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17 March 2020

Dear Dr Jocelyn Martin

Managing Editor

Kritika Kultura

Kindly find below the list of revision following the recommendations of reader 1 on my essay “Contested Javaneseness”.

Sincerely yours,

Dr G.M. Adhyanggono
Soegijapranata Catholic University
Semarang - Indonesia

List of Revisions Following the recommendations of Reader 1

Reader 1 Comments	Revisions made by Author (with page numbers in the revised version...)
<p>Addressing the documentary genre:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• First, it is critical to establish the historic development of the documentary both as a genre and a device for political propaganda. A number of the cinematic traditions examined in the article often allude to cinematic practices in general, even though a number of film scholars (ie. Garin Nugroho and Krishna Sen) keep dissociating the documentary from more popular forms. Are these representations of Javaneseness, then, unique to the two documentaries cited? Or can they be seen as the logical evolution in a longer and maybe yet-to-be articulated tradition? Likewise, who are the directors, producers, writers and other creative staff, and what are their ideological leanings?	<p>Addressing the documentary genre:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I have provided an explanation of the historic development of documentary film as a genre and device for political propaganda in Indonesia (pp.3-6).• In the explanation above, I also have made use of references from relevant documentary film scholars both Indonesians and foreign proportionally, in line with my ideas (pp. 3-6).• The uniqueness of Javaneseness represented in the examined documentaries can be found in my explanation on the introductory section (pp.1-2) and on the aesthetic qualities/forms and styles of the examined films (pp.11-18), as well as on the section under the sub-heading ‘Challenging the New Order’s Unitary Ideal’ (pp.18-24).
<p>Addressing the theoretical framework:</p>	<p>Addressing the theoretical framework:</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second, I want to challenge the author’s reliance on Western constructs of philosophical and anthropological frameworks to explain cultural specificity. While Ricoeur and Hall provide good foundations for understanding different socioeconomic and cultural positions in Indonesia, many more local scholars have articulated these concerns with much more authenticity and care for representing local identities (Ariel Heryanto has an interesting collection of articles on Indonesian popular culture which embraces the author’s theoretical concerns more smoothly). While I understand the need to hail Western knowledge, perhaps it would be better for the author to cite more contemporary and culturally sensitive incarnations of hermeneutics after Ricoeur (and even Gadamer). This way, the article will be more poised to consider the many layers of Islamic experience which have relegated other formations of the religion in the margins of modern Muslim/Indonesian/Javanese experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I only frame my article within Benedict Anderson’s concept of imagined community where Javanese-ness is included, and the rest I synthesised both aesthetic and ideological filmic readings needed. • I have dropped Paul Ricoeur and Stuart Hall. • Thus, in my perspective, I have used adopted Western construct of Anderson sufficiently, along with the method I apply. The fact that I still rely on some basic typological concepts of documentary films from Bill Nichols and other Western scholars is inevitable as to the best of my knowledge none of the local/Indonesian scholars ever posited basic theories concerning the aesthetic values of documentary films. • Other local/Indonesian scholars such as Yuda Karnanta, Lulu Ratna, Arifianto and Junaedi, Irawanto and others are used in my explanation especially in the sections of introduction (pp.1-3), of Documentary Film as A Genre and Device for Political Propaganda (pp.3-6), and of the New Order’s Unitary Sense of Javanese-ness and Indonesian National Identity (pp.6-11)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Third, and connected to the limitations of the previous point, the experience of modern nation-building—both physical and ideological—is an absent concept from the interrogation of Javanese-ness in the article. For example, the <i>Sikep</i> conditions enumerated in the article leans entirely towards the agrandization of provincial and, possibly, colonial— even nativist—life: Representing ordinary people and their daily life problems such as sex and identity card do not necessarily mean less educated (low-brow); more vulgar illustration of sexuality is not equivalent to pornographic minded; provocative depictions of nightlife and communal struggle are not the same as being subversive, and the <i>Sikep</i>’s less materialistic orientation is not a reflection of their total denial to material things in their life. Therefore, the documentaries provide us with an incremental bottom-up imagination of Javanese society from social realities whereas the New Order’s one is designed and engineered from selected abstract models, top to bottom (15). But the <i>Reformasi</i> was neither one-sided nor binary. It was replete with tensions that were pulling different identities into different directions. The documentaries are not the only 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have explained the intersection of the interrogation of Javanese-ness with the experience of modern nation-building in the section of the New Order’s Unitary Sense of Javanese-ness and Indonesian National Identity (pp.6-11). • I have further explained in which way the unique representations of the examined documentaries challenge the unitary ideal of Javanese-ness in the section of Challenging the New Order’s Unitary Ideal (pp.18-24).

<p>witness to an ‘incremental bottom-up imagination of Javanese society,’ they are also testaments to a much more complex border-crossing between domestic and public lives, cultural taboos and social upheavals, as well as the shifting meanings of infrastructure and public works. The discussion of how the urban hotel challenged marital security in the ‘countryside’ (including people situated in the city who retain provincial views) was a good start. I just wish that the author could have pushed the conversation further so as to give more textured and nuanced reading of the documentaries and the context/s from which they emanate.</p>	
<p>Addressing the Use of Language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The article will benefit from a little bit more proofreading and copyediting 	<p>Addressing the Use of Language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have done the proofreading and copyediting as suggested as far as I can.



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17 March 2020

Dear Dr Jocelyn Martin

Managing Editor

Kritika Kultura

Kindly find below the list of revision following the recommendations of reader 2 on my essay “Contested Javaneseness”.

