	_____
lancaran	Bubaran Nyutra	traditional	_____	_____
palaran	Megatruh	traditional	_____	_____
srepeg	Grandhèl	Supanggah	1970s	_____
sampak	Ngracik	Lumbini	2007	_____
garap balungan	"VII"	Lumbini	2007	
pathetan	lima ngelik	traditional	_____	gérong chorus

Movement Techniques

Purbo Asmoro's prologues feature the expressive movement techniques from *pakeliran padat* performance practice, known as *sabet tématik* or *sabet tématis*, which were described in Chapter 3. While in classical practice each movement of the opening court scenes is highly stylized, in *garapan* performances the "blank slate" premise, and freedom that applies to scene structure, character development, musical accompaniment, and literary techniques, also applies to movement sequences in the prologues.

One important point that Purbo Asmoro has spoken about often in public however, is his belief that the movement expressions in *padat* practice, and particularly in the prologues, tend to be too highly *tématik*, obscure, and abstract. Bambang Suwarno's *Ciptaning* and Sukardi's *Kunthi Pilih* are both examples of *padat*

scripts in which the first few pages are full of detailed movement sequences, before the dhalang speaks a single word. Characters emerge without introduction and engage in mime-like sequences that are embedded with symbolic meaning. Most *padat* performance prologues, from the early days through to the present, are single scene, movement-based tableaux, and quite hard to interpret. Understanding these prologues requires background knowledge of the lakon, an ability to identify characters with no help from the dhalang, and an ability to interpret obscure and symbolic movements. Purbo Asmoro makes it a point in his all-night performance prologues to be more up front with his audiences. Before an informal gathering of artists and fans in Kemang (May 2013) he described how his prologues differ from those of the *padat* days:

> We need to be performers, communicators, and artists. Not just "artists." We need to always remember that this is a performance. If [the new style] goes the way of "pure art" we are going to lose our audience. The presentation will be too complex, too abstract, too much into the dhalang's head and just for him. Sometimes a dhalang [creating a prologue visual] can lose control, and lose sight of his audience. He can just seem to be mesmerized by his own beautiful moves and expressive techniques. Just making himself happy. Forgetting that there is an audience. Those prologues that—you know what I'm talking about, from the days of *padat,* like *Ciptaning* and *Déwa Ruci*—are all movement and nothing else. For a quarter of an hour no one knows what's going on! A *kayon* just gesticulating around to no end, and no one knows what it means! Sure, for people who have background knowledge may be able to say to themselves, 'Oh, this symbolizes the process of Arjuna becoming Ciptaning." Fine, they get it. But for others, they're thinking, "What??!" … It's really very—well to be vulgar, masturbatory. [The guests laugh.] Well, it is. It's masturbatory. Just the dhalang indulging in himself with no regard for anyone else. Art for art's sake no matter how opaque, not caring whether your audience gets anything out of it.

While Purbo Asmoro utilizes expressive *sabet tématik* to the full in his prologues, he also connects the symbolism with meaning, without being condescending to his audience (interview, Feb 2015):

> I always find small ways to help the audience during a movement sequence in the prologue. Maybe through the vocal text, maybe via one single word, maybe through a short narration. It has to be subtle. But I make sure I don't just leave the audience in the dark, impressed by my depth while completely lost as to what's happening.

Now that we have examined two of Purbo Asmoro's prologues in particular (*Rama's Crown* and *The Grand Offering of the Kings*) from the standpoint of scene structure,

message, characterization, narration, musical accompaniment, and movement techniques, we will move on to the variety of types of prologues in his wider repertory.

Constructing Prologues: Small-Scale Scenes

> **PÉTRUK (Purbo Asmoro)**: Creating a prologue is difficult. Very difficult. To squeeze out the essence of the lakon, and provide background to important events to come—this is difficult. To connect what is presented in the prologue and the rest of the scenes. The red thread that needs to run through the plot all night. This starts in the prologue. This needs to be planned out. The gamelan accompaniment has to have variety; the language has to have variety [*Iringané ora éntuk tumbuk; sastrané ora éntuk tumbuk*].
>
> (March 2014, Pekalongan)

From the comments quoted so far in this chapter, we can see that Purbo Asmoro crafts his prologues to all-night performances with a mind to providing the audience early on in the evening with:

- exposure to his chosen theme and focus for the lakon (*esènsi, fokus, gagasan pokok*)
- plot movement, both main storyline and a subplot
- variety in types of scenes presented
- variety in musical accompaniment
- variety in language (dialogue, narration; poetic, everyday)
- a connection to real-life, current events and issues

Since the prologue is a blank slate and the dhalang starts with minimal historical precedent as to form or content, I was interested to see if there was a structure or template in the prologues to Purbo Asmoro's all-night *garapan* performances. Over time, had he developed a system or any sort of consistent format for his prologues? He has clear aspirations for what he wishes to achieve in the prologue, but does a common organization emerge from his performances, either consciously or unconsciously? The first step was to ask him about this directly (interview, June 2014):

> There is no structure that I apply to each lakon. The important thing is that meaning, focus, theme, and variety is all there, and that the prologue serves to represent what the lakon is about and serves as a taster for what is in store all evening. I have no structure. Blank. And then it comes to me as I prepare.

The next step was to determine whether in fact structures were there even if not consciously. From among the 386 recordings by Purbo Asmoro I have collected over 11 years (2004–2015) I took out all the multi-episode (*banjaran*) constructions, since these are examined separately in Chapter 8, and disregarded any *padat* or classical style performances. There were 103 single-episode recordings remaining, all in *garapan* style, such as Lontar's *Rama's Crown* and *The Grand Offering of the Kings*. These 103 recordings covered 40 different lakon. I then chose one touchstone recording for each lakon—the one recording that represented the most intensely thought-out *garapan*, the most ideal performance situation of the choices available, and preferably one accompanied by Mayangkara, ISI, or at least one of the highly capable Jakarta troupes that make it their business to substitute for Solonese troupes when necessary. From these 40 exemplar recordings of 40 different lakon in *garapan* style, I then had 40 different prologues to use as data (see Appendix 4 for a list of the recordings used).

I then examined these prologues, one by one, to see if some categories emerged, which they did, confirming a suspicion I had developed from observing performances. It turns out that Purbo Asmoro's single-lakon all-night *garapan* performance prologues, 2004–2015, primarily use nine different types of small-scale scenes, in various configurations:

1. *Gara-gara Kayon* Narration
2. A Protagonist's Troubled Introspection
3. A Protagonist and His or Her Adviser
4. An Ogre Antagonist
5. A Love Scene
6. Two Perspectives Juxtaposed
7. A Battle
8. A Flashback
9. Plot Moving Forward

During an interview in September 2014, I presented these categories to Purbo Asmoro. His reaction was complex. When I first read off the categories, he nodded in vigorous affirmation at each one, as they seemed required little or no explanation. But when I finished reading the nine categories he was silent for a bit, characteristically contemplative, and then said:

> Hmm. Well … hmm. I don't … hmm. The thing is … [Pause. More thought.] I can see that this is accurate. I can't think offhand of a scene from a prologue that doesn't fit one of these categories. [Pause.] And the titles reflect the essences of the scenes. But I don't go about planning a prologue consciously thinking about such categories. I want meaning. I want variety. I want a fast-paced dramatic presentation of plotline and theme, focused on the main characters and main messages. I want short scenes lasting no more than 10 or so minutes each. I want to grab the audience's attention but I won't entice the audience through cheap attractions in a prologue. I'm searching for meaning in the prologue. And variety. I guess these just end up being the types of scenes naturally occurring through the process. And of course it all depends highly on the lakon. [One last subtle nod of distant affirmation in my direction—distant in the sense that these categories, while they may be accurate, are not his own.]

We will now take a brief look at each category, interspersed with some of Purbo's comments specific to each scene type. Every category except 6 is represented in the two *garapan* recordings used throughout this work: *Rama's Crown* and *The Grand Offering of the Kings*. In the 38-minute prologue to *Rama's Crown:*

- The Opening (*Gara-gara Kayon* Narration, category 1)
- Semar advising Arjuna (A Protagonist and His Adviser, category 3)
- Dasamuka and Kumbakarna (An Ogre Antagonist, category 4)
- Kumbakarna and his wife, Kiswani (A Love Scene, category 5)

In the extensive 56-minute prologue to *The Grand Offering of the Kings:*

- Puntadéwa's Troubled Introspection (category 2)
- Kresna advising Puntadéwa (Protagonist and His Advisor, category 3)
- Flashback (category 8):
    - Love Scene (Brihadrata and his wives, category 5)
    - The God Naradha Advising King Brihadrata (category 3)
    - Ogress Antagonist Nyai Jara (category 4)
    - Plot Moving Forward (category 9)
    - Battle Scene (Jarasandha and Brihadrata, category 7)

The other 38 prologues I analyzed presented an even mix of each category, as can be seen in the pages that follow.

1. Gara-gara Kayon Narration

Purbo Asmoro often opens a performance, and hence, a prologue, with what Sunardi (2012) has referred to as "*gara-gara kayon* narration." It features the dramatic flurry of three *kayon*, accompanied by a narration reminiscent of the classical *gara-gara*, chaos narration.

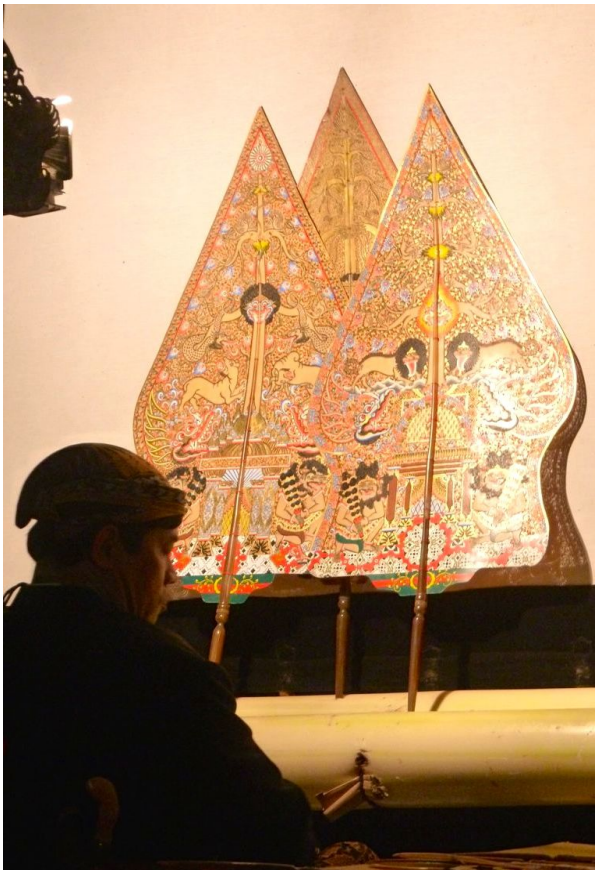


Figure 6-5: Three-kayon set up that opens most all-night *garapan* performances.



Figure 6-6: Sometimes there is a figure hidden behind the opening set-up, as in the Priest Bisma on his deathbed in *The Fall of Astina*.

Purbo Asmoro sets up his *garapan* performance stage with various configurations of three *kayon* in the center of the screen, rather than the classical single *kayon* (see Figures 6-5 and 6-6). His wayang begin, about 70 percent of the time, with Mayangkara's signature opening piece: *Ayak-ayak Anglaèng*, composed for the group by Dedek Wahyudi around 1990, with its vocal text:

> As a sacred and powerful mantra says,
> "Om … may there be no obstacles to our entreaty,"
> Wellbeing to all before us,
> As the powers that heal come forth,
> Maladies among us are snuffed out,
> The death of all maladies leads to wellbeing,
> Wellbeing for all the living.

The other 30 percent of the time, Purbo Asmoro begins with something more startling, such as: *Pathet Manyura Wantah* sung by the male chorus, *Ldr Maskentar* from a *rebab* introduction, a male solo such as *Bawa Palugon*, an eerie *garap balungan* fragment straight away, a male-female chorus with minimal or no accompaniment, a ceremonial *kemanak* vocal introduction, the *gendèr* introduction to *Ldr Gadhung Mlathi*, the lengthy, grandiose *bonang* introduction to a *sekatèn* piece, or *Ayak-ayak Singgah-singgah*, another meditative well-wishing chorus, by Jungkung Darmoyo. During these various opening selections, the three *kayon* are removed from the banana log, twirled around, and then often stuck to the far left and right so that the story may begin, just as is the practice with the single *kayon* in classical tradition during the initial *Ayak-ayak* in *sléndro manyura*.

When using a "*Gara-gara Kayon* Narration" prologue scene, instead of the three *kayon* being set to the sidelines, two of them are flipped to the fire side and vigorously placed at angles into the banana log forming a large V-shape, while the third *kayon* is brought down, still vertical, near the dhalang's lap. Purbo Asmoro then delivers a narration that he composed, usually describing some sort of chaos in the universe. In 12 years of following and recording his performances, I have never heard the same *gara-gara kayon* narration twice. These short, never more than three-minute, poetic openings are constructed with a mind to efficiency, beauty, and dramatic power at the level of the individual word (interview with Purbo Asmoro, June 2014).

> I may only write an opening *pocapan* at the last minute in the car on the way to a performance, or on the flip side of something I find lying around in the back of the stage, but I craft each word with care. Each word matters. How it sounds, how it feels, the image it brings up, how it relates to the words before and after. This is a matter of working at the word level. Short. Powerful. Meaningful.

The performance of *Rama's Crown* begins with a *gara-gara kayon* narration (see p. 192 for the English translation and p. 207 for the Javanese text) [MK-CInt 1, 02:45]. In fact, it was in preparation for his debut performance of *Makutharama garapan*, in July 2007 in Triyagan, Karanganyar that Purbo Asmoro first created this type of prologue opening. Besides describing natural disasters, Purbo Asmoro's *gara-gara kayon* opening narrations have addressed corruption, civil violence, an imposing foreign

threat to peace in a kingdom, the beginning of time, an imbalance from the underworld, a restless soul in the afterworld, or trouble in the heavens. Ten of the 40 single-episode lakon performances analyzed began with this type of scene, in every case the narration taking three to four minutes. The entire vignette sometimes involves additional elements like, in the case of the Lontar recording, an enactment of the suffering surrounding the natural disasters.

2. A Protagonist's Troubled Introspection

In *Rama's Crown*, following the *gara-gara kayon* narration and enactment of natural disasters, the focus moves to Arjuna, who is deeply disturbed about the destruction which has hit those in poverty the most. His troubled state is illustrated through sorrowful music (*Ktw Durma Rangsang* by Nartosabdo) and the expressive juxtaposition of the *kayon* over his figure [MK-CInt 1, 08:45]. Similarly, after the signature Mayangkara opening, *The Grand Offering of the Kings* performance opens with King Puntadéwa of the Pandhawa, alone and introspective [SRS-CInt 1, 01:45]. He is troubled, thinking about the state of the world and the threat Jarasandha poses.

In both of these cases, Purbo Asmoro thus highlights, within the first nine minutes, an lone individual who will ultimately make a difference. Arjuna, feeling weak and helpless, will eventually find the strength he needs through the wisdom handed down from King Rama. A confused Puntadéwa will eventually come to understand the nature of the threat he is facing in Jarasandha and the ceremony the Pandhawa will stage in response. Purbo Asmoro makes these troubled introspections more poignant by composing or choosing special texts to deepen the moment. The newly composed narration illustrating Arjuna's inner state, spoken over *Durma Rangsang*, was translated on page 192. Puntadéwa's weighty sense of lone responsibility is underscored by the use of the classical *dhandhanggula* text below. The Pandhawa brothers enter one by one to support their older brother, but he seems not to notice them as the following is being sung:

> The village drum strikes three yet I am still unable to sleep,
> The moonlight lights up the yard,
> I sit alone staring blankly,
> The wind blows to the south,

My heart aching and chilled to the bone,
Feeling all alone in the world like an orphan,
Ah my body and soul,
With neither children nor siblings,
Living a life with no home of my own,
Oh my, just take my life away.

Half of the 40 prologues studied feature a small-scale scene in which a protagonist of the lakon is seen in troubled introspection, with some sort of newly composed narration or vocal text presented to enhance meaning and give the moment weight: Bima contemplating his lofty ideals for knowledge in *The God Ruci*, Kunthi unable to keep her mind off her love for Pandhu in *Kunthi's Choice*, Rama distressed over the kidnapping of his wife Sinta in *Rama Bridges the Waters*, Kresna overwhelmed by his massive responsibility to forge peace in *Kresna as Emissary*, Abimanyu looking for meaning in life in *The Cakraningrat Boon*, to name a few. While focus on the individual, particularly this early in a performance, is not typical of classical treatment, it is a hallmark of Purbo Asmoro's *garapan* style.

3. A Protagonist and His or Her Adviser

Often the central scene in a prologue by Purbo Asmoro, and the most cited by wayang critics as well as most admired by fellow dhalang, will be the moment a protagonist meets with an elder adviser about the inner struggles he or she is facing. This is when the hero or heroine of the lakon will receive the inspiration to act, and this is where Purbo Asmoro chooses from his literally hundreds of tidbits of *wejangan* (philosophical teachings), communicated to the audience through the words of the adviser. In the 40 lakon studied, Semar is the elder adviser figure to appear most often in this scene: inspiring Arjuna to act in *Rama's Crown* [MK-CInt 1, 10:30], directing Sumantri in *Sumantri's Apprentice*, making Arjuna's wife Sembadra see the other side of issues in *Arjuna Jelur*, guiding Bima in both *Pandhu's Afterlife* and *The God Ruci*, encouraging Rama in *Semar Enlisted*, or Kresna in *Kresna As Emissary*. Kresna is often placed in this role as well, such as in *The Grand Offering of the Kings*, when he reassures Puntadéwa that he will find the answer to his troubles [SRS-CInt 1, 05:00].

Often the adviser will be the protagonist's parent or grandparent, such as Dhanapati receiving marriage advice from his mother in *Sukèsi's Hand in Marriage Contested*, Abiyasa advising his great-great-grandchild Parikesit on leadership in *The Coronation of Parikesit*, Sudarsana learning about the depth of thought of his Pandhawa ancestors from his grandfather Sidikara in *Sudarsana Amputated*, and Rama coming to terms with the inevitability of his exile through the wise words of his mother Kekayi in the flashback scenes of various *Ramayana* lakon. Sometimes a god appears as a result of a protagonist's deep meditation, granting wisdom through a *wejangan* and perhaps the granting of an heirloom or boon, such as Naradha granting Brihadrata the special mango in *The Grand Offering of the Kings* [SRS-CInt 1, 24:30] or the antagonist Durga receiving a visit from Bethara Guru in *Sudamala*.

4. An Ogre Antagonist

The audience gets a chance to breathe a bit during one of the most popular prologue scenes among the general public: an ogre or other aggressive figure holding court with his or her servants, usually Togog and Bilung. As Purbo Asmoro explained in an interview (March 2015):

> I need *vulgar* characters like Togog, Bilung, the ogre figures, and even Semar, in order to add color, variety, and a different perspective. Since we want to bring all the subplots into the fold during the prologue, this kind of scene is almost a certainty.

Of the 40 prologues analyzed, 23 included this type of scene. Whether the antagonist represented is Dasamuka, Dasakumara (Dasamuka from the afterlife), Niwatakawaca, Kalasrenggi, Maésasura, Kangsa, Déwa Srani, Durga, Boma, Pracona, or even the ogre protagonists Tremboko or Kumbakarna, their "vulgar" nature allows Purbo Asmoro to use a different kind of language, gamelan accompaniment, and movement repertory than the categories above. The dialogue between the antagonist and the servants Togog and Bilung is enlivened with humor and recklessness not allowed in the other scenes. The appearance of ogress Nyai Jara in the forest [SRS-CInt 1, 38:45] or Dasamuka and Kumbakarna from the afterlife [MK-CInt 1, 20:20] allows the audience to experience the kind of energy that in a

classical performance is often not felt until *Adegan Sabrang*. These scenes often include their own departures of the troops, featuring various ogre and spirit-like characters taking off into battle.

5. A Love Scene

A thoughtful narration on the state of the world, a protagonist's troubled introspection, philosophical advice from a respected adviser, and a rousing ogre scene reflect the main elements of any lakon save one, romance. Purbo Asmoro is renowned for his love scenes, as he gives equal time to both the male and female perspective. Be it Kunthi and Pandhu, Rama and Sinta, Kumbakarna and Kiswani [MK-CInt 1, 28:30], Brihadrata and his wives [SRS-CInt 1, 15:30], or any of the other 12 couples who are featured in the prologues analyzed, the female characters are given at least as much voice as the male. The *iringan* and poetry crafted by Purbo Asmoro and the expressive movement between the lovers, create a sweetness, poignancy, and depth to these scenes different from the other types of scenes.

6. Two Perspectives Juxtaposed

As described at the opening of Chapter 5, Purbo Asmoro constructed a new prologue to *Kresna as Emissary* on the eve of the performance, in which he envisioned Kresna in the middle of the screen while Drupada advised him from the left and then Kunthi from the right. This is the least common category in 40 performances, and does not occur in the two Lontar recordings. It is strikingly different, and is the one construction that cannot be categorized as an already existing prototype. Purbo Asmoro does not recall when he first used the "Two Perspectives Juxtaposed" scene in a prologue, but it is evident as far back as Tristuti's 1995 use of the technique in the script *Sumantri Apprentices*, developed for Purbo Asmoro. Sumantri, trying to decide what is the best path for his future development, is goaded by two gods, one from the left and one from the right:

> **THE GOD OF WEALTH (KUWÉRA)**: Sumantri, what is making you so conflicted? Why are you so sad? You needn't think so hard about dedication to your people and your nation and the likes. It should be enough that I will bestow upon you great riches, in the form of jewels, cash, and treasures. You will be able to use your great wealth to go any direction you please in life.

> **THE GOD OF PROSPERITY (RAHASPATI)**: Hey, Bambang Sumantri! No need to be sad or despairing. I grant you great status, command, and authority in life. Use it to its full! With your combination of status and authority, you will be able to do anything, including controlling the universe, Sumantri.

Sumantri, however, rejects both and decides to take off in search of knowledge. Each time Purbo Asmoro has performed this lakon since 2004, the source, content and timing of the left and right temptations has been different, as has Sumantri's precise reaction.

Another early example is in the opening of the *padat* script *Salya Bégal* (*Salya is Intercepted*, 1997, Budiarjo), where the focus is Salya's torn loyalties. The performance opens with Salya in the middle, recalling when Kresna's (from the right) reminded Duryudana of his promise to give Astina back to the Pandhawa. Then Salya hears Duryudana, from the left, vowing only to do this over his dead body. Purbo Asmoro performed this script in 2001 for a recording at STSI, and since then has used the construction in other battle tales. In *Building a Temple in Saptaarga* (2013) a rectangular figure symbolizing the troops (*rampogan*) comes in from the left, issuing mass complaints about the current governance in Amarta, followed by another *rampogan* from the right with a whole different set of complaints. In *Semar Boyong (Semar Enlisted*, 2011) monkey troops on the left decry the corrupt kingdom of Rama, while troops on the right defend him. In *Karna Becomes King* (2013) ogre figures on the right and left goad the young Karna, much like in the Sumantri example, with suggestions of paths to glory much easier than his planned path of asceticism and discipline.

7-8-9. A Battle, A Flashback, Plot Moves Forward

Some of Purbo Asmoro's prologues include small battle scenes, and other scenes that cannot be categorized in any special way but simply move the plot forward. Sometimes these take the form of flashbacks. For example, in *The Grand Offering of the Kings*, the entire flashback concerning the birth of Jarasandha includes a number of small scenes: Brihadrata brings the mango back to be eaten by one of his wives, the deformed babies are born and discarded, and Jarasandha battles his way through the palace to find his father.

Pathet Sanga Moved to the Forefront

I had often felt that *Pathet Sanga* was somewhat slighted in Purbo Asmoro's new all-night *garapan* style, as shown in Figure 6-7 from the two representative performances.

Figure 6-7: Time spent on story content in each *pathet* (excluding *Limbukan* and *Gara-gara*).

	Prologue	**Pathet Nem**	**Pathet Sanga**	**Pathet Manyura**
Rama's Crown	38 minutes	144 minutes	51 minutes	73 minutes
The Grand Offering of the Kings	56 minutes	104 minutes	25 minutes	74 minutes

Yet it turns out that the types of scenes found in *Pathet Sanga* are not missing but rather moved up to a more prominent position, into the prologues. To quote from Chapter 2 (p. 50): "*Pathet Sanga* … takes place mostly in the forest and concerns journeys, meditation, introspection, personal suffering, and individual trials or sacrifice." Purbo Asmoro wants the essence of the lakon, both in theme and character development, to be at the forefront of his performances, hence hermitage, meditation, and highly philosophical scenes are moved to this more prominent position.

All of the prologue scene-type categories proposed, resemble scenes from the *Pathet Sanga* section of a classical wayang, except for 4, An Ogre Antagonist, which resembles the *Adegan Sabrang* scene in *Pathet Nem*. These Pathet Sanga-esque scenes (such as A Protagonist's Troubled Introspection, A Protagonist and His Adviser) are focused, specific, and meaningful to the lakon. Rather than generic, required scenes in *Pathet Sanga*, in the wee hours of the morning, they now serve as essential introductions to the issues central to the lakon.

The old-style *gara-gara* narration that reflected chaos in the universe only occurred in certain lakon (p. 51), and has been considered long-gone by many observers. It is now back in the *Gara-gara Kayon* Narration prologue scene. The entire seven-hour wayang performance now in fact often starts off with this short narration, re-crafted into a literary form, expanded in scope, and written anew to fit each individual lakon. If we consider these scenes, as well as the small battles, love

scenes, and flashbacks of the prologues, as *Pathet Sanga*-like material, we can see that Purbo Asmoro does not slight *Pathet Sanga*. Rather, he moves half of its material up to a more prominent position in the Prologue. This is also indicated by the musical accompaniment, in that 34 of the 40 prologues analyzed were either entirely in *pélog nem* (30 lakon) or *sléndro sanga* (4 lakon), thus aligning musically with *Pathet Sanga*. Only six of the prologues were in *sléndro manyura* and none were in *pélog barang*.

While analyzing Purbo Asmoro's prologues along the lines of these categories seems to "work" in that it is an accurate reflection of the essence of his small-scale scenes, his performances are in no way formulaic. No two love scenes are alike in poetry or feel, no two ogre antagonist scenes follow the same scenario, no two protagonist and adviser scenes contains the same philosophy delivered in the same way for the same purpose. The richness lies in the details. Going into a Purbo Asmoro performance with the idea that these categories exist in his prologues only informs the viewer on a superficial level. Every scene will still come across as fresh, new, and original because of the newly constructed poetry, accompaniment, interpretive story details, unique characterizations and, mostly, the very nature of the blank slate that is a prologue. At the center of Purbo Asmoro's planning is his intent to create meaning before Pak Camat and Pak Lurah go home. In the following chapter, we will look at what is in store for the audience who stays on beyond the prologue in Purbo Asmoro's all-night *garapan* performances.

SEVEN

CREATING DRAMATIC HIERARCHY:
THE POIGNANT AND THE FAMILIAR

All-Night *Pakeliran Padat*?

Mas Purbo is what we would call—well, if we speak in terms of a chef, he has mastered what *gudeg* is, what *soto* is, what characterizes *tahu kupat*, and all the rest. He knows how to properly mix the necessary spices and has the talent to rework the various ingredients so as to create a new style of cooking. It all depends on which village he is performing in, who the sponsor is, and who he is working with … but no matter what, his performances are inspirational. From the beginning to the end they sparkle and have an energy as if on fire. Mas Purbo's many talents combined into one have made it possible for him to create all-night *padat* style [*padat semalam suntuk*]. He took the *padat* concepts from Pak Gendhon and associates, then remastered them … added a heavy influence of Pak Narto … spiced it up with Mas Manteb, Mas Anom, Mas Darman, Pak Tristuti. From this he has created the perfectness [*perfektnya*] of his performances that we have now…. In addition to all of that, Mas Purbo is a genius. You never see him studying or preparing, yet when he performs you think, "There you have it—it's all there, he's integrating it all." (Supanggah, Balai Soedjatmoko, May 2013)

Now that we have examined Purbo Asmoro's use of prologues in single-episode all-night *garapan* style, how does he craft the remaining six hours of his wayang performances? Supanggah labels Purbo Asmoro's style as "all-night *padat*," and at least three other intellectuals have independently used this same characterization (Kayam 2001, 212-213; Nugroho 2012, 421; Perlman, personal communication, 2006). Since 2005 when I first started following Purbo Asmoro's all-night *garapan* style, I have been struggling to reconcile this oft-heard phrase with what I observe on stage, performance after performance, and what I glean through conversations with Purbo Asmoro himself about his process. After documenting 224 single-episode *garapan* performances over 11 years, something the four intellectuals quoted of course did not have the benefit of, my impressions take the form of a more wordy description, perhaps something like this:

> Throughout a seven-hour wayang, Purbo Asmoro creates a new type of dramatic hierarchy through a purposeful juxtaposition of newer, conceptualized, *padat* techniques with familiar, stylized, traditional techniques. The segments he selects for *padat* treatment rise to the top and stand out as special moments of poignancy, focus, and intensity. The result is a performance shaped quite differently from either classical or *padat* treatment, but with elements of both.

Of course the insightful scholars mentioned earlier were speaking off the cuff, looking to capture the essence of Purbo's style in a short phrase. By contrast, I am focused here on exploring the complexity of the style. In the Balai Soedjatmoko seminar quoted above, Purbo Asmoro himself rephrased Supanggah's term, calling his style *padat disewengèkaké* ("*padat* all-night-ed"). This is not just "all-night *padat*" in the passive, but in fact has a different connotation. This chapter will explore how, more accurately than "all-night *padat*," Purbo Asmoro's performances are "*padat* all-night-ed": *padat* style interspersed, selectively juxtaposed, and at times combined, with traditional style. This contrast creates a new type of dramatic hierarchy, and allows poignant moments to rise to the surface over the course of the night.

Purbo Asmoro uses three broad categories of scenes to create this hierarchy:

1. Scenes in which he applies *padat* techniques across all six main artistic elements (scene structure, interpretive details, movement, gamelan accompaniment, dialogue and narration, characterization). This category is reserved for a limited number of chosen, crucial scenes or moments.
2. Familiar scenes that are retained, yet transformed using a limited range of *padat* techniques across selected artistic elements.
3. Familiar, beloved scenes that are retained more or less as per tradition.

Each of these categories is briefly defined below, and then explored further, one by one.

1. Creating Dramatic Hierarchy Through Selective Application of Padat Techniques

In addition to his heavily *garap*ed prologues, Purbo Asmoro uses *padat* techniques selectively throughout an all-night performance in order to highlight focal points of the lakon. During these chosen moments, special attention is given to the recrafting and rethinking of scene structure, explicit character development, and a fresh interpretation of story details (*sanggit*). Purbo Asmoro applies narrative, musical, and movement techniques from the *pakeliran padat* movement in order to support these pearls of *garap* interspersed throughout the night. By leaving other moments relatively traditional, a hierarchy and shape to the dramatic energy emerges; an ebb and flow of intensity. Audience attention is reined in at these moments, tension created, and poignancy sculpted through this defining of important junctures. *Padat* techniques are meant to condense and compress content. Paradoxically, the resulting effect when applied to an all-night wayang is a thickening, deepening, and enhancing of content during these segments. Rather than any abbreviating or shortcutting that may be associated with *padat* techniques, these segments are lengthened, and more elaborate than in their classical-style counterparts, due to the intensity and complexity of the *garap*. These *garapan*-heavy segments tend to occur in the same seven places, regardless of the lakon:

1. the prologue
2. a climactic moment at the end of *Prang Gagal*
3. the transition from *Pathet Nem* to *Pathet Sanga*
4. the transition from *Pathet Sanga* to *Pathet Manyura*
5. the single defining scene (climax) of the lakon
6. the final battle scene
7. the precise manner in which the performance ends

This chapter examines the nature of these *garapan*-heavy moments in *Rama's Crown* and *The Grand Offering of the Kings*, and how the resulting conscious sculpting of these selected segments creates a clear graph of dramatic hierarchy over the seven-hour progression of the lakon (see Figures 7-4 to 7-9 at the end of the chapter). The experience of an all-night *garapan* performance by Purbo Asmoro, therefore, is one of moving in and out of the world of *pakeliran padat*, rather than being "all-night *padat*."

2. The Familiar Transformed

Aside from these seven *garapan*-heavy segments to be discussed later in this chapter, what else characterizes an all-night *garapan* performance by Purbo Asmoro? Immediately after the prologue, he slips seamlessly into a court audience scene (*jejer*) of traditional length and feel. As mentioned in Chapter 4 in reference to the radically new *Kunthi Pilih* performance at Rebo Legèn in 1989 (see p. 116), there is a sense of relaxation at this point and even perhaps the false supposition that the performance will now proceed classically. This familiar scene, disallowed by the *padat* movement as too stylized, may seem unaltered. In fact, however, Purbo transforms it in subtle ways into a *padat* (dense, meaningful), albeit not condensed, construction. Characters expound on philosophy and engage in extended debate over a central conflict in a far more directional and focused way than in typical traditional practice. This chapter will explore the first court scene in both *Rama's Crown* and *The Grand Offering of the Kings*.

3. The Beloved Retained

Throughout the seven hours, Purbo Asmoro faithfully supplies his audiences with beloved, familiar attractions such as the elaborate troop departure scene (*Budhalan*),

the fierce and virtuosic *Cakilan* battle scene, and a lengthy *Prang Gagal* sequence, complete with ample slapstick. At times, depending on the lakon and situation, Purbo may transform these scenes in subtle ways also, in order to enhance the focal points in a *padat*-esque way. But most often these scenes appear much the same as they would in a completely traditional performance. Finally, not to be forgotten, Purbo Asmoro unapologetically provides his audiences with the two entertainment interludes they have come to love from the *hura-hura* days: a full *Limbukan* and *Gara-gara* of 60 to 90 minutes in length each. During these two intermezzi, the lakon and any thought of theme or character is entirely left behind. Anything goes including stand-up singers and dancers, comedians, guest speakers, and even, although rarely in the case of Purbo Asmoro, *campursari*, *dhangdhut*, or pop bands. This is clearly not in alignment with *padat* practice, or anything that could be labeled "all-night *padat*."

Hence, as we will see through an examination of *Rama's Crown* and *The Grand Offering of the Kings*, it is not literally accurate to label Purbo Asmoro's all-night *garapan* style as all-night *pakeliran padat*.[1] Rather, his style features his deliberate creation of dramatic hierarchy through the selective use of interspersed *padat* techniques, and the crafting of highly *garap*ed milestones that give the lakon shape. This shape sits within the encasing of both the familiar transformed and the entirely traditional. We will now examine the progression of this hierarchy across a lakon.

[1] I feel certain that the scholars mentioned who have termed Purbo's style as "all-night *padat*" would qualify the label as well, given an opportunity for further thought. I am grateful for their quick and inspired comments in public settings though, as the first time I heard the term (Perlman, 2006, personal communication) was in many ways when the seed material of this dissertation was sown.

The Familiar Transformed: The Opening Court Scene

The First Court Scene: As Weighty as a Classical Performance

After the prologue, Purbo Asmoro almost always[2] moves into a traditional court scene similar to one that would open a classical performance. In spite of the length of his prologues this initial court scene is not shortened. And more importantly, the essential content of the scene is consistently at least as weighty as in a classical performance, and in fact often more so. This can be seen by examining the court scenes in the Lontar recordings.

In the classical performance of *Rama's Crown*, the opening Astina Kingdom scene lasts 55 minutes [MK-Class 1, tr 1]. Thirty minutes are taken up by the musical selection, generic narration, *sulukan*, and elaborate, formal introductions. That leaves only 25 minutes of the scene actually dedicated to discussing the issue at hand. The Astina Kingdom scene in the *garapan* performance [MK-CInt 1, tr 4] is a comparable 50 minutes long. However, a more weighty 38 minutes are dedicated to discussing the issues surrounding the plot. Moreover, the narration describing the kingdom is not generic, but was written by Purbo Asmoro and actually helps to develop the audience's understanding of the corrupt nature of King Duryudana.

In *The Grand Offering of the Kings* classical performance [SRS-Class 1, tr 1] a monumental 65 minutes is dedicated to the opening court scene in Kresna's kingdom of Dwarawati, with only 24 minutes spent discussing content. In the *garapan* performance of *The Grand Offering of the Kings*, [SRS-CInt 1, tr 5 and 6] the scene is only 30 minutes long, but with 20 minutes of that dedicated to content. So although in this case the court scene is much shorter than the classical version, it is comparable (20 minutes versus 24 minutes) in terms of time spent on content. Figure 7-1 shows that, when the plot-intensive prologues are included, more than three times as much time is spent on content in the *garapan* performances, opening to Limbukan, than in the classical performances.

[2] This based on data from the same 40 recordings used for the prologue analysis in Chapter 6. Every recording moves from the prologue into a traditional court audience scene. Even aside from these 40 examples over 11 years, I have no recollection of a single-episode performance by Purbo Asmoro that did not move from the prologue into a formal court audience scene.

Figure 7-1: Time spent on plot, theme, and non-stylized character representation,[3] opening to Limbukan				
	Rama's Crown palace-classical	***Grand Offering*** village-classical	***Rama's Crown*** all-night *garapan*	***Grand Offering*** all-night *garapan*
Prologue	(no prologue)	(no prologue)	**38 minutes**	**56 minutes**
Opening Court Scene Set-up (before any plot-related dialogue begins)	30 minutes	41 minutes	12 minutes (a non-generic narration, however, that in fact does contribute briefly to character development)	10 minutes (a non-generic narration, however, that in fact does contribute briefly to character development)
Opening Court Scene Dialogue	**25 minutes**	**24 minutes**	**38 minutes**	**20 minutes**
TOTALS (time spent on plot, theme, character development)	**25 total minutes** (45% of the 55-minute opening)	**24 total minutes** (37% of the 65-minute opening)	**76 total minutes** (86% of the 88-minute opening)	**76 total minutes** (88% of the 86-minute opening)

In the case of a freeform prologue, there is no question that *garapan* concepts are employed from beginning to end. But, in fact, so are the subsequent formal court scenes, only in more subtle ways. Purbo succeeds in making these classically-based scenes dense and meaningful by applying the concepts developed initially for *padat* performances as outlined in Chapter 3. Hence, while familiar, these court scenes are also significantly yet subtly transformed in the ways outlined below.

Recrafting Lakon Interpretation in the Court Scene

Purbo Asmoro ensures that the discussion in the court scene stays focused on the central idea, avoids digression, and is infused with conflict rather than being flat. As he himself jokes in one of the interludes, "In the old days, the dialogue and banter was not always connected to the theme, and that was considered fine." In Purbo's contemporary-interpretive court scenes there is much less stylization in the dialogue, and each discussion is infused with debate and contrasting viewpoints.

The priest Bisma, who does not appear in the classical court audience, serves as the spark of conflict in the opening court scene of *Rama's Crown*.[4] Bisma enters and

[3] "Non-stylized character representation" meaning narration or dialogue that contributes to an understanding of the character's position with regard to the conflict at hand, as opposed to generic greetings and small talk.

immediately criticizes his great-nephew Duryudana's corrupt and irresponsible rule. He accuses the young king of only thinking of his own wealth, and of not being willing to take an honest look at the decline of his nation. It is in this context that he challenges Duryudana to better himself through attaining the boon soon to be handed down by the gods. This sets up a tension and resistance that does not occur in the classical treatment, where Duryudana simply announces to his court, devoid of any particular conflict, that he has been visited in a dream and told of a boon to be handed down by the gods. He orders his court to take action to find the boon in a flat interpretation that denies any of the characters, including Duryudana himself, choice in the matter.

In the contemporary version Purbo crafts the lakon into a human conflict rather than a heavenly decree. The corrupt and powerful King Duryudana is reprimanded by his great-uncle priest in front of his entire court, and an argument ensues. The minister Sangkuni and the court tutor Durna both chime in with their opinions, heating the atmosphere of the court to a palpable melting point. After considerable discussion Uncle Bisma finally leaves in disgust. The brave and virtuous cousin Prince Karna then steps up to suggest that if Duryudana is indifferent to the god's gift perhaps he himself may be granted permission to strive for the boon, in the interest of Astina Kingdom. While this infuriates Duryudana, he grudgingly gives his permission. The end result is the same in both versions: the Astina troops depart for Mount Swélagiri, with Karna in the lead. In the contemporary version, however, the plot has been *garap*ed into a rich conflict infused with numerous and varying viewpoints and with ample opportunity for philosophical content.

Recrafting Characterization in the Court Scene

In Purbo Asmoro's all-night *garapan* style, every character appearing in the court audience scene has a crucial role. For example in *Rama's Crown*, we hear from every single member of the Astina Court. Each one expresses an opinion on whether King Duryudana should strive to attain the boon, and each speculates on whether the

[4] Purbo Asmoro described to me on numerous occasions, how his inspiration for consistently and deliberately enfusing the court scene with conflict came from Tristuti's performance practice. When the opening court scene takes place in Astina, the spark of conflict and criticism most often comes from Bisma.

Kurawa have a chance or not. By the end of the scene, each of their separate personalities is clear, each of their perspectives is distinct, and there is a specific reason for everyone's presence. The intense philosophical nature of Bisma's commentary contrasts with Sangkuni's sly cynicism, and with Durna's comic exasperation at the good-for-nothing Kurawa sons, and all in contrast to Karna's virtuous, but ultimately futile, aspirations.

Most strikingly, Purbo Asmoro rejects generic and traditional responses to an issue that do not reflect a character's true nature. In the classical version of *Rama's Crown,* and in every performance I have seen or read by other dhalang, Duryudana does not question the advice to pursue the gift from the gods, but unceremoniously hands the task over to Karna. Purbo Asmoro fills the scene with meaning by using it as a chance to reinforce Duryudana's arrogance, while also highlighting Karna's nature as a bit of a renegade. It is a subtle, yet radical, departure from tradition to portray Duryudana as completely disinterested:

> **DURYUDANA**: I have no intention of pursuing this boon. The only people in need of such a boon are those who have no status. The only people in need of such a boon are the destitute. The only people in need of such a boon are those whose lives are in disarray, people with no direction. The only people in need of such a boon are those who have no position in life and no respect. I am in control of a third of the universe. Yet the world-renowned Duryudana is being told to go after a boon? For what? Without any sort of boon I am already victorious. Without any sort of boon I am already esteemed. Without any sort of boon I already have authority over all. The Legacy of Rama's Crown consists of King Rama's philosophy. Yet this is no longer the era of Ramawijaya. This is the era of Duryudana. Therefore it is not Rama's legacy that should be sought after, but rather the legacy of Duryudana. It's not Rama's legacy that the world needs right now, but rather clear and strong action. He with the ability to make a country strong and powerful will be the one respected as a protector, will be thought of as someone having a legacy.

Again, the end result of Karna departing for the boon is the same, but the character development is far stronger in the *garapan* version. Duryudana insists he has no need for such a boon; Karna replies with an individualistic and strong-willed response. This all could simply be referred to as good interpretive practice—effective *sanggit*—which any classical dhalang might also create. But, as he often remarks in public forums, Purbo Asmoro's *padat* training has helped him address issues of *sanggit* in a more systematic, consistent, deliberate, and thoughtful way, assuring

attention to conflict and character development in every opening court scene of every lakon.[5]

Recrafting Narration in the Court Scene

Purbo Asmoro writes his own narrations rather than using those traditionally associated with the opening court scene. His narrations depict the nature of the kingdom and are unique. He also shortens the post-narration introductions and tightens up the content and speed of the dialogue throughout the court scene. Below is the narration to the Astina Court scene from *Rama's Crown*. As is a common practice of his, Purbo Asmoro begins the narration with a phrase in Old Javanese, which would be incomprehensible to modern audiences, and then translates the phrase into everyday Javanese. In this case he chose a phrase concerning leadership. This opening narration is much more specific to the situation and far less stylized than the classical opening narration (see Chapter 6, p. 187).

→*Gd Udan Soré kt 2 kr mg kt 4, sléndro nem, Semarang-style chorus* **(comes down in volume)**

1. *Nihan kramani déning ngaunirat awakta rumuhun warah ring hayu telas ta-mapageh mango magama, teke ri kangamantya mantri tumut.*[6]

In essence, a phrase describing the path a leader must take. His entire being must first be completely dedicated to virtue. If his loyalty to higher powers is stalwart, if his actions speak of idealism, if his heart is led by pure motives, then inevitably his advisors, ministers and the like will follow suit. Now let's begin our tale, which takes place in Hastinapura Kingdom, also known as Gajahoya, Limanbenawi, or Kurujanggala.

2. It's a vast country covering a huge area, famous in stature but in a state of decline. Year after year, again and again, the great hopes and aspirations for the kingdom are shattered due to the contemptuous actions of the king who indulges his every whim, and with one simple goal: to accumulate as much wealth and as many riches as he possibly can. It is therefore no surprise that the country's advisors have given up and the kingdom's priests have lost their patience, while the common people scrape for bits of food and the generals show off their gold. It's a desperate state of affairs, with no light in

[5] Purbo Asmoro texted me a few months before the Lontar recordings with the comment, "Having Duryudana reject the boon and show disinterest is so much more in character. But it's not the classical treatment to be explicit about his nature in this way. So don't be disappointed in the flatness of the classical version. That's the way things were done—just look at all the original sources of this lakon. I'd be more satisfied showing Duryudana's arrogance, but let's save that for the *garap*ed version. It is *garap tokoh*, after all."

[6] Purbo Asmoro reports taking this phrase from a paragraph on leadership found in a text entitled *Sarwaçastra* (1963 edition) that he had saved out from his father's literature collection. He had no more information on the origin or era of the passage, and I was unable to gather any on my own. Purbo Asmoro has hundreds of tidbits like these that he has collected over the years, many on small scraps of paper already torn and yellowed, and often with scant details on origin. (The numbers placed in this narration excerpt are to aid the analysis of the language that follows on the next page.)

sight. What's more, such a multitude of problems will never be solved when justice is up for sale.

3. Those at the top are constantly questioning, while those at the bottom simply wait to see: when will the situation improve?

4. The country is proceeding like a boat with no captain, thrown about by the ocean waves. From all directions of the compass we find people spreading death and destruction, enticing conflict and pitting members of different cultures and religions against each other.

5. There are only a few who keep up their faith and rely on the Creator for inspiration, waiting for a golden age to arrive whose coming cannot be accelerated, cannot be sped up. A time when the world is bright again, the leaders honest, the government calmly and peacefully in control, integrity in place. This is where their hopes lie.

6. On this particular day, the leader of Ngastina, the Great Ruler King Jakapitana, has graced the court with his presence by presiding in the Audience Hall. The hall is packed with every village elder and all reigning advisors and ministers. Priest Durna, the regent of Awangga, and Minister Sir Sangkuni are all present. Everyone is then startled to see the arrival of the priest of Talkandha, the great pundit Bisma, who causes a stir among all who witness his entrance.

Purbo Asmoro employs rhyme in this narration, with long phrases based on similar ending sounds:

-ar: paragraph 2

Negari jembar, wewengkon wiyar, hadegé wus kawentar, parandéné 'tan bangkit tumangkar, krana ing mangké hambyar buyar ingkang ginayuh jinangka mataun-taun gagar wigar pating balesar, labet tingkahing ratu kang anasar, nuruti napsu kang dèn-umbar, marma katekan sedyané kanthi mayar angukup bandha, hanumpuk dinar. Mila nayaka bebahuning praja koncatan nalar, pandhita wiku brahmana wus datan sabar, kawulané cakar-cinakar, sénapatiné mamrih onar, pepeteng 'tan bangkit pajar, sakèhing prekara 'tan bisa wudhar, merga ukuming negara kena dibayar.

-é: paragraph 3

Ing nginggil samya ramé-ramé, ing ngandhap ngantu-antu mbésuk kapan padhangé.

-i: paragraph 4

Lakuning pepréntahan kadya baita ingkang tanpa kemudhi, kombak-kombul ing jaladri. Kéblat papat wus kèbegan manungsa ingkang nyebar pepati, urub-urub memanas ati, ngedu kumba suku miwah agami.

-é: paragraph 5

Amung sekedhik ingkang tasih éling dhateng panembahé, suméndhé marang kang nitahaké, ngentèni timbuling jaman kencana ingkang nyata 'tan kena ginégé, ginelak wanciné dadya srana padhang jagadé, jujur ratuné, adhem préntahé, jejeg adeg-adegé; mangkono pangarep-arepé.

The opening narration to *The Grand Offering of the Kings* is much shorter and less elaborately constructed, but in a simple and straightforward way reflects the purity and virtue of the Amarta Kingdom, without relying on traditional structures (contrast to the narration in the village-classical performance: Asmoro 2013, 5).

> Purity surrounds amidst incantations of wellbeing. The world's evil vanishes; all dangers perish, swept away by the presence of such purity. From the beginning it was intended that this story be unfolded: may it serve as a looking glass into the ways of a people; may it develop nobility of character. And indeed, here appears the kingdom of Indraprastha, otherwise known as Cintakapura. A grand kingdom, a great kingdom, a kingdom that protects, thus feels peaceful. The overarching crown of authority in the palace belongs to His Majesty King Yudhisthira, or the Honorable Puntadéwa. He has been holding audience as he observes the arrival of the great monarch of Dwaraka, along with his older brother the monarch of Mandura, King Halayuda. Thus it was that the musings of their hearts were expressed.

Recrafting Movement Techniques in the Court Scene

Although a court audience scene will be entirely devoid of *sabet tématik* (the highly symbolic vocabulary of expressive movement developed in the *padat* era), and although traditional movements are used, Purbo Asmoro does recraft movement by reducing the amount of time it takes for a character to enter and leave the scene. He shortcuts classical sequences, such as the elaborate path the maid servants traditionally take across the screen to bow and position themselves, and he chooses gestures carefully to efficiently reflect personality and emotional state. Characters enter and depart much more quickly and simply than in a classical treatment.

Recrafting Gamelan Accompaniment in the Court Scene

Although the musical selections in the contemporary versions of initial court scenes are not significantly shorter than their classical counterparts, Purbo Asmoro chooses pieces with a view toward dramatic liveliness. He presents faster tempos as well as fuller vocal chorus orchestration, such as *Gd Téjanata, bedhayan Solo* for Dwarawati Kingdom in *The Grand Offering of the Kings* and *Gd Udan Soré*, *koor Semarangan* for Astina Kingdom in *Rama's Crown*. This helps to sustain the audience interest, dispelling potential audience dread that the initial court scene will be slow-moving, since this scene follows what has already been a lengthy prologue. By moving quickly and dynamically from the prologue into one of these fast-paced vocal chorus

pieces, Pak Camat and Pak Lurah and the village masses remain glued to their places after the prologue, with expectations that dramatic tension and interest will remain high in the court scene. Each musical element is also shortened: pieces are cut off before they are completed and the number and length of *sulukan,* for the most part, are reduced. Character development is also enhanced through the *iringan*. The dramatic and regal entrance of Priest Bisma in *Rama's Crown* is accompanied by *Ldr Uluk-uluk,* and the aggressive entrance of the enemy Hamsa in *The Grand Offering of the Kings* by *Ldr Wirangrong*. In classical treatment, a guest's entrance in the initial court scene is most often accompanied by the more generic *Ayak-ayak, sléndro nem*.

Hence we can see that although the court audience scene may appear to be a familiar element from traditional practice, in fact Purbo Asmoro subtly applies *garapan* concepts across every element: movement, narration, musical accompaniment, story details, and characterization. Unlike the obviously *padat*-inspired prologue, this scene does not come across as *padat*-esque in any way. It has the same long and expansive feel as in the classical counterparts and seems deceptively classical in nature. But *garapan* techniques are used by Purbo Asmoro, nonetheless, to transform the scene into something consistently deeper and thicker than the more stylized and flatter, more predictable classical versions. Again, creative and innovative dhalang all over Central Java for centuries have infused the court scenes with life, conflict, and creative interpretation. But Purbo Asmoro's *padat* background manifests in more rigorous and consistent application of *garapan* principles to the court scene, and more deliberate thought and interpretation than is traditionally and generally the case with most dhalang.

The Familiar and Beloved

To return to our hypothetical audience of Pak Camat, Pak Lurah and the masses, it is now approximately 11 PM and there has been an hour and a half of focused and powerful drama: the heavily *garap*ed, multi-scene prologue and the expansive, philosophically-intense court scene infused with conflict and debate. *Rama's Crown* featured a 38-minute prologue and 50-minute court scene, while *The Grand Offering of the Kings* a 56-minute prologue and 30-minute court scene. A *padat* performance would be nearing the end if not over, as would, for that matter, a Western theater

performance, feature film, or ballet. Also important to remember is that the audience would have been in place even longer, through some 30 to 45 minutes of pre-wayang concert music from the gamelan, followed by speeches and protocol.[7]

At this point in Purbo Asmoro's all-night *garapan* performances, there is a move away from the intense *padat* techniques and concepts of the prologue scenes, as well as the heavy philosophy and debate of the court scene. For the next approximately two hours (until about 1:15 AM in both performances being analyzed) audiences have the chance to relax into what I have termed the "familiar and beloved." Although there may be a moment of intense *padat* treatment here and there, depending on the lakon, for the most part these next two hours are a combination of the traditional, the traditional spiced up with a contemporary element here and there, and even the *hura-hura*. That is not to say that anything relaxes for the dhalang. He now segues into two hours of movement sequences, battles and visual attractions that require virtuosic physical skills, and an entertainment interlude that requires comedic talents and a high level of clever spontaneity. In these two hours, however, with the exception of the 20-minute Foreign Kingdom Scene (*Adegan Sabrang*), the heady matters of theme, message, philosophy, debate, and, for the most part, all matters of *garapan* as well, are given a rest. This is where the traditional scenes that audiences have loved for decades, perhaps centuries, are presented by Purbo Asmoro without considerable recrafting.

In *Rama's Crown*, the next 127 minutes contain the following scenes, all with little to no *padat*-style *garapan*:

- Court Dispersal Scene (*Bedholan*), 4 minutes
- A Court Dancer (*Gléyongan*), 5 minutes
- Entertainment Interlude (*Limbukan*), 65 minutes
- The Troops Depart (*Budhalan*), 12 minutes
- A Foreign Kingdom (*Adegan Sabrang Alus*), 21 minutes
- A Series of Inconclusive Battles (*Prang Gagal*), 20 minutes

[7] Current audiences for the typical superstar dhalang's performance in a massive venue tend to arrive at the beginning of the performance and stay somewhat in one place until midnight or so. This is in contrast to the more fluid ebb and flow of a traditional performance, pre-1990. The VIPs are expected to be present from the beginning, and the masses of fans usually want to secure a good seat early on, be it in chairs, on the grass, or at the sidelines. Purbo Asmoro, without a doubt, plans on this dedicated attentiveness through the first few hours of the wayang, and crafts his interpretation with this in mind.

In *The Grand Offering of the Kings* the next 132 minutes contain the following scenes:

- Court Dispersal Scene (*Bedholan*), 5 minutes
- A Court Dancer (*Golèk*), 7 minutes
- Entertainment Interlude (*Limbukan*), 67 minutes
- Foreign Troops Gathering (*Paséban Njaba: Hamsa*), 10 minutes
- Foreign Troop Departure Scene (*Budhalan Sabrang*), 2 minutes
- A Series of Inconclusive Battles (*Prang Gagal*), 41 minutes

In subtle ways Purbo Asmoro's focus and theme for the night is often still palpable, but the overall feel in many of the scenes is a release of contemporary treatment, a considerable relaxation of the pace of the plot, and an immersion in non-conceptualized, traditional and more stylized movement, narration, dialogue, battle, and musical offerings. These scenes are briefly outlined below.

The Court Dispersal Scene

In the court dispersal scenes we see for the first time the traditional stylized movements of each character as they depart from the court. The musical accompaniment choices are contemporary in both recordings (*Ldr Undur-undur, pl lima→Ldr Runtung→Kemuda Rangsang, pl lima* for *Rama's Crown*, and *Kilayunedheng→Ldr Bayangkaré→Srepeg Mataraman, sl nem* in *The Grand Offering of the Kings*). The overall impression, however, is a return to the traditional. Purbo Asmoro does use the opportunity in *Rama's Crown* to highlight the foreign origins of Sangkuni, with special dance and drumming patterns from Ngawi, East Java known as *Orèk-orèk Nggorang-Garèng* [MK-CInt 1, 1:30:45]. Other than subtle matters of *iringan* and a few subtle matters of particular movements, most audiences can truly take another deep breath and relax even more than they did when the prologue was complete. The release of tension is real at the beginning of these court dispersal scenes, especially for audiences familiar with Purbo Asmoro's style. Everyone is prepared for an upcoming two hours during which the artistry will not let up and the storytelling will continue to be exquisite, but the intellectual demands will loosen a bit.

A Court Dancer

After the court dispersal, most current wayang performances, whether *garapan*, classical, or primarily *hura-hura*, go straight into the *Limbukan* entertainment interlude. The classical practice of describing the king going through the elaborate gateway and then into the Queen's Quarters (*Gapuran*) is, at most, only referred to momentarily. During the dispersal, without any interruption or change in the music, the dhalang might place the king before a gateway (*kayon*), with a maid servant waiting nearby, in a nostalgic depiction lasting only a minute or so and with no narration. The *Kedhatonan* scene, in which the king enters the Queen's Quarters and reports the issues brought up in the court scene to his wife, with servants Limbuk and Cangik nearby, has disappeared from all but the most classical performances.

In almost all of his wayang, however, Purbo Asmoro retains one vestige of the Queen's Quarters scene. After the court scene and before Limbuk and Cangik come out, Purbo Asmoro features a court dancer. This dancer is, in effect, entertaining the king and queen in the Queen's Quarters, a reference that only audience members who have a strong understanding of classical tradition will appreciate. In *Rama's Crown*, Purbo brings out what is known as *gléyongan* [MK-CInt 1, 1:33:00] a figure with a moveable neck joint so that her head can reflect dance movements. She can perform a variety of dances: *golèk*, *gambyong*, or *tayuban*. *Gléyong* is the name of a more refined dance in the *tayub* tradition that was specifically offered as court entertainment (Purbo Asmoro, May 2011). A number of people refer to this moveable neck joint dancer scene as *srimpèn* (Sutino and Wakidi, June 2009) even though I have never seen her do *srimpi* dance moves, even by the performers who use that term.

