



UNIVERSITAS SANATA DHARMA

LEMBAGA PENELITIAN DAN PENGABDIAN KEPADA MASYARAKAT

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SURAT PERJANJIAN
PELAKSANAAN PROGRAM PENELITIAN INTERNAL REGULER TAHUN 2021
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Pada hari ini, Rabu tanggal 17 bulan Februari tahun 2021, kami yang bertanda tangan di bawah ini:

No	Nama	Status
1	Dr. rer. nat. Herry Pribawanto Suryawan	Ketua Lembaga Penelitian dan Pengabdian kepada Masyarakat Universitas Sanata Dharma (LPPM-USD) Yogyakarta, yang selanjutnya dalam Surat Perjanjian ini disebut sebagai PIHAK PERTAMA
2	P. Sarwoto S.S., M.A., Ph.D.	Dosen Tetap Universitas Sanata Dharma, pengusul dan pelaksana Penelitian Internal Reguler Universitas Sanata Tahun 2021 yang selanjutnya dalam surat perjanjian ini disebut sebagai PIHAK KEDUA

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Caliban Discourse from Shakespeare's Time to Contemporary Java

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Surat Perjanjian Pelaksanaan Program Penelitian Internal Reguler Universitas Sanata Tahun 2021 ini dibuat rangkap 2 (dua) dan bermaterai cukup sesuai dengan ketentuan yang berlaku.

<p>PIHAK PERTAMA Ketua LPPM Univ. Sanata Dharma</p>  <p><u>Dr. refnat Herry Pribawanto Suryawan</u> P.2236</p>	<p>PIHAK KEDUA Ketua Pelaksanaan Penelitian</p>  <p><u>P. Sarwoto S.S., M.A., Ph.D.</u> P.1676</p>
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Skema Penelitian: Reguler

LAPORAN AKHIR PENELITIAN

Caliban Discourse from Shakespeare to Java's Baron Sekeber



Oleh:

(Paulus Sarwoto, S.S., M.A., Ph.D. NIDN: 0504046901)

**PROGRAM PASCASARJANA
UNIVERSITAS SANATA DHARMA
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2023**

LEMBAR PENGESAHAN LAPORAN AKHIR PENELITIAN

1	Penelitian	
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b	Bidang Ilmu	Sastra
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Mengetahui
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Kata Pengantar

Pertama-tama saya mengucapkan terimakasih kepada LPPM USD yang telah melakukan seleksi proposal penelitian dan meloloskan proposal ini untuk didanai. Penelitian ini saya anggap penting untuk membawa diskusi sastra Inggris dalam konteks sastra Jawa dan sebaliknya. Konsep utama dalam kritik sastra Inggris poskolonial yang dipakai dalam penelitian ini adalah wacana Caliban (Caliban discourse). Wacana itu berasal dari karya William Shakespeare berjudul *The Tempest* yang mengisahkan kedatangan bangsa kulit putih di tanah jajahan. Kisah serupa juga dijumpai dalam kisah babad Baron Sekeber yang memiliki bayangan yang menolak wacana Caliban. Dalam kisah Baron Sekeber, bangsa Jawa direpresentasikan memiliki derajat yang lebih tinggi dari bangsa Eropa melalui plot dan Bahasa yang digunakan.

Saya juga ingin minta maaf karena keterlambatan penyelesaian laporan ini karena ternyata penelitian memerlukan waktu yang lebih lama dari yang saya perkirakan. Meskipun demikian, penelitian ini akan memiliki keterbacaan global karena saat ini sudah proses review dan editing oleh jurnal internasional terindeks Scopus, *Kritika Kultura*, yang diterbitkan oleh jurusan Sastra Inggris Ateneo de Manila, Filipina. Artikel akan diterbitkan di bulan April 2024. Akhir kata, saya berterimakasih kepada semua pihak yang telah membantu saya menyelesaikan laporan penelitian ini.

Paulus Sarwoto, S.S., M.A., Ph.D.

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Abstrak

Wacana Caliban yang berasal dari drama karya William Shakespeare berjudul *The Tempest* (1610), telah tersebar melampaui batas-batas ruang dan waktu dalam berbagai wacana, baik wacana politik, psikoanalisis, maupun teks sastra. Wacana Caliban, ditandai dengan kedatangan orang kulit putih di pulau luar Eropa, juga dijumpai di khasanah sastra Jawa dalam bentuk babad, kisah fiksional sejarah, *Serat Baron Sakendher* (1960an) dan salah satu babad turunannya, *Serat Babad Pati* (1925). Baron Sakendher di *Serat Baron Sekendher* dan Baron Sekeber di *Serat Babad Pati* digambarkan sebagai aristocrat Barat yang pergi ke Jawa untuk menundukkan Mataram tetapi gagal dan dipermalukan. Artikel ini melacak bagaimana wacana Caliban dari teks Shakespeare dijungkir-balikkan dalam kisah Baron Sekeber dan bagaimana paradigma Eropa tentang orang Jawa dilawan dengan narasi sebaliknya. Bahasa Jawa dengan tingkatan kesopanan yang berbeda-beda dan cara aktor ketoprak memperagakan Baron Sekeber menjadi alat untuk melawan narasi superioritas kulit putih itu. Pada bagian akhir artikel ini menganalisis situs perziarahan di Pekalongan, makam Penatas Angin, yang dipercaya telah membunuh Baron Sekeber. Rekonstruksi dialektika Timur/Barat dalam kisah Baron Sekeber, surogasinya dalam penampilan ketoprak, dan peziarahan ke makam Penatas Angin merupakan bentuk-bentuk anti-kolonialisme yang melawan mitos-mitos kolonial, seperti dinanti-nantinya bangsa kulit putih di pulau terasing.

