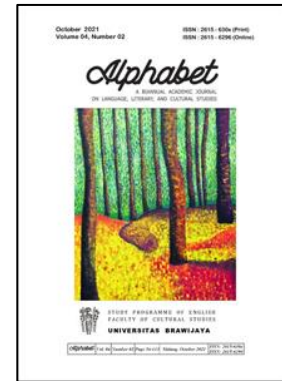


ALPHABET

<http://alphabet.ub.ac.id/index.php/alphabet>



The Novelties in the Novel “Sang Keris”: An Intertextual Study

Anggit Febrianto

Alphabet / Volume 04 / Number 02 / October 2021, pp. 107-113

doi: 10.21776/ub.alphabet.2021.04.02.06, Published online: October 2021

How to cite this article :

Febrianto, A. (2021). The novelties in the novel Sang Keris: An intertextual study.

Alphabet, 04(02), 107-113. doi: 10.21776/ub.alphabet.2021.04.02.06

The Novelties in the Novel “Sang Keris”: An Intertextual Study

Alphabet ©2018, by Study Programme of English, Faculty of Cultural Studies, Universitas Brawijaya

ISSN: 2615-630X (print)

2615-6296 (online)

Vol. 04, No. 02

Anggit Febrianto ¹

Abstract

This research aimed to prove that old literature helps the creation of modern literary works, such as providing inspiration, assisting authors in making themes, characterizations, motives, and so on. One of the modern literary works inspired by old literary works is the novel titled *Sang Keris*. Reading this 107 pages novel, we will feel a very thick Javanese nuance. By using the intertextual approach, this paper will focus on discussing the “novelty” contained in the novel *Sang Keris*, in the sense that “novelty” is a form of deviation, transformation, or rebellion against old literary works that existed far before. The results of this study prove that there are six novelties in the novel *Sang Keris*, in relation to old literary works. First, the novelty in the character of Patih Lokajaya. Second, the novelty in the Pulanggeni figure. Third, the novelty in the Lembu Peteng character. Fourth, the novelty in Larung Manah ritual. Fifth, the novelty in Raden Katong character. Sixth, the novelty in the character of Parikesit.

Keywords: novelty, intertextual, *Sang Keris*, old literary works

The old literature that contained in the old manuscripts does offer legacies in the form of ideas, aspirations, and statements of attitudes from the ancestors that have been passed down from generation to generation (Robson, 1978). In the literary life, old literature also helps the creation of modern literary works, such as providing inspiration, assisting authors in making themes, characterizations, motives, and so on. At least, there are several aspects of continuity that occur between old literature and modern literature as stated by Teeuw (1982), namely: (1) modern literature is a transformation of old texts in the form of adaptations, copies, and others, (2) the use of traditional themes in modern literature, and (3) revealed the traditional culture basics in modern literary works.

One of the modern literary works inspired by old literary works is the novel titled *Sang Keris*. Reading this 107 pages novel, we will

feel a very thick Javanese nuance. One page before the table of contents, the author has even started the novel with a Javanese sentence accompanied by a translation: *Kridhaning ati tan bisa mbedhab kuthaning pesthi, budi dayaning manungsa tan bisa ngungkuli garising Kang Kawasa* (No matter how hard we try to change the order of destiny, it will not be possible to transcend the decrees of the Almighty). Javanese poetry is also present in this novel, enriched with translations of Javanese terms in footnotes that total to ninety footnotes.

The novel *Sang Keris* was written by Panji Sukma, a doctoral student in Cultural Studies, Sebelas Maret University, Surakarta. In 2019, this novel script was selected as the second winner of the most prestigious writing competition in Indonesia, The Jakarta Arts Council (DKJ) Novel Competition. Then in February 2020, its first print was published by Gramedia Pustaka Utama.

