

# Wayang Performances Offered to Nyai Lara Kidul : A Reading of Narratives of the 1965 Coup Attempt

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(出版者 / Publisher)

法政大学教養部

(雑誌名 / Journal or Publication Title)

法政大学教養部紀要. 社会科学編 / 法政大学教養部紀要. 社会科学編

(巻 / Volume)

83

(開始ページ / Start Page)

15

(終了ページ / End Page)

30

(発行年 / Year)

1992-02

(URL)

<https://doi.org/10.15002/00004706>

# Wayang Performances Offered to *Nyai Lara Kidul*: A Reading of Narratives of the 1965 Coup Attempt<sup>1)</sup>

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## I

The so-called September 30th Movement, 1965, is officially interpreted as a coup d'état instigated by the PKI (*Partai Komunis Indonesia*, Indonesian Communist Party). It is a well known fact that Indonesian history drastically changed after that incident, and it is also well known that a violent massacre took place after the coup which lasted to the end of 1965, or the beginning of 1966. But, here, I am not going to present to you some shocking documents that might bring a new view of the coup. Rather, this essay will focus on a discussion of how people in Yogyakarta narrate their experience of that time.

When I was in Yogyakarta from 1981 to 1982, a number of informants<sup>2)</sup> told me that Yogyakarta was peaceful (*aman*) after the

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1) This is a revised version of my paper presented at a research circle of the Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University on Oct. 20, 1988. But it was originally written in Japanese in "*Girei to Shocho* (Rituals and Symbols)", Kyushu University Press, 1983. My fieldwork was done from March, 1981 to March, 1982 under the sponsorship of LIPI (Indonesian Institute of Science) and in affiliation with Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta. My research was funded by the oversea's study program of Kyushu University; I also got some financial aid from Hosei University for organizing the field data in 1982. For this English version I also used some data from my two-month follow up survey in 1989.

2) Among them are the ex-mayor of Yogyakarta at that time and the *dalang*, or puppet player, of the wayang performances mentioned below. I am very grateful to them for their understanding of my study, but of course I take full responsibility for the contents of this essay.

coup. I was very interested in their accounts, and asked them to explain their observations. As any critical discussion of questions related to the coup is still considered to be very dangerous in Indonesia, my data and analysis are tentative. My question is why the people of Yogyakarta believe that Yogyakarta was peaceful in the aftermath of the coup, and why they believe that only Yogyakarta was peaceful in Java. As I am interested in a dynamic analysis of Javanese mythology, my aim here is to interpret the narration of the coup attempt in terms of theories of historical narrative.

## II

Several points that emerged from my research will shed light on the historical and cultural context of the events and their narration. First it is significant that two wayang performances were offered to *Nyai Lara Kidul*, or the spirit guardian of the Javanese kings in the Indian Ocean<sup>3)</sup>, before and after 1965 coup attempt. Both wayang were performed at the *Parangtritis* Coast, which is believed to be the entrance to the palace of the Spirit Queen in the South Ocean.

The first wayang was performed in late December of 1963 and was organized at the initiative of Sultan Hamengkubuwana IX, the Governor of the Special District of Yogyakarta. And the second was performed in February, 1966, and was organized at the initiative of Pakualaman, the Vice Governor of Yogyakarta. Needless to say, both wayang performances were offered to *Nyai Lara Kidul*. Actually however, the purpose of the offering of the first wayang had no relation to the second one. But through the September 30th Movement, 1965, or the most serious political struggle in Indonesia, these wayang performances came to be linked to each other in narratives about the situation in Yogyakarta after the coup attempt.

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3) It is called *Samodera Selatan*, or the South Ocean in Javanese.

Now it is useful to retrace briefly the coup attempt.<sup>4)</sup> Before dawn on October 1, 1965, some soldiers lead by Lieutenant Colonel Untung occupied some important places and attacked seven generals of the Indonesian army. They killed six of them, only one general (Nastion) managed to escape from their attack. In an early morning radio broadcast, Untung made a statement about the purpose of their actions. In Yogyakarta Major Mulyono and his group confined two colonels and Pakualaman, and later killed the two colonels. Pakualaman managed to escape from confinement. In Solo, where the PKI's influence was stronger than in Yogyakarta, some demonstrations in support of the coup broke out after the broadcast.

