

Surviving Legend, Surviving 'Unity in Diversity' a Reading of Ken Arok and Ken Dedes Narratives'

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Abstrak

Tulisan ini mengkaji interpretasi-interpretasi ulang atas cerita Ken Arok dan Ken Dedes dalam drama yang ditulis oleh Muhammad Yamin, Ken Arok dan Ken Dedes (1928) dan Pramoedya Ananta Toer novel Arok Dedes (1999). Kedua teks ditafsirkan dengan bertatarbelakang masalah-masalah di Indonesia saat ini, yaitu pelestarian ideologi nasional yang dirumuskan berdasarkan prinsip *bhinneka tunggal ika*. Pembahasan berkisar seputar alasan-alasan reproduksi narasi tersebut untuk melihat apakah beragam representasi yang terkandung di dalamnya merefleksikan ketegangan dalam sejarah, masyarakat, dan politik Indonesia. Yamin menjadikan kebudayaan Jawa sebagai dasar dari karyanya, sedangkan Pramoedya menggunakan bahan yang sama dengan beberapa pemikiran baru. Sementara fokus drama Yamin adalah pada kesattian nasional, Arok Dedes karya Pramoedya menekankan pada sikap kritisnya terhadap kondisi politik. Dalam hal ini jelaslah, wacana seringkali mengabaikan kenyataan bahwa ide-ide lokal dibentuk sebagai tanggapan terhadap berbagai bentuk otoritas.

Myths, legends, *hikayat*, *babad*¹ and various other types of folk stories from the ancient kingdoms have become familiar backdrops in literary works and stage performances throughout Indonesian archipelago. Moral, cultural

and socio-political messages were woven into these court texts at the time of production. As such, these texts can be treated as referential and meaningful through the specific cultural, religious and political environments that produced them.³ Given that these folk stories travel

¹ This article is a revised version of the paper presented in the panel on: 'Unity in Diversity in Folklore' at the 3rd International Symposium of the Journal ANTROPOLOGI INDONESIA: 'Rebuilding Indonesia, a Nation of "Unity in Diversity": Towards a Multicultural Society', Udayana University, Denpasar, Bali, 16-19 July 2002.

² Used indiscriminately *hikayat* and *babad* are often associated with the literary classics from, respectively, the Malay and Javanese kingdoms. The Malay *Hikayat Hang Tuah* for example tells of the friendship be-

tween two controversial heroes, Hang Tuah (embodiment of loyalty to authority) and Hang Jebat (symbol of outlawry). *Rabad Tanai Jawi* was written during the reign of Pakubuwana IV of the Mataram kingdom in Central Java introducing the heroes and heroines who figure in the penetration of Islam into Java upon the decline of the Hindu-Javanese Majapahit kingdom.

³ The historian Oliver Wolters opines that court texts

through times and continue to engage Indonesian audiences, it is interesting to see the continuity and change in the ways in which they have been coopted in modern reworking of the texts. This paper is to discuss the repeated interpretations of the story of Ken Arok and Ken Dedes, two historical figures from the 13th century East Java kingdom of Singasari. The texts chosen for discussion are a play by Muhammad Yamin, *Ken Arok dan Ken Dedes* (1928) and Pramoedya Ananta Toer's novel *Arok Dedes* (1999). The discussion revolves around the reasons behind the reproduction of the narrative to see if the diversified representations here invariably reflective of particular tensions in Indonesian history, society and politics. One of the current concerns in Indonesia is the preservation of the national ideology, i.e. Unity in Diversity, now that the country is under a threat of disintegration.