Caliban Discourse from Shakespeare to Java's Baron Sekeber

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Abstract

Caliban discourse originated in William Shakespeare's play, *The Tempest* (1610), has travelled across time and space to be reconfigured in various discourses, such as in political, psychoanalytical, and literary texts. The discourse of Caliban, marked with the arrival of a white man in a non-European island, is also found in Javanese *babad*, semi historical narrative, of *Serat Baron Sakendher* (1600s) and one of its rewriting, *Serat Babad Pati* (1925). Baron Sakendher in *Serat Baron Sakendher* and Baron Sekeber in *Babad Pati* are portrayed as a Dutch aristocrat travelling to Java to conquer Mataram kingdom but failed and humiliated. This paper seeks to trace how Caliban discourse from Shakesporean text is subverted in this Javanese version of Prospero/Caliban and how the European colonial gaze is displaced in contemporary Javanese cultural performance of *ketoprak* staging *Baron Sekeber* story. The stratified Javanese language and the Javanese *ketoprak* actor's mimicry of the Dutch Baron have been the means by which the gaze is returned. In the last section this paper discusses a site of pilgrimage related to Sekeber's death in Pekalongan, Central Java, where Javanese Muslims regularly go and pray in the cemetery of Penatas Angin, believed to have defeated Baron Sekeber. The reconstruction of the East/West dialectic in *Baron Sekeber* story, its surrogation in Javanese traditional performance of *ketoprak*, and religious pilgrimage to the cemetery of Penatas Angin is a form of anti-colonial assimilation reflected in colonial myths such as the much-awaited arrival of the White in a foreign island.

Keywords: postcolonial, textual congruities, Senapati, communist, *priyayi*, *wali sanga*, *petilasan*

Introduction

Caliban, now accepted symbol of colonized subject in the global South, originates in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (1612). Although Caliban only speaks 180 lines in the play, he has drawn critics' interest not only from traditional Shakespearean scholars but also postcolonial and new historicist critics. Most contemporary literary critics have dismissed authorial intention as fallacy due to the impossibility of fathoming what Shakespeare's intention was. A deconstructionist, for instance, would see the absurdity of finding an author's intention because of its wrong assumption that there is a definitive referent or transcendental signified – a stable referent beyond language signification. While it might be true that Shakespeare had a certain intention in writing *The Tempest*, for a revisionist critic, his intention is less important than the complicity of the text with the political climate of the time. England early expansionist ideology of the time, ripe with Eurocentrism and desire to know and conquer the new world, must have become, in Edward Said's words (14), "productive constraints" for writers, including Shakespeare. This makes allegorical reading of the play with European colonialism as the background plausible. Complicit colonial perspectives in both European and non-European literature have been elaborated by postcolonial scholars through such term as Caliban discourse to designate the complex colonizer/colonized relations.

If postcolonial criticism stresses ideological and textual complicity in the discourse of colonialism, new historicism seeks to map textual congruities between the literary text and historical texts not only in time of production but also time of consumptions. Following Raymond Williams' argument (*Culture and Society*) that literature should be treated equally with other cultural texts, new historicism views literary and historical texts as co-texts, quite unlike postcolonial and intentionalist readings that prioritize literary text over historical contexts. In this view, literature is seen as participating in practical politics of "consolidation, subversion, and containment of power" (Dollimore and Sinfield 10). The equality between literary text and other cultural products signifies the embeddedness of the aesthetics with the politics. These "textual congruities" (Vaughan 153) are what make past texts relevant with contemporary contexts in finding out how, for instance, *The Tempest* embodies both the propagation and ambiguity of colonial mechanism (Brown).

While textual congruities in new historicism relate with the historicity of texts and textuality of history, I would argue for anti-colonial discursive congruities as an approach in this article. Anti-colonial discursive congruities refer to manifestations of anti-colonial discourses found across different modalities, space, and time. Colonialism taking place in many different places by different European states with different colonial policies must have

generated various anti-colonial discourses, reflected in how the colonized responds to colonial experience textually and metaphorically. The experience of colonialism in America, responded with the Americanization of Caliban (Vaughan, 1988 and Castells, 2018, p. 41), is responded with different kind of Prospero/Caliban metaphor in Java through the writing of *babad*, semi historical narratives, of *Serat Baron Sakendher*, (1600s) and *Serat Babad Pati* (1925). Studies show that the 26 manuscripts of *Serat Baron Sakendher* were written by different writers from different periods (Widodo et al. 1). Both *Serat Baron Sakendher* and *Serat Babad Pati* narrate the arrival of a European Baron, Baron Sakendher in *Serat Baron Sakendher* and Baron Sekeber in *Serat Babad Pati*, in Mataram both to challenge the Javanese king, Panembahan Senapati. Theodore Pigeaud (1967) contended that the composition the first Sakendher texts and its subsequent rewritings started from the late 17th Century. The many rewritings of Sakendher texts cannot be separated from the political backdrop of the poets. They were commissioned by the Javanese Sultans to compose this semi historical narratives depicting their superiority over Spanish and Dutch colonizers. The objective was to gain strong support and legitimacy of their rule over the populace. This strategy was especially crucial when the sultanate was suffering from post-war trauma, such as the Java war (W. Widodo et al. 294).

