

PARATEXTUAL REFRAMING IN TRANSLATION: BAKER'S SOCIAL NARRATIVES

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Abstract

Translation can be viewed as a mode of (re)narration as it actively contributes to constructing the world rather than simply functioning as a mechanism for transferring meaning from one language to another. This study delves into the role of paratext in reframing or (re)constructing various narratives concerning a translated work, Stuart Robson's *The Wedhatama*, and highlights how the translator has strategically taken advantage of those paratextual elements to reinterpret the Javanese literary work and to promote his ideological viewpoints. By applying Baker's social narrative approach, this study identifies that Robson presented personal reflections in his translation and shed light on the personal narrative of the ambiguous authorship of *Serat Wedhatama*²; public narratives presenting some clues might have provided its author with inspiration or impulse to write, under the glory of the Mangkunegaran, stories related to the governments, which flourished under the capable leadership of Mangkunegara IV, and stories about challenging the existing meta-narratives: Panembahan Senapati versus The Prophet, and kejawen versus pure Islam. Finally, Robson presented conceptual narratives, stating that the original work of *Serat Wedhatama* conveys a profound sense of cultural identity of the noble class. The paratextual elements present in the translation can assist target readers in understanding the translation and enhance the wider cultural narratives, thus playing an active role in the meaning-making process.

Keywords: translation; paratext; narrative; reframing; *The Wedhatama*

Abstrak

Penerjemahan dapat dipandang sebagai sebuah upaya penarasian ulang karena berkontribusi secara aktif dalam mengkonstruksi dunia, bukan sekadar menyandang fungsi sebagai pengalih makna dari satu bahasa menuju bahasa lain. Studi ini mengkaji peran parateks dalam membingkai ulang atau merekonstruksi berbagai narasi yang terkait dengan sebuah karya terjemahan—*the Wedhatama* karya Stuart Robson—serta menyoroti bagaimana penerjemah secara strategis memanfaatkan elemen-elemen parateks tersebut untuk menafsirkan ulang karya sastra Jawa sekaligus menggambarkan pandangan ideologisnya. Dengan menerapkan pendekatan naratif sosial dari Baker, studi ini menghasilkan temuan bahwa melalui parateks, Robson mengikutsertakan refleksi pribadi dalam karya

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² *Serat Wedhatama* is believed as a prominent Javanese poetic work known for its ethical and philosophical teachings, especially concerning the concept of divinity and the importance of character education

terjemahannya dan menekankan narasi personal mengenai kepengarangan Serat Wedhatama yang ambigu; narasi publik memberikan petunjuk yang mungkin menjadi sumber inspirasi atau dorongan bagi sang pengarang untuk menulis karya sumber di bawah bayang-bayang kejayaan Mangkunegaran, narasi tentang pemerintahan yang berjaya di bawah kepemimpinan Mangkunegara IV yang cakap, serta metanarasi yang menentang narasi yang telah ada, yakni narasi Panembahan Senapati versus Sang Nabi, dan kejawen versus Islam. Terakhir, melalui parateks pula, Robson menyajikan narasi konseptual yang menyatakan bahwa karya asli, Serat Wedhatama, memuat identitas budaya yang kuat dari kalangan bangsawan. Elemen-elemen parateks dalam terjemahan dapat membantu pembaca memahami terjemahan dan memperkaya narasi budaya yang lebih luas, sehingga mampu memainkan peran aktif dalam proses pembentukan makna.

Kata kunci: penerjemahan; paratekstual; narasi; pemingkakan ulang; *The Wedhatama*

1. INTRODUCTION

The narrative concept has attracted significant attention across various academic fields, leading to multiple definitions. In socio-pragmatics and literary studies, narratives are often regarded as a form of communication (Pearson and de Villiers 2006). While they are recognized as a means of expression that plays a crucial role in how individuals structure their lives, they are still considered one of several communicative choices available, such as argumentation versus narrative. Research that views narrative as a discretionary communication mode emphasizes the internal composition, such as components consisting of orientation, complication, sequence of events, resolution, and coda or reorientation (narrative). Meanwhile, the argumentative structure consists of assertions, a conclusion (claim), and a justification (premise), highlighting the benefits of narrative in fostering audience engagement and commitment.