At this point one may ask why legends or folklores? What are the values of dwelling on things of the past whilst coming to grips with contemporary issues? Under the rubric of postcolonial project Lo and Gilbert for instance recommend that indigenous knowledge the likes of myths and legends be recuperated and examined as their complexity and contradictory relations with the authorised social discourse help dismantle the propagation of the colonial power (Lo and H. Gilbert nd:7). Similarly, anchoring her argument on Malinowski's idea of myths, Errington suggests that a text be seen from its source, meaning and function within a particular time and social context (Errington 1979:26-42). For the same reason examining the legend of Ken Arok and Ken Dedes may un-

in the early Southeast Asian arc produced at times of turbulence or disorder; and that the appearance of such texts should thus be understood as a teaching manual for the later generation. See his *History, Culture and Region in Southeast Asian Perspectives* (ISEAS 1982).

fold a picture of the socio-political structure in the past which, to say the least, speaks of unity. Thus some awareness of the past may help understanding the present-day condition.

The old Javanese chronicle *Paramton* from which the account of Ken Arok and Ken Dedes is cited narrates the genealogy of the Singasari rulers and that of the subsequent Majapahit kingdom. To retell the story in brief, Ken Arok, borne out of the union between an ordinary woman and god Brahma, was destined to become a king. He began his career as an outlaw and later managed to work at the service of Tunggul Ametung, the atrocious local governor of Tumapel. Ken Arok's lust to Ken Dedes, the governor's wife, and his unchecked political ambition compelled him to kill Tunggul Ametung and marry his widow. Having defeated the neighbouring Kediri kingdom, this new ruler of Tumapel united the two sovereignties and made himself a king of Singasari with the approval of the Shivaite and Buddhist priests alike. Under the order of his step-son Anusapati, the King was murdered at the point of the same kris by which he killed Tunggul Ametung. The next chapter of the *Pararaton* tells the tale of victory and vengeance involving the descendants of Tunggul Ametung and Ken Arok, hence the curse of the kris getting its due.

Myth and history are intertwined in the *Pararaton*. This oscillation between the historical and mythological aspects of the narrative has been the site of contestation among historians focusing as it does on the significance of the text.⁴ This paper however neither

⁴ C. C. Berg, for example, has little trust in *babad*, *hikayat* and other 'priestly cultivation' to be used in studying the past. Meanwhile, challenging Berg's view, the ancient historian and philologist J. P. Zoetmulder is of the opinion that returning to the very source is 'the first approach to take in studying the past vis-à-vis solely observing the cultural pattern of the society'

aims nor intends to resolve the conundrum but to argue that such a text—in this case the story of Ken Arok and Ken Dedes—can be regarded as palimpsests of Indonesian society which have continued to give shape and colour to the country's cultural and political life to date. In fact, the writers under discussion have their own perceptions about this particular historical juncture and treat it accordingly in their respective writing.

Do the two writers in question have corresponding concerns of preserving the nationalist goals when they reframe the legend? There is no doubt that both Pramoedya and Yamin are fascinated with the idea of the nation and its history as reflected in their works. Both share common characteristics, namely their nationalist sentiment, but as the following discussion will show they are distinct from one another. The discussion examines both writers in turn by pointing out each writer's perspective of historical past which helps shape the moulds of their works. It is interesting to point out that both writers are attracted, in different ways, to rework the narrative of Ken Arok and Ken Dedes to convey their individual messages.

Yamin: modern 'court poet'?

Muhammad Yamin's literary achievement is inextricably linked with his political career. For one thing his role in the advancement of Indonesian literature is important to notice (Teeuw's

in question as endorsed by the other historian. Zoelmulder suggests that Indonesian historiography concerns with the inextricably linked issues of culture and religion of the period and region studied. Here, it seems that Zoelmulder wins the better of the argument since later historians like Wolters mentioned above follows suit. See C. C. Berg's *The Javanese Picture of the Past* and P. J. Zoelmulder's *The Significance of the Study of Culture and Religion for Indonesian Historiography* all in *An Introduction to Indonesian Historiography* edited by Soedjatmoko et. al. (1965:87-118:326-343).