Etymologically Baron Sakendher derives from the words ‘Baron,’ a European aristocratic title, and Sakendher. Anthony Reid (Quoted in Winet 10) argues that the name Baron Sakendher is a combination of two historical names: Governor-General Baron von Imhoff reigning in Java from 1743 -1750 and Javanized name of Alexander the Great. Long before, T. Pigeaud (Pigeaud 162) speculated that Sakendher is from Arabicized Alexander into Iskandar, indicating that the history of Alexander the Great reached Java through Middle Eastern version narrative of his feat. His ancestor is depicted as an Arabic by descent but who has moved to Spain and succeeds to become the king of Spain. Another version maintains that he is descended from successful traders who later gains some political power in Spain. What makes the different Sakendher texts similar is that, Baron Sakendher came to Java to challenge Panembahan Senapati, the king of Mataram, the present-day Yogyakarta.

Caliban Discourse and Sakendher Texts

Caliban discourse since Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* has been through several surrogation. I wrote on this process of Caliban surrogation in my Master’s thesis (Sarwoto) in which I approached Caliban discourse using the theory of cultural surrogation. Joseph Roach (2) defines cultural surrogation as a textual dialectic by which a cultural text always engenders other cultural texts. This is made possible since textuality involves what Elin

Diamond (1) called “cultural stories, traditions, and political contestations that comprise our sense of history.” As a dramatic figure, Caliban stage history evidences aesthetic performances with politically-charged surrogation. He slowly evolved from Shakespearean half-monster of the 17th century to half-human, noble savage, black Caribbean, Latin American and finally archetypal representative of the global South. The productivity of Caliban’s surrogation is inseparable from geopolitical contestation with racism strongly involved. Such complicit racism in the process of surrogation can be found in Octave Mannoni’s pseudo-scientific theorization of Prospero complex and Caliban complex to illustrate a psychological disposition of European and the rest of the world in the colonial context.

Moving to Java, no studies have been able to locate the cultural surrogation of Caliban in Javanese texts. Although Trisno Sumardjo, a Javanese poet and translator, translated Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* into Indonesian *Prahara* in 1952, other connection between the figuration of Shakespearean Caliban and Java might be no more than the reference of the play’s production in 1963 when Peter Brook directed *The Tempest* at Stratford-upon-Avon in which Caliban was depicted as a Java man (Vaughan and Vaughan 2009). The association of Caliban with Java man whose first fossils of homo erectus is believed to be the missing link between humans and apes suggests the backwardness of this non-European human. In that production, Caliban was seen as the representation of emergent humanity against European human, Prospero. The absence of direct textual surrogation, despite its thematic relevance, between Javanese texts, such as *Sakendher* texts and Caliban figuration requires a justification for comparing them. New historicist reading employing textual congruities might lend a hand to understand the connection. The absence of explicit intertextuality between *Sakendher* texts and Caliban surrogation can be reconnected through the congruities of anti-colonial discourse such as Caliban discourse. Since there have been several texts of Baron Sakendher, I decided to focus *Serat Babat Pati* written in 1925. The reason is because this version of Baron narrative is continually reproduced up to the present day in stage performance by the *ketoprak* theater groups, which I will discuss more later.

Baron Sekeber in *Serat Babad Pati*

Serat Babad Pati was originally written in Javanese orthography by K.M. Sosrosumarto and S. Dibyosudiro and the text used in this article has been transcribed into Javanese Latin by Yanti Darmono (1980). The name of Baron Sakendher in the older Sakendher texts is displaced with Baron Sekeber in *Serat Babad Pati*. The name ‘Sekeber’,

according to Pigeaud (380), is a javanized term for Dutch colonial administration, *gezaghebber*/commissioner, government official appointed by the Dutch colonial administration to oversee and manage various aspects of Dutch colonies during the period of Dutch colonialism, particularly in the 17th through 19th centuries.

Depicting the arrival of Baron Sekeber in Pati, central Java, *Serat Babat Pati* is very likely the surrogation of the older Sakendher texts. Six different manuscripts of Sakendher texts are kept in Sonobudoyo museum in Yogyakarta (W. Widodo et al. 283) more than 15 other manuscripts are stored elsewhere. The difference between *Serat Babat Pati* and older Sakendher texts is the additional story of Sekeber's adventure in Pati where he impregnated a local girl and fought *Dipati* (Duke) Jayakusuma of Pati before he finally returns to Mataram after transforming himself as a horse as the consequence of being defeated by the Adipati.

In the text, Baron Sekeber is portrayed as:

Wong bagus ageng dedegnya, muka tajem irungnya rasi inggil, kulit pethak semu pingul, atatang wicaksana. Sagung karya tan ono tinampik wau, wus salin panganggenira, mimba lir manungsa Jawi. (Sosrosumarto and Dibyosudiro 212)

He is good looking with a sharp look, pointed nose, a ruddy complexion, and wise countenance. He never refuses any tasks and now he is dressed like a Javanese.

In Javanese perspective, such physical figuration points unambiguously to a European figure. He is also depicted as mimicking a Javanese: *mimba lir manungsa Jawi*, in order to help him in his business trip to Java. Unlike Prospero who is descended from aristocracy, Sekeber's forefathers were merchants:

De kawula sanes trahing narpati, sudagar leluhur ulun, nanging amengku praja, paning mangkya ulun arsa dagang umur, dhumateng ing tanah Jawa. (Sosrosumarto and Dibyosudiro 213)

My ancestors were not aristocrats but merchants with some political power and now I am going to try my luck by trading to Java.

With his magical power, this Dutchman flies to Java but upon reaching Mataram kingdom, he fell to the ground and came across Panembahan Senapati, the king of Mataram. Sekeber initially mistakes him for a god, reminding me of Caliban mistaking Trinculo for a spiritual being:

Sekeber nulya nembah, trap pranata mangkana in aturipun: “Dhuh dewa sinten paduka, kawula ayun udani?” (Sosrosumarto and Dibyosudiro 215)

Sekeber saluted him respectfully and said: “May I know what god are you?”