The coup in Jakarta was contained by General Suharto by the evening of October 1. Then the anti-coup group announced that the PKI had conspired the coup. This appeal and photos of the bodies of the murdered generals fired up the anti-communist feelings of the Islamic people. Bands of men from RPKAD (Para-Commandos) and ANSOR (Youth Moslem Action Group) tried to find members of the PKI and their supporters, and killed them, or sent them to jails. It is said that at least 200,000 to 500,000 people were killed in Java, Bali and Sumatra.

A brief analysis of the economic and social conditions in Java in the early 1960's<sup>5)</sup> is also necessary to understand the first wayang performance and its relation to the narrative of the coup attempt.

The early 1960's in Indonesia was a time of political conflict, economic failure, inflation and starvation. Sukarno was a proponent of Anti-Colonialism and Anti-Imperialism, and he had decided in December, 1961 to go to war with the Netherlands over West Irian.

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4) See "A Preliminary Analysis of October 1 1965 Coup in Indonesia" by Ben Anderson and Ruth MacVey, Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 1971.

5) See, e. g. "A History of Modern Indonesia" by M. C. Ricklefs, the Macmillan Press, 1981, pp. 245-264.

With the support of growing nationalism, the PKI had spread its influence into rural areas, and was promoting its policy of land reform and sharecropping. Meanwhile, the Moslems, who accused the communists of being atheists, were being threatened by the expansion of the PKI's power in rural areas, and conflicts between the two sides were increasing.

In 1963, just when political and economic conditions were worsening, another problem occurred: there was an infestation of rats throughout Java. People said that the number of rats was multiplying daily in spite of attempts to exterminate them; thus their crops suffered severe damage.

According to documents on file at *Dinas Pertanian*, or the Agricultural Office, Gunung Kidul, Yogyakarta, there was little rainfall in 1963 and 1964. In 1963, 42,000 hectares of fields had been eaten by millions of rats. It was as if the rats were flooding the countryside. It was said that unbroken streams of them swept across the fields for more than fifteen minutes at a time. Even dogs were frightened by the hoards of rats. After eating *Ubi Kayu*, or cassava, they went to the rice fields and ate the rice crops. Therefore many villagers were left with nothing to eat, and they had only *gabah*, or thin rice porridge made of empty ears of rice. Thousands of people, they said, were seen starved to death in the streets. No exact numbers of victims were documented. People in Gunung Kidul still call that time *jaman gabah* (the time of *gabah*.)

On December 6, 1963, the *Kedaulatan Rakyat*, a local newspaper in Yogyakarta, reported that the rat infestation was becoming a nation-wide problem, and that the Diponegoro Division in Central Java had taken action to drive the rats away into the South Ocean. I got some information at *Dinas Pertanian* Yogyakarta, too. They had no documents from 1963 to 1965, but I was able to see the agricultural documents from 1966, 67 and so on. These documents indicated that the damage done to the whole of central Java by rat

infestation in 1966 was reduced to nearly half of that of 1965.<sup>6)</sup>

Those who believe in *Nyai Lara Kidul* also believe that rats are sent by this female deity. Rats are believed to be messengers between the earth and underworld. A mystic told me that *Ratu Lara Kidul* had expressed her anger through the rats infestation, because the PKI had refused to give any offerings (*sajen*) to her. Besides neglecting to give offerings there were some people who accused members of the PKI of stealing irrigation water, practicing black magic, speaking disrespectfully and so on. People were suffering from the rats infection and wanted to end the difficulty.

A school teacher in Gunung Kidul told me that Sultan Hamengkubuwana IX once recommended people to eat rats, otherwise rats might eat human beings. Then, knowing of the peoples' serious predicament, he gave some money to Sudarisman Purwakusuma, Mayor of Yogyakarta at the time and ordered him to organize a wayang performance at Parangtritis. He added that the *dalang*, or wayang puppeteer, should be chosen from among the *dalangs* in the Province of Bantul, in which Parangtritis is located. Furthermore he said that the *lakon*, or story of the wayang, should be "*Semar Boyong*". It was Ki Timbul Hadiprayitono who was selected to be the *dalang*. At the time, Ki Timbul was just twenty-four years old, and nobody knew he was a good *dalang*. He told me that he had no choice, because he had been ordered by Sultan IX.

