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Javanese Cultural Inculturation in The Depiction of Mother Mary's Statues: a Semiotic Analysis and Theological Reflection

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Abstract

Inculturation is one of the crucial aspects in the living out of the Christian faith. Without inculturation, the Christian faith would become alienated from the context of believers' lives. Conversely, with inculturation, faith becomes more vibrant as it is not only expressed in accordance with the local context, but also touches the concrete lives of the people. This research concentrates in exploring the uniqueness and distinctiveness of the inculturation of four statues of Mother Mary within Javanese culture in several pilgrimage sites and churches. The four statues of Mother Mary are Dyah Marijah Iboe Ganjoeran, Maria Ratuning Katentreman lan Karaharjan in Gantang, Bunda Maria Stella Maris in Pacitan, and Maria Bunda Segala Suku in Jakarta. By using this qualitative method, the research employs literature review, interviews, and field observations. The aim of this research is to analyze the forms of Javanese-styled Mother Mary statues and reflect on them within the framework of theological inculturation. The analysis is based on Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic theory, which includes the nature of linguistic signs to distinguish between the signifier and the signified, the concepts of langue and parole, and the syntagmatic-paradigmatic relationship. Based on this theory, it is concluded that the Mother Mary statues are signs that representing her personality. As sign, each statue has symbolic meanings derived from its name/title, accessories, clothing, and body position. The theological reflection also indicates that each statue possesses dimensions of inculturation that align with the local (Javanese) cultural taste. Therefore, the acculturative effort towards these Mother Mary statues further supports the devotion of the faithful to the figure of Mother Mary, as one of the expressions of their faith.

Keywords

Inculturation, Sculpture art, Mother Mary, Javanese culture, Ferdinand de Saussure.

INTRODUCTION

Strong devotion to the Mother Mary is a familiar phenomenon for Catholics in Indonesia, not least in Java. This can be seen in the custom of pilgrimages to Marian grotto, processions of Marian statues, neighborhood rosary activities, other devotions

to Mary, Marian communities, and so on. These are all parts of the Catholic Church's desire of honoring Mary and asking her help to intercede for our prayers to Jesus Christ. Along with that, today there are more and more Marian pilgrimage sites in various places that are visited by many people. In *penakatolik.com*, it is revealed that in Java there are more than 50 popular pilgrimage sites that are visited by pilgrims, whether in the form of grotto or Marian prayer garden. Based on the data, there are at least 4 pilgrimage sites in the Diocese of Bogor, 3 in the Diocese of Bandung, 9 in the Archdiocese of Jakarta, 5 in the Diocese of Purwokerto, 30 in the Archdiocese of Semarang, 4 in the Diocese of Malang, and 4 in the Diocese of Surabaya.[1] This shows that the practice of Marian pilgrimage and devotion is highly developed and loved by most Catholics in Indonesia, especially in Java.

There is something interesting in the pilgrimage sites of Gua Maria Gantang, Ganjuran Church and St. Francis Xaverius Church, Pacitan. The faithful people may have noticed that each place has its own unique statue of the Virgin Mary. For example, in Gantang, people will be presented a 10m high statue of Maria Ratuning Katentreman lan Karaharjan. In that place, Mother Mary is shown as a simple and nurturing Javanese woman, dressed in kebaya, and stepping on a dragon. The second example, inside the Chapel of St. Francis Xaverius Church, Pacitan, is a statue of Mother Mary presented in the style of Nyai Roro Kidul, dressed in a green kebaya, with a beautiful and authoritative face, and adorned with a beautiful crown on her head. These are just two examples, of course there are many others, such as *Bunda Pemersatu in Gedono, Bunda Segala Suku in Jakarta, Dyah Marijah Iboe Ganjoeran,* and so on. The point is, some places –be it pilgrimage sites or churches/chapels– have statues of Mother Mary with a distinctive, unique, and interesting style or model. This uniqueness is what the writers will discuss in this paper.

It can be said that in every church, chapel, monastery, and prayer garden there is generally always a statue of the Virgin Mary, in addition to a cross or a statue of Jesus. Most of the statues of Mary in these places depict the figure of Mother Mary that we already know with all its characteristics and peculiarities. For example, *Maria Fatima* is depicted with a statue of a female figure dressed in white/beige wearing a beautiful crown on her head or *Maria Assumpta* who is depicted with a statue of a female figure in a white robe, covered in a blue cloth/veil, carrying a rosary in her

[1] Pena Katolik, "Daftar Gua Maria di Indonesia," *Penakatolik.com,* accessed on December 1st 2023, https://penakatolik.com/2023/04/21/daftar-gua-maria-di-indonesia/

hand, and there is a halo of stars above her head. The various models of Mary statues that is familiar to the faithful presumably want to represent one and the same personal figure, namely Mother Mary, the mother of our Lord Jesus Christ. The expectation is that the statue of Mary –with all kinds of peculiarities– becomes a sign, symbol, or visible symbol that can help the devotion and respect of the people to the figure of Mother Mary.