Responding to Sekeber’s high Javanese, Senapati speaks in low Javanese:

“Sira iku sapa aranmu yekti, miwah miwah ngendi wismanipun paran ingkang sinedya?” Dyian Sekeber mangkana ing aturipun: “Kawula ingkang winastanan, Dyian Baron Sekeber inggih.” Tyang saking nagri Walanda. Ulun arsa ngupaya ratu Jawi Senapati namanipun, nedya sun sirnakena, perang tandhing nagarinya kula pundhut, kadarbe ingsun parentah, ing mangke wonten ing pundi?” (Sosrosumarto and Dibyosudiro 215)

“Who are you and where are you from?” Sekeber replied: “I am Baron Sekeber. I came from the Netherlands. I am looking for the king of Java, Senapati, to kill him and take over his kingdom. Do you know whereabouts is he?”

Addressing Senapati in high Javanese signifies Sekeber’s positionality below the Javanese king. Conversely, Senapati addresses Sekeber in low Javanese, assuming his social status higher than Sekeber.

In the dialogue, Sekeber makes it clear that the purpose of his visit is to kill the king: *nedya sun sirnakna*. The fight ensuing from this encounter ends with the victory of Senapati:

“Senapati sun kalah dina iki, antenana patang taun, sun bali mungsuh sira, mangsa wurung sira mati dening ingsun!” Senapati sabdanira: *“Benjang wani mene wani!”*

“Senapati I was defeated today. In four-year’s time, I will return for a revenge to kill you! Senapati answered: “I am ready whenever you are!”

Sekeber admits his defeat and intends to return in four years for a rematch, believing that by then he will be powerful enough to subdue Senapati.

Sekeber then flees in search of a powerful guru and mysterious places to improve his *kasekten* (magical power) until he lands in Pati region where he meets and impregnates a local woman, Sari. Sari thinks that Sekeber is not human but a genie so that when her mother asks about the father of the child, she replies that he is not a human but a genie:

“Biyang biyang sun wewarti, satuhu meteng kawula, nanging boten lawan janmi, andon lulut lan ejim, kang tengga sareyan kubur” (Sosrosumarto and Dibyosudiro 221)

“It is true that I am pregnant but not because of a man but a genie inhabiting the graveyard.”

By the time, Sekeber has returned to his cave for a lengthy ascetic mediation and consequently does not know that Sari finally gives birth to a twin, Janurwenda and Sirwenda. Later, the two were raised and made to serve, Jayakusuma, the Duke of Pati.

Eventually, the news reaches Duke Jayakusuma of two exceptional children, Janurwenda and Sirwenda, the sons of a foreigner, a Baron from the Netherlands who is fleeing to Pati in search of *kasekten* (supranatural power). After realizing that Baron Sekeber is in hiding in his dukedom, the Dipati orders a thorough search for Sekeber. When found, Sekeber changes his clothes to a Dutch attire before meeting Jayakusuma:

Sekeber enggal manjing jroning guwa, tan dangu nuli mijil, ngagem cara Landa, bagus gagah prakosa, ngasta pedhang angajrihi, nuli sesumbar: “Ya ingsun Baron Sekti. Sun Sekeber kadange Raja Nederland, becik teluk sireki, tan wurung matia, dening pamedhang ingwang!” (Sosrosumarto and Dibyosudiro 226)

Sekeber quickly entered the cave and came out again already in a Dutch attire with a frightening sword. He looks so grand and handsome. He then boasts, “Yes, I am the powerful Baron Sekeber, the brother of the king of the Netherlands. You’d better serve me or else I will kill you!”

They fought, Sekeber with a sword and Jayakusuma with a kris, a Javanese dagger. The fight took three days and three nights but both are so powerful that no one can defeat the other. Consequently, they agree to find another mode of fighting: diving competition. Whoever can stay longer under the water will win the battle and the loser will serve the winner.

Jayakusuma tricks Sekeber in the challenge by pretending to dive while he stays on land and he eventually wins. Losing the battle, Sekeber is so humiliated that he turns himself into a horse called Juru Taman serving Dipati Jayakusuma:

“Salamiya kawula boten puruna, dhumating sand Dipati sedya angawula, nanging panuwun kula, mugi kula den lilani, warni turangga, dados titihan gusti. Lamun kula

taksih awarnia janma, sanget merang ngembani, sami trah Kusuma, mugi anglilanana, dadi teluk wedi mati, mila kawula, kalilana rupa wajik.” (Sosrosumarto and Dibyosudiro 107)

“I do not want to serve you in a human form, therefore allow me to turn myself into a horse for you to ride. I cannot stand the humiliation of serving you in a human form since we both are aristocrats. Please allow me to become a horse.”

Becoming a horse, Juru Taman can fly and save Jayakusuma plenty of time when travelling long distances.

His current form as a horse becomes a way for Sekeber to return to Mataram and carries out his plan to kill Senapati because knowing that Jayakusuma has an unusual horse, Senapati will ask Jayakusuma to give Juru Taman to him. Once becoming the Senapati’s beloved horse, Sekeber is free to explore the Sultanate without raising suspicions. The writers of *Serat Babat Pati* depict that Sekeber takes a revenge by dishonoring all Senapati’s wives. When Senapati is attending a meeting in an island far away from Java, Sekeber turns himself into Senapati in order to be able to sleep with Senapati’s wives. However, Senapati catches him red handed when manipulating and exploiting his wives and, in the end, he beheads Sekeber with his kris. This story has been passed down from generation to generation via *ketoprak* theater groups in Java.