Sincerely yours,

Dr G.M. Adhyanggono (Adhy)
Soegijapranata Catholic University
Semarang - Indonesia

List of Revisions Following the recommendations of Reader 2

Reader 1 Comments	Revisions made by Author (with page numbers in the revised version...)
<p>Addressing the documentary genre:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perhaps a better way to look at the documentaries and their ‘imaginings of an alternative Javaneseness’ is to first explicitly provide the cultural and social context from which these alternative imaginings occur. Look into Anderson, and then how the New Order created a unitary sense of Javaneseness and Indonesian national identity, and how these reformasi films are able to challenge this. Again, I do not necessarily see what Ricoeur has to do with the author’s reading of the films. 	<p>Addressing the documentary genre:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I have provided the cultural and social context in the introductory section (pp.1-3) and the section of Documentary Film as A Genre and Device for Political Propaganda (pp.3-6). I have sufficiently adopted Anderson’s concept of the imagined community concerning the concept of Javaneseness in the introduction section (p.2) I also have explained the New Order’s Unitary Sense of Javaneseness and Indonesian National Identity (pp.6-11) and how the examined documentaries challenge this in Challenging the New Order’s Unitary Ideal (pp.18-24). I have dropped Ricoeur.
<p>Addressing the theoretical framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There seems to be very little critical engagement with the theories used. The author simply lifts Ricoeur and Hall and applies their tenets to the films without engaging with the cultural specificities explicit in the films. The use of 	<p>Addressing the theoretical framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I have dropped Ricoeur and Hall altogether. Other local/Indonesian scholars such as Yuda Karnanta, Lulu Ratna, Arifianto and Junaedi, Irawanto and others are used in my explanation

<p>Ricoeur has to be justified. I don't necessarily see how this theorization of the symbolic adds to the argument of the article. Is Hall not enough? Barthes? I find Ricoeur unnecessarily complicates this realm of the symbolic by tangling it with the phenomenological – which the articles do not engage with. My suggestion is to drop Ricoeur altogether.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The discussion on Hall is much better and lays the foundations for the author's primary argument. Perhaps this section should be expanded further. 	<p>especially in the sections of introduction (pp.1-3), of Documentary Film as A Genre and Device for Political Propaganda (pp.3-6), and of the New Order's Unitary Sense of Javanese-ness and Indonesian National Identity (pp.6-11).</p>
<p>Addressing the Use of Language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The article requires much editing in terms of style and grammar (ie. clipped sentences, choppy paragraphs, repetitiveness, awkward transitions, etc). See highlights in red in the attached document. • The article makes the assumption that its potential readers are familiar with the concepts and practices it discusses. The author/s should ensure that these are explained further in the article. 	<p>Addressing the Use of Language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have done the proofreading and copyediting as suggested as far as I can.

CONTESTED JAVANESENESS Examining the Representations of Cultural Identity in Socio-Cultural Documentaries of the Post-New Order Indonesia

Abstract

This article analyses the convergence of symbols and images of ethnic identity, Javaneseeness, in two Indonesian socio-cultural themed documentaries of the post-New Order era. They are *Jamu/ Javanese Traditional Medicine* (2002) and *Kulo Ndiko Sami/We are Brothers* (2005). The emergence for bringing the issue of Javaneseeness to light has its cause on its complex politicization in the New Order regime wherein Javaneseeness was ideologically manipulated as the hegemonic narrative of the state to construct an image of Indonesian society. Javaneseeness incorporated by the regime was of a desired aristocratic model in combination with other non-Javanese worldviews. This desired strand of Javaneseeness was then politically used to simplify the whole gamut of Javanese cultures and marginalize other ethnic cultures. With the collapse of the New Order, socio-cultural activists regarded the burgeoning of independent documentary filmmaking as a momentum to utilize documentary film as a medium to project alternative interpretations of Javaneseeness. The examined documentaries represent Javaneseeness through the convergence of the films' subject matters and their symbolism. *Jamu* is concerned with sexuality while *Kulo Ndiko Sami* deals with sociocultural identity. Framed within Paul Ricoeur's symbolism and Stuart Hall's cultural representation, the films offer images of Javaneseeness that are more down-to-earth, more daily life and provocative rather than an elitist and highly abstract one, which was once promulgated by the New Order regime.

Keywords: *hermeneutics, symbolism, productive imagination, regime of representation*

Three key characteristics feature Indonesian cinema in the first decade of the 1998 Indonesian political reform (*reformasi*). First, active involvement of women in producing films of various genres became more recognizable. Second, emergence of documentary and independent filmmaking based around universities, cinema clubs, and film festivals was widespread (Hanan 120–21). Third, cinematographers had more freedom to portray various subject matters including themes repressed during the New

Order regime, such as sex, homosexuality, irony of the development, social injustice, poverty, and provocative issues concerned with inter-ethnic and inter-faith relationships (Nugroho and Herlina S. 213–14). Along with these, on the euphoric development of Indonesian documentary itself, there are three causal factors identified to have induced it to happen. First was wider freedom for one to express and speak (Heeren 53). Second was the spirit of “make-your-own-film” to produce independent films on various subject matter (Ratna 304). And third was the continuing practice of the repressive paradigm censorship a la the New Order regime on cinema (Paramaditha 69).

In the above context, this article provides an analysis of symbols of two post-New Order documentaries in Indonesia, Ayu Utami’s *Jamu/ Javanese Traditional Medicine* (2002) (Utami and Prasetya) and Gunritno’s *Kulo Ndiko Sami/ We are Brothers* (2005) (Gunritno et al.), from a cultural perspective. The symbols here are concerned with culture, with cultural identity of an ethnic group living in Indonesia, the Javanese. The analysis of symbols aforementioned highlights a convergence between symbols and images in the documentaries. Such a convergence projects what I call “Javaneseness”. What is it? In this article Javaneseness is understood as the qualities that construct identity of being Javanese. These qualities are contained in the symbols of the films whose significations relate to the social actors’ actions, thoughts, and appearances. From such understanding, the analysis of this article tries to answer questions: What become the symbols in the films? What images of Javaneseness are projected? Why do the images oppose the New Order’s Javanese aristocratic model? and What do the represented images suggest?

In order to answer these questions, I frame my analysis using Paul Ricoeur’s concepts of symbol and imagination in his *hermeneutics* as well as Stuart Hall’s cultural representation. The reason for applying this synthesized approach is twofold. Both documentaries project Javaneseness expressing cultural and political dimensions. The cultural dimension is pertinent to Javanese cultural entities portrayed in the films. Traditional medicine is in *Jamu* while *Sikep* people and their traditional belief are in *Kulo Ndiko Sami*. All of these entities communicate Javanese traditional values. The political dimension of the documentaries relates to the films’ arguments. *Jamu* questions an Indonesian public moral view, “We are a moralized society”. *Kulo Ndiko Sami* highlights the struggle of *Sikep* communities, a variant of Javanese ethnic group, for an official recognition of the Indonesian government concerning their traditional belief.