Sculpture means an imitation of the shape of people, animals and so on made of stone, wood or other materials (cf. KBBI online). In the context of tradition, sculpture is often associated with *statuary*, which is a three-dimensional work depicting human or divine figures using various media. This definition refers to a variety of classical artifacts as a result of culture with varied functions in its existence. In modern terms, *sculpture* is a three-dimensional form of fine art media. The main focus of modern sculpture is the dimension of expression that emphasizes artistic practice and creativity, having a broader meaning than sculpture. The birth of sculpture in Indonesia has a long history, starting from the early independence era, the establishment of art academies, to the development of contemporary art today. The history of modern Indonesian sculpture is not only a chronology of time and practice, but also involves the dynamics of aesthetic thought. In the context of fine art, sculpture studies often focus on issues of practical techniques. Unfortunately, the historical aspects, concepts, theories, and strategies of work creation are often considered less important in the creative process.[2]

In relation to the context of the Marian statue as a three-dimensional work of art, there is an interesting phenomenon that in some pilgrimage sites or churches/chapels, Marian statues are made in the style or model of local cultural inculturation, from the name and title of Mary to her physical appearance. For example, in Java, there is a statue of Mary with the name *Ratuning Katentreman lan Karaharjan* or *Dyah Marijah Iboe Ganjoeran*. Then, there are statues that are displayed in traditional clothes, Javanese kebaya, wearing Javanese batik with *jarik* motif, and wearing a hair bun, but there are also statues that are displayed in the clothes of palace nobles and wearing royal crowns. All of those statues are forms of cultural inculturation that wants to offer the role and distinctiveness of Mary that reaches a certain context of place and time that is expected to suit the taste of the local people.

[2] M. Hendra Himawan, "Sejarah Perkembangan Seni Patung Modern Indonesia" (Skripsi S1, Institut Seni Indonesia Surakarta, 2016), 16-17.

Therefore, the initiative to study and analyze the forms of Mary statues in the style of local culture (in this case Javanese culture) and reflect on them within the framework of inculturation theology reflection is an interesting thing that should be made. It is hoped that this paper can further foster people's recognition and respect for the figure of Mary and develop the faith of the faithful according to local cultural flavors.

THE DEPICTION OF MOTHER MARY STATUE IN JAVANESE STYLE

As explained earlier, there are several forms of the Virgin Mary's statues which are based on the concept of Javanese cultural inculturation. This is captured at least through Mary's distinctive name and title as well as her physical appearance in the form of clothing, ornaments/accessories, body position, facial depictions, colors, and so on. Although some of these Marian statues are made with unique characteristics (*anti-mainstream*), we can usually immediately catch that the statue wants to depict the figure of the Virgin Mary. The reason for this is either because of the placement of the statue (generally the statue of Mary is placed in a church/chapel) or because there are basic characteristics that are not lost (for example: a female figure, dressed elegantly, sometimes carrying a child, and so on). The following part will show and discuss four examples of statues of the Virgin Mary in the style of Javanese cultural incuturation.



Dyah Marijah Iboe Ganjoeran



Maria Ratuning Katentreman lan Karaharjan, Gantang



Bunda Maria Stella Maris, Pacitan



Maria Bunda Segala Suku, Jakarta

RESEARCH METHODS

The research on the object of the Javanese-style Mother Mary statues was conducted by using three methods, namely library research, interviews, and field observation (object). Firstly, library research, which is a method of collecting data by searching and studying various literatures related to the object of research. In addition, the writer also searches for data through several sites on the internet and YouTube social media to explore some of the information needed. Secondly, qualitative methods by means of interviews. Regarding this second method, the writer conducted interviews with several informants, including the initiator of the concept of the Javanese-style Marian statue as well as the parish priest and the station's regional chairperson (*ketua wilayah*) where the Javanese-style Marian statue is placed. Thirdly, environmental observation, which is a method of searching for data by visiting and directly observing the object of the statue of Mother Mary in Gantang and Ganjuran.

FERDINAND DE SUSSURE'S SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS OF THE DEPICTION OF THE MOTHER MARY STATUE IN THE STYLE OF JAVANESE CULTURAL INCULTURATION

Humans are creatures that always communicate themselves. One way of communication that is quite commonly used is through symbols. In simple terms, a symbol can be defined as a sign, symbol, or word that shows, symbolizes, or is understood to represent an idea, object, or relationship. Symbols can be objects, characters, colors, or shapes that represent certain concepts.[3] One form of symbol used by humans is sculpture. As a symbol, sculpture is used to depict figures, feelings, values, characters, or concepts that are not directly expressed.[4] This shows that humans have signs that transcend themselves in terms of time, place, and themselves.

The use of statues in everyday life is not taboo. There are many statues of heroes in public places, such as on highways, in universities, and even in cemeteries. Of course, it is a form of respect for the services of national heroes. The same thing can also be found in the Catholic Church. Catholics also use statues as an aesthetic expression and also a form of respect for central figures in the Church, such as the Lord Jesus, Mother Mary, saints, and so on. In order to seek a Catholic faith that speaks

[3] Daniel Chandler, *Semiotics The Basics* (New York: Toutledge, 2007), 7.

[4] Teguh Purwantari, *Seri Bangunan Bersejarah: Patung* (Jakarta: Kanak, 2023), 2.

more in the context of the local Church, there is a process of inculturation that makes the Catholic faith "spoken" in the "local language."[5]

Before going into the theological reflection in the next section, this section will present a philosophical study related to Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic theoretical framework. He is a Swiss scholar, a founding father of structuralism and modern linguistics who is best known for his Cours de Linguistique Generale. He was born in Geneva on November 26, 1857 and at the age of 21 obtained his doctorate. Saussure was able to prove himself as a very brilliant historical linguist. He died in Switzerland on February 22, 1913. He also left behind ideas about the nature of language signs; the difference between *langue* and *parole*, and the syntagmatic-paradigmatic relationship.[6] It is exactly that by using these ideas, the writer intends to use as an analytical knife to analyze the forms of the statue of the Virgin Mary in Javanese style.