1959; 1967). His first published poem 'Tanah Air' (1922) has made him the pioneer of Indonesian modern poetry although the motherland in question is his homeland of Sumatra. Indonesia is the subject of his second collection of poems *Tumpah Darahku*, of which the publication date is historical, 28 October 1928 when the Second Youth Congress was held. Added to his poetry book, his play *Ken Arok dan Ken Dedes* was performed for the cultural night in the eve of the congress. This was indeed a political move significant to him later.

Here, Yamin's political involvement in the making of the nation is something to gloss over. This Minangkabau scholar, according to one critic, can be seen as 'a government writer, with a similar role to the court writers of past kingdom' (Noer 1979:249-262). This might be an exaggeration of this critic, but it is hard to deny that Yamin sometimes appeared inconsistent in his political stand as to please the ruling regime. (He was sometimes called Sukarno's 'myth-maker').⁵ While both views need to be further substantiated, what is more important to resolve in this present discussion is Yamin's role as a producer of the text and the circumstances available for him at that time to assume such a role.

Time will be spent to look at the Indonesian political situation in the 1920s which was conducive to the growth of nationalist leaders like Muhammad Yamin. There was a concern among the Dutch educated young people throughout the archipelago to create a national culture in addition to their chief agenda, i.e. establishing a political pressure group. So much as they were attracted to the Western culture, they would like to lay the foundation for the national culture based on their ethnic cultural heritage. Beginning with a group of young in-

⁵ See <http://www.kirjasto.sci.fi/yamin.htm>.

tellectual Javanese (the long Java) who finally formed Budi Utomo in 1915, other youth across the country followed suit. Muhammad Yamin spearheaded the movement using the Malay language and culture to express Sumatran arts, customs and language.

The pressure to move forward to building national culture heightened and in 1924 the first youth congress was held. In this congress Yamin's speech delivered in Dutch 'The Future Possibilities of Indonesian Language and Culture'¹ was important (Foulcher 1980:3). The awakening of 'Indonesian' consciousness was finally expressed four years later in the Second Youth Congress, whereby Yamin together with other nationalists stood up for embracing 'one land, one nation and one language, that is, Indonesia'.

Yamin is a hard core nationalist growing up in the 1920s, the period when anti-colonial sentiment was at its height. Despite his non-Javanese background, Yamin, interestingly enough was enchanted to almost everything belonging to the past kingdoms of Java and he wrote earnestly about them. While his *Gadjah Mada* (1953) and *Tatanegara Madjapahit* (1962) is self-explanatory, his play *Ken Arok dan Ken Dedes* was arguably a cultural as well as political undertaking. Unity is the grand theme of the aforementioned works: Majapahit kingdom with its mighty prime minister managed to unite nearly the whole islands in the archipelago. Ken Arok brought the unification of two warring kingdoms of Kediri and Jenggala. For Yamin then, unity comes before difference and this became the aspiration of the nationalist founding fathers to liberate the nation from colonialism.

Yamin's notion of unity and nationhood as well as his glorification of the past should not be seen as being unusual given the socio-political situation he was in. Yamin also helped

Sukarno constructing the country's philosophical foundation of Pancasila. Flirtation with power is therefore criticism levelled on him when he appeared acquiescent with Sukarno about the President's idea of Guided Democracy, for instance (Noer 1979:259).

One might argue that most plays were based on the ancient kingdoms of Java; consequently this appears to sit uneasily with the nationalist program of supposedly embracing national culture *vis-a-vis* a specific ethnic culture. To address this problem, again familiarity with the socio-cultural and political sphere of the early twentieth century Indonesia is important. Here again where literature and politics intersect.

Corollary to the concern among young intellectuals to define the national culture, two 'camps' appeared (Foulcher 1980:4-15). The first group championed the use of Western culture to sophisticate the existing culture which was largely borrowed from the Malay culture. Sutan Takdir Alisyahbana was the prominent member of this group. Meanwhile, Muhammad Yamin belonged to the second camp. He frowned upon this complicity to the colonial culture. His proposal was to grow the national culture out of the indigenous seed; and the glorious kingdoms in Java can be a template for the national culture.