The reason why the wayang was performed at Parangtritis is quite clear. The legitimacy of the Mataram kingship has been maintained through the mystical communication with *Lara Kidul*. *Senopati*, the late sixteenth century semi-mythological founder of the Mataram Kingdom, was given magical power through sexual intercourse with her. Thereafter every Mataram king underwent a ritual marriage to her at his inauguration. The Javanese kings stand at

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6) It is said that the Government bought rats from villagers keeping count of the tails; thus they could count the exact numbers of millions of rats slaughtered each year.

the center of their cosmology in which the classifications of heaven, earth and the underworld are very important and *Lara Kidul* represents the chthonic, or the underworld power. Besides that the classifications of mountain and sea are also important. And heaven and mountain, underworld and sea are mythological codes which are often interchangeable. *Lara Kidul* is believed to ride on a giant *naga*, or dragon, which also symbolizes the chthonic power and water from the underworld. *Lara Kidul* symbolizes ambiguous powers. Generally *Lara Kidul* is believed to be a beautiful woman with long hair. Sometimes she is described as an ugly, old woman. *Lara* in Javanese means to be ill, to be in pain, or to have a disease; it also means a virgin girl." In Java it is often said that she symbolizes the moon. When the moon is full, she is very beautiful, but as the moon goes through its phases she becomes ugly.

Why then, did Sultan Hamengkubuwana IX request to have "*Semar Boyong*" performed? As he passed away in October 1988, it was impossible to ask him the reason directly. Therefore I have to merely guess his intention. Usually there is some relation between a *lakon* and the occasion of wayang performance. Usually the *lakon* is determined by discussion between the *dalang* and the wayang organizer just before the performance. But in the case of wayang at Parantritis at the end of 1963 it was the Sultan IX who determined the *lakon* long before the performance.

### III

In order to understand this question and relate it to this essay's main topic, we should look at the story of "*Semar Boyong*", and ask who Sultan Hamengkubuwana IX was?

*Semar Boyong*, which is a typical *lakon carangan*, or invented tale from the Mahabarata and the Ramayana, gives an account of

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7) Elinor C. Horne: "Javanese-English Dictionary", Yale University Press, 1974.

the struggle over who should be worthy to be the master of *Semar*, or the wise follower of the *Pandawa* five brothers. King *Rama* of the Ramayana needed *Semar* and his supernatural power, because his country had been suffering from a serious drought. But the *Raksasa*, or evil giants, also wanted *Semar*, because they thought they could beat the *Pandawas* if they could get *Semar*. But the *Pandawas* would not allow *Semar* to belong to other countries. Therefore, violent fightings broke out among the three different countries over *Semar*. However, *Semar* was deemed to be the wise follower of the *Pandawas* according to the fate of the Javanese mythological history. I assume that Sultan IX must have compared Yogyakarta in a serious drought to the *Rama's* country in a serious drought, too.<sup>8)</sup>

But here it is more important to make a few points about the career of Sultan Hamengkubuwana IX.<sup>9)</sup> He is a well known hero of the Indonesian Revolution,<sup>10)</sup> and accounts of his life are filled with anecdotes with mystical overtones. How did he get such a reputation?

He was nominated to become the Sultan IX immediately after his father gave him the *Jaka Piturun*, or *kriss* (dagger) symbolizing the Hamengkubuwana family, in 1939. But his inauguration was postponed until he finally accepted some conditions from the Dutch colonial authority in March, 1940. During the Japanese occupation he resisted the occupation policy of *romusha*, or forced labour, and used the Japanese military power to construct *Selokan Mataram*, or irrigation systems in Yogyakarta. Just after the surrender of Japan, KNI (*Komite National Indonesia*; Indonesian National Committee)

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8) As I mentioned above the reason why he chose the *tacon* will be a riddle forever. But some of my informants agreed with my hypothesis.