Baker characterizes narratives as 'the stories we tell ourselves and others about the world(s) in which we live' (Baker 2014:151) and posits that 'individual behavior is ultimately influenced by the narratives they accept regarding the events in which they find themselves' (Baker 2006:3). Within this framework, framing is identified as a mechanism through which narratives are formed; specifically in translation and interpreting. It encompasses a wide range of techniques and strategies, from the selection of

translations to the linguistic decisions made during the translation or interpretation process, or – importantly for this discussion – in the creation or translation of paratextual elements. Baker's definition of *framing* aligns with her application of narrative theory and emphasizes the fluidity of the process. She describes framing as “an active strategy that entails agency and through which we intentionally engage in the construction of reality” (Baker 2006:106). Further, she explains that framing involves establishing anticipatory structures that direct others' interpretations of events, often as a direct counter to prevailing interpretations of the same events within a particular society (Baker 2014:156).

In the context of publication and narrative theory, where the text itself remains static, paratexts act as “an instrument of adaptation” and are described as “more flexible, more versatile, always transitory” (Genette 1997: 408), subject to ongoing modifications by various agents such as a translator or a publisher (Baker 2006). These paratextual elements are vital for anchoring the text, guiding the interpretations of target audiences, and revealing the practices conducted by agents who become “visible” through these components (Jansen and Wegener 2013). Consequently, connecting paratextual analysis with social narrative theory facilitates a thorough examination of the intricate paratextual mediation performed by publishing agents.

The Wedhatama, translated by Stuart Robson and derived from the Javanese text *Serat Wedhatama*, which is widely attributed to KGPAA Mangkunegara IV³, offers a comprehensive collection of paratextual elements found within its preface, introduction, and annotations. This work merits investigation due to its rich paratextual pieces of information, which potentially construct or reframe a new narrative that challenges both the prevailing public narrative and the broader meta-narratives.

³ The term "KGPAA" is an abbreviation of "Kanjeng Gusti Pangeran Adipati", a Javanese title of nobility, typically used for the ruler of a Javanese principality, like Mangkunegaran or Pakualaman. In English, it translates to "Your Majesty, Prince, High Duke, and Arya". Your Majesty Mangkunegara IV (3 March 1811 – 2 September 1881) served as the fourth sovereign of Mangkunegaran, a principality located in Surakarta, Java, governing from 1853 until his demise in 1881. He was the son-in-law of Mangkunegara III.

The research questions of this study can be formulated as follows: (1) In what ways can the paratextual information found in *The Wedhatama* be classified into a framework comprising a narrative typology that includes personal, public, conceptual, and meta-narratives? (2) What types of mediations are conducted by the translator in his paratextual narratives? Accordingly, this study aims to describe ways the paratextual elements in *The Wedhatama* can be classified into a narrative typology and to identify types of mediations conducted by the translator in his paratextual narratives.

Some scholars have conducted scholarly investigations of paratexts in translation, encompassing a range of themes. Freeth (2021) investigated how the representation of the Other in translated literature is conveyed to a new audience. In his journal article, “*Germany asks: is it OK to laugh at Hitler?*”, Freeth conducted a case study on *Er ist wieder da*, a novel critiquing Germany's engagement with its National Socialist history, alongside the British release of its English translation, *Look Who's Back*. The findings revealed that although the British publisher alters the humorous elements of the novel, the contentious nature of its role in Germany's *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* discourse remains a fundamental aspect of the paratexts featured in the British media. Consequently, this article illustrates the transnational significance of distinct national traits in the paratextual representation of translated works, highlights the importance of paratexts as subjects for imagological analysis, and underscores the methodological advantages of differentiating between production-side and reception-side paratexts.

Freeth's (2022) investigates the presence of translator Jamie Bulloch within digital environments related to his English translations of two novels by German author Timur Vermes: *Look Who's Back* and *The Hungry and the Fat*. The study revealed that although Bulloch played a key role in the development of the publisher's paratextual content, MacLehose Press chose to emphasize the German origins and the foreignness of the texts over Bulloch's role as the translator. Consequently, Bulloch's minimal visibility in the materials produced by the publisher was echoed in the digital paratexts generated by readers and external entities such as Amazon, despite his efforts

to engage with readers and showcase his translatorship on platforms like Twitter. Thus, rather than mitigating Bulloch's limited visibility, digital platforms ultimately served to reinforce it (Freeth 2022: 283--284).