The second group was more persistent; the evidence being the emergence of cultural expressions at that time which highlighted the past accomplishments of the ancient Javanese kingdoms. Several plays after Yamin's appeared: Sanoesi Pane's *Kertajaya* (1932) and *Twilight Over Majapahit* (1933) and Armyan Pane's *Nyai Lenggang Kencana* (1938). Together with Yamin's play, they are all plays about the magnificent of the Javanese monarch of Kediri (before Ken Arok's kingdom) and Majapahit (after Ken Arok's). These plays were

played several times thereafter in numerous occasions from congress to school functions.

Ken Arok and Ken Dedes was thus performed for the first time when historical dramas were very popular, hence the right medium to catch the public's attention. During the late 1920s right up to the 30s, added to the nationalist rhetoric of the day was the cry for freedom continually chanted in works proliferated in this period. Earlier, *Bebasari* is the main character of the title play written by Rustam Effendi (1926) (Avelling 1974:100). The strife for Indonesian independence is at the heart of the play which tells of a woman whose life is saved from the atrocity of an ogre, hence the name *Bebasari* -*bebas* being freedom. Similar to *Bebasari*, *Ken Dedes* is likewise freed from her husband Governor by Ken Arok. Allusion to women as Motherland has become a natural part of Indonesian (and presumably Southeast Asian) literary heritage.

Whether such is the message in Yamin's play remains to be seen. The fact that the play was later published in *Pudjangga Baru*, one Indonesian literary journal, is any indication that Yamin's work strikes a chord with the general feeling of the time. Sometimes, though, this flowing piece of music is sidetracked by acerbic comments like Noer's cited above. But given that the search for integrated nation of Indonesia was the order of the day, Yamin then wrote accordingly using the 13th century East Java as a model for the united Indonesia. He even made some modifications of the original plot by having Ken Arok and Ken Dedes die one after another at their own will for the sake of the united Singasari. Keith Foulcher rightly points out that the theme of the works published during this period is the individual's choice of moving from her/his 'private' to 'public' sphere, hence the furthering of the nationalist cause (Foulcher 1980:52-53,151). The royal couple resolved to

give up their lives followed by the transfer of power to Anusapati, Ken Arok's step-son. Implicit in this is the absence of familial vengeance characteristic of the story as they were all united in harmony.

Thus, suffice it to say that Yamin as the producer of this text is aware of the fact that his work is to be contingent to the historical condition to be accepted by his audience. A quite similar view regarding unification is also evident in the work of Pramoedya to which the discussion now turns.

Pramoedya Ananta Toer: writing from the fringe

The widely renowned Pramoedya Ananta Toer, whose works have been translated into more than twenty languages, needs no introduction. He is often likened to writers of such international standing as Steinbeck, Conrad, Saroyan and Tolstoy. While his non-authoritative style, free flowing of action and dialogue, in his own acknowledgement, comes from Steinbeck, (Foulcher 1993:191-220). Pramoedya has accredited the most important influence upon his writing to the Dutch author Eduard Douwes Dekker (GoGwilt 1996:147-164). From E. D. Dekker alias Multatuli, whose masterpiece *Max Havelaar* (1860) criticizes the odd combination of colonialism and humanism, Pramoedya is convinced that the Dutch colonial and consequently the official postcolonial historiography of Indonesia is in need of revision, and literature can be an avenue to achieve this. On being asked about the ways in which he combines history and fiction in his famous 'Buru tetralogy' and the relationship between history and novel-writing, Pramoedya has this to say: 'Historical facts emerge from literature the way water, flowing through different channels, comes to shape a stream or lake. Embedded in literary form remain the facts of history'.

'Whatever distortions of history there are in literature', Pram continues, 'stem from the deficiencies of autobiography, the circumstances of the author's existence' (GoGwilt 1996:147-164).