¹ Faculty of Cultural Studies, Universitas Brawijaya. Jalan Veteran, Malang Indonesia. E-mail: anggitkusopo@yahoo.co.id

The main character in this novel is a keris named Kanjeng Kyai Karonsih, a time-traveling keris that has moved through Indonesian history, since its mystical birth in heaven in Javanese cosmology, descending to the ancient Javanese Hindu-Buddhist kingdom, then to the late Majapahit era, the period of the entry of Islam to Java, the period of independence, and to modern times. This novel has a non-linear plot, jumps from one historical period to another, breaks itself into long and short chapters, and has many characters with miscellaneous viewpoints. By the Jury of The Jakarta Arts Council (DKJ) Novel Competition (in Sukma, 2020: *foreword*), this novel is referred to as: “A complicated novel, shows the courage to form and content experiment. The crossover nature applied not only to different figures, epochs, or levels of reality, but also to the variety of languages that change according to time and space, as well as the changing point of view of narrative with subtle allusions towards historical figures Indonesia.”

By using the intertextual approach, this paper will focus on discussing the "novelty" contained in the novel *Sang Keris*, in the sense that “novelty” is a form of deviation, transformation, or rebellion against old literary works that existed far before. It is important to note that perversion, transformation, or rebellion requires the existence of something that can be deviated, transformed, and rebelled. That is where old literature take the position.

RESEARCH METHOD

Intertextual approach was inspired by the ideas of Mikhail Bakhtin, a Russian philosopher who had a great interest in literature. According to Bakhtin, the intertextual approach emphasizes the notion that a literary text is seen as an interpolation on the framework of other literary texts. This intertextual approach was later developed by Julia Kristeva (Worton and Still, 1990).

The term intertextual is generally understood as the relationship of a text with other

texts. According to Kristeva (1980), each text is a mosaic of quotations, each text is an absorption and transformation of other texts. To strengthen her opinion, Kristeva (in Worton and Still, 1990) offers two reasons. First, the author is a text reader before writing the text. The process of writing a work by an author cannot be avoided from various types of references, quotes, and influences. Second, a text becomes meaningful, only after the reading process takes place. The possibility of acceptance or opposition depends on the author through the reading process.

In an effort to transform other texts into his [her] work, the author cultivate it with thoughts, ideas, aesthetic concepts and horizon of expectations so that a new text is created. Nevertheless, the ideas of the transformed text can still be recognized in the new text by comparing them with other texts that are transformed (Pradopo, 1995). Because literary texts are mosaics of quotations, in each of these mosaics there are interrelated functions and roles. They are spreaded and scattered, but in essence, dialogue with each other to build networks or weaves in the text (Sunto, 2011). Thus a literary text, contains two characteristics that cannot be avoided where it is a complex synthesis between affirmations and a negation from other previous texts (Culler, 1975). With such a view, the principle that literary works are autonomous—as the structuralists said—is completely rejected. A literary text must be read with other texts as the background; there is no single text that is truly independent, in the sense that the text is a transformation, that its creation and its reading cannot be done without other texts as examples, models, and frameworks (Teeuw, 1984).

The point is, intertextual study is the study of a number of texts that allegedly has the shape of a certain relationship, such relationships intrinsic elements such as ideas, events, plots, characterizations, styles, and other (Nurgiyantoro, 1995). Previous literary work that is recorded as references, is called the hypogram. In this intertextual relationship, there are two things put forward by Riffaterre

(1978), namely *expansion* and *conversion*. *Expansion* is the extension or elaboration of the hypogram, whereas *conversion* is the reversal of the hypogram. In addition, Partini Sardjono (1986) added two things, namely *modification* or alteration, and *excerpt* which means the essence of an element or episode of the hypogram.

BRIEF SYNOPSIS: FROM HEAVEN TO AIRPLANE

A brief synopsis of the novel *Sang Keris* can be written like this: Chapter 1, *Museum*. The keris figure is told as a magical keris that is always up for grabs. This keris continues to move from one owner to another; from the hand of a tribute puller, to a poor fisherman, to a thief named Pulanggeni, to a royal soldier, to Patih Lokajaya, then to Lembu Peteng. Chapter 2, *Arya Matah*. The story jumps to a character named Arya Matah, who is the human form of the keris. Chapter 3, *Asmaradana*. This chapter takes place in heaven. Tells the story of Maha Empu Jati Kusuma who, because he fell in love with Dewi Sasmitarasa, was willing to throw away his beloved keris, Kanjeng Kyai Karonsih.