9) See "Tahta Untuk Rakyat, Celah-celah Kehidupan Sultan Hamengkubuwono IX" disunting oleh Atmakusumah, Penerbit PT Gramedia, Jakarta, 1982, "Sri Sultan: Hari-hari Hamengku Buwono IX", Sebuah Presentasi Majalah TEMPO, Penerbit PT Pustaka Utama Grafiti, 1988.

10) He was awarded National Hero Medal in July, 1990,

was organized in Yogyakarta, too. Their first work was to take away Japanese political and military power, and train the people in the time of revolution to maintain Indonesian Independence which was declared on August 17, 1945. This drastic change in Yogyakarta took place without any official contacts with the Sultan. Understanding the peoples' desire, Sultan Hamengkubuwana IX declared on September 9 that he would support the Indonesian Independence. The Indonesian Government in Jakarta welcomed the Sultan's decision, and they sent some messengers to talk to Sultan on the following day. In contrast to Sultan in Yogyakarta, Susuhunan in Surakarta didn't support the revolutionary change.<sup>11)</sup>

As the KNI in Yogyakarta became bigger and bigger, it came to be difficult to tell who was the official leader of Yogyakarta. Then the Indonesian Government determined that they would return the Sultan's territory to him. Sultan's Yogyakarta became *Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta* (The Special District of Yogyakarta) which has equal status with other regions (West Java, Central Java, East Java, and so on). Sultan Hamengkubuwana IX became the Governor, and Pakualam became the Vice Governor. Since the Declaration of Independence, the Indonesian Government had faced lots of interventions from other countries. In 1946, the capital city had to be removed from Jakarta to Yogyakarta. In December, 1948, the Dutch armies attacked Yogyakarta and arrested Sukano and Hatta. From that time the Dutch had occupied Yogyakarta for six months, and tried to get help from the Sultan saying that they would restore his position and territory as the king of the whole of Java. But the Sultan refused. Then the Dutch pressed the Government officers to help the Dutch, however, the Sultan appealed to them not to help the Dutch. The only response to the Dutch pressure was "we will follow only the Sultan's order". Sukarno also respected the Sultan's charismatic power, because his *Guru*, or magico-religious advisor,

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11) After a severe struggle between the Susuhunan and the revolutionary leaders, the Susuhunan was deprived of his political power.

always cautioned Sukarno not to fight the Sultan.

The Sultan's charismatic power was evident not only in the field of politics but also in magico-religious affairs. From the beginning of 1947, bubonic plague came to be very prevalent in Yogyakarta, for Yogyakarta's population had increased drastically after it became the capital of Indonesia. *The Kedaulatan Rakyat* reports on March 4, 1947, that the plague had reached its peak and was subsiding due to the diffusion of disinfectants in rural Yogya as well as in the city. At the same time the newspaper reported that people in Yogya asked the Sultan to organize a procession using two palace *pusakas* heir-looms): a spear (*Kanjeng Kyai Tungulwulung*) and a banner (*Kanjeng Kyai Pare Anem*). Following the Javanese tradition, the same *pusakas* were brought out and carried in a procession around the city at the time of an outbreak of cholera in 1891, of influenza in 1919, and plague in 1932. Receiving a request from the people, the Sultan IX approved the procession.<sup>12)</sup>

Therefore, it is quite reasonable to presume the same pattern in the traditional power system when the wayang performance at Parangtritis was organized in December, 1963. But the people who saw that wayang performance didn't recognize this aspect of it. Although everybody knew the wayang was offered to *Nyai Lara Kidul*, nobody had any idea why *Semar Boyong* was performed at Parangtritis, and why the Sultan organized the wayang at that time.

Nevertheless, after this wayang performance people told me that the rats disappeared. Perhaps peoples' practical efforts to exterminate the rats were successful, but they said that some people saw thousands of rats jump into rivers and swim away to the South Ocean. Did they go back to their place in the Palace of *Lara Kidul* in the sea? After this wayang performance, Timble Hadiprayitono was recognized as an excellent *dalang*, and the charismatic reputation of the Sultan IX had become more firmly established.