The inextricable engagement of these cultural and political dimensions in each film through a symbol produces different images of Javanese-ness from that of the New Order regime, which will be explained in the section below. Bearing these all in mind, I come to my second reason why Ricoeur's and Hall's standpoints are employed. Ricoeur's is designed for the cultural reading concerning the symbols and images of Javanese-ness in the films. Hall is put into practice to explain the political dimension of the produced images, which challenge the New Order's Javanese aristocratic model.

THE NEW ORDER'S JAVANESENESS

The films' cultural and political dimensions are significant to explore. What does this suggest? The documentaries were produced after the fall of the New Order regime. The regime was led by President Suharto from 1968 to 1998 (Vatikiotis 25; Vickers 160). Yet, in the early years after the New Order's fall, the social, economy and political conditions of Indonesia were still unpredictable. Such a condition was partly due to the effects of the 1998's Asian financial crisis, economic liberalization and global democratization. The other part was engendered by the prevailing social, economic, politic and even cultural practices of the fallen regime (Sato 12–14).

From socio-economic and political vantage points, many researchers have written about the developmental policy, the patriarchic, authoritarian and militaristic governance, the bureaucratic and capitalistic-oriented logic as well as the nepotistic and corruptive cultures typifying the New Order regime (Bresnan 196; Hadiz 14; RobertsonSnape 595–97; Wieringa 72). Some other experts have further explored the regime's characteristics from cultural perspectives (Clark; Heryanto; Holt; Sen and Hill). Many of them, to some extent, have also touched upon the influence of Javanese culture on the regime's style of governance. The Javanese dominated key positions of the whole government system, including the structure's apex, President Suharto. This condition makes values of Javanese culture more well manifested in the system (Budianta 116). However, only a limited number of scholars who have tried to explain the kind of Javanese-ness that the New Order envisioned and favored (Antlöv and Cederroth; Foulcher; Pemberton).

Some art and cinematic works of the post-New Order period, including the examined documentaries, have distanced themselves from the New Order's Javanese

aristocratic model. The films articulate more fluid interpretations of Javanese-ness. So, what is the New Order's Javanese aristocratic model? In "The Construction of an Indonesian national culture: patterns of hegemony and resistance", Keith Foulcher points out that the New Order's model designates a mental picture of redefined Javanese aristocrats blended with modern touch from other non-Javanese concepts to construct an ideal society of Indonesia.

There has been tendency to align "Indonesia" with a redefined *priyayi* [aristocrat] Java...an eclectic combination of aspects of a *kebatinan* [Javanese mysticism] world view and the Dutch colonial mix of public morality and private self-interest [capitalism], all elaborated against a backdrop of the arts, customs, and etiquette of the courts of Central Java. (303)

The quote above suggests that the New Order's Javanese aristocratic model is a synthesis of Javanese elitist manner (aristocratic) and Javanese mystic worldview in combination with "Western" (Dutch) public morality and capitalism. Similarly, John Pemberton, in *On the Subject of Java*, describes the notion of Javanese-ness *à la* the New Order regime as a redefined model of Javanese aristocrat, an imagination of Java that is court-centric but modern (307). It is within the echoing of Foulcher's and Pemberton's that my intention to bring out the notion of Javanese-ness in this article is established.

However, what is exactly meant by Javanese aristocrat (*priyayi*)? In "The Priyayi", Heather Sutherland describes that *priyayi* designates a ruling social class. This class includes king and his families, nobles and officials, court-based administrators and local chiefs (57). The term *priyayi* itself refers to "younger brothers of a king" but the term may apply to both men and women. In the traditional sense, a *priyayi* used to be a well-born Javanese who had a position in the structure of royal apparatus. He (or she) had to be thoroughly versed in the aristocratic culture of the courts, be familiar with Javanese classical literature, music, dance, *wayang kulit* (Javanese shadow puppet) and be to some extent knowledgeable with Javanese philosophy, ethics and mysticism. A *priyayi* also ought to have mastered polite behavior, refined language, and fashion. In addition, for the aristocratic men, they were required to learn the arts of war (Sutherland 57–58). Manipulating this cultural concept and making it in line with the purpose to maintain power and stability, the New Order regime developed a model of authoritarian paternalistic leadership (Mulder 64–65). This all amounts to projecting the Javanized Indonesian society mentioned above.

SYMBOLISM IN *JAMU* AND *KULO NDIKO SAMI*

From the understanding of the New Order's Javanese aristocratic model, we turn to symbolism in the films. Ricoeur defines symbol as "any structure of signification in which a direct, primary, literal meaning designates, in addition, another meaning which is indirect, secondary, and figurative and which can be apprehended only through the first" (Ricoeur, *The Conflict of Interpretations: Essays in Hermeneutics* 12–13). This definition suggests two things. First, a symbol must be a sign in its various forms (objects, events, actions). Nevertheless, not every sign is a symbol because in the end a symbol should have a significant philosophical meaning and not only an allegory of something (Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil* 15). Second, the meaning(s) of a symbol resides in its second layer or in its figurative layer. However, to disclose the meaning(s) of a symbol, understanding its literal appearance through interpretation is necessary to conduct. This must be done not in isolation of its literal appearance, but through contextualizing it at the whole discourse of the text (Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil* 350).

Let us now turn to examine the documentaries; what the films basically tell us about. To begin with, I would like to focus on the first documentary, *Jamu*, a documentary highlighting a traditional medicine in Indonesia, which is called 'jamu'. The word jamu itself is of Javanese origin and culture (Beers; Soedarsono and Roemantyo). Jamu in general may be grouped into five categories based on its uses: medicine, health-care, beauty-care, tonic and beverage, as well as body protection and endurance (Soedarsono and Roemantyo 1). The ingredients for making jamu can be various but mainly it is composed of herbal, mineral and to a certain extent animal products as well (Elfahmi et al. 52).