For Pramoedya history and literature interlace, strewn by biographical occurrence and political censure. His disenchantment with power has become more pronounced in his later writing as to allow one to read from it the progression of Indonesian history. He compares the blood-shed history of the New Order with the previous order whilst giving credit to Sukarno who, in his opinion, 'was able to give birth to the nation without losing a drop of blood'¹ (GoGwilt 1996:147-164). Indeed, his 'Buru quartet' writes back to the New Order official history. Here, there are two takes in his statement. First, he acknowledges the inevitable conflation of history and literature. Second, history and literature should be perceived as a response from the author to her/his own situation. And, in the light of the views of his 'mentor'¹ Multatuli, Pramoedya has responded to series of historical reality proved unfair to him. To quote the words of one critic, 'Pramoedya's memoir, full of death, is a testament to life'(Persky 1999).

Rewriting history remains to become major forces in Pramoedya's fine works appeared after the 'Buru tetralogy'¹ as his next set of novels⁶ *Arus Balik* (1995), *ArokDedes* (1999) and *Mangir* (2000) testify. It is not hard to under-

stand, therefore, when *Arok Dedes* was published people took it to mean the author's satire to the regime that had tortured him. In the introduction of this novel Pramoedya maintains that this work is fiction lampooning to no particular establishment in modern time, although the foreword of the publisher clearly states otherwise. In his oft-quoted article 'My apologies, in the name of experience'^{1,7}, however, the bitter novelist could not be more obvious as he says the following:

In detention for 14 years and 2 months, stripped of everything altogether, I reflected on all this past experience from underneath the military boot that trampled on me. It all became clearer, that all of this was nothing but a material experience, a sort of historical vicious circle of '*kampung*' civilization and culture without re-orientation inward, or outward either. Meanwhile the birth of whatever it is they call the New Order is nothing other than the repetition of historical events from the second decade of the 13th century, mythified by Javanese poets several centuries later as the legend of Gandring.³

Here Pramoedya affirms his concept of '*kampung*' civilization with which he begins his essay, that is, his denunciation of people's stance in sacrificing their fellow countrymen and women whilst subscribing to the climax of Mahabharata story where the Pandawas and Kurawas 'bathe in the blood of their own brothers'. Referring to this '*kampung*' mentality, he laments the predilection of the Javanese society in such things as myths and babads. It is clear here that the Blora born writer has no hesitation of becoming self-critical of his own Javanese background, hence the apology. 'I am a critic of Javanese culture. While I have

⁶ Together with the fourth novel *Lara'lati* (2000) these works are often called 'the second tetralogy'. Excepting from the last, the previous three novels are based on the history of the ancient Javanese kingdoms. Thematically speaking, Pram's own classification of the other quartet appears nearer whereby he adds one of his 'Buru tetralogy', *Child of All Nations* (1980) to the three novels and slots them into the category of novels of 'great fundamental changes of the nation' as each observes moment of transition from one sovereignty to the other. See GoGwilt's article.

¹ Pram's essay entitled '*Maaf, alas naina pengalaman*' is published in *Kabar Seberang* 23 (1992:1-9). This essay is translated and footnoted by Alex G.Bardsley and appears in *Indonesia* 61, April 1996.

¹ Pramoedya Ananta Toer, 'My apologies, in the name of experience' (<http://www.radix.net/~bardsley/apolog.html>)

consciously used Javanese elements, I have done so with a critical eye, not under its influence¹, Pramoedya says in an interview, 'On the other hand, I have received the good values of Java, those that are decadent I have rejected'.⁹ Again he reiterates this '*kampung*' mentality in his Ramon Magsaysay speech when he was granted the award in 1995 saying that the State is using myths of the glorious past to maintain its power.¹⁰

Certainly, the Java-centric power structure in Indonesia does not escape his critical eye. His works can be seen as an allegory of the factual battles for sovereignty in colonial as well as postcolonial Indonesia in which power remains concentrated mostly in Java. The centralized regime of Suharto has dissipated the nationalist's belief like Pramoedya in the country's motto 'Unity in Diversity'.¹ Nevertheless he still has faith in the idea that common experience of colonialism will enable the multiethnic society of Indonesia to unite. Such conviction has become the recurring theme in Pram's writing which helps Benedict Anderson illustrate his path breaking theory that nation is so imagined.