Chapter 4, *Sang Pencerab*. It tells about a perfect human who lived in Medina, who ordered his students to preach to the southeast. By the perfect human, the student is equipped with a stick with a handle made of iron. This iron was the origin of Kanjeng Kyai Karonsih. Chapter 5, *Larung Manab*. Tells about the meeting between the Berandal Mamuru and Ibn Sakhawi—a man wearing a robe and turban, and had a long beard. Chapter 6, *Brawijaya Pamungkas*. This chapter tells of a King of Majapahit who sent the gamelan orchestra to his son, Raden Katong, in Ponorogo. In that thing, keris Kanjeng Kyai Karonsih is stored. Chapter 7, *Kanjeng Sunan*. Tells the story of a senopati (royal soldier) named Blumbang Ludira who gave a magical keris to Kanjeng Sunan, for later Kanjeng Sunan will give that keris to a “chosen king” whom he would meet. Chapter 8, *Tundhung Mediyun*. Tells the story of Empu Supa Anom who succeeded in making keris named Tundhung Mediyun. By

its master, the keris was handed over to the Ruler of Pajang, and from that moment on, its name was changed to Kanjeng Kyai Karonsih.

Chapter 9, *Ledhek Suji*. Tells about the fight between Parikesit, one of Ki Ageng Mangir's envoys, against Suji, a female dancer. In that battle, Parikesit was killed by a head cut of Suji's keris. Chapter 10, *Ki Konang and Ki Anggaspati*. Tells about their duel at Cangkring River. In that duel, both of them died and were killed by a third person who took Ki Anggaspati's keris. Chapter 11, *Sang Penyambung*. Tells the story of a man who often wears a brown suit and black cap. When the youths came to him at Rengasdengklok, he went into the room and tucked a keris under his coat, then said, “Make sure everything is ready. Tomorrow we will be a independent nation.” Chapter 12, *Talidarma*. It tells the story of King Karna, who take a seat next to Ki Narto Sabdo when the puppeteer play the Baratayudha war. In this chapter, Prabu Karna is a friend of Ki Narto Sabdo.

Chapter 13, *Perempuan Prancis*. Tells the story of a French female researcher—named Eli—who is interested in studying ancient Javanese literature. She came to Keraton Solo, studied with the courtiers there. Chapter 14, *Pantai Selatan*. It tells about Resi Segara Muncar who reveals that Matah is not the son of Resi Kala Dite. Matah was a gift from the Queen of the South Sea who was entrusted to Resi Kala Dite when he was meditating at Segara Anakan. Chapter 14, *Surya Sengkala*. It tells of Eli who succeed to solve the prediction in the *serat* (ancient Javanese literature) that the Queen of Justice would appear in 2024. Unfortunately, shortly after that, the plane she was boarding had a problem and plunged freely into the sea. The story ends, it is not known whether Eli managed to survive to tell his discovery or not.

THE NOVELTIES IN THE NOVEL *SANG KERIS*

First, the novelty in the character Patih Lokajaya. In the novel *Sang Keris*, it is told that Patih Lokajaya is an ambitious, selfish, and

cunning man. When he found out that one of his *senopati* (commander in the ancient Javanese kingdom) had a very powerful keris, the patih was determined to seize the keris with a cruel and cunning way. Patih Lokajaya accused the *senopati* as betraying the kingdom, and got the *senopati* beheaded (Sukma, 2020).

Patih Lokajaya accused the *senopati* betrayed the kingdom, and got the *senopati* beheaded (Sukma, 2020). The character Patih Lokajaya built by Panji Sukma is totally opposite to the character Lokajaya we already know, namely Brandhal Lokajaya. Brandhal Lokajaya has the real name Raden Sahid, son of the Duke of Tuban named Tumenggung Wilatikta. Because he saw the very miserable condition of the common people, Raden Sahid's soul revolted. His youth exploded when he saw the officials of the Tuban Duchy who arbitrarily collected taxes on the common people. The sad events then made him a thief. He sneaked into the storehouse of food supplies, took groceries, and distributed them to people in need secretly. Raden Sahid was caught many times and expelled from the Duchy of Tuban by his father. He later became a famous robber so that he was dubbed as Brandhal Lokajaya (Sunyoto, 2012). In Javanese, *brandhal* means people who don't follow the rules; the troublemaker.