Jamu, through an on-screen narrator (Ayu Utami), sets off with a rhetorical argument that Indonesians are a moralized society. Making use of interviews and fly-on-the-wall technique, the film exposes the socio-cultural practices for consuming jamu in Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia. The exposition further discloses the fact that many people consuming jamu are motivated not only by its medicinal potency, but also by its aphrodisiac 'power'. With this, the film explores some *myths* imbued in jamu pertinent to sexuality. Then, the focus shifts from the socio-cultural practice for consuming jamu to highlighting places in the capital notorious for 'Jakarta's red districts'. This is marked

by the second argument the narrator posits in that sex in Indonesia is understood as a husband and wife's intimate relationship bound in a marriage (Utami and Prasetya).

The issue then develops into 'hidden' free-sex and sex-hours practices reenacted by the on-screen narrator (Ayu) and a social actor (Erik Prasetya) who perform as if they were a husband and a wife making a sexual relationship in an unnamed motel room in the capital. The narrator makes an alibi that such a sex practice is intended to keep 'the intimacy between husband and wife' in between their working hours because when they go home they might have already **felt so fatigued** to perform it (Utami and Prasetya). With such a story, *Jamu* basically challenges the adage of public morality wherein the Indonesians are claimed to be a moralized society. Such a belief is contradicted by the free-sex and sex-hours practices in reality wherein boundaries between marital, extra-marital or pre-marital sexual relationships are blurred. Therefore, by theme, *Jamu* challenges the established adage but the way to get into the issue is by exposing a Javanese traditional medicine first as the entry point.

Now what about the second documentary, *Kulo Ndiko Sami*? This film illustrates a variant of Javanese society called *Sikep* in Central Java who intends to get their traditional faith, *Religion of Adam*, officially stated in their identity cards by the local authorities. With unproblematic identity cards, they can facilitate their life to get what they need, such as obtaining driving license for mobility and installing their homes with basic electricity. The story begins with an explanation of who *Sikep* people are by the filmmaker, Gunritno. Here, he acts as both the narrator and one of the social actors. He recounts a brief history of *Sikep* people established by *Ki Samin Surontiko* who firstly taught rural Javanese peasants some principles of life. The teaching emphasizes on a simple life wherein farming and managing household chores are celebrated. Gunritno also explains why *Sikep* people are most of the time called by the rest of the majority Javanese as *Samin* people. Apart from the derivative of the founder's name, Gunritno's explanation suggests that the word *Samin* and *sami* in Javanese language are nearly homophone. *Sami* in Javanese language, which is also spoken by the *Sikeps*, means 'equal' or 'similar'. Thus, *Samin* people believe that all human beings are basically the same or equal. From *Sikep*'s teaching, Gunritno claims that *Sikep* people admit what they do and do what they admit or believe in. They also do not differentiate people on the basis of their social, economic, and religious backgrounds (Gunritno et al.).

The problem is exposed when the film shows the complication encountered by the *Sikeps* as the local government refuses to admit and state their traditional belief in their identity cards. On Indonesian identity card, stating one's religion is one of the pieces of information officially given. Ironically, the authorities fill in the space of religion on their identity cards with other religions that the *Sikeps* do not assume, such as Islam and Buddhism, instead of *Religion of Adam (Agama Adam)*. The officials of the sub-district level argue that it is done for the sake of 'a mere administrative matter' so long as the *Sikeps* get the cards (Gunritno et al.). The films further heightens the complication by presenting voices of both sides, the *Sikeps* and the local authorities, through testimonies and fly-on-the-wall technique. From the sub-district to the district level, the film discloses the struggle of Gunritno and his fellow *Sikeps* to get explanation why such 'manipulation' occurs and to ask for the solution. In the district level, they get explanation from a member of the regional representatives that the central government in Jakarta only officially acknowledges five religions: Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, and Buddhism (Gunritno et al.). From this kind of narrative, by theme, *Kulo Ndiko Sami* is apprehended to have exposed the struggle of *Sikep* people for an official recognition of their traditional religion.

What are shown on the surface of the two films may seem 'banal and cliché' as other guerrilla-type documentaries do. In *Jamu*, it is the connection between traditional medicine, virility and sex practices. In *Kulo Ndiko Sami*, it is about the point-blank refusal of the authorities based on regulation towards a 'distinct' community's aspiration. However, when observed closely, there are 'cultural things' problematized here. At this point, Ricoeur's symbol and imagination may help us to explain and to understand this 'cultural problematization'. To put it straightforwardly, it concerns jamu (the traditional medicine) in the first film and the *Sikeps* in the second film. From Ricoeur's standpoint, both jamu and *Sikeps* can be viewed as hermeneutic symbols because in them cultural values and all complications the films unmask are attributed and condensed.

In the first documentary, jamu is a symbol of ambivalence towards the adage 'We are a moralized society'. This public morality belief is rhetorically stated by the narrator as the voice of the documentary (explicit authorial narrator) at the outset of the film.

Welcome to Jakarta, the capital city of Indonesia. My name is Ayu, I will take you city touring. Jakarta, together with Bali and Yogyakarta, are three major tourist destinations in Asia because of their rich culture. But, we are not like

Bangkok that is famous for the Amsterdam of Asia. We are not like that you know. We are a moralized society. Our motto is Jakarta *Teguh Beriman*, or Jakarta - strong in faith. (Utami and Prasetya)

With such a bold statement, *Jamu* has clearly positioned itself as a documentary with *cinéma-vérité* style describing a personal city-tour of the filmmaker to unveil the ambivalence of the adage pertinent to sexuality and its opposing reality.

This signification is constructed out of how jamu (the traditional medicine) is introduced, investigated and finally intersected with the free-sex phenomena in Jakarta. This evokes a perception as if the traditional medicine took part in creating the phenomena to occur. With its myth on aphrodisiac content, jamu seems to be placed in an illustration where virility and sex are of significance in the film. On the contrary, the documentary has voiced out its satirical tone of the adage from the beginning. This is the case since textually the main argument of *Jamu* lies in its contradictory representation of the public morality adage in Indonesia. Such a moralistic view appears to abate since there is disparity between the truth of the adage and its reality concerning the free-sex trend. Should *Jamu* uncover the gap between the adage and the reality, what about the second film then?