As for *Arok Dedes*, this book has been interpreted in different ways to suit the political purposes of the ones doing the interpretations.¹¹ The author, however, has acknowledged

⁹ An interview with Pramoedya Ananta Toer by Sebastian Tong and Fong Foong Mei, 26 December 1996.

¹⁰ "Pramoedya Ananta Toer, 'Literature, Censorship and the State: How Dangerous are Stories' translated by Marianne Katoppo (<http://www.antenna.nl/wvi/eng/poet/pram/magspee.html>)

¹¹ Hersri Sctiawan, an exile writer in his letter 'Ken Angrok—*brandal yang menjadi raja*' sent to his Dutch friend and scholar Henk Maier makes an obvious referent of various characters in the narratives such as Ken Arok, Kebo Ijo and Gandring to the real actors, respectively, Suharto, Untung and the PKI (<http://www.jawapalace.org/kenarok.html>).

that what he wants is to re-write history¹². He 'salvaged' his MS written when he was imprisoned in Buru Island and turned it into this novel. *Arok Dedes* is an instance of the ways in which the legend of Ken Arok and Ken Dedes is reconstructed. Pramoedya narrates the story of Ken Arok and Ken Dedes in order that it is not suffocated in a legend.¹³ He thus deconstructs several events in the *Pararaton*.

The most-often-alluded kris, for example, in the hands of Pramoedya is downplayed. There is no such a thing as a mighty dagger, says the author; it is strategy and intelligence that matter. Even by then, Pramoedya maintains, it is doubtful if there was an industry for weaponry. What Pramoedya refers to 'the legend of Gandring' quoted earlier is his criticism toward the mythologization of the weapon, contrary to the views of most myth-makers.¹⁴ Just as the kris is a ploy, so is the kris-maker Mpu Gandring the architect of the plan. In *Arok Dedes* Gandring is depicted as being accurate and

¹² See for example his article 'My Apologies, in the name of experience'. He says that he would like to redress the story of Arok and Dedes so that 'they could come out of the cage of legend' (<http://www.radix.nct/bradsley/apology.html>).

¹³ Pramoedya Ananta Toer, Personal Communication, Bojong Cede, September 18, 2002. See also 'My apolo-

¹⁴ Hero and his weapon are characteristic of most legends. From the Malay literary classic, readers are familiar with Taming Sari, the kris owned by Hang Tuah. Said to have been made from the same metal as that of the Ka'aba, the kris was capable of doing the fight for its owner in times of danger. Moving closer to home, another weapon is Kyai Baru Klinting, the spear owned by Ki Agcng Mangir from the Malaram kingdom. Again in Pramoedya's earlier work *Mangir* (2000) (he authors titillates the myth surrounding this weapon which is commonly said to have been the cause of the owner's defeat as it broke into pieces in the enemy's hand. For Pramoedya, interestingly enough, Kyai Baru Klinting is but a mortal human being. Any motifs to mystify this person (by the power—that—be), according to Pramoedya, means to blur historical realities.

astute a politician. Should Ken Arok outwit Gandring, it is because of the more accurate and astute younger political actor.