The Nature of Language Sign

Ferdinand de Saussure first laid down clear boundaries to distinguish the sign (*signifier*) from what is signified. A sign is something that shows what is signified (a name for a thing/concept), while the signified refers to the thing signified or meant by the sign.[7] In this context, the statue of Mary –with all its various models– is the *signifier* that points to the person of Mary as the *signified.*

SIGN	
Signifier	*Signified*
Statue of Mary	The Person of Mary, Mother of Jesus Christ

Langue dan Parole[8]

According to Ferdinand de Saussure, *langue* is a system or abstract code, common rules, and a shared conscious structure. In the context of the Virgin Mary statue, *langue* includes the rules, norms and artistic structures found in the representation (art style and design) of the Javanese-style Virgin Mary statue. *Langue*

[5] Emanuel Martasudjita, Teologi Inkulturasi: Perayaan Injil Yesus Kristus di Bumi Indonesia (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2021), 12.

[6] Harimurti Kridalaksana, *Ferdinand de Saussure: Peletak Dasar Strukturalisme dan Linguistik Modern* (Jakarta: Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia, 2005), 6-13.

[7] Alexandros Ph. Lagopoulos dan Karin Boklund-Lagopoulou, *Theory and Methodology of Semiotics: The Tradition of Ferdinand de Saussure* (Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2021), 31.

[8] Ph, Lagopoulos dan Lagopoulou, *Theory and Methodology*, 28-30.

relates to artistic choices, distinctive religious symbols, and other elements that make up the artistic system of the statue. Meanwhile, *parole* is a social phenomenon or practice that refers to the concrete use of language by individuals, i.e. the act of speaking or writing in certain situations. In this context, *parole* includes the concrete expression of the artistic system embodied in one specific sculpture of the Virgin Mary. *Parole* relates to the artistic choices made by the artist in creating the statue.

Although they are different, *langue* and *parole* are related, because *langue* provides a systematic basis for *parole*, while *parole* derives meaning from the structures and norms that exist in *langue*. In this context, *langue* provides the aesthetic basis and artistic values inherent in the Javanese-style Virgin Mary statue, including the rules and norms recognized in the sculpture. Meanwhile, *parole* is the concrete result of the application of the Javanese art language system in a particular sculpture work that reflects the interpretation and creativity of the artist who made it. Here is the description:

LANGUE	
Statue of the Virgin Mary	The name/title of Mother Mary in the Tradition of the Catholic Church. Role/work of Mother Mary in the Catholic Church Tradition. Choice of artistic elements of the statue: base material, color, carving/printing, facial appearance, type of activity, accessories, clothing, etc.
PAROLE[9]	
Dyah Marijah Iboe Ganjoeran	Name/title : Dyah Marijah Iboe Ganjoeran Role/work : Mary, Mother of Jesus Christ Artistic : The statue is made of white stone, white/beige in color, with an image of an authoritative queen's face, sitting on the lap of little Jesus, dressed in Javanese royal kebaya and crowned.
Maria Ratuning Katentreman lan Karaharjan, Gantang	Name/title : Maria Ratuning Katentreman lan Karaharjan Role/work : Maria, the Queen who nurtures and welfare Artistic : Solid stone-based statue, sculpture, large in size, silver/black in color, with an image of the queen's authoritative yet nurturing face, standing with open hands,

[9] Penjelasan artistik terkait masing-masing patung akan diperjelas dan dirinci di pembahasan bagian berikutnya.

	stepping on a dragon, dressed in Javanese kebaya, with a head covering cloth.
Bunda Maria Stella Maris, Pacitan	Name/title : Mother Mary Stella Maris Role/work : Mary star of the sea, patroness of the coast Artistic : Fiberglass-based statue, green in color, shady nurturing face, standing with open hands, dressed in Javanese kebaya and green shawl with brown batik jarik, green crown in Javanese Balinese style.
Maria Bunda Segala Suku, Jakarta	Name/title : Mary Mother of All Tribes. Role/work : Mary, Mother of all tribes in Indonesia. Artistic : Fiberglass-based statue, a combination of colors (white, blue, red), a shady face of a protector and protector, standing with open arms, there is a Garuda bird symbol on the chest, dressed in a white Javanese kebaya with a reddish-brown batik jarik, with a gold crown and halo.

Syntagmatic-Paradigmatic Relationship

In Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic theory, syntagmatic relationships are sequential (parallel) relationships and operate together to create a meaning. This relationship is directed by strict rules (grammar, speech). Meanwhile, a paradigmatic relationship is one in which one sign may be replaced by another (associative).[10] In the case of the Javanese-style Mother Mary statues, this syntagmatic-paradigmatic relationship is also used to display the characteristics and peculiarities of each statue of the Virgin Mary which are divided into four main topics, namely the title/origin, accessories, clothing, and body position of the Virgin Mary. The following is the description:

[10] Ph, Lagopoulos dan Lagopoulou, *Theory and Methodology*, 42.