In *The Grand Offering of the Kings*, Purbo varies his typical *gléyongan* practice and instead brings out two *wayang golèk* figures: a beautiful female dancer and her male heckler from the audience, Jiwèng [SRS-CInt 2, 0:00]. For decades a number of dhalang have used *wayang golèk* characters in the beginning of *Limbukan*, representing the king and queen's entertainment as they are dining. Gandabuwana of Madiun, Gandadarman of Sragen, and later on Tristuti Suryasaputra of Solo (all Klaten-born) popularized this attraction, and were Purbo Asmoro's inspiration as well (Purbo Asmoro, 2008). In the 1990s Purbo Asmoro often employed *wayang golèk*

characters to open the *Limbukan* scene. Since about 2005 he has preferred the more refined *gléyongan*. He returned to a *wayang golèk* attraction for this recording in order to add variety and complete the representation of styles in the Lontar project (interview, September 2009).[8]

The Entertainment Interludes

After the dancer has finished, the *Limbukan* entertainment interlude begins. Technicians turn up all the stage lights, the video team adjusts the position of their cameras slightly in order to take frequent shots of the *pesindhèn* section, and any stand-up comedians or other special guests in attendance prepare themselves to be called on stage. Crowds balloon, fans move in closer and the audience is often more packed than before, with numbers reaching the highest of the night. At the same time, connoisseurs of storyline, interpretation, and dhalang artistry will often take a break to use the facilities, communicate on their cell phones, move around a bit, get something to eat, or even, in some cases, go home and in an hour or so tune in to listen to the rest of the story on the radio. The interlude will have absolutely nothing to do with the story, and could easily be spliced out with no interruption in the dramatic flow of the lakon, yet it is one of the most popular aspects of a performance among some. I have timed hundreds of these interludes in Purbo Asmoro's performances and they run from 30 to 90 minutes, with the vast majority around 60 to 70 minutes in duration. In fact, Purbo Asmoro is consistent in capping off the interlude by the 70-minute point, frequently checking the clock on his cellphone to monitor the duration.

Limbukan begins with the dhalang explaining the purpose of the event, introducing and elaborating on who the sponsor is, and praising all the neighborhood parties involved in the production. After this introduction the remaining 50 to 60 minutes resembles a television night-time talk show. The dhalang is in complete control as host, through the voices of Cangik and Limbuk (see Figure

[8] There is also an older, long-standing village tradition of bringing out a *wayang golèk* character at the very end of a performance. This reference employs a play on the word *golèk* (to search for something) and is a symbolic message from the dhalang to the audience encouraging them make their own personal meaning out of the performance they have just seen (Sutino, 1995). In this case, the character would do a short dance, often to the song *Godril*, to end the performance.

2-5). Especially in Purbo Asmoro's performances, the dhalang reigns firm throughout this interlude as the beloved star and most talented comedian on stage. He interviews, and more precisely roasts, his own *pesindhèn*, any guest *pesindhèn* or other stars who have been invited by the sponsor, or any respected officials or guests in attendance. Just as a talk show host, he manages the guest stars: cleverly gauging how he will use the most unusual or most talented among them, delicately cutting off those who tend to ramble, diplomatically stepping in if a comment goes into uncomfortable territory, and alternating all the interactions with light songs from the gamelan. He reads notes passed up to him from the crowd through the musicians, and screens the multitude of text messages he receives. Some of these texts may be from his crew informing him of respected guests he did not realize were in attendance and who need to be recognized. Some may be from the sponsor or friends informing him of various details to announce such as which radio stations are broadcasting, upcoming performances in the area, or requests from listeners who happen to have his cell number. Dhalang even sometimes are asked to announce the license plate of a car blocking someone's way, or a lost item. Occasionally drawings for prizes are held during the interludes, with the dhalang being asked to call out numbers matching audience members' tickets.

Unlike many other dhalang, Purbo Asmoro never invites *campursari*, *dhangdhut*, Western pop bands, stand-up comedians, or *wayang orang* comedians directly. Rarely, he finds himself required to invite guest *pesindhèn* from outside his typical line-up. All of these types of attractions are requested specifically by the sponsor and their fees, in most cases, negotiated separately by the organizing committee. Once on stage, however, Purbo Asmoro alone is responsible for managing these many elements into an interlude that is without a moment of downtime, leaves no one important out, sufficiently highlights the sponsor's efforts, agrees with his own aesthetic principles, and ends within his own prescribed time-limit. While the pretense of the scene is still, as per tradition, Cangik and Limbuk passing time while the king and queen finish their private time in the Queen's Quarters, it currently stands as an interlude completely separate from the lakon.

Later on in the performance the second entertainment interlude, known as *Gara-gara*, proceeds in much the same way, serves many of the same purposes, and

lasts about the same amount of time. However, it is "MC-ed" by the jesters Pétruk, Garèng, and Bagong, and requires slightly less attention to the sponsors since they were given their due in *Limbukan*.[9] Much more could be written about *Limbukan*[10] and *Gara-gara*. However, in this examination of Purbo Asmoro's contemporary-interpretive style the important aspect to note is that the interludes are considered a break from the plot and a remnant of the *hura-hura* era. Some, particularly Western commentators, have alluded to the attractions in *Limbukan* and *Gara-gara* as "innovative," citing the use of realistic wayang figures such as George Bush, Saddam Hussein, Barack Obama, or the variety of pop music and light songs as "innovations." Purbo Asmoro does not consider them as part of his own mark in the history of wayang:

> Oh *Limbukan* and *Gara-gara* are just a break, a complete break. They have nothing to do with *garapan* and nothing to do with my innovations in wayang. My construction of *Gara-gara* comes from Pak Narto [Nartosabdo], and *Limbukan* from the *néka-néka* era of PANTAP. Anything goes. Stand-up comedians, *pesindhèn* that stand while interacting or that dance while singing, *dhangdhut*, and even *campursari*, although I don't use it. These aren't my innovations. Are they "innovations" at any rate? Well, it's for the scholars to decide what to call them. But these "attractions" anyway are from the 1990s and in my performances are actually rather toned down compared to the days of PANTAP. They have come to be viewed as necessary for the balance of the performance, and they are certainly expected by the audience. The dhalang also needs a break, especially in *garapan* style, lest his brain burst! (interview, April 2012)

Ornamentation of the Dramatic Action

After *Limbukan*, Purbo Asmoro's performances most often skip the redundant *Paséban Njaba* scene, in which the head of the troops repeats the mission set out in the court audience with the king, unless the head of the troops plans to be rebellious.

[9] Although these interludes are a complete break from the storyline, Purbo Asmoro does assure that they do not clash with the storyline. When performing lakon that preceed the births of Pétruk, Garèng, and Bagong (*Aji Saka*, *Semar Lair*, *Lairé Panakawan*, *Lairé Bethara Gana*) he substitutes other figures as the MCs for *Gara-gara*, such as whimsical spirit figures, or villagers. In a lakon in which Pétruk is missing or captured before *Gara-gara* (*Semar Mbangun Kahyangan*, for example) Pétruk does not preside over the interlude, and Garèng and Bagong will refer to his absence. When the sponsor has invited a stand-up comedian from the *wayang orang* tradition dressed as Garèng, Purbo only brings out Pétruk and Bagong and allows the comedian to represent Garèng for the scene. When there would be no Queen's Quarters, such as in one of the Baratayuda War episodes on the battlefield, Purbo Asmoro will employ the *panakawan* jesters in both interludes, rather than using Cangik and Limbuk. If he does use the maid servants from the Queen's Quarters, he will start with an apologetic explanation that he is now truly stepping completely out of the story, even more than usual.

[10] See Suratna's 905-page book on *Limbukan* (2013) in which he compares three superstar dhalang (Anom Soeroto, Purbo Asmoro, and Warseno "Slenk") and their construction of this interlude.

Generally, *Limbukan* is directly followed by the visually magnificent troop departure scene. The various visual attractions: the court dispersal scene, the *gléyong* or *golèk* dancers, the elaborate troop departure, and, later in the wayang the *Cakilan* battle in the forest, have been eloquently described by Wesleyan University ethnomusicologist Sumarsam as "ornamentations of the dramatic action" (2013, 33):

> The presence of these other arts produces effects that are peripheral to the story, but essential to the wayang; I call these "ornamentations of the dramatic action." These ornamentations often draw the listener's attention away from the story; the key to understanding and appreciating wayang performance lies in the interplay between the drama and its ornamentations. The juxtaposition of the visual presentation, soft music, and the stylized language of the dhalang's narration [in a *Gapuran* scene, for example] emphasize pure aesthetics while the story itself recedes into the background. The sequential clarity of the plot becomes ambiguous as the relation between one scene and another is often "disturbed" by ornamentation.

Although they are primarily discarded in *padat* tradition, Purbo Asmoro uses these ornamentations of the dramatic action, particularly during the two-hour segments of "familiar and beloved," to create a distinction—a hierarchical ebb and flow between moments of intense dramatic importance that are wrapped in *padat* techniques, and moments focused more on sensory attractions or pure aesthetics that are more traditional.

The troop departure scene is followed by another court audience scene (*Sabrangan*), which is usually treated fairly traditionally by Purbo Asmoro, and then opposing sides of the conflict face off in the familiar and beloved *Prang Gagal*, or extended series of inconclusive battles. These battles alternate between serious, slapstick, and back to serious again. They end, however, in a sudden return to the dramatic intensity and *garapan* of the 90-minute opening, as we will see in the next section.

Dramatic Hierarchy and Poignancy: Pearls of *Garap*

It is now 1:15 AM or so, and the audience has experienced a plot-heavy opening of some 90 minutes of pure *garapan*, a philosophic court scene full of debate and conflict, an hour-long entertainment interlude, about an hour's worth of the beloved and familiar ornamentations of dramatic action, a second court audience scene (*Sabrangan*), and a virtuosic battle scene with slapstick elements as well. It is here that intense *garapan* and focused *padat* techniques return and are sustained through the end of the performance, with the exception of *Gara-gara* and some inevitable comedic relief here and there. Of the seven pearls of *garapan* mentioned at the opening of this chapter, only one occurs before 1:00 AM, the prologue. The remaining six come much later.

Garapan Pearl #2:[11]

The Climactic Moment at the End of *Prang Gagal*

In both *Rama's Crown* and *The Grand Offering of the Kings*, audience attention is now drawn away from the more sensory, comedic battle, or slapstick attractions, as more intellectually demanding material presents itself again. The focal point often revolves around a climatic event marking the end of *Prang Gagal*. In *Prang Gagal* no one side will be victorious, and the outcome will be ambiguous (see p. 48). Purbo Asmoro treats this ambiguous and complex moment—a question posed by the dhalang that is left unanswered until it is wrapped up at the end of the performance—with full *padat* techniques in order to give it a strong position in the dramatic hierarchy of the lakon.

In *Rama's Crown*, such a moment occurs when Prince Karna decides to use his heirloom *wijayandanu* arrow against Anoman's onslaught. In the classical version, this five-minute scene [MK-Class 3, 16:00–21:00] is straightforward in every way. After many inconclusive battles between Anoman's forces and the Kurawa, all to the accompaniment of *Sampak, sléndro nem*, Karna bringing out the *wijayandanu* arrow to yet another *Sampak* in *sléndro nem*. The arrow is intercepted by Anoman and there is

[11] ***Garapan* Pearl #1** being the Prologue.

a brief moment of despair by both Karna and Sangkuni since they are fearful of Duryudana's reaction. The key moment, lasting only a few minutes, is over. In the 10-minute contemporary-interpretive version [MK-CInt 3, 27:30–37:30] Purbo Asmoro uses the opportunity to develop Karna's complex character. The orphan Prince Karna took a risk by taking on the challenge to attain the boon. He does not have the official support of Duryudana in this struggle, and yet now has been humiliated by Anoman who has managed to wrest his precious heirloom away in battle. Karna is loyal to the Kurawa and yet cannot trust them, proven by how they simply desert and taunt him in his moment of weakness. He wishes to uphold virtue at all times, yet is goaded by Dursasana into shouting obscenities in his frustration. Readers can see below how, instead of a brief, primarily text-less moment to the accompaniment of only *Sampak, sléndro nem* in the classical version, there is extensive attention given to the gamelan accompaniment, texts, and expressive stances, in order to "thicken" the characterization of both Karna and Anoman. One of Purbo's themes for the lakon is how the individual makes a difference in any conflict. Here an example is made of Karna, for whom nothing ever seems to go right.

Sampak, sléndro nem→**crashed into by** *Garap Balungan I*
[Karna brings out his *wijayandanu* weapon.]
→*Garap Balungan I* (**sirep**)
→**sung over by a male chorus**, *fragment of Ada-ada Hastakuswala, sléndro nem*

Menthang gandhéwa dibya,	*(The mighty bow is drawn,)*
Bintulu rinukmi gadhing,	*(That made of golden wood,)*
Parianya kumuning,	*(With a striped pattern across it,)*
Kang trisula panggah.	*(The trident holding strong.)*

[Karna prepares his weapon.]
→*Garap Balungan I* **crashed into by** *Sampak, sléndro nem*
[Karna releases the weapon.]

ANOMAN: King Karna!

(*Sampak*, **stops suddenly**)
[The weapon is intercepted by Anoman in a dramatic, full screen shadow effect.]

Ada-ada Srambahan, sléndro nem

ANOMAN: Open your eyes, Regent of Awangga. Did you think that Priest Kapiwara would fall at the hands of your weapon? The *wijayandanu* is now in my possession!

Sampak, sléndro nem
[Karna is seen in deeply disturbed stance.]
→*Ayak-ayak Dudukwuluh, sléndro nem* (**sirep**)

NARRATION: As if he had been struck by lightning, the Regent King Karna Basuséna fell lifelessly to the ground in a heap. His priceless heirloom weapon, the *wijayandanu*, which was his mortal protection, had now vanished, ripped away by the Priest Kapiwara and swept up into the heavens. His heart felt an indescribable sense of despair. And thus as tears were gushing down his face, the great leader of Awangga began to speak in broken phrases.

KARNA: Oh dear gods in the heavens, I ask for your protection.
→*Srepeg Tlutur, sléndro nem* (**sirep**)

KARNA: Dear Great God in the Heavens, how could I have aspirations so great, yet instead lose the manifestation of all belief in myself? How could an heirloom weapon vanish from my possession like that? And of what use am I now on this earth?

SANGKUNI: Ah my son, my son, I can imagine how devastated you must feel, my son of Awangga. But remember—just remember—His Highness did announce that he was not planning to go after the boon, yet you insisted on this. What is there to do once something like this has happened? It's like the saying, "If you go after the little fish, you'll lose sight of the bigger ones." It was never a certainty that you would attain what you were after, and you have in fact now lost what is most important to you.

KARNA: Uncle, it's as though I have lost my very blood vessels themselves. I swear, may it take decades, I will not return without the *wijayandanu* back in my hands. It would be better that I die here and now, my Uncle.

(*Srepeg Tlutur*, **sirep**)
[Karna disappears.]

SANGKUNI: Ah, serves you right. We told you there was no need to go after that boon. It's only when you happen to meet with disaster that you recognize the situation for what it is and feel disappointed, unlike someone who happens to always be lucky and everything goes his way. (Someone who gets fanned when he's feeling stuffy and hot; that's someone for whom everything always goes right. Or someone who's having some urinary troubles, there will be a helper right there to heat up a hot water bottle for him.[12]) Ah just imagine what you've lost, oh my, my. Dur?

DURSASANA: What is it Uncle?

SANGKUNI: Why are the Kurawa so quiet?

DURSASANA: What do you call that over there? They're making quite a noise over to the west there.
SANGKUNI: And the ones to the north?

[12] Despite the seriousness of the scene, these are hints to Purbo's assistant that he is getting sweaty and would like to be fanned, and then extension jokes beyond that about various other services an assistant could provide during the performance.

DURSASANA: They're continuing with their game. The ones who lost are proposing another challenge.

SANGKUNI: Those lowlifes.

DURSASANA: Don't pay any attention to that. Join me over here!

SANGKUNI: Alright, let's keep going.

→**crashed into by** *Sampak, sléndro nem*

DURSASANA: Come on 'Ti!

DURMAGATI: Alright, fine.

→**crashed into by** *Lnc DHAYOHÉ TEKA, sléndro manyura*
[Dursasana and Durmagati are seen continuing their festivities. Dursasana goads Karna from the rear.]

DURSASANA: Don't stop the festivities!
(*Dhayohé Teka*, **stops suddenly**)

KARNA: Bastard! Get the hell out of here!

Sampak, sléndro nem

KARNA: You Kurawa are so heinous. To the point where even I spoke obscenities.[13] You have gone too far. You care nothing for standards of virtue. Oh dear gods in heaven, protect us all.

Srepeg Tlutur, sléndro nem (**sirep**)

KARNA: Kurawa, I can accept the fact that you don't want to defend me in my time of need, but don't taunt me when I'm in despair. Oh Great God in the Heavens, give me a sign. If I don't get my precious heirloom back, better that I be carried away to the afterlife.

This moment is consciously sculpted to create poignancy, through the use of *padat*-inspired techniques. The gamelan accompaniment truly comes across as a snippet from a film score. Purbo Asmoro writes original narrative passages, selects specific vocal texts, and designs expressive *sabet tématik* visuals, all with an eye towards thickening emotional moments and explicitly developing individual character traits. This recrafting results in a dramatic hierarchy that the traditional version does not

[13] For princely types, one of the worst things that can happen in an interaction is to lose your temper. Even worse, is to be brought to the point of losing control and yelling obscenities.

allow, across all elements of performance practice. Around the same time (1:15 AM) audiences watching *The Grand Offering of the Kings* are also drawn back in to a heavily *garap*ed moment, after experiencing some two hours of traditional material. For that moment, when Bima kills Hamsa and Dhimbaka and Supala enters the storyline, see SRS-CInt 3, 27:00–40:00.

Garapan Pearls #3 and #4:

The Transition Between *Pathet Nem* and *Pathet Sanga*
The Transition Between *Pathet Sanga* and *Pathet Manyura*

While in classical treatments a wayang is broken into three segments (*Pathet Nem*, *Pathet Sanga*, *Pathet Manyura*) in Purbo Asmoro's *garapan* performances a different, and in fact more distinct, three-part structure emerges: from the Prologue up to *Limbukan*, from *Limbukan* to *Gara-gara*, and from after *Gara-gara* to the end. *Limbukan* and *Gara-gara* serve as lengthy breaks, separating the triple segments of the story. This three-part structure cuts across *pathet* divisions, as follows:

1. Prologue to *Limbukan*: starts off in a variety of modes, depending, and ends in *sléndro nem*
2. *Limbukan* to *Gara-gara*: starts off in *sléndro nem* and ends in *sléndro sanga*
3. *Gara-gara* to end: starts off in *sléndro sanga* and ends in *sléndro manyura*

Within this new three-part distinction, however, Purbo Asmoro crafts the precise moments at which he will move from *Pathet Nem* to *Pathet Sanga* (happening somewhere in #2 above) and from *Pathet Sanga* to *Pathet Manyura* (somewhere in #3 above) with special treatment. These moments no longer stand out as generic classical scene breaks, but as small pearls of *garapan* within a section. Not every lakon features a special moment at both transitions, but the vast majority of these junctures are somehow consciously highlighted with *padat*-esque treatment by Purbo Asmoro.

The moment of transition between *Pathet Sanga* and *Pathet Manyura* in *The Grand Offering of the Kings* is, although short and simple, one of the most striking moments in the two *garapan* performances [SRS-CInt 4, 24:40]. Arjuna, confronted by

the mysterious drum at the entrance of Jarasandha's kingdom, is told by Kresna to pierce the skin and release the spirit of the long-dead King Brihadrata. Audiences saw the entire terrifying story of Jarasandha murdering his father acted out in the Prologue, and there is emotional involvement in the horror of this drum. Of course one could predict that the piercing of the skin and release of Brihadrata would be made into a pearl of *garap* by Purbo Asmoro, but in this case he adds to the power of the moment by designating it also as the juncture between *Pathet Sanga* and *Pathet Manyura*. Arjuna readies his arrow to the accompaniment of *Sampak*, *sléndro sanga*, with a vocal chorus sung above it (*ditumpangi*):[14]

> *Out comes the talisman, provoking a lightning storm,*
> *Gales pounding unabated,*
> *Darkness encompasses all and the ocean seethes,*
> *The deafening turmoil.*

A *kayon* creation by Bambang Suwarno from the *padat* days at ASKI symbolizes the drum and at the precise moment of puncture by Arjuna's arrow, the gamelan moves vigorously into a fast-paced *Sampak Pi-Ma* in *pélog barang* (7777 5555, but with interlocking 6s played on some of the *balungan* instruments, resulting in: 67676767 65656565). *Sampak Pi-Ma* was created by Purbo Asmoro during rehearsals specifically for this performance and this moment. *Pathet Manyura* has arrived with the burst of energy contained in the piercing of the arrow.

In *Rama's Crown*, Purbo Asmoro singles out one moment to use as the transition from *Pathet Nem* to *Pathet Sanga*, which is the dramatic arrival of Kumbakarna to reunite with his long-lost brother in the hermitage [MK-CInt 3, 1:00:00]. Kumbakarna descends from the sky to the accompaniment of *Sampak Gosongan*. This is a modally ambiguous piece, composed by Mayangkara, used interchangeably in *sléndro nem* or *sléndro sanga* (Asmoro *Gamelan Scores*, 96). As Kumbakarna approaches and embraces his brother Wibisana, the gamelan descends to gong pitch middle 1 and segues into the calm and meditative *Ktw Kaduk Rena*, firmly in *sléndro sanga*. *Pathet Sanga* has officially arrived, and the moment is

[14] This chorus was written by ISI instructor, and Gendhon apprentice, Wahyu Santosa Prabowo in 1984 for his dance drama *Jemparing* (*Bow and Arrow*). It is based on the poetic form *sekar ageng Nagabanda*.

poignantly focused on Kumbakarna, his good heart, his genuine intentions, and the peaceful atmosphere of the Candramanik Hermitage.

In traditional practice, the manner in which each act ends and moves into the next is highly stylized and often predictable: *Ayak-ayak, sléndro nem* **[*kayon* in center of screen]**→*a knock on the box*→*Pathet Sanga Wantah* or *Ayak-ayak, sléndro sanga* **[*kayon* in center of screen]**→*a knock on the box*→*Pathet Manyura Wantah*. Purbo Asmoro considers these two transitional points, filled with meaningful connotations for the knowledge wayang-goer because of their function in classical practice, to have intense dramatic potential, and often gives them full *padat*-esque treatment.

Garapan Pearl #5:
The Single Defining Scene of a Lakon

Every lakon has at least one single defining scene, serving as the pinnacle toward which all comes together, all becomes clear or, most importantly, the primary essence of the lakon is revealed. This is the moment that educated wayang observers await, the one scene to which dhalang watching other dhalangs' performances are most attentive, and the place through which, historically, dhalang could potentially exhibit their most meaningful *sanggit*. Usually this content is presented in the penultimate scene, around 3:00 AM or a bit later, right before the final battle and the closing. Some examples from a variety of lakon are:

- the moment when Brataséna finally faces his alter ego, known as Déwa Ruci, and takes in a set of philosophical teachings about how to access true spirituality (*The God Ruci*)
- the scene in which Princess Sukèsi is finally allowed to hear the dangerously powerful *sastrajéndra hayuningrat* teachings from Priest Wisrawa (*Sukèsi's Hand in Marriage Contested*)
- the moment Kunthi and Pandhu finally meet at the competition in *Kunthi's Choice* and know they are fated to be together
- the scene in which the rice goddess Dèwi Sri finally explains why she has abandoned the Javanese people (*Sri Returns*)
- when Kresna presents Duryudana with a choice: to acknowledge him as his one single adviser or have the support of 1,000 allied kings at his disposal in the Baratayuda War (*Kresna As Emissary*)
- the heart-wrenching meeting up of the Pandhawa with Pandhu and Madrim in hell (*Pandhu's Afterlife)*
- the series of disturbing revelations communicated to Kresna's spirit by the gods, predicting the bloody outcomes of the upcoming Baratayuda War (*Kresna Awakened*)

- the nature of the final surrender of an aspiring prince to the hopelessness of his situation as an outsider (*Palgunadi*)
- the advent of hope as the young Parikesit is finally crowned king of Astina after the Baratayuda War (*The Coronation of Parikesit*)

In his contemporary-interpretive performances, Purbo Asmoro crafts deliberate, heavily-*garap*ed treatment for these moments in order for them to shine as highlights of the seven-hour structure.

Rama's Crown: Defining Moment

In *Rama's Crown*, the defining moment is when the Hasthabrata philosophy of leadership, great King Rama of yore's legacy or his metaphorical "crown," is passed down to a worthy mortal at Mount Swélagiri in Kutharungga Hermitage. The entire storyline, from the prologue on, has been building around the mystery of the revered legacy of King Rama. Who will be the chosen recipient? Who is this elusive priest named Késawasidi charged with handing out the boon? What are the criteria for his choice? Arjuna has been the focus of Purbo Asmoro's treatment since the prologue, but how exactly will he prove himself worthy? What will the content of the Hasthabrata ultimately be?

In traditional performances of *Rama's Crown* by other dhalang that I have attended or studied[15] the Hasthabrata moment is treated with a surprising lack of ceremony, with no special *iringan*, relatively short-shrift on narration (compared to the long, elaborate, generic narrations in other sections describing a random carriage, gateway, or garden), and little dramatic tension or conflict.

The Hasthabrata scene in the contemporary-interpretive performance of *Rama's Crown* by Purbo Asmoro lasts about 30 minutes and is *garap*ed into a number of small segments. The first is a 10-minute scene in the mountain hermitage, in which Priest Késawasidi receives a visit from Anoman [MK-CInt 5, 28:00–37:00]. Anoman intends to hand over the *wijayandanu* arrow he stole from Karna in exchange for praise and recognition for his loyalty as an apprentice of the priest. Not only are his intentions rejected, but Késawasidi scolds Anoman for interfering in

[15] A recording of a live performance by Nartosabdo, 1980s; a studio recording by Anom Soeroto, Lokananta 1980s; and live performances by Sutino Hardokocarito (Eromoko 1993), Suyati (Baturetno 2000), and Hali Jarwosularso (Solo 2008).

Karna's affairs, criticizes him for his arrogance, and tells Anoman to leave. Although Purbo Asmoro's theme for the lakon is the difference a single force can do for the betterment of the world, he is able to point out here, in contrast, that do-gooders meddling in others' lives are not to be celebrated. Anoman, as admirable as his intentions may be to return the arrow to Arjuna, it's rightful owner, has no right to meddle. [16]

Upon Anoman's departure, Arjuna arrives [MK-CInt 5, 37:00–45:00]. With the *wijayandanu* in his hands, the priest Késawasidi has an idea: he will test Arjuna's worthiness by pretending that the *wijayandanu* itself is the boon from the gods. This is *sanggit* unique to Purbo Asmoro, devised to thicken and create tension in the defining moment of the lakon. Arjuna is devastated. Although his trip to Mount Swélagiri has been long and arduous, although he has meditated for months in preparation, although he knows this boon is a unique opportunity to understand the famed King Rama's principles of leadership, although strong leadership is so desperately needed right now to bring under control the effects of the natural disasters that have struck the land, and although he knows that the *wijayandanu* was originally meant for him all those years ago, he cannot accept it as a vessel of Rama's legacy.

Once Arjuna rejects the offer, thus proving his integrity and character, he has passed the test and is determined worthy. Priest Késawasidi takes him into the meditation chambers on the mountain and delivers the Hasthabrata philosophy of leadership [MK-CInt 5, 45:00–53:00]. After Arjuna has received the teaching, Késawasidi further challenges him to have the integrity to take the *wijayandanu* arrow back to Karna without delay, which he does [MK-CInt 5, 55:00–1:03:00]. Immediately upon Arjuna's departure, the priest Késawasidi reveals his true form, Kresna, and expresses his satisfaction with how the whole interaction has transpired [MK-CInt 5, 53:00–55:00].

Here is the all-important moment, from the October 2007 performance by Purbo Asmoro in Pacitan, in which Arjuna receives the teaching:

[16] Wayang enthusiasts know that the *wijayandanu* arrow was originally meant for Arjuna and ended up in Karna's hands by mistake years during a previous lakon (*The Birth of Gathutkaca*).

KÉSAWASIDI: It is true that I have been appointed to be the vessel through which this esoteric teaching will be passed. But what is Rama's crown, about which we have heard so much? What is it exactly, which is referred to as the Hasthabrata? *Hastha* means eight, and *brata* principles or steps to be taken. Thus we can see that the Hasthabrata takes the form of eight virtuous characteristics, or eight aspects of character that need to be mastered by a king. Anyone appointed as a leader, as long as they can master the Hasthabrata, can be said to be a leader who truly bears a crown. And why? Because the crown can be thought of as the symbol of legitimacy in a king.

The eight principles known as the Hasthabrata are derived from the basic elements. The first one being the essence of the sun. The sun's role is to illuminate the entire universe and to bring life to all existence. And thus it is with a king, who must serve as a beacon of light for his entire monarchy.

The second is the essence of the moon. The moon's role is to illuminate the night hours, as well as to provide a peaceful and protecting radiance. And thus it is with a king, who must be able to offer enlightenment when the empire is cast in darkness.

The third is the essence of the stars, which serve as adornments in the sky, as well as points of the compass to determine the seasons and impart a sense of direction. And thus it is with a king, who must be at the center of all ethics, conduct and cultural traditions in his kingdom; who must be willing to serve as an example.

The fourth is the essence of the clouds. The clouds are able to elicit foreboding in all those who behold them, yet at the moment they break into rain, they become a source of renewal. It is the same in the case of a king, who must exude a fearful and powerful aura. Yet his governance must lead to prosperity and peace.

The fifth is the essence of the earth. The earth embodies a robust and pure nature. A king must possess strength of character, not be easily influenced by flattery, and not be swayed by those spreading tales.

The sixth is the sea. The ocean is wide, without limits, and fills all spaces as though infinitely. Just as in the case of a king, whose character needs to be open and generous, not overly sensitive to those critical of him.

The seventh is the nature of fire. Fire has the ability to conquer all in its path without discrimination, yet at the same time is a vital and necessary force. Just as in the case of a king, who must have the courage to hand down punishment to those who deserve it, without an eye toward friend or family.

The final characteristic is that of the wind. The wind has the ability to sweep across an entire locality in even measure. Just as a king needs to act consistently throughout his reign. Even if some parts of the nation seem remote and inaccessible, all must be known equally by the leader.

ARJUNA: Then what is the essence of the Hasthabrata, Venerable One?

KÉSAWASIDI: The essence of the Hasthabrata lies in serving as an example. If you—or anyone—can at once become an example to yourself, to the greater community and also

> to the entire universe, then you have internalized the Hasthabrata. Whether you are a king, a minister, a soldier, a noble warrior, or of the most humble of origins, as long as you can serve as an example to yourself, your family, as well as society, this world will truly know health and wellbeing, my Prince.

The content of the Hasthabrata teaching itself here, comes from classical tradition.[17] The difference dramatically between most classical versions and Purbo Asmoro's *garapan* version lies in the multi-segment structure of the hermitage scene, in which Purbo tests Arjuna.

Another primary difference between the classical and *garapan* versions of this defining moment lies in the gamelan accompaniment. In most classical versions, an *ayak-ayak* is played when Arjuna greets Késawasidi, and then repetitions of *srepeg* or *sampak* during the process of revealing the Hasthabrata. Purbo Asmoro's contemporary-interpretive version features something specific to illustrate each event in the sequence:

The scene sequence starts with a transition to *pélog barang:*

Anoman arrives in Kutharungga:	*Ldr Kuwung, bedhayan Solo*
Anoman's offer of the *wijayandanu* is rejected:	*Sampak Tlutur→Ada-ada Tlutur*
Arjuna arrives in Kutharunggu:	*Sampak→Ayak Rangu-rangu*
Arjuna refuses the *wijayandanu:*	*Pathet Onengan, chorus*
Arjuna enters meditation chambers, Hasthabrata:	*Ldr Mijil Ludira, kemanak*
Celebration that the Hasthabrata is complete:	*Srepeg Kalatidha* (text by Purbo Asmoro)
Késawasidi transforms back to Kresna:	*Ada-ada Mataraman→ Galong Semarangan →Ada-ada Mataraman, keprak Yogyan*
Arjuna meets the *panakawan* to report success:	*Lagu Lepetan*

Mode switches from *pélog barang* to *sléndro manyuri:*

Arjuna meets up with Karna:	*Ada-ada→Srepeg Manyuri*
Karna demands the boon from Arjuna:	*Ada-ada Kebumènan digarap palaran*
Karna receives the *wijayandanu* from Arjuna:	*Srepeg Galong→Ayak-ayak, Mataraman*

Mode switches from *sléndro manyuri* to *sléndro manyura* to signal end of scene.

We have examined gamelan accompaniment choices in enough detail for the reader to infer from this list how carefully Purbo Asmoro crafted the accompaniment for the *garapan* version. He uses everything from ceremonial Kraton pieces to underline

[17] See Asmoro 2013, 402 where Emerson's footnote outlines the two major classical versions of the Hasthabrata, of which using natural elements as a metaphor for the qualities of a king, is one.

the weight of the Hasthabrata, to tongue-in-cheek regional pieces for the moment Kresna reveals himself. The Karna sequence is given its own dedicated mode, being exclusively in *manyuri* (see Glossary of Terms). The lends a unique poignancy and tension to the moment. Note that in the entire Hasthabrata segment the single item specially composed was the text by Purbo Asmoro to Nartosabdo's *Srepeg Kalatidha*:

Thus complete,
The meaning of a revered philosophy,
Revealed and no longer concealed,
In fact it was a mere mortal who,
In his ever insightful way,
Was ever searching for wellbeing.[18]

The Grand Offering of the Kings: Defining Moment

In *The Grand Offering of the Kings*, the *sesaji raja suya* ceremony itself is of course one of the defining moments of the lakon. Since the opening court scene, suspense has built around the exacting requirements of this most sacred ceremony. The Pandhawa need to gather the support of 100 foreign allies, collect dozens of rare offerings, and work against the bad karma of a destructive force in the world, in this case Jarasandha. Audiences know that with the completion of the *sesaji raja suya* ceremony, the golden age of the Pandhawa in Amarta will begin.

Traditional performances I have seen or studied of *The Grand Offering of the Kings* by other dhalang skimp, to say the least, on the presentation of the actual *sesaji raja suya* at the end.[19] In some cases it is only described through short narrations, and in some cases it is just assumed to have happened, after seven hours leading up to it (Nartosabdo, Blora). Traditional dhalang feature the first appearance of the dreaded Jarasandha, on average, about 30 minutes before the end of the wayang, and in all cases his battle against Bima features no debate, conflict, or development of his perspective.

---

[18] Wus kacakup,
Werdining kang ngèlmu luhung,
Sumendhang datan karempit
Nyata janma kang wus putus,
Saliring kang sarwa lungit,
Tansah ngudi karahayon.

[19] A live recording of Nartosabdo, Blora 1980s; a live recording of Mujoko, RRI Solo 1984; and live performances by Suyati (Jatisawit 2004), Sutino Hardokocarito (Ngadirojo 2005), and Manteb Soedharsono (Pati 2008).

It is hard to fathom why exactly, in many of these versions, the final ceremony is often not even played out on the screen. Some possible reasons were given by Tristuti in an interview in 2007 concerning his own *sanggit* for this and other lakon. "Sometimes the dhalang may simply run out of time and feel that this is the most self-evident part of the lakon; sometimes they are either fatigued, have lost enthusiasm or are truly disheartened by the lack of audience remaining.[20] Sometimes there may be a feeling that the actual ceremony itself is impossible to depict and should remain mysterious."

Purbo Asmoro, however, consistently crafts the *sesaji raja suya* ceremony as one of the particularly outstanding *garapan* pearls of the evening, not only in the Lontar recording [SRS-CInt 4, 1:22:00–1:28:00] but in all of the 20 of his performances of this lakon that I have seen, both before and after the Lontar documentation. Unlike other defining moments, this one is not heavy on philosophy or content but rather on the visual presentation of regality and ceremony. The requirements of the offering do not include the profession of any profound knowledge but simply the presence of the priests and 100 allied kings whose support speaks for itself, as it has taken the entire lakon to come to fruition.

There are ceremonial pieces used to underscore the regality of the moment (*Gd Anglir Mendhung* in *kemanak* style, *Ktw Pisangbali* in loud style, *Ktw Langengita*) and expressive visual sequences with innovative Bambang Suwarno *kayon* figures. One of the most unusual moments in the entire performance is when the kings recite a simple pledge of allegiance. The leader of the 97 formerly imprisoned kings (represented by the dhalang) initiates the pledge and the other kings (represented by the entire gamelan troupe speaking in chorus, both players and singers) parrot the pledge back:

[20] This feeling of disheartened apathy (*malas*) due to lack of audience may be a phenomenon of the past. According to Purbo Asmoro (interview May 2010): "Dhalang today cannot afford to let up in their performance when the audience thins out. Most every performance is being documented these days on video, TV, internet, or at least in audio form. Even if there is no one left in the audience, my performances will last forever as a result of some form of documentation."

> **REPRESENTATIVE OF THE KINGS**: From the pride and happiness in my heart, and in all the hearts of the monarchs who have been set free by none other than Your Highness himself, we will now recite the following vow:
>
> Pledge:—"Pledge:"
> We—"We,"
> An assembly of rulers—"An assembly of rulers,"
> Are here to lend support—"Are here to lend support,"
> In free will—"In free will."
>
> We—"We,"
> An assembly of rulers—"An assembly of rulers,"
> Recognize—"Recognize,"
> The Grand Offering—"The Grand Offering,"
> Of the Kings—"Of the Kings."
>
> We—"We,"
> An assembly of rulers—"An assembly of rulers,"
> Anoint—"Anoint,"
> His Majesty the King—"His Majesty the King,"
> Yudhisthira—"Yudhisthira,"
> As Most Exalted of Kings—"As Most Exalted of Kings,"
> His Highness the Godlike—"His Highness the Godlike."

This is then crashed into (*ditabrak*) by the dramatic and repetitive *Garap Balungan Wisudhan* by Blacius Subono. All this in contrast to Purbo Asmoro's classical recording in which the entire sequence is only accompanied by one *Sampak* and one *Ayak-ayak* in *sléndro manyura*.

While the *sesaji raja suya* ceremony is purely a show of regality, Purbo Asmoro crafts another defining moment about 30 minutes earlier, in the debate scene between Jarasandha and Kresna. Purbo Asmoro describes this as his own original contribution to the lakon, inspired by current events (interview, May 2013):

> I don't believe that the destruction of Jarasandha should simply be an item on the list when Kresna outlines the requirements of the ceremony in the prologue, as it often is in classical treatment. I wanted Kresna to engage with Jarasandha and try to make him see reason. I constructed the debate on purpose, in order to invite thought on the current terrorist threat right here in Indonesia, fostered by radical groups who believe that anything can be justified in the name of their beliefs.

In a 20-minute scene in the main Audience Hall of Giribajra [SRS-CInt 4, 47:00–1:07:00] Kresna enters into a debate with Jarasandha about his plan to sacrifice one hundred kings in a black magic ceremony:

> **KRESNA**: King Jarasandha, one moment. I am a brahmin.[21] I was put here on this earth as a priest—a brahmin—with the sole purpose of protecting the wellbeing of the universe. I have heard the news that you plan to put on the Grand Offering to Lodra, in which you will slaughter one hundred kings. It is said that you already have 97 in your grasp and are in need of the last three. In other words, in no time at all you plan to conduct a horrific massacre.
>
> **JARASANDHA**: Yes, I admit it, Your Eminence.
>
> **KRESNA**: What is your intent?
>
> **JARASANDHA**: What kind of thing is that to ask? It's a belief system. You can't ask about that. I'm following my belief system.
>
> **KRESNA**: Now hold on. What is a belief system, in truth?
>
> **JARASANDHA**: As far as I'm concerned, a belief system is something that resides deep in your heart, consists of your convictions and your faith, and is carried out according to your own instinct.
>
> **KRESNA**: How can it be left to your instinct, when your own personal instinct may be correct or it may be faulty?
>
> **JARASANDHA**: Regardless of whether my own personal instinct may be correct or faulty, I'm the one with the right to define it as correct or faulty, right?
>
> **KRESNA**: If you're the one defining whether it is correct or faulty, that may mean your belief system is a faulty one that you yourself have consciously decided to deem correct.
>
> **JARASANDHA**: How can you criticize me? A belief system is the same thing as a religion, is it not?
>
> **KRESNA**: But does a belief system cause the suffering of others? Think about it. You plan to slaughter kings who have done no wrong and have committed no sins.
>
> **JARASANDHA**: Listen to me. Humans are brought into this world with the right to choose, have faith in, and organize their own individual religions. So don't judge my belief system by your own belief system. There is no connection.
>
> **KRESNA**: Jarasandha, there may be no connection and they may not be in alignment, but you must understand that He Who Designed the Universe created humans to love

[21] Kresna, Bima, and Arjuna have all entered Jarasandha's court disguised as brahmin, as it is well known that while Jarasandha despises kings and princes, he respects spiritual leaders.

each other. He didn't intend for the differences in belief systems and religion to result in killing each other.

JARASANDHA: The Creator of the Universe, huh? Yes, the work of the Creator of the Universe. If humans were created to love and care for each other, then why were they given different belief systems and religions, huh? Why? You know what? This world is in chaos precisely because of different religions and belief systems, which are used to kill each other.

KRESNA: Jarasandha, hold on, hold on. Examine this for a moment. Think about it. The essence and meaning of any religion or belief system is the same: to assure the wellbeing of humans here on Earth and on into their eternal life. And part of assuring the wellbeing of life on Earth is to avoid conflict and the killing of others.

JARASANDHA: You're forgetting. You're forgetting that every belief system has its own tenets and its own rituals of devotion that must be carried out. It is inevitable that they are not the same. So the fact that I plan to kill those kings and offer them up as a sacrifice is not a sin but rather a requirement of my belief system. It's not a sin.

KRESNA: Tenets should not involve the killing of humans, but rather should involve harmless offerings, objects. And if a sacrifice is necessary it should be an animal sacrifice, such as a chicken or other fowl, a cow, horse, elephant, or other. But you are slaughtering humans. Are you equating those kings that you're planning to slaughter with animals? Is that it?

JARASANDHA: I may be murdering kings, but they are kings who do not share my belief system. And according to my religion, that is not a sin.

KRESNA: Now hold on. In other words, you don't realize that by putting complete faith into this belief system, you stray from all righteousness in your life. You are becoming inhuman. Jarasandha, you are being driven by evil. All empathy has been drained from you. You no longer have empathy for other humans. Think about this: if one of those kings rules over ten thousand citizens, that means that with the murder of those one hundred kings you will cause the deaths of a million people. And every single mortal on Earth will be made a victim, since no one will feel at ease anywhere due to their constant fear of the soldiers you have deployed and the spies you have ordered, who kill furtively. You steal around like a coward, setting fires to places where people gather, only because their inhabitants don't share your belief system. Jarasandha, if types like you are not stopped they will become dangerous.

For this scene, and this scene only, the gamelan accompaniment goes into *sléndro manyuri*, including pieces like *'Bang-bang Wétan* (in *ladrang* form), a piece that is not technically in *manyuri* (i.e., not a traditional piece in *sléndro manyura* transposed up a pitch) but definitely has an "up a step from *manyura*" feel to it. This practice is similar to *Rama's Crown*, when in the tension-filled moment that Arjuna faced Karna, holding the *wijayandanu* arrow the gamelan also went into *manyuri*. Purbo Asmoro

often creates a new modal hierarchy by pinpointing a scene to conduct entirely in *manyuri*, thus making it stand apart tonally from the rest of *Pathet Manyura*.

In the Lontar recordings, there is not as much distinction between the classical and *garapan* treatment of these defining moments as there is in general performance-practice everyday across Solo. The main difference between the recordings, for these particular *garapan* pearls, lies in the musical accompaniment. This is most likely because Purbo Asmoro could not bring himself to treat the defining moments lightly in either recording. Evidence from the many classical performances by a number of dhalang shows, however, that typical classical treatment is much more brief and less developed during these moments.

***Garapan* Pearl #6:**

The Final Battle

There are certain scenes in traditional wayang that every wayang enthusiast expects no matter what the lakon: the opening court scene, the troop departure, the battle between Cakil and a prince in the forest being a few. The final battle scene is certainly in this category, and this is another scene that Purbo Asmoro inevitably extends with some sort of special *garap*.

In *Rama's Crown* the final battle occurs when Kumbakarna wants to find eternal peace by reincarnating into Bima's thigh through battle. In *The Grand Offering of the Kings* the final battle is the grueling weeks-long match between Jarasandha and Bima. Purbo Asmoro keeps the actual battle itself primarily classical in terms of stylized battle-movement techniques and, as is traditional, there is very little narration or dialogue involved in these scenes.

The primary area in which these battle scenes are crafted is through the choice of *iringan*, and very occasionally through some special contemporary features in the design of the antagonist wayang figures. During the early days of *garapan* in dance dramas at ASKI (1970s) composer Rahayu Supanggah was reportedly the first to juxtapose repeated *sampak*s throughout the initial skirmishes in the last battle with a climatic, distinctive choice for the final battle segment. Bambang Suwarno debuted this practice in wayang accompaniment with his *Rama* script in condensed style, in

which many repetitions of *sampak* are capped off by the distinctive *Kodhok Ngorèk* for the final standoff between Rama and Rahwana.

Tristuti spoke of a sequence he preferred (interview 2006) in which he used many repetitions of *sampak*, until the penultimate moments of a battle for which he would use *Sampak Galong* (6666 5555 3333 2222), and the final blow for which he would move into *Sampak Kebumènan* (6666 6662). Purbo Asmoro also uses a version of this sequence frequently, including in the final battle in *Rama's Crown* [MK-CInt 5, 1:22:00–1:25:00]. Numerous repetitions of *sampak* finally break into the distinctive *Gegilak* when Bima and Kumbakarna truly face off. This moves into *Sampak Galong*, followed by *Sampak Kebumènan*, again, giving the battle a shape and internal hierarchy that the classical version, which simply uses multiple repetitions of *sampak*, does not have.

The same kind of hierarchical shape within a battle is created in *The Grand Offering of the Kings* [SRS-CInt 4, 1:07:00–1:22:00]. Bima and Jarasandha's first few threatening moments are simply to the accompaniment of *sampak*, but when the maces comes out and things get very serious the *iringan* goes into *Ganjuran*, a piece used often by Mayangkara for the climatic battle moment.

Another *garapan* element that can be found in final battles is the use of unusual versions of the antagonist character. While he would not consider using it when presenting a classical version, in the contemporary-interpretive performance Purbo Asmoro uses a wayang figure made depicting just the severed head of Jarasandha. He also, at times, uses a version of Jarasandha that can actually be severed into two pieces, so that during the final battle with Bima he literally comes apart upon his death [SRS-CInt 4, 1:15:40]. For use in other lakon, there are also versions of Dursasana and Sangkuni (see



Figure 7-2: A Sangkuni figure that comes apart during the death scene.

Figure 7-2) that can come apart, as both of experience highly violent deaths in which their bodies are maimed.

Garapan Pearl #7:

The Ending

Endings in classical wayang are as stylized as openings, with an obligatory final court scene. Although it may be as short as three to five minutes, this final gathering of the protagonist kingdom wraps up the seven-hour performance, presenting harmony, symmetry and a return to balance and normalcy in the world no matter what the story and no matter what the outcome. Sometimes, as in *Rama's Crown*, Purbo Asmoro's *garapan* performances end with this type of traditional closing. Often, however, the ending is *garap*ed by Purbo Asmoro in ways that create a sense of quiet shock in the audience. While in a classical wayang audiences start their exodus after the final battle, knowing that only a standard and brief court audience scene remains, in these *garap*ed endings audiences remain gripped by the dhalang's interpretation of the story to the very end. Rather than picking up their belongings and wandering away feeling calm and a bit fatigued but assured of the balance in life, they may leave stupefied and with more questions than ever about what to think and how to interpret the tale.

Both classical and *garapan* versions of *The Grand Offering of the Kings* end with the aggressive Supala from Cèdhi Kingdom disrupting the *sesaji raja suya* ceremony, as he had planned to do ever since receiving his invitation. He has a longtime grudge against Kresna, which he plans to air before all 100 kings and numerous priests. Kresna responds with equal aggression and frustration and kills Supala before the entire gathering. In the meantime, Duryudana, who has been wandering around the new Amarta Kingdom grounds festering with envy over the Pandhawa's success, accidentally falls, completely clothed, into a pond that he mistook for one of the many crystal floor pieces in the courtyard. Regardless of both odd occurrences that disrupt the regality of the ceremony, the final scene in the classical version follows with little explanation and concludes with the elder King Matswapati's words:

> **MATSWAPATI**: The danger among us has been destroyed. All priests in attendance, let us set the ceremonial fires alight and burn the sacred incense. Let us all begin to chant, to bring on prosperity and wellbeing in the world, by means of the Grand Offering of the Kings. May the Pandhawa be forever in control of the universe. Let us chant the mantra for peace, plenty and eternal wellbeing.

In the *garapan* version the progression of the plot is identical [SRS-CInt 4, 1:28:00–1:38:00], but the treatment is quite different. Following the violent murder of Supala by Kresna, Duryudana falls into the pond and the final words of the entire seven-hour wayang are Duryudana's, mixed in with the orchestrated, loud laughing of the entire gamelan troupe, meant to reflect the sneering of the guests in attendance:

> **DURYUDANA**: Hey! Shut your mouths and stop mocking me! My ass is wet, don't you see? Uncle Sangkuni!

This is immediately followed by an eerie mantra repeated in a chant style, as the dhalang places a small *kayon* by Bambang Suwarno in the center of the screen to signal the ending, with the gamelan and chanting fading out to the accompaniment of a single *suling* (bamboo flute) melody:

> *Malékaha malékaha*,[22]
> If there be ill will may it not fall here,
> And if it were to fall here, may no one suffer.
> *Malékaha malékaha*.

In the Javanese language, greetings and leave-takings are communicated with special care and, more than in English, a generic set of expressions that allow everyone to feel at ease and know what to expect. This is the same in wayang, where traditionally certain expressions of good wishes are recited at the end. The *garapan* ending is disconcerting, even if the text to the mantra is of well-wishing. Questions are implied about the authority of the *sesaji raja suya* ceremony after all; about the integrity of Kresna who lectured Jarasandha on respecting life yet then marred this sacred occasion by murdering one of the guests in anger; about the potential for peace and prosperity in Amarta given Duryudana's hatred. Audiences leave with

[22] *Malékaha* has no specific meaning but is a chant of well wishing that is uttered in blessings.

their mouths agape rather than feeling like the wayang was a force for forging, or at least reflecting, order in the world. Purbo Asmoro refuses the audience the traditional sense of peace and order at the end of the wayang.

Thus, Purbo Asmoro weaves tradition, classical structure, innovation, and *padat* techniques into an all-night package, interspersed with two entertainment interludes. In order to summarize what I have referred to throughout as dramatic hierarchy, I provide some charts at the end of this chapter that depict visually the way intense *garapan* is interspersed throughout Purbo Asmoro's all-night *padat*ed performances, *padat diwengèkaké*. In the next chapter, we will take a look at how Purbo Asmoro applies this approach to the multi-episode constructions he creates.

In closing, I offer a quote from an interview in December 2007, in which Purbo Asmoro shared his take on modern audiences (see Figure 7-3 and back cover for examples of contemporary audiences) and the challenge of the modern dhalang:

> Audiences are much more sophisticated these days. Not only are they used to the fast-paced and climax-based directional drama of film, but they also expect to be shown how these stories are relevant to them and to modern life. They have no patience for the unquestioned authority of a king, or generic narrative passages that don't distinguish the virtuous from the corrupt and questionable. They expect clever, sharp humor and will not stand for empty digression. They demand strong technique, high quality equipment, a professional presentation, a good voice, and they aren't interested in long, extended musical selections. That being said however, they may be much less familiar with characters, plot lines and ancient literary phrases than their elders, and may need to be led along in the cleverest, most discreet and most respectful of ways throughout the performance. The classical style of the past is for moments of nostalgia and for those interested in preserving something from history. But it is not what is going to keep wayang alive. Wayang is not like an artifact that simply needs to be taken out and delicately dusted off or occasionally mended here and there. It needs to be developed and it requires innovation to keep it alive and relevant. Yet at the same time we must retain its integrity and depth as an art form. This is my challenge as a modern-day dhalang.



Figure 7-3: The audience at Purbo Asmoro's contemporary-interpretive performance of *The Grand Offering of the Kings*, 24 Nov 2007, Pacitan, East Java, that has been used for analysis in this dissertation. This photo only shows 20% of the audience, who eventually filled up this left field, but also the right field, center field, left front stage area, and right front stage area. The performance had not even commenced yet; this was at about 8:00PM. As the evening progressed, the audience swelled to even greater numbers (photo by Kartiko Nugroho).

Charts (Figures 7-4 to 7-9) Reflecting Dramatic Hierarchy

The intent of the charts that follow is simply to allow the reader to see, at a quick glance, what is expressed in this dissertation as "dramatic hierarchy." The pearls of *garap* outlined in this chapter, in which *padat* concepts are applied to most all elements of the performance (narration, movement, characterization, and gamelan accompaniment choices and techniques) are represented in blue. Green reflects strong, philosophically-rich, conflict-rich plot development that is presented somewhat traditionally, without significant *garapan* techniques, such as many court audience scenes. Pink and red reflect "ornamentations of the dramatic action"[23] (visual attractions such as troop departure scenes and court dispersal scenes are in pink, and battle scenes in red). Yellow reflects moments of comedic relief that are still within the context of the plot, while gray shows the entertainment interludes.

Looking at the blue and green sections combined, readers can see how much total time is spent on plotline development in each performance. The difference between the contemporary-interpretive and classical performances when this is compared is striking:

Rama's Crown, contemporary-interpretive:
99 minutes *garapan* plot (blue) + 113 minutes basic plot (green) = 212 total minutes
= **47%** of the performance the audience is engaged with intense plot development

The Grand Offering of the Kings, contemporary-interpretive:
126 minutes *garapan* plot (blue) + 52 minutes basic plot (green) = 178 total minutes
= **46%** of the performance the audience is engaged with intense plot development

Rama's Crown, palace-classical:
0 minutes *garapan* plot (blue) + 98 minutes basic plot (green) = 98 total minutes
= **24%** of the performance the audience is engaged with intense plot development

The Grand Offering of the Kings, village-classical:
0 minutes *garapan* plot (blue) + 113 minutes basic plot (green) = 113 total minutes
= **28%** of the performance the audience is engaged with intense plot development

[23] See this term as defined by Sumarsam, on page 243. My application of the term may be different from Sumarsam's original intent.