By government officials, Brandhal Lokajaya was seen as a brash, breaking the rules. But for the poor, the thief is sufficient and complementary. So it is not wrong if his heroism is always embedded in the hearts of poor people (Widagdo, 2009). Then, Lokajaya met Sunan Bonang in the Lasem area, Rembang. He intended to rob Sunan Ampel, but was instead left dumbfounded when the sunan could completely turn the tree into gold. He repented, became a disciple of the sunan, and later became Sunan Kalijaga (Sudarsa (Ed), 1995).

There are two forms of novelty (conversion) of the character Patih Lokajaya in the novel *Sang Keris*. First, in the old story, Lokajaya is a son of a duke; but in the novel, he became a patih (the vice of the king). Second, in the old story, Lokajaya is a person who

fights for the people, committing crimes not for himself; but in the novel, Lokajaya is a cunning and selfish man, who does not hesitate to slander and kill for his personal gain.

Second, the novelty in the Pulanggeni figure. In the novel *Sang Keris*, Pulanggeni is a thief who manages to steal keris Kanjeng Kyai Karonsih from a fisherman. With this keris, he later became the most feared market gangster (Sukma, 2020). The name Pulanggeni is certainly inspired by Arjuna's keris, which is also named: Pulanggeni. In the Mahabharata story, Pulanggeni is used by Arjuna to match Karna's keris named Kyai Jalak. Pulanggeni was then given to Abhimanyu and brought to death in the Baratayuda war (Awi, 2019).

There are two novelties in the character of Pulanggeni. First, modification, in Mahabharata, Pulanggeni is a keris; but in the novel *Sang Keris*, pulanggeni is a human. Second, conversion, as Arjuna's keris, Pulanggeni is on the good side; but in the novel, as a thief and a market gangster, Pulanggeni is on the bad side.

Third, the novelty in the character of Lembu Peteng. In the Panji Sukma's novel, Lembu Peteng is a thief who manages to possess a keris named Kanjeng Kyai Karonsih. He is told as an orphan, living alone after his mother died and no one knows the origin of his father. With a magical and powerful keris in his hand, Lembu Peteng grows into a handsome man, has a strong aura, and has extraordinary intelligence. He only needs to read a book once and can memorize it by heart. Lembu Peteng then became a rebel, gathering followers little by little, then within thirteen years, he succeeded in conquering and taking over the kingdom. He became a king with the title Lintang Panjer Sore (Sukma, 2020).

In Javanese history, the name Lembu Peteng is not a foreign name. Lembu Peteng is the pseudonym of Bondan Kejawan, the son of King Brawijaya V and Putri Wandan-Kuning (Abidin, 2018: 30). When he grew up, he became a king on Gili Mandangin—now Sampang, Madura. In the oral

tradition which tells about the existence of holy people in Blambangan, it is stated that one of Maulana Ishak's sons married the daughter of Lembu Peteng. The marriage took place in the second half of the 15th century AD (Hernawan, 2016).

There are two novelities (conversions) in the figure of Lembu Peteng. First, in the novel *Sang Keris*, he is described as an orphan; whereas in Javanese history, he is believed to be the son of King Brawijaya V and Putri Wandan-Kuning. Second, in the novel, he is described as a thief who later became king because he rebelled; whereas in the oral tradition, he is told as a prince from birth, who later became king on Gili Mandangin.

Fourth, the novelty in Larung Manah ritual. In the novel *Sang Keris*, Larung Manah is told as a ritual in the Mahendrapura Kingdom which is held once a year at the end of the twelfth full moon. Husbands or wives whose spouse has died, will do Larung Manah — which means “float away the heart”. The people will get into a boat and head to the middle of Segara Asih (Sea of Asih), their bodies tied by a rock twice the size of a human's head, then they jump into the blue sea. This ritual is believed to be able to reunite their spirits and the spirits of their partners in heaven (Sukma, 2020).