R	SYNTAGMATIC			
PARADIGMATIC	Title & Origin	Accessories	Clothing	Body Position
	Dyah Marijah Iboe Ganjoeran	Background: palace hallway, crowned, necklaced, foundation: lotus petal decoration, Javanese title of nobility	Kemben, typical for Javanese nobility, a mother's dress with batik motifs of *broken parang* and *complete kawung* with foot ornaments	Upright face, half-closed eyelids, calm facial expression, seated on a small child's lap, right hand on chest
	Maria Ratuning Katentremman lan Karaharjan, Gantang	Background: Mount Merapi and Merbabu, hooded with cloth, necklaced with three jewels	Javanese kebaya-jarik (*batik*), long robe (a kind of plaid batik motif)	Standing upright, face calm and slightly downcast, both hands open, stepping on the dragon
	Bunda Maria Stella Maris, Pacitan	Javanese-Balinese style crown (with flowers), sacred heart (fire), bracelet, green shawl	Nyai Roro Kidul style: *kemben* and green shawl, dark brown *jarik* with soka motif, belt/stagen	Standing upright, right foot slightly forward, facing forward, hands open, resting on the circle of the earth, stepping on the snake
	Maria Bunda Segala Suku, Jakarta	Gold crown (with a relief map of Indonesia), gold halo, Garuda emblem on the chest	Colorful kebaya (red, white, blue), *batik jarik* (various motifs), red and white headscarf, blue shawl	Standing upright, face shaded, head moderately bowed, hand position open

The data on the characteristics and peculiarities of the four statues of the Virgin Mary captured by the writer [11] along with the philosophical study within the framework of Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic thinking above will then be used to continue theological reflections related to the forms of inculturation of the forms of statues of the Virgin Mary in the Javanese cultural style in the next section.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

The Statue of Mary as a Personal Representation of Mother Mary

Praying before a statue of Mary certainly does not mean worshiping a statue or idol. Besides, devotion to Mary is also not the same as worshipping Mary.[12] Sculpture is an expression of the human soul that has an element of beauty (aesthetics).[13] Thus, it is possible to incorporate local culture into the Marian statue so that Mary's presence can be more closely felt. Therefore, the statue of Mary is a form of respect and love of the faithful for Mary's role in salvation history. The Second Vatican Council directly mentions the use of statues in the Church:

> "The practice of placing sacred images in churches so that they may be venerated by the faithful is to be maintained. Nevertheless, their number should be moderate and their relative positions should reflect right order. For otherwise they may create confusion among the Christian people and foster devotion of doubtful orthodoxy." (SC, 125)

The Marian statue functions as a representation of the figure/role of Mary, regardless of the form of the statue. In other words, the existence of the statue evokes informative imagination and leads to an understanding of the event of faith. Brenk reveals that there were three functions of art (pictures and sculptures) in the Church in the XII century: didactic (education), affective (feelings), and anagogic (symbolic interpretation).[14] In addition, a correct understanding of the function of statues and iconography in the Church strengthens faith and prevents misunderstandings. This

[11] This data was obtained by direct observation to the field (place) and interviews with several figures who initiated the Marian statue/parish priest/station chief on October 31, 2023, November 26, 2023, and December 16, 2023.

[12] Agus Widodo, "Maria dalam Misteri Kristus dan Hidup Gereja," *Jurnal Teologi* 10.02 (2021): 195-214.

[13] Timbangunusa Tumimbang, "Karya Seni Patung Simbolik dalam Ungkapan Perdamaian," *Jurnal Dimensi* Vol. 12, No. 1, Februari (2015): 39-52.

[14] Beat Brenk, *Art & Propaganda Fide: Christian Art & Architecture* (Cambridge: University Press, 2008), 98.

kind of understanding opens the minds of believers to understand the mystery of God's will.[15]

Mary's nobility is not determined by the quality of her representation, in this case, sculpture. Statues can be vandalized, destroyed, and replaced. However, none of this diminishes the nobility of Mary. Therefore, statues are used to show respect to the Blessed Mother for her great role in salvation history. In this regard, we can look at what the Catechism of the Catholic Church says about Mary's role below:

> "Her role in relation to the Church and to all humanity goes still further. "In a wholly singular way she cooperated by her obedience, faith, hope, and burning charity in the Savior's work of restoring supernatural life to souls. For this reason, she is a mother to us in the order of grace"." (CCC, par. 968)

> "The Church rightly honors "the Blessed Virgin" with special devotion (...) to whose protection the faithful fly in all their dangers and needs (...)The liturgical feasts dedicated to the mother of God and Marian prayer, such as the rosary, an "epitome of the whole Gospel," express this devotion to the Virgin Mary." (CCC. par. 971)

Another thing that needs to be developed regarding the statue of Mary and devotion to Mary is the need for more thorough catechesis for a full understanding of the faith. Mary's presence must not be separated from the role of Christ. There should not be a process of "deification" of Mary. Catholics honor Mary, not worship her. Therefore, it is necessary to emphasize the importance of reasonable forms of respect so that faith can be positioned appropriately.