Figure 7-4: *Rama's Crown*, contemporary-interpretive style

Figure 7-5: *Rama's Crown*, palace-classical style

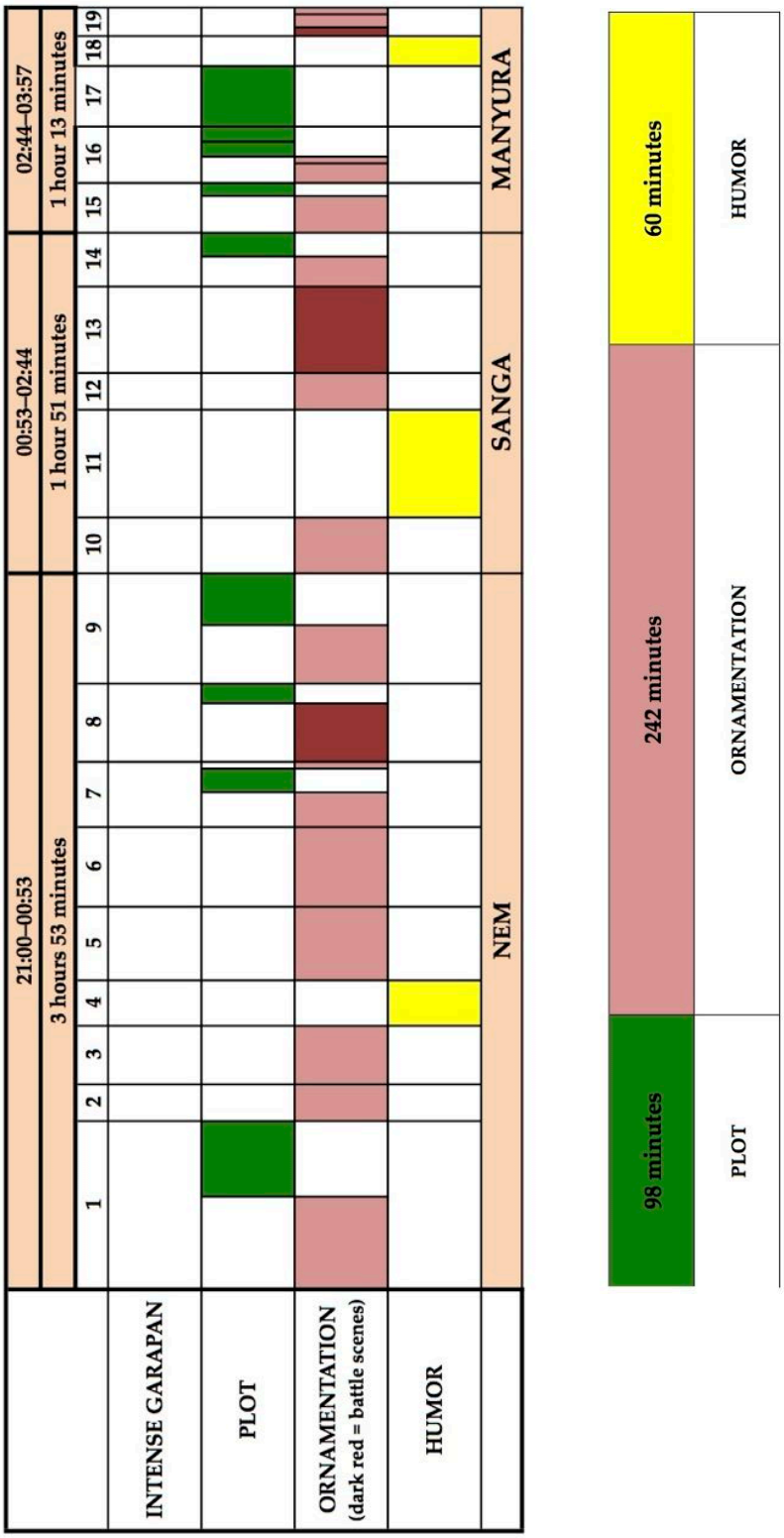
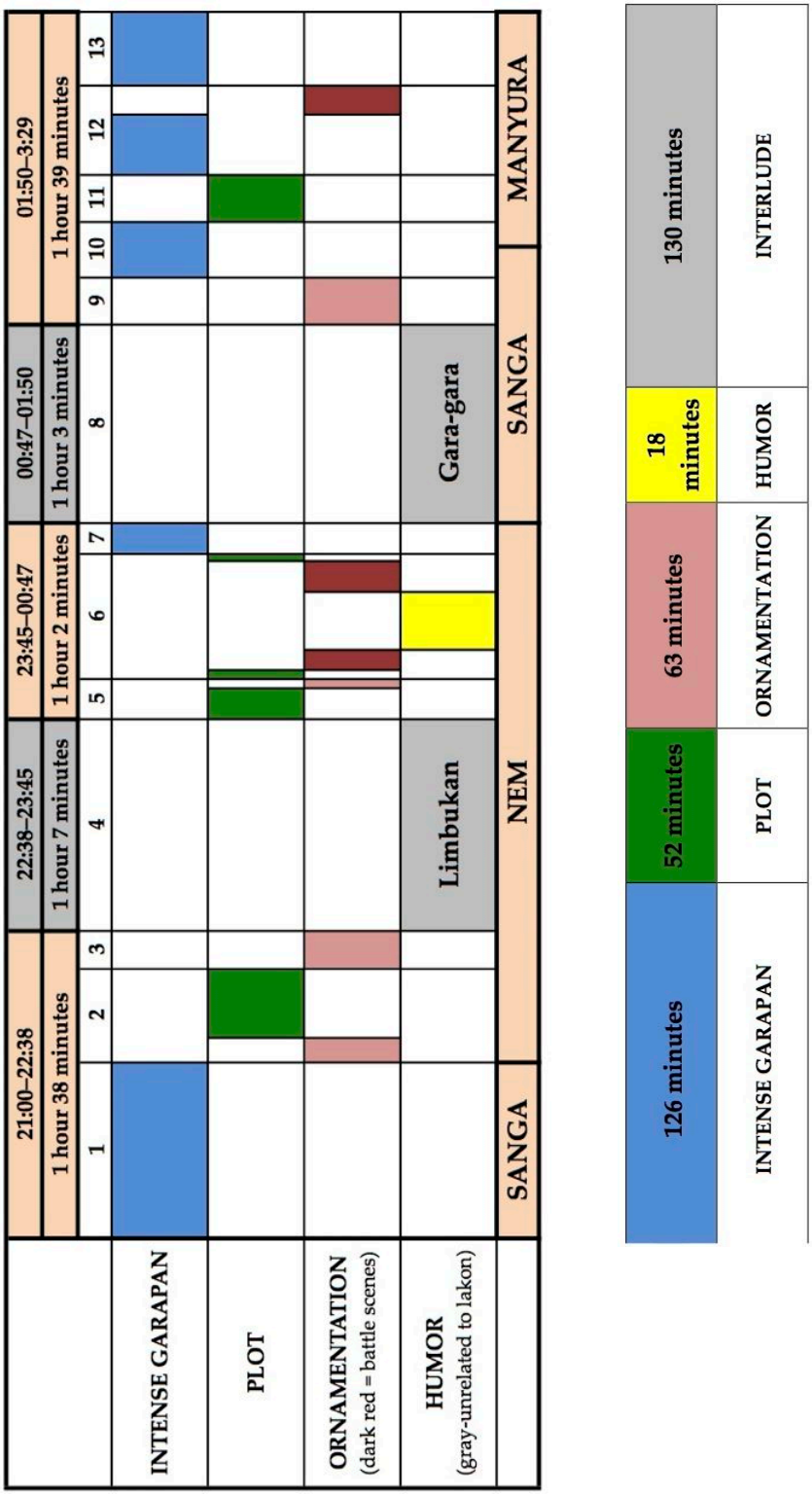


Figure 7-6: *The Grand Offering of the Kings* contemporary-interpretive style



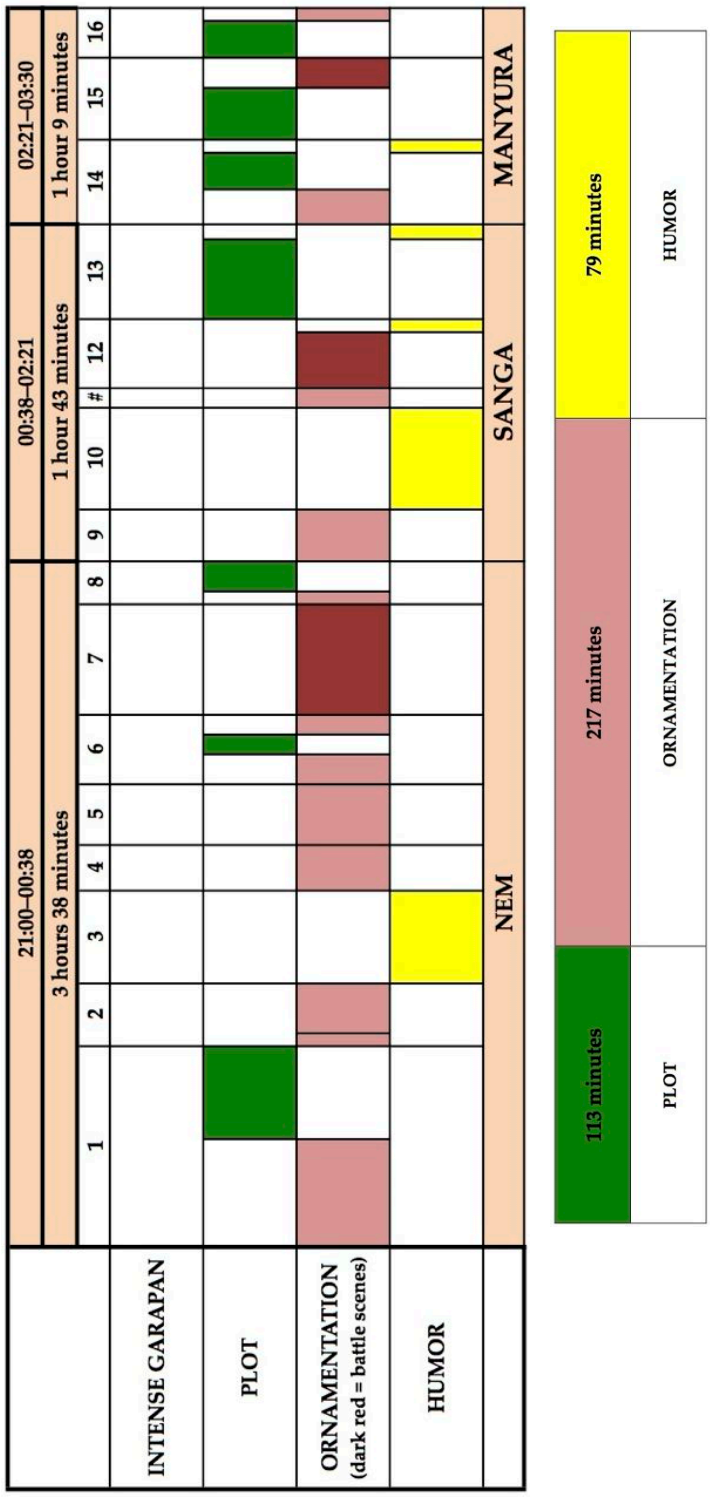


Figure 7-7: *The Grand Offering of the Kings* village-classical style

Figure 7-8: *Rama's Crown,* condensed style

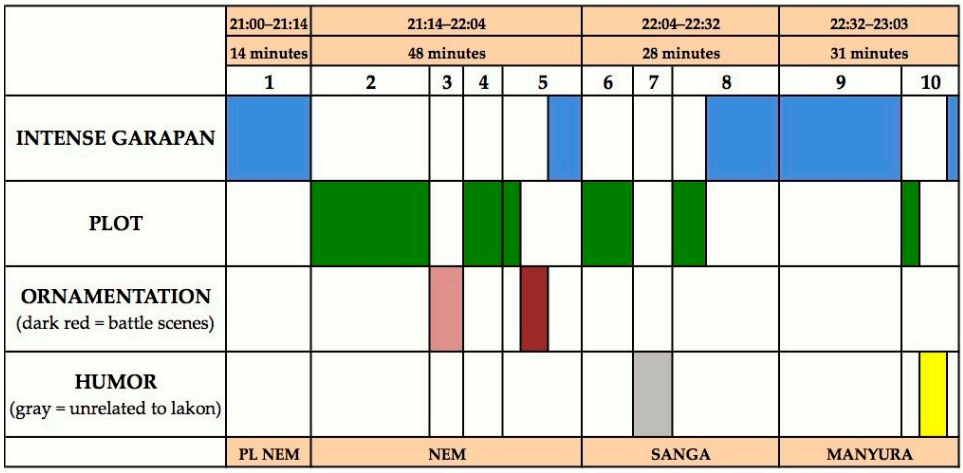
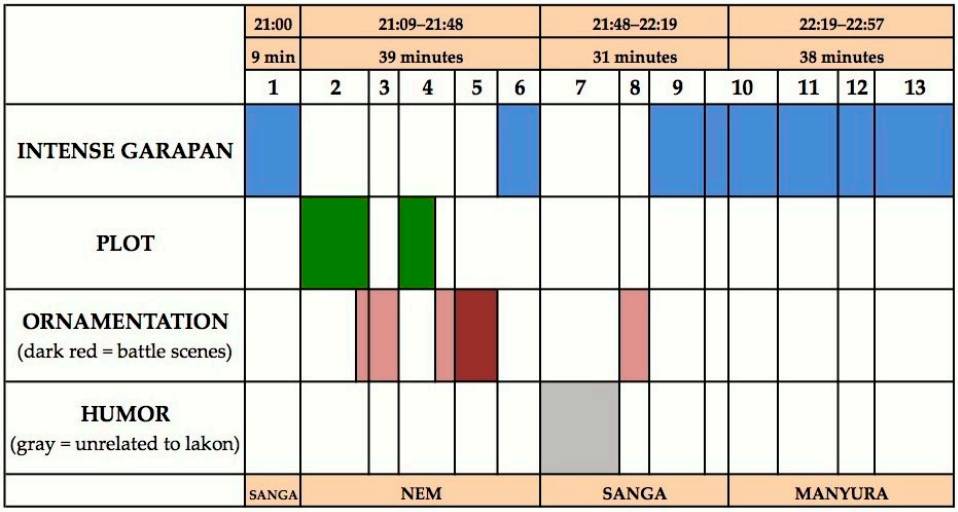


Figure 7-9: *The Grand Offering of the Kings,* condensed style



EIGHT

MULTI-EPISODE CONSTRUCTIONS

Dhalang Banjaran

> Ki Purbo Asmoro has been called a high-class, refined dhalang [*dhalang priyayi*], a master of interpretation [*dhalang sanggit*], an academic dhalang [*dhalang akademis*], a philosophical dhalang [*dhalang filsafat*], a dhalang of the highest artistic integrity [*dhalang sejati*], and a dhalang who has it all [*dhalang komplit*]. But here at Gadjah Mada University we like to think of him as a master of the biographical portrait [*dhalang banjaran*].

This is how Purbo Asmoro was introduced by the Dean of the Medical School, before his performance of *Banjaran Karna* (*The Life Story of Karna)* at Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta, March 2011.[1] To be sure, Purbo Asmoro is famous in the *pedhalangan* and wider artistic community for his *lakon banjaran*: biographical sketches of a single character, spliced together from snippets of many different

[1]The then Governor of Central Java, Muhammad Ismail, named Purbo Asmoro *dhalang priyayi* after attending his performance of *Kunthi Pilih* at the home of Anom Soeroto in March 1989, and this label became widespread through the press. Prince Benawa from Kraton Solo used the label *dhalang sanggit* at a gathering of the *pedhalangan* community in 2007 in Madiun. Also in 2007, the rector of UNS (Universitas Negeri Surakarta "Sebelas Maret") used the term *dhalang akademis* in a speech before one of Purbo's performances. The terms *dhalang sejati* and *dhalang komplit* in reference to Purbo Asmoro have come from many sources, two being, respectively, Prapto Panuju (wayang critic in Jakarta) and Suyadi (gamelan teacher in Solo). UGM first termed Purbo *dhalang banjaran* before his 2006 performance of *The Life Story of Anoman* at the Economics School. (All data from my personal notes, except for the 1989 *dhalang priyayi* label. The tradition of using such labels to describe a dhalang was previously mentioned in a footnote, p. 106.)

lakon. He is also well-known for other kinds of eclectic multi-episode constructions, such as those taken from chronologically adjacent lakon or those crafted around bits of lore, philosophy, or poetry, using a number of different episodes.[2]

Some background information is necessary to place these multi-episode constructions in context, as they are so important to Purbo Asmoro's artistic profile. This dissertation primarily examines the history of and technical elements involved in Purbo Asmoro's all-night *garapan* style. This style is, I argue, a profound innovation. Purbo Asmoro's subsequent application of it to multi-episode constructions, simply follows as an extension. Hence, in planning the material to be used for much of this work's analysis of all-night *garapan* style (the Lontar recordings) Purbo Asmoro and I chose single-episode lakon, despite his *banjaran* fame. The use of single-episode lakon allows analysis of the all-night *garapan* style in isolation from the dramatic complications introduced by multi-episode constructions. It is also the only way to compare *garapan* and classical performances of the same lakon, since the classical style repertory consists only of single-episode constructions. Furthermore, Purbo Asmoro's first experiments in all-night *garapan* style were of single-episode lakon (*Kunthi's Choice*, *Sumantri Apprentices*, *Sukèsi's Hand in Marriage Contested*; see Chapter 4). Finally, despite the prominence of multi-episode constructions in Purbo Asmoro's reputation, single-episodes still represent some 50% of his all-night performance record in Indonesia (more, if his overseas performance record is considered, see Figure 8-1):[3]

[2] Throughout this chapter, the term "multi-episode" is synomous with multi-lakon. Episode does not refer here to scene but rather to major story chunk, or lakon. My use of it here is hence similar to that of a television series episode, which has many scenes and a few simultaneous plotlines but is considered one story chunk.

[3] In 11 years, Purbo Asmoro performed a total of 589 times, or, an average of 4–5 times per month (counting a year as 11 months due to the exclusion of the fasting month, during which performances are rare). He often comments on this in public: "I am not a prolific dhalang. I'd rather be a thoughtful dhalang. I'd rather have time to rest, to develop artistically, and to engage in preparation for each performance. I've had an average performance record of 4–6 times a month almost my whole career, with somewhat more prolific years in the mid-1990s (Kemang, May 2012)."

Figure 8-1: Purbo Asmoro's performance record over 11 years, June 2004–June 2015.

	single-episode lakon	**multi-episode constructions**
all-night performances in Indonesia, 2004–2015	255 performances of 74 distinct, single-episode lakon	254 performances of 47 distinct, multi-episode constructions
padat performances in Indonesia, 2004–2015	9 performances of 6 distinct, single-episode lakon	5 performances of 2 distinct, multi-episode constructions
overseas performances (or exclusively foreign audiences in Indonesia)	46 performances of 11 distinct, single-episode lakon (all *padat*)	20 performances of 6 distinct, multi-episode constructions (all *padat* except for 2 performances)
TOTAL in 11 years (June 2004–June 2015)	**310 performances of single-episode lakon**	**279 performances of multi-episode constructions**

One reason for choosing specifically *Makutharama* and *Sesaji Raja Suya* for the single episodes,[4] was that they are two of the six most frequently performed lakon in Purbo Asmoro's repertory, only one of which is a multi-episode construction:

1. S*emar Mbangun Kahyangan (Semar Builds His Own Heaven)*, performed 32 times in 11 years.[5]
2. *Sumilaking Pedhut Astina* (*The Darkness Over Astina Lifts*), performed 27 times in 11 years (multi-episode).[6]
3. *Makutharama (Rama's Crown)*, performed 26 times in 11 years.[7]
4. *Sesaji Raja Suya (The Grand Offering of the Kings)*, performed 20 times in 11 years.[8]
5. *Wahyu Trimanggala (The Three-Pronged Boon From the Gods)*, performed 18 times in 11 years.[9]
6. *Parikesit Winisudha (The Coronation of Parikesit)*, performed 13 times in 11 years.[10]

While single episodes can be performed in classical or all-night *garapan* style, Purbo Asmoro almost always applies a full all-night *garapan* treatment to multi-episode constructions. The key to appreciating these, once one understands all-night *garapan*,

[4] For other reasons behind the choices of lakon for the Lontar project, see Asmoro 2013, xix–xviii (either title).
[5]This is a *lakon carangan* from the 1980s, popularly associated with government reformation and frequently requested by bureaucratc institutions sponsoring wayang. Purbo Asmoro's version uses bits of the original lakon by Anom Soeroto and combines it with aspects of the later version by Mujoko Joko Raharjo, entitled *Semar Mbangun Gedhong Kencana*.
[6] For more information on this lakon, see Chapter 4, p. 139.
[7] This is popular due to the lakon's frequent association with the military and government, as it explores the nature of leadership.
[8] This is popular due to the focus on a sacred ceremony of offerings—making it useful for all sorts of blessings (new land, a new house, a new nation, a new outlook). It has become popular recently due to the theme of overcoming a ubiquitous evil force, which in Purbo Asmoro's version is equated with terrorism.
[9] Developed by the late Mujoko Joko Raharjo, Purbo Asmoro uses this lakon as a creative alternative whenever the sponsor asks for "any *wahyu* story." *Lakon wahyu*, or lakon in which a boon from the gods is handed down to a deserving mortal, are commonly requested but dhalang often express boredom with their generic storylines.
[10]Associated with a new ruler and a new era, this lakon was popular both when Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono became president in 2004 and Joko Widodo in 2014.

lies mostly in attention to Purbo Asmoro's choices concerning the arrangement of scenes, his newly crafted points of focus, and his adjustments of dramatic hierarchy.

History of the Form "Banjaran"

The term *banjar* in Javanese refers to something that is lined up in a row. The noun *banjaran* comes originally from rice farming, and refers to bundles of sprouted rice seedlings tied together and lined up ready to be planted in the paddy. *Banjar* is also commonly used in Java to specify a number of adjacent villages that are not separated by farmland (*désa banjar dawa*, or long line of villages), and there is a verb *mbanjar*, to line something up.

Around the same time as the exploration of condensed constructions at ASKI in the late 1970s, a new form referred to as *lakon banjaran* emerged in the *pedhalangan* world. At first, this term referred exclusively to portraying the life of a single character from birth to death, but later the term was extended to other types of constructions. In creating such a biographical sketch, the dhalang selects a number of different episodes focused on the character chosen. He then presents these side by side (*mbanjar*) and melds them into a new lakon with integrity, although in fact, chronologically he is leaving out many episodes in between. In one seven-hour performance of *Banjaran Gathutkaca*, for example, the audience would see Gathutkaca's story from birth to death, with as much focus on Gathutkaca as possible. Yet the context of the conflict between the Pandhawa and the Kurawa that Gathutkaca was born into, and the context of the Baratayuda War in which he perished, still need to be clear. The birth of Gathutkaca is already its own lakon, as are stories of his coming of age, boons he receives, his various coronations, his marriage to Pergiwa, the defending of his Pandhawa uncles and cousins in different situations over the years, and of course his death. The dhalang has to choose what to present and needs to create new strands of meaning, theme, and connection between the plotlines. He has to condense a number of lakon and a number of storyline threads into one new creation. *Lakon banjaran*, therefore, take recrafting and rethinking along similar lines as the contemporary *padat* movement on the ASKI campus, and Purbo Asmoro's later all-night *garapan* style. Surprisingly, however, the

first experiments in all-night *banjaran*[11] remained quite classical in style and came mostly from figures outside of the ASKI world.

Nartosabdo was reportedly the first to craft a *lakon banjaran* with his studio recording of *Banjaran Bisma* in 1977 and his live performance of *Banjaran Bima* in Yogyakarta that same year. Bambang Murtiyoso, a Gendhon apprentice from the ASKI *padat* days, insists that he was the one to ignite this spark of an idea in Nartosabdo's creative subconscious (interview, November 2008): [12]

> I've explained this to many, and I've even written about it, but unfortunately I can't prove anything. This was a conversation between just the two of us and Pak Narto isn't around anymore! Anyway, we were hanging around talking—he was on the jury for that *kethoprak* festival at Konser [*Festival Kethoprak se-Jawa Tengah dan DIY*, early 1977 at the High School of Performing Arts (SMKI) in Solo] and I was there. He asked me what was going on these days at ASKI and I was telling him about the *padat* work with Pak Gendhon. He didn't say much. Then I said, "You know what I think would be interesting? Creating a lakon like a novel [*roman*]. A novel of a character's life. Tell his story from birth to death." Pak Narto seemed totally uninterested. But then, what do you know, later that year I hear he has come out with a recording called "Banjaran Bisma" that tells Bisma's story from birth to death and I think to myself, "So, he paid attention after all!"

In the next few years after *Banjaran Bisma* and *Banjaran Bima*, Nartosabdo continued to create other biographical sketches, while no other dhalang appeared to be ready to give them a try. These included studio recordings of the life of Karna in 1978, Arjuna in 1980, and Gathutkaca in 1981. While this was a significant conceptual innovation, Nartosabdo's resulting performances retained the same basic structure as a traditional lakon. The *Banjaran Arjuna* studio recording is a marathon 14 hours long, and told within the scene structure of two complete traditional lakon (*Banjaran*

[11] If applying the definition of *banjaran* accepted in the field by the 2000s (creating a new lakon out of multiple episodes, not necessarily character-based) one could argue that *Rama*, ASKI's condensed script from 1975, was the first experiment in *banjaran* as it combined many lakon into one. There is also the century-old Klaten tradition of Baratayuda performances during the Javanese month of Ruwah, in which a number of episodes from the final war between the Pandhawa and the Kurawa are combined into one performance. But for this chapter, we will define the first *banjaran* experiments as those that used the term *banjaran*, and were created in the spirit of exploring a new form.

[12] This entire story, in more detail, is chronicled in Nugroho 2012, 29. Although one always has to take anecdotes with a grain of salt, this is so often and so emphatically repeated by Bambang Murtiyoso in public settings that I believe it has to be given credence. Additionally, no other sources—even those close to Nartasabdo—offer an alternative story on how Nartosabdo came up with the concept.

Arjuna I and *Banjaran Arjuna II*). This work covers more episodes than his other *banjaran* and hence is longer, but in all his *banjaran* works Nartosabdo abbreviated traditional scenes rather than applying any *padat* treatment to the structure: "He did not reconceptualize anything, just trimmed scenes way down to squeeze in a lot in the same traditional way," explained Purbo Asmoro (interview, May 2009).[13]

At about the same time, in 1980, Anom Soeroto introduced yet another new form, the partial *banjaran*, which he created two of that year (Nugroho 2012, 24). One of them, *Narayana Kridha Brata* (*Narayana Takes on His Ascetic Side)*, started with Kresna's coming-of-age struggles and then told the story of his marriage to Rukmini. This meant combining just two lakon: *Narayana Ngèngèr* (*Narayana Apprentices)* and *Alap-alapan Rukmini* (*Rukmini's Hand in Marriage Contested)*. Anom Soeroto's other partial *banjaran* started with Baladéwa's struggles as a youth and connected this to the tale of his becoming a king in Mandura. It was entitled *Sang Kakrasana* (*The Great Kakrasana),*[14] and combined three lakon: *Resi Jaladara* (*Jaladara the Priest)*, *Prabu Nagakilat Gugur* (*The Death of King Nagakilat)* and *Kakrasana Winisudha* (*Kakrasana's Coronation)*. It is probable that these two new constructions were created with inspiration from Tristuti, who had been taken on by Anom Soeroto in 1980 as teacher, writer, and script consultant (see p. 102). In 1981, Nartosabdo recorded his *Banjaran Drona* which was also a partial biographical sketch. It covered the story of Durna, from his becoming a tutor to the Kurawa and Pandhawa in the Astina Kingdom through his death on the battlefield during the Baratayuda War.

Timbul Hadi Prayitno (1934–2011), legendary Yogyakarta-style dhalang,[15] appears to be the second performer after Nartosabdo to try his hand at the complete birth to death *banjaran* form. For 12 years, from 1982 to 1994, Timbul was the dhalang chosen for the yearly Javanese New Year (*Sura)*[16] commemoration

[13] Audio recordings of the Nartosabdo *banjaran* creations referred to, available on www.indonesiawayang.com.

[14] Baladéwa is known as Kakrasana in his youth.

[15] While this work does not explore Yogya-style *pedhalangan* or Yogyanese dhalang, a fair comparison might be to say that Timbul Hadi Prayitno of Bantul, DIY, and his contemporary, Hadi Soegito (1942–2008) of Kulon Progo, DIY, were for decades the Anom Soeroto and Manteb Soedharsono of Yogyanese wayang, i.e., the twin kings of the performing field.

[16] The Javanese lunar calendar consists of 12 months—Sura, Sapar, Mulud, Bakda Mulud, Jumadil Awal, Jumadil Akir, Rejeb, Ruwah, Pasa, Sawal, Sela, Besar—each 29 or 30 days in length, and parallel to the months of the Islamic calendar. Since there are only 354 or 355 days in each lunar year, the point of convergence between the Javanese and Gregorian calendars shifts forward by 10–11 days each Gregorian year. For example, the Javanese New Year, Sura 1, fell on 5 November in 2013, 25 October in 2014, and 15 October in 2015. No adjustments are made to retain seasonal alignment with the solar calendar (unlike the Chinese calendar) so any given date in the

performances at Balai Sidang, Senayan, Jakarta. These events attracted huge, attentive, savvy wayang audiences in the thousands. For a number of these, Timbul Hadi Prayitno prepared *lakon banjaran*: 1986 *Banjaran Bima*, and 1989 *Banjaran Karna*, to mention a few. There is an impressive total of 12 different *banjaran* creations by Timbul from this era, exploring the life stories of: Bima, Karna, Duryudana, Abimanyu, Arjuna, Anoman, Gathutkaca, Durna, Kumbakarna, Baladéwa, Sangkuni, and Dasamuka.[17] These performances, while compelling, dramatic, lively, and creative in many ways, are primarily quite traditional in structure.[18]

Mujoko Joko Raharjo was also regularly performing at least one *banjaran* construction in the late 1980s. In fact, when interviewed by the researchers Bambang Murtiyoso and Suratno in 1990, Mujoko reported that *Banjaran Séna* (*The Life Story of Bima*) had been one of his most frequently performed lakon over the past few years.[19] Since Mujoko played *rebab* for Nartosabdo for many decades, it is quite possible that his use of biographical sketches was inspired by Nartosabdo's later life experiments with *lakon banjaran* (from 1977 to his death in 1985). Out of the 18 popular dhalang and 23 lead gamelan musicians from the greater Solo area interviewed by Murtiyoso and Suratno for their 1992 publication: *Studi tentang Repertoar Lakon Wayang Yang Beredar Lima Tahun Terakir di Daerah Surakarta* (*A Study of the Repertory of Wayang Lakon Existing in the Past Five Years Around Surakarta)*, only Mujoko reported a *lakon banjaran* in his repertory over the five year-period, 1987–1992.

Manteb Soedharsono almost certainly experimented with birth-to-death *banjaran* in the early 1990s, although mention of them is scarce in any written material.[20] It appears certain, from cross-checking his replies on a number of occasions, that he performed *Banjaran Anoman* in 1995 for the Transmigration Office

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Javanese calendar simply cycles all the way through, falling earlier and earlier each Gregorian year for more than three decades before it appears in the same general two-week span.

[17] Full audio recordings of all 12 are available on www.indonesiawayang.com.

[18] Charts of the outline and flow of Nartosabdo's *Banjaran Karna* in classical style (1978), Timbul Hadi Prayitno's *Banjaran Karna* in classical style (1989), and Purbo Asmoro's *Banjaran Karna* in all-night *garapan* style (2012), appear later in this chapter.

[19] Murtiyoso 1992, 99.

[20] Nugroho, 2012 asserts that Manteb performed *Banjaran Gathutkaca* in 1990 for the Jakarta Police Department's Founder's Day, and *Banjaran Karna* for an unknown venue in 1989. I was unable to confirm, however, any pre-1995 *banjaran* debuts by Manteb with actual recordings, newspaper articles, anecdotal memories (specific stories that made the event sound probable or that supported a plausible context), collaborating informants, or written documentation by Manteb or one of his crew.

in Jakarta,[21] but any earlier use of the *banjaran* form is difficult to ascertain. (In his *Banjaran Bima* series of 1987, he performed one episode from Bima's life every month for 12 months, but the present concern is with single-night performances.) The following Tristuti texts for *lakon banjaran* exist from the early 1990s, during the time (1987–1999) that Tristuti was writing primarily for Manteb Soedharsono: *Banjaran Gandamana* 1992, *Banjaran Anoman* 1993, *Banjaran Setyaki* 1995, *Banjaran Arjuna* 1996, *Banjaran Bisma* 1996. In these written works, however, there was a primarily traditional approach to all structural elements of the performance.

Hence, the first explorations of *banjaran*, both complete and partial, came from outside of ASKI and did not involve an application of all-night *garapan* techniques despite, in hindsight, the obvious potential. The debuts of multi-episode constructions from 1977–1990 by these six pioneering dhalang (Nartosabdo, Anom Soeroto, Timbul Hadi Prayitno, Mujoko, Tristuti, and Manteb Soedharsono) remained surprisingly encased within traditional ideas about scene structure, gamelan accompaniment, movement techniques, narrative techniques, characterization, and interpretive details. Stories were skipped, summarized, and sped over to get the job done. There was not a global, all-night, recrafting of the performance style to match the new form, however, until Purbo Asmoro joined the effort.

It was in this context that Purbo Asmoro began experimenting with different types of multi-episode constructions, briefly in the mid-1980s and more extensively in the early 1990s. Naturally he was quick to combine this exploration with his parallel work on all-night *garapan* style. He vigorously pursues innovation in this area to the present, and *lakon banjaran* form an undeniably important part of his artistic profile. While the complete character portrait, birth to death, is considered by many to be Purbo Asmoro's specialty, there are actually four categories of multi-episode constructions in his repertory, listed here in the order, historically, that he worked them into his practice (Figure 8-2):

[21] Manteb's statement on this was without hesitation on two separate occasions before two separate interviewers (Nugroho and myself); he was able to name the month, year, and venue. The Tristuti script of the lakon also predates his reported performance date, so it would have been prepared and ready.

1. **banjaran lakon**:
   two or more lakon, adjacent chronologically, spliced into one new creation

2. **banjaran tokoh, wantah:**
   full biographical sketches of characters, birth to death, taken from a cross-section of episodes

3. **banjaran tokoh, jugag:**
   partial biographical sketches, highlighting a character's struggles during a particular segment of his or her life—from birth to somewhere mid-adulthood, or from somewhere mid-adulthood to death. The term *kalajaya* is sometimes specified for partial sketches that cover two or three illustrious events in the middle of a character's life, not usually including birth or death. [22]

4. **banjaran téma**:
   lakon exploring a theme, a philosophy, a piece of poetry, or a boon from the gods, and taken from a cross-section of episodes

Figure 8-2: Types of multi-episode constructions in Purbo Asmoro's repertory.

type of construction	number of distinct creations in Purbo's repertory	total performance instances over 11 years
banjaran lakon (chronological)	8 creations	113 instances (93 all-night, 20 *padat*)
banjaran tokoh wantah (birth-to-death biographical sketch)	18 creations	56 instances (53 all-night, 3 *padat*)
banjaran tokoh jugag (partial biographical sketch)	20 creations	87 all-night instances
banjaran téma (thematic)	2 creations	6 all-night instances

[22] Sugeng Nugroho (2012) coined the use of the term *banjaran wantah* for a complete birth-to death sketch. He coined the term *banjaran jugag* for a sketch that covers only a part of a character's life: either from birth to the middle or from the middle to the end of a character's life. He states that he borrowed the term *banjaran kalajaya* from the Yogyanese repertory, meaning a construction that covers an auspicious time in a character's life (*kala* is era and *jaya* victorious or auspicious). Purbo Asmoro, however, to confuse the matter, often refers to a *banjaran kalajaya* as a *banjaran* that combines any two lakon into one, and points out that these lakon are chosen for their auspicious nature (*kala* + *jaya*) and need not be character-based. In this dissertation I do not use *kalajaya*, due to the confusion in definition. The terms *wantah* (for something complete) and *jugag* (for something cut short) are traditionally applied to *sulukan*. Not many dhalang concern themselves with these labels, but Purbo Asmoro occasionally uses them, depending on where he is speaking. There is not always consistency, even when the terms are being used, but as long as Sugeng Nugroho has defined them they are helpful for our purposes here, simply as a vocabulary for the analysis.

Banjaran Lakon: Multiple Consecutive Episodes

Purbo Asmoro's first experiment with a multi-episode construction was actually in his early years as a student at ASKI, sometime around 1983 or 1984. He combined three consecutive lakon into one: *Jagal Abilawa* (*Abilawa the Butcher's Son)*, *Wiratha Parwa* (*The Incident in Wiratha)*, and *Kresna Gugah* (*Kresna's Awakening),* for a performance in Sumberlawang, outside of Solo. The resulting compilation covered a number of incidents during the Pandhawa's year of hiding in Wiratha Kingdom, the details of how their forced exile ended and how their return was rejected by the Kurawa, all the way up through the revelations Kresna received from the gods about how the Baratayuda War alliances would play out. Each of these events traditionally takes the form of an all-night lakon.

Even after repeated questioning on a number of occasions using a wide variety of strategies for jogging his memory, Purbo Asmoro cannot remember the slightest detail about how he came up with the idea to combine these three lakon into one. It is probable that he was influenced by Tristuti's own combining of *Abilawa the Butcher's Son* and *The Incident in Wiratha*. Purbo was frequently exposed to Tristuti's thinking at Rebo Legèn. Purbo does not remember how he treated, arranged, and organized the compilation, and there are no existing recordings. At any rate, this was his first dip into the realm of multi-episode constructions in an all-night wayang.

In his current practice, Purbo Asmoro combines consecutive lakon in one of five ways, and these also have become his building-blocks or strategies for constructing *banjaran tokoh, wantah* and *banjaran tokoh, jugag*:

1. Prologue Lakon + Main Lakon

When combining two lakon, one lakon can serve as the prologue while the other takes up the bulk of the performance. An example of this can be seen in Purbo Asmoro's combining of *Balé Sigala-gala* (*The Burning of the Villa)* and *Babad Wanamarta* (*The Clearing of the Wanamarta Forest)*.[23] In the traditional version of *The Clearing of the Wanamarta Forest*, the Kurawa, assuming Puntadéwa and the others to have perished

[23] Some in *pedhalangan* insist that to use something like "Wanamarta Forest" (*Babad Alas Wanamarta*) would be redundant, since *wana* and *alas* both mean forest. But as Tomo Pandoyo, a well-read dhalang from Klaten, ofetn points out in public venues, "Wanamarta" is the name of the forest, not "Marta."

in the villa fire, have appointed Duryudana to be the new king of Astina. When the Pandhawa show up alive and well, they are given the Wanamarta Forest plot as a compromise measure so that they do not cause trouble.[24] The classical lakon primarily concerns the clearing of the forest, the peace the Pandhawa are able to make with the resident spirits of the land, and the formation of the new Indraprastha Kingdom. The background story of the villa fire will often be told as a narration (a practice known as *pagedhongan*), but is never acted out.

In his two-episode version, Purbo Asmoro acts out the Pandhawa's heroic escape from the villa arson in a dramatic 30-minute prologue, rather than relegating it to background narration.[25] He takes this practice from Manteb Soedharsono, who first added *The Burning of the Villa* events to his performance of *The Clearing of the Wanamarta Forest* during the 1987 Bima Series in Jakarta. This construction of prologue lakon + main lakon now occurs often in Purbo Asmoro's biographical sketches. The prologue encapsulates one entire storyline, usually the character's birth, and with the subsequent court scene a new plotline begins. "If audience members need to go home after the prologue they are satisfied, as they have experienced one entire episode in the character's life" (Purbo Asmoro, interview May 2012).

2. Lakon #1 Through *Prang Gagal* + Lakon #2 *Magakan* to End

Another method Purbo Asmoro has for combining two lakon gives more equal time to each episode. In this construction, he positions the final battle scene of the first lakon as *prang gagal*. The second lakon begins somewhat traditionally with a court audience scene (which is actually the Second Foreign Court Scene, or Magakan, before *Pathet Sanga*) and proceeds through to the morning hours. In this construction there is a built-in suspense, as Purbo Asmoro highlights the inconclusive nature (*prang gagal*) rather than the finality of that last battle, leading the audience straight in to the second lakon.

[24] It goes without saying that this is only one possible presentation of the plot. This is the interpretation used most often by Purbo Asmoro. Other dhalang and other sources present different circumstances under which the Pandhawa accept the plot of land.

An example of this is Purbo Asmoro's version of *The Incident in Wiratha*, which covers the final few days of the Pandhawa's year in disguise in Wiratha Kingdom, under King Matswapati. While the Pandhawa have attempted to keep a low profile during their year in disguise, their sense of honor requires them to come to the assistance of King Matswapati when his nation is attacked by an alliance of King Susarma of Trigartha Kingdom and King Duryudana of Astina. Because of their heroism, skills, and courage, the Pandhawa's disguise is ultimately revealed, but luckily not before the stroke of midnight ending one complete year.

Traditionally, the strong alliance between King Duryudana and King Susarma is explained by the dhalang through a *pagedhongan* narration. While treated differently by different dhalang, the explanation lies in the events of the previous lakon, *Abilawa the Butcher's Son*. In this episode, King Matswapati is challenged by his brothers, Kencakarupa and Rupakenca, to host a jousting match in Wiratha. If their champion the semi-ogre Rajamala wins, they will take over the kingdom. Bima, living in disguise as the simple son of a butcher under the name Abilawa, steps up to be King Matswapati's champion. When Abilawa easily defeats Rajamala as well as Kencakarupa and Rupakenca, Susarma sees a power void and his chance to attack in order to take Matswapati's daughter Utari as his wife. Duryudana, on the other hand, watches the powerful Abilawa during the match, certain that he must be none other than Bima in disguise. Hence Susarma and Duryudana form an alliance to attack.

Instead of telling the background story of the jousting match between Abilawa and Rajamala as a narration, Purbo Asmoro acts the entire drama out, timing the jousting match itself to take place during *prang gagal*. While the jousting match is the final scene if *Abilawa the Butcher's Son* is performed traditionally, when positioned as *prang gagal* it loses its finality and instead incites curiosity as to who this mysterious fighter is. Although Purbo Asmoro experimented with combining these two lakon as early as 1983–1984, the precise version of the compilation that he uses to this day is borrowed from Tristuti. In 1988, Tristuti wrote a script for Manteb Soedharsono, which Purbo referred to in an interview in January 2014:

> Oh, my version of *The Incident in Wiratha* is definitely from Pak Tris, in terms of the basic structure. Of course the poetry, commentary, and philosophy I inject the lakon with differ during each performance and are all mine. The *iringan* and the way I have transformed it into *garapan* style, is all mine. But the dramatic kernel of an idea to combine the two lakon in this particular way comes from that early Pak Tris work, no question.

Nartosabdo also has a similar combination from the mid-1980s, entitled *Pandhawa Ngèngèr* (*The Pandhawa Family Apprentices*), however Purbo Asmoro mentioned in the 2014 interview that he was not familiar with that recording at the time. Purbo uses the "equal treatment" construction quite often in his partial biographical sketches, especially when one episode's final battle only raises questions or causes trouble seeping into a subsequent episode, and hence can be appropriately positioned as *prang gagal*.

3. Main Lakon + Epilogue Lakon

When combining two lakon, one lakon can serve as an epilogue and be relegated to the last hour or so, taking the form of *Pathet Manyura* only. As can be seen from Figure 8-3, there are really only some 100 minutes dedicated exclusively to plot development in a seven-hour, traditionally-treated lakon. In the classical treatment of *Makutharama* (Asmoro 2013), only 98 minutes is spent on specific plot development. In the parallel classical treatment of *The Grand Offering of the Kings* (Asmoro 2013), only 113 minutes was spent on plot development in the entire seven-hour wayang. One can see, therefore, how it would be possible to place an entire lakon in the 90–100 minutes of *Pathet Manyura*, if ornamentation and comedic interludes were kept absent or to a minimum.

Figure 8-3: Proportions of dramatic content in Purbo Asmoro's classical performances.

***Makutharama*, palace-classical recording, 2008**

98 minutes	242 minutes	60 minutes
PLOT	ORNAMENTATION	HUMOR

***Sesaji Raja Suya*, village-classical recording, 2008**

113 minutes	217 minutes	79 minutes
PLOT	ORNAMENTATION	HUMOR

When a lakon is played out as a 45-minute prologue or 20-minute flashback, only the essential parts are addressed, using the fast-paced *padat*-style *garapan*. When a lakon is used positioned as an epilogue of some 100 minutes in *Pathet Manyura*, it is treated more extensively and can start with a court scene, but will still be almost pure plot with no ornamentation and very little humor. While not quite as fast paced as an opening prologue, Purbo Asmoro will still treat these epilogues with *garapan* style in his approach to music, narration, and movement techniques.

Purbo Asmoro, again taking his lead from the Tristuti script prepared for Manteb Soedharsono's treatment from the 1987 *Life Story of Bima* series, constructs the lakon known as *Déwa Ruci* (*The God Ruci*) this way. Audience members familiar with his style know that when the lakon is advertised as "Déwa Ruci" it will inevitably be a compilation of *Déwa Ruci* (*Prologue–Pathet Nem–Pathet Sanga*) with *Bima Suci* (*Pathet Manyura*) as an epilogue. In *Bima Suci*, Bima takes up as a sage in the mountain hermitage Arga Kélasa, feeling capable and worthy after the spiritual knowledge he attained in *Déwa Ruci*. Although Nartosabdo made a recording of this same compilation, Purbo Asmoro was not familiar with it when he began performing *Déwa Ruci* this way in mid-1990s, but rather with the Tristuti script (interview, May 2014). Anom Soeroto has also performed these two lakon combined into one since around the same time (conversation with Anom Soeroto before a performance of *Déwa Ruci* in Jakarta, March 2015).

In February 2013, Purbo Asmoro created a similar construction with a different pair of lakon. Calling the lakon *Mbangun Candhi Saptaarga* (*The Building of a Temple in Saptaarga)*, the bulk of the performance was the episode *Musthakawèni the Thief*. This *lakon carangan* traditionally ends in the disappearance of the Pandhawa's sacred document known as the *kalimasada*. The sequel lakon, known as *Pétruk Becomes King*, reveals that it is Pétruk who has run off with the *kalimasada* and is using its authority as a pretense on which to build his own kingdom and reign as an eccentric sultan. Purbo surprised the audiences in Rembang in the wee hours of that February morning, as he wrapped up *Musthakawèni the Thief* by the end of *Pathet Sanga*. He continued on with *Pétruk Becomes King* as an epilogue in *Pathet Manyura*. He has since performed this on two other occasions. Purbo Asmoro also uses this

format often in his partial *banjaran*, in which one part of the character's tale will form the bulk of the lakon, with a second story told as an epilogue in *Pathet Manyura*.

4. Main Lakon + Flashback Lakon

When combining two lakon, one lakon can be played out as a flashback embedded in the other, main lakon. The flashback of Jarasandha's birth that is embedded in *The Grand Offering of the Kings* is the only example of this construction in Purbo Asmoro's repertory. Although popularly considered a single-episode performance, his all-night *garapan* version of this lakon in fact does represent two lakon: *The Birth of Jarasandha* and *The Grand Offering of the Kings*.[26] The entire story of Jarasandha's birth is told in a 42-minute flashback during the prologue. While this is not a common construction in Purbo Asmoro's repertory, I mention it here for three reasons: it may appear more in his repertory in the future and is undeniably a distinct category on its own; it occurs in one of the Lontar recordings used in much of this analysis; and it is the most common *garapan* construction used by Manteb Soedharsono (see Chapter 9).

5. Compilations of Three or More Lakon: War Stories

The final multi-episode construction that Purbo Asmoro uses is the telling of numerous war episodes in one performance, the individual battles of which are traditionally entire lakon in their own right. This practice has been in place for over century in Klaten, where the telling of the Baratayuda War occurs in one night, or in a combination of one afternoon performance followed by another wayang in the evening. Usually occurring during the Javanese month of Ruwah for village cleansings, this is the only existing example of how three or more lakon have been combined by masters of the past. It can include anywhere from three to ten episodes compressed into one performance. Often starting with Kresna's attempt to negotiate a peace (*Kresna As Emissary*) this construction includes the deaths of these major characters: Irawan, Utara, Wratsangka, Séta, Bisma, Abimanyu, Gathutkaca,

[26] This two-lakon construction (*The Birth of Jarasandha* + *Sesaji Raja Suya*, which ends in Jarasandha's death) has been billed as *Banjaran Jarasandha* by a number of dhalang, although Purbo Asmoro prefers to think of it as *Sesaji Raja Suya* with a flashback. He feels more depth into Jarasandha's story, and a complete reworking of the end, would be needed in order to refer to it as *Banjaran Jarasandha* (interview, Dec 2015).

Dursasana, Karna, Durna, Salya, Sangkuni, and Duryudana. Each *dhalang Baratayuda*[27] will have a different way of breaking the episodes up, different places where he lingers and develops, and different choices as to where to start and stop that night.

Perhaps inspired by the genre as a Klaten-born dhalang, Nartosabdo recorded many war chronologies in the 1980s, to name a few:

- *Ramayana* (14 hours of the *Ramayana* story, from Rama's exile to his return as king of Ayodya)
- *Drupada As Emissary* (*Kunthi As Emissary* + *Drupada As Emissary* + *Kresna's Awakening*)
- *Kresna As Emissary* (*Kresna As Emissary*, continuing to the deaths of Irawan, Séta and Bisma)
- *The Death of Salya* (combining the death stories of Salya, Sangkuni, and Duryudana)[28]

In Nartosabdo's versions, each lakon was told somewhat traditionally, simply adjusting for where the lakon started in the all-night context. There was no recrafting of the shape and elements of the performance.

On Rebo Legèn, 22 August 2000, Purbo Asmoro was asked, in yet another historic invitation by Anom Soeroto, to perform for the debut of Anom's new home and arts center in Timasan, Sukoharjo. For this invitation, he ended up creating what appears to be the first all-night *garapan* version of a Baratayuda construction. Like the Rebo Legèn occasion of 1989, for which he prepared the first all-night *garapan*, he felt the weight of the occasion profoundly. Every dhalang in the community would be in attendance, the arts community would be talking about such an event for decades, and the performance would be broadcast on numerous radio stations. He decided to create a multi-episode tale of the end of the *Baratayuda*, but one that would segue in to the optimism of a new era in Astina Kingdom. His resulting creation, *Sumilaking Pedhut Astina* (*The Darkness Over Astina Lifts*), explores entirely different aspects of the Baratayuda from Klaten tradition.

Purbo combined three main lakon into one: *Duryudana Gugur* (*The Death of Duryudana*) focusing on the last, desperate Kurawa commander, Duryudana, and his demise at the hands of Bima; *Pandhawa Boyong* (*The Pandhawa Are Brought to Astina*)

[27] Villages in Klaten that have a tradition of a *Baratayuda* village-cleansing wayang during Ruwah, also inevitably have a tradition of employing a particular dhalang, year after year. When the dhalang who has been performing *The Baratayuda* in that village for decades dies, the village will hand the responsibility down to that performer's son, nephew, daughter, or nearest descendant rather than opening the search for a new dhalang.

[28] See https://listantoedy.wordpress.com/tag/ki-narto-sabdho/or a wealth of recordings and information.

exploring the conflicted emotions on all sides, as the bitter Dhestarata and Gendari defer to the guilt-ridden, traumatized Pandhawa as victors; and *Aswatama Nglandhak* (*Aswatama Digs a Tunnel*), describing the clandestine efforts of the last struggling members of the Kurawa army (Aswatama and Kartamarma) from their hiding place in the forest. These lone survivors attack the Astina palace at night and commit genocide on sleeping civilians, violently killing Srikandhi, Pancawala, and Trusthajumna. The mayhem is miraculously brought to an end by the infant heir to Astina, Arjuna's grandson Parikesit. The power and innocence residing in baby Parikesit ushers in a new and hopeful era to Astina.

This work has been called a masterpiece by wayang critics (Prapto Panuju, interview 2008, see p. 139; Sudarko Prawiroyuda, interview 2009, Bambang Murtiyoso, interview 2011) and features intense *garapan* of every performance element, at key structural points. The structure of *The Darkness Over Astina Lifts* (which Purbo has performed 27 times in the past 11 years) is far more complex than any of his other multi-episode constructions. Rather than being told by the omnipresent dhalang in a linear manner, as in the traditional *Baratayuda*, the entire work is offered from the perspective of the dying Bisma, who appears in the opening scene pierced by numerous deadly arrows, but still breathing.[29] In the final minutes of the wayang, Purbo brings back the three *kayon* and reveals Bisma's figure again on his deathbed. Bisma then gives a wrenching speech on the importance of holding on to optimism in the new era, before dying (see Figure 8-4).



Figure 8-4: Dying Bisma gives Duryudana a piece of his mind at the beginning of this historic multi-episode construction. He witnesses the end of the Baratayuda War from his deathbed, coming back at the end to speak his final peace.

[29] See Figure 6-6 showing the opening *kayon* configuration to this construction. The dying Bisma, unbenounced to the audience, is hidden behind the three *kayon* figures. I have heard 27 versions of Bisma's dying plea to Duyurdana, all written by Purbo Asmoro, and each one about five minutes of oration in length, and have never once heard a duplicate.

Banjaran Wantah: Character Portraits from Life to Death

Purbo Asmoro created his first full biographical sketch of a character from birth to death in 1993 with *The Life Story of Kunthi* for an event in Jakarta.[30] Surprisingly, given that it was his first attempt at the new form, he does not remember the exact circumstances of this debut. Of course he had been experimenting with the story of Kunthi during that era. Inspired by the original Sukardi *padat* script *Kunthi's Choice* while at ASKI, he put on the historic Rebo Legèn all-night *garapan* performance of the same lakon in 1989. He also won first place in the Javanese Regional 1990 *padat* competition with his own revised condensed version. Hence it is not hard to imagine his decision to extend the topic of Kunthi's marriage into a full biographical sketch, given that *banjaran* character sketches were becoming popular. Since that debut in 1993, biographical sketches have come to be more associated with Purbo Asmoro than with any other dhalang in the Solo tradition. He has both explored this form with more characters than any other dhalang, and performed these sketches with more frequency than any other dhalang.[31]

Purbo Asmoro has developed 18 full biographical sketches in his career through 2015, crafting the lives of the following characters from birth to death (debut dates in parentheses):[32]

1. Kunthi (1993)
2. Ramabargawa (1995)
3. Karna (1996)
4. Dasamuka (1997)
5. Sangkuni (1997)
6. Durna (1998)
7. Gathutkaca (late 1990s)
8. Srikandhi (2003)
9. Bisma (2004)

[30] This simple, declarative statement took a full year of investigation to determine with certainty.

[31] Nartosabdo experimented with biographical sketches primarily in studio recordings only, and only for about eight years, from 1977 to his death in 1985. Mujoko had only a few *banjaran* in his repertory (Bima, Karna, and perhaps one other, according to his longtime musician, Gathot). Manteb Soedharsono was a pioneer of *banjaran*, but has only five or six birth-to-death constructions in his repertory to date, and does not frequently perform any of them (interview with Manteb, January 2015).

[32] The debut dates for #1–8 are estimates, determined through a process of interviewing Purbo Asmoro, his musicians, and various supporters, as well as cross-checking news reports, inquiring on social media, listening to available recordings for references to performance records, and examining artifacts (scripts, lakon outlines, *iringan* lists) in Purbo Asmoro's possession. The debut years for #9–18 are exact; taken from my own data.

10. Baladéwa (2005)
11. Arjuna (2005)
12. Abimanyu (2005)
13. Anoman (2006)
14. Salya (2006)
15. Gandamana (2010)
16. Boma Narakasura (2011)
17. Abiyasa (2015)
18. Duryudana (2015)

While Purbo Asmoro is renowned for these creations, full birth to death sketches are not particularly common due to their unusual and difficult nature. They represent only 9% of his performances from 2004 to 2015 (53 out of 589 total performances). Several reasons for this can be extracted from his comments over the years, both in interviews and via causal interactions:

- If the wayang is in celebration of a pregnancy, birth, marriage, wedding anniversary, birthday, or circumcision, ending with a death tale is not advised and not appropriate.
- The birth stories of many characters (Sangkuni, Durna, Boma, Salya, Gandamana, for example) are obscure, more challenging to follow, and employ characters not familiar to most viewers. Not all audience types will be interested in these unusual birth tales, and capturing an audience's attention from the beginning is crucial to performance success these days.
- Although *banjaran* have been in the repertory since 1977, many sponsors are not aware of these constructions and would not request them without prompting. If the sponsoring committee has decided to determine the lakon, *banjaran* titles come up less frequently than traditional lakon.
- *Banjaran* constructions take rehearsal time and special preparation, which is not always available.

Hence, even if the dhalang has been asked to determine the lakon, he will only choose a *banjaran* if he has time and inclination to prepare and rehearse, and if he feels the venue's audience would probably appreciate such a construction. Purbo

Asmoro's complete biographical sketches tend to be presented at the following types of events:

- Mass wayang happenings before knowledgeable audiences, mostly in Jakarta or East Java, often for a neutral event like an office's or regency's Founder's Day.
- Internal, artistic community events such as Rebo Legèn, the monthly wayang at Taman Budaya Surakarta, or various milestones of an academic or artistic institution.
- Routine television or radio broadcasts, which were more common in the 1990s but rare since 2000.
- An event emerging out of an individual fan's whim, and for no particular occasion.

Purbo Asmoro described his process for creating a new birth-to-death portrait, in an interview in 2013 at his home:

> First, I research all the various existing lakon synopses and references related to the character from the different sources I have at my disposal. I get them all out, and sometimes need to do some legwork to find what I want.[33] Then I compare everything and make choices. If every source mentions this or that about the character, perhaps it will be important to include? If only one source tells this or that episode or infers this or that character trait, then I need to decide how interesting it is, and if I am to include it, why? At this point, all of it is just data.
>
> Now I need to craft the events I choose into a sequence of scenes. In doing this, it is important that the central character is the focus for each scene. This doesn't mean they have to appear in every scene, but discussion or addressing their life struggles needs to be the focus. This is not a matter of sequencing entire episodes or lakon, but sequencing at the scene level and only with an eye to focus on the character. I discard anything that may not be so important in the character's development. The individual lakon lines from the traditional repertory may start to disintegrate, but what is left is a sketch of the character, independent of episode boundaries.
>
> Then I look at my resulting order of scenes and consider whether it will be difficult to pull off. Does it lend itself to any semblance of traditional wayang structure? Will it be pleasing to the audience when performed as a

[33] On a number of occasions over the years, Purbo Asmoro texted me that he had just come from the home of the late Toto Atmojo of Sukoharjo to ask for a particular detail about a character's life that he could not find in any of his sources. The birth of Salya is one I remember in particular. Upon Toto Atmojo's death in 2012, Purbo obtained a thick book of his lakon snippets and synopses, but the book is handwritten, and is in Javanese script, which Purbo Asmoro reads but not on a regular basis and with some difficulty.

> wayang? Sometimes the scenes duplicate themselves, sometimes the conflicts of adjacent scenes seem—ah, it's hard to explain. This is actually the difficult part. I can't even put it into words. What I mean is, so that the resulting structure lends itself to a wayang performance. The scenes aren't repetitive in feel, the dramatic tension has gradation, and such. It's a feeling, really, that comes with experience too.
>
> Only now can I start to consider the gamelan accompaniment choices and larger structure. What will form the prologue? What will define *Pathet Nem*, *Pathet Sanga*, and *Pathet Manyura?* Next, I decide which sections I will compose special narration for, which sections I can embed with philosophical learnings or debate, and where the potential for comedic relief within a scene may lie. But I always leave room for improvisation and spontaneity. My performances of any lakon are a combination of reading what I have prepared and improvising on the spot; of following the accompaniment list drawn up for the musicians and not. But the basic structure of scenes, chosen for focus and dramatic gradation, will probably not change once I am at the screen.
>
> Somewhere in that planning, I also gather in my mind all the possible physical forms (*wanda*) the main character can take. What versions of the character do I have in my collections, what versions do others have that I could borrow, and, rarely, would I want to make something new for this debut biographical sketch? If we are to focus all night on this character, why not find an opportunity to use different *wanda*. Sometimes, if I am taken with a particular *wanda* of that character in my collection, it might even drive a decision about a particular scene—become an excuse to finally bring out that form of the character. But usually, consideration of *wanda* happens in a gentle and parallel way during the planning. It can guide, or follow.

At the beginning of his description, Purbo Asmoro mentions gathering many sources together as a first step, and this requires some explanation. In the wayang community, there is a distinction between "Mahabharata" versions and "Pustakaraja" versions, the latter also often referred to as the "pedhalangan" version. The vast majority of dhalang in the Solo tradition identify themselves as coming from the Pustakaraja tradition, meaning they consider the literary basis of their interpretations to lie in the *Serat Pustaka Raja Purwa* by the Solonese court poet Ranggawarsita (late 1880s). Most dhalang I have come into contact with in Solo contrast this massive narrative with what they think of as the Mahabharata (or

Ramayana or Arjunasasrabau) versions of stories, which they define vaguely as meaning the more originally Indian versions:

> *Pustakaraja* storylines are more in line with Javanese aesthetics, Javanese morals, Javanese ethics, and a Javanese approach to life. There are aspects to the Indian versions, such as Drupadi being married to five men at once, or the Pandhawa being greedy for riches once they are leaders, that just don't fit with a Javanese way of thinking. That's why most dhalang prefer to use the *Pustakaraja* as their source (interview with Mangkunegaran Palace dhalang Hali Jarwosularso, May 2002).

Ranggawarsita not only collected and arranged village Javanese versions, but also tried to date these events and connect the lineage of Javanese kings to the Pandhawa, as Sears describes (1996, 180–181):

> The stories included in Ranggawarsita's compendium might serve as an inventory of the stories being performed in the villages at that time. What Ranggawarsita did was to arrange the shadow play stories in a chronological fashion, along with other Javanese myths and quasi-historical materials, to produce a magnum opus which, in a unique way, documented the history of Java from the Islamic creation story to the fall of the last great "Hindu-Javanese" kingdom, Majapahit, at the end of the fifteenth century.[34]

Although every dhalang I have spent much time with eventually mentions a distinction between "Mahabharata" and "Pustakaraja" versions in his thinking, this seems to be a distinction primarily passed down anecdotally through generations of dhalang, without much, if any, actual access to the written sources at this point. Until I met Purbo Asmoro, I had never known a dhalang who actually owned any part of the Ranggawarsita work, and certainly none who had access to old, Indian-based versions of the *Mahabharata*, as Sears relates (1996, p. 185):

> The Javanese puppeteers distinguish between the *Pustaka Raja Purwa*, which recounts all of the cycles of wayang stories, and the Mahabharata, which they also acknowledge to be a source of their tradition. But it is difficult to determine exactly what they mean by Mahabharata. Mahabharata stories were transmitted from India to Java in the early centuries of this millennium, but only eight of the eighteen books of the Sanskrit Mahabharata exist in Java and these are essentially unintelligible today to all Javanese except scholars of Old Javanese.

[34] Sears (1996, 94–95 and 179–184) provides extensive information and context regarding Ranggawarsita's *Pustaka Raja Purwa*, as well as the Dutch and scholarly reaction in general to his quasi-historical attempts.

Sears then goes on to describe a number of texts circulating among dhalang in the 1980s considered to reflect the Mahabharata (Indian) versions. She comments that they have taken circuitous routes into the community, for example, a Sanskrit text translated by an English scholar and brought to Java by a Dutch scholar in the 1930s.

In the end what is important here are the sources Purbo Asmoro accesses for the processes he describes, and what he himself considers them to be: *pedhalangan* or Mahabharata or something else. Purbo Asmoro is unusual among dhalang I have encountered, in that he does have volumes I–V of the eight-volume *Serat Pustaka Raja* in his collection (although the Kurawa-Pandhawa era is only related in volumes VII and VIII). Volumes I–IV he owns in the form of a reissue by Padmosusasro (1906), and Volume V from a transliteration by Tristuti. A more recent narrative source of *pedhalangan* interpretations is the seven-volume, dense, *Silsilah Wayang Purwa Mawa Carita* (Padmasoekotjo, 1986). Purbo Asmoro often reviews passages from this in preparation for a new biographical sketch. Other *pedhalangan* versions of lakon used as sources by Purbo Asmoro are the Ngasinan, Klaten lakon outlines, also entitled *Pustaka Raja Purwa*. Tristuti transliterated and transformed these into an 11-volume set of lakon outlines based on the Cermasuwarna 1928 text, and informally distributed them in the early 1990s (mentioned also in Sears 1996, 184). Purbo Asmoro regularly consults the lakon outlines by the late Toto Atmojo of Sukoharjo, lakon scripts by Siswoharsoyo from the 1960s, and scripts by Samsudin Proboharjono from the 1960s and 1970s, all considered *pedhalangan*.