In *Kulo Ndiko Sami*, *Sikep*'s struggle to get their traditional religion officially recognized becomes the hermeneutic symbol. It is a symbol of determining their group identity. As noted above, Gunritno claims that *Sikep* people do not treat other peoples unjustly because of their petty differences. The documentary, through fly-on-the-wall and testimonies, illustrates the social capabilities of the *Sikeps* to socialize with other Javanese peoples and to get involved in helping them. Shortly, they are just like other rural Javanese commoners except that they can be identified from their preference to wear simple black garments and never put on trousers (Gunritno et al.). Although *Sikep* people try to catch up with modernity, they are still firm believers in their traditional values. It is at this point that the film shows their determination.

Such attitude happens because *Sikep* people admit what they do and do what they admit. On this, the ambience of their determination characterizes their efforts to aspire their wish. This, again, concerns having their faith stated officially or leaving it unstated (blank) in their identity cards, but not being manipulated into assuming other faiths. In addition to the testimonies and the illustrations of the *Sikep*'s struggle from village to district levels, there is a scene that further underpins their determination in the last

segment of the film. It shows an evening meeting of the *Sikeps* attended by the representatives of various *Sikeps* communities encountering the same problem. In the meeting, they discuss the situation and a possible solution to take. They have all agreed to keep on aspiring their wish even if they have to go to the central government in Jakarta to make their message heard (Gunritno et al.).

SYMBOLISM AND JAVANESENESS

From such symbolism above, the question now would be: what is the connection between the symbols and Javaneseeness? Although *jamu* and the *Sikeps* as cultural entities have already represented qualities related to Java and Javanese culture, from Ricoeurian hermeneutics, they have not sufficed yet. Their symbolism must philosophically communicate ‘profound’ values. What are they? In *Jamu*, the traditional medicine (*jamu*) in relation to the whole context of the film expresses value of sexuality that is ‘problematized’. What is it exactly? It relates to Javanese marriage value wherein a sense of distrust in it is echoed in the documentary. This is particularly shown by two contradictory scenes. They are the Javanese statuettes *Loro Blonyo* and the motel sex re-enactment.

The scene of *Loro Blonyo* illustrates the narrator introducing a pair of statuettes, a man and a woman, used to represent a union of man and woman in a marriage. The narrator clearly states the statuettes as “husband and wife in Javanese folk art” (Utami and Prasetya). This understanding is of Javanese conventional interpretation of the statuettes. *Loro Blonyo* recalls the Javanese that philosophically man and woman are different in many aspects, but once they have united in a marriage, they become one physically, emotionally and hopefully spiritually (Endraswara 72). *Loro Blonyo* is a manifestation of Javanese world view underpinning the notion that a matrimonial bond should be ideally established on the basis of love and respect. In Javanese worldview, the value of sex is philosophically sacred, and therefore deserves to be institutionalized in a marriage (Endraswara; Malhotra; Suseno). The sacredness of sex is culturally perceived from an echoing Javanese ancient myth of *Dewi Sri* and *Raden Sadana* (the divine lovers) wherein the teachings of couple’s unity, fidelity, fertility, sacrifice and familial protection are foregrounded (Endraswara; Subiyantoro). With the incorporation of *Loro Blonyo* here, it appears that the statuettes are used to recall and re-establish the significant aspect of love, loyalty, and unity in the documentary.

Yet, when it is observed closely in relation to the last scene, such signification, which ‘logically’ supports the adage of public morality, is challenged in *Jamu*. Why? This relates to the ‘trend’ of urban sexual practices (free sex) as re-enacted in the last scene wherein the narrator directly addresses the viewers.

This is the end of our city tour. I am now in a motel room. There are a lot of motels in Jakarta. Why? Because Jakarta is very crowded. Its population during the day is more than twelve million. Millions of people live in the satellite cities. They commute every day and it takes a long journey, and they might already get tired and exhausted when they get home. To maintain the intimacy between [a pause] husband and wife, some married couple make love here. After office hour or during lunch break, like me and my ‘husband’ [the narrator does say quote-unquote], Erik. Come honey... We welcome you to Jakarta. Good bye. (Utami and Prasetya)

This scene demonstrates the ‘intimacy’ between the filmmakers, Ayu and Erik. The ‘husband’ is not her husband in reality, and this is deliberately meant to satirize ‘love hotel’ trend involving pre-marital and extra-marital sexual relationships that have become a tendency of urban lifestyle in many Indonesian big cities in more-liberal relationships between man and women in the reform era (Francoeur and Noonan 538). This point is further indicated by the next shots illustrating Erik showing taking off his T-shirt and jeans to leave his underpants exposed with a reading “*Jangan lupa pakai kondom* [Don’t forget to wear condom]” on the back of the underpants (Utami and Prasetya). In this regard, I would like to reiterate that *jamu* as a Javanese cultural product can be hermeneutically interpreted as the symbol in the film. It is the symbol of ambivalence of the adage versus the reality which also expresses a distrust of the existing Javanese marriage values. These all are due to the incorporation of *jamu* as a Javanese cultural entity with which all disclosures are later on revealed and intertwined.

In *Kulo Ndiko Sami*, the symbol, as mentioned earlier, concerns the determination of *Sikep*’s group identity, i.e. admitting their traditional belief before the authorities. As the symbol, this cultural struggle philosophically reflects honesty and non-violence principles that have characterized *Sikep*’s way of life (see also Benda and Castles; King; Korver; Sulistiono). In their *Religion of Adam*, there is a teaching deeply ingrained in *Sikep* society, i.e. “*Wong Sikep weruh teke dhewe* [*Sikep* people only know what they possess and believe in]” (Ba’asyin and Ba’asyin 13). From this teaching, benevolence, patience, honesty, and non-violence principles are faithfully upheld and implemented in their two main orders: order of living (making family) and order of profession (being

farmers) (Ba'asyin and Ba'asyin; Shiraishi). *Sikep* society is never far away from these two orders and principles as can be indicated in the film. All social actors of the *Sikep* community and their environments **are of farming world** (Gunritno et al.).