Moreover, Pope Francis emphasized that in countries where Christianity is minority, the Particular Church needs to actively promote at least the initial forms of inculturation to convey the Gospel with courage and creativity (cf. EG 129).[16] The piety that comes from society is reflected through symbols, not just words. This encourages the People of God to go beyond themselves and embark on a spiritual journey. By going beyond themselves, they show appreciation for life, such as a mother caring for a sick child while holding tightly to her rosary and lighting candles in front of a statue

[15] Andreas Mariano dan Yohanes Alfrid Aliano, "Tradisi Penghormatan Patung dan Ikonografi para Kudus sebagai Sarana Beriman Umat Katolik di Indonesia," *Aggiornamento: Jurnal Filsafat Teologi Kontekstual* Vol 3, No 1 (Juni 2022): 119-132.

[16] Paus Fransiskus, *Seruan Apostolik Evangelii Gaudium* (Jakarta, DepDokPen KWI, 2014).

of the Virgin Mary facing a statue of Christ crucified (cf. EG 125). Thus, the piety manifested through the inculturation of the Gospel is recognized as a force that enriches active and creative evangelization.[17]

Javanese Cultural Inculturation in the Forms of Mother Mary Statues

One of the liturgical riches of the Catholic Church involves all five senses, including through sculpture. On the other hand, the Church also respects local culture with all its characteristics, peculiarities, and local wisdom. [18] Therefore, the representation of Mary in sculpture is also possible to include local cultural values through visible ornaments, whether the style of clothing, accessories, facial appearance, and so on. In the context of Javanese culture, the statue of Mary can be created using *kebaya*, *jarik*, shawl, hair ornaments in a bun, Javanese crown, and so on.

This idea of inculturation can be found in Gaudium et Spes which gives place to people, faith and culture:

> "Man comes to a true and full humanity only through culture, that is through the cultivation of the goods and values of nature.
>
> .....
>
> Throughout the course of time he expresses, communicates and conserves in his works, great spiritual experiences and desires, that they might be of advantage to the progress of many, even of the whole human family." (GS, 53)

Therefore, Marian statues that are made with local cultural characteristics - as long as they are still within a reasonable level - can be accepted as a form of cultural inculturation in terms of sculpture. In other words, the difference between one Marian statue and another does not necessarily indicate that there are many persons of Mary or that the Catholic faith is wrong/inconsistent in depicting the figure of Mary, but rather because the diversity of Marian statues is a way of "speaking the faith" according to the "local language" so as to create a deeper and closer sense of the figure

[17] Marihot Simanjuntak, "Graha Maria Velangkanni sebagai Bentuk Pewartaan Injil secara Inkulturatif di Medan," *Jurnal Teologi* 08.01 (2019): 31-46.

[18] Edmund Kee-Fook Chia, *"Asian Theology of Inculturation," Asian Christianity and Theology: Inculturation, Interreligious Dialogue, Integral Liberation* (UK: Routledge, 2022), p. 64-83.

of Mary.[19] In this section, the theological reflection or acculturative meaning of the four forms of Marian statues raised by the author will be presented:

Dyah Marijah Iboe Ganjoeran[20]

Inside the Ganjuran Church, which is built in the typical Javanese *Joglo* style, there are several statues, one of which is a statue of the Virgin Mary called Dyah Marijah Iboe Ganjoeran. The statue of Mother Mary is modeled after the Prajnaparamitha statue, a statue found in the National Museum in Jakarta. Prajnaparamitha itself is a title given to a Buddhist woman who symbolizes a perfect transcendental wisdom in the Mahayana school of Buddhism. The visual depiction of the Dyah Marijah Iboe Ganjoeran statue seems to be more directed towards the Hindu-Javanese aesthetic model, with elements of Western aesthetics and modernization seen in the model and ornamental details on her clothes that are fully covered at the chest and the characteristics of her face. The understanding of the interpretation of the statue as a characteristic figure of the Catholic Virgin Mary and not in a Buddhist's sense is seen in the presence of a small child in the lap and the title under the statue. [21]

The statue of Dyah Marijah Iboe Ganjoeran is depicted sitting on a throne. The background of the statue resembles a palace hallway with columns and passageways. In Hindu-Buddhist understanding, this symbolizes the figure of the queen who has power in the palace, while in Catholicism, this statue wants to express the understanding of a woman who has great power. This seated position is one of the positions on Buddhist statues that would indicate high degree and power/respect.[22] Dyah Marijah Iboe Ganjoeran's upright face with half-closed eyelids and calm expression depicts a meditative and tranquil atmosphere. The crown symbolizes her power. This seems to create an interpretation of the figure of Mother Mary that is

[19] Laurenti Magesa, "Theology of Inculturation: History, Meaning, and Implication," *The Routledge Handbook of African Theology* (UK: Routledge, 2023), 44-56.

[20] The explanations in this section were obtained using the methods of literature study and field observation (visiting Ganjuran Church) and interviews with several local leaders on November 26th 2023.

[21] Ira Audia, et al. "Analisa Sinkretisme Agama dan Budaya melalui Transformasi Elemen Visual Bernilai Sakral pada Gereja Katolik Ganjuran." *Jurnal Desain Interior,* Vol. 2, No. 2, Desember 2017: 73-86.