Java’s Ketoprak and Politics

The Javanese, especially those residing in Central and East Java are familiar with *Baron Sekeber* story because it has been repeatedly staged in *ketoprak*, Java’s traditional folk theater. The origin of *ketoprak* significantly differ from *wayang kulit* (shadow puppet), viewed as high and refined art developed around the courts. In opposition to courtly performing art, *ketoprak*’s origin was to be found among poor peasants in rural areas. It presumably started with some villagers playing *lesung* (a tool for peeling rice by pounding). With this very simple musical instrument they invented some kind of rhythm called *gejog*, and hence *gejog lesung*, *lesung* ryhthm. A simple story emphasizing humorous dialogues was added between *gejog lesung*. Popular story as recalled by Pak Glinding and Pak Jamal (Wijaya and Sutjipto 16) was of a farmer working on his plot of paddy field and his wife bringing him food and water in a *kendi* , a water jar made of clay. After a couple humorous

dialogues, often sexist in nature, they end up realizing that the wife has wrongly brought inedible stuff and an empty jar and finally they decide to return home to have lunch together.

Gejog lesung assumed its present form of *ketoprak* when gamelan instruments were added and eventually replaced *lesung* altogether in 1927 (Wijaya and Sutjipto 31). In its development, *ketoprak* became professional traveling theater looking for *tanggapan* (paid to perform) in *priyayi*, Javanese gentry, families. In the beginning, social distance was observed since *ketoprak* was seen as an art of the peasantry. They were allowed to perform as far as the front yard of a *priyayi* house, whereas the front porch, *pendapa*, was designated for the *priyayi* family to sit and enjoy the performance. Although *ketoprak* was frowned upon by the aristocracy for being less refined, in Surakarta, however, an aristocrat, KRMT Wreksadinigrat, directed a *ketoprak lesung* signifying its acceptance among certain circle of aristocracy since 1908 (Wijaya and Sutjipto 18).

The stories, *lakon*, staged by *ketoprak* groups during Dutch colonial time were folktales derived from *Panji* story and their performances were under close surveillance of the colonial apparatus. It was reported that in 1927 the Dutch colonial police arrested Ki Wisangkara and Sagiman, for directing and staging *ketoprak* performance titled *Ajisaka* (Wijaya and Sutjipto 32). *Ajisaka* is believed to be the creator of Javanese alphabet and orthography. In one of the scenes, the performance depicted a giant, Prabu Dewatacengkar, devouring human blood and brain. The Dutch interpreted the scene as satirizing Dutch colonialism, indicating that *ketoprak* has been involved in political contestation regardless of the seemingly neutral story and the possible absence of the directorial intention in staging it.

Dutch publishing house and colonial agency, *Volkslectuur*, played an important role in censorship not only of books allowed to publish but also of traditional performances, such as shadow puppet and *ketoprak*. *Volkslectuur*, dubbed by Doris Jedamski (1992) as a colonial wolf in sheep clothing, functioned as “civilizer, modernizer, and tranquilizer” (38), especially in coping with anti-colonial movements in arts and literature. In January 1929 a pro-Dutch *Bupati* (Regent) of Pandeglang reported “his anxiety about agitating *ketoprak* theater groups” (Jedamski 37). The *Bupati* feared the anti-colonial insurgence that the *ketoprak* performance could generate among the populace so that he suggested the colonial government to create a pro-colonial narrative through indoctrinated puppeteers. Shadow puppet, also popular among the peasantry, had been seen as more refined art performance since it developed within the Javanese courts and therefore was expected to work more effectively in influencing the common populace to side with the colonial policy.

Japanese troops took over Java from the Dutch from 1942 to 1945 and during this time *Ketoprak* theatre groups underwent harsher challenge than under Dutch occupation for two reasons. First, the Japanese occupation of Dutch East Indies was done amidst Japanese war against American and European powers leading to excessive exploitation of the colony to support the war. The Javanese suffered from food shortage and prioritized their expenditure on the very basic needs rather than buying *ketoprak* tickets. *Ketoprak* theater groups relying their survival on ticket sale and patronage of rich *priyayi* families suffered from this condition. The second difficulty arose from the stricter censorship by the Japanese colonial regime concerning the story that the *ketoprak* theatre groups could perform. They were forced to stage new stories supporting Japanese occupation as Wijaya and F.A. Sutjipto noted:

Pengawasan pemerintah yang ketat mendorong pipinan *ketoprak* ini menyajikan cerita-cerita baru yang cocok dengan situasi agar dapat terlepas dari hambatan-hambatan yang datang dari pihak penguasa. Beberapa cerita baru yang telah diciptakan antara lain: *Amat Heiho* dan Pendaratan di Maguwa. (41)

Stricter colonial government surveillance drove the *ketoprak* theater directors to write new stories accommodating the new colonial power in order to pass censorship. They wrote new stories such as *Amat Heiho* (*Amat the local Japanese soldier*) and *Maguwo Landing*, referring to the landing of Japanese troops in Maguwo airstrip.

In short, the new stories written for *ketoprak* performances during the Japanese occupation was meant to rally the people's support for Japanese troops against the Dutch and British colonialism. Budi Susanto mentioned that various youth organizations during the Japanese occupation used *ketoprak* performances for war propaganda in support of the Japanese by raising fund and collecting rice (*Imajinasi Penguasa Dan Identitas Postkolonial* 29). Heroic stories, feared and censored by the Dutch, were encouraged by the Japanese to raise people's anti-colonial sentiment against European colonialism. The other colonial policy that the Japanese enforced was the ban of Dutch language use and the encouraging the use of Bahasa Indonesia instead. It might be true, as Umar Kayam (reported in Rahmanto, 2004) pointed out that the benefit of Japanese colonialism is that it fostered the formation of a new independent nation: Indonesia.