One of the scenes mirroring these honesty and non-violence principles can be seen in Turlan's attitude for not choosing other religions instead of his *Religion of Adam* and for being 'submissive' to what was chosen for him. In this scene, Turlan, a *Sikep* of Galiran hamlet, at the sub-district of Sukolilo, Regency of Pati, is being interviewed in his own house about his experience to get his identity card from the sub-district office. He reveals that in order to install electricity in his house and to buy a motorcycle, he needs to obtain an identity card; therefore, he went to the sub-district office. In the subdistrict office, he told an officer processing his identity card that if his belief could not be stated in the card, then the officer would have just leave it blank. Yet, the officer refused it on the excuse that the provided data regarding the five official religions had already been set 'unchangeable' in the computer program. The identity card could not be further processed if there was a single item indefinite. Turlan did not argue and let the officer 'choose' a religion for him as he did not want to choose any as testified in his statement: "I let you do it, but I am not going to choose" (Gunritno et al.). When he received his identity card, the card stated that his religion was Buddhism.

JAVANESENESS IMAGINED

From the analysis of symbols aforementioned, the question now is what imagination of Javaneseeness do they demonstrate? Ricoeur, in his "Lectures on Ideology and Utopia", explains that imagination is both a process and a result from seeing, interpreting and/or thinking about things happening in the real world through various media.

Imagination is not something marginal to or occasional in thought but rather permeates all thought and conceptualization [...] imagination is not at all an alternative to perception but an ingredient of perception. It's encapsulated within the framework of perception [...] we can no longer oppose [...] imagining to seeing, if seeing is itself a way of imagining, interpreting, or thinking. (Taylor 94) According to Ricoeur, imagination always involves perception, concepts and ability to view things in different ways. **Ability to view things** here suggests that the phenomenon of the real world is contemplated in mind. So, there is a copy of reality constructed in our mind; this is called *reproductive imagination*. Meanwhile, 'in different ways' refers to our creative interpretation to contemplate

the copy of reality as something new to the mind. This is called *productive imagination* (Taylor 96).

Ricoeur further elaborates that there are four domains in *productive imagination*: social and cultural imagination, epistemological imagination, poetic imagination, and imagination of religious symbols. The socio-cultural is the kind of imagination based on what happens in the social reality, which is then interpreted to be something new, such as utopia, landscape paintings (impressionism), and performances with cathartic power (Greek tragedy). The epistemological is concerned with theoretical models in science providing new description of reality. The poetic is the kind of imagination that also unfolds new dimensions of reality, such as types of figurative language (metaphor, symbolism, simile, personification, alliteration, onomatopoeia, etc.) (Taylor 97). The imagination of religious symbols deals more with the kind of imagination that is established within the intertwining of religion and narrative (Brueggemann 95).

In relation to text, Ricoeur asserts that having understood the textual constraints (including symbols), imagination is directed towards establishing images free from the linguistic boundaries of the text, but still takes its point of departure from them. This is conducted by means of interpretation providing a renewed perspective and understanding of what the text figuratively offers, or is able to speak of (Friedman 167–68). In this article, the symbols in their contextualization with the films' discourses become the springboard for us to construct imagination of Javanese society in the documentaries. The discourse of *Jamu* is about sexuality while the discourse of *Kulo Ndiko Sami* is of identity. I perceive that the imagination resulted from such contextualization designates a sort of 'utopia' of Javanese society that the documentaries evoke. By 'utopia' in this article I mean bearing the quality of "imaginary project of another kind of society, of another reality, another world. Imagination here is constitutive in an inventive rather than an integrative manner" (Ricoeur, "Ideology and Utopia as Cultural Imagination" 24).

Why is it said that the documentaries may offer a sort of utopia? As I mentioned earlier, the association of *jamu* and *Sikep* with Java and Javanese culture in their materiality or tangibility illustrated in the films is obvious. This means that Java and Javanese culture are 'nowhere' but 'there' in the films and in the reality. No one will deny that neither the traditional medicine nor the *Sikep* people do not exist. The documentaries have provided hard evidence of the truth of their existence. However, at

the same time, what these objects signify once they were made into films with such representations and narrating makes an imaginary project of Javanese-ness invented in the cognitive level. Again, the objects, the symbols are ‘nowhere’ but ‘there’ in the filmic and the social realities. But having been watched and contextually interpreted they enable us to cognitively see an alternative image of Javanese-ness.

The concern now goes back to the question of what imagination of Javanese-ness *jamu* and *Sikep* demonstrate. The documentaries illustrate two representations of Javanese-ness. In *Jamu* with its sexuality discourse, the film provides us with a representation of the Javanese who are sex-driven and secretive. As to *Kulo Ndiko Sami* with its identity discourse, a representation of the Javanese who are ‘unrefined’, straightforward, self-determined but sociable appears. From such representations, I perceive that both films project an alternative image of Javanese society that is ordinary, more vulgar, provocative, and less profit-oriented. This is distinct from that of the New Order’s construct, the *priyayi* (aristocratic) model that is educated, refined in language and behavior, moralistic, and capitalistic (Foulcher; Jones; Pemberton). The cleavage between these imaginations of Javanese-ness in my perspective indicate two things. First, cultural representation cannot be easily separated from the socio-political contexts which either frame or trigger such representation to occur. Second, in the case of these two documentaries, I further discern their imagination of Javanese-ness appears to distance from the New Order’s Javanese aristocratic model for Indonesian society.

CONTESTED IMAGINATIONS

What do the two points above mean? In relation to the cultural representation, this article, as mentioned at the outset, takes its point of departure from Hall’s view positing that modes of representational system, including film, communicate culture. Culture, in this article, is understood at the intersection of both anthropological sense, the way of life of a people, community, nation or social group” and a constructionist sociological standpoint, i.e. a process of producing and sharing meaning (Hall 1–2). Sharing the working operation as language in terms of producing and exchanging meanings (communication), film becomes a medium whose ‘language’ is accessible for it offers recognizable signs and symbols through its visual and aural capacities. This enables the shared meanings and values to occur. As part of the representational system,

film signification can be explained from the effects and consequences of what is represented, in Hall's term 'politics of representation'.