[22] Rini Pinasthika, "Tinjauan Inkulturasi Budaya Jawa pada Ornamen Hias dalam Interior Gereja Katolik Ganjuran," *Jurnal Tingkat Sarjana bidang Senirupa dan Desain* No 1 (2020): 1-6.

similar to the Boddhisatva Prajnaparamitha. In addition, Dyah Marijah Iboe Ganjoeran is also seen holding a small child with a crown on her head. The child is also meant to be a powerful king or prince. In Catholic reflection, the child is Jesus Christ who is the King of kings.

The clothes worn by Dyah Marijah Iboe Ganjoeran are batik motifs of *parang rusak* and complete *kawung* with foot ornaments. *Parang rusak* was created by Panembahan Senopati which symbolizes the human spirit that wins against evil by controlling desires with wisdom and nobility of character, while *kawung* can be interpreted so that humans can be useful to anyone and never forget their origins. Dyah Marijah Iboe Ganjoeran's anvil is cylindrical with *padmasana* flower petals. *Padmasana* itself means a lotus flower seat that symbolizes inner and outer purity. Possibly, this *padmasana* flower is used as a substitute for the halo or circle of sanctity generally worn by saints in the Church.

Through the depiction of Dyah Marijah Iboe Ganjoeran using the Buddhist Prajnaparamita model, it provides an interpretation of the figure and characteristics of Mother Mary who has reached perfection in transcendental wisdom. As someone who has reached the stage of perfect transcendental wisdom, her face radiates serenity, peace and tranquility. The *padmasana* foundation beneath her feet shows her holiness. The title emphasizes the figure of the statue as the mother of a prince/king-to-be.[23]

Bunda Maria Ratuning Katentreman lan Karaharjan[24]

The statue of Mother Mary *"Ratuning Katentreman lan Karaharjan"* (*Mbok Tentrem*) is located in the area of St. Kristoforus Banyutemumpang Parish. This prayer garden was blessed on October 30, 2017 by Mgr. Robertus Rubiyatmoko. The statue of Mother Mary is the work of Merapi artist, Mr. Leonardus Ismanto. The artist prefers to call Mother Mary, who is embodied in this beautiful work of art as *"Mbok Tentrem"* (mother of peace). This is because the aura emanating from the statue of the Virgin Mary is peaceful and nurturing. The historical background shows that this prayer garden was the dream of the late Mgr. Johannes Pujasumarta and the local people. The context of the people is the community in a hamlet atmosphere that is still not

[23] Audia, et al. "Analisa Sinkretisme Agama", 82-83.

[24] The explanations in this section were obtained through desk research, field observation (visiting Gantang), and interviews with local community leaders on October 31st, 2023.

much touched by modernization culture, but also not very traditional. The pattern of kinship and brotherhood between residents is still strong. Most of the residents earn a living as farmers working on moorland. Their part-time livelihoods are generally as cattle breeders. In addition, the spiritual life of the people is not in doubt. The rosary prayer in May and October is attended by many residents. The Saturday evening mass starting at 18.00 is always full of people. The spirit to make the mass livelier is always endeavored. There are choir groups with accompaniment of *selawatan* (songs of praise), gamelan, etc. Celebrating religious holidays is also always enlivened with traditional art performances from local residents, whether *jathilan, soreng, kuda lumping, wayang kulit*, or other traditional arts.[25]

The philosophy and theological meaning of the statue of Mother Mary Ratuning *Katentreman lan Karaharjan* is as follows:

The statue of Mother Mary is 10 meters high and is divided into three meaning parts. First, the 3 meters base of the statue is dedicated to the Holy Trinity; God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Christians have a strong faith in the Holy Trinity, which has existed and will always exist throughout the ages. Catholics always base their faith on the role of the Trinity. For example, making the sign of the cross to begin everything: "In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." (cf. Mt 28:19). Secondly, the body of the 7 meters high statue of Mother Mary symbolizes the seven sacraments of the Catholic Church: Baptism, Eucharist, Confirmation, Confession (Penance), Marriage, Holy Oil, and Priesthood. The Lord Jesus through His Church provides humanity with sanctifying grace through the sacraments of the Church as a gift from God (cf. CCC 1213, 1322, 1285, 1422, 1601, 1499, 1536). Thirdly, the overall height of the statue of Mother Mary *Ratuning Katentreman lan Karaharjan* is 10 meters, meaning the ten commandments of God (cf. Exod 20:2-17).

Then, Mother Mary *Ratuning Katentreman lan Karaharjan* steps on the dragon's head. It means that today the wickedness of man is no longer as big as the snake that tempted the first man who fell into sin, but the snake has now become a big, evil dragon. However, together with Mother Mary *Ratuning Katentreman lan Karaharjan* the people are able to defeat the evil dragon in life. By practicing good virtue and love, the people are able to overcome greed and worldly possession (cf. Rev 12:1-9).

[25] "Lebih Dekat bersama Taman Doa Maria Gantang," accessed on November 1st 2023 from https://tamandoagantangtdg.wordpress.com/

The pastoral message written by Fr. Vincentius Suparman at the Prayer Garden of Mother Mary *Ratuning Katentreman lan Karaharjan* was: "If we want to experience an atmosphere of peace and prosperity, then we ask God based on faith in the Holy Trinity, together with Mother Mary our prayers reach Jesus her Son. Always adhere to the ten commandments with the foundation of love so that the joy and peace of God will be bestowed upon us."