Indonesia proclaimed its independence in 1945 and gained full sovereignty in 1948 not without violence but the most violent history of Indonesia after independence and the reason why Indonesian artists were diverted from responding to postcolonial themes is the

purge of the communists after the abortive coup of 1965. Before communist-affiliated *ketoprak* groups were disbanded in 1965, many leftist *ketoprak* groups modified folktales into politically charged *ketoprak* performance. As reported in *Tempo* magazine (2013), the story of Suminten Edan, *Suminten Goes Crazy*, is a case in point. Originally the popular folktale tells of Suminten, a *warok*¹'s daughter, going lunatic because her aristocratic lover, Raden Broto, decided to marry another *warok*'s girl. This love triangle makes the two *waroks* fight before a solution is reached: Broto marries both girls. In the hands of PKI (the Indonesian Communist Party) *ketoprak* theater groups, this traditional folktale underwent a cultural surrogation. Broto's decision to marry another girl is read as an aristocrat's strategy to set the people against each other. In PKI version, rather than fighting with one another, the two *waroks* unite to attack Broto and his aristocratic pretensions. The role of *ketoprak* as a tool for a political party was quite banal in this time. Another story, *Patine Gusti Allah* (The death of God) daringly critiqued Islamic parties and created a violent response from their members.

After 1965, with the disbanding of all cultural organizations under PKI and other communist-associated groups and activities, *ketoprak* ceased to voice political criticism because any critical voice against the New Order regime was seen as a challenge to the state. The emergence of the army and state-sponsored *ketoprak* theater groups, such as Saptamandala and Ketoprak RRI indicate the successful regime cooptation of these theater groups to manufacture consent among the populace through ideological apparatuses. The regime often used *ketoprak* to deliver Government messages and programs to the masses. This does not mean that all *ketoprak* groups were coopted by the regime. A local comedy *ketoprak* group in Yogyakarta, *Dagelan Mataram Baru*, gains prominence through their satiric comedy against the corrupt apparatus (Susanto, *Imajinasi Penguasa Dan Identitas Postkolonial* 139–51). After the demise of the New Order regime, this genre of comic and satiric *ketoprak* gained more popularity.

From this brief account of *ketoprak* development, no historical account is available on when the story of *Baron Sekeber* entered the *ketoprak* stage for the first time. However, the sustained popularity of the story among the *ketoprak* performers and audience is worth noting. Quick search on *YouTube* with keywords '*ketoprak baron sekeber*' yields no less than 15 *ketoprak* performances, indicating the narrative's popularity across Java. *Ketoprak* might not be involved in a direct surrogation of Caliban in the same way as other postcolonial

¹ Warok is a title given to a man who is believed to have an extraordinary power and artistic talent in Ponorogo area, East Java.

theatrical productions in Europe and America. Javanese performers might not have any reference to Shakespeare's figuration of Caliban and its subsequent surrogation when performing popular *lakon* (script) of *Baron Sekeber* but similar power constellation between the white colonizer and the people of color is present in *Baron Sekeber* since it narrates the arrival of a European Baron in Java and his conflict with a Mataram Sultan. A different ending with the triumph of the Javanese indigenous king over the white Baron signifies reimagination against European narrative of white supremacy.

Baron Sekeber can be viewed as a cultural surrogation of Caliban discourse by Javanese poets on witnessing the usurpation of European colonizers in the island of Java, a military occupation accompanied by the construction of the Javanese as the Other. In case of Dutch colonialism in Java, the epistemological and cultural violence was carried out by a publishing house, *Volkslectuur*, whose initial aim was to provide quality and affordable reading materials for the indigenous population. *Baron Sekeber* and other anti-colonial literature belong the opposite side of *Volkslectuur* that the Dutch termed *bacaan liar*, illegitimate reading materials. As such, *Baron Sekeber* stands in opposition with the Dutch construction of the Javanese as the Other. The legacy and preservation of *Baron Sekeber* through *ketoprak* leaves traces of colonial past in the present. By revisiting the past memory in the present-day context, *ketoprak* performers have preserved a collective memory of decolonization.

The figuration of European Baron being defeated and humiliated by an indigenous king has drawn numerous *ketoprak* performances adapting the narrative. Smaller *ketoprak tobongs* (theater company) used to perform this favorite story from town to town while the more established theater company, like *Ketoprak Mataram*, performed it in the auditorium of Radio Republik Indonesia, Yogyakarta, where they also regularly perform other stories. The story of *Baron Sekeber* has also inspired a famous local group of comedians of *Ketoprak Conthong* to perform this as a satirical comedy in 2018 (Intarti).

Traces of colonial encounter in *Baron Sekeber*

Although postcolonial theme is almost absent in modern Indonesian literature, it keeps resurfacing in *ketoprak* performances carrying *Baron Sekeber* story in the villages of Java. The sustainable popularity of the story might have something to do with a colonial legacy, especially the residue of inferiority complex on the one hand and traces of anti-colonial resistance on the other. If Octav Mannoni (1950) formulated this pseudo-scientific inferiority as Caliban complex, the story of Baron Sekeber seems to argue against Mannoni

that the inferiority is bias with racism and therefore open to reconstruction. The Dutch definition the Javanese and the colonial policy are the main factors of this inferiority and its resistance. In *Baron Sekeber* story, the traces of this postcoloniality are manifested in three aspects: language, mimicry, and pilgrimage.