By contrast, the narratives *Mahabarata Kawedhar* (Soetarto, 1938) and *Mahabarata* (P. Lal, 1981, translated to Indonesian by Hartowardojo, 1986), are thought to present the Indian versions of stories. These books show signs of frequent use in Purbo Asmoro's collection. In five volumes of story synopses entitled *Mahabharata* from the 1990s, Tristuti presents a mix of old, village-style *pedhalangan*, Mahabharata, and his own, new interpretations. These are often referenced by Purbo Asmoro.

Purbo Asmoro is also, on occasion, inspired by more unusual sources, such as various popular novels, movies, television serials, comics, or theater productions based on tales from the *Mahabharata* or *Ramayana*. The colossal theater production *Opera Anoman*, which played at Teater Tanah Airku, Taman Mini Indonesia Indah,

Jakarta in the late 1990s, included a startling sequence in which Anoman is in search of his father's identity as a young monkey. Rather than simply challenging the gods in the heavens, Anoman travels through space devouring the Sun and the Moon for sustenance in his travels, and spitting them out again when they cause him stomach difficulties. Purbo Asmoro reports being taken by this scene when he attended *Opera Anoman* in 1999, and using it as part of his *Banjaran Anoman* debut at UGM in 2006.[35] In any lakon, aside from a purely Javanese *lakon carangan*, be it a single episode or a multi-episode construction, Solonese dhalang may freely mix elements of Mahabharata with *pedhalangan* interpretations. In Purbo Asmoro's biographical sketches, however there is a virtual guarantee that different snippets of the story will be woven together from almost every one of the sources above, in some way or another.

One of the most interesting parts of the biographical sketch process is the step Purbo Asmoro had the most difficulty putting into words: examining his proposed sequence of scenes for its performability. As described in Chapter 7, Purbo Asmoro's all-night *garapan* performances tend to follow this structure, an adaptation of traditional structure:

1. Prologue **[*garapan* pearl #1]**[36]
2. Opening Court Audience Scene
3. (Limbukan Interlude)
4. Departure Scene
5. Second Court Audience Scene
6. Inconclusive Battles, ending in a focal moment of the lakon, **[*garapan* pearl #2]**
7. Pathet-transitional Court Audience Scene, building on a focal moment of the lakon, **[*garapan* pearl #3]**
8. (Gara-gara Interlude)
9. A variety of scenes, depending, and transition to Pathet Sanga **[*garapan* pearl #4]**
10. A variety of scenes in Pathet Manyura, depending on the lakon

[35] Off and on throughout the 2000s, *Mahabharata* television serials from India, dubbed in Indonesian, have been the rage on Indonesian primetime television. The most recent version, which played nightly in 2014, was particularly popular for its elaborate settings, costumes, and grandiose war scenes. During his performances in 2014 and 2015, Purbo Asmoro made numerous references to the characterizations of Sangkuni and Naradha from this series, among other figures. Although he has yet to integrate one of the storylines from this series that does not yet exist in Javanese wayang performance practice, he makes frequent sideline commentary about the differences.

[36] See Chapter 7, p. 245 for an explanation of the "seven pearls of *garap*."

11. The climatic and defining scene of the lakon, **[*garapan* pearl #5]**
12. A final battle scene, **[*garapan* pearl #6]**
13. An unorthodox but focal ending scene, **[*garapan* pearl #7]**

Although this structure was described as it applies to single-episode lakon in Chapter 7, Purbo Asmoro rarely veers from it in his multi-episode constructions, and I believe this is what he is referring to in the quote about performability. If the order of scenes he comes up cannot approximately fit into this general structure, it appears—from an examination of his resulting body of work—that he is not satisfied. He searches, among his list of potential story segments, for what will work as an Opening Court Scene, or what has potential to be a Troop Departure scene, or a Foreign Kingdom Court Audience. He considers which confrontation will serve as the traditional Series of Inconclusive Battles scene and whether there is a confrontation that could be framed as a *Cakilan* battle scene. This is what makes the resulting new compilation "performable," and is also one of the factors that leads so many researchers to refer to his work as innovation within a classical framework.

In the end, whatever the process, the lakon as a whole must come together with an integrity and focus of its own. At a brief discussion session before his performance of a biographical sketch of Baladéwa at ISI in 2010, Purbo Asmoro summarized the difficulties:

> When asked to prepare a *lakon banjaran*, whether he likes it or not, a dhalang is forced to think hard. By thinking I mean that, in my view, if you are going to do a *banjaran* you need to align, snip, snatch, sew, patch, connect, discard, and then add in your own creativity. Because if not, the episodes you are placing together as one, performed together in an all-night performance, will pose too many twists and turns. Align, snip, snatch, sew, patch, connect, discard, add in, with constant focus on that main character and their life struggles. A different job from that a dhalang faces when performing a traditional lakon.

This was also summed up in a colorful way, as far back as 1988, by wayang enthusiast and critic Suhartoyo in a short commentary in the Senawangi magazine publication *Gatra*. Suhartoyo was referring specifically to *lakon banjaran* that had been created recently by Nartosabdo and Timbul Hadi Prayito:

> Most importantly, it must be remembered that without a unifier, or the red thread that is able to run through and connect each episode in the drama to make a round and homogenous whole, the audience is going to experience dissonance and disorientation. It's as if one watching a *lakon banjaran* could be said to leave their home during the first scene and simply end up further and further away as each episode is told, without any hope of returning back home by the *tancep kayon* [end].

Purbo Asmoro connects the numerous story segments in a variety of ways. Certain structural points provide smooth transitions between the periods in character's life: between the prologue and opening court scene, after *Limbukan*, after *Gara-gara*, or at the beginning of any main change of scene. For example, while traditionally in *Budhalan,* troops depart for the task described in the court scene, the scene change could also be used to start a new plot thread. The points at which *Pathet Nem* moves to *Pathet Sanga* or *Pathet Sanga* to *Pathet Manyura* are not, however, moments used to change era or fast-forward ahead in a character's life. Rather, as described in Chapter 7, Purbo Asmoro crafts these boundaries into emotional climaxes and almost always chooses to use these mode changes to create moments of poignancy and dramatic emphasis within a scene.

In addition to placing a new life segment at a new structural point in the performance, he sometimes smooths transitions with a narration by the dhalang, or with characters like Semar, Limbuk, Cangik, Pétruk, Garèng, or Bagong, who explain that time is passing and the character is growing up, living in a new kingdom, in search of a new goal, or the like. Sometimes, he creates small bridges of plot material to make a transition between one tale and another. In *The Life Story of Dasamuka*, for example, he developed a scene in which Dasamuka sees the goddess Widawati for the first time and falls hopelessly in love. This helps to make explicit the connection between Dasamuka's attacking Lokapala and his subsequent attacks on Ayodya and his kidnapping of Sinta.

Purbo Asmoro is in the process of collecting story files on three other characters: Irawan (Arjuna’s son by the goddess Palupi), Samba (Kresna’s son by Jembawati), and Antaraja (Bima’s first son by the goddess Nagagini). He is intrigued with their life struggles, and awaits an opportunity with the right venue, sponsor, and audience to develop their tales into all-night biographical sketches. When asked

about what other characters hold potential for birth to death explorations, he listed quite a number, including (personal communication, July 2015):

- Rama
- Sinta
- Niwatakawaca
- Puntadéwa
- Nakula-Sadéwa
- Parikesit

but added:

> When characters have deeply personal and tragic problems in their lives, this leads to interesting interpretation difficulties and a dramatic content that is more satisfying. With stories and episodes that are more empty, the dhalang needs to go to a lot more work to find ways to fill the content. All lakon are just material to be *garap*ed. All lakon are fine and all have potential, but, in the case of *banjaran*, the entirety will be more dramatically charged and more interesting if the main character's life is fraught with unusually complex conflicts.

I show the skeletal construction of a handful of Purbo Asmoro's biographical sketches below. In these tables, in which biographical sketches are taken apart episode by episode, there is a quick reference to where each snippet came from, all confirmed by Purbo Asmoro by personal communication.

Banjaran Kunthi

This was the first birth-to-death sketch ever done by Purbo Asmoro, and is examined in detail in Sugeng Nugroho's book on *banjaran* (2012). Purbo Asmoro received accolades from former President Soeharto's wife for his performance of this biography on the Javanese New Year's Eve in 1995 at the House of Representatives. From the far-right column (see Figure 8-5) it can be seen how Purbo Asmoro created this sketch out of three Mahabharata story versions, four *pedhalangan* story versions, and one modern, condensed script, and he inserted bits of text and screen choreography directly traceable to two of his influences: Sukardi and Tristuti (for the Javanese lakon titles, see Appendix 3).

Figure 8-5: Skeletal outline of Purbo Asmoro's *The Life Story of Kunthi*.

1a.	King Kunthiboja and Queen Bandondari of Mandura yearn for a child.	Prologue	*The Birth of Kunthi-A*	a philosophical interchange written by Purbo Asmoro, based on a *pedhalangan* storyline
1b.	The twins Kunthi and Basudéwa are born to King Kunthiboja and Queen Bandondari.	Pathet Nem	*The Birth of Kunthi-B*	this scene was written by Tristuti (based on a *pedhalangan* storyline), commissioned by Purbo Asmoro in 1993
Limbukan				
2.	Kunthi marries Pandhu of Astina in a competition with many complications, including Kunthi giving birth to Karna (her illegitimate child by the God of the Sun) right before the competition.	Pathet Nem	*Kunthi's Choice*	based on Sukardi's *padat* script *Kunthi Pilih*, 1986, which presents a new and unique version
Gara-gara				
3.	Kunthi and the five Pandhawa are nearly killed in the villa fire set by Sangkuni and his allies.	Pathet Sanga	*The Burning of the Villa*	Mahabharata
4.	Kunthi meets up with Karna to try to convince him to ally with the Pandhawa in the Baratayuda.	Pathet Sanga	*Kresna as Emissary*	Mahabharata
5.	Kunthi's heart is broken as she witnesses Karna die at the hands of his brother, Arjuna, in the Baratayuda.	Pathet Sanga	*Karna's Final Challenge*	Mahabharata
6.	The Pandhawa, led by Kunthi, make amends after the Baratayuda, by conducting acts of charity among the villagers.	Pathet Manyura	*The Pandhawa Wander in Penance*	*pedhalangan*
7.	Kunthi, assured that Astina is safe in the hands of her great-grandchild Parikesit, allows her soul to willfully depart (*muksa*).	Pathet Manyura	*Kunthi's Release from This World*	Purbo Asmoro's own creation, based on *The Pandhawa's Release from This World, pedhalangan*

Banjaran Anoman

Purbo Asmoro created this work for Gadjah Mada University's Founder's Day in 2006, and it remains his most frequently performed full biographical sketch. He has performed it on ten other occasions, including the founder's days of Solo, Pacitan, and Nganjuk as well as the 15th anniversary of his own gamelan troupe, Mayangkara, two election-season events in 2014, and a routine mass wayang event in Jakarta. In his typical telling (see Figure 8-6) Purbo Asmoro includes five episodes from the life of Anoman, covering the early days of the *Ramayana*, before Rama and Sinta, and then through the story of the Javanese King Jayabaya.

Figure 8-6: Skeletal outline of Purbo Asmoro's *The Life Story of Anoman*.

1.	Anoman is born to Anjani while she is immersed in water meditating.	Prologue	*Sugriwa-Subali* and *The Birth of Anoman*	from the *pedhalangan* lakon *Descendants of the God of the Wind*
2.	Anoman searches the universe for his father, reaching as far as the moon and sun.	Pathet Nem	*Opera Anoman*, a theater production choreographed by Riantiarno, with music by Addie and Djaduk Ferianto	a sequence adapted for wayang by Purbo Asmoro
Limbukan				
3.	Anoman is sent as an emissary to Alengka to find Sinta, and encounters many obstacles.	Pathet Nem	*Anoman As Emissary*	*pedhalangan*
Gara-gara				
4.	During the Pandhawa-Kurawa era, Anoman mistakenly intercepts the *wijayandanu* arrow, is reprimanded by Késawasidi and then sent back to his hermitage.	Pathet Sanga	*Rama's Crown*	*lakon carangan* by Wignyosoetarno
5.	Anoman survives the post-Pandhawa/Kurawa era and well into the era of Javanese kings, and finally receives a peaceful place in the afterlife.	Pathet Manyura	*Mayangkara*	a sequence created by Purbo Asmoro from *Serat Mayangkara pedhalangan*

Banjaran Dasamuka

This work (see Figure 8-7), comparable to *The Life Story of Anoman* in its popularity, was created by Purbo Asmoro for the 1,000-day commemoration of the death of a famous dhalang, Sujali of Klaten. Since 2004, he has performed it seven times, including founder's days (UNS-Sebelas Maret, City of Bojonegoro), an Independence Day celebration in Nganjuk, a street fair in Solo, a routine mass wayang event at the Wayang Museum courtyard in Jakarta, and two private birthday celebrations by major wayang fans and sponsors.

Figure 8-7: Skeletal outline of Purbo Asmoro's *The Life Story of Dasamuka*.

1.	Dasamuka's birth, a result of the inauspicious and mistaken union of Priest Wisrawa and Princess Sukèsi.	Prologue	*Sukèsi's Hand in Marriage Contested*	*pedhalangan* and ASKI's *padat* script by Sumanto
2.	Dasamuka searches out the *panca sonya* power from Subali.	Pathet Nem	described in Padmosoekotjo	adapted for wayang by Purbo Asmoro
3a.	Dasamuka plans to attack the Lokapala Kingdom.	Pathet Nem	*The Takeover of Lokapala*	*pedhalangan*
Limbukan				
3b.	Dasamuka defeats the Lokapala Kingdom.	Pathet Nem	*The Takeover of Lokapala*	*pedhalangan*
4.	Dasamuka discovers and declares his eternal love for Widawati.	Pathet Nem/Sanga	developed by Purbo Asmoro	original sequence created by Purbo Asmoro
Gara-gara				
5.	Dasamuka defeats the Ayodya Kingdom (King Rawatwaja and Queen Sukasalya).	Pathet Sanga	*The Takeover of Ayodya*	*pedhalangan*
6.	The story of Rama's exile from Ayodya and Sinta's kidnapping.	Pathet Sanga	*Sinta is Kidnapped*	from ASKI's *padat* script by Bambang Suwarno
7.	Dasamuka's final defeat at the hands of Anoman, Rama, Lesmana.	Pathet Manyura	*The Fall of Alengka*	Ramayana

Banjaran Karna

Purbo Asmoro's third most frequently performed full biographical sketch is *The Life Story of Karna* (see Figure 8-8), which he first performed for a Javanese New Year's celebration in Manjungan, Klaten in early 2004. Since then he has performed the all-night version on five other occasions: the founder's days of Gadjah Mada University, the City of Pacitan, UNS-Sebelas Maret, the northern coast city of Pati, as well a routine radio broadcast in Klaten. He has performed condensed versions for the Jakarta artistic community at Salihara Arts Complex in Jakarta and for a recording by a group of Japanese students in Solo.

Figure 8-8: Skeletal outline of Purbo Asmoro's *The Life Story of Karna*.

1a.	The situation in Mandura leading up to Kunthi's marriage competition.	Prologue	*Kunthi's Choice*	*pedhalangan*
1b.	The birth of illegitimate Karna (fathered by the God of the Sun) to Kunthi, who is then forced to abandon her new baby.	Pathet Nem	*The Birth of Karna-A*	Mahabharata
1c.	Karna is adopted by Adirata, carriage driver for Astina, and his wife Nada.	Pathet Nem	*The Birth of Karna-B*	*pedhalangan*
	Limbukan			
2.	Karna hones his skills under the eccentric forest ascetic Ramabargawa.	Pathet Nem	described in Padmosoekotjo	sequence created by Purbo Asmoro
3.	Durna evaluates his Pandhawa-Kurawa students in Sokalima, and Karna, a mysterious new-comer, shows them up.	Pathet Nem	*The Students of Sokalima Compete*	Mahabharata
	Gara-gara			
4.	Karna fights to be allowed to marry his love, Princess Surthikanthi, despite his position in life and despite Duryudana's proposal to her.	Pathet Sanga	*The Marriage of Surthikanthi*	*pedhalangan*
5.	Karna gives up all his heirlooms so that he will not be a threat to the Pandhawa in the Baratayuda.	Pathet Manyura	*Karna Rejects his Heirlooms*	*pedhalangan*
6.	Karna is tragically killed by his own half-brother, Arjuna, in the Baratayuda, in a battle that devastates Kunthi.	Pathet Manyura	*Karna's Final Challenge*	Mahabharata

Banjaran Arjuna

While not frequently performed, this lakon is the longest biographical sketch Purbo Asmoro has ever completed. When performing in a typical venue (such as UGM, the Wayang Museum in Jakarta) Purbo uses only the episodes with asterisks (see Figure 8-9). On the 11th of November, 2011, however, Purbo Asmoro put on an 11-hour wayang at his home, combining 11 episodes from Arjuna's life, outlined below. While biographical sketches usually access standard, popular episodes, this treatment was unusual as he included four obscure *lakon carangan* in the middle. Nartosabdo's 16-cassette version of *The Life Story of Arjuna*, referenced earlier, was a compilation of two all-night classical performances. Purbo Asmoro's construction was the first-ever compilation of two full *garapan* performances, live.[37]

Figure 8-9: Skeletal outline of Purbo Asmoro's *The Life Story of Arjuna*.

1.*	The birth of Arjuna, whose soul disappeared to the heavens when still in the womb, asking to be told the meaning of his future life on Earth.	Prologue	*Arjuna is Hidden Away*	*pedhalangan*
2.*	Arjuna proves his prowess in archery, and is challenged by the young upstart from out of nowhere, Karna.	Pathet Nem	*The Students of Sokalima Compete*	Mahabharata
	Limbukan I			
3.*	Arjuna marries Sembadra in an elaborate ceremony of offerings, brought together through a variety of complex intrigues.	Pathet Sanga	*Parta's Marriage*	*pedhalangan*
	Gara-gara I			
4.	Janaka (Arjuna), in love, searches for his soul mate.	Pathet Sanga	*Janaka and the Pudhak Flower*	*pedhalangan*
5.	Arjuna disappears just as his son, Abimanyu, is to be married to Siti Sendari.	Pathet Manyura	*Arjuna Jelur (Semar Kuning)*	from the magazine *Panyebar Semangat*
6.	The mysterious, talented Prince Palgunadi appears from overseas to apprentice with Durna, and Arjuna struggles with his sense of rivalry.	Pathet Manyura	*Palgunadi*	Mahabharata

[37] Normally, two all-night *garapan* performances would take about 14 hours. This compilation took 11 hours because the four entertainment interludes were all extremely short.

7.	Arjuna meditates and various intrigues occur in his absence, including an encounter with Banowati.	Pathet Nem	*Janaka and The Pool*	*pedhalangan* and from *Panyebar Semangat*
Limbukan II				
8.	Arjuna receives the boon from the gods known as the Legacy of Rama—a philosophy of leadership to hand down to his descendants.	Pathet Nem	*Rama's Crown*	*lakon carangan*
Gara-gara II				
9.	Arjuna disappears again, this time meditating in the form of an ascetic named Cèkèl Indralaya.	Pathet Sanga	*The Priest Cèkèl Indralaya*	*pedhalangan* and from *Panyebar Semangat*
10.*	Arjuna goes into a deep meditation and is tested in a number of ways by the gods, eventually receiving a number of talisman, honors, and gifts for his efforts.	Pathet Sanga	*Arjuna's Meditation*	*pedhalangan*
11.*	Arjuna faces the moral dilemma of his life when asked to take on his half-brother Karna in the Baratayuda War.	Pathet Manyura	*Karna's Final Challenge*	Mahabharata
12.*	Arjuna's soul is willfully released to the heavens, along with his other brothers, leaving the future of Astina to his grandson, Parikesit. (Not included in the 11-11-11 performance.)	Pathet Manyura	*The Pandhawa Are Released from this World*	*pedhalangan*

Charts Comparing *Banjaran* Treatment by Three Dhalang

I conclude this discussion of birth-to-death biographical sketches with three dramatic content charts (see Figures 8-10 to 8-12), reflecting dramatic layouts for *Banjaran Karna*. The first one charts Nartosabdo's studio recording from 1978, the second one charts Timbul Hadi Prayitno's 1989 live performance before a mass audience in Jakarta, and the final one charts Purbo Asmoro's 2011 live performance at UNS in Solo. One additional element that was not present in the similar charts from Chapter 7, is the use of shading to denote time spent specifically focused on Karna. So, plot time soundly focused on Karna is shaded solid green (as in the charts in Chapter 7), but plot time only marginally focused on Karna, such as the extensive time Nartosabdo spends on Kunthi's wedding, is given a striped green filler. Plot time not directly related to Karna, such as the detailed interchange between Kresna and Arjuna as to whether to enter the Baratayuda War or not, is shaded gray.[38]

By examining the charts, readers can see the prominence of *garapan* (blue) in Purbo Asmoro's treatment, Nartosabdo's propensity for traditional story-telling (green), and how much Timbul Hadi Prayitno strays from plot content related to the main character (gray). Overall in total, the three artists spend the following percentages of time intensely focused on Karna. The first percentage is calculated from the entire performance, including interludes, the second percentage excludes the interludes:

Nartosabdo:	171 minutes focused on Karna
	38% of the total performance (no interludes, studio recording)
Timbul Hadi Prayitno:	154 minutes focused on Karna
	27% of the total performance
	30% of the storytelling (excludes time on interludes)
Purbo Asmoro:	193 minutes focused on Karna
	49% of the total performance
	79% of the storytelling (excludes time on interludes)[39]

[38] This famous exchange, known as *sanditama* in Javanese wayang and part of the Bhagavad Gita in India, of course has some connection with Karna since Arjuna's moral conflict is whether to battle his half-brother. But Karna is not in the scene, nor are his feelings or perspective included in any way.

[39] What is even more impressive about the fact that 49% of the storytelling in this performance was entirely focused on Karna, is that after this particular event at UNS, Purbo Asmoro was highly criticized by the sponsoring committee for spending too much time interviewing and engaging with one of the *pesindhèn* guest stars, Eka, from Kebumen, resulting in the interludes being too long. One of the committee members even went so far as to say that the performance had been "Banjaran Eka instead of Banjaran Karna" (personal communication with Purbo Asmoro a few days after the performance). Yet, when analyzed, not only a greater

Of course when Nartosabdo first created the full biographical sketch, almost 40 years ago now, and when Timbul Hadi Prayitno engaged with the form as well, some 26 years ago, neither was influenced directly by the phenomenon and basic concepts of ASKI's *pakeliran padat* movement. They told the stories as they knew how, based on traditional practice. Purbo Asmoro's full biographical sketches, on the other hand, grew out of not only the ASKI padat concepts, but were also at that point extensions of his well-developed all-night *garapan* style.

percentage but also more actual total minutes (even though his was a shorter performance than the Nartosabdo or Timbul performances) was spent on Karna than in the other two interpretations.

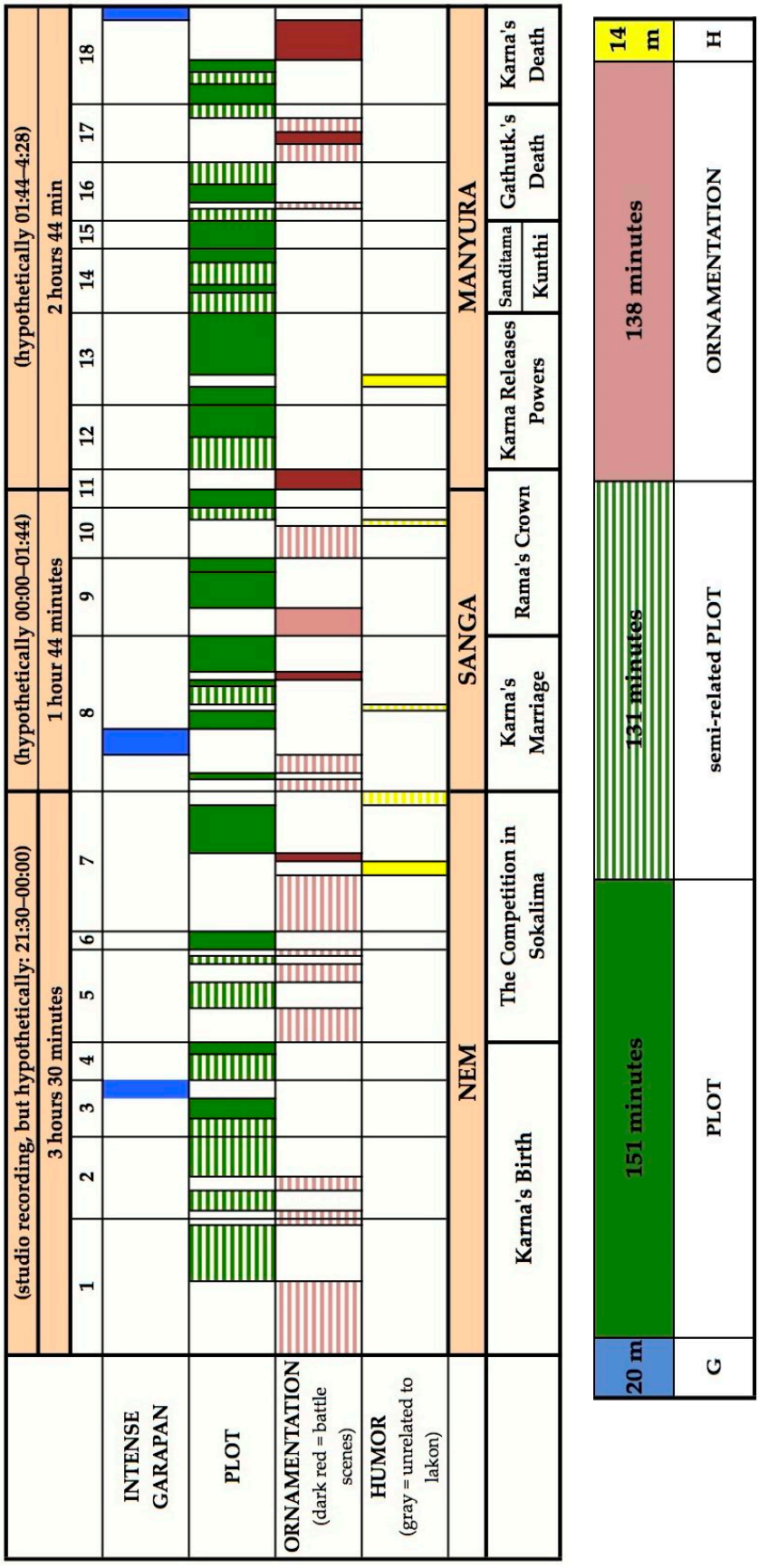


Figure 8-10: **Nartosabdo:** ***Banjaran Karna***
1978, studio recording

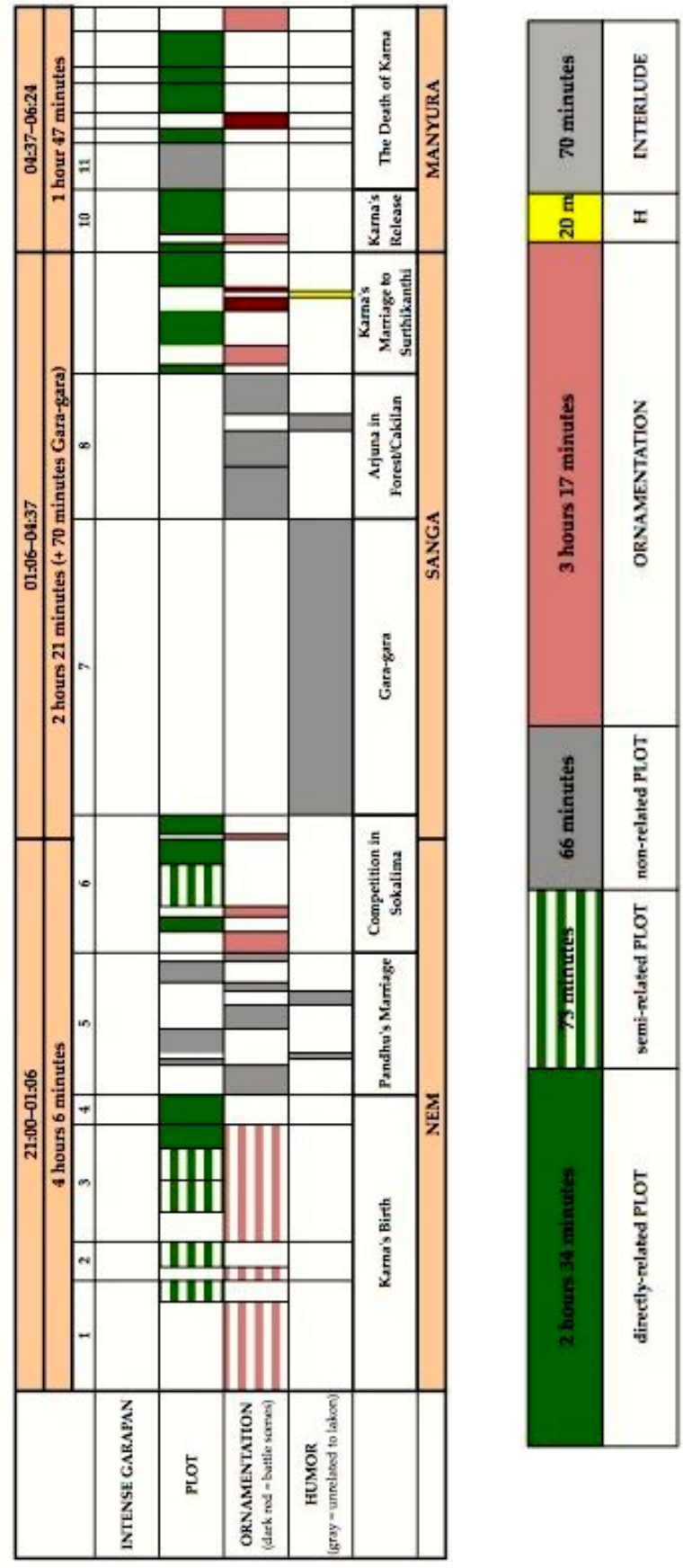


Figure 8-11: Timbul Hadi Prayitno: *Banjaran Karna*
1989, live performance in Jakarta

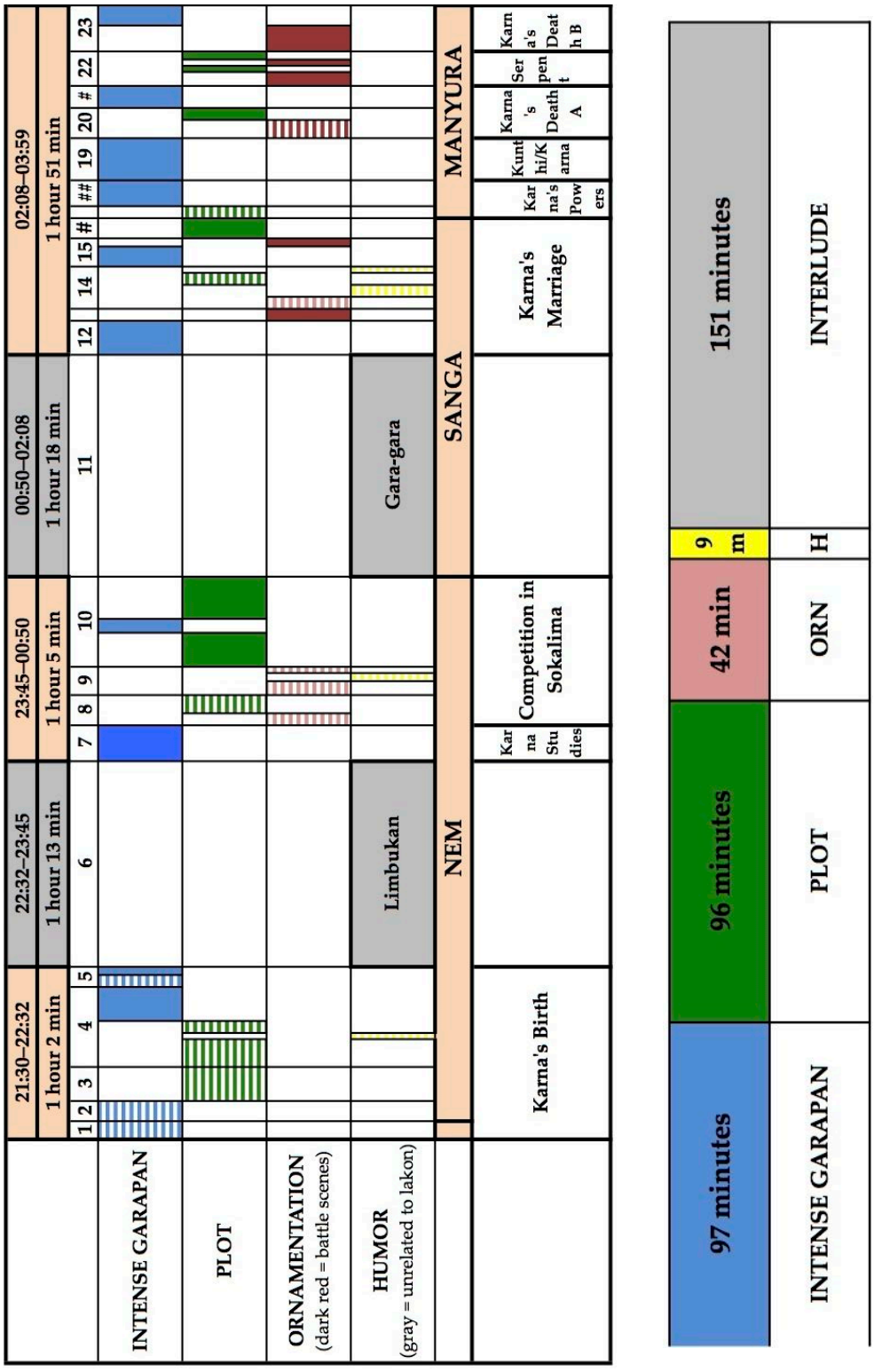


Figure 8-12: Purbo Asmoro: Banjaran Karna
2011, live performance in Solo

Banjaran Jugag: Partial Character Portraits

After experimenting with multi-episode lakon and full biographical sketches from the 1990s through the mid-2000s, Purbo Asmoro began exploring the partial character portrait in about 2006. In an interview at his home in May 2014, he described this shift in his thinking:

> I'm still interested in the birth to death biographical sketch, but the practicalities of the stage often rule out such a construction. On a number of occasions, I have planned to do a full sketch—*The Life Story of Gathutkaca*, for example, is one that fell through a number of times—and simply did not get to the death scene in the time frame I had. When I fail to go through with a plan, my overall performance is not as tight and successful as it could be and is a disappointment to me. Had I known I would be forced to stop at a given place in Gathutkaca's life, I would have planned the whole thing differently. There is often not enough time, in reality. The interludes need to fulfill the needs of the sponsor and sometimes last longer than one plans. The audience reacts differently, or I decide to extend one section or another in reaction to audience taste or the situation. At this point, I've decided that unless I am sure the venue and audience will allow for it, it is safer to trim down the sketch. Just do part of the character's life. Then instead of feeling rushed, I sometimes find myself able to expand into the time. At this point in my career, I feel that a single lakon is often not enough content for me to feel satisfied, but a full biographical sketch has an intensity that is not always possible. And frankly, a full biographical sketch, while artistically satisfying, really taxes the brain, and is not for the everyday situation. Somewhere in between is now where I feel most comfortable.

Purbo Asmoro's experiments with partial character sketches started when he was searching for something special to do for the wedding party of a member of his troupe. His longtime singer, Sukèsi Rahayu, was being married in August 2006 in Campurdarat, Tulungagung, East Java. Purbo decided to perform the story of Gathutkaca's marriage to Pergiwa, but was looking for a way to alter his typical treatment of that lakon. He decided to start with the dramatic and conflict-rich story of Gathutkaca's birth and then segue into the story of Gathutkaca's marriage for the latter part of the performance. He was happy with the result of this construction, and in the months and years that followed was to perform it frequently. In June 2007, he presented a parallel construction in the outskirts of Solo, in which he combined the birth and marriage stories of Wisanggeni. This has also been frequently repeated in the years since. A few months later, he tried a partial Gathutkaca sketch again, but this time connecting Gathutkaca's birth to his

coronation in Pringgondani. These experiments were followed by sketches covering Baladéwa's youth, Srikandhi's young adulthood, Sumantri's apprenticeship through to his death, Karna's birth through his coronation as king of Awangga, and many segments from Bima's life. These partial sketches have become popular, and are often requested for weddings, circumcisions, political gatherings, and celebrations in honor of a specific person. By June 2015, Purbo Asmoro had approximately 20 constructions, including rarely crafted tales such as Semar's birth through his descent to Earth, and Aji Saka's exploration and populating of the island of Java up through his creation of the Javanese script. These partial sketches are far less complicated dramatically than full birth-to-death sketches. Purbo Asmoro can shape them using the same options for the multi-episode constructions described at the beginning of this chapter:

- prologue lakon + main lakon
- lakon #1 through *prang gagal* + lakon #2 from *magakan* to end
- lakon #1 through *Gara-gara* + epilogue lakon
- a slightly more complex combining of more than two episodes

Although perhaps dramatically less complicated to craft, these sketches share the emphasis on character development that full portraits require. For Purbo Asmoro, any juxtaposition of episodes that is character-based, requires deliberate conceptualization (*garap*) of the character in question. When combining two chronological episodes, a dhalang simply uses concepts of *garapan* to condense the presentation, giving himself room to tell a number of episodes in one night. But when combining even just two episodes from a character's life, Purbo Asmoro feels that the thread bringing the episodes together must be character development—a deliberate emphasis on the issues surrounding that character's struggles. At an interview in his home in August 2014, he described this:

> The essence of the plot is the same, for example, in *Gandamana's Competition*: Gandamana puts on the competition for Drupadi's hand in marriage and is killed by Bima, right? This is the essence. But at the very least, when performing this episode as part of a sketch of Drupadi, I need to address Drupadi's viewpoint. I need to address the matter of Drupadi herself. So that's why, before the final battle between Gandamana and Bima I insert the dialogue referring to: "Is a palace daughter only meant to be a prize in battle," and the like. Normally, Drupadi is not even in the scene and her opinion is not expressed. So these are the kinds of moments I need to look for in order to focus on Drupadi. And this takes time and thought. The same episode, performed as part of *Banjaran Gandamana* and *Banjaran Drupadi*, while having the same general outcome, has a completely different focus. In the case of Gandamana, the focus has to be crafted around Gandamana. If the lakon were *Banjaran Bima* and I were telling of his victory over Gandamana, I would emphasize Bima's motives and Bima's reaction. This is where the difficulty lies.

While Drupadi does not speak a word when Purbo Asmoro is telling the story of Gandamana or Bima and includes this competition episode, she is central to the scene in *Drupadi*, debuted by Purbo Asmoro in July 2014:

> **The Kingdom of Pancala**
>
> **[Drupadi appears.]**
>
> **NARRATION**:
>
> A flower's buds just opening. The fragrance of the flower's essence wafts pleasantly by, its exquisite perfume spreading, filling, and encompassing the entire kingdom of Pancala. The sky's brightness shines down through the floating clouds, protecting and supporting the Pancali flower's expanding. She is the great Retna Drupadi, also known as Princess Yatnyaseni, or The Lovely and Respected Princess Kresna. As the God of the Sun was lightening up the world on the eastern horizon, her Highness the Princess was engrossed in the world of daydreams; ponderings that obsessed her to the very center of her heart.
>
> **[Drupadi sees a vision of the 1,000 foreign kings who have asked for her hand in marriage.**]
>
> **NARRATION**:
>
> The word has spread through the land about the battle competition that has begun in the enclosed ring. The flags are flying and the battle cries sounding; the shouts of aggression and the claps in support of each king who goes forth, yet none a match for the strength of the Great Gandamana, who never fails to come out victorious. Drupadi's breath quickens as she witnesses it all and she is ever disturbed to the core.
>
> **[Minister Gandamana appears.]**
>
> **GANDAMANA**: Drupadi, the competition has started and dozens of kings have stepped up to the ring, set up to face off in battle. So why is it that I see not a shred of pride or joy in your face while witnessing this? What are you thinking, Drupadi?
>
> **DRUPADI**: Uncle Gandamana's words are correct. I feel like a piece of something discarded in the ocean. A prisoner to the direction the waves may take it. A prize and nothing more.
>
> **GANDAMANA**: But why, my dear, as this competition is by order of your own father, His Highness King Drupada?

> **DRUPADI**: That is exactly why it disturbs me so, my Uncle. Drupadi's status is as the daughter of the king himself. Yet when it comes to whom she will marry, will it be decided by a battle competition?
>
> **GANDAMANA**: Drupadi, your life is controlled by the wheels of fate and the laws of the kingdom of Pancala. Given that you are the daughter of the king, extremely beautiful, and desired by so many foreign kings, it is entirely appropriate that your mate be determined by a competition.
>
> **DRUPADI**: In that case, my life is defined by arrogance. My beauty defines my feminine authority, and nothing more. Oh my Uncle, it will look like Drupadi thinks of herself as the most superb of all women, the single most beautiful of all. Uncle, this garden is full of flowers of many colors and they appear so wonderful to us precisely because no one flower considers itself the best. It is the collection of buds and flowers that overwhelms the senses, Uncle.
>
> **GANDAMANA**: No one flower feels itself to be exquisite but there are eyes who view one to be special, and noses who take in a single flower's fragrance as different.
>
> **DRUPADI**: And what is more, what value does my life have, if it causes the end of yours, Uncle Gandamana? You are powerful and fierce beyond measure, and my life should not be the cause of the crushing of your chest or the gushing of your blood.
>
> **GANDAMANA**: Drupadi, we are only attempting to find your life partner for you.
>
> **DRUPADI**: In my opinion, your life partner cannot be determined by just any means. If I am to be won by someone there is no guarantee that I will ever find true love.

While character development is not a paramount concern in traditional performances, it is central to Purbo Asmoro's *lakon banjaran*.

Purbo Asmoro started his multi-episode exploration by simply connecting chronologically adjacent episodes, then moved on to the massively complex life to death biographical sketches using all-night *garapan*. Since 2006, he has found in the partial character sketch a middle ground. Character development is still the thread that pulls the episodes together and still the artistic challenge, through the medium of all-night *garapan*. The dramatic structure is less complicated than a full sketch, and the overall performance has a scope and complexity more palatable to the typical sponsor, audience, and venue.

Banjaran Téma: Tracing a Theme

The most recent multi-episode construction in Purbo Asmoro's repertory is that of the *banjaran téma*, or the exploration of a particular theme, philosophy, piece of literature, or boon from the gods, that crosses over a number of lakon. In this

category, so far, Purbo Asmoro has two constructions—*Tripama Kawedhar* and *Hasthabrata Kawedhar*[40]—but he is planning a number of others.

Tripama is a poem in *dhandhanggula* form written by the Regent Prince Mangkunegara IV in 1878. It explores three tragic heros in wayang lore: Sumantri, Kumbakarna, and Karna, who each come from different epics (*Arjunasasrabau*, *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata*). Each is equally misunderstood and undervalued in his time, and each ends up making immense sacrifices for his nation. Around 2012 there was a burst of interest in the poem in the *pedhalangan* community, although it traditionally has only been a source for songs accompanied by the gamelan known as *palaran*. It is often difficult to trace the origins of such a sudden trend. The first I heard of it was when Purbo Asmoro informed me in April 2012 that he was interested in creating a wayang story out of the *Tripama*, combining four episodes: *Sumantri's Apprenticeship*, *The Death of Sumantri*, *The Death of Kumbakarna*, and *The Death of Karna*. He would use Semar and Togog to open, close, and tie together each section with their reflective dialogue. Before he had a chance to debut his new work, there was a three-dhalang performance at the national radio station in Solo (RRI Solo) in September 2012 that premiered a version of *Tripama* with "Crazy" Djoko Hadiwidjoyo, the elderly female dhalang Rumiyati and the late Mujoko Joko Raharjo's son, Jungkung Darmoyo. Soon after, Manteb Soedharsono also did a debut of the lakon at the national radio station in Jakarta. Purbo Asmoro finally debuted his own version in 2014, and has performed it on five more occasions since.

The *Hasthabrata* philosophy of leadership (most well-known as the cornerstone of *Rama's Crown*) has a history that can be traced through various episodes. Purbo Asmoro's creation *Hasthabrata Kawedhar* explores the development of the philosophy through time, crossing many different episodes from Rama obtaining the knowledge, to his passing it on to Wibisana after the fall of Alengka, to Kresna obtaining it and passing it on to Arjuna through the disguise of Priest Késawasidi, and then Arjuna's grandson Parikesit's use of the knowledge.

[40]*Kawedhar* means to reveal, disclose, or explain. There is a precedent of this word used in titles: *Mahabharata Kawedhar*, by Soetarto (1938). This is an influential source every modern-day dhalang in Solo seems to own, in which Soetarto "reveals" the original Indian version of the Mahabharata epic. Hence these lakon titles came about: *Tripama Revealed* and *Hasthabrata Revealed*, i.e., explored, explained, and traced as to origin.

There are many other possible themes, philosophies, pieces of literature, or heirlooms to be traced through episodes. These range from the morbid, such as *gojalisuta* (a study of all episodes in which fathers kill their sons), to the ethereal, such as following the *kalimasada* heirloom, which lends the Pandhawa so much grace and power over the eras. There are lakon that address the environment, the struggles of women, or the nature of justice, all being considered for multi-episode constructions by Purbo Asmoro.

Whatever the nature of the construction, however, the challenge for the dhalang, according to Purbo Asmoro, is creating and then retaining the focus. This was the challenge always at the center of his all-night *garapan* performances in single episodes: crafting narrative passages, accompaniment choices, creative movement sequences, deliberate interpretative details in the story and the layout of scene sequences so as to allow a dramatic hierarchy and expressive poignancy to emerge around the points of focus. But now, with multi-episode constructions, the challenge is raised up a notch. It includes the need to "align, snip, snatch, sew, patch, connect, discard, and then add in your own creativity," in order to weave episode segments together seamlessly. In Purbo Asmoro's performances, multi-episodes do not present themselves simply as individual lakon strung together, each performed in a condensed one to two hour format. Nor do we experience an inventory of episodes, with narration only to fill in the plot. Rather Purbo Asmoro constructs a new entity: a quilt as it were, in which each piece is visible and can be appreciated on its own but the entire work also holds together as a whole, has a beauty in its own right, and a unifying theme. Not every dhalang is either up to or interested in this challenge. Purbo Asmoro has made these constructions much of his life's work up to this point, all under the umbrella of applying his concepts of all-night *garapan*. In the next and final chapter, we examine how a number of other dhalang have approached the idea of *garapan* in their performances.

NINE

IN THE HANDS OF OTHER PRACTITIONERS

Purbo Asmoro's innovative all-night *garapan* style, debuted over twenty-five years ago with *Kunthi's Choice* in 1989, has had a profound influence on dhalang of his generation and younger in the greater Solo area. Whether performers try to imitate Purbo Asmoro somewhat faithfully, adopt parts of his style in combination with other influences, further develop his concepts toward a new result, or actively reject his methods, his presence as a creative entity in the Solonese *pedhalangan* world looms large. His style and approach have become widespread not only due to his popularity and the prevalence of his live performances, recordings, broadcasts, and tours, but also because of his influence as an instructor for over twenty-five years at ISI Surakarta. The question for this chapter is, to what extent is his system of all-night *garapan* taken on by other practitioners, and what are the alternatives in today's Solonese wayang performance scene?

In the Context of Other High-Profile Dhalang

Purbo Asmoro competes for domestic engagements, international tours, recording opportunities, and a lasting mark on the field of *pedhalangan*, with a small group of similarly high-profile Solo-style performers. This community is his artistic world, and is certainly the primary model for aspiring, younger dhalang. In order to discuss the effect of Purbo Asmoro's all-night *garapan* style among this community of high-profile performers over the past decade, I propose here a list of the ten most popular, respected, and highest-paid Solonese dhalang performing at the most attended and prestigious venues across Central and East Java and Jakarta, 2005–2015. I believe that this list would be generally uncontroversial in the wayang community (from oldest to youngest, year of birth in parentheses):[1]

1. Anom Soeroto (1948)
2. Manteb Soedharsono (1948)
3. Purbo Asmoro (1961)
4. Warseno "Slenk" (1965)
5. Enthus Susmono (1966)
6. Anom Dwijokangko (1976)
7. Tantut Sutanto (1978)
8. Sigid Ariyanto (1979)
9. Cahyo Kuntadi (1981)
10. Bayu Aji Pamungkas (1984)

Only one of these dhalang, Anom Soeroto, typically still opens performances with a traditional court audience scene. The traditional *Kedhatonan* (In the Queen's Quarters) scene is hardly ever used anymore by any of these performers. Virtually non-existent in current practice is the traditional, palace-style, *Gapuran* (Gateway Before the Queen's Quarters) scene. While *Budhalan*, *Prang Gagal*, and *Cakilan* scenes are common, extended narrations of any kind are rare, as are full court audience scenes. The *Limbukan* and *Gara-gara*

[1] Seno Nugroho, a highly popular and innovative dhalang from Yogyakarta, might vie for Tantut Sutanto's spot on the list but this study is limited to Solonese artists. From what I gather by listening to his recordings and speaking to colleagues, though, he is a proponent of all-night *garapan* style and actively studies works by Purbo Asmoro, combining that material with elements of Yogyanese performance style.

interludes, in all cases above, take up a combined two hours or more of the performance, and are inspired by the *hura-hura* movement of the 1990s. Harder to generalize in these performers' styles is the gamelan accompaniment. In some cases it might be primarily classical in repertory, as is the case with Anom Soeroto. In some cases, although traditional, the gamelan accompaniment might be striped down to mostly repetitions of *ayak-srepeg-sampak* with one or two *ladrang* or *ketawang* for a court audience or hermitage scenes, and a few *lancaran,* as in many of Manteb Soedharsono's performances. In some cases, the gamelan accompaniment might be highly *garap*ed for meaning, consciously mixing the traditional and the new, as is the case in Purbo Asmoro's performances and many of Cahyo Kuntadi's. In other cases, the accompaniment might be newly composed but more to create an effect, rather than forge deep dramatic connections. In still other cases the musical accompaniment will be made up of almost all new compositions and would be highly conceptualized toward meaning, as in many of Sigid Ariyanto's performances.

What we are looking for, however, when trying to identify practitioners influenced by Purbo Asmoro's all-night *garapan* style, is not simply the existence or absence of certain scenes or the insertion or rejection of new elements. Rather, we are looking for application of a system; an integrated approach. We are trying to identify performers who consistently apply *pakeliran padat* techniques, consciously reconceptualizing their performances across the six areas that have guided the analyses in Chapters 3–8 of this dissertation:

- plot details (*garap lakon*)
- character development (*garap tokoh*)
- scene structure (*garap adegan*)
- narration and dialogue (*garap catur*)
- movement techniques (*garap sabet*)
- musical accompaniment (*garap iringan*)

Practitioners of Purbo Asmoro's all-night *garapan* style would also strive to create dramatic hierarchy throughout the seven-hour performance by applying these *padat* techniques for specific reasons: to support the energy of

the opening prologue, to underscore crucial subsequent moments in the plot or unraveling of the lakon's message, to enrich poignant encounters between characters, and to delineate important points of structural division in the performance. The remaining parts of the lakon would, quite purposefully, have a more relaxed, traditional feel, with a number of stock visual and comedic attractions. If a dhalang shares Purbo Asmoro's intent, he creates musical accompaniment that, rather than being like individual film scores for each lakon, eventually becomes a new system his musicians and singers can work within, requiring less and less rehearsal over time.

To take on this entire system and apply it consistently, lakon after lakon, performance after performance, is a tall order. It takes a great deal of experience with repertory, uniform talent across every performance element, time, the right musical personnel, leadership, desire to make a mark on the world of *pedhalangan*, unwavering self-confidence, supportive sponsors, and charisma. Hence, no one dhalang is following precisely in the footsteps of Purbo Asmoro, but there are a few who are presenting similar approaches.

The next section will briefly explore four dhalang who are known in the community as "all-night *garapan*" practitioners: Purbo Asmoro's elder, Manteb Soedharsono, who came to espouse this style via a slightly different route; one contemporary of Purbo Asmoro's, Enthus Susmono; and two former students, Sigid Ariyanto and Cahyo Kuntadi. This is followed by brief sketches of dhalang who take on some elements of *garapan* but not its entirety as a system, those who reject *garapan* elements entirely, and also the viewpoints of a few elder dhalang. The chapter ends with a look at how *garapan* is being taught at ISI Surakarta.

Manteb Soedharsono

born 31 August 1948 in Jatimalang, Mojolaban, Sukoharjo, Central Java
father: renowned dhalang, the late Ki Brahim Hardjowiyono; mother: the late *gendèr* player, Ibu Darti
currently resides in Karangpandan, Karanganyar, Central Java



Figure 9-1: Manteb Soedharsono (photo courtesy of JIBI Photo and Agoes Rianto/*Solopos*).

The legendary Manteb Soedharsono is, without a doubt, a record-breaker in the wayang world (see Figure 9-1). He was the first dhalang from outside of the ASKI world to study *padat* performance techniques directly under Gendhon Humardani and his apprentices, and the only non-academic dhalang to ever win a province-wide competition in *padat* performance style. He, along with Nartosabdo and Anom Soeroto, were the first to embody the now relatively common pan-Java superstar-dhalang phenomenon, as opposed to the more traditional local dhalang model. For years his fame resulted in 20 or more performances in a month, combined with grueling travel times in between engagements across Java and even to outer islands:

> In 1992, I performed every single night for a six-month period, with only one night off every 35 days, and that was Tuesday-Legi [his Javanese birthday]. What is more, the distances between the performances were quite far, for example from Jember to Cilacap, and between cities with no airports [650 kilometers, and about 18 hours by car] (Soedharsono 2015, 7).

As an answer to the challenges of such a schedule, Manteb became the first dhalang to take on a team of script writers, gamelan music arrangers, and interpretation (*sanggit*) consultants, many of whom encouraged him to use elements of the *garapan* style in his performances. He holds the record for the shortest wayang performance ever: *The Death of Rahwana* (3 minutes, 2 seconds) in Paris, France, April 2004, when he accepted the UNESCO award on behalf of Indonesia. He also holds the record for the longest wayang performance ever: *The Baratayuda War* (24 hours, 28 minutes) in the courtyard of the Indonesian national radio station in Semarang in September 2004. Both of these records required a certain amount of *garapan* treatment, as such extremes in duration cannot fit within the traditional structure and content of scenes. Manteb is the only dhalang to have received the honorary title of "The Maestro," by former President Soesilo Bambang Yudhoyono in 2009. He received the prestigious Nikkei Asia Prize for his work in the arts in May 2010, and in July 2015 was officially denoted as an *empu* (master, elder practitioner and teacher) by the Pedalangan Department of ISI Solo, all awards that carried with them specific praise for his innovation.

Manteb Soedharsono is the only dhalang older than Purbo Asmoro, and one of the very few dhalang without a university degree of any age, who deliberately and routinely incorporates elements of *garapan* technique in his all-night performances, and defines himself as an all-night *garapan* practitioner:

> Dhalang must be able to adapt their performances to the situation, context, times, and developments in their art. For example, the way I shape my performances has been accepted by today's society because I use concepts in Western drama as they were reinterpreted by Gendhon Humardani in order to create *pakeliran padat*. Not meaning to sound arrogant, I am the only non-academic dhalang who understands these concepts and is willing to construct all-night performances using the concepts of *pakeliran padat* (Soedharsono 2015, 35).

Manteb Soedharsono thus defines himself as an all-night *garapan* practitioner, aligning with the concepts as they are represented by the ASKI think-tank of the 1970s and 1980s led by Humardani. He is enthusiastic and passionate

about this association. In my observation,[2] however, Manteb Soedharsono chooses to focus most of his attention on reconceptualizing only two of the six areas: story details (*garap lakon*) and movement techniques (*garap sabet*). He focuses very little on the reconceptualization of character, narration, or musical accompaniment, and only in a limited way on changing up the scene structure.

Manteb is, without question, renowned for his work in *garap sabet*. Continuing in the vein of Bambang Suwarno in the area of expressive, "thematic" *sabet*, and yet far more virtuosic in his application, Manteb himself comments (Poerwono 2000, 54):

> The key to my entire approach to movement techniques lies in internalizing the personalities of each individual character, as well as the external situation arising from the contents of the story itself, which in turn affects the character and what he is experiencing internally in his soul. If we are dedicated to this approach and always keep it in our minds as we perform, it will allow us to discover new types of movements which will sometimes take the audience entirely by surprise.

Manteb can often be heard commenting in public forums as well as private settings, about searching for ways to create as much expression as possible through movement. He describes how dialogue sequences and even narration can often be discarded and represented instead by a single, economical movement or set of movements.

He can also often be heard talking about his *sanggit garap lakon*—his solutions for why something happened or someone decided what they did in a situation. Offstage, on stage during interludes, and in his writings, Manteb frequently concerns himself with the plotline and new interpretations. Before his performance of *The Death of Kumbakarna* in Jakarta, he took me aside and said: "I've rethought some of the details of this lakon. I have new ideas, new versions to show off tonight. Just wait. You'll see."

Manteb brightens up and his eyes sparkle whenever engaged in a conversation about solutions to storylines. This passion for *garap lakon* seems

[2] Based on 42 live performances I attended in full, 2004–2015, another 10–12 recordings that I viewed via live-streaming broadcasts or on youtube, and three occasions I did simultaneous translation of Manteb Soedharsono's performances for foreign audiences in Jakarta.

to me to be a part of his own natural character rather than his taking on "concepts of Western drama as they were reinterpreted by Gendhon Humardani." Sometimes I wonder if Manteb feels his interpretations will have more weight if cloaked under the term of all-night *garapan*, and at other times I wonder if he is "speaking the speak" of various ISI researchers who have supplied him with the vocabulary. I can easily imagine him sitting around debating story solutions animatedly 100 years ago, long before any discussions of *garap lakon* as one of six elements encased in a new style of performing.

In a limited sense, Manteb experiments with the recrafting of scene structure (*garap adegan*). He often opens with a brief prologue, but this is usually limited to one scene: either an aggressive, strong dance (*kiprah*) by the antagonist, or perhaps a meeting of Semar with a protagonist. One of his favorite techniques is the flashback. Related to his love of story-telling, he often delights his audiences by giving them an entire background tale acted out on the screen rather than in a narration. While Purbo Asmoro also chooses to act out tales on the screen rather than have them told in summary by a character or the dhalang, he prefers to place these stories as prologues or somehow reorganize his presentation so that the inserted story can occur in sequence and not as a flashback. Manteb Soedharsono waits for the background story to come up in the episode, and then with a dramatic flair utters the phrase, "And here is how it happened..." resulting in his fans erupting in spontaneous applause. These flashback sequences can last anywhere from 20 minutes to an hour or more, and can happen any time of the night. They have become a trademark of his style, and form the one example of *garap adegan* that he uses, but they are entirely predictable. They also, in my experience viewing, do not directly support major messages or in the lakon or develop characterization of main figures, but rather seem to be offered in the name of teaching the audience a rare storyline.