Ken Arok is given a positive light by subverting his notoriety into the youth's ceaseless energy to help the poor to the disadvantage of the rich. This Javanese Robin Hood's immense ambition for power is conditioned by first, his unusual intelligence and second, injustice exercised toward Tumapel people and priests by the ruling regime. Pramoedya is at pains telling how quick Arok learns everything from his mentor Lohgawe. Meanwhile Ken Dedes' portrayal is not less adept and learned than Arok's. Similar to Arok, Ken Dedes is depicted as being quite smart and daring. The portrait of a willing and submissive wife of the more dominating spouse is non-existent in this book. Just as Arok is eager to seize Tunggal Ametung's seat, so is Dedes distraught upon realizing that Arok is after all the winner. And the winner takes it all; he makes Dedes share her bed with his other wife, Umang.

Such an ending makes the novel different from the work of Yamin. But, like Yamin's play, unifying theme is highlighted when the author implies that the annexation of Kediri and Jenggala kingdoms is a seal of Arok's success in mediating the contestation between the Shivaite and Bhramin priests. It is apparent that for Pramoedya unity is the means and succession (power transition) is the end. It works otherwise for Yamin.

Concluding remarks

To conclude, there is still continuity in the ways in which the strive for unity is subscribed in the works separated more than seventy years from each other. If Muhammad Yamin relies on Javanese culture as the basis of his work, Pramoedya Ananta Toer makes use the same material with some alterations.

Given the differing authorial backgrounds against which the story of Ken Arok and Ken Dedes is reproduced, the two texts should thus be interpreted accordingly. At the heart of both narratives are tension and/or reactions against colonialism and nationalism. While the focus of Yamin's play is on national unity, Pra-moedya's *Arok Dedes* capitalises on the novelist's critical stance against politics. At this juncture it is clear how dominant discourses often forget about how local ideas are shaped by responses against colonialism/imperialism/ domination. This is not to say that Yamin's work helps promulgating the nation-state ideology whereas that of Pram is preaching the otherwise doctrine in allegorical fashion. Central to these diversified interpretations is the reason and/or passion behind the production of both works. Written when the nation was struggling to free itself from the common enemy, i.e. Dutch colonialism, Ken Arok in the hands of Yamin was indeed the symbol of unity. Pramoedya's circumstances, conversely, do not allow him to abide to the same disposition without voicing his personal experience. Both writers talk about unity. They likewise are pro-populace and against autocracy. But here the resemblance ends. Yamin avoids mentioning bloodshed succession which Pramoedya brings to light.

It could be argued that the popular/quotidian reconstructions of the narratives are inseparable from the cultural, political and religious orientations and priorities of individual/groups' at particular realms of time and, most probably, location. Supomo, for example, has aptly pointed out the tension between the new Javanese and Indonesian writing on the image of Majapahit (Supomo 1979:171-185). The grandeur and glory of Majapahit seen in *Pararaton* and *Negarakratagama* are nowhere to be seen in the *Babad Tanah Jawi*, which!

according to Supomo, reflects the religious present to comprehend the differing contestation between the older Hindu-interpretations without acknowledging one Buddhist kingdoms and the later Islamic-based and refusing the other, much less to let the Mataram. Neither the accuracy nor inaccuracy diversification to merge into one. The raging of the picture of Majapahit, Supomo ethnic conflicts testify the declining efficacy maintains, is the concern when one is to of the motto. Whilst accepting part of struggle for Unity and Diversity. To quote him Supomo's argument, this paper needs to at length, 'the more the *tunggal* (unity) add that it is high time for the education of becomes a reality, the less the need for a (young) people to advance from symbol of unity; and the less the fear that understanding any folk writings to scruti-*bhinna* (diversity) will lead to disintegration, nizing the rationale behind the emergence the less the need for a symbol of stability of the very texts. Only then can people and greatness from the remote see the vices and virtue of the past from pass'(Supomo 1979:185). which the current condition can be

Supomo, wrote about thirty years ago, may have this optimism. But the stake is so high at

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Ken Arok (<http://www.jawapalace.org/kenarok.html>)
Memory of Mojopahit (<http://www.eastjava.com>)
Muhammad Yamin (<http://www.kirjasto.sci.fi/yamin.htm>)
Pramoedya Ananta Toer, 'My apologies, in the name of experience' (<http://www.radix.net/bardsley/apolog.html>)
Pramoedya Ananta Toer, 'Literature, Censorship and the State: How Dangerous are Stories' translated by Marianne Katoppo (<http://www.antenna.nl/wvi/eng/poet/pram/magspee.html>)

Appendix:

A brief description of Ken Arok and Ken Dedes according to the *Pararaton* is necessary to help unfamiliar readers in following the discussion.