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12) *Kedaulatan Rakyat*: Poesaka Keraton Dibawah Keliling Kota? March 4, 1947.

## IV

It is very interesting that now many people in Yogyakarta remember this wayang not in relation to the rat infestation of 1963, but in relation to the September 30th Movement, 1965. The people whom I met often told me that Yogyakarta was *aman*, or peaceful, in the aftermath of the coup attempt. They didn't deny there were some killings, but they emphasized that those were very few. In contrast to Yogyakarta, they said, Solo was terrible. They related the reason to the wayang performance at Parangtritis at the end of 1963. They said, "As the Sultan offered the wayang immediately before 1965 to *Nyai Lara Kidul*, Yogya was peaceful (*aman*)".

John Hughes reports that many people were killed and their bodies were thrown into the underground river in Wanasari, Gunung Kidul and that thirteen employees of a government-owned hotel in the city of Yogyakarta were killed.<sup>13)</sup> Some informants said they had "witnessed" the killing at *Gumpuh*, or the underground river. A PNI (*Partai Nasional Indonesia*; Indonesian National Party) member in Gunung Kidul gave the following account; "Gunung Kidul was one of the most powerful places of the PKI, because this area was the poorest area of Java. Some leaders of Wonosari were members of the PKI, but I have never seen them since the coup. I don't know whether or not they were killed, or where the killings were done. But it's true at least that I have not seen them since then". A video company worker, who was twenty years old in 1965 and lived in Yogyakarta, told me that he had seen many members of the PKI being carried away from the city of Yogyakarta. While on his way to Solo at the beginning of October, 1965, he had seen the main road from Yogyakarta to Solo barricaded with logs and had to pass there by pushing his motor bike. An old man, whose grandfather-in-

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13) "Indonesian Upheaval", D. Mckay Co., 1967, p. 157.

law is Sultan VII, told me that he had been threatened by the government when he asked them about his missing son-in-law who was a worker at a post office in Yogyakarta and a member of the PKI. Although no one can tell so far where the missing persons were taken, it is quite natural to assume that most of them were killed. I am not sure the exact numbers of victims in Yogyakarta, however, it is very clear that there were no serious killings in the city of Yogyakarta itself.

But why did some people *narrate* the story in a way that suggested Yogya was peaceful? I will explore two possible reasons for this.

The first may be found in the rivalrous relations between Solo and Yogya. Since the division of the Mataram Kingdom in 1755, the two cities have been competing with each other. Since Indonesian Independence, the two royal families have had completely opposite histories. Susuhunan in Solo lost his political power and was forbidden to have contact with *Lara Kidul*, or the female guardian of the Javanese kings in the South Sea, while the Sultan in Yogyakarta became a charismatic figure in modern Indonesia. Let me cite an example to show how the people of Yogya expressed the rivalrous relations between them. There was a bloody massacre at the temple of *Lara Jonggrang* at Prambanan which is the border between Residency of Surakarta and the Special Region of Yogyakarta. Many people told me about this bloody killing at *Lara Jonggrang*, and they emphasized that the killing did not happen in Yogya but in Solo. Let me cite "*Indonesian Upheaval*" again.<sup>14)</sup>

Moslem youths were attacked there by Communist members of the *Pemuda Rakyat* (Peoples' Youth). A number of Moslems were killed and quickly buried. When their friends and families came looking for the bodies to transfer them to another burial place with proper religious rites, the *Pemuda Rakyat* resisted.

The Moslems called in the army to help, and the military say

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14) *ibid.*, pp. 153-154.

they killed fifty Communists in the battle that ensued, but a knowledgeable resident of the area says the retaliation did not stop there. For weeks afterwards, he says, the army ferreted out Communist supporters and seized them. Each night under the temple's moonlit walls about three hundred people were killed by the army's guns and buried in unmarked mass graves.