In his constructionist angle, what comes up from this politics of representation needs to be framed within a historical specificity. In other words, it must be connected to a "regime of representation" of a particular time and place (Hall 6). It is at this point that this article is concerned with. Such imagination of Javanese-ness above – ordinary, more vulgar, provocative, and less profit-oriented – is situated within a particular regime of representation in Indonesia that was once highly Javanese that is the New Order's model of society. The short answer to why it needs to be framed within the New Order's model instead of the *Reform* era's 'Javanese-ness' is precisely because there is no such state's 'hegemonic imagination of Javanese-ness', i.e. being educated, refined in language and behavior, moralistic, and capitalistic, in the post-New Order era. Yet, before coming to such an inference, I need to clarify some points in my explanation.

First, from the imaginations above, we may ponder what can actually be contested between the two documentaries' Javanese-ness and the New Order's Javanese aristocratic model? I perceive there are two points of contestation here: legitimacy (representativeness) and alignment to power. As regards legitimacy, I perceive that both projected imaginations have an equal right to represent Javanese-ness although I believe that ethno-cultural qualities can never be fully represented. It is the degree of representativeness that matters then. What they have done in my view is incremental. In the New Order's Javanese aristocratic model, the imagination of society is represented by highly elevated values which the New Order believed and politically designed to enhance the Indonesian society towards progress or modernity. Therefore, values such as education, polite language, manner and behavior, morality, and economic logic are underscored. These became the New Order's regime of representation norms.

Meanwhile, the films' imagination such as values of ordinariness, vulgarity, provocation, and less-profit orientation are put forward. The imagination of Javanese-ness of this kind is more daily life and close to viewers. I do not apprehend such representation in the negative sense, but in the positive one with an understanding that the grassroots have the freedom to construct their own interpretations of Javanese-ness in the *Reform* era of Indonesia. Representing ordinary people and their daily life problems such as sex and identity card do not necessarily mean less educated (low-brow); more vulgar illustration of sexuality is not equivalent to pornographic minded; provocative depictions of night life and communal struggle are not the same as

being subversive; and the *Sikep*'s less materialistic orientation is not a reflection of their total denial to material things in their life. Therefore, the documentaries provide us with an incremental bottom-up imagination of Javanese society from social realities whereas the New Order's one is designed and engineered from selected abstract models, top to bottom.

Although it is obvious that the New Order's Javanese aristocratic imagination is projected by means of state's cultural policy and the other Javanese-ness by cinematic works, their alignment to power, i.e. the degree they are used or incorporated in the regime of representation, is different. The Javanese aristocratic model of the New Order was of the government's interpretation. This state's imagination of Javanese-ness was ironically meant for all societies of various ethnic groups in Indonesia to be their mental frame of reference to comply with when representing each of their own ethno-cultures. This was thus the New Order's cultural representation policy (Jones). Therefore, the degree of this imagination's alignment to power is highly dependable and absolute. Had not been planned to be incorporated in state policy, I suspect no Javanese aristocratic model would have been 'selected' to represent Javanese-ness as a whole and to greatly influence the model of Indonesian society. This incorporation slightly has the sense of Arnoldian view wherein culture is always classically understood as the best of what is thought of and produced in society (Arnold and Garnett). And the New Order regime thought that Javanese aristocratic model was the 'best' model to represent Javanese-ness and Indonesian-ness at the same time. On the contrary, the documentaries' imagination of Javanese-ness is not contaminated by power; it is more independent. Therefore, it explains why I previously mentioned this non-state interpretation of Javanese-ness opposes the New Order's construct. This imagination of Javanese-ness by ordinary citizens derives from the existing values in the society. The only power that this imagination has may reside in the rhetoric that films employ to illustrate their subject matters.

Second, **the more important thing to ask is why such imaginations of Javanese-ness are said to be contested?** To answer this, we need to frame the films within the *zeitgeist* of the early Indonesian *Reform* periods. At these particular moments, roughly within a decade after the collapse of the New Order, the spirit of the ruling administrations was to advocate distribution of power, from the New Order's centralized governance to the more decentralized one. This was carried out by amending the 1945 Constitution wherein divisions and authorities of the legislative, the judicative, and the executive

bodies were made more visible with the spirit of denying the old practices and beliefs in which the executive's authorities overwhelmed the others' (Büntje). In addition, regional autonomy was also applied enabling each province, region and district to almost fully manage and administer its own territories except on the six fields: national defense, security, foreign affairs, justice system, monetary and fiscal system, as well as policies on religion (DPR and Presiden).

This spirit of denying the New Order's practices and beliefs also spread across the socio-cultural dimensions of the society. Nearly anything considered 'legacies' or 'having to do with' the New Order regime was subject to condemnation and scrutiny. To put it bluntly, anything that represented and 'used' cultural mentality of the New Order regime, including Javanese-ness, was 'easily suspected'. On the contrary, anything that 'contradicted' or 'undermined' the old practices and beliefs was more welcomed. This also applied and was mirrored in the euphoric development of documentary film in Indonesia. Themes repressed during Suharto's administration such as inter-ethnic relations, inter-religious relations, regional-center relations, sexuality, and group identities were celebrated in the *Reform* era. *Jamu* and *Kulo Ndiko Sami* are the examples of this echoing celebrated discourse. Theme wise, these documentaries have already contradicted the New Order's desired belief and imagination of Javanese-ness, i.e. the aristocratic model mixed with the necessary *-isms* to maintain the status quo. Confronting the old stigmatizing terms: morally taboo in talking about sexuality and the inferior Javanese in representing *Samin* or *Sikep* communities, the two films appear to me to distance themselves from these stigmatizing terms of the New Order.

CONCLUSION

Given these all, there are some points need underlining here. First, the signification of cultural symbolism of the films under examination represented in *Jamu* and *Sikep* can be drawn into imagination of Javanese-ness. This is achieved by means of contextualizing the symbols with the socio-political contexts addressed. The old 'established' New Order's Javanese-ness represented by its alignment to Javanese aristocratic model has been rivalled by a more 'down-to-earth' imagination of Javanese-ness. Second, this is to say that Javanese-ness is not 'only' court-centric and not defined by and within power structure, the state in this case. In the context of the *Reform* era, public participation has taken role and shaped the interpretation. This suggests that

there has been a shift from state to public interpretation operating in the films studied. Any representation involving some elements of Javanese culture, however 'incomplete' and 'less' profound, to some degree can be still said to have incrementally illustrated Javanese-ness. Third, the imagination of Javanese-ness of the documentaries proves to be beyond what is shown on the surface. Not only does the 'down-to-earth' imagination of Javanese-ness here construct an alternative view of Javanese society, but it also expresses the idea that Javanese-ness cannot be confined within a single interpretation. It is fluid and therefore subject to multi-interpretations, and will possibly be contextually redefined and remodified throughout history.