A newly-wed wife Ken Endok was on her way to bring food for her husband Gajahpara who was working on the field when God Brahma, wanting to have a child of his own, approached her. Then God Brahma forbade Ken Endok of having intimacy with Gajahpara for failing to do so would mean the death of the poor husband. The enamored couple, however, was unable to compromise with this situation. They chose separation instead, and five days later Gajahpara

was found dead. Fearful of the demonic power of the infant in her womb, Ken Endok left his son near the graveyard soon after his birth. A passing thief named Lembong took the child and the latter soon learnt the 'trade' of his adopted father. Young Ken Arok's criminality forced him to move from place to place and he fell into the care of different parents. Yet his destiny was to become a great king, the sign of which was shown to HyangLohgawe the Indian Brahmin priest who traveled a long the way to meet Ken Arok. He found Arok at the gambling table and advised the young man to set out to Tumapel to work in the service of the local governor, Tunggul Ametung.

Tunggul Ametung had recently abducted Ken Dedes, the beautiful daughter of a Mahayanic Buddhist monk Mpu Parwa, and made her his wife. The angry father lay a curse on the kidnapper that he would meet his untimely death at the point of a *keris*, the Javanese dagger.

On one fine day Tunggul Ametung took his three-month pregnant wife for a ride to the park of Babaji where Ken Arok stealthily watched them passing by. It was the willing of the gods that a soft, gentle wind blew KenDedes's outfit as she got off the carriage just in time for Ken Arok to catch a glimpse of Ken Dedes¹ glowing private part. When later Arok asked for Lohgawe's opinion about what had happened, the Brahmin explained that such a woman had a great power and brought good luck; and that whoever won her would become a great king.

Lohgawe, however, was not in the position to advise Ken Arok regarding his ambition to oust Tunggul Ametung. Ken Arok then consulted one of his guard parents Bango Samparan and the latter suggested him to order a dagger from a well-known ironsmith Mpu Gandring. It would take him one year to make the *keris* but within five months the impatient Ken Arok met Gandring to collect the weapon. Upon seeing that the *keris* was not ready, Arok stabbed Gandring to death. Before dying, Mpu Gandring cursed Arok and said that seven kings would die with that unfinished dagger.

Next Ken Arok went back to Tumapel to lend the *keris* to the close guard of Tunggul Ametung and friend of Arok. This unscrupulous Kebo Ijo proudly showed the *keris* off to his friends. When the next day Tunggul Ametung was found dead with the dagger stabbed into his heart, Kebo Ijo assumed guilty for the assassination. Upon committing the crime Ken Arok married the widow of Tunggul Ametung without the objection of Tumapel people. Arok's unbridled lust for power coupled with the support of the populace smoothed his way. Added to these is the blessing of the priests, Sivaite and Buddhist alike, who were in conflict with the neighbouring ruler and found shelter in Tumapel. Having defeated Jayakaton, the king of Kediri, Ken Arok was finally crowned as King of Singasari and his royal name was Sri Rajasa Amurwabhumi.

Meanwhile Ken Dedes gave birth to Tunggul Ametung's son, Anusapati. Out of her marriage to Ken Arok, another son, Mahisawanateleng, was born. Arok's second wife Ken Umang bore him a son, Tohjaya. Mpu Gandring' curse was attested by chains of retribution among the offspring of Tunggul Ametung and Ken Arok.