Considering these facts, I suppose that people in the City of Yogyakarta rather neglected the killing inside Yogyakarta city itself, and stressed the killing outside Yogya. To them it may not have been a fiction that Yogya was peaceful, but we notice that this 'peace' after the coup attempt was relative, and sometimes they shut their eyes on the killings in Yogyakarta city.

## V

Now I will go on to discuss the second possible reason for the narrative, which will lead me to the conclusion of this essay.

There was another wayang performance at Parangtriris in February, 1966. This time it was Pakualaman who organized the wayang performance, and it was Sudarisman Purwakusuma, Mayor of Yogyakarta who selected the *lakon*, "*Wahyu Cakraningrat*". Ki Timble Hadiprayitono was asked to perform the wayang again. Although the purpose of the wayang performance, as the late Purwakusuma and a secretary of Pakualaman told me, was to show their thanks to *Nyai Lara Kidul* for the peace of Yogyakarta in the aftermath of coup,<sup>15)</sup> the *lakon* contained clear allegorical references to the political situation around the beginning of 1966.

This *lakon* runs as follows. "It is prophesied that the descendants of the *Pendawas* will become the historical kings who will unite all Java. The person who receives *wahyu*, or god's will, will be the

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15) We should remember that Pakualaman was confined to his Palace, but managed to escape from confinement. Two colonels were killed on the way to Kaliuran from Yogyakarta.

king. About getting the *wahyu*, children of the *Pandawas* fought among themselves. But it is *Ongkawijaya* (*Abimanyu*; one of the children of *Arjuna*) who receives the *wahyu*. *Ongkawijaya* was not involved with the fighting and did not want anything.

Purwakusuma, ex-mayor of Yogya told me that just after this wayang performance, a lot of *lurah* (village head), *camat* (county head), *bupati* (district head), *wali kota* (mayor) and professors were purged from their positions. Purwakusuma himself quit his job. I think he might have wanted to guess who would be receiving the *wahyu* after the coup-attempt by selecting the lakon of the wayang performance. Then Sukarno agreed to yield his power to Suharto on March 11, 1966, and the PKI became illegal.

Here we begin to see the second reason why the people in Yogyakarta want to construct a narrative that Yogyakarta was peaceful. The narration of the people in Yogyakarta is not always based on exact causal relations. It is true that the Sultan Hamengkubuwono IX has been a charismatic hero in Indonesian history since Independence. But it is not true to assume that Yogya was relatively peaceful because of the offerings to *Lara Kidul* immediately before and after 1965. I have already pointed out the rivalous relationship between Solo and Yogyakarta.

We may ask what theories are available to interpret their narration. Here we need to rely upon theories of historical narrative, because they will help us understand why they made a myth of their recent history. But it is very difficult to consider that myth is totally different from history. Lévi-Strauss suggests that the interpretive aspect of historiography is specifically mythical or myth is an agent to control historiography.<sup>16)</sup> I am not suggesting that Java is a kind of 'cold society',<sup>17)</sup> or ahistorical society, but in order to interpret the history of Java, I think, it is necessary to use mythological methodology. After introducing two methodologies of history,

16) "The Raw and the Cooked", Harper & Row, Publishers, 1964, pp. 1-32.

17) "La Pensee Sauvage", Japanese version, Misuzu Shobo, 1976, Chap. 9.

or 'proper history' and 'metahistory', Hayden White talks about the epistemological status of these two methodologies as follows;<sup>18)</sup> 'Proper history', taking a positivistic explanation, has argued that historians explain past events only insofar as they succeed in identifying the laws of causation governing the process in which the events occur. On the contrary, metahistory, taking a somewhat more literary task, has insisted that historians explain the events that make up their narratives by specifically narrative means of encodation. And he says that the difference between the two methodologies "does not occur on the level of the 'facts' which make up the chronicle of the process under analysis, but on the level on which the story to be told about the facts is constituted as a story of a particular kind". Then he concludes that "the distinction between proper history and metahistory tends to dissolve into a matter of emphasis".