There is very little narration of any kind in Manteb Soedharsono's performances, and only basic and direct dialogue with few debate sequences or special techniques, hence no *garap catur* to speak of. Characters are presented in alignment with traditional interpretations and I have not

observed any unusual representations of personalities. Unless there is a special performance in which Blacius Subono is called in to arrange the accompaniment, Manteb uses primarily basic accompaniment: *ayak*, *srepeg*, *sampak*, their sorrowful (*tlutur*) versions, and one or two *ladrang* and *ketawang* here and there. He has both rejected heavy, large, classical pieces and the more ASKI-based unusual accompaniment choices discussed in Chapter 5. In fact, this was the one area of his performance style heavily criticized in a public forum in August 2015. One of the court princes, Gusti Benawa (not a musician himself, but a fellow dhalang), complained, "I hear the same pieces over and over at your performances. This is an area that needs rejuvenation in your work."

While Purbo Asmoro is passionate about the entire system of *garapan* and has integrated it fully into his all-night performances, Manteb Soedharsono seems to only be interested in certain parts of the system and only for limited moments. His natural talents and enthusiasm for *sabet* and for story-telling shine through his performances and lend themselves to "town talk" around him about *garapan*, but perhaps these features are not so much reconceptualization of anything but rather simply his strong points as a performer. Especially when he adds a short prologue or a flashback to his performance, he appears to be a practitioner of all-night *garapan*. But his version of *garapan* is not a system like that of Purbo Asmoro's. It is far less deeply embedded into the texture, hierarchical structure, focus, and feel of the performance from beginning to end.

Enthus Susmono

born 21 June 1966 in Dampyak, Kramat, Tegal
father: the late Ki Soemarjadihardja, both a *wayang kulit* and *wayang golèk cepak Tegal* performer
currently resides in Tegal, Central Java as the District Head (Bupati)



Figure 9-2: Enthus Susmono, performing at the World Wayang Day, ISI Surakartra, 8 Nov 2015 (photo by Kartiko Nugroho).

No one can immerse themselves in the world of *wayang kulit* for long without hearing the name Enthus Susmono: a controversial, colorful leader of radical innovation in the performance world (see Figure 9-2). Since about 2000, he has been the third highest-paid dhalang in the world after Anom Soeroto and Manteb Soedharsono,[3] with an active fan base in the thousands, similar to that

[3] This information comes from two anonymous organizers of prestigious wayang events in Jakarta and one in East Java, and is based on figures I have collected from them over a ten-year period. Most superstar dhalang, in particular Manteb Soedharsono, Enthus Susmono, and Purbo Asmoro (fourth highest-paid dhalang in the world), have a wide range of fees they will accept. Situations can range anywhere from donating their equipment and using their own funds to pay musicians while receiving nothing (rare), to accepting overhead costs, and musicians'/singers' fees but no dhalang fee, to agreeing to a reduced dhalang fee, to receiving official, full-fledged fees with little negotiation. The determination of "highest paid dhalang" order is based on the full-fledged fee asked by each performer, times an estimation of the frequency each dhalang receives this sort of fee per month.

of those twin legends.[4] Enthus Susmono and Purbo Asmoro are contemporaries (Enthus being four-and-a-half years younger than Purbo) and their paths to fame have been neck-and-neck since the mid-1990s when they were both high-profile performers in PANTAP events across Java. They are surely ranked 3 and 4 (in either order) among Central Javanese dhalang, 1995–2015, according to a combination of: grassroots popularity, salary, performance frequency at prestigious events, media coverage, attention garnered from researchers both domestically and overseas, fervor with which their recordings are sought after by both simple and knowledgeable fans, number of young dhalang fashioning themselves after their careers, and international fame. However, that is where easy comparisons end. Their current styles, their views on innovation, their relationship to the art of wayang, and the make-up and tastes of their fan base are all practically without overlap.[5]

Theorists Supanggah, Sugeng Nugroho, and Murtiyoso have all made the distinction in their writings between innovation in wayang within a traditional framework and innovation in wayang outside of a traditional framework. Specifically when looking at how dhalang treat the lakon, and not the entertainment interludes, Sugeng Nugroho (2002, 80) places Purbo Asmoro as an innovator within the traditional framework of Central Javanese wayang, and Enthus Susmono as an innovator outside it.[6] Although Purbo Asmoro's milestone invention of the all-night *garapan* style falls outside the traditional framework in many ways, for now we can look at Enthus Susmono's influence through this dichotomy, as I briefly outline his background and a few of his innovations.

Enthus Susmono was born and raised in Dampyak, Kramat, Tegal, which is in Central Java, on the north coast and not far from Cirebon and the border with West Java. Most people I have met from Tegal, from taxicab

[4] Based on counts of their respective fan-based social media sites, general observations of activity on these sites, as well as reports of audience numbers at their peformances.

[5] The information here is based on three live performances, as well as an additional eight all-night performance videos I have accessed online and through friends' collections.

[6] I specifially refer to Purbo Asmoro and Enthus Susmono's "innovations" rather than simply their "work," because there are plenty of areas and performance instances in which both of them fall within the traditional framework. What is being compared here is specifically the nature of their innovations. As for use of the term "traditional," see Chapter 2.

drivers to musicians living in Jakarta, to Enthus Susmono himself, are quick and proud to distinguish themselves from the court culture of Solo or Yogyakarta within the first few minutes of meeting a foreigner. They will eagerly explain that people from this north coast region tend to be more straight-forward, openly brash and perhaps seem aggressive. They are not so interested in the complex rules of Solonese etiquette, have a more democratic and less feudal outlook on life, and a freer and more lively application of the Javanese language. In fact Enthus Susmono introduced himself in this vein the first time I met him, on the ISI campus in late 2006 after I had already gone on two international tours with Purbo Asmoro. At the time, I got the immediate impression that he was trying to both shock me and also pique my interest in something less "regal," "gentlemanly," or "refined," while somehow more "real," and "honest" than the wayang tradition I was involved with.

Enthus graduated from high school in Tegal and, although already apprenticing with his father to be a dhalang, did not go to Solo to attend SMKI or ASKI as was the dream of many aspiring dhalang of his day. During his vacations he would often travel to Solo, however, and was, it turned out, ultimately interested in what was going on with the *padat* movement at ASKI. From 1984–1988 (Purbo Asmoro's last two years at ASKI and his first two years as a teaching assistant) Enthus would reportedly attend rehearsals at ASKI, and spend time talking with the *pedhalangan* students and instructors as much as he could. His father's goal for him, however, was to have a strong Islamic scholarly training, and to never become an instrument of the government like many dhalang did at the time.

From 1984 to 1990, Enthus studied informally from both Manteb Soedharsono and Bambang Suwarno within the ASKI setting, and by attending performances around town. He cites these two as his biggest influences from the world of Solonese *pedhalangan*, aside from listening to Anom Soeroto recordings in his youth. He was particularly interested in Bambang Suwarno's work as a wayang-figure artisan, and his creation of new types of *kayon*. After six years involved with ASKI and Solo, however, Enthus

decided he needed to develop his own identity, as a new talent from the *pantura* (north-central coast) region, an identity also referred to as *pesisiran*.[7]

From 1990 to 1992 he branched out into other styles and studied Cirebonese *wayang kulit purwa* and *wayang golèk*, with Bahani, Basari, and Suteja, as well as Sundanese *wayang golèk* with the legendary Asep Sunandar Soenaryo. He was also, at the same time, studying Islamic writings and teachings, and had a spiritual leader, Sukiman Tamid, who was influential in his life. From 1994 to 1998, Enthus Susmono became a national name due to his involvement in PANTAP events, which were routinely broadcast on national radio and TV stations throughout Indonesia. Although in 1994 he was not as established an upcoming force in the *pedhalangan* world as Purbo Asmoro and not nearly as popular, six years later, by 2000, he was rising up to a similar status and fame.[8]

In 2000, Enthus the innovator emerged on the scene, around the same time that Purbo Asmoro was consistently exploring and developing his all-night *garapan* style. In my limited exposure to him, I have garnered three major impressions: (1) reaching out, popularizing, and making wayang attractive to both young people and the masses is of primary importance to Enthus;[9] (2) He considers himself both a political and religious activist, propagating democracy, anti-feudalism, and moderate Islamic thinking through wayang; (3) The persona of a charismatic and idolized star, who arrives with flair and an entourage of assistants, media, and fans around him, is a conscious part of the equation. When these goals are combined with his self-proclaimed background as a *pesisiran* north-coasterner from Tegal complete with rough edges, the result is a sensationalist, populist, dhalang-centric spectacle combining art, political commentary, religion, and societal

[7] *Pesisir*, meaning coastal area, outback, far outreaches or edges, is most often used to refer to the north coast. *Pantura* is a contraction of *pantai utara*, or north coast. Both have the connotation in the arts of not identifying with the Central Javanese court cultures of Solo and Yogya and projecting their own more rustic, coastal flavor.

[8] These three paragraphs of background biographical information come from Sugeng Nugroho's 1992 master's thesis on Enthus Susmono.

[9] See Richard Arthur Curtis's dissertation, "People, Poets, Puppets: Popular Performance and the *Wong Cilik* in Contemporary Java," (Curtin University of Technology, Australia, 1997) for a detailed examination of this aspect of Enthus Susmono's outlook.

criticism. I also imagine that Enthus Susmono himself would heartily approve of this characterization.

By examining each performance element (from my personal observation of recordings and attendance at his performances), we can see that Enthus's aesthetic and approach is quite different from Purbo Asmoro's, or anyone else addressed in this chapter. We can also see how his innovations are often said to fall outside of a traditional framework.

Narration:

Enthus stays away from archaic (*Kawi*) and elevated (*krama inggil*) Javanese and usually goes so far as to avoid the most typical and well-known phrases from *basa pedhalangan*: the unique ways characters address each other, as well as specific metaphors, figures of speech, and stock phrases used only in wayang. He uses a mix of everyday Javanese, Indonesian, even frequent Arabic stock phrases, and employs very few or no extended narrations in Javanese. He is famous for juxtaposing both familiar Arabic formulas laced with religious connotations and vulgar, highly pornographic sequences in the same scene.

Scene Structure:

Enthus does not concern himself with a prescribed sequence of scenes, and although some of his scenes may resemble traditional scene structure this appears rare. There is a sense in his performances that he is telling the story in whatever way he happens to choose, without specific reference to traditional structures.

Musical Accompaniment:

Enthus's performances use very few traditional Solonese or Nartosabdo-style pieces. He most often seems to employ his staff members to compose scores, combining new compositions, vocal choruses in Arabic, and standard wayang repertory from the north-coastal or Cirebon region. The accompaniment is not crafted to form any sort of dramatic hierarchy, or to contrast with a traditional repertory in any way, but just stands alone as something new. He employs

Western instruments and Sundanese instruments within the lakon section of the performance.

Movement Techniques

Enthus Susmono has clearly been inspired by the dramatic and expressive movement techniques coming out of ASKI during *padat* exploration, as well as the ideas about new wayang design from Bambang Suwarno. He has also developed his own sensationalist elements of wayang-figure manipulation, which have caught on among a certain sector of younger dhalang. He often interacts with wayang figures during the performance, punching them with his fist during a fight scene, pointing at them, or even standing up to confront them. It is not unusual for him to turn around or stand up, face the audience, and engage the audience in a dialogue about what is happening on the screen. He has been known to shake the cloth screen in fury, and rip it during dramatic interchanges (Nugroho 2012, 128).

New Stage, New Figures, New Forms



Figure 9-3: An oval screen designed by Enthus Susmono, now being used by a number of younger dhalang.

Within the past five years, Enthus has designed a new oval shape for his wayang stage (see Figure 9-3). He often uses this new stage, especially at the most prestigious of events, and a number of young dhalang are imitating him. His performances usually feature colored lights, dry ice, colored smoke, and sound effects. He has designed a number of wayang-figure collections that are unique. While many dhalang, Purbo Asmoro included, have commissioned political and pop figures for use in the entertainment interludes, Enthus Susmono's new figures become part of the lakon. Among these new figures are:

- *wayang planèt*: extraterrestrial figures from science fiction movies
- *wayang sétanan*: special spirit figures
- *wayang teletubbies*: cartoon figures from television
- super heros like Batman, Superman, and Spiderman, used in the lakon
- political figures like George Bush, Osama bin Laden, Saddam Hussein
- his 2002 invention of "Wayang Rai Wong" or wayang with realistic human faces
- his 2010 invention of "Wayang Santri," an entirely new form in which stories are told from everyday Islamic life in a typical neighborhood

Lakon Interpretation

According to Sugeng Nugroho, who followed Enthus Susmono across one year of his performances and witnessed thirteen different lakon, Enthus's lakon interpretation focuses around how to connect the story to something in current politics. The connections are presented directly, without any vagueness or subtlety. The main point of the performance, according to Sugeng Nugroho, is for the audience to make the connection to current events, for example (Nugroho 2002, 149):

1. *Garèng Becomes King* (wishing for a democratic leader of the people)
2. *The Birth of Gathutkaca* (hopes for the character of future leaders)
3. *Wisanggeni's Struggle* (the role of students can play in reformation of the country)
4. *Gathutkaca's Struggle* (being critical of the opposition and not giving up)
5. *The Sage Dawala* (the nature of a spiritual leader today)
6. *King Baka* (former president Soeharto's corrupt policies)
7. *Kresna Awakened* (campaign politics, and promises that are never kept)
8. *Rajamala* (corruption and nepotism)
9. *The Death of Kumbakarna* (leaders who only think of themselves)

10. *Brajadenta Rebels* (being critical of the opposition and not giving up)
11. *Semar Goes Out on His Own in Rebellion* (how spiritual leaders today can be activists)
12. *The Clowns Demand What They Deserve* (the "little people's" demands)
13. *The Sage Bima* (the nature of a spiritual leader today)

Enthus Susmono became the District Regional Head of Tegal in 2013, and has used his position to try to encourage government parties to support wayang consistently. He gave an inspiring speech at the closing ceremony of International Wayang Day at ISI Solo, on 8 November 2015. He praised ISI Solo for their history and their potential for the future. He complimented Purbo Asmoro specifically as a dear colleague and contemporary, and made a number of appeals for international support of wayang. To end this section on a controversial figure that I do not know well, I offer two quotations:

> **Purbo Asmoro:**
>
> Enthus is a genius. He is incredibly, incredibly smart. That guy is talented. Have you ever seen him perform when he is being completely serious and mostly classical? Amazing. So good. So dramatic, so powerful. When he is approaching it with a certain seriousness. But when it's all sensation and colored lights and smoke, well that's another story. It's all a question of what direction he wants to go and what is his motive. We will see. But he is a genius, no question about that (interview, May 2014).

> **Sugeng Nugroho (Enthus Susmono's primary researcher to date):**
>
> Enthus Susmono is known in the wayang performance community as a young, extremely controversial dhalang.... Although he is from the northern coast outskirts, his style is some 70% from Surakarta, while 30% comes from other styles such as *wayang kulit purwa* from Yogyakarta, Cirebon, and Banyumas as well as *wayang golèk* from Tegal and Sunda. While his style may be framed within the style of Surakarta, certain dominant qualities in his performances, such as a pulsating vigor, high energy, raucousness, boisterousness, liveliness, and intimacy with the audience, come from his northern coast outskirts background. Looked at in their entirety as a package, Enthus Susmono's performances fulfill the criteria of what one would call *kitsch*[10] performance art—*kitsch* elements of the grand and spectacular variety. While recognizing that there are both exceptional and less exceptional qualities to Enthus Susmono's work, there is no doubt he has succeeded in creating a performance format that is causing a sensation, and that is worthy of going down in history as [an important] development in Javanese *pedhalangan* (Nugroho 2002, 361–363).

[10] The 1985 PhD thesis by Lindsay "Klasik, Kitsch, or Contemporary: A Study of the Javanese Performing Arts" has been influential in the ISI Solo Pedalangan community. Nugroho uses this term surely as a result of being familiar with her work.

Sigid Ariyanto

born 8 June 1979 in Blora, northern coast region of Central Java
father: Bp. Djarijanto, Solo-style dhalang, mother: a *pesindhèn*
currently resides in Rembang, also in the northern coast region of Central Java



Figure 9-4: Sigid Ariyanto of Rembang.

Sigid Ariyanto, 18 years younger than Purbo Asmoro, his teacher from ISI Pedalangan, is one of the most active dhalang on the current scene (see Figure 9-4). From Rembang, on the north coast of Central Java, he rarely has a month with more than three nights off. Most of his performances are centered around the coastal areas: *pesisir/pantura.*[11] Sigid Ariyanto does, however, perform often in Jakarta, and occasionally in the Solo area and East Java.

I am not as familiar with his style when performing in the Rembang area, but when performing for the artist communities of Jakarta and Solo, Sigid Ariyanto consistently designs deep, thoughtful, and highly *garap*ed all-night performances. In the eight performances I have seen, five of which I was simultaneously translating,[12] Sigid Ariyanto has proven himself to be not only well-versed and fully capable in the all-night *garapan* style, but also a true innovator, creatively pushing the style to further limits.

[11] The area Sigid is from, closer to Semarang and not near the border with West Java, is not considered as rough as Enthus Susmono's Tegal. But it is equally marginalized by many Solonese artists.

[12] I specifically mention occasions for which I did simultaneous translation, because during these events I am present and working parallel with the dhalang in a way unlike any other. While throughout this dissertation I only use as data performances that I have attended all-night, sat right up near the wayang screen, and for which I remained completely alert and focused, during the performances in which I was translating there was a further heightened awareness of every moment and every expression uttered by the dhalang.

As Sigid explained in a discussion panel at Balai Soedjatmoko in 2013, he believes that dhalang today need to employ a team made up of a script writer, music arranger, special-effects technician (smoke, colored lights, sound effects), and a manager, in order to be successful.

> The first example from the past was Pak Blacius Subono arranging accompaniment for Ki Manteb Soedharsono, then it was Mas Dedek doing arrangements for Ki Enthus Susmono. Now I myself have Mas Setyaji. Dhalang [performing in *garapan* style] cannot go it alone. It used to be that the famed dhalang ego, the dhalang's sense of individualism, could not be challenged. But we need to work in teams now. And we cannot make do without rehearsals.

Hence when Sigid Ariyanto is planning a performance for the artist community in either Solo or Jakarta with prestigious sponsorship, he delegates the gamelan accompaniment to Setyaji, an up-and-coming young composer from ISI Solo, or to Dedek Wahyudi. He knows that the narration will be *garap*ed as he employs a script writer (whom he did not name in any interviews), and he meets with respected teachers and wayang critics to consciously engage in discussion on the reconceptualization of story details, scene structure, and character. Sigid Ariyanto has a special eye for dramatic visual presentation, and is a virtuoso with movement techniques, so *garap sabet* is also a given. Once he has a "packet," such as his arrangement of *The Life Story of Karna* (from narration to movement to music and story details), my impression is that he repeats the performance in much the same presentation for different venues, only occasionally revising and changing parts.

Although Sigid is successful with each *garapan* element, he does not yet approach the whole as a system within which to work spontaneously, as Purbo Asmoro aspires to, but rather ends up with a packet of through-composed music, fixed narration, and scenes which are set, which he then repeats for similar engagements. It may be too early to tell, however, whether he will become more spontaneous, since Sigid is much younger than Purbo Asmoro. Purbo Asmoro also shifted in his career from more packet-like performances to more improvisation within a new system. What is certain,

however, is that Sigid is attracted to the teamwork set-up and to dedicated rehearsals to get a performance as polished as possible—two concepts that never resonated with Purbo Asmoro, even from early in his career.

Due to the influence of both Setyaji and Dedek Wahyudi, the gamelan accompaniment for Sigid Ariyanto's performances tends to be both prominent and highly avant-garde. Almost every moment is accompanied by something new and startling to most ears, and often this causes a dissonance between elements of the performance. Traditional figures on the screen, engaged in relatively traditional dialogue, discussing a relatively traditional problem, might be accompanied by a new composition using saxophone, cymbal, and diatonic scale patterns with wailing extended male-female choruses using only the syllable "o". This is one of the main criticisms heard about Sigid's performances: that the music, rather than being one of six main elements to support the hierarchy of the drama (a major point in Purbo Asmoro's development of *garapan*) stands out like a concert of new compositions. Sigid Ariyanto described his style strategy in the same 2013 Balai Soedjatmoko seminar:

> In Rembang, a dhalang has to compete with the drama of the popular *kethoprak* tradition, in which the antagonists and protagonists and the intense exchanges are unparalleled. But they also have to compare with the liveliness of *tayuban* and *dhangdhut*, also so popular in that area.... I thought to myself, "Ki Enthus's energy is fascinating when he performs but his language and his content—well there are those who like it and those who don't. Ki Purbo's language and content are wonderful, but his energy may be not be boisterous enough for Rembang." So I had this vision to combine the energy of Ki Enthus with the contents of Ki Purbo, in order to present wayang that was profound but lively at the same time. That is my model—a combination of Ki Enthus Susmono and Ki Purbo Asmoro. What about Ki Anom Soeroto? He doesn't even come into it. Wouldn't be popular [in Rembang]. In the old days, everything was centered around Ki Manteb Soedharsono's style, by bringing out a foreign antagonist and having him do one *kiprah* dance, and calling it a prologue. Well, not anymore. Not anymore.



Figure 9-5: Sigid Ariyanto performing *Sinta in Flames* at the Monas Monument Park Dhalang Competition in 2013, where he won first place.

Purbo Asmoro commented on Sigid Ariyanto's career in a casual conversation in Kemang, Jakarta in October 2015:

> Sigid would take over the *pedhalangan* world entirely and shake up the whole scene, if he would only move to Solo. I've told him this over and over. Oh, you can bet he would be a hot point at the center of the new scene. But he insists on staying up in Rembang, and this highly limits the scope of his connections and sponsors. No matter what the distance from their domicile, people are used to the idea: "Let's go to Solo to find Pak Dhalang." But by living in Rembang, Sigid loses a certain charisma and authority, as well as the interactions that happen everyday within the community and help make someone into a name. If I had stayed in the Pacitan area the same thing would have happened to me. Sure, he's popular and performs every night in the Rembang area, but he's destined to be just busy and no more. If he moved to Solo he would be historic. He's extremely talented. I don't happen to care for his *iringan* when it is through-composed for a lakon, and uses all new compositions, but that's me. Doesn't change the fact that he would be historic.

Cahyo Kuntadi

born 13 July 1981 in Blitar, East Java
father: the renowned Ki Sukron Suwondo, Blitar
currently resides in Surakarta, Central Java



Figure 9-6: Cahyo Kuntadi, right, with the head of the central branch of PEPADI at the time, Ekotjipto, in the Dharmawangsa Hotel, Jakarta, 2013.

Cahyo Kuntadi, also known fondly to his friends as Yoyok, grew up under the powerful influence of his renowned dhalang father, Sukron Suwondo, in Blitar, East Java. Sukron Suwondo, in an era dominated by traditional performance practice, developed a unique style of his own that incorporated wayang *orang* and *kethoprak* dramatic structures, exchanges, and musical selections into *wayang kulit*.

Aside from the influence of his father, Cahyo Kuntadi was also inspired early on by two performances of Manteb Soedharsono. He distinctly remembers Manteb's *Rama Tambak* (*Rama Bridges the Waters)* that was broadcast live on television when he was eight years old, and a wayang performance of *Bima Suci* (*Bima As Sage*) in Blitar by Manteb when he was nine years old. He attributes his desire to become a dhalang the inspiration he garnered from these two performances.

Cahyo Kuntadi graduated from the Karawitan Department of SMKI Solo, and then the Pedalangan Department of ISI Solo. In an interview at his home in March 2014, he described his first introduction to the work of Purbo Asmoro:

> I had never seen Pak Purbo perform until my first semester at ISI. My first reaction was that his way of manipulating the wayang figures was exactly like Pak Manteb! But this was a naive first reaction and once I had studied *garapan* and concepts at ISI I realized what Pak Purbo was really all about. And then his influence took on a bigger part of who I was. Once I had gone through ISI, I tried to take my dramatic techniques, philosophical content, and *iringan* ideas from Pak Purbo, my movement techniques and some of my lakon details from Pak Manteb, and then the rest was still from my father: my comic relief routines, social and religious commentary, and my understanding of the whole vitality a village performance has to have. In there I was also exposed to recordings of the late Pak Gandadarman and really his style has become my favorite. You know, Pak Manteb and Pak Purbo take a lot from him.

Much of the time that Cahyo Kuntadi was at both SMKI and ISI, his current wife, Sukesi Rahayu of Tulungagung, East Java, was the star *pesindhèn* performing with Purbo Asmoro. Years later when they married, the influence of Purbo Asmoro's all-night *garapan* style on Cahyo Kuntadi became ever more evident. It seems probable that this was due to his access to notation and texts used by Purbo Asmoro, as well as a wealth of recordings. At any rate, from about 2009 on Cahyo Kuntadi's performances seem to be modeled largely on Purbo Asmoro's interpretations, with the exception of movement techniques, which, as mentioned, were modeled after Manteb Soedharsono.

When Cahyo Kuntadi performs,[13] we can recognize large portions of the performance as Purbo Asmoro-inspired. This is of course, historically, the method of transmission in *pedhalangan*: imitation and then a slow release of that imitation into one's own creativity. The future will tell to what extent Cahyo Kuntadi develops more of his own style, makes further innovations to Purbo Asmoro's *garapan*, decides to reject *garapan* in favor of more classical treatment, decides to use more of his father's material, or, perhaps, develops a unique hybrid of many options.

Cahyo Kuntadi and Sigid Ariyanto, in many ways, appear poised to be the Anom Soeroto and Manteb Soedharsono of the next generation. Each generation recently seems to have produced two history-making superstars: Ki Anom and Ki Manteb, Ki Purbo and Ki Enthus, and now, perhaps, Ki Sigid

[13] I have attended seven performances by Cahyo Kuntadi, and, additionally, have done simultaneous translation for him on four occasions, for a total of 11 performances.

Ariyanto and Ki Cahyo Kuntadi. While there are many talented and popular dhalang their age, these two men, who are good friends, are often referred to in the same breath (see Figure 9-7). Cahyo Kuntadi is a more gentle force in the *pedhalangan* world than Sigid Ariyanto, not as brashly innovative, but more focused on carrying on the respected traditions of his father, Manteb Soedharsono, and Purbo Asmoro. Purbo Asmoro commented on Cahyo Kuntadi's future in the same conversation of October 2015 in Kemang:

> Ah, now here's an example of what I was saying earlier. Once Yoyok moved to Solo [from Blitar] his prestige blossomed. He is now the new Solo talent. The new thoughtful, creative dhalang with integrity. Had he stayed in Blitar, or in Tulungagung [where his wife is from], he would have been no more than a locally-popular, educated talent. Maybe it could be said that Yoyok needs to find his *jatidhiri* [individual way] a bit, but he will. And we all start out by imitating others. This is eventually what leads us to our own styles. He's very talented, and will find his way.



Figure 9-7: Cahyo Kuntadi (left) and Sigid Ariyanto (right) after the dhalang competition at Monas Monument Park in Jakarta, September 2013, in which Sigid Ariyanto won first place and Cahyo Kuntadi second.

Of the ten performers listed at the beginning of this chapter, only one is a professed classicist, Anom Soeroto, and he will be addressed in the next section. The remaining four: Warseno "Slenk," Anom Dwidjokangko, Tantut Sutanto, and Bayu Aji Pamungkas, with the addition of a personal favorite, Jungkung Darmoyo, are each given a short sketch here. None of these five are classicists, yet none of them profess to attempt all-night *garapan*.

Warseno "Slenk":



Figure 9-8: Warseno "Slenk."

Essayist Umar Kayam (2001), in describing the wayang scene from 1993 to 1995 in Central Java, repeatedly mentions only three stand-out stars after Anom Soeroto and Manteb Soedharsono: Djoko Hadiwidjoyo (born 1948 in Yogyakarta but residing in Semarang), known as "Crazy" Djoko, Warseno "Slenk" (born 1965 in Klaten) and Purbo Asmoro. Twenty years later, it is clearly Purbo Asmoro who has risen to the top. He is also the only one of the three who has been profoundly innovative in the way he treats lakon. Crazy Djoko and Warseno Slenk caused a sensation in the 1990s with the way they revolutionized the entertainment interludes. By the year 2000, however, Crazy Djoko was mostly performing in the Semarang area and only occasionally in Jakarta. Since 2005, I have rarely heard anything about his career and have only had the opportunity to see him perform twice, translating for him once. I questioned a number of people about this, but no one seemed to be able to explain the fading of his popularity.

Warseno Slenk (see Figure 9-8), one of Anom Soeroto's younger brothers, [14] remains extremely popular and most months has a full

[14] The youngest brother in the family, Bagong Darmoyo, is also a respected practicing dhalang.

performance schedule.[15] Kayam was not the only one to note the parallel nature of his rise to fame with Purbo Asmoro; Tomo Pandoyo (a Klaten-based classical dhalang) and Agus Birowo (a Wonogiri-based dhalang) note this as well. "For years we thought that Mas Warseno and Mas Purbo would be the next Pak Anom-Pak Manteb legends. But it turns out that Mas Purbo rose to an artistic level in the 1990s and 2000s that was impossible for Mas Warseno to keep up with. There's no comparison." (Interview with Tomo Pandoyo, September 2015.)

Many say that the reason Warseno Slenk has been able to keep up his popularity is due to his untiring people skills. An amicable and engaging man, and the owner of a successful local radio station, Warseno Slenk enjoys talking to people, visiting and calling officials, and networking both domestically and overseas. Suratno, a researcher at ISI Solo who comes from a renowned dhalang and musician family in Solo, also commented on the popularity of Warseno Slenk in his essay in *Puppet Theater in Contemporary Indonesia*:

> He is the most visible and successful among the popular puppeteers of his generation when one looks at how well he sells, the number of spectators, and how much he is paid for each performance. This is even though other commercially successful puppeteers of his generation, such as Tomo Pandoyo, Warjito, Suryanto, Joko Wardono, Warsito, and Sri Susilo have superior abilities in the fields of language, literary abilities, dialogue, puppet manipulation, voice, and knowledge of etiquette (Mrázek/Suratno 2002, 153).

His performances often feature extended, newly written opening narrations, full of *basa pedhalangan* metaphors, mixed with Arabic, combined with phrases from *ruwatan* (cleansing ceremonies) and at the same time references to the sponsor, sometimes by name. These unusual narrations please and impress many from the start: the sponsor, the officials wishing to feel washed in the ritual of wayang, the fans overwhelmed by their idol's power and abilities.

[15] One of Warseno's fan groups from Sukoharjo gave him the nickname "Slenk," in 1993, which is an acronym for: **S**aya **L**ebih **E**nak **N**onton **K**amu (I Enjoy Watching You More), due to his entertaining interludes and use of non-gamelan, rock music-like bands.

Warseno generally uses script writers, in particular the late Sri Sadhono Amongrogo (Sri Dadi, 1952–2016) of Makam Haji, as Suratno describes:

> When a sponsor asks Warseno to perform a story that Warseno has not mastered, Sri Sadhono functions as a source. He explains the plot of the story and the most important dialogues to Warseno, and if needed he writes out the most important passages. This is done by Sri Sadhono during the performances. For instance, while the dhalang performs the first scene, Sri Sadhono writes the dialogue for the second scene, and during the second scene the text composed by Sri Sadhono is read by Warseno.

Soon after the opening narration and some sort of brief court scene, most performances I have witnessed by Warseno Slenk descend into a Limbukan entertainment interlude of more than 90 minutes, with all the typical antics of the PANTAP era. The section between *Limbukan* and *Gara-gara* is filled with primarily battles, and then another 90-minute or more intermezzo. After *Gara-gara* there are perhaps 45 minutes to an hour more of lakon, mostly battles.

Anom Dwijokangko



Figure 9-9: Anom Dwidjokangko, International Wayang Day, ISI Solo, 7 November 2015 (photo by Kartiko Nugroho).

Born in Blitar in 1976, "Kangko" is Cahyo Kuntadi's older brother by five years, also a son of the creative and eclectic dhalang from Blitar, Sukron Suwondo. Of the ten dhalang on the list, he and Sigid Ariyanto are the most highly booked. Kangko (see Figure 9-9) publishes his schedule once a month on Facebook and routinely has only one day open each month. While from Blitar, he lives in Solo, and his schedule takes him all over East Java, but also frequently

around Central Java and Jakarta. Unlike his brother, who enjoys crafting all-night *garapan* performances and studying recordings and written sources, Kangko is really too busy and perhaps not inclined. He jokes in public about not being a deep dhalang, about enjoying long entertainment interludes, and about not taking himself or wayang too seriously, which all may be true. But in fact, he is currently probably the most purely virtuosic dhalang alive, which is an audience draw.

Kangko recently created a sensation at the International Wayang Day (8 November 2015 at ISI Solo), when he performed a *padat* version of *Gandamana Luweng* (*Gandamana Is Buried Alive)*. At the moment Gandamana was most enraged at Sangkuni and started to tear his body apart, Kangko stood up and starting slamming the Sangkuni figure against the wayang screen, ripping the screen and breaking the wayang figure. He then threw the broken wayang off stage and stood yelling blasphemies into the pathway the figure took through the air. After a few minutes he motioned for his musicians to stop the piece they were playing in mid track, at which point he got off the stage and walked away. Some say he was literally overtaken by the enraged spirit of Gandamana, some say he was only being melodramatic for effect, and some say he had reached a new height of artistic development and courage, inspired by antics similar to those of Enthus Susmono.

Tantut Sutanto

Tantut Sutanto, born in 1978, is the son of the legendary *pesindhèn* from Ceper, Klaten, the late Tantinah, who sang with Nartosabdo. He has an outstanding voice, a strong family background in *pedhalangan*, and excellent technique across all elements: narration, movement, *iringan*, and drama. He consistently experiments with prologues and other limited *garapan* elements in his performances, but has yet to develop any sort of all-night *garapan* system for himself. He has the love and respect of a number of important sponsors in Jakarta and elsewhere, making him a growing star, but he is not one who feels a need to highly conceptualize his performances. While he is a graduate of SMKI, he never completed his studies at ISI due to his busy performance schedule.

Bayu Aji Pamungkas

The youngest child of Anom Soeroto, born in 1984, Bayu (see Figure 9-10) has been performing with his father since he was under 10 years old. He has at his disposal his father's troupe of elderly and seasoned musicians, his own drummer who has memorized his moves since they were both 10 years old, beautiful equipment, all the recordings of Rebo Legèn from his father's collection, and a solid sponsorship base. He rivals Kangko in his virtuosity, and has inherited his father's flawless voice. Bayu has yet to develop a special interpretive angle. He, like Tantut, often starts his performances with a prologue of some sort, but the reconceptualization tends to stop there. Like Tantut and Kangko, he is not performing in classical style, yet also not in all-night *garapan* style. These three artists are busy, talented, equipped with virtuosic hands and beautiful voices. They are highly popular, and already quite wealthy. Their performances are dominated by battle and entertainment scenes. Time will tell if they develop any qualities deeper or more innovative than this.



Figure 9-10: Muhammad Bayu Aji Prasetyo Pamungkas.

Jungkung Darmoyo

One artist I would like to make special mention of is the son of legendary dhalang Mujoko Joko Raharjo, Jungkung Darmoyo, born in 1964 (see Figure 9-11). Although not on the list of top ten high-profile dhalang, he has interesting and unique views on *garapan* and is one of my favorite performers. He is popular in the Boyolali and Klaten regencies, but not a pan-Java star. He is a contemporary of Purbo Asmoro's, being three years his junior.

Jungkung's father, the late Mujoko Joko Raharjo (1940–1992) of Gombang, Sawit, Boyolali, was considered by many to be the next Nartosabdo. When I arrived in Solo in late November 1991, he was the



Figure 9-11: Jungkung Darmoyo, after a performance of a rare village-cleansing lakon: *Kresna Kridha*, November 2015 in Gombang, Sawit, Boyolali.

dhalang everyone was talking about for his dramatic and orative flair, his unique interpretative details in lakon, his rich musical repertory, and his talented musicians. Before I had a chance to gain exposure to his work though—in fact right after I had attended my first rehearsal at his house in preparation for a wayang—Mujoko's mark on the *pedhalangan* world tragically came to an end. In February 1992, he had a heart attack and died within the first few seconds of a performance in Tawangmangu. Jungkung Darmoyo, was attending ISI Yogyakarta in the Karawitan Department at the time, and for some time after his father's death was not particularly active as a performer. Around 2002, when he started to perform more, and especially since 2004 when I embarked my own study of lakon, *basa pedhalangan*, interpretation, and performance practice, I started to attend as many performances of his as possible. In total I have attended an average of about one of his wayang performances every few months for the past ten years, so some 60 or so in total. At first, my intent was to gain some access into the talented mind of the late Mujoko, since Jungkung frequently performs a number of lakon unique to his father, and uses his characteristic interpretative details. Physically he holds an uncanny resemblance to his father, his voice is almost indistinguishable from his father's during *sulukan*, and his dramatic power and strong, energetic characterizations are similar. However, I also became interested in Jungkung's outlook in relation to this study, because he considers himself a practitioner of a kind of new *garapan*, but with a result quite different from Purbo Asmoro's.

Jungkung's innovations are mostly in the area of musical accompaniment and the way scenes are set up. He does not, unlike Enthus

Susmono and Sigid Ariyanto and other highly experimental dhalang, use hired composers (such as Subono, Dedek Wahyudi, or Setyaji), script writers, or any other formal consultants. Jungkung himself is a composer, and I have attended performances of his in which he has written all the gamelan music except for the use of a few *srepeg* and *sampak*. Usually though, his own compositions and arrangements occur only in the first few hours of the wayang, and by *Pathet Sanga* and *Pathet Manyura* he has relaxed back in to traditional repertory.

A hallmark of Jungkung's performances is the startling way the opening court audience scene is set up. His view is that, while he wants to remain loyal to the classical order of scenes and is not interested in prologues, he senses that "a wayang performance has to be engaging and exciting from the very opening these days, in order to keep the interest of the audience" (interview, January 2010). His solution, different from that of Purbo Asmoro, is to infuse the opening court scene itself with more visual attractions and grandeur. He often opens the performance with a court dancer (*gléyongan*), followed by a loud-style, processional gamelan piece to accompany the entrance of the king and court members, perhaps transitioning into a male-female chorus-style piece, but with no narration. After the piece ends, Jungkung presents an unusual arrangement for whatever *sulukan* he chooses to sing, in which the dhalang alternates his phrases with the vocal section (male and female), who sing their phrases in a rhythmic, metered style. This segues into a raucous West Javanese *jaipongan* drumming interlude, as entertainment for the king before he speaks. Jungkung then goes into a rather long (sometimes as long as ten minutes) set of introductions between characters. Although introductions are a traditional element of course, here they take the form of fast-paced arguments between the characters about the appropriateness of their respective choice of language and terms of address. Although the particular elements differ from performance to performance, Jungkung almost always opens his performances this way: court dancer + loud processional piece for entrance of the court (with no narration) + vocally and texturally varied *sulukan* with lively drumming entertainment at the end + arguments over the way characters greet each other.

This is only one example of a number of devices Jungkung has to, as he explains, "make the performance lively from the outset." In the gathering of dhalang organized by Lontar at the home of Supanggah in Benawa in 2008 (see Figure 4-7), Jungkung referred to this as *garapan*, speaking directly and animatedly to Purbo Asmoro:

> We're speaking here today of *garapan*, well *garapan* according to whom? And I agree that the term *garapan* can be used in a specific sense as a term to refer to how we as modern-day dhalang reconceptualize our performances to match the needs of the time. But within that special definition, why limit the examples to your solution? Prologue, focus on a main character or theme, reworking of the order of traditional scenes, use of *padat* techniques. That's *garapan* according to Purbo Asmoro. There are other models for *garapan*.

Jungkung Darmoyo's "*garapan* solutions" in fact tend to extend the visual and musical elements, in order to enhance the grandeur of a scene, to make the scene more interesting, according to his aesthetic. He does not reject the extensive introductions, but rather places them in the context of entertaining arguments between characters, less than 15 minutes into the wayang performance. He is definitely an innovator within the traditional framework, but is making choices quite different from Purbo Asmoro's, with a quite different basis of thought.

The Classicists

"Surely there are dhalang out there still performing in classical style? Not just the elders, but middle and younger generation as well?"

This question was posed by a respected Western researcher at the Balai Soedjatmoko seminar, in May 2013. Of course there are still dhalang performing in traditional style, who are disinclined to explore all-night *garapan* techniques. However, as mentioned in Chapter 1 of this work, they are in the minority. In an average month, perhaps 90% of the dhalang in the greater Solo area would be integrating a significant number of elements of all-

night *garapan* style into their performance, even if not taking the style on whole-heartedly or perhaps defining it differently from Purbo Asmoro.

Anom Soeroto



Figure 9-12: Anom Soeroto, before a performance in Jakarta, May 2015.

Anom Soeroto (see Figure 9-12) was born in Klaten in the same year as Manteb Soedharsono, 1948. He still performs classically in that he almost always begins with the opening court audience scene, almost always follows a traditional sequence of scenes even if somewhat abbreviated, and always uses pieces from the traditional Solonese repertory for his accompaniment. He uses the classical narrations and tends to limit his characterizations and interpretative details in lakon to traditional representations. He does not use *sabet tématik*, but rather a traditional set of movement techniques, and he never uses colored lights or sound effects. He does at times combine lakon into multi-episode constructions, although not frequently. I translated for a performance of his in Jakarta in 2014 in which he combined *Déwa Ruci* and *Bima Suci*, much like many other dhalang do and, as mentioned in Chapter 8, early in his career he was a pioneer in combining lakon. Occasionally he will present an unusual opening, such as using a lively *kiprah* (masculine dance to special drumming) for Dasamuka's entrance in *The Death of Kumbakarna*, rather than the sequence for a traditional opening court scene. But this sort of alternative opening is rare.

In principle, Anom Soeroto stays within conservative, palace-classical, refined performance practice to this day, but there are two exceptions which skew the overall traditional feel of his performances. One is the extended

entertainment interludes, *Limbukan* and *Gara-gara*. Anom Soeroto's performances almost always feature multiple stand-up comedians, and each interlude will last well over 80 minutes, longer than the interludes in Purbo Asmoro's performances. Second, Anom Soeroto almost always performs now in tandem with his son, Bayu Aji Pamungkas. Bayu performs the battle scenes and other demanding visual attractions such as the Troop Departure scene, such that Anom Soeroto and his son replace each other on the stage some five or six times throughout the wayang. Because of the length of the entertainment interludes, and the length of Bayu's virtuosic battle and other visually exciting scenes, Anom Soeroto has little room (about 90 minutes total) for development of material, philosophic interchanges, or interpretive detail. So, while classical in intent and basic format, the resulting performance is considerably altered. Classical in some senses yes, but as a compelling alternative to all-night *garapan*, I would say no. Many commentators I interviewed felt similarly about Anom Soeroto's current presentation (but were unwilling to be quoted on the matter): that while still beautiful, grandiose, and full of the regal authority Anom has always had at the screen, the extended interludes and tandem play with Bayu Aji have reduced the interest and depth of Anom Soeroto's work.

Tomo Pandoyo and Kasim Purwocarito

Tomo Pandoyo, a well-respected and popular dhalang from Kebonarum, Klaten, who is two years older than Purbo Asmoro and performs entirely in classical style, said this about his choices (interview, September 2015):

> I imitated Bapa Anom for years and consider him my ultimate teacher. But I could never perform like him, with his regality and beautiful voice. I also studied informally from Pak Manteb's performances, but how could I ever actually be like him? I don't have the hands for it. I understand what Mas Purbo has developed as well with his style, but I could never do it. I don't have the ability and it's just not me. So that's who I was for awhile: The Prince of Confusion [*Harya Bingung*]. Finally, I just decided to be who I am. You know, I've just been lucky actually. When I started performing, I was the only one in my generation out here. There were plenty of elderly Klaten dhalang, but I was really the one coming up. I got a lot of connections, I have my audience and sponsors that choose me mostly due to the local tradition. That's what I am. Just a local, Klaten dhalang doing what I can. To me, the important thing is that a dhalang offers something

> to his audience so that they go home richer in thought than they arrived. It doesn't matter what style you use to do this.

There is no doubt that Tomo Pandoyo was being overly humble, when in fact he has significant talent recognized by many, and boasts a regular schedule of some ten performances a month. He is interested in lakon interpretation, studying different versions of the same lakon, and taking on unusual, older lakon into his repertory. But he is not interested in altering or reconceptualizing the classical form. He does not feel it is necessary, and has not felt the pressure to do so in order to earn a good living. Kasim Kesdolamono (born 1963), the son of Klaten dhalang legend Kesdik Kesdolamono, expressed similar sentiments when interviewed in June 2013:

> This is just what I do. This is my father's style. This is me. I'm just a Klaten dhalang. I'm just performing the way I know how to perform. I see what those others are doing—Mas Purbo, Pak Manteb, Dik Jungkung, Sigid, Yoyok—and it's something to be admired. But it's for them. Not for me.

Hali Jarwosularso

One practicing classical dhalang I spoke to, Hali Jarwosularso, born in 1948 in Solo, was outspoken in his dislike of and disagreement with all-night *garapan* style. For Hali, an instructor for some 30 years at PDMN and the head teacher there for many years, *garapan* elements fly in the face of tradition (interview, July 2005):

> What's wrong with the classical ways? What does *garapan* add to the meaning of wayang? Where's the beauty of all the old scenes and all the old narrations? Where is the history and the ritual and the process of an entire lakon unfolding slowly? The artistry of the long gamelan pieces? If the audience can't take it then, well, let them go watch something else, but wayang has a tradition.

Two Elders' Opinions

Most of the elder dhalang I interviewed (or spoke with casually),[16] such as Sutino Hardokocarito (b. 1932) of Eromoko, Wonogiri, and Gaib Widopandoyo (b. 1937) of Senden, Klaten, have been quite tolerant of dramatic innovations. Neither Sutino nor Gaib take issue with the various *padat* elements used within scenes of Purbo Asmoro's all-night *garapan* style, or with his extended prologues, relatively shocking endings, or unusual transitions between scenes. Unlike the harsh response by some seniors during the ASKI *padat* exploration days, *garapan* elements now seem to have achieved a place of respect and there is an acknowledgement and acceptance that most dhalang are using them as part of the lakon treatment to one degree or another.[17] Sutino told me, in a interview at his home in March 2014 the morning after a full *garapan* performance of *The Life Story of Anoman* by Purbo Asmoro near his home in Eromoko:

> Wayang belongs to the younger generation of dhalang. I had my era and they have theirs. I knew my generation and they know theirs. Dik Purbo knows how to tell a tale. He knows how to mesmerize his audience. I couldn't keep my eye off the screen tonight! The important thing is to keep wayang going, keep it flourishing, and keep the audiences coming. But because you have something to say. If you don't have anything to say, well that's another matter. Then what's the point, as it's just ridiculous fooling around in that case. Wayang is not entertainment. Wayang is food for thought, through a medium of entertainment. There's a difference, you know.[18]

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[16] Unfortunately, there are not many elder dhalang remaining, especially ones who are still active enough to attend performances and who are willing to speak about new developments. Gaib Widopandoyo's live performance of *Gathutkaca On Trial* was translated into English by Gloria Poedjosoedarmo (Lontar 1999), making his performance the only other Solo-style dhalang's work published in its entirety in English. (*Tall Tree, Nest of the Wind* by Bernard Arps, however, is currently in press, which documents a 1987 performance by Anom Soeroto in Amsterdam of *Déwa Ruci*, with English translation and extensive annotation.)

[17] Or, it could be that *garapan* elements slipped artfully and meaningfully into an all-night performance are received more positively by elder dhalang than the same treatment in *pakeliran padat*—this was not something I thought to explore in the interviews. The criticism of *padat* by elders from Chapter 3, are of course all refer to more frantically paced, shortened performances. Also, neither of these two dhalang still actively performs, and there is therefore no competitive element in their responses.

[18] Sutino spent much of the performance either glued to the screen or appearing to exchange opinions with his cousin, Suyati, still a popular performer in the Eromoko area (see Figure 9-13). These are the two dhalang I played *gendèr* most frequently for, from 1991–1994, making this moment a kind of full circle for me.



Figure 9-13: Sutino Hardokocarito (right), watching a performance of *The Life Story of Anoman* by Purbo Asmoro in Eromoko, Wonogiri, March 2014, with his cousin, Suyati, also a dhalang (left).

Both Sutino (see Figure 9-13) and Gaib (see Figure 9-14), while accepting the idea of innovation in the lakon, did mention specifically, however, that they did not like non-traditional musical accompaniment during the story-telling portion of the performance.

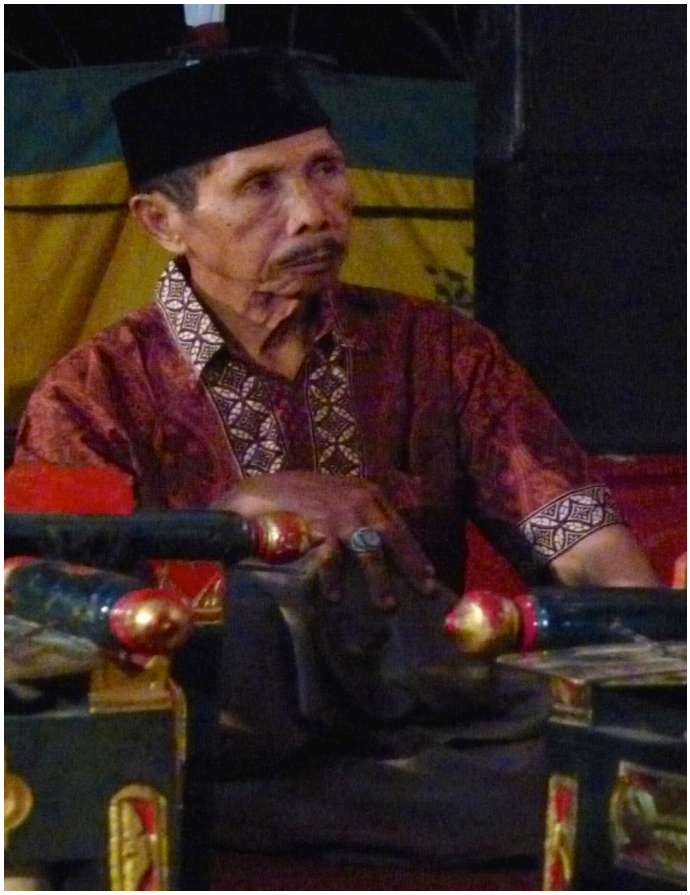


Figure 9-14: Gaib Widopandoyo watching a performance of *Sang Wisanggeni* by Purbo Asmoro. Cawas, Klaten, October 2015.

> Look, it doesn't matter to me how a dhalang gets across what he is trying to say dramatically. As long as he has something to say! Prologues, new narrations, *padat* techniques—it's all no problem to me. And I actually highly approve of the deletion of certain scenes like the meeting of the troops to review the problem again, or the female quarters scene. These are just redundant. I salute the move to skip over these in the name of dramatic motion and interest. And if dhalang don't want to start with "dhen, dhen" [*Ayak-ayak, sléndro manyura*, signaling a traditional opening] followed by the long "swuh rep data pitana" narration I can understand their point. But the one thing I cannot take is the new compositional stuff used for accompaniment in the lakon. I don't like all the pop stuff in the interludes either, but they are just interludes. I can use that time to get something to eat or drink or go to the bathroom and I won't miss anything. But it is during the lakon part, when I would like to enjoy the story, that makes me want to leave when I hear the new compositional stuff. The rest of it though, and especially depending on the dhalang—and with Dik Purbo what is more—really does have a sense to it. I can accept it. We have to allow the youth to develop the art after all (Gaib Widopandoyo, at his home right before leaving for a Purbo Asmoro performance, October 2015, Klaten).

Current *Garapan* Training at ISI

Since the founding of the Pedalangan Department in 1974 under Gendhon Humardani, a trademark of a dhalang's training at ASKI, particularly in the later semesters of the curriculum, has been the exploration of *pakeliran padat* techniques. While the first five semesters of Purbo Asmoro's student days at ASKI were packed with exclusively classical training, semester six of his program focused on studying a number of *padat* scripts. In the last two of eight semesters, students worked on either creating a new script or performing one from an approved lists of choices. Extensive breakdown of the creative process of working within the principles of *garapan* was not addressed, however. Application of *padat* techniques to all-night performances was not a consideration. This changed in 2009, under the direction of Purbo Asmoro and Blacius Subono.[19] The study of *garapan* techniques at ISI is now a five-semester process (63% of the four-year program) rather than a three-semester process, and includes two semesters of intense work focused specifically on actively creating *garapan*, rather than

[19] The curriculum at ISI is reviewed and revised every five years, according to Sugeng Nugroho and Purbo Asmoro. The deeper focus on *garapan* techniques was first formalized in the 2008 revision of the curriculum. For an outline of the 2013 Pedalangan ISI Surakarta Curriculum, see Appendix 5.

simply studying established *padat* scripts, or being asked to develop a script without specific training in techniques.

Direct Instruction in *Garapan* Techniques

Students at ISI since 2008, are first exposed to all-night *garapan* techniques in semester 4. Under the course title Praktek Gaya Pokok (Primary Style Practicum), a studio course that meets four times per week, students are required to master the all-night *garapan* script by Blacius Subono, *Pandhu Banjut* (*Pandhu's Life Taken By the Gods*). Students do not create anything themselves in the studio class, but rather are asked to internalize the script and the new elements presented.

In 2008, Purbo Asmoro created a two-semester course in which students are taught how to construct *garapan* elements for themselves, whether they wish to apply these to *padat* or all-night performances. Called *Garap Pakeliran I* and *II*, the point of these two courses, at least as Purbo Asmoro envisions them,[20] is to put the onus on the students themselves to create and conceptualize elements of performance practice rather than memorizing or imitating any existing script. The courses meet three times a week for two hours each session. The published course descriptions are:

Garap Pakeliran I (semester 5)

After finishing this course work, students will be able to demonstrate the various elements and implement the techniques specific to a contemporary-interpretive performance:

1. Demonstrate and implement a number of different types of *garap*ed literary techniques.
2. Demonstrate and implement a varied vocabulary of *garap*ed movement techniques that express character and theme, and that symbolize the inner workings of a character's heart.

[20] Depending on how many Pedalangan students there are in a given year, there are usually two sections of each of these courses. In Semester 5/2015, Purbo Asmoro and Wardono instructed one section, while Bambang Suwarno and Kenik Asmarawati the other. According to Purbo Asmoro as well as his students, there was a significantly different focus in the section led by Bambang Suwarno. In that particular year, Bambang Suwarno spent most of his teaching time on unusual *sulukan*, and specific movement techniques the students were asked to memorize, while Purbo Asmoro focused on development of the skills required for writing poetic narrations.

3. Demonstrate and implement a number of different types of *garap*ed musical accompaniment techniques.

Garap Pakeliran II (semester 6)

After finishing this course work, students will put together a lakon, of necessity in short duration,[21] using contemporary-interpretive performance techniques learned. Students will:

1. Identify a theme and primary conflict for the lakon.
2. Plan the lakon's path as a whole.
3. Write each scene to be presented and decide on interpretation of each character.
4. Create the narrations, movement techniques, and gamelan accompaniment score.

Hence, in the first semester students learn techniques in isolation using excerpts from a variety of lakon. In the second semester they focus on creating a lakon: from the theme and conflict, to interpretive details, scene structure, narrations, movement sequences, characterization details, and musical accompaniment.[22]

Purbo Asmoro commented in an interview at his home in August, 2015:

> We of course do not have enough time for all of this. I have to keep in mind my own goal for the students, when making choices about how to use the limited number of sessions. What is important is for them to develop independence, confidence—and mostly criteria—for stepping out on their own to create something different from the rest. It does not matter in the end whether the students apply the techniques to condensed or all-night performances, but the crucial part is that the students create rather than memorizing an existing script. These are the tools they will need for all-night *garapan* performances or for their own *padat* scripts. And they were never explicitly taught before.

Given the limited time and vast scope of the material to cover, Purbo Asmoro centers his Garap Pakeliran I course around the examination of poetic

[21] The short duration is a practical matter, so that students can have time to be coached during class. Purbo Asmoro makes it clear to students how these elements could be used in all-night performances and that the techniques are the same, either way.

[22] There is a third semester of this series, Garap Pakeliran III, which focuses on *wayang sandosa* and is taught by Blacius Subono.

narrations. He described the steps to me a number of times over the years, but was particularly detailed in an interview in May 2013:

> First I present my theories on writing effective poetic narrations in *garapan* style, because this is a very different approach from the memorizing of traditional texts they have been doing for four semesters. I explain the technique of using the physical environment of the scene as a metaphor to reflect the psychological state of the character in question. There are many other narrative techniques—we could spend a year just on techniques of poetic narratives in *garapan*—but I start with this one. I explain the qualities that we are striving for: language that is to the point with no circular repetition, and language that is condensed yet packed with meaning; clear, and yet poetic.
>
> The second step is to give them sample texts to read that use this technique: from Soemanto, from Sri Dadi [Sri Sadono mentioned in the section on Warseno Slenk], from wherever I can find them. I do not use my own texts very often, since I do not want my students to think that I am trying to use my power as their instructor to force them to imitate me. And they can find my texts in recordings all over the place if they wanted to anyway.[23] We read the sample texts together in class, texts they might not otherwise be exposed to, and I point out various aspects.
>
> Finally, I give the students each an assignment. I give them a physical environment, a character, and an emotional state, and have them write their own poetic narration for the scene. Sometimes they are working on a lakon in another class and I deliberately mold their assignment around that lakon if I can. Each student gets something different.
>
> When they come back with their work, a week or so later, this is when the interesting part starts. We sit together, as a group, and I lead a critique of what they have done. First, we need to take out the phrases that use elevated Javanese. The students usually do not yet understand that although the language in a narration should be poetic, this does not mean that the dhalang speaks to his audience in elevated Javanese. He is a story-teller. The relationship is more intimate than that. We take out *dipun*-s, for example. And there are words like *wus*, only used in wayang, that are more intimate and less elevated than *sampun* ["already"]. *Bahasa pitutur* [the language an adviser or teacher uses fondly with his disciples] is what we are looking for. Then we look for words that are repeated, and find ways to alter the vocabulary. We look for phrases not contributing to the emotional content of the scene and try to direct everything rather toward a representation of the character's current state of mind. We look for words that stick out, that don't seem right. Considering there are six to seven students in the class, getting to everyone's assignment takes time, but it is worthwhile.

[23] Over the years, I have often heard former Purbo Asmoro students beoman the fact that he never gave much of his own material to his students. It turns out, this is on purpose and meant for their own good.



Figure 9-15: Purbo Asmoro critiquing a student's narration. Garap Pakeliran I, Oct 2015, ISI Solo (photo by Kartiko Nugroho).

Purbo Asmoro described, in the August 2015 interview, how he has the students practice their narrations once they are critiqued (see Figure 9-15), putting the scene together with movement techniques and *iringan* (see Figure 9-16).