This Larung Manah ritual reminds us of the Sati tradition in India or the Pati Obong tradition in Java. In the Sati tradition, women whose husbands are dead will lie down beside their husband's body to be burned alive. They did this to maintain their honor because during the war, women whose husbands died on the battlefield would be gang raped (Permata, 2018). In Indonesia, in 1691, it is believed that the biggest Pati Obong incident occurred. At that time, Pangeran Tawang Alun II died and was going to be cremated. The prince has 400 wives, and of the 400, 270 of them do Pati Obong (Permata, 2018).

There are four novelities (modifications) in the Larung Manah ritual. First, in the novel, the medium for Larung Manah's sacrifice is water; while in the ritual of Sati or Pati Obong,

the medium of sacrifice was fire. Second, Larung Manah is only held at the end of the year; while Sati or Pati Obong can be held at any time in conjunction with the death of a partner. Third, in the novel, a husband or wife can perform a sacrificial ritual; whereas in the ritual of Sati or Pati Obong, only the wife does it. Fourth, there is different motive for sacrifice. In Larung Manah, the motive is love; whereas in Sati (India), the motive is dignity.

Fifth, the novelty in Raden Katong's character. In the novel *Sang Keris*, Chapter 6, it tells about the destruction of Majapahit because it was invaded by Demak Bintara. In a state of near destruction, Sang Prabu ordered Senopati Blumbang Ludira to go to Ponorogo to help one of the King's sons, Raden Katong, who became a duke there. Sang Prabu also ordered to bring along the royal gamelan, Kyai Condhong Laras, to be handed over to Raden Katong (Sukma, 2020: 55). When the Senapati Blumbang Ludira group arrived at Ponorogo and faced Raden Katong, the Raden did *ngaraga sukma* (take the soul out of the body for adventure) to ask Raden Sujana for directions. Apparently, from Raden Sujana, he learned that under the gamelan Kyai Condhong Laras, there is a keris named Kanjeng Kyai Karonsih (Sukma, 2020).

The character of Raden Katong in this novel is clearly inspired by the character Raden Katong in *Babad Ponorogo* (The Chronicle of Ponorogo). According to the chronicle, Prabu Brawijaya V from Majapahit had many wives and 117 children. One of them is Batara Katong, whose real name is Lembu Kanigoro, with his nickname Raden Joko Piturun or Raden Harak Kali (Kurniawan, 2019: 40). Raden Katong is the first Muslim duke to rule in Ponorogo City. He is a disciple of Sunan Kalijaga. According to *Babad Ponorogo*, Raden Katong together with Patih Selo Aji and Ki Ageng Mirah, spread Islam and built power between Mount Lawu and Mount Wilis (Kurniawan, 2019).

There are two novelities in the character of Raden Katong. First, *ekserp* (the essence of an episode). The things that are told in *Sang Keris* about Raden Katong are in accordance with

those in Babad Ponorogo except that in the novel, there is a simplification and a summary. Regarding the position of the Raden as duke, regarding his residence in Ponorogo, and regarding his Islamic religion; similar to what is told in the chronicle. What is not told in the novel is who the children and wife of Raden Katong, the periods of his preaching, and his lineage. Second, modification. The things that are modified are: in the novel, Raden Katong's confidant named Senapati Blumbang Ludira; while in *Babad Ponorogo*, the confidant is named Patih Selo Aji. Then in the novel, Raden Katong's character is Raden Sujana; while in *Babad Jawi*, it is Ki Ageng Mirah.

Sixth, the novelty in the character of Parikesit. In the novel, Parikesit is one of the three Ki Ageng Mangir's envoys who is ordered to bring Suji, the beautiful dancer, to face him. When Parikesit threatened that if Suji refused, she would still be taken even if it was only the body, Suji smiled disparagingly. This made Parikesit furious. The fight was inevitable. Parikesit was killed by cutting his head off by a slash of Suji's keris, which apparently was Kanjeng Kyai Karonsih keris (Sukma, 2020).

The name Parikesit in this novel, must be inspired by the character Parikesit in *Mahabarata*. In this monumental literature, Parikesit is told as a king of the Kuru Kingdom and the grandson of Arjuna. His father is Abhimanyu, and his son is Janamejaya. In the *Adiparwa Book*, Parikesit died from being bitten by a Dragon Taksaka disguised as a caterpillar in guava fruit, in accordance with the curse of the Brahmin Srenggi who felt hurt because King Parikesit had wrapped the carcass of a black snake around his father's neck, Begawan Samiti.