Language as power

Javanese language is a stratified language. The age and social class of the speakers determine the register to be used: *ngoko*, *krama madya*, and *krama inggil* (low, middle, and high Javanese). *Ngoko* is the most colloquial register, used among friends of the same social class and age. It is also used by someone older or with higher social status when addressing the lower class or the younger. *Krama madya* is semi formal and is used to address someone people just meet whose age and class status are similar or who looks a bit older and richer than the addresser. *Krama inggil* is used when meeting someone much higher socially. Each register contains distinctive vocabularies and spoken with different gesture and tone of formality to show *hormat*, respect. Improper use of the register will result in uncomfortable situation because the speaker will be judged as rude and even insulting.

Hormat is the principle that a person ought to know his position in society based on his age, wealth, status, descent, and occupation. It is impossible to talk in Javanese without considering the speakers' class position just as it is as impossible to speak in English without considering the tenses. With such a communication code, it might be impossible for a person of lower status to express anger in front of a person of higher social class because the language possibilities stop him from doing so. As Geertz also notes:

It is always a situation of some anxiety when two Javanese, especially *prijajis*, meet for the first time, for each must determine the other's rank in order both to employ the correct linguistic forms and to apply *andap-asor* pattern correctly. (Geertz 243)

Geertz referred to a historical context of 1930s in Mojokuto, East Java, when *priyayihood*, belonging to the aristocracy, still highly matters. Paradoxically even today, when aristocracy does not really matter anymore, Geertz study is still true in the context of Javanese community. This principle of *andap-asor*, knowing one's position, in conversation is still an important dramaturgy in *ketoprak* performances.

The staging of *Baron Sekeber* by different *ketoprak* theaters depict Senapati, the Javanese king, addresses Sekeber in the low Javanese indicating equal status. Such dialogue is exemplified by the a coastal *ketoprak* performance whose dialogues have been transcribed:

“Mengko dhisik kisanak, gene kowe wani njogarake anggonku mapan ana semedi ing asamun memintu ing ngarsaning gusti kang akarya jagad” (Pambudi 108)

“Wait a second, how dare you disturbed me when I was meditating, trying to be in touch with God?”

If Senapati feels inferior, he would have said:

“Mangkeh rumiyin to sedherek, wonten wigatos menopo panjenengan njugaraken anggen kawula semedi nyeyuwun wonten ing ngarsanipun Gusti ingkang akarya jagad.”

This signifies a reimagination of power relations between the two races where European supremacism is resisted through language.

Serat Babad Pati the primary source of the staging of Baron Sekeber by many *ketoprak* theaters does not only represent the superiority of Senapati over Baron Sekeber by addressing Sekeber in low Javanese but also by depicting Sekeber who responds to Senapati in high Javanese:

“Sira iku sapa aranmu yekti, miwah miwah ngendi wismanipun paran ingkang sinedya?” Dyian Sekeber mangkana ing aturipun: “Kawula ingkang winastanan, Dyian Baron Sekeber inggih.” Tyang saking nagri Walanda. Ulun arsa ngupaya ratu Jawi Senapati namanipun, nedya sun sirnakena, perang tandhing nagarinya kula pundhut, kadarbe ing sun parentah, ing mangke wonten ing pundi?” (Sosrosumarto and Dibyosudiro 215)

“Who are you and where are you from?” Sekeber replied: “I am Baron Sekeber. I came from the Netherlands. I am looking for the king of Java, Senapati, to kill him and take over his kingdom. Do you know whereabouts he is?”

The English translation might not really convey the class discrepancy of the original text but the *ketoprak* theater groups certainly sense this when reproducing the text in their performances. The resistance against the residual white supremacy has become a collective memory continually staged and remembered through Baron Sekeber *ketoprak* performances. Since Collective memory is what constructs one's identity, the rewriting and restaging of Baron Sekeber being addressed in low Javanese and Sekeber responding in high Javanese can

be seen as a thought experiment to redefine Javanese identity and positionality, a decolonizing gesture. On the other hand, Sekeber's depiction as very good-looking that makes the Javanese female characters infatuated with him points towards the ambivalence of previous language superiority.

Between Mimicry and Mockery

The mimic man acting as Baron Sekeber is a Javanese actor dressed in an attire of European aristocratic soldier complete with a sword and military badges. The actor's hair is usually dyed blonde with thick whitish make up. He always speaks half Javanese and half Indonesian with a foreignized accent, a stereotypical depiction of Europeans commonly found in Indonesian films portraying the war for independence against the Dutch, such as *Janur Kuning* (1979) and *November 1828* (1979). This staged mimicry displaces the colonizer's gaze on the native to the indigenous' gaze on the anecdotal European figure as the Other, Baron Sekeber. To quote Homi Bhabha (1), "what is theoretically innovative ... is to focus on those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences" which in the case of Baron Sekeber figuration is its anecdotal articulation of differences by the European Other on European Self – the gaze has been displaced.

It is relevant too situate Bhabha's subsequent comment (86) on mimicry in this displaced gaze: "It is from this area between mimicry and mockery, where the reforming, civilizing mission is threatened by the displacing gaze of its disciplinary double." Rather than seeing mimicry as an invitation to be assimilated with the colonizer, the *ketoprak* performers create a stage representation of Baron Sekeber between mimicry and mockery as a strategy of anti-assimilation. The foreign and almost comical figuration of the Baron and the stratified language of the dialogue where he is addressed in low Javanese and responds in high Javanese shift his positionality from a dominating colonizer to a subordinated colonizer. The mimicry and mockery also deconstruct the colonial fetishization of race by which difference is mystified into sameness for assimilation purposes. The staging of Baron Sekeber by the Javanese *ketoprak* theater groups demystifies the politics of assimilation by returning the gaze and position Sekeber into an object of mockery and trickery.