In writing this essay, I referred frequently to "*A Preliminary Analysis of the October 1, 1965, Coup in Indonesia*" by Ben Anderson and Ruth McVey, 1971. I greatly admired the way the authors were able to collect and analyze such a large body of materials in such a short time period. I also found their style of description to be interesting. In every chapter they cite passages from "*Nagarakrtagama*", or documents of the court life and rituals of the Majapahit Kingdom. Some passages are very allegorical. I suppose that they wanted to be metahistorians rather than just proper historians. If we accept the notion of the metahistory, it is not so difficult to understand the story narrated around 1965 in Yogyakarta.

People in Yogyakarta interpreted their experiences around 1965 through their discourse. They created the story through the discourse, and narrated it to me. Here we must pause once again to ask what discourse is.

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18) "Tropics of Discourse", The John Hopkins University Press, 1978, pp. 52-54, 59, 62.

Michel Foucault says<sup>19)</sup> that “as history constantly teaches us, discourse is not simply that which translates struggles or systems of domination, but is the thing for which and by which there is struggle, discourse is the power which is to be seized”. And he defines two different aspects of discourse. One is explained in terms of the exterior. Any one discourse should be different from any other discourse. The second aspect is explained from the perspective of internal procedures which function rather as principles of classification, of ordering. It is clear that Foucault does not see discourse as static. He says that “discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it”.<sup>20)</sup>

Thus we can understand the exterior and interior aspects of the discourse in which the mythic narrative that Yogyakarta was peaceful was produced. The people of Yogyakarta made the narrative in order to differentiate Yogya from Solo as its exterior aspect, and to have confidence in the charismatic power of Sultan IX as its interior aspect.

Finally I want to discuss Ben Anderson's powerful paper, ‘The idea of power in Javanese Culture.’<sup>21)</sup> He himself said that he did not have to answer some questions about his theory, especially from Indonesian scholars,<sup>22)</sup> because those criticisms were published long after his paper, and that his thinking has changed since the writing of that paper. Nevertheless, it is still important for our study because of its influence on Indonesian studies. Now I want to place his discussion into the context of post-structuralism. If we compare his

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19) ‘The Order of Discourse’, in “Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader”, by Robert Young, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981, pp. 52-53, 56.

20) “The History of Sexuality”, Vol. I: An Introduction, Vintage Books, 1980, p. 101.

21) “Culture and Politics in Indonesia” edited by Clair Holt, Cornell University Press, 1972, pp. 1-69.

22) For example, Koentjaraningrat, ‘Javanese Terms for God and Supernatural Beings and Idea of Power’, “Man, Meaning and History” ed. by Scheffold, Schoorl and Tennekes, the Hague-Martinus Nijhoff, 1980, pp. 127-139.

idea of power to Foucault's discourse, I think that his idea of power—underlying which is the key concept of *kasakten*, or magical power—emphasized the aspect of discourse which defines power/knowledge not only of the traditional Javanese but also of modern Indonesian politicians. In his consideration of the process of the founding of Indonesia and the attempt to legitimize the unification of Indonesia, I'm afraid that he failed to indicate that power/knowledge is also the moment to change the discourse itself. The idea of a unified Indonesia is not always congruent with the idea of Javanese culture.

Events can happen without any causal relations. But when people, or even historians, narrate the events, every detail of the events is edited and arranged according to their discourse. Suharto's "New Order" started when Sukarno agreed to yield the political leadership to him on March 11, 1966 (Sebelas Marret, 1966; *Semar*). It is said that *Super Semar* was born at this time, too.<sup>23)</sup> We know that another mythic story was produced.<sup>24)</sup> Those things happened at a moment of major transfer from a time of Revolution (*Revolusi*) to a time of Development (*Pembangunan*).

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23) *Semar* is said to represent people, and Suharto often emphasizes his descent from *rakya* (people). See Suharto's autobiography, "Soeharto, Pilihan, Ucapan, dan Tindakan Saya" diterbitkan oleh PT Citra Lamtoro Gung Persada, 1989.

24) G. J. Resink see the change with allegory of the Mahabarata Epic and the Ramayana Epic. 'From the old Mahabarata-To the New Ramayana-Order', *Bijdragen Tot de Taal, Land en Volkenkunde*, Vol. 131, No. 2-3, pp. 214-235.