> It's when the students practice these narrations that I have the chance to present the expressive movement techniques. Sometimes I take a detour here and present a few of the standard, quintessential *padat* expressive movement sequences, such as Pak Bambang's transformation of Arjuna to Ciptaning, or Brataséna's interaction with Déwa Ruci, or Sukardi's opening presentation of the young Kunthi and Pandhu. This is also when I can give different *iringan* alternatives. Every time a student goes up to practice any scene in this process, I change the piece used. Really mostly to entertain the studio musicians more than anything else, and to prevent them from getting bored! This started, frankly, as a gesture to my studio musician friends, but it has turned out to be good for the students' repertory as well of course. By the time we get through all that, one semester is over. Yet there is so much more to get to: how to construct effective dialogue that is conflict-rich and to the point, how to construct an advice-giving segment from Semar or a god or Bisma, and much more. There is just not enough time. The second semester then focuses on theme, message, and character development, within a specific lakon that the students will work on and specialize in for the entire semester.



Figure 9-16: Purbo Asmoro demonstrating an expressive movement technique in his Garap Pakeliran I class, Oct 2015, ISI Solo (photo by Kartiko Nugroho).

Purbo Asmoro's writer's-circle technique and focus on analyzing poetic narration down to the word level is a hallmark of his teaching style, and a characteristic of his input as an adviser and jury member. His passion for the process clearly surfaces when he describes this class. I wanted to see what his students' perspectives were as well, however, and so I contacted some of them.

Students' Perspectives on Coursework with Purbo Asmoro

In September 2015, I gathered together Purbo Asmoro's current Garap Pakeliran I class, for interviews in a relaxed atmosphere at my simple weekend home in Soniten, Solo (see Figure 9-17). This gathering was well away from the ISI campus and without any ISI instructors present, in order to invite the greatest freedom of response. After 30 minutes of small talk, including the students being coaxed into joking around with my Javanese musician husband, Wakidi Dwidjomartono, to lighten the atmosphere (they all would have heard of him and one had studied under him at SMKI), we started the discussion.



Figure 9-17: Interview with five of the seven students in Purbo Asmoro's Garap Pakeliran I course, Sept 2015, at the author's home in Reksoniten, Surkarta.

All the students knew I was an avid supporter, frequent entertainment-interlude guest in, and researcher of Purbo Asmoro's performances. All had heard about, and wanted the publication Purbo Asmoro and I had recently completed together.[24] Although the students seemed shy and hesitant to get started that day in person, it turned out that all but one had been connected with me on social media sites for a number of years, and had routinely read and interacted with postings from my sites about wayang and Purbo Asmoro's work in particular. Once the discussion got started, it was lively, full of laughter, and as candid as I could have imagined.[25]

Four of the seven students in the course this particular year were sons and grandsons of dhalang in either Central or East Java, and one the son of a particularly well-known dhalang. Three of the students came to ISI as graduates of the High School of Gamelan Music (SMKI): two from the Pedalangan Department there, and one from the Karawitan Department. One

[24] All received one of the two Javanese volumes and one DVD set after the interview.

[25] There are a number of factors that would cause stiffness and reserve in such a situation: my being so much older, my being Western and a woman, my being married to a respected Javanese elder musician, and the fact that they all knew me as a *pedhalangan*-event organizer. I am sure they all assumed that I would report what they said back to Purbo Asmoro, despite my promises of confidentiality. Hence, while I take their compliments here on his courses as candid, since they chose what they wanted to comment on, I take their lack of any criticism or complaints as, while very Javanese, also perhaps holding back.

student came from a farmer's family in South Sumatra, and two from middle-class merchant families, one in Sragen and one in Jakarta. While the non-SMKI graduates, particularly the three who do not come from *pedhalangan* families, may have had quite a struggle in the first four semesters to master material, the fact they had survived to semester 5 proved their drive. As the student from Sumatra said:

> I think the language and literature of *pedhalangan* is very special and I just wanted to study it, kind of like you would study any literary tradition. I'm not going to be a practicing dhalang and I know that. But I feel like I might be able to expose the language and literature to students who know nothing about it, in coursework at the high school or university level some day.

The four from *pedhalangan* families, all practicing dhalang on some level or another, were all highly motivated to study with the renowned Ki Purbo Asmoro. It was clear from the interviews that the students appreciate his teaching style.

> **Student A**:
> Pak Purbo is different from the other instructors. He is extremely patient when working with students. I have so many deficiencies, but Pak Purbo develops a confidence in us, no matter what our background, and this is quite special and unique. We want to work hard for him. We end up doing more than we thought we could.
>
> **Student B**:
> Pak Purbo's class has a different feel from other classes. He is incredibly serious, but at the same time relaxed and jokes around with us. He demands focus from us, but at the same time is close to us. We can be free and we feel no reins on us as we experiment.
>
> **Student C**:
> Pak Purbo's class is much more about literary techniques than any other class. He also emphasizes that we must come up with interpretive details (*sanggit*) that are different from what has come before, that are creative and innovative. He teaches about movement that represents emotion and dialogue, and about the connection between movement and *iringan*—this integration has to be perfect in his mind.
>
> **Student D**:
> He always understands our questions and takes them seriously. I asked him once, "Pak, what elder dhalang portrayed Rama and Sinta in a truly romantic and personal way? Is this something the older dhalang just did not do, or what?" He took me so seriously, "Hem, who would that be..." he

> pondered as he sat at the *gendèr*. We were supposed to start class but he just kept his head down on the *gendèr* and kept saying, "Who would that be...?" Much later, when we'd all gone on to something else, he was still thinking about it! Basically we are free to ask him about anything, anything at all.
>
> **Student E**:
> I value most the sessions when we bring back our attempts at narrations. He collects them and criticizes them. Wow. It's powerful. Sometimes he takes off so unpredictably and so suddenly at the end of a class. You turn around and he's just gone. In a flash. Sometimes he goes past the time, still talking about something he feels strongly about.
>
> **Student C**:
> I used a tiny snippet from a Pak Tristuti script in mine—remember, guys? [They all laugh.] Pak Purbo listened for a few seconds and then interrupted me, eyes closed, hand up like a stop signal, and said, "Go home and try again. Someone else wrote that one." He knew right away, after only about two sentences, that it was from Pak Tristuti. Amazing. Really amazing.
>
> **Student B**:
> The students are encouraged and required to be proactive in his class. We create. We cannot be passive, we cannot use something already existing, we cannot use Pak Purbo's material or anyone else's. And when he criticizes our scripts we learn so much. It's kind of overwhelming how much we get, really.

While taking Garap Pakeliran I and II, students are also enrolled in the eight-hour per week performance practicum course, Praktek Gaya Pokok. In semester 5 and 6 this studio course is also taught by Purbo Asmoro. Rather than centering around the creative process, students in this course are expected to master two famous scripts from the golden era of ASKI's *padat* exploration: *Alap-alapan Sukèsi* (1980) by Soemanto in semester 5 and *Kunthi Pilih* (1984) by Sukardi in semester 6. In addition, students in semesters 6 and 7 take a course called Penulisan Lakon (Lakon Writing), often taught by Sugeng Nugroho, which is a theory course analyzing the techniques used in various lakon scripts by various masters. Purbo Asmoro emphasizes that the Garap Pakeliran I and II courses are at the core of developing the students into performers:

> No matter how many good examples they are given, if they are not guided through the process of trying it themselves, they will never be able to do it. Garap Pakeliran is not the study of performance. That would be

> easy—all I would have to do is bring one of my own texts from home, show them what it looks like on the screen, and tell them to reproduce it. But if we do that, they will only be able to imitate, but not understand, the techniques involved. The course is the study of a creative process. A process of examining something in a new way and creating something new.

In addition to teaching Garap Pakeliran I and II and Praktek Gaya Pokok, Purbo Asmoro also serves as an adviser and coach to students in their final semesters as they are preparing performance exams, as well as a jury member for the exams of students he does not directly advise (see Figure 9-18).



Figure 9-18: Purbo Asmoro, part of a jury during a performance exam at ISI Surakarta in 2009 (photo by Kartiko Nugroho.)

> While it may be an elevated, respected art form from our ancestors, full of high ideals and rich content, *pedhalangan* does not have to be interpreted as an artform that needs to look to the past. In fact what is far more crucial is looking at what an elevated and respected artform full of high ideals and rich content looks like when it adjusts to new developments of its era. This is what I tell my students. And more and more I find that this is why I teach (Purbo Asmoro, interview with a reporter, University of Mercu Buwana, Oct 2015, Jakarta).

TEN

CONCLUSION



Figure 10-1: Purbo Asmoro, at an interview in his home in 2009 with a visiting group of international artists.

Purbo Asmoro approaches a lakon or lakon compilation by trying to view it through different lenses than have been used in the past. He then creates a dramatic presentation that highlights this new angle, using the techniques of all-night *garapan*. As he often tells his students:

> Strive to present something different. Find something different to say, and a different way to say it. Not just for the sake of different-ness, but rather, because it is compelling—both the message and the method. Something no one has thought of before. Yet once you present it, people wonder how could it have been missed (Pétruk in *Gara-gara*, Banyuanyar, November 2015).



Figure 10-2: More of Purbo Asmoro's characteristically pensive moments, pre-performance (left, 2010) and on campus (right, 2009) It turned out that Purbo was composing a narration in those moments before the 2010 performance of *Sumantri's Life Struggles* at Sasanamulya, Solo, inspired by an interaction five minutes previous.

Striving to present aspects of a lakon in a fresh way is not new to wayang, nor unique to Purbo Asmoro. The search for original *sanggit* (interpretation) is an aspiration of every dhalang I have spoken to, heard stories about, or read about. Classical elders, however, seemed primarily to realize originality through subtle, relatively minor tweaks in story details: the reason a character may give for a certain decision, the particular circumstances of an obstacle or plot complication, the manner in which a dhalang reveals the true identity of a character in disguise. When I arrived in Solo in 1991, many highly classical dhalang still actively performing were considered notable for their original *sanggit* in specific areas of performance practice: philosophical commentary (Sutino Hardokocarito of Wonogiri), expressive movement repertory (Puspocarito of Klaten), unusual musical accompaniment (Sukron Suwondo of Blitar), gripping dialogue and conflict in court scenes (Mujoko Joko Raharjo of Boyolali and Tristuti of Solo), quirky and innovative troop departure or battle scenes (Gandadarman of Sragen). The late Nartosabdo was held up as a model of originality in the realm of musical accompaniment and scene structure. Anom Soeroto and Manteb

Soedharsono were, at the time, revolutionizing the nature of the two entertainment interludes. Manteb Soedharsono was setting a new standard for virtuosity in battle scenes. On the campus of ISI every day since the late 1970s, discussions had continued unabated on how to create *padat* scripts that were entirely reconceptualized from standard practice, as described in detail in Chapter 3.

For Purbo Asmoro though—and the dhalang who have been inspired and trained by him, such as Sigid Ariyanto and Cahyo Kuntadi—presenting the lakon in an original way is no less than a global concept. It is an essential starting point. It is not a matter of one or two interpretive points throughout the evening, or one area of expertise that is considered original. Just as the *padat* practitioner does, Purbo Asmoro starts from the vantage point of a more-or-less blank slate, and truly strives to see the lakon through new lenses from the very beginning of his process. Beyond this, he strives to express his interpretations through the repertory of *padat* techniques in narration, musical accompaniment, movement, scene structure, and character development. Yet different from the *padat* practitioner, he attempts to manage all of this originality, in both content and technique, across a seven-hour performance, and often within complex, multi-episode constructions.

Purbo Asmoro's ruminations on how to be compellingly different are built upon decades of experience. He is not only well-read (in dhalang manuals, lakon synopses, and other primary sources) but also has more than four decades of experience watching and listening to wayang. A decade in his youth of listening to radio broadcasts of Nartosabdo and Anom Soeroto was followed by two decades of watching performances by the classical masters of Solo, Klaten, Sragen, Boyolali, Wonogiri, and Sukoharjo at Rebo Legèn and in the field. His ruminations are also built upon a continuous immersion in *pedhalangan* developments. For almost four decades, he has been an active participant at ASKI-STSI-ISI, first as a student, then as an assistant instructor, and finally as a senior instructor. His daily activities on campus include not only the coursework he teaches, but also sitting in on rehearsals and exams of his advisees, being on the exam jury for almost every candidate not his advisee, and attending a wide variety of performances. In his own

performance travels across East Java, Central Java, and Jakarta, Purbo is known for spending his pre-performance time talking to musicians and other dhalang from the locality, rather than sponsors and officials, thus picking up on local developments. He attends most of the routine dhalang get-togethers around Solo, as well as sponsoring his own every 35 days on Sunday Paing. Here, dhalang discuss ideas and *sanggit*, while watching performances.

Therefore, when Purbo Asmoro aspires to have something different yet compelling to say it is a tall order, as he is well aware of the richness of interpretations both past and present. The first time he performs a new lakon, or when performing a lakon he has not thought about in years, he chooses a character, theme, message, or some sort of plot thread to address in an innovative way. In his most recent version of *The Grand Offering of the Kings* (Asmoro, 2013) he focuses less on the offering ceremony and much more on his portrayal of King Jarasandha as a force of terrorism. His performance highlights that the key to defeating Jarasandha is in understanding why he turned against the world as he did, and how he has misrepresented his belief system. In one of his most recent versions of *Rama's Crown* (Asmoro 2013), Purbo Asmoro focuses on the idea that the humble individual striving for virtue can make a difference in the world. He tied this theme directly to the relief efforts after the myriad of natural disasters that had struck Indonesia in the years previous to the recording. This is opposed to a typical, classical interpretation more about the Kurawa-Pandhawa struggle for supremacy coming up to the Baratayuda War.[1]

I have often witnessed Purbo Asmoro's struggle to find that kernel of an idea, that theme or focus which will make his interpretation different. When preparing for his premiere performance of *The Life Story of Abiyasa* at the University of Mercu Buwana in Jakarta, October 2015, he read everything he could find and spoke to many colleagues, friends, and experts. He arrived at my house in Kemang, the performance two days away, thinking about nothing else. I dug up recordings of bits of Abiyasa's story from many

[1] Both of these Lontar 2013 recordings were made from live performances in 2007. His *Sesaji Raja Suya* performances since then have been quite similar. He has created a number of different takes on *Makutharama* since then, however.

different performances by a variety of dhalang over the past decade. He would listen for a bit and then shake his head in frustration, "That's not it. That's just not it. Nothing compelling here." He woke up the morning of the performance, came out to breakfast and said, "I figured it out. Abiyasa himself played a crucial part in the fact that the Kurawa and Pandhawa never saw eye to eye. A good part of the responsibility is on him. But no one ever talks about this." He then disappeared into his room again and did not come out until it was time to go to the venue for rehearsal, this time armed with a full two-column summary of how the drama would unfold via what pieces the gamelan would play. Finding the innovative focus had clearly sparked his creative energy, and planning the rest of the performance went easily.[2]

The moment Purbo Asmoro finds what he is looking for, his all-night *garapan* style begins to serve him well. Put another way, special treatment of narration, musical accompaniment, movement techniques, and scene structure means nothing if not preceded by this initial determination of focus, theme, message, plotline detail, and character angle. This is the *gagasan pokok* principle around which Gendhon Humardani built his *pakeliran padat* movement at ASKI in the 1970s (see p. 60), and that Purbo Asmoro has remained faithful to in his all-night performances. In a single-episode lakon, this will most likely be a single universal theme or big-issue focal point. In a biography (*lakon banjaran*) Purbo Asmoro will look for a determining character trait or the effect of a pivotal event in the character's life, selecting story threads and creating bridges between threads that support the choice. In a multi-episode lakon based on chronologically adjacent stories, he will look for something—a big idea—that binds the stories together other than chronology.

He then uses techniques of the *pakeliran padat* movement, to craft dramatic hierarchy and emotional poignancy around moments in the lakon relating to his chosen focus. He begins by crafting the scene structure. The

[2] I have also seen him on many occasions reject or be disappointed in his performance of a lakon because he never did find what he was looking for. I had asked him to perform *The Life Story of Drupadi* at events of mine for many years, before he finally found the original angle he was looking for and agreed in 2014. Before performing *Gendrèh Kemasan* at SMKI in 2008 he texted me to say, "Don't expect anything special tonight. I never came up with what this lakon is really about."

theme or focus will be foremost right from the prologue (the unusual circumstances of Jarasandha's birth in *The Grand Offering of the Kings*, Arjuna's search for his role in life in *Rama's Crown*). These are moments, more often than not, that would fall in the *Pathet Sanga* section of a traditional performance. He crafts the boundaries between Prologue and *Pathet Nem*, *Pathet Nem* and *Pathet Sanga*, *Pathet Sanga* and *Pathet Manyura* with a careful eye as to how they can serve as highlights for his unique interpretation. The same is true for three other transition points: the opening to *Limbukan*, *Limbukan* to *Gara-gara*, and *Gara-gara* to the end. Never random, these transitions stand out as structural pillars in building his interpretation. He also crafts how the lakon will end, or the climactic, determining scene (Jarasandha's debate with Kresna on belief systems, Késawasidi's philosophical teachings on leadership passed on to Arjuna metaphorically as Rama's crown).

After crafting the scene structure, Purbo Asmoro determines the gamelan pieces used to highlight important emotional and structural moments. He also considers elaborate, expressive movement sequences and how the music will support these. He may also consider the variety of *wanda* (forms of wayang figures) he wishes to use, and this may in turn influence accompaniment choices or small matters of scene structure. In one of the last steps of his process, he will create narrations to emphasize the important structural and focal points, or to further communicate the inner state of a character. Sometimes these will be carefully thought out and refer to historical poems or other sources. Purbo Asmoro tends to leave these until last, however, sometimes even creating them in the car on the way to the performance, or in the green room waiting to get dressed. This is not because he is careless with literary passages, but rather, it appears to me from observation, that his mind enters the space of the lakon the closer it comes to performance time, and this is when the poetry flows. Many of Purbo Asmoro's creations feature a debate sequence (Jarasandha and Kresna's debate on religion, Kunthi and Basudéwa's debate on loyalty to child or nation) and these are developed thoughtfully, weeks before a performance.

Aside from the focal, emotionally poignant, and structurally crucial points, Purbo Asmoro allows other parts of his performances to relax, and to ebb and flow. He offers some of the more traditional visual attractions, battle scenes, and slapstick, comedic routines. In every performance, without fail, he will grant the audience two entertainment interludes, each about one hour in length and having nothing to do with the story, as is typical practice for all high-profile dhalang these days, regardless of style.

Purbo Asmoro's life's work is centered on crafting the most meaningful dramatic, narrative, musical accompaniment, and movement structures possible to explore and communicate theme and character in key moments. This was the mission of the *pakeliran padat* movement as well. But in the all-night *garapan* style, this intense treatment of theme, character, and plotline is interspersed with traditional and generic visual attractions as well as entertainment interludes. The techniques of *pakeliran padat* are used toward a specific purpose—as the tools to craft special focus or interpretative points. Many of Purbo Asmoro's colleagues, former students turned professional, and even dhalang senior to him such as Manteb Soedharsono, experiment with the use of *pakeliran padat* techniques. But very few, in fact perhaps only Sigid Ariyanto and Cahyo Kuntadi, approach the insertion of *padat* techniques into all-night wayang in the same way Purbo Asmoro does.

Having summed up what defines Purbo Asmoro's style, also interesting to encapsulate here is what he therefore rejects, and why. First and foremost, as outlined in Chapters 2, 3, and 4, he rejects the idea that quintessential classical, condensed, or *hura-hura* style performances are useful models for the future of wayang. Although he is experienced in all three, immersed in all three on a weekly basis, and his all-night *garapan* has elements of all three, he rejects them as models that stand on their own for the audiences of today.

Classical Style: Rejecting an Artifact

Purbo Asmoro grew up with classical models. He was born into a family of traditional dhalang in Pacitan, and schooled at SMKI and ASKI. From the radio, to wayang at Rebo Legèn and elsewhere, he was steeped in the

classical. To this day the classical style is, as he often says, part and parcel of his "daily fare" on campus. Teaching assignments at ISI rotate, but he often finds himself as an instructor for first-year students, who are in the process of mastering palace-classical style much as it is represented by manuals from a hundred years ago. Yet he strongly believes that this broad category of style (from palace-classical to various village styles across Klaten, Sragen, or Boyolali, to Nartosabdo-style) is only relevant for him now as a historical phenomenon.

> My performance practice stands on the structures of classical style. It references classical styles. It is encased within classical styles. Its foundations are classical styles. It can be thought of as classical style modernized if you like, as opposed to some of the other styles that are clearly outside the boundaries of anything that could be called classical. But to follow classical stylistics to the letter these days: a court audience scene complete with a full gamelan piece, generic narration that everyone knows but doesn't listen to, long *sulukan*, elaborate introductions? A major antagonist like Jarasandha only appearing for the first time at 3:00 in the morning? Exploration of the point of the lakon beginning at 3:30 in the morning with only fellow dhalang and hired facilities staff remaining in the audience? Well, as I have said over and over again in public, it is time for us to let this go. Let's give the audience something to take home from the lakon whether they leave at 10, or at midnight, or at 2 in the morning (phone conversation, Oct 2015).

All-night *garapan* is so embedded in who Purbo Asmoro is at this point, and so much more satisfying to him artistically, that he will gravitate to this style no matter what. The only real limiting factor to using his entire all-night *garapan* system, is the gamelan troupe. Yet he will sacrifice the *iringan garap* element if necessary and go ahead with all other elements being *garap*ed, rather than revert to a traditional style, if performing with a local troupe with no rehearsal time. From Seattle to Kalimantan, Purbo Asmoro has still chosen to start with a prologue, write his own narrations, use expressive movement sequences, and employ innovative story details, all to the accompaniment of *ayak-srepeg-sampak* if necessary, rather than revert to telling the story using traditional elements. *Garapan* is not determined by one element, but rather by the recrafting of the majority of elements of the performance, even if the gamelan accompaniment element has to be left out.

Condensed Style: Rejecting Art for Art's Sake

Purbo Asmoro also rejects certain philosophical points that the condensed style was built upon at ASKI in the 1970s and 1980s, whether he is performing in actual condensed format or simply using the techniques interspersed in his all-night performances. He rejects, for example, the often obscure, lengthy, dense movement sequences designed by Bambang Suwarno, in which not a word is spoken and every gesture is symbolic. Originally conceived with the ideal that movement can represent words in a more artistic and abbreviated way, these sequences are revised in Purbo's performances. They include the addition of dialogue or narration to help the viewer along. In essence, these *sabet tématik* sequences are used to deepen the expressive meaning of the moment, but not as a substitute for narrative descriptions or dialogue. This is an example of how Purbo's use of condensed techniques does not serve to abbreviate or minimalize the sequences in which he uses them but rather to lengthen and elaborate, or "thicken" them. In general, Purbo rejects the "art for art's sake" basis on which much of the *pakeliran padat* movement was based (see Chapter 3). He employs the techniques to enhance certain moments, but without being obscure or too abstract:

> We have to retain our idealism on the one hand, but we also ultimately need to be successful among the masses. This cannot be art for art's sake. A meaningful and virtuous art form [such as wayang] needs to speak to the public so that they can enjoy it and so they are in fact able to access the deep and honorable values within (*Adiluhung*, July 2015).

Hura-hura Antics Rejected as Not Worth the Time

Purbo Asmoro's initial boost into superstardom was built upon opportunities handed him by the *hura-hura* movement of the early 1990s. These started with the colossal wayang put on by Governor Ismail at the national radio station in Semarang (1990–1993), and PANTAP performances put on by Ganasidi's Sudjadi and Governor Suwardi in Semarang (1993–1998). Most importantly, sponsors in general during this period wanted extra-long entertainment interludes, extended battle scenes, and a drastically reduced emphasis on lakon content. Although he did not refuse prestigious and widely broadcast engagements with PANTAP, Purbo struck out on his own when performing

at non-PANTAP events, and espoused his own principle that lakon integrity was his priority. To this day, Purbo Asmoro is keenly aware when an engagement "smells" of the PANTAP-era aesthetics. He holds the reins tightly in such events, making sure that the entertainment interludes do not go on too long, and that stand-up comedians and other sponsor-invited attractions are kept in proportion. He has been asked to start the entertainment interludes early or to make the entire lakon's atmosphere light, yet, as of early 2016, I have never seen him stray from his ideals in these situations.

Stark Realism Rejected in Favor of the Timeless

One area of innovation that Purbo Asmoro rejects entirely is a movement toward realistic representation in wayang. He keeps his story interpretations in the world of allegory (*pasemon*, in his words), and his visual presentation in the world of symbolism. Certainly the themes he addresses are real and current (love, power, corruption, betrayal, the nature of death, the meaning of life, the environment, war, peace, motherhood, fatherhood, life's rites of passage), but he continues to use traditional tales and characters as his vehicle to address these big issues. Some dhalang, such as Enthus Susmono and Jlitheng Suparman,[3] question the feudal, out-of-date structure of the wayang world. They experiment with a new paradigm, telling stories through modern international figures such as Saddam Hussein, George Bush, or Osama bin Laden, or generic local governmental figures like Pak Camat or Pak Lurah, or other modern-day artifacts. Purbo Asmoro has often commented that these are by definition fleeting and hence not satisfying to him:

> We have everything we need in the allegory (*pasemon*) of wayang. The internet? Wayang has always had that in the *cupu manik asthagina*. Text messaging? Wayang has always had that in *aji pameling*.[4] Every emotion, every type of conflict, every human struggle, every eternal question

[3] Jlitheng Suparman, a talented dhalang and graduate of ISI Pedalangan, created *Wayang Kampung Sebelah*, which in 2015 was extremely popular both in live performance and on television. It is a wayang-based storytelling medium exploring everyday life in villages and metropolitan neighborhoods, and the conflicts between everyday people and local officials.

[4] Amulets that various wayang characters have had in their possession over time. The *cupu manik asthagina* is a kind of small looking glass one can look into that contains the entire world's essence and all its meaning. *Aji pameling* is the power to call forth and communicate with people not in your presence.

> already exists in the world of wayang. The feudal structure, the godly world of wayang—these are only allegories. As a modern dhalang I am not advocating a return to feudal interactions, or any belief system in particular, just because I tell these stories. It is all allegory. As long as audiences can access the language and the meaning and the content of the story, they will see themselves somewhere in every lakon, no matter how old-fashioned the medium may seem to some. If we start presenting wayang in a modern setting, by contrast, it will go out of date and become more trite every decade (informal gathering in Kemang, Oct 2015).

While some superstar dhalang, such as Enthus Susmono, have added elaborate realistic scene backdrops or props (trees, realistic kingdom entrances, clouds) and modern elements such as pistols, motorcycles, or cellphones, Purbo Asmoro has referred to this kind of thing as a slippery slope (interview at his home, August 2008):

> Once you start adding these elements, where are you going to stop? To an audience used to realistic tree figures and clouds and waterfalls, suddenly scenes not reflecting the actual backdrop will come to seem primitive. I prefer the *kayon*, the *kayon*, and the *kayon* always. Either the stage is elaborately decorated, or the whole world is represented by the *kayon*. I prefer the latter, in order to engage the imagination of the audience.

This being said, Purbo Asmoro, as of his December 2015 performance of *Dèwi Sri* (*The Goddess Sri*) at UGM in Yogyakarta, started experimenting with a few, limited realistic backdrops in the form of lush, greenery. He used these again in a number of performances throughout December 2015 and January 2016. It remains to be seen where he will take this new development.

Every Element in Equal Proportion

Purbo Asmoro strenuously rejects attempts to label him. He does not like to be termed an academic dhalang, a master of interpretation (*dhalang sanggit*), a master of the biographical sketch (*dhalang banjaran*), or a dhalang who excels in the area of dramatic expression. While he grew up with other dhalangs' labels, such as: *dhalang catur*, alluding to Nartosabdo's talents as an orator, *dhalang kung*, alluding to Anom Soeroto's beautiful voice, and *dhalang sabet*, alluding to Manteb Soedharsono's virtuosic talents, he strives to be a *dhalang komplit*. As he expressed through Pétruk in a performance in Banyuanyar in November 2015:

> Back when Gusti Benawa referred to me as a dhalang *sanggit*, I didn't accept this. I am not just a dhalang *sanggit*. My interpretive details would only score about a six [out of ten]. I'm also a dhalang *sabet*, but my movements only score about six. I might aspire to be a talented comedian, but no matter how hard I try I will only score about six. A dhalang needs to have it all, in even measure. No one element needs to rate 10. If they rate six, all elements should be six; if seven, all elements should score seven. There is no particular area I specialize in. Because the dhalang's interpretation, drama, poetry, movement, musical knowledge, humor, and everything else is of equal importance in a performance. If a dhalang can only interpret a lakon profoundly but can't get his audience to laugh, he doesn't really have it. If all he does is joke around but there's nothing meaningful to his performance, he doesn't really have it. If everything is deep and meaningful but his movements are horrible, that's not right either. No one element should stand out over the others. Everything works together in even measure to create the aesthetic.[5]

Ultimately it is this outlook that shapes Purbo Asmoro's all-night *garapan* style. Each element is recrafted, each element holds equal importance, and each element plays its part in underlining the greater focus or meaning the dhalang is trying to communicate. The dhalang needs to have confidence, experience, and a repertory of ideas and references with which to craft these elements. If a dhalang focuses only on startling musical accompaniment, the music will steal the focus from the poignant moments or structural points. If a dhalang becomes self-absorbed in complex narrative passages or obscure movement sequences, these will also steal the focus from the message.

Purbo Asmoro's all-night *garapan* is a holistic, integrated system—a system that Purbo strives to apply with less and less rehearsal, and within which he emphasizes the importance of his own improvisation at the screen. It is a system that combines elements of classical, condensed, and *hura-hura* wayang styles, with the intent of exploring eternal questions through the allegory of wayang. Most of all, Purbo Asmoro's *garapan* style was born, and continues to develop, as a medium meant to be compelling to contemporary audiences.

[5] Purbo Asmoro makes this point clear again in a 2015 interview with *Adiluhung* magazine (Sardjono, 2015).

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Appendix 1
ANTECEDENT TALES

The vast majority of wayang tales performed today have their origin in two ancient Indian epics, the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*, and their Javanese retellings. Below are synopses of these tales to help readers place the three lakon analyzed in this dissertation (*Kunthi Pilih*, *Makutharama*, *Sesaji Raja Suya*) within the larger plotline of the epics. Over the ages, across the oceans, and within India itself, a myriad of versions have developed through multiple retellings, but these synopses are based on a typical Central Javanese perspective of the tales.

The Mahabharata

The *Mahabharata* concerns a family feud between a set of cousins: the Pandhawa, a family of five brothers, and the Kurawa, a family of 99 boys and one girl. The Pandhawa and Kurawa, whose fathers were brothers, vie for control of the vast, prosperous, and powerful Astina Kingdom. The Pandhawa have official rights to the kingship of Astina as their father, Pandhu, was the former king and named them successors. However the Kurawa also claim rights to the kingdom, since their father was the oldest son in the family and passed over as king simply because of his blindness. Moreover, the Kurawa had temporary control over Astina in between Pandhu's death and the Pandhawa's coming of age, and thus were reluctant to relinquish power. While the Pandhawa are inspired to lead Astina so they may guide the world toward greater peace and prosperity, the Kurawa see gaining control of Astina as a way to ensure personal power and wealth. Besides the basic plot line, the *Mahabharata* deals with everything from births of the main characters to their coming-of-age rituals, marriages, and pivotal life struggles. The Pandhawa-Kurawa feud eventually erupts, due to unresolvable differences and despite numerous attempts at reconciliation, into the colossal Baratayuda War, in which there is massive bloodshed on both sides.

The *Mahabharata* dates back at least 2,500 years, with parts of it most certainly much older. According to lore, it was first orated by the poet Vyasa (grandfather of the feuding cousins) after the Baratayuda War, and was written down by the elephant-god Ganesha. True authorship is unknown but the poem is thought to be by multiple authors over time. One commonly

referenced version has 200,000 verses, 18 *parwa* (books), and about 1.8 million words, making it some 7 to 8 times longer than Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* combined.[1] The epic appears to have come to Java some 1,200 years ago, through Indian traders, traveling Brahmin priests, and the subsequent Hindu dynasties on Java. A copper plate inscription dated 907 CE describes an enactment of part of the *Mahabharata,* and what was perhaps a type of wayang performance in a village then known as Sangsang, in Central Java. King Balitung of the Mataram Kingdom had recently dedicated large plots of land to this freehold village. A public offering to the gods was held, which included a dance featuring the *Mahabharata* character Kicaka, comedy, singing, acting, story-telling, and some sort of wayang (*mawayang*) by a performer known as Galigi. The inscription even specifies that the story told was *Bhimaya Kumara*, *Bhimaya* referring to Bima and *kumara* meaning adolescent or young man. Also useful in dating the *Mahabharata* in Java is the work of Mpu Kanwa, court poet of the Airlangga Kingdom of East Java. He created the poem *Arjunawiwaha* in about 1040 CE, which explores Arjuna's spiritual coming of age, meaning that by this time the Javanese were already reworking the material of the *Mahabharata* into their own creations.

The Ramayana

The *Ramayana* is a devotional work (as opposed to the *Mahabharata* which is historically oriented), setting up the example of Rama as the ideal man, ideal husband, ideal prince, and ideal leader; and Sinta his wife as the ideal woman, ideal wife, and ideal mother of her country. Heir to the prosperous Ayodya Kingdom, Prince Rama is exiled to the forest by his stepmother to keep him away from the kingship, which she insists belongs to her own blood son, Barata. Rama not only accepts his exile but embraces it as a chance to develop himself through meditation and sacrifice. His brother, Lesmana, will not be left behind and vows to keep Rama company during his exile. Rama's young bride, Sinta, insists on going through this trial at her husband's side, too, in Dandaka Forest. The power-hungry and insatiable Rahwana (or Dasamuka), king of Alengka, discovers that a beautiful princess has settled in the Dandaka Forest and decides, for various reasons depending on the version, that he must have her. Sinta is eventually kidnapped by Rahwana and most of the rest of the epic concerns her rescue by Rama, with the help of

[1] Many thanks to Ann Hanson, Senior Research Scholar at Yale University's Department of Classics, and 1992 McArthur Fellowship recipient, for offering data to support this oft-debated comparison.

a massive army of monkey troops, led by the great and godly monkey, Anoman. Rahwana's brothers (Kumbakarna and Wibisana) face inner moral struggles throughout the epic as to whether to support their brother's aspirations or stand up to him.

The *Ramayana* consists of 24,000 verses, and probably dates back earlier than the *Mahabharata*. According to most Hindu lore, the first version was written by the poet Valmiki, who was mentor to Rama's twin sons long after the events told, and wanted them to know about their father's greatness. The epic appears to have come to Java some 1,200 years ago, in the same manner as the *Mahabharata*. The same copper-plate inscription dated 907 CE from King Balitung of Mataram's reign, describes a performer named Jaluk, who sang parts of the *Ramayana* at the same offering where *Bhimaya Kumara* was performed. Manuscripts of a Javanese retelling of the *Ramayana* by the Mataram court poet Yogiswara date from about this same time as well.

Lokapala and **Arjunasasrabau**

These relatively short story cycles have their origin in the *Kekawin Arjunawijaya* by Mpu Tantular from the 14th century Majapahit Kingdom and, before that, in the Old Javanese retelling (~990s) of the *Uttarakandha*, seventh book of the *Ramayana*. The poem *Arjunawijaya* tells of Dasamuka's struggles with his half-brother of Lokapala, as well as his attacks on King Dasarata of Ayodya and King Arjunasasrabau of Maéspati. Mangkunegaran court poet Yasadipura II created a Modern Javanese *macapat* retelling in 1819 with the title *Serat Lokapala*. In 1829 Sindusastra of Kraton Solo did the same, under the title *Serat Arjuna Wijaya* or *Serat Arjunasasrabau*. Current-day *pedhalangan* distinguishes between the "Lokapala" and "Arjunasasrabau" story cycles. While there is some overlap, the former is considered to be episodes focusing more on Dasamuka, while the latter chronicles King Arjunasasrabau's reign, including stories surrounding his minster, Sumantri.

Jawa Déwa

Referred to by various names and defined differently among dhalang, this is the repertory of Javanese lakon explaining the origins of the gods. It includes the birth, reincarnation, and various Earthly-reign episodes of gods and goddesses, such as: Naradha, Indra, Kala, Wisnu, Brahma, Surya, Ismaya, Téjamaya, Manikmaya, Sri, Durga, and Saraswati. It can also include stories of the settlement and cultivation of Java, as well as the taming of its spirits.

Appendix 2
THREE LAKON SUMMARIES

Lakon Used as Illustrations in Chapters 3–7

Kunthi Pilih (Kunthi's Choice), the episode used as an illustration in Chapters 3 and 4, falls within the basic context of the *Mahabharata*. The episodes used extensively as examples in Chapters 5–7, *Makutharama* (*Rama's Crown*) and *Sesaji Raja Suya* (*The Grand Offering of the Kings*), also both fall within the context of the *Mahabharata*. *Makutharama* refers to characters and events from the *Ramayana* as well. Summaries of these three lakon can be found here.

The *Kunthi Pilih* summary is from Tristuti's *Buku Balungan Lakon Serie, Vol 1*, 1995. The *Makutharama* and *Sesaji Raja Suya* summaries are based on Purbo Asmoro's classical treatment of each lakon in the Lontar recordings (Asmoro 2014), which in both cases is fairly standard. The general topic and characters of both of these lakon would be familiar to most educated wayang-goers, although many of the details might be sketchy in their memories. Knowledge of the typical classical treatment of each lakon will greatly enhance appreciation of the various aspects of Purbo Asmoro's all-night *garapan* style described in Chapters 5–7.

For more background on lakon *Makutharama* and lakon *Sesaji Raja Suya*, as well as Purbo Asmoro's criteria for choosing them for the documentation by Lontar, see *Rama's Crown*, Asmoro 2013, p. xix–xxviii or *The Grand Offering of the Kings*, Asmoro 2013, p. xix–xxviii.

KUNTHI PILIH
(KUNTHI'S CHOICE)

I. *PATHET NEM*: ACT ONE
***Jejer Sepisan:* Mandura Kingdom**
King Kunthiboja meets with his court. They plan a competition to determine a suitable husband for his daughter Kunthi. The one obstacle is that his daughter has refused to come out of her chambers for months now. His son, Basudéwa, is ordered to investigate.

Bedholan: The court disperses.

***Kedhaton Mandura:* The Female Quarters of Mandura**
Basudéwa discovers that his sister Kunthi is in an advanced stage of pregnancy. Her spiritual teacher, Druwasa, gave her an amulet used to call forth gods at will. She summoned the God of the Sun, and through their interaction immaculately conceived a child. Druwasa is brought in to take responsibility. He finds a way for the child to be born while keeping Kunthi's virginity intact [in many versions the baby is born through her ear], but then sends the child down the river in a container to be adopted. The child is discovered downriver by Astina's carriage driver. He and his wife immediately take in the young baby, who goes on to become the great Prince Karna. [This is sometimes acted out in a later scene, but usually simply related in a narration here.]

Limbukan: The Queen's maid servants, Cangik and her daughter Limbuk, pass the time with jokes, stories, and songs.

Pasében Njaba* and *Budhalan:
With Kunthi's troubles over, the troops prepare for the grand competition.

***Adegan Sabrang Gusèn:* The Kingdom of Plasajenar**
The rough and aggressive King Gendara is infatuated with Kunthi and has heard about the competition. He departs for Mandura, together with his younger sister Gendari, and their younger brother Harya Suman, later to be known as Sangkuni, in order to compete for Kunthi's hand.

***Prang Gagal:* A Series of Inconclusive Battles**
Gendara's forces clash with the troops of Mandura, and he temporarily retreats to the forest.

***Magakan:* Astina Kingdom**
King Abiyasa tells the young Prince Pandhu to go to Mandura and enter the competition. Pandhu departs.

II. *PATHET SANGA*: ACT TWO
***Adegan Pandhitan:* The Hermitage of Argabelah**
Ogre-priest Bagaspati is with his daughter Pujawati. Pujawati has had romantic dreams about a prince named Narasoma, and begs her father to go find him for her.

Gara-gara: Semar, and the clown-servants Pétruk, Garèng, and Bagong, are with young Narasoma, who has run away from Mandaraka Kingdom because his father is forcing him to get married before he is ready. They try to cheer him up.

Alas-alasan/Prang Kembang: As Narasoma travels through the forest, he meets up with Bagaspati. A battle ensues when Bagaspati tries to get Narasoma to come meet his daughter, but Narasoma finally capitulates.

***Adegan Sintrèn*: Argabelah Hermitage**
Narasoma is taken back to the hermitage but refuses to marry Pujawati, with the excuse that she has an ogre for a father. Bagaspati feigns a battle with Narasoma and loses on purpose. Before his death he gives his blessing to Narasoma and hands him an heirloom amulet. If Narasoma is ever in danger a tiny ogre spirit will emerge from the amulet and join him in battle. If the single ogre is killed two more will emerge, if they are killed four more will emerge, if they are killed eight more, and on exponentially until Narasoma is victorious.

Mandaraka Kingdom*:*
Narasoma returns to Mandaraka with his new wife, Pujawati. When his father finds out that he attained his wife by killing a priest, he is incensed and throws his son out. This time when Narasoma leaves, his little sister Madrim insists on going with him, but Narasoma has departed too quickly. Pujawati and Madrim find themselves alone in the forest unable to keep up with him.

III. *PATHET MANYURA*: ACT THREE
Adegan Manyura: **The Kingdom of Mandura**
The competitors arrive one by one, parading before Kunthi and her father. She is uninterested until she sees Narasoma, who has stumbled across the competition with Pujawati and Madrim not far behind. Pandhu arrives around the same time from Astina. A battle ensues between Pandhu and Narasoma, which Pandhu wins. Pandhu attains both Kunthi and Madrim. Narasoma (the future King Salya of Mandaraka) and Pujawati (the future Queen Setyawati) go off together to try to make amends with his father.

Candhakan/Prang Tandhing: **In the Forest/Final Battle**
On his way back to Astina with Madrim and Kunthi in tow, Pandhu runs into King Gendara, and is challenged to hand over Kunthi. Gendara loses the battle. Pandhu thus goes back to Astina with Kunthi, Madrim, and Gendari. Harya Suman decides to join them rather than return to Plasajenar.

***Adegan Tancep Kayon*: Astina Kingdom**
Back in Astina, Pandhu offers the three women to his older brother, the blind Dhestarata. Dhestarata chooses Gendari and allows Pandhu to keep Kunthi and Madrim. He also grants his new brother-in-law, Harya Suman, a position in the Astina court.

MAKUTHARAMA
(RAMA'S CROWN)

I. *PATHET NEM:* ACT ONE
***Jejer Sepisan:* Astina Kingdom**
King Duryudana meets with his court. He explains a recent dream he had, that a boon will soon be handed down by the gods to a worthy leader. This boon is known as the Legacy of Rama's Crown, and will encapsulate all the wisdom of leadership that King Rama of yore possessed. Duryudana wishes to attain the boon but is concerned that Arjuna will also be in competition for the gift, and worries he is not the appropriate match for any test against Arjuna. Sangkuni advises him that Karna would be a perfect candidate to go in his place to Kutharungga Hermitage, where the boon will be awarded.

***Dhayohan:* Another Court Member Called In**
Karna is called in and told of his mission, which is to go to Mount Swélagiri in Kutharunggu Hermitage to await the announcement. A sage, as a servant of the gods, will be there to determine the worthy candidate.

Bedholan: The court disperses.

Kedhaton Astina: **The Female Quarters in Astina**
King Duryudana retires to Queen Banowati's chambers and tells his wife what transpired in the court audience, before dining.

Limbukan: The Queen's maid servants, Cangik and her daughter Limbuk, pass the time with jokes, stories, and songs as they wait for the King and Queen to finish their meal.

Pasében Njaba* and *Budhalan:
Sangkuni gathers the troops to explain the mission. The Kurawa depart to support Karna.

***Adegan Sabrang Alus:* Kutharunggu Hermitage**
The sage Késawasidi, who has been told by the gods to await a worthy candidate, discusses the heavy responsibility with his disciples: Anoman (the white-furred monkey god), Jajalwreka (an ogre), Mahambira (a *garudha* bird), Situbanda (an elephant), and Kuwara (a serpent). All five apprentices are reincarnations of the God of the Wind. Késawasidi retreats to meditate, leaving Anoman in charge. Suddenly Karna and the Kurawa troops arrive, demanding to see the sage Késawasidi and be given The Legacy of Rama's Crown.

***Prang Gagal*: A Series of Inconclusive Battles**
When Anoman refuses to allow them through, battles ensue. Neither side is victorious. The Kurawa retreat after Anoman is able to intercept Karna's most prized heirloom weapon, the *kunta wijayandanu* arrow.

***Magakan:* Candramanik Hermitage**
The elderly ascetic, Wibisana, still alive from the days of the *Ramayana*, is in his mountain hermitage when his son, Bisawarna, pays a visit. After a short

discussion on how Singgelapura Principality is faring with Bisawarna as their new young leader, Wibisana announces to his son that his time has come to leave the earthly realm. Bisawarna is given advice on leadership, and told to leave his father alone to meditate.

In comes Wibisana's older brother, Kumbakarna, who is suffering in a middle-world hell. After being killed in the final days of the war between Dasamuka against Rama and Anoman's monkey army, Kumbakarna's soul has been unable to rest. He comes to his brother Wibisana for advice, who tells him to reincarnate into a strong and virtuous warrior in order to find peace.

After Kumbakarna's spirit leaves, Wibisana focuses on his desire to leave the earthly realm. Four ogres emerge from his body, symbolizing the human emotions of greed, pleasure, anger, and gluttony. Once these are released, Wibisana leaves the Earth and disappears into the afterlife.

II. *PATHET SANGA:* ACT TWO

***Adegan Satriya ing Wana:* A Prince in the Forest**

Arjuna is meditating in the forest, asking the gods for his direction in life. He receives a vision of the boon, known as The Legacy of Rama's Crown, being handed down to a worthy mortal.

Gara-gara: Semar, Pétruk, Garèng, and Bagong entertain themselves while waiting for Arjuna.

Alas-alasan/Prang Kembang: Arjuna breaks his meditation and begins traveling down the mountainside and through villages and rice fields. He meets up with the four desires who had been released from Wibisana, who challenge his inner peace through a series of battles.

***Adegan Sintrèn:* Sembadra in the Forest**

Sembadra is searching for Arjuna, who has been away from his principality in Madukara for a very long time. The messenger god Naradha comes down from the heavens to assist her. Naradha transforms Sembadra into a young prince, Sintawaka, so that she can continue to question people about his whereabouts without arousing suspicion.

III. *PATHET MANYURA*: ACT THREE

***Adegan Manyura:* The Kingdom of Amarta**

King Puntadéwa is also concerned about Arjuna's whereabouts. Bima and Gathutkaca depart on a search.

***Candhakan:* In the Duryapura Forest**

Arjuna approaches Kutharunggu and is accosted by the five apprentices of the God of the Wind, who question him one by one about his motives.

***Adegan Manyura*: Kutharunggu Hermitage**

Késawasidi meets with Kumbakarna, who asks about the strong warrior his brother had referred to. Suddenly in comes Anoman, presenting Karna's *wijayandanu* arrow as a battle prize. Késawasidi tells Anoman it was not honorable to steal Karna's most precious heirloom. He takes possession of the arrow and orders Anoman away from the hermitage.

Arjuna enters, and Késawasidi tests his moral strength by offering him the *wijayandanu* arrow, claiming that it holds The Legacy of Rama's Crown within. When Arjuna refuses, Késawasidi knows that he is the worthy mortal the gods have been looking for.[1] Késawasidi takes Arjuna into the meditation chambers and passes on the teachings of Rama's Crown: a set of guidelines on how to be a wise, benevolent, and powerful leader. Arjuna is then told to return the *wijayandanu* arrow to Karna. Upon Arjuna's departure, Késawasidi transforms back into his original form: Kresna.

Candhakan: Arjuna meets with Karna and returns the arrow. He also runs into the mysterious Sintawaka and battles him until forcing the transformation back into his wife, Sembadra.

***Prang Tandhing*: Grand Final Battle**
Kumbakarna finally finds Bima and knows that this is the strong warrior he was looking for. He engages in a battle, his spirit is defeated, and he reincarnates into Bima's thigh, affording Bima even more power than he had.

***Adegan Tancep Kayon*: Amarta Kingdom**
King Puntadéwa, Semar, and all of the Pandhawa gather for some final words of wisdom.

[1] This interpretation is unique to Purbo Asmoro.

SESAJI RAJA SUYA
(THE GRAND OFFERING OF THE KINGS)

I. *PATHET NEM:* ACT ONE

***Jejer Sepisan:* Dwarawati Kingdom**

King Kresna receives a visit by his older brother from Mandura, King Baladéwa. Both kings are concerned at the recent aggressive acts by a relatively unknown foreign leader, King Jarasandha of Giribajra. Kresna has heard that Jarasandha plans to carry out a massive black-magic ceremony, known as *sesaji lodra*, in which he will slaughter 100 kings and colonize their countries, amassing unheard of territory and power by force.

***Dhayohan:* A Guest Arrives**

Bima arrives as a messenger from King Puntadéwa in Amarta. The Pandhawa are planning on staging a grand ceremony of goodwill, known as *sesaji raja suya*. The Pandhawa wish to offer thanks to the many who assisted them recently in the struggle to attain their new nation, Amarta. They also wish to support their father Pandhu spiritually, because he is suffering under a curse in the afterlife. Kresna reminds Bima that *sesaji raja suya* will not be easy. It requires the active support of 100 friendly nations, the presence of numerous priests and sages, and rare offerings.[2] At this point Kresna reveals that Jarasandha has already defeated 97 of the 100 targeted kings. This infuriates both Bima and Baladéwa, but everyone is steadfast in their intent to help the Pandhawa with the *sesaji raja suya*. Kresna and Baladéwa both agree to attend the ceremony.

Bedholan: The court disperses.

Kedhaton Dwarawati: **The Female Quarters in Dwarawati**

King Kresna retires to Queen Jembawati's chambers and tells his wife what transpired in the court audience, before dining.

Limbukan: The Queen's maid servants, Cangik and her daughter Limbuk, pass the time with jokes, stories, and songs as they wait for the King and Queen to finish their meal.

Pasében Njaba* and *Budhalan:

Baladéwa meets with his ministers and orders the troops to depart for Amarta, where they will all support the *sesaji raja suya*.

***Adegan Sabrang Gusèn:* The Kingdom of Bata Sarémbag**

Troops from Bata Sarémbag, an ally of Jarasandha, are already poised outside Dwarawati ready to attack. The semi-ogre twin leaders of the nation, King

[2] Here Purbo Asmoro's interpretation veers far from tradition, even in his classical performance. In the typical version, the *raja suya* offering ceremony has four requirements: the support of 100 kings, the presence of numerous priests and sages, a number of rare offerings, and, finally, a human sacrifice that represents evil (in this case, Jarasandha). Purbo Asmoro refuses to perform this version, as he cannot reconcile how the Pandhawa and Kresna would abide by such a requirement. Jarasandha's eventual death, in his version, is a separate matter and not something the Pandhawa are seeking out in order to fulfill the requirements of their ceremony.

Hamsa and King Dhimbaka, meet with their comedic companions, Togog and Bilung. Hamsa orders the troops to mobilize against Dwarawati, so the troops of Bata Sarémbag depart.

Prang Gagal: **A Series of Inconclusive Battles**
As the troops from Dwarawati and Mandura depart for Amarta, they run into the troops from Bata Sarémbag and battles ensue. Baladéwa is able to defeat King Hamsa and King Dhimbaka in one move, by smashing their heads together.

Magakan: **Astina Kingdom**
King Duryudana meets with his ally, King Supala, of Cèdhi. Supala holds a lifelong grudge against Kresna, and he knows that Duryudana holds the same against his Pandhawa cousins. When they both receive invitations to support the *sesaji raja suya*, they decide to find a way to disrupt the proceedings.

II. ***PATHET SANGA:*** **ACT TWO**
Adegan Satriya ing Wana: **A Prince in the Forest**
Arjuna is meditating in the forest, asking the powers that be for strength and success in the *sesaji raja suya*.

Gara-gara: Semar, Pétruk, Garèng, and Bagong entertain themselves as they are waiting for Arjuna to complete his meditation.

Alas-alasan/Prang Kembang: Arjuna starts his way down the mountain to return home, and runs into a series of forest ogres who challenge his inner and outer strength. Arjuna then meets up with Kresna and Bima, who are returning from the battle with Hamsa and Dhimbaka. The three of them decide that the only thing to do is to confront Jarasandha directly, in Giribajra.

Candhakan: **Mount Cetiyaka**
At one of the entrances to Giribajra Kingdom, Kresna, Bima, and Arjuna face an obstacle, in the form of a wailing drum. Kresna explains that when Jarasandha was young he was born deformed, in two pieces. His father discarded the pieces of flesh in the forest. A forest ogress found them and magically melded his two pieces into one. He went searching for the father who had discarded him, King Brihadrata. When he found him, Jarasandha's temper exploded. He attacked his father, killed him, ripped off his skin, and made the skin into a drum to guard the kingdom. The spirit of his father, trapped in the skin, is what wails whenever anyone comes near the kingdom.

Arjuna pierces the skin with his arrow, releasing Brihadrata's spirit. The three continue on, with Kresna and Bima assigned to scout out Jarasandha's whereabouts and Arjuna told to go to the female quarters to see what he can find out about Jarasandha's weaknesses.

III. ***PATHET MANYURA:*** **ACT THREE**
Adegan Manyura: **The Female Quarters of Giribajra**
Arjuna enters Queen Rantamsari's quarters with caution, just as she is making a private vow, begging for release from her aggressive and rough husband. She

utters a promise to marry the person who can save her, just as Arjuna comes in. Arjuna vows to help defeat Jarasandha.[3]

***Adegan Manyura:* Giribajra Kingdom**
King Jarasandha is with his son, Jayatséna, when a maidservant comes in to say there is a strange man in Queen Rantamsari's quarters. Jarasandha is infuriated, but at that moment Kresna, Bima, and Arjuna enter, disguised as sages. Jarasandha is infamous for despising virtuous kings and princes, but having respect for men of deep faith. Kresna slowly lures Jarasandha into a discussion about the *sesaji lodra* and tries to convince him to give it up. When this fails they drop their disguises, and Bima takes over.

***Prang Tandhing*: Grand Final Battle**
Bima engages in battle with Jarasandha and is able to defeat him once he realizes that Jarasandha is actually two pieces of human spliced into one. He strikes at the splice in between his two parts, and Jarasandha dies instantly. His son, Jayatséna, orders all 97 kings released.

***Adegan Manyura*: Amarta Kingdom**
Great-granduncle Matswapati presides over the *sesaji raja suya*, as everyone gathers. The 97 kings give their support, so the Pandhawa easily have the 100 they need, as well as the sages and offerings. Both King Puntadéwa and King Kresna are sworn in as great and virtuous leaders.

Suddenly, King Supala bursts in. He mocks the anointment of Kresna as "great and virtuous." He tells his story: when young, Supala was born deformed. His father vowed that whoever could heal him would have authority over his life always. Kresna was able to heal Supala, and was given the power to make decisions about Supala's life. Although he had never used these powers, Supala resented him greatly for it and found every opportunity to challenge Kresna.

On this occasion, Kresna stands up and announces to the gathering that Supala has gone too far in disturbing such an auspicious ceremony. He attacks Supala with his heirloom *cakra* and kills him. Meanwhile Duryudana comes in, drunk and enraged at the Pandhawa's success, and vows, one day, to find a way to destroy his cousins, once and for all.

***Adegan Tancep Kayon*: Final Scene**
Matswapati gives some final words of advice and good wishes.

[3] Rantamsari plays a prominent role in both Nartosabdo and Mujoko Joko Raharjo's versions of this lakon, but she does not appear in many classical treatments of *Sesaji Raja Suya*.

Appendix 3
LAKON TITLES AND THEIR TRANSLATIONS

The lakon titles listed below, appear in this dissertation. Some of the titles, for certain contextual reasons, may only appear in English, hence this guide.