There are two novelties in the character of Parikesit. First, conversion, in the novel, Parikesit is only a subordinate of Ki Ageng Mangir; while in *Adiparwa*, Parikesit is a king. Second, modification, in the novel, Parikesit died at the hands of a woman named Suji; while in *Adiparwa*, Parikesit died because he was bitten by Naga Taksaka.

CONCLUSION

There are six novelties in the novel *Sang Keris*, in relation to old literary works. First, the novelty in the character of Patih Lokajaya. The novelty is in the form of conversion—a distortion of the hypogram. Second, the novelty in the Pulanggeni figure. The novelty takes the form of conversions and modifications to the hypogram. Third, the novelty in the Lembu Peteng character. The novelty is in the form of conversion. Fourth, the novelty in Larung Manah ritual. The novelty is in the form of a modification. Fifth, the novelty in Raden Katong character. The novelty takes the form of modification and excerpting of an episode of the hypogram. Sixth, the novelty in the character of Parikesit. The novelty is in the form of conversion and modification.

REFERENCES

- Abidin, Zainul. (2018). K. H. Ahmad Dahlan (pendiri Muhammadiyah): Apakah keturunan dari Prabu Brawijaya V? *Fikiran Masyarakat*, 6(1), 30-32.
- Culler, Jonathan. (1975). *Structuralist Poetics*. London: Methuen.
- Hernawan, Wawan. (2016). Menelusuri raja para Madura dari masa pra-Islam hingga masa kolonial. *Wawasan: Jurnal Ilmiah Agama dan Sosial Budaya*, 1(2), 239-252.
- Kristeva, Julia. (1980). *Desire in Language a Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Kurniawan, Idham Wahyu. (2019). Bathoro katong dan peranannya dalam pengembangan agama Islam di Ponorogo menurut Babad Ponorogo. *Skripsi*. Surabaya: UIN Sunan Ampel.
- Moh. Muzakka. (2018). Hubungan intertekstualitas *Syair Paras Nabi* dan *Hikayat Nabi Bercukur*. *Nusa*. 13(3), 341-350.
- Nurgiyantoro, Burhan. (1995). *Teori Pengkajian Fiksi*. Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press.

- Pradopo, Rachmat Djoko. (1995). *Pengkajian Puisi*. Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press.
- Pradotokusumo, Partini Sardjono. (1986). *Survey on English Literature*. Bandung: Intervisual Grafindo Utama.
- Riffaterre, Michael. (1978). *Semiotic of Poetry*. London: Methuen & Co. Ltd.
- Robson, S. O. (1978). Pengkajihan sastra-sastra tradisional Indonesia. *Bahasa dan Sastra*, 4(16), 3-48.
- Sudarsa, Caca (Ed). (1995). *Cerita Rakyat dalam Majalah Berbahasa Jawa Tahun 1980-an*. Jakarta: Pusat Pembinaan dan Pengembangan Bahasa.
- Sukma, Panji. (2020). *Sang Keris*. Jakarta: PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama.
- Sunyoto, Agus. (2012). *Alas Walisongo*. Depok: Pustaka Iman.
- Susanto, Dwi. (2011). *Pengantar Teori Sastra*. Yogyakarta: CAPS.
- Teeuw, A. (1984). *Sastra dan Ilmu Sastra*. Jakarta: PT Dunia Pustaka Jaya.
- Widagdo, Sungging. (2009). *Wong Jawa Kok (ora) Ngapusi Karya Sucipto Hadi Purnomo dalam Perspektif Intertekstualitas*. Skripsi. Semarang: Universitas Negeri Semarang.
- Worton, M. & Judith, S. (1990). *Intertextuality and Practices*. New York: Manchester University Press.
- www.wikipedia.com
- Awi. (2019). Tentang keris pulanggeni, pusaka milik Arjuna. www.fokuslintas.com.
- Permata, Aulia Dian. (2018). Inilah ritual pati obong, Saat para janda sukarela membakar diri demi menjaga kehormatannya. www.suar.grid.id.