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21 December 2019

Dear Dr. Gerardus Majella Adhyanggono

Please find below the comments on your essay “Contested Javaneseness”.

Sincerely yours,

Jocelyn Martin
Managing Editor
Kritika Kultura

Scholarship

Both Readers agree with the need for revisions on the theoretical level as well as on the discussion of the documentary genre. Both also recommend thorough stylistic revisions. Please see more detailed comments below:

SPECIFIC COMMENTS FROM READER 1	SPECIFIC COMMENTS FROM READER 2
The article is rife with insight on matters concerning Indonesian identity. It hones in on notions of ‘Javaneseness,’ a cultural ideologue that assumes the centrality of Java and Jakarta in the construction of an overarching national identity. The problem has been examined constantly since the 70s but the article adds to the existing literature by looking at documentaries specifically.	
On the Documentary	

<p>First, it is critical to establish the historic development of the documentary both as genre and a device for political propaganda. A number of the cinematic traditions examined in the article often allude to cinematic practices in general, even though a number of film scholars (ie. Garin Nugroho and Krishna Sen) keep dissociating the documentary from more popular forms. Are these representations of Javanese-ness, then, unique to the two documentaries cited? Or can they be seen as the logical evolution in a longer and maybe yet-to-be articulated tradition? Likewise, who are the directors, producers, writers and other creative staff, and what are their ideological leanings?</p>	<p>Perhaps a better way to look at the documentaries and their ‘imaginings of an alternative Javanese-ness’ is to first explicitly provide the cultural and social context from which these alternative imaginings occur. Look into Anderson, and then how the New Order created a unitary sense of Javanese-ness and Indonesian national identity, and how these reformasi films are able to challenge this. Again, I do not necessarily see what Ricoeur has to do with the author’s reading of the films.</p>
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On the theoretical framework

<p>Second, I want to challenge the author’s reliance on Western constructs of philosophical and anthropological frameworks to explain cultural specificity. While Ricoeur and Hall provide good foundations for understanding different socioeconomic and cultural positions in Indonesia, many more local scholars have articulated these concerns with much more authenticity and care for representing local identities (Ariel Heryanto has an interesting collection of articles on Indonesian popular culture which embraces the author’s theoretical concerns more smoothly). While I understand the need to hail Western knowledge, perhaps it would be better for the author to cite more contemporary and culturally sensitive incarnations of hermeneutics after Ricoeur (and even Gadamer). This way, the article will be more poised to consider the many layers of Islamic experience which have relegated other formations of the religion in the margins of modern Muslim/Indonesian/Javanese experience.</p>	<p>There seems to be very little critical engagement with the theories used. The author simply lifts Ricoeur and Hall and applies their tenets to the films without engaging with the cultural specificities explicit in the films.</p> <p>The use of Ricoeur has to be justified. I don’t necessarily see how this theorization of the symbolic adds to the argument of the article. Is Hall not enough? Barthes? I find Ricoeur unnecessarily complicates this realm of the symbolic by tangling it with the phenomenological – which the articles does not engage with. My suggestion is to drop Ricoeur altogether.</p> <p>The discussion on Hall is much better, and lays the foundations for the author’s primary argument. Perhaps this section should be expanded further.</p>
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Third, and connected to the limitations of the previous point, **the experience of modern nation building**—both physical and ideological—is an absent concept from the interrogation of Javanese-ness in the article. For example, the *Sikep* conditions enumerated in the article leans entirely towards the aggrandization of provincial and, possibly, colonial—even nativist—life:

Representing ordinary people and their daily life problems such as sex and identity card do not necessarily mean less educated (low-brow); more vulgar illustration of sexuality is not equivalent to pornographic minded; provocative depictions of night life and communal struggle are not the same as being subversive; and the *Sikep*'s less materialistic orientation is not a reflection of their total denial to material things in their life. Therefore, the documentaries provide us with an incremental bottom-up imagination of Javanese society from social realities whereas the New Order's one is designed and engineered from selected abstract models, top to bottom (15).

But the Reformasi was neither one-sided nor binary. It was replete with tensions that were pulling different identities into different directions. The documentaries are not only witness to an 'incremental bottom-up imagination of Javanese society,' they are also testaments to a much more complex border-crossing between domestic and public lives, cultural taboos and social upheavals, as well as the shifting meanings of infrastructure and public works. The discussion of how the urban hotel challenged marital security in the 'countryside' (including people situated in the city who retain provincial views) was a good start. I just wish that the author could have pushed the conversation further so as to give more textured and nuanced reading of the documentaries and the context/s from which they emanate.

Use of language

SPECIFIC COMMENTS FROM READER 1	SPECIFIC COMMENTS FROM READER 2
The article will benefit from a little bit more proofreading and copyediting.	<p>The article requires much editing in terms of style and grammar (ie. clipped sentences, choppy paragraphs, repetitiveness, awkward transitions, etc). See highlights in red in attached document.</p> <p>The article makes the assumption that its potential readers are familiar with the concepts and practices it discusses. The author/s should ensure that these are explained further in the article.</p>

Decision

After considering the evaluation of the readers, *Kritika Kultura* recommends that the essay be revised and be resubmitted on 31 January 2020 for further evaluation. A request for an extension is possible.

To facilitate a speedy review, it is recommended that the authors also list down, on two separate sheets, one for each Reader, how they addressed each of their main comments, as shown below, for example:

List of Revisions

Following the recommendations of Reader 1:

Reader 1 Comments	Revisions made by Author (with page numbers in the revised version...)
Addressing the documentary genre....	Addressing the documentary genre....
Addressing the theoretical framework....	Addressing the theoretical framework....