English translation	**Javanese original**
Abilawa the Butcher's Son	Jagal Abilawa
Anoman as Emissary	Anoman Duta
Arjuna in Meditation	Ciptaning
Arjuna is Hidden Away	Arjuna Piningit
Bima as Sage	Bima Suci
Birth of ..., The (applies to any character)	Lairé ... (applies to any character)
Building a Temple in Saptaarga	Mbangun Candhi Saptaarga
Burning of the Villa, The	Balé Sigala-Gala
Cakraningrat Boon, The	Wahyu Cakraningrat
Clearing of the Wanamarta Forest	Babad Wanamarta
Coronation of Parikesit, The	Parikesit Winisudha
Darkness over Astina Lifts, The	Sumilaking Pedhut Astina
Fall of Alengka, The	Brubuh Alengka
Fall of Astina, The	Brubuh Astina
Gandamana is Buried Alive	Gandamana Luweng
God Ruci, The	Déwa Ruci
Grand Offering of the Kings, The	Sesaji Raja Suya
Incident in Wiratha, The	Wiratha Parwa
Janaka and the Pool of Water	Janaka Sendhang
Janaka and the *Pudhak* Flower	Janaka Pudhak
Karna Becomes King	Karna Ratu
Karna Rejects His Heirlooms	Karna Ngrasuk
Karna's Final Challenge	Karna Tandhing
Kresna as Emissary	Kresna Duta
Kunthi's Choice	Kunthi Pilih
Life Story of ..., The (applies to any character)	Banjaran ... (applies to any character)
Mustakawèni the Thief	Mustakawèni Maling
Pandhawa's Release from the World	Pandhawa Muksa
Pandhawa Wander in Penance, The	Pandhawa Puter Puja
Pandhu's Afterlife	Pandhu Swarga (Déwa Amral)
Parta's (Arjuna's) Marriage	Parta Krama
Pétruk Becomes King	Pétruk Dadi Ratu
Rama Bridges the Waters	Rama Tambak
Rama's Crown	Makutharama
Semar is Enlisted	Semar Boyong
Seven Descendants of the God of the Wind	Tumuruning Bayu Pitu
Sinta Is Kidnapped	Sinta Colong
Students of Sokalima Compete, The	Pandadaran Siswa Sokalima
Sudarsana is Amputated	Sudarsana Kethok
Sukèsi's Hand in Marriage Contested	Alap-alapan Sukèsi
Sumantri Apprentices	Sumantri Ngèngèr
Takeover of Ayodya, The	Bedhahé Ayodya
Takeover of Lokapala, The	Bedhahé Lokapala
Yearning Carries with it Misjudgment	Mélik Nggéndhong Lali (Alap2an Sukèsi)

Appendix 3: Lakon Titles and Their Translations

Javanese original	English translation
Alap-alapan Sukèsi	Sukèsi's Hand in Marriage Contested
Anoman Duta	Anoman as Emissary
Arjuna Piningit	Arjuna is Hidden Away
Babad Wanamarta	The Clearing of the Wanamarta Forest
Balé Sigala-Gala	The Burning of the Villa
Banjaran ... (applies to any character)	The Life Story of ... (applies to any character)
Bedhahé Ayodya	The Takeover of Ayodya
Bedhahé Lokapala	The Takeover of Lokapala
Bima Suci	Bima as Sage
Brubuh Alengka	The Fall of Alengka
Brubuh Astina	The Fall of Astina
Ciptaning	Arjuna in Meditation
Déwa Amral (see Pandhu Swargi)	Pandhu's Afterlife
Déwa Ruci	The God Ruci
Gandamana Luweng	Gandamana is Buried Alive
Jagal Abilawa	Abilawa the Butcher's Son
Janaka Pudhak	Janaka and the *Pudhak* Flower
Janaka Sendhang	Janaka and the Pool of Water
Karna Ngrasuk	Karna Rejects His Heirlooms
Karna Ratu	Karna Becomes King
Karna Tandhing	Karna's Final Challenge
Kresna Duta	Kresna As Emissary
Kunthi Pilih	Kunthi's Choice
Lairé ... (applies to any character)	The Birth of ... (applies to any character)
Makutharama	Rama's Crown
Mbangun Candhi Saptaarga	Building a Temple in Saptaarga
Mélik Nggéndhong Lali (Alap2an Sukèsi)	Yearning Carries with it Misjudgment
Mustakawèni Maling	Mustakawèni the Thief
Pandadaran Siswa Sokalima	The Students of Sokalima Compete
Pandhawa Muksa	Pandhawa's Release from the World
Pandhawa Puter Puja	The Pandhawa Wander in Penance
Pandhu Swarga (Déwa Amral)	Pandhu's Afterlife
Parikesit Winisudha	The Coronation of Parikesit
Parta Krama	Parta's (Arjuna's) Marriage
Pétruk Dadi Ratu	Pétruk Becomes King
Rama Tambak	Rama Bridges the Waters
Semar Boyong	Semar is Enlisted
Sesaji Raja Suya	The Grand Offering of the Kings
Sinta Colong	Sinta is Kidnapped
Sudarsana Kethok	Sudarsana is Amputated
Sumantri Ngèngèr	Sumantri Apprentices
Sumilaking Pedhut Astina	The Darkness over Astina Lifts
Tumuruning Bayu Pitu	Seven Descendants of the God of the Wind
Wahyu Cakraningrat	The Cakraningrat Boon
Wiratha Parwa	The Incident in Wiratha

Appendix 4
DATA ON 40 PROLOGUES USED IN CHAPTER 6

Below are the 40 all-night *garapan* performances of single-episode lakon by Purbo Asmoro, 2005–2015, that were used as data on prologues for Chapter 6.

	lakon	English translation	date	location	troupe
1	*Kunthi Pilih*	*Kunthi's Choice*	2005 Feb 2	Nganjuk	Mayangkara
2	*Mélik Nggéndhong Lali*	*Yearning Carries with it Misjudgment*	2005 Apr 23	Solo	Mayangkara
3	*Sri Mulih*	*The Goddess Sri Returns*	2005 Apr 30	Yogya	Mayangkara
4	*Anggada Duta*	*Anggada as Emissary*	2005 Aug 18	Nganjuk	Mayangkara
5	*Gandamana Luweng*	*Gandamana is Buried Alive*	2005 Aug 25	Nganjuk	Mayangkara
6	*Cupu Manik Asthagina*	*The Asthagina Looking Glass*	2006 Jan 21	Jakarta	Dwidjolaras
7	*Sumantri Ngèngèr*	*Sumantri Apprentices*	2006 Aug 3	Wonogiri	Mayangkara
8	*Palgunadi*	*Palgunadi*	2006 Sept 2	Solo	Mayangkara
9	*Makutharama (version A)*	*Rama's Crown*	2007 Oct 27	Pacitan	Mayangkara
10	*Sesaji Raja Suya*	*The Grand Offering of the Kings*	2007 Nov 24	Pacitan	Mayangkara
11	*Kembang Déwa Retna*	*The Déwa Retna Flower*	2008 Mar 7	Nganjuk	Mayangkara
12	*Kangsa Adu Jago*	*Kangsa's Match*	2008 Mar 15	Solo	Mayangkara
13	*Sakuntala*	*Sakuntala*	2008 May 19	Solo	Mayangkara
14	*Wahyu Tri Manggala*	*The Triple Boon to Greatness*	2008 July 6	Yogya	Mayangkara
15	*Ciptaning*	*Arjuna in Meditation*	2008 Oct 23	Sukoharjo	Mayangkara
16	*Wahyu Cakraningrat*	*The Cakraningrat Boon*	2009 Dec 17	Yogya	Mayangkara
17	*Rama Tambak*	*Rama Bridges the Waters*	2010 Apr 2	Jakarta	Dwidjolaras
18	*Semar Boyong*	*Semar is Enlisted*	2010 Apr 20	Klaten	ISI Solo
19	*Mbangun Astina*	*The Building of Astina*	2010 Apr 29	Pengging	ISI Solo
20	*Parikesit Jumeneng Nata*	*The Coronation of Parikesit*	2010 Nov 12	Trenggalek	Mayangkara
21	*Rama Gandrung*	*Rama out of His Mind*	2010 Feb 10	Solo	Mayangkara

Appendix 4: Data on 40 Prologues

22	*Déwa Ruci*	*The God Ruci*	2011 June 1	Solo	ISI Solo
23	*Semar Mbangun Kahyangan*	*Semar Builds His Own Heavens*	2011 Aug 17	Sukoharjo	Mayangkara
24	*Wahyu Cempaka Mulya*	*Cempaka Flower Boon of Prosperity*	2011 Sept 4	Praci	Mayangkara
25	*Anoman Duta*	*Anoman as Emissary*	2011 Dec 10	Jakarta	Dwidjolaras
26	*Kresna Gugah*	*Kresna Awakened*	2012 June 2	Tulungagung	Mayangkara
27	*Narayana Bégal*	*Narayana is Intercepted*	2012 July 13	Jakarta	Dwidjolaras
28	*Kikis Tunggarana*	*The Tunggarana Border Dispute*	2012 Aug 25	Cepu	Mayangkara
29	*Sudamala*	*Sudamala (Nakula as Priest)*	2012 Dec 12	Solo	Mayangkara
30	*Arjuna Jelur*	*Arjuna Jelur*	2013 Jan 6	Kartosuro	Mayangkara
31	*Mbangun Candhi Saptaarga*	*Building a Temple in Saptaarga*	2013 Feb 15	Rembang	Mayangkara
32	*Pandhu Swarga*	*Pandhu's Afterlife*	2013 Aug 26	Kediri	Mayangkara
33	*Karna Ratu*	*Karna Becomes King*	2013 Nov 9	Sragen	Mayangkara
34	*Wahyu Purbakayun*	*The Boon of Control over Desire*	2014 Feb 19	Pacitan	Mayangkara
35	*Sudarsana Kethok*	*Sudarsana is Amputated*	2014 Mar 1	Solo	Mayangkara
36	*Sugriwa-Subali*	*Sugriwa-Subali*	2014 Mar 15	Solo	Mayangkara
37	*Kresna Duta*	*Kresna as Emissary*	2014 Nov 29	Tulungagung	Mayangkara
38	*Makutharama (version B)*	*Rama's Crown*	2014 Dec 4	Kediri	Mayangkara
39	*Anoman Maneges*	*Anoman's Spiritual Struggles*	2015 Feb 25	Nganjuk	local group
40	*Bedhahé Lokapala*	*The Takeover of Lokapala*	2015 Mar 7	Yogya	Mayangkara

Appendix 5
CURRICULUM OUTLINE: ISI SOLO PEDALANGAN
(2013 edition, reviewed every five years)

COURSES IN: THE CREATION OF A WORK		
Course	Credits	Semesters
Primary-style Performance Studio (at ISI Solo, Solo-style *wayang kulit purwa*)	28	I-II-III-IV (classical, all-night) V (*ringkas*), VI (*padat*)
Recrafting Performance Elements (*Garap Pakeliran* I–II)	3–6	V-VI
Gamelan Accompaniment	10	I-II-III
Yogya-style Performance-Practice	3	V
Golèk Ménak-style Performance-Practice	2	VI
East Java-style Performance-Practice	2	VII
Wayang Sandosa (*Garap Pakeliran* III)	3	VII (performance majors only)
Lakon-Writing Course	3–6	VI-VII
Research Techniques	3–9	V-VI-VII
Theater Studies/Dramatic Techniques	3	V
Lighting and Sound Techniques	3	VII
Final Performance or Thesis Consultations	3	VII
Final Performance or Thesis Supervision	6	VIII

COURSES IN: THEORY AND EXPERTISE		
Course	Credits	Semesters
Pedalangan Theory	12	I-II-III-IV
The Language of Pedalangan	3	III
The Literature of Pedalangan	3	IV
The History of Pedalangan	3	V
Aesthetics in Pedalangan	3	IV
Criticism in Pedalangan	3	VI
Pedalangan Seminar	3	VII
Indonesian Performing Arts	3	II
Survey of Indonesian Arts	3	I
Multimedia Studies	3	I
Epistemology	2	III
Psychology	3	III
Cultural Anthropology	3	VI (non performance majors only)

Appendix 5: Curriculum Outline: ISI Pedalangan

COURSES IN: PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT		
Course	Credits	Semesters
Religious Studies	2	I
Pancasila Studies	2	II
Civics	2	II
Indonesian	2	I
English	2	II

COURSES IN: ARTS IMPLEMENTATION		
Course	Credits	Semesters
Aesthetics in Indonesian Culture	3	IV
Entrepreneurship	3	IV
Arts Management	3	III

COURSES IN: SOCIETAL ISSUES		
Course	Credits	Semesters
Government	2	I-II-III-IV
Intellectual Property Rights	3	II
Sociology of Culture	3	IV

NOTE:
This information is compiled from a curriculum packet lent to me by both Sugeng Nugroho and Purbo Asmoro, independently. (Purbo Asmoro had it right in the briefcase that he takes to and from campus everyday, and was able to lend it to me the very day I requested it—rare for him to have something immediately on hand.) In one section of the packet the courses were listed, using the same categories above. I simply translated the names of courses and the categories into English. In other parts of the curriculum packet the number of credits per course were cited, and yet another section noted which semesters the courses were taught. I put all the information together in one chart here. When there is a range of credit options:

- students giving a performance as their final exam are required to take the higher number of credits when the course is performance-related
- students writing a thesis take the higher number of credits when the course is more academic, research-based

Appendix 6

PURBO ASMORO'S 100 INFLUENCES (2008)

> The following is an entry I wrote for Purbo Asmoro's website in 2008,[1] reflecting one of the most unusual text messaging interactions I ever had with him. The data within is useful in completing the picture of how Purbo Asmoro developed into the artist he was in 2008. The data would look slightly different if he were to go through the same exercise in 2015, or after any 5-10 year interval had passed in his artistic development.

Usually when asked by reporters and researchers who his idols or teachers are, or who has influenced his style the most, Purbo Asmoro shakes his head and says one of the following (and I'm paraphrasing answers I have heard):

"I couldn't even begin to say—there are so many," or "I take away something from absolutely everyone and everything I come in contact with," or "No dhalang should be asked to identify an idol—we all build our style from a wide range of influences." I've never even heard him follow those statements with a qualifying "however…" and a subsequent list of a few important forces in his life. But one day, I decided to press him on this. I asked him to list the "everyone and everything," even if the list ended up being 20 to 30 items long. Well, in a fast and furious string of text messages, he was able to, without hesitation, identify **seventy-six** artists who have strongly influenced his work. A few hours later he contacted me with **twenty** more, and then finally **four** more. In the space of one day he had supplied a list of 100 influences. At times, another name would come up and he would immediately weed out one. I did not initiate the idea of 100, but he kept asking me, "How many is that so far?" He was clearly interested in the idea of being able to prioritize the list to a neat 100.

The very same week, when he realized from my expression of great interest that I might use the data, Purbo Asmoro requested that I list the resulting 100 names in an approximate "order of seniority," which he then offered. I list here only the affiliation or connection that Purbo Asmoro mentioned to me, in the final order he arranged, and with the spelling he gave as well. Any member of the artistic community in Solo elicits multiple associations depending on the context, but noted here is the affiliation meaningful to Purbo Asmoro, in that moment in time, in 2008.

[1] Purbo Asmoro's website (www.purboasmoro.com) has since been updated and I did not include this entry in the update, since it is from 2008.

Appendix 6: Purbo Asmoro's 100 Influences

1. **Padmatjarito** (ASKI instructor, Bambang Suwarno's father)
2. **Sutrisno** (ASKI instructor)
3. **Darsamartana** (ASKI instructor)
4. **Suratna Gunawiharjo** (author of performance manuals used at SMKI)
5. **Nartosabdo** (legendary superstar dhalang, musician, composer, 1960s–1980s)
6. **Gandamargana** (artisan in Kartosuro, Purbo Asmoro was his apprentice)
7. **Gandakamiyana** (dhalang from Sukoharjo, Rebo Legèn community)
8. **Samsudin Proboharjana** (author of performance manuals used at ASKI)
9. **Suratno** (instructor at PDMN)
10. **Suyatno** (instructor at PDMN)
11. **Darsana** (instructor at PDMN)
12. **Gendhon Humardani** (founder of the *pakeliran padat* movement)
13. **Gandasaraya** (instructor at SMKI, Rahayu Supanggah's father)
14. **Pringgasatoto** (instructor at ASKI)
15. **Sangkana Ciptawardaya**
16. **Gandawijaya** (Ganda "Maktal," dhalang from Klaten, Rebo Legèn community)
17. **Gandabuwana** (dhalang from Klaten/Madiun, Rebo Legèn community)
18. **Naryacarito** (dhalang from Kartosuro, instructor at ASKI)
19. **Darman Gandadarsono** (dhalang from Klaten/Sragen, Rebo Legèn community)
20. **Ganda Tukas** (dhalang from Klaten, Rebo Legèn community)
21. **Slamet Sutikna** (dhalang from Klaten, Rebo Legèn community)
22. **Kesdik Kesdalamono** (dhalang from Klaten, Rebo Legèn community)
23. **Pringga** (Gandadarman's younger brother, Rebo Legèn community)
24. **Sri Kamto** (instructor at SMKI)
25. **Subantar** (instructor at SMKI)
26. **Poniran** (instructor at SMKI)
27. **Minarno** (instructor at SMKI)
28. **Painem** (Purbo Asmoro's grandmother)
29. **Dhamiri Soemarno** (Purbo Asmoro's father)
30. **Jarno Atmagunardo** (dhalang from Wonogiri, Rebo Legèn community)
31. **Jali** (Kesdik's younger brother, dhalang from Klaten, Rebo Legèn community)
32. **Harjoko Joko Pandoyo "Mokaton"** (dhalang Klaten, Rebo Legèn community)
33. **Puspacarito** (dhalang from Klaten, Rebo Legèn community)
34. **Kasno "bendhul" [Sukasno Mudhocarito]** (Solo, Rebo Legèn community)
35. **Mujoko Joko Raharjo** (dhalang from Boyolali, Rebo Legèn community)
36. **Hadisugito** (dhalang from Yogyakarta)
37. **Suharni** (dhalang from Sragen, Rebo Legèn community)
38. **Tristuti Suryasaputra** (Rebo Legèn community, dhalang, script-writer)
39. **Panut Dharmoko** (dhalang from Nganjuk, Rebo Legèn community)
40. **Timbul Hadi Prayitno** (dhalang from Yogyakarta)
41. **Warsino Gunasukasno** (dhalang from Wonogiri, Rebo Legèn community)
42. **Sutino Hardokocarito** (dhalang from Wonogiri, Rebo Legèn community)
43. **Toto Atmojo** (dhalang from Sukoharjo, source of many older stories)
44. **Sayoko Gandosaputro** (dhalang from Klaten, Rebo Legèn community)
45. **Sutarko** (ASKI)
46. **Hadi Sutikna** (dhalang from Yogyakarta)
47. **Anom Soeroto** (legendary superstar dhalang, 1970s to present)
48. **Manteb Soedharsono** (legendary superstar dhalang, 1980s to present)
49. **Sri Joko Raharjo** (dhalang from Kartosuro)
50. **Suyati** (dhalang from Wonogiri, Rebo Legèn community)

51. **Gusti Benawa** (prince from Kraton Solo, Rebo Legèn community)
52. **Sukron Suwondo** (dhalang from Blitar)
53. **Asep Sunaryo** (legendary Sundanese dhalang)
54. **Sugino Siswocarito** (dhalang from Banyumas)
55. **Sugito Purbocarito** (dhalang from Banyumas)
56. **Nartasindu** (dhalang Kebumèn)
57. **Manta** (dhalang from Sragen)
58. **Soleman** (dhalang "Jèkdongan," East Java)
59. **Basuki** (dhalang wayang golèk Kebumèn)
60. **Bei Narna** (instructor at SMKI and Balé Agung, Kraton Solo)
61. **Mulyanta** (dhalang from Sragen, Rebo Legèn community)
62. **Murdi**
63. **Sukardi** (ASKI, author of *Kunthi Pilih, padat* script)
64. **Sudir** (dhalang from Semarang)
65. **Harjunadi** (dhalang from Nganjuk)
66. **Gati** (dhalang and kethoprak, Yogyakarta, twin to Gita)
67. **Gita** (dhalang and kethoprak, Yogyakarta, twin to Gati)
68. **Soemanta** (ASKI)
69. **Bambang Suwarno** (ASKI)
70. **Rahayu Supanggah** (ASKI)
71. **Darko** (ASKI)
72. **Bambang Murtiyoso** (ASKI)
73. **Blacius Subono** (ASKI)
74. **Dedek Wahyudi** (ASKI)
75. **Soetarno** (ASKI)
76. **Supadmi** (ASKI)
77. **Suratno** (ASKI)
78. **Ganda Wardoyo** (dhalang from Pengging)
79. **Sridadi** (script-writer from Kartosuro)
80. **Gaib Widopandoyo** (dhalang from Klaten, Rebo Legèn community)
81. **Joko Santoso** (dhalang, drummer for *topèngan*, from Klaten)
82. **Enthus Susmono** (dhalang from Tegal)
83. **Mulyono** (dhalang from Semarang, Purbo Asmoro's brother-in-law)
84. **Wajiran** (dhalang from Pengging)
85. **Djoko "Édan" Hadiwidjoyo** (dhalang from Semarang)
86. **Parman** (dhalang from Yogyakarta)
87. **Sofyan** (dhalang from Yogyakarta)
88. **Yusuf Agil** (kethoprak)
89. **Pujono** (dhalang from Wonogiri)
90. **Agus Krisbiyantoro** (kethoprak)
91. **Surono "Petruk"** (comedian)
92. **Ranto "Gudel"** (comedian)
93. **Kirun** (comedian)
94. **Bagya** (comedian)
95. **Marwoto** (comedian)
96. **Yati "Pèsèk"** (comedian)
97. **Garèng "Topan"** (comedian)
98. **Endro Warsena** (silk-screen artist)
99. **Agus**, *dhukun*
100. **PEPADI**

Appendix 7

PERFORMANCE CLIPS DATA

***Kunthi Pilih (Kunthi's Choice)*, contemporary-interpretive style,** was recorded on March 28, 1989, at the home of Anom Soeroto, in Notodiningratan, Solo, on his monthly Javanese birthday celebration Rebo Legèn. It was recorded by Jody Diamond, with full permission of the host, who happened to be studying in Solo at the time. There is also a recording in the collection of Anom Soeroto, currently housed in Timasan, Pajang, Sukoharjo, which was not available for duplication. The musicians were from the ASKI community, including: Blacius Subono and Bagong (*kendhang*), Supadmi (*pesindhèn*), Nartosindu (*gendèr*), Muryana (*rebab*), and Jaka Riyanto, Rustiantoro, Hariyadi in the *penggérong* section. Anom Soeroto also supplied *pesindhèn* from his group: Tantinah, Suyatmi, Darsini, Migud, and Larasati.

***Makutharama (Rama's Crown)*, palace-classical style,** was recorded on October 25, 2008, at the home of Rahayu Supanggah in Benawa, Karanganyar, Central Java, Indonesia. The musicians were from Purbo Asmoro's gamelan troupe, Mayangkara, with special guest musicians from Pujangga Laras: Wakidi Dwidjomartono (*kendhang*), Suyadi Tejapangrawit (*bonang*), Rahayu Supanggah (*rebab*), Ngatirah (*pesindhèn*), Suparni Setya Laras (*pesindhèn*), Mulyani Cendhani Laras (*pesindhèn*), Darsono (*gambang*), and Joko Prihatin (*siter*). The performance was live and open to the public, but members of the artistic community of Solo dominated the audience. The wayang set used for this performance was *Kyai Bantala*, Purbo Asmoro's modern collection. Clips from the commercial Lontar Foundation recording of this performance are referenced in the text as: MK-Class followed by the disc number and timing. See the Lontar DVDs (Asmoro 2014) for a full list of performers.

***Makutharama (Rama's Crown)*, contemporary-interpretive style,** was recorded on October 27, 2007, in the courtyard of the District Office (*halaman* Kantor Kabupten), Pacitan, East Java, Indonesia. The musicians were from Purbo Asmoro's gamelan troupe, Mayangkara. Special guests Nini Wainten (*pesindhèn*) and Sudarno (*kendhang*) performed the Banyumas selections in the interludes. Rusyati, Harjutri, and Budi Sutapa were guest vocalists. The performance was live, open to the public, and attended by approximately 1,500 wayang fans. The wayang set used for this performance was *Kyai Bantala*, Purbo Asmoro's modern collection. Clips from the commercial Lontar Foundation recording of this performance are referenced in the text as: MK-CInt followed by the disc number and timing. See the Lontar DVDs (Asmoro 2014) for a full list of performers.

***Makutharama (Rama's Crown)*, condensed style,** was recorded on June 1, 2008, at The Dharmawangsa Hotel, in Jakarta, Indonesia. The musicians were from Purbo Asmoro's gamelan troupe, Mayangkara. This performance was a ticketed event in the ballroom of the hotel and attended by some three hundred, about one-third from overseas. The wayang set used for this performance was *Kyai Bantala,* Purbo Asmoro's modern collection, supplemented by sideline set-up figures (*simpingan*) from Sanggar Redi Waluya's set in Jakarta. Clips from the commercial Lontar Foundation recording of this performance are referenced in the text as: MK-C followed by the disc number and timing. See the Lontar DVDs (Asmoro 2014) for a full list of performers.

Appendix 7: Performance Clips Data

***Sesaji Raja Suya (The Grand Offering of the Kings),* village-classical style**, was recorded on March 25, 2008, at the Indonesian Institute of the Arts (ISI), in Surakarta, Central Java, Indonesia. The musicians were from Purbo Asmoro's gamelan troupe, Mayangkara, with special guest *gendèr* player Ibu Kris-Pringgo and Rahayu Supanggah on *rebab*. The performance was live and open to the public, but the ISI and various artistic communities of Solo dominated the audience. The wayang set used for this performance was *Kyai Maruta*, Purbo Asmoro's antique collection. Clips from the commercial Lontar Foundation recording of this performance are referenced in the text as: SRS-Class followed by the disc number and timing. See the Lontar DVDs (Asmoro 2014) for a full list of performers.

***Sesaji Raja Suya (The Grand Offering of the Kings),* contemporary-interpretive style,** was recorded on November 24, 2007, in the public square (*alun-alun*) of Pacitan, East Java, Indonesia. The musicians were from Purbo Asmoro's gamelan troupe, Mayangkara. Special guests Nini Wainten (*pesindhèn*) performed the Banyumas selections in the interludes, and Suparno (*kendhang*) assisted with repertory from East Java. The performance was live, open to the public, and attended by approximately 3,000 wayang fans. The wayang set used for this performance was *Kyai Bantala*, Purbo Asmoro's modern collection. Clips from the commercial Lontar Foundation recording of this performance are referenced in the text as: SRS-CInt followed by the disc number and timing. See the Lontar DVDs (Asmoro 2014) for a full list of performers.

***Sesaji Raja Suya (The Grand Offering of the Kings),* condensed style,** was recorded on May 31, 2008, at The Dharmawangsa Hotel, in Jakarta, Indonesia. The musicians were from Purbo Asmoro's gamelan troupe, Mayangkara. This performance was a ticketed event in the ballroom of the hotel and attended by some three hundred, about one-third from overseas. The wayang set used for this performance was *Kyai Bantala*, Purbo Asmoro's modern collection, supplemented by sideline set-up figures (*simpingan*) from Sanggar Redi Waluya's set in Jakarta. Clips from the commercial Lontar Foundation recording of this performance are referenced in the text as: SRS-C followed by the disc number and timing. See the Lontar DVDs (Asmoro 2014) for a full list of performers.

ada-ada: a type of *sulukan* accompanied only by *gendèr* and used to reflect anger, confusion, surprise, or tumult (except for the very first *Ada-ada Girisa* in a classical performance, which is more stately). The *gendèr* player uses an active, pulsating, and rhythmic style, while the dhalang adds to the pulsation with rhythmic taps from the *cempala* (either on the box or against the *keprak*). Tones on the *kempul*, *kenong*, gong and *kendhang* punctuate important junctures in the melody.

adegan: a scene in a wayang performance.

andhegan: a break ("stopping") in the performance of a piece of gamelan music, filled in by the *pesindhèn* singing a relatively short unaccompanied solo, usually unmetered.

ASKI: *Akademi Seni Karawitan Indonesia* (Indonesian Academy of Gamelan Music) was founded in 1964. Originally it was located on the campus of the High School of Performing Arts, and then in 1972 moved to the grounds of Sasanamulya, Kraton Surakarta. In 1985 the current campus in Kentingan, Jebres, Surakarta was built. The Pedalangan Department was founded in the Sasanamulya location in 1974, and for most of Purbo Asmoro's time as a *pedhalangan* student (1982–1986) ASKI was in this location.

asmaradana: a form of *macapat* consisting of seven lines, with the following syllable counts and end vowels for each line: 8i, 8a, 8e/o, 8a, 7a, 8u, 8a.

balungan: literally the "skeletal" outline, this is an abstract melodic line (limited to expression within one octave) played by *saron*, *demung* and *slenthem*, which serves as a reference for embellishing instruments. The *balungan* section has a more central role in louder, faster pieces.

banjaran: from the word "*banjar*" meaning to line something up adjacently; literally to line up tied bundles of sprouted rice seedlings before they are planted, or in reference to adjacent villages. In the world of wayang, this term refers to a *garapan* technique in which a number of episodes are connected to make a brand new creation. Typically what is thought of as a *banjaran* is a work that tells the story of a character's life from birth to death (*banjaran wantah*). But, according to some practitioners, a *banjaran* can also address only a small, crucial time period in a character's life (*banjaran jugag* or *banjaran kalajaya*), or can even connect consecutive lakon into one performance (*banjaran lakon*), or address a theme or be based on a piece of poetry (*banjaran téma*).

Bapa: see *Pak*.

Bapak: see *Pak*.

basa pedhalangan: the unique mix of Javanese language levels, vocabulary sets, archaic language, stylized greetings, puns, metaphors, and figures of speech used in wayang.

bedhaya: a genre of refined court dances performed by seven to nine young women.

bedhayan: **1.** the style of gamelan accompaniment used for *bedhaya* dances, employing unison (octaves) male–female choral singing in a snappy *irama dados* tempo, often starting with the characteristic text, "andhé." The texts are non-specific, can be chosen from any number of *wangsalan*, and proceed according to a specific pattern of phrase repetition; **2.** a common misnomer for the unison (octaves) male–female choruses newly composed by Nartosabdo (often for existing traditional pieces) that are in either *irama dados* or *irama tanggung* and whose texts are through-composed and unique.

bonang: short for *bonang barung*, these bronze, tuned pots sitting on a horizontal double rack of ropes, play a leadership role in both melodic embellishment and anticipation of the *balungan* line.

bonang penerus: similar but an octave higher than the *bonang barung*, this instrument plays a less important embellishment role.

Bu: from *Ibu*, which means "mother," a title used for women, usually in reference to a woman either the same age or older than the speaker, or in a position or venue requiring respect.

buka: means "to open" and in gamelan refers to the introduction to a piece of music.

Bupati: The *bupati* is the elected head of a *kabupatèn*, in other words the head of a district. Districts in Java are often as large as a major town and all its environing villages, so a *bupati* is somewhat like the equivalent of a major city's mayor.

campursari: the mixing (*campur*) of various musical "essences" (*sari*), this is specifically traditional *kroncong* music (Javanese songs using a Portuguese-inspired instrumentation of flute, a ukelele-like guitar, cello, string bass) played on the gamelan, with Western instruments mixed in, such as the electronic keyboard.

carangan: a lakon that, although based on mostly the same set of characters and the same overarching story outcomes, tells of intrigues not existing in the stricter Javanese retellings of the *Mahabharata, Ramayana*, or other story cycles.

catur: the dialogue, monologue and narration recited by the dhalang.

cempala: a wooden knocker with a bulbous knob that is hit either against the large wooden box or against the *keprak*. It is usually held in the left hand but can also be held between the big and first toes of the right foot. The dhalang signals the gamelan from this knocker (the syllable "dhog" is used when notated). He also uses it to create phrasing in narrations and dialogue, and to produce an atmosphere of tension with a stream of tapping (see Figure 5-7).

céngkok: a pattern, riff, unit phrase of embellishment.

ciblon: a medium-sized, double-headed barrel drum presenting the most technically difficult and complex parts of all the drums used in *karawitan*; it is used to accompany dance movements, some of the more lively, dance-based wayang movements, and for the more lively selections of *klenèngan* music.

debog: the complete term *gedebog*, this is the porous, soft, banana-trunk log running along the bottom of the wayang screen and used by the dhalang to prop up the wayang figures. The *gapit* (support sticks extending the length of the wayang figure and usually made of horn or wood) have sharp end points, which stick easily into the banana log. This way, the wayang figure stays stable on the screen, and the dhalang is then free to move the figure's arms in isolation, or to manipulate other wayang figures.

dhalang: see Basic Terminology, page xv.

dhandhanggula: a form of *macapat* consisting of ten lines, with the following syllable counts and end vowels for each line: 10i, 10a, 8e/o, 7u, 9i, 7a, 6u, 8a, 12i, 7a.

dhangdhut: an Indonesian popular music used for dancing, mixing elements of Indian and Malay film music, Arab music influences, and Western rock music.

dhodhogan: the patterns and rhythms of sounds coming from the *cempala* against the wooden wayang box.

ditabrak: a term from the 1970s at ASKI in which a piece of music (usually a relatively calm, melodic, slower selection) is "crashed into" by another piece of music (usually something faster and more furious, like *sampak*, but sometimes by a *sulukan)*. This is done for dramatic effect and all transition conventions are disregarded.

ditumpangi: a term from the 1970s at ASKI for when a vocal melody (either solo or chorus, male or female) is "riding" over another piece of music, resulting in a juxtaposing of two separate pieces at the same time to create an eerie or chaotic mood. In this practice, the instrumental music and the vocal part act as two separate entities that do not fit together but are happening simultaneously.

durma: a form of *macapat* consisting of seven lines, with the following syllable counts and end vowels for each line: 12a, 7i, 6a, 7a, 8i, 5a, 7i.

gambang: the only wooden timbre in the gamelan, this is a xylophone spanning four octaves, played with a pair of padded mallets and creating an embellishment of the melodic line.

gambuh: a form of *macapat* consisting of five lines, with the following syllable counts and end vowels: 7u, 10u, 12i, 8u, 8o. Some vocal experts consider *gambuh* to be a *sekar tengahan*.

gambyong: a type of dance, possibly originating among the people rather than the courts but subsequently developed in the courts of Solo and Yogya, depicting a young woman's preparations—inner and outer—as she dresses, puts on make-up, anticipates, and daydreams. It is often performed at weddings by one or more dancers.

gamelan: see Basic Terminology, page xvi.

garap: **1.** the treatment or interpretation of gamelan music, dances, dance dramas, wayang stories, or other art forms, that a performer or ensemble chooses to employ; **2.** a process of

deliberate reconceptualization, in which the various elements of a performance art are each rethought and recrafted, without being bound by traditional structures or regulations.

garap adegan: **1.** a dhalang's interpretation, layout and contents of a particular scene; **2.** the purposeful recrafting of scene structure and content, according to new principles driven by the relatively recent *padat* or all-night *garapan* movements.

garap balungan: newly composed *balungan*-focused melodies, often with irregular *kenong, kempul,* gong, and *bonang* parts, created to support certain dramatic and climactic moments and usually as an alternative to *sampak*. These are most often composed on the spot during a rehearsal, either in wayang or dance circles. Sometimes they catch on and are used in subsequent performances, but often they fall into disuse after one performance.

garap catur: **1.** a dhalang's use of narration, monologue, dialogue and literary devices; **2.** the purposeful recrafting of literary elements, according to new principles driven by the relatively recent *padat* or all-night *garapan* movements.

garap iringan: see *iringan garap.*

garap lakon: 1. a dhalang's interpretation or making sense of the basic hows and whys in a particular story; the *sanggit* or solutions as to how the plotline unfolds; **2.** the purposeful recrafting of plot details, according to new principles driven by the relatively recent *padat* or all-night *garapan* movements.

garap sabet: **1.** a dhalang's choices regarding the use of movement to illustrate elements of the lakon; **2.** the purposeful recrafting of movement techniques, according to new principles driven by the relatively recent *padat* or all- night *garapan* movements.

garap tokoh: **1.** a dhalang's interpretation of the characters, their motives, reactions and inner feelings; **2.** the purposeful recrafting of character development, according to new principles driven by the relatively recent *padat* or all-night *garapan* movements.

garapan: **1.** a term originating in the late 1970s to early 1980s at the Pedalangan Department of ASKI, among *padat* practitioners. It refers to a conscious recrafting and thoughtful, focused reinterpretation of all the elements in a wayang performance: a deliberate rejection of the constraints of structure and a conscious reworking of each element of a performance according to the needs and defined theme of the lakon; **2.** as of the late 1990s to early 2000s, can also refer to an all-night wayang in which the dhalang employs the recrafting techniques above, as opposed to being a classical, traditional treatment.

gedebog: see *debog*.

gendèr: short for *gendèr barung*, this is one of the most difficult, and by far one of the most important, instruments in the gamelan accompaniment to wayang. Thin metal slabs suspended over tube resonators and spanning a little over two octaves are played with cloth-covered mallets in both hands, and create a gentle yet full, polyphonic embellishment and expression of the melodic line. The *gendèr* player not only plays while the rest of the gamelan is playing and during every poem the dhalang sings, but also creates a continuous

musical and dramatic backdrop during dialogue and narrative sections, weaving together a fabric of snippets and short melodies known as *grimingan* (see Figure 0-6).

gendèr penerus: an octave higher than the *gendèr barung*, this instrument has a far less important and less complex role in the gamelan, although it looks similar.

gendhing: **1.** any piece written for gamelan; **2.** a piece written for gamelan with a *kenong* unit of anywhere from 16 to 64 beats, and most typically four *kenong* units to a gong. *Gendhing* have a refined, calm A-section known as the *mérong*, and then a B-section (the *inggah*) which can take many different forms and is usually more lively.

gendhing lampah: the basic building blocks of traditional gamelan accompaniment for wayang: *ayak-ayak*, *srepeg*, *sampak, kemuda*.

gérong: a unison male chorus, usually with three to five men, who not only sing but also perform interlocking clapping patterns (*keplok*) and single syllable calls (*alok).*

gléyongan: a specific type of wayang figure—a dancer employing a moveable neck joint—that emerges to entertain the king and queen as they relax in the queen's quarters.

golèk: **1.** a type of dance somewhat akin to *gambyong*, which is often performed at weddings by one or more dancers, and may have originated in the courts of Yogyakarta; **2.** to search out, look for something; **3.** the three-dimensional wooden puppets used in *wayang golèk*.

grimingan: polyphonic snippets of short melodies that the *gendèr* player creates, providing a continuous musical backdrop for the dhalang's storytelling during narration and dialogue.

Ibu: see *Bu*.

inggah: the B-section of a *gendhing*, generally more lively than the *mérong* and perhaps featuring *ciblon*; or, the expanded section of a *ladrang*, employing *ciblon* drumming.

irama: the tempo or speed of a musical selection, which determines the level of density (the expansion or contraction in terms of room for embellishment) with which the more complex gamelan instruments play.

irama dados: the second most expanded *irama* level (also known as *irama II* or *irama dadi*), with four strokes of the *peking* for every *balungan* beat.

irama lancar: the most condensed *irama* level, in which the tempo is so fast that the *peking* cannot do any doubling.

irama nyeklèk: a technique developed at ASKI in the 1980s and used for dramatic effect. The tempo change from *irama tanggung* to *irama dados* is made suddenly (like "turning on a dime"), with no gradual, conventional transition.

irama rangkep: **1.** often simply refers to a doubling in the expansion level of the *irama*; **2.** specifically the fourth most expanded *irama* level (also known as *irama IV*), which would

mean sixteen strokes of the *peking* for every *balungan* beat, in the *inggah* of a *ladrang*.

irama tanggung: the first expanded *irama* level (also known as *irama I*), has two strokes of the *peking* for every *balungan* beat.

irama wilet: the third most expanded *irama* level (also known as *irama III*), which would mean eight strokes of the *peking* for every *balungan* beat, in the *inggah* of a *ladrang*.

iringan: gamelan accompaniment to dance, wayang or other theater forms.

iringan garap: gamelan accompaniment to dance, wayang or other theater forms that has been crafted in accordance with ASKI *garapan* concepts, placing the focus on the dramatic needs of the form rather than classical conventions, transitions and usage.

ISI: *Institut Seni Indonesia* (Institute of Indonesian Arts) is the major teaching and research institution in Solo for the study of gamelan, wayang, dance, visual arts, ethnomusicology, design, television media and recording, and other artistic studies. Known as STSI up until 2006, and originally known as ASKI, the institution's status under the government has been continually upgraded over the years, allowing for expansion and resulting in new names. The full name is "ISI Surakarta," as there are also ISI campuses in Yogyakarta, Denpasar, Bandung and Padangpanjang, as well as similar private institutions in Jakarta (IKJ) and Surabaya (STKW). Purbo Asmoro has been an instructor in the Pedalangan Department at ISI/STSI/ASKI since 1986. The main campus of ISI is located in Kentingan, Jebres, Surakarta. In 2010 a new campus was built in Mojosongo, Surakarta, to house the Design Department as well as the expanding Television Media, Recording Studies, and Visual Arts Departments.

jineman: a short, light musical form, featuring the *pesindhèn*.

kalajengaken: meaning "move on to" and used in a suite of pieces to designate a transition from larger forms on to a smaller form.

karawitan: Javanese gamelan music. "Rawit" refers to something intricate, delicate, detailed, refined. The *ka-* prefix and *-an* suffix make a noun.

katampèn: meaning "received by" and used in a suite of pieces to designate a transition, usually specifically to a *ketawang* or other small form like *lancaran* or *jineman*.

Kawi: archaic, literary Javanese; also known as Old Javanese.

kawi miring: a term coined by non-Javanese scholars for a literary style from the late 1700s to early 1800s, in which Javanese court poets imitated Old Javanese through forms such as *sekar ageng*.

kayon: the symmetrical, large raindrop-shaped prop that begins and ends any wayang performance, also known as a *gunungan*. This wayang figure can symbolize a palace, the ocean, fire, rain, a river, a mountain, a tree, a cave, a boulder, the wind, chaos, a doorway, a dream, a storm, a memory, sunlight, the revelations during meditation, fear, subterfuge,

beginnings, closure, peace, conflict, and anything else the dhalang might come up with. *Kayon* are elaborately decorated with symbolic carvings and paintings reflecting the entire cosmos of life.

kébar: a lively style of playing in *irama tanggung* with *ciblon* drumming, highly embellished *bonang* parts, and interlocking clapping and calls from the *gérong*. Used to accompany a series of dance moves known as *kiprah*, in which a male character is showing off his confidence and prowess.

kekawin: the oldest of classical poetic forms in Old Javanese, inherited from Sanskrit meters and using four-line verses.

kemanak: a pair of small, hand-held, tubular bells pitched closely together but played in an alternating pattern by two players. "*Kemanak"* accompaniment for *bedhaya* dances employs only *kemanak*, *kendhang*, gong, a single *kenong* pitch, and the vocal parts, rather than the full gamelan.

kempul: vertically-suspended, small gongs that mark off important points in the structure of a gamelan piece.

kendhang: any of the various double-headed drums; the *kendhang* player is one of the most important "conductors" of the gamelan. This is the primary instrument that brings the wayang figures' movements to life, through patterns partially determined by signals from the dhalang, and partially created by the player.

kenong: a set of large tuned pots that mark off important points in the structure of a gamelan piece.

keprak: a set of metal plates hung on the edge of the wooden wayang box, which the dhalang plays with his right foot, signaling the drummer in a variety of complex ways and also punctuating important moments in battle scenes (see Figure 5-7).

kerep: frequent or often; see *kethuk* for the context in gamelan music.

ketawang: a relatively small musical form with sixteen beats to the *kenong* unit, and two *kenong* units to the gong. The A-section of the *ketawang* is the *ompak* and usually only one gong unit long, while the B-section holds the identifying vocal part, is usually three to five gong units long, and is often based on a *macapat* melody.

ketawang gendhing: while a *gendhing* typically has four *kenong* units, a *ketawang gendhing* has only two.

kethoprak: a form of vernacular theater in which the history of Javanese kingdoms is acted out to the accompaniment of gamelan, but without any dance movements or wayang figures.

kethuk: a small pot with a dull but very audible middle-low pitch, used to mark off points in a *kenong* unit. In a *gendhing* form, the description "*kethuk 2 kerep*" means that there are two

kethuk strokes in one *kenong* unit, occurring relatively frequently (*"kerep")* on the fourth and twelfth beats of the sixteen-beat unit. "*Kethuk 2 arang*" means two *kethuk* strikes occur relatively infrequently ("*arang*"), on the eighth and twenty-fourth beats of the resulting thirty-two-beat *kenong* unit.

Ki: a respectful title, most often reserved for a dhalang but can also be for any respected, educated male figure in a position of spiritual leadership.

kinanthi: a form of *macapat* consisting of six lines, with the following syllable counts and end vowels for each line: 8u, 8i, 8a, 8i, 8a, 8i.

kiprah: dance moves, accompanied by lively gamelan music in *irama tanggung*, in which a male character is showing off his self-confidence and prowess.

klenèngan: an event at which gamelan music is played on its own, without any dance or wayang. Ranging from highly formal to freeform, this could be a music-making session for the benefit of the musicians themselves, or could be for some sort of function.

kombangan: short melodic phrases, or single pitches, sung by the dhalang and matching the melodic line of what the gamelan is playing. The texts for these short phrases can come from fragments of *sulukan*, or the dhalang can simply resonate on the vowel "o." A *kombangan* can also serve as a signal from the dhalang to the musicians, asking them to move on to a different section of the piece they are playing, or to make a transition to a different piece.

koor: choral singing; either male, female or mixed.

krama: a language level in Javanese, referred to in English as "high Javanese."

krama inggil: a specific vocabulary set of elevated terms in Javanese, used to show respect to the person being spoken to and humility on the part of the speaker.

kroncong: a traditional song form, inspired by Portuguese instrumentation from the 1500s, featuring a female or male singer, flute, ukelele-like guitar, cello, and string bass.

ladrang: a very common musical form, with thirty-two beats to the *kenong* unit and four *kenong* units to the gong.

lakon: see Basic Terminology, page xvi.

lakon banjaran: see *banjaran.*

lakon carangan: see *carangan*.

lancaran: a very short musical form, with only eight beats to the gong.

macapat: a category of poetic forms in modern literary Javanese. Although the number of forms is sometimes debated, there are generally considered to be eleven: *Pangkur, Sinom, Dhandhanggula, Asmaradana, Kinanthi, Mijil, Durma, Pocung, Gambuh, Maskumambang* and *Megatruh*. Each form has a predetermined number of lines in each verse, number of syllables

in each line, and vowel sound ending each line.

malik: a reference in gamelan scores to a change—*malik pélog*, for example, meaning to switch over to the *pélog* tuning from *sléndro*.

mandheg: to stop, see *andhegan*.

manyuri: a variant mode in *sléndro,* in which pieces in *sléndro manyura* are played up one pitch. Hence, *Sampak Manyuri*, starting from gong pitch 3, would be: 3333 5555 222(2) 2222 3333 iii(i) iiii 5555 333(3). This alternate mode was traditionally used in the last hour of a wayang performance, to enhance the intensity of the final battles. It can include *sampak*, *srepeg*, *ayak*, various *sulukan*, and even pieces such as *Gd Kutut Manggung*, all played up a step. ASKI garapan practitioners, including Purbo Asmoro, use a different version of *Sampak Manyuri*, starting from gong pitch 6: 6666 iiii 555(5) 5555 6666 333(3) 3333 iiii 666(6).

Mas: literally meaning "older brother," a respectful way of addressing a man; used for relatively younger men or among those of the same age and status, reflecting a familiarity.

maskumambang: a form of *macapat* consisting of four lines, with the following syllable counts and end vowels for each line: 12i, 6a, 8i, 8a.

Mayangkara: the name of Purbo Asmoro's gamelan troupe, founded by him in 1992. Mayangkara is the name the white monkey Anoman goes by in his elder years when he has become an ascetic. In the context of Purbo Asmoro's gamelan troupe, it stands for *Mangèsthi Wayang Kagungan Rahayu*, translated as "Dedicated to Wayang as a Source of Wellbeing." Mayangkara is also the name of Anoman's inner soul throughout his life.

Mbah: literally meaning "grandfather," a respectful way of addressing an elderly man.

Mbak: also spelled *mBak*; literally meaning "older sister" this is a respectful way of addressing a woman; used for relatively younger women, or among those of the same age and status, reflecting a familiarity.

Mbakayuné: similar in usage to *Mbak*, but used in the region of Central Java known as Banyumas.

Mbakyu: similar in usage to *Mbak*, but has more of a connotation of close family, and may mean that either the woman being spoken to, or her spouse, is slightly older than the speaker.

megatruh: a form of *macapat* consisting of five lines, with the following syllable counts and end vowels for each line: 12u, 8i, 8u, 8i, 8o. Some vocal experts consider *megatruh* to be a *sekar tengahan*.

mérong: the generally more calm and refined A-section of a *gendhing* (although the *mérong* can be played at a fast tempo, with lively *garap*).

mijil: a form of *macapat* consisting of six lines, with the following syllable counts and end

vowels for each line: 10i, 6o, 10e, 10i, 6i, 6u.

minggah: moving into the *inggah* section of a *gendhing.*

ngelik: a section of a gamelan piece (usually in a *mérong*, *ladrang*, or *ketawang*) that is signaled by going into a higher register.

ngoko: a language level in Javanese, referred to in English as "low Javanese."

padat: Indonesian for dense, compact, or packed in; refers to a format for wayang performances developed at ASKI in the 1970s and continuing to develop to this day.

pagedhongan: a story told in narrative form, either by the dhalang or from one character to another, relating a background tale or giving explanatory information that is relevant to an issue being faced in the lakon. One feature of a *garapan* performance, is that what would traditionally be told as a *pagedhongan* is acted out in a separate scene on the screen as a flashback or prologue.

Pak: from *Bapak,* a title used for men, usually in reference to a man either the same age or older than the speaker, or in a position or venue requiring respect.

pakeliran: *wayang kulit* performance; "kelir," the root word, means screen.

pakem: in general, referring to traditional, classical, precedent-based performance practice; specifically referring to the traditional storylines in the Javanese retelling of the Indian *Mahabharata, Ramayana*, or other story cycles; as opposed to Javanese-created intrigues (*carangan*) that do not exist in these epics.

palaran: poems sung by any solo vocalist—*pesindhèn*, *gérong* or dhalang— accompanied by *gendèr*, *gambang* and *suling*, with a metered, rhythmic backdrop provided by *kendhang*, *kenong*, *kempul*, *kethuk,* and gong.

panakawan: the jesters in wayang (clown-like figures) who accompany virtuous, princely types through thick and thin; Semar (a god exiled to a life on Earth as a jester and advisor), with his charges—in some versions his sons—Garèng, Pétruk and Bagong. Many also consider Togog and Bilung (also referred to as Sarawita) *panakawan*. These two jesters accompany all evil and antagonist types through thick and thin. Togog is also a god exiled to Earth, and is Semar's older brother.

pangkur: a form of *macapat* consisting of seven lines, with the following syllable counts and end vowels for each line: 8a, 11i, 8u, 7a, 12u, 8a, 8i.

Panji cycle: a cycle of stories concerning the legendary Panji Asmarabangun of Jenggala, East Java, and his love for Princess Candrakirana (or Sekartaji) of Daha, Kediri. One of the antagonists of the story cycle is the powerful and ferocious King Kelana Tunjung Séta (Klana), who has an obsession with Candrakirana. From this base story, many other "Klana" (foreign aggressor king) and many other "Panji" (prince) characters and intrigues sprouted. The stories from this cycle are told in both *wayang gedhog* and *wayang topèng* performances

and are probably some 800 years old.

parikan: playful, sung, rhyming riddles in Javanese. These consist of four phrases; the first two usually somewhat mundane and referring to food, plants, or everyday matters yet containing hints as to the punch line, and the last two phrases containing the meaning, or punch line.

pathetan: a type of *sulukan* reflecting a calm, stately or introspective mood, accompanied by *gendèr*, *rebab*, *gambang* and *suling*. Tones on the *kempul*, *kenong*, gong, and *kendhang* punctuate important junctures in the melody.

pedhalangan: the study and discipline of being a dhalang; studies related to the performance of wayang. ("Pedalangan" Department uses the Indonesian spelling.)

pélog: one of two gamelan tunings (the other being *sléndro*), made up of seven tones (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7). Within the *pélog* scale there are three basic modes or *pathet*: *pélog lima*, *pélog nem* and *pélog barang*, and unlike the *sléndro* scale, not all tones are present in each mode. *Pélog barang* utilizes the 7 pitch and not the 1; while *pélog nem* uses 1s and not 7s, for the most part. *Pélog lima* is in some ways similar to *pélog nem*, but the *rebab* tunes its strings to 1 and 5 instead of 2 and 6. *Pélog lima* is also related to *pélog barang*, and for some pieces can be thought of simply as *pélog barang* transposed down a step. *Pélog nem* can be further divided into *pélog bem* (*sléndro sanga*-related) and *pélog nyamat* (*sléndro manyura*-related).

peralihan: the transition between sections within gamelan compositions, or between two gamelan compositions.

pesindhèn: the female singer in a gamelan, also known as *waranggana* (single female part). There are typically anywhere from two to ten *pesindhèn* in a wayang performance, taking turns singing a solo melodic line. This melodic line is created by the singer on the spot using patterns she has in her repertory, and is based on the *balungan*, *rebab*, and other vocal parts. There are also many pieces sung as a chorus.

pocung: a form of *macapat* consisting of five lines, with the following syllable counts and end vowels for each line: 4u, 8u, 6a, 8i/o, 12a.

putra/putri: a specification in vocal chorus notation for sections that should be sung by male voices only (*putra*) or female voices only (*putri*).

rangkep: generally means "double," and specifically in gamelan music refers to doubling the space between points in a melody, allowing a doubling of the density in elaboration.

rasa: loosely translated as feeling, this complicated musical and dramatic concept can be thought of as a combination of feeling, intuition, affect, and mood.

rebab: a bowed, two-stringed instrument that has a crucial melodic leadership role in the gamelan.

ringkas: a shortened, abbreviated wayang performance, which has not been recrafted

according to *garapan* principles, but instead is still classical in nature.

ruwatan: A spiritual cleansing ceremony through wayang. Most often the lakon used is *Murwakala*, in which the dhalang negotiates with the ogre Bethara Kala, offering him all sorts of appeasements and reciting special texts so that the ogre will allow the families, communities, or individuals requesting the *ruwatan* to live in peace and good health. A *ruwatan* can stand on its own or be performed in the wee hours of the morning after a separate, full wayang, and can last anywhere from 15 minutes to four hours.

sabetan: movement techniques in wayang.

sabet tématik: The particular expressive, mime-like movement vocabulary developed at ASKI in the 1970s, by Bambang Suwarno and others. Also referred to as *sabet témati*s.

sanggit: the dhalang's individual interpretation of the whys and hows of character behavior or plotline. The subtle differences and the attention to detail in *sanggit* are what make the difference between a simple storyteller and a master dhalang.

sasmita: short, sometimes very cryptic, literary riddles from the dhalang that cue the gamelan musicians as to which piece to play at certain junctures.

sekar ageng: classical sung poetry in Old Javanese, using four-line verses similar to Sanskrit meters but without patterns of emphasis. Each line of the *sekar ageng* ("ageng" means grand or large) has the same number of syllables, and there are no rules about ending vowel sounds. Phrasing patterns known as *pedhotan* break the lines into chunks. *Sekar ageng* probably arose during a renewed interest in ancient Javanese literature in the late 1700s and early 1800s. The imitation of archaic language is referred to by some scholars as *kawi miring*.

sekar tengahan: also referred to as *sekar madya* ("tengahan" meaning in the middle and "madya" referring to intermediate). A type of sung poetry similar to *macapat*—with regulated numbers of syllables in each line and end vowel sounds—but using generally more archaic language and considered to be more erudite and less "of the people." Some forms include: *jurudemung*, *balabak*, *girisa*, *wirangrong,* and *palugon*.

selingan: when one piece of music is juxtaposed in alternation, taking turns, with another piece of music.

sendhon: a type of *sulukan* reflecting pensive, nostalgic and somewhat melancholy moods. *Sendhon* are accompanied by *gendèr*, *gambang* and *suling*. The absence of the *rebab* (along with an optional, pulsating, fluttery *gendèr* technique known as *pipilan*) lends a lonely and sparse feeling to them. Tones on the *kempul*, *kenong*, gong, and *kendhang* punctuate important junctures in the melody.

sindhèn: short for *pesindhèn*.

sinom: a form of *macapat*, consisting of nine lines, with the following syllable counts and end vowels for each line: 8a, 8i, 8a, 8i, 7i, 8u, 7a, 8i, 12a.

sirep: when the gamelan comes way down in volume and some of the players drop out, so that the dhalang's narration or dialogue can be heard.

sisipan: something slipped in between something else; in wayang when the course of a lakon takes a break for an entirely separate tale to be acted out before going back to the main lakon, usually as a flashback but sometimes as foreshadowing. In classical tradition, such separate tales would be told in narrative from, as stories by one character to another, or in a narration by the dhalang (*pagedhongan*). In contemporary *garapan* style, these stories are often acted out as prologues or *sisipan*.

sléndro: one of two gamelan tunings (the other being *pélog*), with a five-tone, more or less equidistant scale (notated with the numbers 1, 2, 3, 5, 6). Within the *sléndro* tuning there are three modes or *pathet*: *sléndro nem*, *sléndro sanga* and *sléndro manyura*. Speaking only in extremely basic terms, the tones 5 and 1 are the more common gong or final pitches in *sléndro sanga*, while in *sléndro manyura* the tones 2 and 6 are more prominent as final gong pitches. *Sléndro nem* is in many ways similar to *sléndro manyura*, but with a greater predominance of heavy patterns to low 2, mixed in with more patterns to 5 than in *sléndro manyura*, although these take a completely different melodic path from the patterns to 5 in *sléndro sanga*.

sléndro manyuri: see *manyuri*.

SMKI: founded in 1950, formerly known as *Konservatori Karawitan Indonesia di Surakarta* (KOKAR, also known as "Konsèr"), this is the oldest high school-level, performing arts academy in the country. In 1976, the government upgraded its status, renamed it SMKI (*Sekolah Menengah Karawitan Indonesia*), and opened the Pedalangan and Dance Departments. In 1997, it was renamed SMK (*Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan*) Negeri 8. It is located in the center of Solo, in the Kepatihan neighborhood.

srimpi: a category of refined court dances, performed by a group of four women, to the accompaniment of gamelan *bedhayan* pieces.

STSI: *Sekolah Tinggi Seni Indonesia* (College of Indonesian Arts) was the name of the conservatory for *karawitan*, wayang, and dance studies in Solo from 1988 through to 2006. Located in Kentingan, Jebres, Surakarta, it was formally known as ASKI and is currently known as ISI. In 1988 ASKI was upgraded from an academy to an institution of higher learning, and renamed STSI.

suling: an end-blown, bamboo flute.

sulukan: or *suluk*, are poems sung by the dhalang, accompanied by only a few of the softer, elaborating instruments. *Sulukan* provide an opportunity for reflection rather than moving the plot forward and the texts used can date back as far as 800 CE. While they are being sung, movement on the screen is traditionally static. In contemporary performances, there is often action on the screen during a *sulukan*, and *sulukan* might be sung by the female singer or male chorus. There are three types of *sulukan*: *ada-ada*, *pathetan* and *sendhon*.

suwuk: the ending to a gamelan piece.

suwuk mronggol: a technique recently developed among *garapan* practitioners in which a piece simply breaks off and stops in its tracks, with none of the traditional types of ending preparations and signals, and with no regard for the traditional places a piece might end. Unlike the *ditabrak* technique, nothing else follows it; just complete silence. This practice is used for intense dramatic effect.

tayuban: a raucous and social dance tradition, still popular in many parts of East Java and some parts of Central Java, in which a female singer (*lèdhèk*) dances and male members of the audience are allowed to take turns (by donning a particular type of scarf) dancing with her in public, to gamelan accompaniment.

topèng dhalang: see *wayang topèng*.

udhar: when the gamelan comes back up in volume and returns to complete orchestration after a *sirep*.

wanda: the variety of forms a wayang figure can take. Any one character may have a number of *wanda*, reflecting their affect, stance, and features when at war, when young, when in meditation, when showing deference. Differences in *wanda* are generally quite subtle.

wangsalan: riddles used as texts by the *pesindhèn*, made up of twenty-four syllables and in poetic, literary Javanese. The riddle is posed in the first twelve syllables (in two stages of four and eight syllables), and then answered in the second twelve syllables (again in two stages, four and eight).

wayang: see Basic Terminology, page xv.

wayang gedhog: a type of *wayang kulit* that uses tales from the Panji cycle. According to Javanese lore, Panji is considered to be a descendant of Arjuna's grandson, King Parikesit. Wayang figures from the Panji cycle exist from the 1400s in Demak, but it was Pakubuwana III in the late 1700s, who formalized *wayang gedhog* and developed it at the Kraton Solo. The *iringan* for *wayang gedhog* is completely in *pélog*. *Wayang gedhog* was never very popular and there are very few practitioners left (primarily Bambang Suwarno), but Purbo Asmoro studied it somewhat intensively over a few semesters when at ASKI.

wayang golèk: a type of wayang using three-dimensional wooden puppets that are manipulated by the dhalang from below through the use of wooden rods, without involving shadows. Although primarily associated with West Java and Sundanese culture, there are also *wayang golèk* art forms from Cirebon, Kebumen, Tegal, Yogya, and many other Central or even East Javanese locations. A number of dhalang, inspired by Enthus Susmono, have started mixing *wayang golèk* excerpts in to *wayang kulit purwa* performances, sometimes with a separate small stage and sometimes right on the main screen. *Wayang golèk purwa* performances tell stories from the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* epics, while *wayang golèk ménak* and *wayang golèk cepak* performances tell stories from Islamic history. (**Note**: Purbo Asmoro

is currently working on his own creation of what he calls "*wayang golèk purwa Solo*." One by one, he is designing *wayang golèk* puppets crafted with a Solonese aesthetic, and starting to create a repertory of *sulukan* and *iringan* that will be unique to this new art form.)

wayang kulit purwa: see Basic Terminology, page xv.

wayang madya: a type of *wayang kulit* developed by Mangkunegara IV in the late 1800s. The stories connect the Pandhawa lineage to Panji by relating the tales of Javanese kings from Arjuna's grandson, King Parikesit, up through about 1100. *Wayang madya* stories were reportedly created to fill the gap between *wayang kulit purwa* and *wayang gedhog* stories. Almost completely extinct, *wayang madya* was done in *sléndro* at the Mangkunegaran, and *pélog* at Kraton Solo.

wayang orang: a form of theater in which much the same repertory of lakon is performed as in *wayang kulit purwa*, but played out by a troupe of actors and dancers on a stage instead of by wayang figures at a screen. The actors' stylized movements are meant to mirror and replicate the way *wayang kulit* figures move, rather than to be realistic. The dhalang's role is reduced to simply directing transitions (using both the *keprak* and *cempala*), narrating very short passages, and singing *sulukan* while sitting in the gamelan-musician orchestra pit. The performances can be any length, but are typically only two to three hours long. Historically there have been three major *wayang orang* theater companies, all of which are still in existence but experienced golden eras long ago in the 1960s-1970s: Sriwedari Wayang Orang Theater in Solo (where Wakidi Dwidjomartono was the drummer during its golden era), Ngesti Pandawa Wayang Orang Theater in Semarang (where Nartosabdo was the drummer during its golden era), and Barata Wayang Orang Theater in Jakarta. The national radio stations of Solo, Semarang, and Jakarta have also had *wayang orang* troupes in residence, to varying degrees of popularity.

wayang sandosa: a form of wayang developed at ASKI in the early 1980s, in which a number of dhalang enact the lakon together, manipulating *wayang kulit* figures from standing positions. These figures are often a normal size with wooden-stick extensions, but sometimes oversized. The performance is viewed exclusively from the shadow side so that all the motion and the multiple dhalang are not visible. All narration and dialogue is conducted completely in Indonesian, hence the term "sandosa", which comes from a compressing of the two words *bahasa* (language) and *Indonesia*. The gamelan accompaniment is highly innovative and Blacius Subono has been a major force in this area.

wayang topèng: primarily a daytime art form prevalent in the past in Klaten, which would be followed by an evening *wayang kulit* performance. The performers, who have to be dhalang by profession, wear masks (*topèng*) and enact the stories from the Panji cycle (as dancers and actors, with no screen or shadows involved). Many dhalang fluent in this style have passed away, but the art form is being kept alive by a few remaining performers, determined to restore and revive it.

wejangan: *wejang* means to teach, lecture or offer advice, and *wejangan* (teachings, advice sessions, philosophical waxings) are a standard part of a wayang performance. Elder characters are depicted passing on words of wisdom to those studying about life from them.

wetonan: a person's traditional Javanese birthday, which occurs every thirty-five days at the confluence of the Gregorian calendar seven-day week and the traditional Javanese five-day market week: *Kliwon, Legi, Pon, Paing, Wagé*. Artists in former generations were more likely to know their *wetonan* (for example Monday-*Legi* or Friday-*Kliwon*) than they were to know the exact date of their birth, and were more likely to do something to mark this thirty-five-day happening than their yearly birthday. Known as *wiyosan* or *tingalan* in high Javanese.