Beyond Stage and Text: Pilgrimage

Pilgrimage for the Javanese until today is a popular spiritual activity aimed primarily to seek blessings. George Quinn observes that Javanese pilgrimage is unique:

Local pilgrimage is anything but pure and exclusive, or rigidly authoritarian. It is powerfully Islamic but it fuses Islam with local history, ancient power of place and a pastiche of devotional practices with roots deep in the pre-Islamic past. (Quinn 20)

Among Javanese Muslims, the traces (*petilasan*) and graves of *wali sanga*, the nine Islamic saints and scholars who played an important role in spreading Islam in Java during the 14th to 15th century in Java, are among the most favorite destinations of pilgrimage spread in various districts in Java. Studies conducted by Quinn (2019) and Albertus B. Laksana (2014) indicate that the pilgrimage to the sacred sites signifies more than mere spiritual exercises. It also relates to identity formation and even resistance against fundamentalist vision of Islam. Focusing on what Quinn terms “eccentric saints,” he elaborates how the saints’ traces and tombs of Java’s past have an enduring legacy over the Muslims of Indonesia.

Identity formation and resistance in the act of pilgrimage is also to be found in the act of pilgrimage to the fictional figure like Baron Sekeber and Penatas Angin in Kendal and Pekalongan, Central Java. Since pilgrimage contains a residue of pre-Islamic spirituality which indicate the Javanese accommodative attitude in synthesizing different spirituality, the pilgrimage to the supposed graveyard of Penatas Angin imbibes not only another form of spirituality but an anti-colonial attitude. According to a local folktale, Penatas Angin is not only the disciple of Sunan Kalijaga, one of the nine saints, but also the one who killed Baron Sekeber when he was fleeing from Senapati. As a tribute to his merits, the local community build a tomb where Senapati was said to have died. People regularly flock the site asking for his blessing or making a promise (*nadhar*) to God that if his plea is granted, he will repay it in some way.

While the site of Penatas Angin is venerated by Javanese Muslims, Baron Sekeber has been appointed a god whose statue is put on a dedicated altar in Tri Dharma temple in Weleri (Kendal) where local Indonesian Chinese usually go to pray. Pilgrimage to Penatas Angin and the veneration of the statue of Baron Sekeber is too paradoxical to dismiss. Does it indicate the residual policy of racial segregation of Java’s colonial past or is it a manifestation of postcolonial ambivalence of the Chinese Indonesian in Kendal? At present, I do not have the answer to these very intriguing questions but they might be a rewarding topic to research further.

Conclusion

Caliban discourse in Javanese literature and cultural performance is reflected in the works of the poets and ketoprak actors reimagining the construction of race relations in Sakendher texts, Serat Babad Pati and ketoprak theaters. Traditional *ketoprak* groups have been the vehicle for passing Caliban discourse from one generation to another. The political complicity of ketoprak groups with the dominant political powers have been able to survive anti-colonial collective memory to the present day. Through language and performance they demystified the myth of white supremacy, despite ambiguously, by displacing the gaze in the texts and performances.

The figuration the Dutch Baron Sekeber who, like Propero, is stranded in an island, contradicts the imagination of the West about their expected arrival by the indigenous inhabitants of some remote islands. Rather than being glorified, Baron Sekeber figuration is situated between mimicry and mockery making the Dutch hero an object of indigenous gaze and trickery. Javanese stratified language has been instrumental in displacing the gaze and flipping Sekeber's position to a lower social status, where he is made to speak in high Javanese with the king of Java. Caliban discourse in this Javanese language game provides a room for a thought experiment to reimagine a new power constellation.

Beyond Baron Sekeber textual and stage representations, he becomes a contested symbol of pilgrimage in two different locations in Java, Pekalongan and Weleri. In Pekalongan, it is not Sekeber but his opponent, Penatas Angin, whose tomb has been a favourite destination of pilgrimage among local Muslims seeking blessings. Contrarily, in Weleri, some 55 kilometers away, a statue of Sekeber is venerated on a dedicated altar in Tri Dharma temple frequented by local Indonesian Chinese. The different treatment of the Sekeber mythical figure in the local people's religiosity might evidence a complex residue of postcolonial ambiguity in a nation state comprising of more than 1,300 different ethnic groups. This intriguing question of postcoloniality is worth elaborating in another research.

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Manuscript from Jeju Colloquium

3 messages

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Fri, Sep 22, 2023 at 9:53 PM

To: "Luisa L. Gomez" <lgomez@ateneo.edu>

Cc: "kk@ateneo.edu" <kk@ateneo.edu>, lulu reyes <lu2reyes3x@gmail.com>, "ma. luisa reyes" <lu2reyes2x@gmail.com>, Vincenz Serrano <vserrano@ateneo.edu>

Dear Ms Luisa Gomes,

Please find attached my manuscript and short bio for KK joint publication. Thank you very much for giving me a generous extended deadline.

Best wishes,
Sarwoto

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2 attachments**Paulus Sarwoto Caliban Discourse from Shakespeare to Contemporary Java.docx**

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Luisa L. Gomez <lgomez@ateneo.edu>

Mon, Sep 25, 2023 at 7:00 AM

To: Paulus Sarwoto <psarwoto@gmail.com>

Cc: lulu reyes <lu2reyes3x@gmail.com>, "ma. luisa reyes" <lu2reyes2x@gmail.com>, "Kritika Kultura [KK]" <kk@ateneo.edu>

Dear Dr. Sarwoto,

Good day! I hope you are doing well. I am writing to confirm receipt of your manuscript. I'll send the initial comments of Kritika Kultura's internal evaluators soon.

Thank you.

All the best,
Luisa

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Paulus Sarwoto <psarwoto@gmail.com>

Mon, Sep 25, 2023 at 7:17 AM

Draft To: "Luisa L. Gomez" <lgomez@ateneo.edu>

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