Bunda Maria Stella Maris[26]

The statue of Mother Mary "Stella Maris" is located inside St. Francis Xaverius Catholic Church, Pacitan which is located at Piere Tendean Street, No.9, Palihan, Pucangsewu, Kec. Pacitan, Pacitan Regency, East Java. Geographically, the church, which was founded in 2020, is located on the South Coast because the distance is approximately only 4 km from the shoreline. The name of the statue of Mother Mary in this Church is *Stella Maris* which means "Star of the Sea." This title is actually an ancient title for Mother Mary. This title is actually an ancient title for Mother Mary. This name or title is considered allegorical of Mary's role as "a guiding star" on the journey to Christ. With this name, Mother Mary is believed to specifically intercede as the guide and protector of sailors. Related to this, there are quite a number of coastal Churches that are named *Stella Maris* or Star of the Sea.

The statue of Mother Mary Stella Maris was made by Francis Assisi Tri Atmojo or familiarly called Pak Bagong from Ganjuran, Bantul. This statue is indeed associated with the figure of Nyai Roro Kidul, who is the "ruler" or "queen" of the South Sea according to Javanese mythology. According to Fr. Sabas Kusnugroho, Catholics also have a Catholic "Nyai Roro Kidul", namely Mother Maria *Stella Maris*, Star of the Ocean. This is inseparable from the context of the people on the South Coast who are related to local wisdom and Mataraman culture. In this case, the statue of Mother Mary with a model similar to Nyai Roro Kidul wants to carry the value of Catholic faith in the figure of Mother Mary the Protector and is associated with local noble values. The green color chosen is actually a color that is close to the blue of the sea or can be referred to as the color of the ocean. Thus, the green color of the ocean which sometimes feels scary is to be eliminated by the presence of the figure of Mother Mary

[26] The explanations in this section were obtained through interviews with the parish priest (Rm. Sabas Kusnugroho, Pr) and the head of St. Fransiskus Xaverius's Station, Pacitan (Mrs. Bambang) on December 16th 2023.

the Protector. Even the green color is a symbol of fertility which is the hope of the local community.

Mother Mary of Stella Maris in Pacitan uses dark brown soka batik motif. Soka batik itself is typical of the culture of the Pacitan community. This Soka batik is also inseparable from the absorption of Solo culture which emphasizes the dark brown color which essentially wants to promote local values. Meanwhile, the crown of Mother Mary of Stella Maris is characterized by Javanese-Balinese art, although Javanese art is more strongly emphasized. The crown is worn on the head as a symbol of Mother Mary's figure as Queen, as is also the local mythology that Nyai Roro Kidul also wears a beautiful crown on her head.

The appearance of Mother Mary of Stella Maris' open hands shows the role of Mary in channeling God's love and mercy to people who are facing difficulties and storms of life. This body position is like a mother who is open and expects her children to come or a mother who is ready to accept and welcome all the complaints and problems being experienced by her children. In a broader aspect, Fr. Sabas also revealed that Mother Mary of Stella Maris does not only belong to Catholics, but also to all people of other religions who equally ask for help from God. Mother Mary is an open figure in responding to all the problems of human life in navigating the oceans and storms of life. An open hand also means openness to all people who want to do good and ask for help from Mother Mary. The reality is that in this Pacitan Church many non-Catholics visit. In addition, this church building was made by the majority (90%) by Muslims so there is a dimension of tolerance and openness here.

Mother Mary of *Stella Maris* Pacitan is also shown stepping on a snake on the earth. The meaning is that the snake is a picture of the evil that exists on this earth. Mother Mary stepping on the snake means that Mother Mary managed to overcome all the problems and evil that are intertwined in human life on this earth. Mother Mary plays a role in providing help and defeating all the powers of evil that surround in the midst of all forms of human life struggles against evil.

In addition, there is also an interpretation that Mother Mary of Stella Maris is a mother figure who is close to the culture of water. This means that mythology about water is often related to the figure of a mother, for example in Larantuka and Maluku. Water is always related to a motherly figure. Pacitan itself geographically also often experiences floods and tidal disasters accompanied by tsunami issues. So, the church building and all its artistic elements are physically modeled after a ship that

enculturates elements of the coastal sea. Spiritually, Fr. Sabas said that the congregation interpreted that the figure of Mother Mary is the protector of all threats of natural phenomena related to water. In other words, the people in Pacitan ask to be saved from various kinds of natural disasters, especially from the sea.

Maria Bunda Segala Suku[27]

The statue of Mother Mary of All Tribes was introduced in the Archdiocese of Jakarta (KAJ) as a marker of the movement in living out Pancasila in 2016-2020. The statue is a representation of Mother Mary that includes cultural elements from various tribes in Indonesia. The main inspiration for this depiction comes from Indonesia's diversity and spirit of nationalism. In the view of Catholics, this depiction illustrates the belief that Mother Mary can be a light and protector for all ethnic groups in Indonesia. Creativity in creating various forms of Mary, Mother of All Tribes is considered a response from the Catholics to the dynamics of identity politics that affect social integration in Indonesia around 2016-2020.[28]

This sculpture was created by Robert Gunawan, who won a related art competition. He tried to present Indonesian elements in a series of paintings and sculptures of the Virgin Mary. Elements such as the red and white flag, the Pancasila symbol, kebaya, veil, batik and weaving are included in the work. Mother Mary's clothing consists of batik motifs from all regions of the archipelago (Flores, Kalimantan, Papua, Java, etc.). According to Ignatius Cardinal Suharyo, the goal of this statue is to invite Catholics (and people in general) to nurture and develop a spirit of love for the country.[29]

On May 13, 2018, a statue of Mary Mother of All Tribes was unveiled at the Jakarta Cathedral by Ignatius Cardinal Suharyo in conjunction with the World Day of Social Communications and the Commemoration of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Fatima. This statue is currently placed in the Cathedral of the Assumption of Mary, Jakarta. The statue of Mary Mother of All Tribes also marks a wider recognition of the value of art and spirituality. Along with these events, Catholics in Jakarta held the 2018

[27] The explanations in this section were obtained using the literature study method from various sources on the internet.