Yu: see *Mbakyu*

ARTISTS CITED IN TEXT

Note: While the older generation of traditional artists tended not to have access to advanced levels of education, the citing of one's degree among current generations is often valued. Here is a guide to abbreviations:

S Kar (*Sarjana Karawitan*) = Bachelor's Degree in Gamelan Studies
S Sn (*Sarjana Seni*) = Bachelor of Arts
MS = Master of Science
M Sn (*Magister Seni*) = Master of Arts
M Hum (*Magister Humaniora*) = Master of Humanities

Anom Dwidjokangko was born in Blitar, East Java in 1976. Known to his friends as "Kangko," he is a son of the renowned Blitar dhalang Sukron Suwondo, and Cahyo Kuntadi's older brother. Kangko is one of the most virtuosic dhalang of his generation, and has a consistently full schedule each month.

Anom Soeroto was born in 1948 in Bagor, Juwiring, Klaten, into a long lineage of dhalang. He and Manteb Soedharsono form the "twin living legends" of Solo's current wayang scene, with Anom Soeroto highly praised for his outstanding voice and stately, refined classical treatment. He continues to hold *Rebo Legèn*, the monthly Javanese birthday celebration at which so many artistic milestones in the Solonese community have occurred.

Bambang Murtiyoso (S Kar, M Hum), was born in 1945 in Nganjuk, East Java, into a family of Islamic religious community leaders. He graduated from ASKI Pedalangan in 1981 after already having obtained a liberal arts undergraduate degree elsewhere. He was one of the major innovators of wayang *padat* and was a devoted student of Humardani. He is a retired senior instructor in the Pedalangan Department at ISI, and is a frequently published critic, writing on a variety of *pedhalangan* topics.

Bambang Suwarno (S Kar, M Hum, Dr), was born in 1951 in Gemolong, Klaten, son of dhalang Padmatjarito. He graduated from ASKI Pedalangan in 1981 as one of the major innovators of wayang *padat* and was one of Humardani's favored students. An instructor in the ISI Pedalangan Department, he has garnered special recognition in many areas: his talent with *garap sabet*, his creativity as a wayang designer, his innovative *kayon* designs, and his being one of the only practitioners left of *wayang gedhog*. He received his doctorate from UGM in 2015, with a dissertation on the various *wanda* of the Pandhawa figures.

Bayu Aji Pamungkas was born in 1984 in Solo, and is the youngest son of Anom Soeroto. Bayu is one of the most virtuosic dhalang of his generation. He often performs in tandem with his father, taking over for battle scenes and other visual attractions while his father does the main court scenes and interludes.

Blacius Subono (S Kar, M Sn) was born in 1957 in Klaten, and officially graduated from ASKI Pedalangan in 1984 (although his thesis was completed in 1981). He has been one of the major innovators in the area of *iringan garap* for both *padat* performances and *wayang sandosa*. Subono is an internationally recognized composer, a practicing dhalang, and an

instructor in the Pedalangan Department at ISI.

Cahyo Kuntadi (S Sn, M Sn) was born in Blitar, East Java, and is the son of renowned Blitar dhalang Sukron Suwondo. He is married to the star *pesindhèn* Sukesi Rahayu of Tulungagung, East Java, who got her start with Purbo Asmoro. Known to his friends as "Yoyok," this young talent was made an instructor at ISI Pedalangan in 2016.

Dedek Wahyudi was born in 1960 in Klaten and graduated from the Karawitan Department of ASKI in 1986. He was a member of Asmorolaras (Mayangkara's pre-1992 name) in its earliest days. Dedek is one of the major innovators of *iringan garap*, a major influence on *iringan* in the Dance Department of ISI, and an internationally known composer, writing works for gamelan that are not based on traditional gamelan conventions.

Djoko Hadiwidjoyo was born in Yogyakarta in 1948, but has spent much of his adult life in Semarang. He was popular in the PANTAB and *hura-hura* movement of the 1990s and received the title "Crazy Djoko" (Djoko Édan) in response to the sensationalist antics he introduced to entertainment interludes and battle scenes.

Enthus Susmono was born in 1966 in Dampyak, Kramat, Tegal, son of Soemarjadihardja, dhalang *wayang golèk*. Enthus Susmono steps away from convention in radical ways, from his use of newly designed wayang figures, to innovation in the set-up of the stage, as well as brazenly new scene structures and *iringan*. He often combines *wayang golèk* fragments with *wayang kulit* and experiments with narrations and vocal texts in Arabic.

Gaib Widopandoyo was born in 1937 in Senden, Klaten, and is one of the most respected elderly dhalang still living.

Gandadarman (1933–1994)—**Sudarman** or **Darman Gandadarsana**—was born in Klaten but spent much of his adult life in Kedung Banteng, Sragen. He is remembered for being delightfully creative and spunky. Aside from his many dramatic strengths, Gandadarman popularized the now common slapstick sequence in *Prang Gagal* involving a traveling herbal healer, and is also cited by many as popularizing the trend of bringing out the *panakawan* in any post-*Gara-gara* dramatic scene in order to balance serious scenes.

Hali Jarwosularso, born in 1948 in Solo, is one of the main instructors at PDMN (*pedhalangan* school, Mangkunegaran Palace) and was a popular freelance performer in the 1980s.

Jaka Rianto (S Kar, M Hum) was born in 1961 in Gunung Kidul, Yogyakarta, and graduated from ASKI Pedalangan in 1986. An instructor in the Pedalangan Department at ISI, he is well respected for his pedagogical abilities, as well as his extensive practical knowledge of the *iringan garap* repertory.

Jungkung Darmoyo (S Sn) was born in 1964 in Gombang, Sawit, Boyolali, son of Mujoko Joko Raharjo. A graduate of ISI Yogyakarta, Jungkung is a well-respected dhalang and is highly active in the area of *iringan garap,* composing many of his own *iringan* selections.

Kasim Kesdolamono was born in 1963 to the respected classical dhalang of Klaten, Kesdik Kesdolamono. The relatively young Kasim still continues to perform in the classical village

tradition of his father, despite the contemporary trends his peers support.

Lumbini Trihasto (S Kar) graduated from the Karawitan Department at STSI in 1991. Son of the highly respected *gendèr* player Ibu Kris-Pringgo, Lumbini was a member of Mayangkara for decades. He was one of the central creators of *garap balungan* during rehearsals for Mayangkara in the 1990s and early 2000s, and is still active in the Dance Department at ISI.

Manteb Soedharsono was born in 1948 in Jatimalang, Mojobalan, Sukoharjo to a long line of dhalang. He and Anom Soeroto form the "twin living legends" of Solo's current wayang scene, with Manteb Soedharsono considered a master particularly in the area of *sabetan*. He frequently interacted with the community at ASKI during the early *padat* days, and has done much more in the area of *garapan* exploration, while Anom Soeroto tends to remain more in the classical vein.

Martopangrawit (1914–1986) of Surakarta, was an extremely influential figure in musical circles in Solo for decades. He was an instructor in the Karawitan Department at ASKI and STSI, as well as a gifted performer, a ground-breaking theorist, and a composer in the area of *iringan garap* well before its heyday, particularly in dance dramas.

Mujoko Joko Raharjo (1940–1992) was born in Gombang, Sawit, Boyolali, and is remembered for his creative and dramatically gripping performances. Mujoko composed tidbits of his own *iringan* and was a connoisseur of older-style *sulukan* and alternative *sulukan* texts. He played *rebab* for Nartosabdo for many years and was quite influenced by his performance style. He died an untimely death and is mourned by many as one of the greats; unable to develop his creative abilities through to old age.

Nartosabdo (1925–1985) was born in Wedi, Klaten, but spent much of his adult life in Semarang, as he was drummer for the Ngesti Pandawa Wayang Orang Theater. Nartosabdo's style is probably the single most influential force in *pedhalangan* from about 1975 through to the present. He was a prolific composer of both original gamelan pieces and new vocal parts to traditional works, many of which were composed for use in specific scenes in wayang—thus placing him as a forefather of the *iringan garap* movement before it was referred to as such. He is considered to be the first dhalang to have created a *lakon banjaran* performance. Nartosabdo popularized the use of regional variant repertory among Solonese dhalang (primarily works from Yogyakarta and Banyumas). He is attributed with altering the position of the *pesindhèn* (who were traditionally nestled in the gamelan behind the *gendèr* player and in front of the drummer) such that they lined up facing the dhalang, perpendicular to the *debog*. (A decade or two later in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the *pesindhèn*'s position shifted once again, this time so that they faced the audience, with their backs to the *debog.* This is generally thought to be a development from the days of the mega-spectacular, grand scale wayang of the 1990s.) Nartosabdo is also attributed with the current structure and function of the *Gara-gara* interlude, as well as the practice of lively and flirtatious interaction between dhalang and *pesindhèn* during *Limbukan* and *Gara-gara*.

Naryocarito (1927–2006), from the Makam Haji neighborhood in Kartosuro, had a long and respected career as both a dhalang and pedagogue. He was a visiting instructor for years in the Pedalangan Department at STSI, and was renowned for being a detail-oriented teacher

with extraordinarily high standards for his students.

Rahayu Supanggah (S Kar, PhD) was born in 1949 in Boyolali and is an internationally renowned composer, writer, critic and theorist, as well as a consummate *karawitan* musician. He graduated from ASKI in 1978, and received his PhD in Paris in 1985. He was one of the first *iringan garap* practitioners, influential in the development of *padat* performances and dance drama creations.

Setyaji (S Sn) was born in 1979 in Batang, and currently lives in Karanganyar. He graduated from the Karawitan Department of ISI in the early 2000s, and designs the *iringan* for a number of young, high profile dhalang. He specializes in *iringan wayang padat*.

Sigid Ariyanto (S Sn) was born in 1979 in Blora. His father was a local dhalang and his mother a local *pesindhèn*. He is currently one of the most popular dhalang in Central Java, performing mostly in the northern coastal area, around his home of Rembang.

Soewito Wito Radyo was born in 1958 in Sraten, Klaten, and is a major artistic figure in the *karawitan* world, both in Klaten and in Solo. He is an instructor at the High School of Performing Arts in Solo (where he graduated in 1979), a visiting performing arts instructor at ISI Surakarta, and active in keeping traditional arts and rituals alive throughout the villages of Klaten.

Sugeng Nugroho (S Kar, M Sn, Dr) was born in 1965 in Wonogiri and graduated from ASKI Pedalangan in 1988. He is currently an instructor in the Pedalangan Department of ISI, and a respected researcher and theorist. He wrote his master's thesis on the performance practice of Enthus Susmono and received his doctorate in 2012 from UGM, with a dissertation on *lakon banjaran*.

Sukardi Samiharjo (S Kar) of Kudu, Baki, Sukoharjo, born in 1944, was an instructor in the Pedalangan Department at ASKI and STSI for many years. A *karawitan* specialist, his contributions lie with *iringan* for wayang. Many of his innovations during the days of *padat* development at ASKI have been adopted by Purbo Asmoro, an admirer of his work.

Sumanto (S Kar, MS) was born in 1947 in Windan, Kartosuro, and was one of the founders of the *padat* movement at ASKI. A senior instructor in the Pedalangan Department at ISI, he is considered a master *padat* scriptwriter, particularly in the area of dialogue, debate and unusual *sanggit* at crucial moments.

Sunardi (S Sn, M Sn, Dr) was born in 1969 in Tempuran, Bulakan, Sukoharjo, and graduated from STSI Pedalangan in 1995. He is an instructor in the Pedalangan Department at ISI and a dedicated researcher into the aesthetics of performance practice in *pedhalangan.*

Suraji Sumarto (S Kar, M Sn), born in 1961 in Klaten, graduated from ASKI in 1987. Currently Department Head of ISI Karawitan, Suraji was a member of Asmorolaras (Mayangkara pre-1992) since its inception, and the *rebab* player for Mayangkara until 2010.

Sutino Hardokocarito, born in 1925 in Eromoko, Wonogiri, is one of the few great dhalang still living of his generation. He is known for his flowery, literary language as well as his

original *sanggit,* and is believed to hold profound spiritual powers.

Tantut Sutanto was born in 1978 in Ceper, Klaten and is a popular young dhalang of today. His mother is the famed Tantinah, of Nartosabdo's Condhong Raos.

Tomo Pandoyo was born in 1963 in Kebonarum, Klaten. Like Kasim Kesdolamono, Tomo Pandoyo sticks to traditional Klaten style, even though he is younger than Purbo Asmoro and despite the contemporary trends of his other peers.

Toto Atmojo (1942–2012), Wiyono Toto Atmojo, dhalang, was born in Parangjoro, Grogol, Sukoharjo. He was considered an authoritative source on various obscure and localized storylines or genealogical connections. Although he himself did not perform a great deal, quite a number of successful dhalang (Purbo Asmoro included) have been known to have made the pilgrimage to his home, an area prone to ankle-deep mud and flooding, in order to ask his help with a storyline or character they need to master for an upcoming performance.

Tristuti Rahmadi Suryasaputra (1939–2009) was born of dhalang lineage from Jombor, Klaten, but grew up in Grobogan, Purwodadi, and lived much of his later life in Mojosongo, Solo. An up-and-coming dhalang with a promising career ahead, he was suddenly imprisoned without charges in 1965. Fourteen years later, after being held as a "political prisoner" on Buru Island and elsewhere, Tristuti was released but banned from performing, as the new Soeharto government accused him of having ties to the Communist Party. In order to survive and continue to immerse himself in *pedhalangan*, Tristuti became a scriptwriter and literary advisor to high profile dhalang. From 1980 to 1987 he worked exclusively for Anom Soeroto, and from 1987 to 1999 for Manteb Soedharsono and miscellaneous other dhalang. During this period (the 1990s in particular) dhalang with superstar status, such as Anom Soeroto and Manteb Soedharsono, were performing so frequently—and broadcast on television—that they often employed scriptwriters and musical arrangers in order to assure variety and avoid too much repetition in their performances. Purbo Asmoro wrote his master's thesis on the prevalence of Tristuti's scripts in the Solonese *pedhalangan* community in the 1990s.

Wahyu Santosa Prabowo (S Kar, MS) was born in Tegal in 1954. He graduated from ASKI Dance Department in 1982. He is an instructor in the Dance Department at ISI Surakarta, and well known as a choreographer and creator of many new dance dramas.

Wakidi Dwidjomartono was born 1947 in Jagalan, Solo, and is one of the most respected and senior drummers in Solo. Having an extensive background across many sectors of performance practice, he began his career as a dance drummer, and was subsequently the drummer at Sriwedari Wayang Orang Theater during its golden era in the 1970s. In the 1980s and 1990s he was a highly sought-after wayang drummer, and now has settled into the *klenèngan* repertory. Kathryn Emerson's husband, he provided endless musical insights throughout the creation of this dissertation.

Warseno "Slenk" (S Sn, M Sn) was born in 1965 in Bagor, Juwiring, Klaten and is Anom Soeroto's younger brother. He is a highly popular performer, and owns a major radio station that broadcasts primarily wayang and other traditional Javanese arts.

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Summary

Transforming Wayang For Contemporary Audiences

Dramatic Expression in Purbo Asmoro's Style, 1989–2015

Kathryn Emerson

This dissertation examines a new style of wayang performance practice in Solo, Central Java, and its environs, known in academic circles as all-night *garapan* or all-night contemporary-interpretive style. This innovative system of story-telling, applied to otherwise traditional all-night wayang performances, was created and debuted in 1989 by the dhalang Purbo Asmoro (born in Pacitan, East Java in 1961), who then further developed the style over the subsequent decade, and continues the work to this day. By 2000, all-night *garapan* had become the single dominant style influencing dhalang of Purbo Asmoro's age and younger, whether only selectively or as a complete systematic approach.

In this dissertation, all-night *garapan* style is defined and analyzed according to its individual elements. A close look into Purbo Asmoro's creative processes offers insight about the challenges and benefits of this new style. The complex historical background and cultural context of its emergence is outlined in detail as well as how this new system of dramatic expression is being applied by other dhalang in the community of Solo-style performers.

As a performance translator, student, and avid follower of wayang in Java since 2004, as well as a practicing gamelan musician in Solo since 1991, the author noticed that a direct examination of all-night *garapan* style was conspicuously absent in both formal research and informal discourse in the artistic community. This curious lack of information on, and even simply identification and labeling of, the most significant development in wayang style in a quarter of a century, was what spurred the research. Only by exploring the history, development, creative

requirements, and philosophical basis of Purbo Asmoro's all-night *garapan* style can current Solonese wayang performance practice be appreciated and fully understood.

Chapter 1: Introduction reviews the abundance of existing writings on wayang performance practice in the greater Solo area. Classical performance practice is well documented by Javanese writers, from manuals for dhalang from the 1870s to technical manuals out of ISI Solo in the 2000s; from example-scripts written by dhalang pedagogues in the 1930s to those proliferating in the dhalang community by influential script-writer, pedagogue, and dhalang Tristuti in the 1990s. Western scholars such as Brandon, Feinstein, Keeler, and Clara van Groenendael have also given us profound insight into classical wayang tradition. Sudarko, Suwarno, and Murtiyoso have written extensively on the condensed wayang movement at ASKI in the 1970s, while Western scholars Arps, Sears, and Brinner have also documented this movement. Kayam, Kuwato, Supanggah, Sumarsam, Suratno, and Mrázek have explored trends that drastically changed wayang in the 1980s and 1990s, an era known as *wayang hura-hura*, focusing on how the entertainment interludes evolved. Curtis, Sugeng Nugroho, Soemanto, and Poerwono have given us detailed artistic profiles of a number of high-profile dhalang, allowing insight into their creative processes. Sugeng Nugroho has explored the new form of biographical sketch known as *lakon banjaran*. Absent, however, until Purbo Asmoro and Emerson's 2013 publication *The Wayang Educational Package*, was a broader stylistic discussion of post-classical, post-condensed, and post-*hura-hura* wayang: Purbo Asmoro's all-night *garapan* style and its subsequent extensions and alterations by other dhalang. This dissertation continues that 2013 exploratory work. Chapter 1 also describes the researcher's background, perspective, and methodology.

The next three chapters, Chapters 2–4, trace the historical perspective leading up to creation of the all-night *garapan* style. In **Chapter 2: Classical Style**, the parameters of the terms classical and traditional, as well as palace-classical style, village-classical style, and Nartosabdo style are examined. **Chapter 3: Condensed Style** explores *pakeliran padat* (condensed style) developed at ASKI (the university-level arts academy in Solo, Central Java) in the 1970s and 1980s. This includes a close look at the founders involved, such as Bambang Suwarno, Bambang Murtiyoso,

Sumanto, Sukardi, and later on Blacius Subono. One *lakon padat* script by Sukardi, *Kunthi Pilih* (*Kunthi's Choice*), is examined in detail. **Chapter 4: Birth of an Idea** introduces Purbo Asmoro, traces his upbringing, his education at SMKI (High School of Performing Arts in Solo), ASKI's influence on his work, and finally the personal challenge that inspired him to come up with the idea of all-night *garapan* style in 1989. This chapter also explores his early career immersed in the *wayang hura-hura* and PANTAP movement, and his disillusionment with this artistic direction.

Chapters 5–7 offer a detailed examination and analysis of all-night *garapan* style, using primary-source examples from two recordings: Purbo Asmoro's October 2007 live performance of *Makutharama* (*Rama's Crown*) in the Regent Office courtyard of Pacitan, East Java, and his November 2007 live performance of *Sesaji Raja Suya* (*The Grand Offering of the Kings*) in the town square of Pacitan, East Java, both published in 2013 as part of the *Wayang Educational Package*. Each of these chapters focuses on a different aspect of all-night *garapan* style.

Chapter 5: A New Vocabulary for Wayang Accompaniment describes the new musical vocabulary used in all-night *garapan* performances. This new vocabulary encompasses a number of techniques: 1) using pieces from outside the traditional wayang repertory, such as from traditional processional, concert, or dance repertories; 2) using traditional pieces but played in new ways; 3) using the repertory of pieces composed at ASKI in the 1970s for *padat*, *sandosa* (multi-dhalang, extra-wide screen wayang performances in Indonesian), or dance dramas; or 4) creating new fragments, instrumental or vocal, on the spot in rehearsals. There are also new types of transitions, alternatives in instrumentation, and layerings (overlays) of pieces not normally played in tandem.

Chapter 6: The Prologue explores the prologue, one of the most characteristic elements of all-night *garapan* style, and one that many dhalang use even if they then proceed with an entirely classical performance. The structure and purpose of Purbo Asmoro's elaborate prologues is examined, his creative process explored, and dramatic categories defined that can be used to define elements of his prologues.

Chapter 7: Creating Dramatic Hierarchy—The Poignant and the Familiar outlines how Purbo Asmoro crafts his all-night *garapan* performances after the

prologues. With a deeply considered theme, eternal question, or burning conflict or struggle as his overall focus, Purbo applies *padat* techniques to specific moments or sections of the story. He recrafts narration and dialogue, movement sequences, musical accompaniment, characterizations, and story details using *padat* techniques. This recrafting underscores structural points, highlights climactic moments, and enhances the poignancy of chosen interactions. In between these interspersed *padat* techniques, Purbo Asmoro provides familiar visual attractions such as traditional battle scenes, troop departure scenes, and court dispersals. This ebb and flow of *padat* intensity contrasted with the familiar and traditional creates a dramatic hierarchy across the all-night performance.

Chapter 8: Multi-Episode Constructions takes a look at how Purbo Asmoro applies his all-night *garapan* style to more complex structures involving multiple episodes combined in one performance. While he is famous for the birth-to-death biographical character sketch known as a *lakon banjaran*, his repertory of multi-episode constructions also includes partial biographical sketches, lakon in which a few chronologically adjacent episodes are combined, and lakon that trace the evolution of a weapon, heirloom, or philosophy.

Chapter 9: In the Hands of Other Practitioners offers short sketches of a number of other dhalang currently active in the Solonese wayang community. The focus is on how they view Purbo Asmoro's all-night *garapan* style, which elements they have adopted, and to what extent. This chapter also briefly addresses a few dhalang who completely reject Purbo Asmoro's style, and also elder dhalangs' reactions to developments in wayang.

Chapter 10: Conclusion wraps up Purbo Asmoro's creative process, summarizing how he constructs all-night *garapan* as well as what he consciously rejects. Ultimately, this dissertation argues the following points:

1. A distinct style, all-night *garapan*, has moved Solonese wayang performance-practice beyond both classicism and the *hura-hura* or PANTAP era of the 1990s. All-night performances by 2000 no longer fell into the two categories of classical (palace, village, or Nartosabdo style) and *hura-hura* as they did in the minds of wayang audiences in the 1990s, but rather five categories: classical,

hura-hura, all-night *garapan*, *garapan*-inspired (but not applied as an integrated system), or performances significantly outside a traditional framework.

2. The all-night *garapan* style was created by Purbo Asmoro, and debuted by him in March 1989. It is based on ASKI's concepts of *padat*.
3. All-night *garapan*, as practiced by Purbo Asmoro, applies *padat* techniques only in well-chosen segments, in order to create dramatic hierarchy and emotional poignancy.
4. All-night *garapan* has been the single most important influence on Solo-style dhalang younger than Purbo Asmoro, even if they do not apply the system in the same way he does.

While wayang has been in a constant state of innovation as far back as scholars can determine, the past four decades (1975–2015), and particularly the past two decades, have seen substantial changes in performance practice. Western discourse about the recent developments in wayang has been mostly limited to the condensed (*padat*) movement at ASKI, the nature of the entertainment interludes, or special effects and innovative tricks in battle scenes since the 1990s. Some scholars have explored alternatives that fall far from a traditional Solo-style framework, such as forms that use modern characters in everyday neighborhoods, or completely alter the stage set-up and equipment. Discourse among Javanese researchers has tended to jump over the question of stylistics and go straight to discussing Purbo Asmoro's performances without any consideration of his entirely new system. This dissertation attempts to fill that gap. It invites researchers to turn conversation away from the entertainment interludes and sensationalist elements for now, and direct their attention to radical and profound, yet, at the same time in some ways subtle, changes in the crafting of dramatic expression presented in Purbo Asmoro's all-night *garapan* style.

Intisari

(Summary in Indonesian)

Pembaharuan Wayang Untuk Penonton Terkini

Sajian Dramatik dalam Pakeliran Garap Semalam Ki Purbo Asmoro, 1989–2015

Kathryn Emerson

(translated into Indonesian by Wikan Satriati and Amrih Widodo)

Disertasi ini akan membeberkan pedalangan gaya baru di daerah Solo dan sekitarnya di Jawa Tengah, yang dikenal di kalangan para akademisi sebagai ***pakeliran garap semalam***. Gaya pakeliran yang berlangsung selama tujuh jam dengan struktur penuturan cerita yang inovatif ini, dan yang juga memakai kemasan dan teknik pakeliran tradisi dalam banyak hal, diciptakan dan pertama kali dipergelarkan pada tahun 1989 oleh dalang Ki Purbo Asmoro, lahir 1961 di Pacitan, Jawa Timur. Selanjutnya gaya pakeliran garap semalam dikembangkan selama satu dekade berikutnya oleh Purbo Asmoro, dan masih berlanjut dikembangkan hingga sekarang. Pada tahun 2000, pakeliran garap semalam menjadi satu gaya paling menonjol yang mempengaruhi dalang-dalang lain yang seangkatan Purbo Asmoro dan yang lebih muda, baik hanya dipergunakan sebagian maupun secara sistem baru keseluruhannya.

Disertasi ini akan mendefinisikan gaya garapan semalam dan menganalisis masing-masing unsurnya. Dengan menyelami secara mendalam proses kreatif Ki Purbo Asmoro, akan diungkap manfaat dan tantangan dari gaya garapan baru ini. Akan dibeberkan secara rinci bagaimana rumitnya latar belakang sejarah dan konteks budaya dari munculnya gaya garapan baru ini, serta bagaimana sistim ekpresi dramatik baru ini juga dipakai oleh dalang lain di kalangan dalang wayang gagrak Solo.

Sebagai penerjemah pertunjukan wayang, pelajar dan peneliti, serta penggemar berat yang tekun mengikuti perkembangan pakeliran wayang kulit di Jawa sejak 2004, sekaligus sebagai *pangrawit* (pemain gamelan) di Solo sejak 1991, penulis memperhatikan bahwa penelitian langsung terhadap pakeliran garap semalam benar-benar belum ada, baik dalam penelitian formal maupun wacana informal di

kalangan seniman wayang. Kurangnya rasa ingin tahu terhadap hal tersebut, bahkan meski sekadar pengenalan dan pengertian tentang sebuah perkembangan penting gaya pewayangan dalam waktu setengah abad inilah yang mendorong penelitian ini dilakukan. Hanya dengan menyelidiki sejarah, perkembangan, landasan kreatif dan dasar-dasarnya gaya pakeliran garap semalam Ki Purbo Asmoro, praktik pementasan wayang Solo di kalangan dalang muda sekarang ini dapat dihargai dan dimengerti sepenuhnya.

Bab I: Pendahuluan mengulas begitu banyaknya tulisan-tulisan yang sudah ada mengenai pertunjukan wayang di daerah Solo dan sekitarnya. Mengenai pakeliran klasik sudah banyak didokumentasikan oleh penulis-penulis Jawa, mulai dari buku tuntunan pedalangan terbitan tahun 1870an sampai buku panduan pakeliran keluaran ISI Solo tahun 2000an; dari naskah-naskah pilihan yang ditulis oleh para empu dalang pada tahun 1930an sampai naskah-naskah karya empu dalang dan penulis naskah Ki Tristuti Rahmadi Suryasaputra yang diproduksi dan disebarluaskan dikalangan para dalang pada tahun 1990an. Peneliti barat seperti Brandon, Feinstein, Keeler, dan Clara van Groenendael telah memberikan wawasan yang mendalam mengenai tradisi wayang klasik. Sudarko, Suwarno, dan Murtiyoso banyak menulis mengenai gerakan wayang padat di ASKI pada tahun 1970an, sementara peneliti barat seperti Arps, Sears, dan Brinner telah mendokumentasikan gerakan ini. Tulisan Kayam, Kuwato, Supanggah, Sumarsam, Suratno, dan Mrázek mengupas tren yang secara drastis mengubah wayang pada tahun 1980an dan 1990an, yang dikenal sebagai era *wayang hura-hura*, dengan perhatian utama pada bagaimana unsur selingan hiburan tersebut tumbuh berkembang. Curtis, Sugeng Nugroho, Soemanto, and Poerwono telah memberikan pemahaman mendalam mengenai proses kreatif beberapa dalang terkenal dengan membeberkan secara rinci profil artistik dalang-dalang tersebut. Maraknya *lakon banjaran,* yaitu lakon yang menuturkan biografi tokoh wayang, juga sudah ditulis oleh Sugeng Nugroho.

Tetapi, sebelum buku *The Wayang Educational Package* karya Purbo Asmoro dan Emerson tahun 2013, belum ada sama sekali karya yang membahas secara mendalam gaya pakeliran wayang paska-klasik, paska-padat, dan paska-hura-hura ini, yaitu, gaya garap semalam Ki Purbo Asmoro beserta pengembangan dan perubahan selanjutnya yang dilakukan oleh dalang lain. Disertasi ini merupakan kelanjutan dari karya produksi Lontar tahun 2013 tersebut. Bab 1 juga menjelaskan latar belakang, perspektif dan metodologi yang dipakai dalam penulisan disertasi ini.

Tiga bab berikutnya, Bab 2–4, menelusuri sejarah penciptaan gaya pakeliran garap semalam. Pada **Bab 2: Gaya Klasik**, menjelaskan tolok ukur istilah klasik dan tradisional, juga mengkaji tentang gaya klasik Kraton, gaya klasik dhusun, dan gaya Ki Nartosabdo. Pada **Bab 3: Gaya Padat**, pakeliran padat dikembangkan di ASKI tahun 1970-an dan dieksplorasi pada 1980-an, termasuk ulasan tentang para pendirinya, seperti Bambang Suwarno, Bambang Murtiyoso, Sumanto, Sukardi, dan kemudian Blacius Subono. Satu naskah lakon padat karya Sukardi, *Kunthi Pilih*, dikaji secara rinci. **Bab 4: Lahirnya Sebuah Gagasan** memperkenalkan Purbo Asmoro, pendidikan yang ditempuhnya, pendidikan SMKI, pengaruh ASKI terhadap karyanya, dan akhirnya upaya pribadi yang menginspirasinya hingga menciptakan gaya garapan semalam pada 1989. Bab ini juga mengulas karir awal Purbo Asmoro saat terlibat dalam garap wayang *hura-hura*, wayang PANTAP, dan kekecewaannya pada kecenderungan artistik gaya tersebut.

Bab 5–7 berisi kajian mendalam dan analisa tentang gaya pakeliran garap semalam, menggunakan contoh utama dua rekaman: pementasan langsung oleh Purbo Asmoro, lakon *Makutharama* pada October 2007 di Halaman Kantor Kabupaten Pacitan, Jawa Timur dan lakon *Sesaji Raja Suya* pada November 2007 di Alun-alun Pacitan, Jawa Timur. Kedua rekaman tersebut diterbitkan tahun 2013 sebagai bagian dari Paket Pendidikan Wayang (*Wayang Educational Package*).

Bab 5: Vokabuler Baru: Iringan Garap memaparkan tentang vokabuler baru untuk iringan wayang kulit yang digunakan dalam pakeliran garap semalam. Ini meliputi sejumlah teknik: 1) menggunakan gending dari luar perbendaharaan gending wayang tradisional, misalnya dari repertoar ritual dari Kraton Solo, repertoar *klenèngan*, repertoar tari; 2) menggunakan gending tradisional tetapi dimainkan dengan cara baru; 3) menggunakan perbendaharaan garap gending dan sulukan yang diciptakan di ASKI pada tahun 1970-an untuk *padat*, *sandosa*, atau sendratari; atau 4) menciptakan fragmen-fragmen baru, instrumental atau vokal, begitu spontan di latihan. Terdapat juga berbagai transisi baru dan swara juga instrumentasi baru.

Bab 6: The Prologue mengkaji tentang prolog, salah satu unsur cirikhas terpenting dalam gaya pakeliran garap semalam, dan satu hal yang digunakan beberapa dalang bahkan jika mereka kemudian melanjutkan dengan pementasan

klasik sepenuhnya. Di sini akan dikaji struktur dan tujuan prolog karya Purbo Asmoro, termasuk proses kreatifnya dan kategori dramatik yang bisa dipergunakan untuk menjabarkan elemen-elemen dalam prolognya.

Bab 7: Menciptakan Hirarki di Unsur Drama—Antara Yang Penuh Intensitas dan Yang Biasa menjelaskan bagaimana Purbo Asmoro menciptakan pakeliran garap semalam setelah prolog. Dengan tema dan gagasan pokok yang sangat dipertimbangkan, sajian debat, konflik atau perjuangan sebagai pusat perhatian utamanya secara keseluruhan, Purbo menerapkan teknik pakeliran padat kepada moment atau bagian khusus dalam cerita. Penggarapan ulang di unsur catur dan dialog, rangkaian garap sabet, garap iringan, garap tokoh, dan garapan sanggit menggunakan teknik padat untuk memperkuatkan titik-titik penting dalam urutan dramatik dan sajian gagasan pokok. Teknik-tiknik dari pakeliran padat juga dipakai Purbo Asmoro untuk memperkuatkan fokus dalam interaksi *nges* antara tokoh-tokoh penting, dan dalam momen kecil yang mempunyai potensi drajat dramatis yang tinggi.

Di antara bagian-bagian yang digarap dengan teknik padat ini, Purbo Asmoro menyediakan atraksi visual seperti adegan perang tradisional, keberangkatan pasukan, dan sidang istana. Hasilnya ada perasaan dinamis, yang menghindari kesan data atau monotone, di mana intensitas bagian padat diseling dengan sajian relatif tradisional dengan secara selektif selama pertunjukan tujuh jam durasinya.

Bab 8: Lakon Multi-Episode menilik bagaimana Ki Purbo Asmoro menerapkan gaya pakeliran garap semalam untuk struktur yang lebih kompleks yang melibatkan episode-episode berganda dalam satu pertunjukan. Walaupun terkenal sebagai dalang lakon banjaran, lakon yang menggambarkan perjalanan hidup tokoh dari lahir sampai mati, khazanah lakon multi-episode garapan Ki Purbo Asmoro juga memasukkan sketsa-sketsa potongan biografi, yakni lakon yang menggabungkan beberapa episode yang secara kronologis bersinggungan, dan lakon yang menelusuri asal-usul senjata, pusaka, maupun ajaran filsafat.

Bab 9: Di Tangan Dalang Lain memaparkan cuplikan ceritera beberapa dalang yang dewasa ini aktif di komunitas wayang gagrak Solo dengan fokus bagaimana mereka memandang gaya pakeliran garap semalam khas Ki Purbo Asmoro, unsur-

unsur apa yang mereka pakai, dan sejauh mana memakainya. Bab ini secara singkat juga menceriterakan beberapa dalang yang sama sekali menolak gaya Purbo Asmoro, dan juga tanggapan beberapa dalang senior terhadap perkembangan wayang masa kini.

Bab 10: Kesimpulan dimaksudkan untuk menyarikan proses kreatif Ki Purbo Asmoro dengan memberikan ringkasan perjalanannya membangun pakeliran garap semalam dan unsur-unsur apa saja yang dirangkul atau ditolak dari wayang *hura-hura* jaman 1990an maupun inovasi terkini. Akhirnya, disertasi ini mengajukan pendapatnya sebagai berikut:

1. Gaya khas pakeliran garap semalam dari Ki Purbo Asmoro telah mendorong pakeliran gagrak Solo keluar dari era dikotomi klasik vs hura-hura/PANTAP tahun 1990an, klasifikasi yang dipegang oleh penonton wayang di dasawarsa tersebut. Mulai tahun 2000, pertunjukan semalam suntuk di Solo tak lagi bisa diklasifikasikan ke dalam dua kategori, antara *klasik* (mencakup gaya istana, gaya desa dan gaya Nartosabdo), dan *hura-hura;* melainkan sudah berubah menjadi lima kategori: *klasik*, *hura-hura*, *garapan* semalam, setengah *garapan* atau yang memakai beberapa unsur, tetapi tak diterapkan sebagai sistim menyeluruh, atau pementasan yang secara jelas di luar kerangka kerja tradisional.
2. Gaya pakeliran garap semalam diciptakan oleh Purbo Asmoro dan pertama kali dipentaskan oleh Purbo Asmoro Maret 1989. Gaya ini berdasarkan konsep pakeliran padat ASKI.
3. Garapan semalam, seperti yang dilakukan Ki Purbo Asmoro, menerapkan teknik-teknik pakeliran padat hanya untuk bagian-bagian terpilih tertentu, akibatnya menciptakan hierarki dramatik dan ketajaman sentuhan perasaan.
4. Garapan semalam telah menjadi satu-satunya pengaruh yang paling penting bagi dalang-dalang yang lebih muda dari pada Ki Purbo Asmoro, bahkan ketika mereka menerapkan sistim tersebut dengan cara yang berbeda.

Walaupun inovasi wayang sudah terjadi dan berlangsung tanpa henti jauh sejak para peneliti mulai mencatatnya, perubahan yang mendasar dalam pertunjukan wayang baru terlihat nyata pada tahun 1975-2015, terutama dalam

dua dasa warsa terakhir ini. Kajian sarjana barat mengenai perubahan dalam pertunjukan wayang yang terjadi dewasa ini kebanyakan terbatas membedah gerakan pakeliran padat di ASKI, bentuk dan ciri selingan hiburan, atau pemakaian teknologi modern dan inovasi garap sabet dalam adegan perang yang terjadi sejak tahun sembilanpuluhan. Beberapa peneliti diantaranya mengupas panjang lebar mengenai pakeliran gaya baru yang jauh menyimpang dari pakem pakeliran Solo, misalnya pemakaian tokoh-tokoh dari kehidupan sehari-hari, atau perubahan radikal tata panggung dan perangkat peralatan pakeliran. Sementara itu, wacana di kalangan peneliti Jawa cenderung mengabaikan persoalan-persoalan tentang gaya, dan langsung memperdebatkan garapan Ki Purbo Asmoro tanpa menaruhnya dalam keseluruhan struktur pakeliran baru yang dibangunnya.

Disertasi ini berusaha untuk mengisi kekosongan ini. Ia mengundang para peneliti agar mengalihkan pembahasan dari unsur-unsur sensasional dalam selingan hiburan dan adegan perang, serta mengarahkan perhatian mereka pada perubahan besar sekaligus halus dalam penciptaan unsur ekspresi dramatik dan alur penceritaan kusus pada bagian lakon bukan bagian interlude atau perang, dalam gaya pakeliran garap semalam oleh Ki Purbo Asmoro.

Samenvatting

De moderne evolutie van wajang voor hedendaags publiek

Dramatische expressie in Purbo Asmoro's *stijl*
1989-2015

Kathryn Emerson
(translated into Dutch by Rob van Albada and Nienke Aben)

Dit proefschrift onderzoekt een nieuwe stijl van wajanguitvoering in Solo en omgeving (midden-Java), die in academische kringen bekend staat als de gehele nacht durende *garapan:* een hedendaags-interpretatieve wajanguitvoering die de gehele nacht duurt. Dit vernieuwende systeem om een verhaal te vertellen, toegepast op de traditionele nachtelijke wajanguitvoeringen, werd geschapen en voor het eerst toegepast door dhalang Purbo Asmoro in 1989. Gedurende een tiental jaren ontwikkelde Purbo Asmoro de stijl verder en hij zet dit werk tot op heden voort. Tegen 2000 was de gehele nacht durende *garapan* de overheersende stijl geworden voor de generatiegenoten van Purbo Asmoro's leeftijdsgenoten en ook voor jongeren, hetzij partieel of als een complete, systematische benadering.

Dit proefschrift definieert de gehele nacht durende *garapan*-stijl en analyseert de individuele elementen. Een nauwkeurige blik op de creatieve processen van Purbo Asmoro geeft inzicht in de uitdagingen en de voordelen van deze nieuwe stijl. De complexe, historische achtergrond en de culturele context van de opkomst van de gehele nacht durende *garapan*-stijl wordt in detail geschetst, evenals de toepassing van dit nieuwe systeem van dramatische expressie door andere dhalangs uit de Solo-stijl.

De promovenda heeft sinds 1991 gamelan gespeeld in Solo, en is sinds 2004 vertaler van uitvoeringen, student en gedreven volger van wajang op Java. Hierbij is opgevallen dat een gerichte studie van de gehele nacht durende *garapan*-stijl opvallend afwezig was in zowel formeel onderzoek als in informeel discours in de gemeenschap van kunstenaars. Dit opvallende gebrek aan kennis en classificatie

van de belangrijkste ontwikkeling in wajangstijl in een kwart eeuw, inspireerde tot dit promotieonderzoek . Door het bestuderen van de geschiedenis, ontwikkeling, creatieve vereisten en de filosofische basis van de gehele nacht durende *garapan*-stijl van Purbo Asmoro te onderzoeken kan de gangbare Solonese wajanguitvoeringspraktijk worden beoordeeld en volledig worden begrepen.

Hoofdstuk 1: Introduction behandelt de overvloed aan bestaande geschriften over de praktijk van wajanguitvoeringen in de regio Solo, uiteenlopend van handboeken voor dhalangs uit de jaren 1870 tot technische handboeken van ISI Solo (voorheen bekend als ASKI, de Kunstacademie in Solo, Midden-Java) uit de jaren 2000. Daarnaast bestaan modelscenario's geschreven door dhalangpedagogen uit de dertiger jaren en scenario's van Tristuti die zich verspreidden in de dhalanggemeenschap in de negentiger jaren. De klassieke uitvoeringen zijn goed geducumenteerd door Javaanse schrijvers. Westerse geleerden zoals Brandon, Feinstein, Keeler en Clara van Groenendael hebben een helder inzicht gegeven in de klassieke wajangtraditie. De verkorte wajang van ASKI is aan het einde van de jaren '70 uitvoerig beschreven door Sudarko, Suwarno en Murtiyoso, en ook gedocumenteerd door de westerse geleerden Arps, Sears en Brinner. Kayam, Kuato, Supanggah, Sumarsam, Suratno en Mrázek hebben stromingen onderzocht die de wajang drastisch hebben veranderd in de jaren '80 en '90, een tijdperk dat bekend staat als *wayang hura-hura* (wajang voor licht vermaak). Zij concentreerden zich de ontwikkeling van de komische intermezzo's. Curtis, Nugroho, Soemanto en Poerwono verschaften gedetailleerde artistieke profielschetsen van een aantal bekende dhalangs, waarmee ze inzicht gaven in hun creatieve processen. Sugeng Nugroho heeft de nieuwe vorm van een biografische schets onderzocht die bekend staat als *lakon banjaran*.

Tot aan de publicatie van Asmoro en Emerson's *The Wayang Educational Package* (2013) ontbrak een bredere stilistische discussie over post-klassieke, post-bekorte en post-*hura-hura* wajang, met name Purbo Asmoro's gehele nacht durende *garapan*-stijl en zijn latere uitbreidingen en wijzigingen ervan door andere dhalangs. Dit proefschrift zet dat verkennende werk uit 2013 voort. Hoofdstuk 1 beschrijft de onderzoeksmethodologie vanuit de achtergrond en perspectief van de promovenda.

De volgende drie hoofdstukken, de hoofdstukken 2 tot 4, schetsen het historisch perspectief dat heeft geleid tot de schepping van de gehele nacht durende *garapan*-stijl. In **Hoofdstuk 2: Classical Style**, worden de parameters onderzocht van de termen 'klassiek en traditioneel', alsmede die van de 'paleis-klassieke' stijl, de 'dorps-klassieke' stijl en de Nartosabdo-stijl. **Hoofdstuk 3: Condensed Style** verkent *padat* (bekorte stijl), zoals die is ontwikkeld aan de ASKI in de jaren '70 en '80. Het hoofdstuk bevat een nauwkeurige beschouwing van de betrokken initiatiefnemers, zoals Bambang Suwarno, Bambang Murtiyoso, Sumanto, Sukardi en uiteindelijk Blacius Subono. Sukardi's *lakon padat* scenario, *Kunthi Pilih* (*Kunthi's Keuze*), wordt in detail onderzocht. **Hoofdstuk 4: Birth of an Idea** introduceert Purbo Asmoro en schetst zijn opvoeding, zijn studie aan de SMKI (Hogere School voor de Kunst, Solo), de invloed van ASKI op zijn werk, en tenslotte de persoonlijke uitdaging die hem inspireerde tot het idee van de gehele nacht durende *garapan*-stijl in 1989. Dit hoofdstuk onderzoekt ook zijn vroege carriere toen hij verdiept was in de *wayang hura-hura* (gesponsord door PANTAP beweging), en zijn teleurstelling over deze kunstzinnige stroming.

De hoofdstukken 5 - 7 bieden een gedetailleerd onderzoek en analyse van de gehele nacht durende *garapan*-stijl, gebruik makend van eerstelijns voorbeelden uit twee opnames, beide gepubliceerd in 2013 als deel van het *Wayang Educational Package:* de uitvoering door Purbo Asmoro in oktober 2007 van *Makutharana* (*de Kroon van Rama*) op het binnenplein van het kantoor van de regent (Bupati) van Pacitan, oost-Java, en zijn uitvoering in november 2007 van *Sesaji Raja Suya* (*de Plechtige Offerande van de Koningen*) op het stadsplein van Pacitan, oost-Java.

Hoofdstuk 5: A New Vocabulary for Wayang Accompaniment beschrijft het nieuwe muzikale vocabulaire dat wordt gebruikt in de gehele nacht durende *garapan* uitvoeringen. Dit nieuwe vocabulaire omvat een aantal technieken: 1) het gebruik van stukken buiten het traditionele wajangrepertoire, zoals uit traditioneel optocht-, concert- of dansrepertoire; 2) het gebruik van traditionele stukken die op een nieuwe manier worden gespeeld; 3) het gebruik van stukken die in de zeventiger jaren werden gecomponeerd aan ASKI voor *padat* en *sandosa* (multi-dhalang, Indonesisch gesproken wajanguitvoeringen met een extra breed scherm) of voor dansdrama's; of 4) het ter plekke creëren van nieuwe fragmenten tijdens repetities, hetzij

instrumenteel, hetzij vocaal. Er zijn ook nieuwe soorten overgangen , alternatieve instrumentbezettigen en vernieuwende simultane uitvoering van verschillende muzikale onderdelen.

Hoofdstuk 6: The Prologue onderzoekt de proloog, één van de meest karakteristieke onderdelen van de gehele nacht durende *garapan*-stijl. Veel dhalangs gebruiken deze, zelfs als ze daarna verder gaan met een geheel klassieke uitvoering. Hoofdstuk 6 onderzoekt de structuur en het doel van de uitvoerige inleidingen van Purbo Asmoro, zijn creatieve proces, evenals de dramatische categorieën die kunnen worden gebruikt om elementen van zijn inleidingen te definiëren.

Hoofdstuk 7: Creating Dramatic Hierarchy—The Poignant and the Familiar schetst hoe Purbo Asmoro na de inleidingen zijn gehele nacht durende *garapan*-uitvoeringen vormgeeft. Met een diep doordacht thema, een eeuwige vraag, brandend conflict of strijd als zijn globale punt van aandacht, gebruikt Purbo Asmoro technieken uit *padat* voor specifieke momenten of gedeelten van het verhaal. Hij herschept met gebruik van *padat*-technieken het verhaal en de dialoog, de opeenvolging van wajangbewegingen, de muzikale begeleiding, karakteriseringen en details van het verhaal. Hiermee onderstreept Purbo structuren, legt de nadruk op beslissende momenten en versterkt diep rakende interacties. Tussen deze verspreide *padat*-technieken biedt Purbo bekende visuele attracties zoals traditionele vechtscenes, scenes van vertrekkende legers en het formele afscheid nemen binnen het hof aan het einde van een scene. Het rijzen en dalen van de *padat*-intensiteit, gecontrasteerd met het bekende en traditionele, schept een dramatische hiërarchie die zich uitstrekt over de nachtelijke wajanguitvoering.

Hoofdstuk 8: Multi-Episode Constructions toont hoe Purbo Asmoro zijn gehele nacht durende *garapan*-stijl toepast op complexere structuren, waarbij meerdere episodes worden gecombineerd tot één uitvoering. Terwijl hij beroemd is om zijn *lakon banjaran,* van geboorte tot dood reikende biografische schetsen, bevat zijn repertoire van meervoudig samengestelde episodes ook gedeeltelijke, biografische schetsen, lakons waarin slechts een paar opeenvolgende episodes zijn gecombineerd, en lakons die de evolutie van een wapen, erfstuk of filosofie traceren.

Hoofdstuk 9: In the Hands of Other Practitioners biedt korte schetsen van een aantal andere dhalangs die tegenwoordig actief zijn in de Solonese

wajanggemeenschap. Aandacht gaat hierbij uit naar hoe zij Purbo Asmoro's gehele nacht durende *garapan*-stijl zien, welke elementen zij hebben overgenomen en in welke mate. Dit hoofdstuk benoemt tevens enkele dhalangs die de stijl van Purbo Asmoro geheel verwerpen en daarnaast ook de reactie van oudere dhalangs op deze ontwikkelingen in de wajang.

Hoofdstuk 10: Conclusion presenteert het creatieve proces van Purbo Asmoro, en vat samen hoe hij de gehele nacht durende *garapan* construeert en wat hij bewust weglaat. Tenslotte poneert dit proefschrift de volgende stellingen:

1. De gehele nacht durende *garapan*-stijl heeft de praktijk van de Solonese wajanguitvoeringen voorbij het classicisme en de *hura-hura* en PANTAP periode van de jaren '90 heeft gebracht. De gehele nacht durende uitvoeringen vielen vanaf 2000 niet langer in twee categorieën uiteen, te weten de klassieke (paleis-, dorp- of Nartosabdostijl) en *hura-hura.* In tegenstelling tot de gedachten van het negentiger jaren publiek ontstonden zo vijf categorieën: klassiek, *hura-hura*, de gehele nacht durende *garapan*, door *garapan* geïnspireerd (maar niet als een totaal systeem toegepast), of uitvoeringen die significant buiten het traditionele kader vielen.
2. De gehele nacht durende *garapan*-stijl werd ontwikkeld door Purbo Asmoro, en door hem voor het eerst uitgevoerd in maart 1989. Deze stijl is gebaseerd op de begrippen over *padat* van de ASKI.
3. De gehele nacht durende *garapan* zoals door Purbo Asmoro in praktijk gebracht , past *padat* alleen toe in goed gekozen segmenten, teneinde een dramatische hiërarchie te scheppen en diepe emoties over te brengen.
4. De gehele nacht durende *garapan* is de belangrijkste invloed geweest op dhalangs die jonger zijn dan Purbo Asmoro, zelfs als ze het systeem niet op dezelfde wijze toepassen zoals hij dat doet.

Terwijl wajang zo lang als de wetenschap kan vaststellen, zich in een constante toestand van vernieuwing bevindt, zijn er aanzienlijke veranderingen geweest in de uitvoeringspraktijk in de laatste vier decennia (1975-2015), in het bijzonder gedurende de afgelopen twintig jaar. Westers discours over de recente ontwikkeling in wajang was vooral beperkt tot de beweging voor ingekorte wajang (*padat*) aan de

ASKI, de komische intermezzo's en de speciale effecten en innovatieve trucages in de gevechtsscenes sinds de jaren negentig. Sommige wetenschappers onderzochten alternatieven die sterk afweken van het traditionele kader, zoals vormen met moderne figuren in alledaagse buurten , of een geheel ander ontwerp van toneel en instrumentarium. Discours tussen Javaanse onderzoekers had de neiging de stilistiek te negeren en rechtstreeks te belanden in een discussie over de uitvoeringen van Purbo Asmoro, zonder zijn innovatieve systeem in beschouwing te nemen. Dit proefschrift poogt in deze lacune te voorzien. Het nodigt onderzoekers uit om de bespreking van de komische intermezzo's en de sensationele gevechtsscenes te verlaten, en hun aandacht te richten op de waarlijk radicale, diepgaande en soms ook subtiele veranderingen in het vormgeven van dramatische expressie in de gehele nacht *garapan*-stijl van Purbo Asmoro.

Propositions (*Stellingen*)

1. All-night contemporary-interpretive style (all-night *garapan* style) was developed by Purbo Asmoro in reaction to the "wayang as entertainment" (*hura-hura*) tendencies of the 1990s. He envisioned it as a way of returning meaning and integrity to wayang while embracing innovation.

2. In Purbo Asmoro's all-night *garapan* style, selected parts of the story are recrafted with innovative techniques in narration, movement, music, characterization, and structure. Other segments remain traditional, while the two comic interludes stem from the *hura-hura* era. Through this contrast, Purbo creates an ebb and flow of dramatic intensity, resulting in a new type hierarchy quite unlike classical tradition.

3. Paradoxically, while *garapan* techniques have their origin in the condensed wayang format created by a group of intellectuals at the conservatory in Solo in the 1970s, these techniques have the effect of actually expanding, elaborating, and thickening scenes when used in an all-night wayang.

4. While the condensed wayang format was created within academia and never became popular, Purbo Asmoro's all-night *garapan* style was developed with the mass wayang audience in mind. It was acknowledged as worthy of attention in the curriculum at ISI Solo only about twenty years later, in 2009.

5. Wayang has been in a constant state of innovation as far back as we can trace.

6. *Wayang kulit purwa* is not a museum artifact, but rather continues to be extremely popular—more so than the related arts of dance, concert music, *kethoprak*, or *wayang orang*. Superstar dhalang face full schedules with audiences often in the thousands.

7. Social media is increasingly a place where professional dhalang, wayang critics, fan clubs, dhalang students, and wayang sponsors meet, distribute information, and engage in discussions across village, province, island, and international borders.

8. High-profile dhalangs' performances are frequently broadcast by mass media and rapidly distributed over the internet by sponsors and fans. Because of this, some dhalang feel compelled to develop more variety in story interpretation, narration, dialogue, comedy bits, and musical accompaniment. Many hire artistic consultants to achieve this, Purbo Asmoro not included.

9. The day of the informally-educated, locally-based dhalang, who may only receive supplies of rice, tea, and sugar for his services, is for all practical purposes over.

10. As every dhalang, wayang musician, wayang fan, or wayang scholar knows, sleep is over-rated.

Curriculum Vitae

Kathryn Emerson was born in Kalamazoo, Michigan, USA in 1961. She graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Cornell University in 1983, with a Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Music and a focus in piano performance. She studied under *fortepiano* expert Malcolm Bilson, and 20th-century music historian William W. Austin. She received a Master of Arts (MA) in Music from the City University of New York at Queens College in 1985.

While at Cornell, Kathryn was exposed to gamelan by ethnomusicologist Martin Hatch. This inspired her, years later, to join the Indonesian Consulate group in New York City. In June 1986, she took her first study trip to Java. She subsequently moved to San Francisco to continue gamelan studies with Midiyanto S. Putro at Berkeley, while at the same time attending Mills College in Oakland as a graduate student in the School of Education. She earned her California Teaching Certificate in 1991 in their one-year program.

In 1991, she embarked on a three-year study trip to Java, during which she performed fulltime as a *gendèr* player for a number of dhalang. In 1995, Kathryn became a teacher at the Jakarta Intercultural School, where she continues to work with international primary-age students in general subjects, as well as gamelan and wayang studies. She spent 12 years (1991–2003) intensely studying *gendèr*, *kendhang*, *rebab*, and *sindhènan* for concert music and wayang with a variety of masters in Solo, and performing in venues across Java.

In 2003, Kathryn decided to turn to the study of Javanese language and wayang performance-practice. In 2004 she began studying under Purbo Asmoro, observing and recording his performances weekly. She developed a method of simultaneous translation in which she types on the spot as the dhalang speaks. This text, with interpolated explanations, is projected adjacent to the wayang screen. Using this technique she has toured the USA with Purbo Asmoro four times, as well as France, England, India, Singapore, and throughout Indonesia for foreign audiences. In 2013, they produced the seven-volume, 21-DVD *Wayang Educational Package*, a precursor to this dissertation.



App-1: The wayang figure "Ki Purbo Asmoro" by artisan Fathur Gamblang of Banyuwangi and Jakarta, 2014.