[28] Ismanto, "Kisah di Balik Devosi Kebangsaan – Maria Bunda Segala Suku," *Tribunnews.com,* accessed on December 16th 2023 from https://www.tribunnews.com/nasional/2018/06/03/kisah-di-balik-devosi-kebangsaan-maria-bunda-segala-suku

[29] HidupTV, "Liputan Pemberkatan & Penyerahan Patung Maria Bunda Segala Suku," accessed on December 16th 2023 from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9fUvZefnnac

Great Devotion and Novena of Mother Mary with the theme "Living the Catholicism in Indonesian Culture." The event involved various activities such as rosary prayers, talk shows, and inculturation Masses with diverse cultures on May 11-19th, 2018. The statue of Mother Mary Mother of All Tribes has elements that reflect Indonesia, including a map of Indonesia, Garuda Pancasila upright on the chest, veiled in Red and White, wearing a long white brocade kebaya with an old puppet painting of Dewi Kunthi as a symbol of patience and purity on the lower right, and a puppet painting of Dewi Sri as a symbol of prosperity and peace on the lower left, as well as woven fabrics with Nusantara motifs.[30]

CONCLUSION

This paper discusses the inculturation of Javanese culture in the statues of Mother Mary, specifically four statues in Java, namely *Dyah Marijah Iboe Ganjoeran*, *Maria Ratuning Katentreman lan Karaharjan* in Gantang, Mother Mary *Stella Maris* in Pacitan, and Mary Mother of All Tribes in Jakarta. The four statues have distinctive, unique, and appealing styles that reflect the cultural assimilation of the local culture through their names, titles, and physical appearance, which mirror the richness of Javanese culture. The various styles of these statues of Mary are intended to represent one and the same person, namely the Virgin Mary. These statues of Mary serve as visible signs, symbols, or emblems that can help the devotion and veneration of the faithful towards the figure of the Virgin Mary.

The study of various statues of the Virgin Mary in Javanese style was conducted using three methods: literature review, interviews, and field observation. The objects of the study were then analyzed using Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic theory, which includes the nature of the sign, the concepts of *langue* and *parole*, as well as syntagmatic and paradigmatic relationships. Based on this semiotic theory, the findings reveal that the statues of Mary – with all their different styles – function as *signifier* pointing to the person of Mary as the *signified*. The concepts of *langue* and *parole* show that each statue of Mary reflects the same rules, norms, and artistic structure (*langue*), yet presents a concrete expression of the artistic system (*parole*) in diverse forms. Meanwhile, the analysis of syntagmatic and paradigmatic

[30] Pena Katolik, "Replika Patung Maria Bunda Segala Suku," *Penakatolik.com,* diakses pada 16 Desember 2023, https://penakatolik.com/2018/05/15/replika-patung-maria-bunda-segala-suku-di-katedral-jakarta/

relationships highlights the distinct features that differentiate each statue, including aspects such as title, origin, accessories, clothing, and body position.

The four statues of Mary described here help deepen the faithful's understanding of the role of the Virgin Mary in both local and national contexts. These statues combine Catholic values with the rich cultural heritage of Indonesia, particularly Javanese culture. The statue of *Dyah Marijah Iboe Ganjoeran* is modeled after the *Prajnaparamita* statue, a representation of a Buddhist woman. This model is meant to depict the Virgin Mary as a figure who has attained perfection in transcendental wisdom. The statue of Bunda Maria *Ratuning Katentreman lan Karaharjan* (*Mbok Tentrem*) is intended to radiate the aura of the Virgin Mary, bringing peace and protection. The statue of *Bunda Maria Stella Maris* seeks to portray the Virgin Mary as the guiding star on the journey toward Christ, protecting sailors and responding to the human struggles of navigating the oceans and the storms of life. The statue of *Maria Bunda Segala Suku* is meant to represent the Virgin Mary as a protector and bringer of peace in Indonesia, a nation rich in ethnic and cultural diversity.

The statue of Mary, as a representation of the Virgin Mary, plays an important role in Catholic devotion. This statue is not meant to be worshiped, but rather serves as a means to honor and love the role of the Virgin Mary in the history of salvation. The use of statues of Mary with local elements, particularly within the context of Javanese culture, reflects the Catholic Church's efforts to convey the message of faith in an inculturated manner. The various forms of the statue of Mary not only reflect Indonesia's diversity but also communicate the message of faith in a language that can be accepted and embraced by the various ethnic groups and cultures in Indonesia. Therefore, the use of the statue of Mary in religious art becomes an effective means of embodying the message of faith in a form that is familiar to the local community's way of life.

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