Aly et al. (2025) investigated the complex phenomenon of translation through the lens of paratextual theory as articulated by Gérard Genette (1987). By analyzing the diverse dimensions of paratexts and offering deeper insights into both peritextual and epitextual elements that influence translated works, the study aimed to uncover dynamic interplay between translated texts and their paratexts and to demonstrate how paratexts serve not only as valuable tools for analyzing the ideological and sociocultural foundations of translated works but also as means for assessing the sociocultural effects on the reception.

On the other hand, a scholar has conducted investigations on *The Wedhatama* translated into English by Stuart Robson in 1990. Maharani (2022) investigated unit, class, intra-system, and structural shifts in the translation. By employing Catford's linguistic theory, Maharani revealed shifts across categories, exemplified by unit-to-structure shifts that transform the organization of phrases in the source text into the structure of sentences in the target text, influenced by the lack of equivalent expressions, changes in meaning, and modifications in aesthetic presentation.

Based on those scholarly investigations, it can be seen how paratexts in translation have become an essential object of discussion. Nevertheless, none of these studies recognizes that paratexts can be classified under a particular typology under specific conditions. Instead of investigating paratextual narratives' typology, the study will also analyze types of mediations conducted by the translator in his paratextual narratives. The present study, which scrutinizes translation, viewed as a form of reframe or (re-)narration that constructs rather than merely represents the events and characters in another language, can be considered a novelty in the realm of literary translation studies in Indonesia.

2. THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

Genette's concept of paratext examines the impact of surrounding features on the presentation of a text, the stimulation of reader interest, and the framing of their comprehension. He characterizes paratext as representing "the most socialized side of the practice of literature" (Genette 1997), serving as a crucial interface that facilitates the interaction between a published work and its audience (Genette, 1997:3). Paratext comprises two main categories: "peritext," which refers to components directly associated with the main text—such as cover designs, prefaces, and promotional blurbs—and "epitext" which pertains to external elements like reviews and author interviews. Genette asserts that the primary attribute of paratexts is their functionality, which is notably varied and aims to fulfill specific, often multiple roles (Genette 1997;7–14).

Mona Baker's narrative typology offers a structured approach for examining narratives in the context of translation, categorizing them into four distinct categories: personal, public, conceptual, and meta-narratives. This framework enhances our comprehension of the construction and dissemination of narratives in translation, as well as the role of translators or interpreters in mediating these narratives across various contexts, including those characterized by conflict. Personal narratives emphasize individual experiences, emotions, and perspectives, often reflecting one's identity and personal history. Public narratives consist of shared stories that prevalent in a community or society, influencing collective perceptions and public opinion. Conceptual narratives convey abstract ideas, beliefs, or ideologies, manifesting in forms such as philosophical discourse, political manifestos, or scientific theories. Meta-narratives examine the nature of storytelling itself, exploring how narratives shape reality and their interplay with power dynamics (Baker 2018). Baker's typology provides a valuable framework for analyzing how narratives in translation can either uphold or contest specific ideologies, perspectives, and power structures. For instance, a translated work may reinforce prevailing narratives of conflict or offer alternative viewpoints that challenge those narratives.

Derived from the field of sociology, Baker's narrative theory referred to as socio-narrative theory, has shifted translation studies from a focus on linguistic equivalence to an emphasis on social construction. This theory outlines four primary categories of narratives, namely ontological narratives (personal narratives), public narratives (institutional narratives), meta-narratives, and conceptual narratives. Ontological narratives represent “the stories that social actors use to make sense of — indeed, to act in — their lives”, shaping individual identity, which serves as “a precondition for knowing what to do” (Somers 1994:618). Public narratives are “attached to cultural and institutional formations larger than the single individual, to intersubjective networks or institutions” (Baker 2006:35). Meta-narratives are described as the “master narratives” within which contemporary actors exist in history and as social scientists, often reflecting the grand narratives of a particular era (Somers 1994:619), such as Puritanism vs Anti-Puritanism. Conceptual narratives, meanwhile, pertain to “concepts and explanations that we construct as social researchers” (Somers 1994:620). Baker expands this definition to include “disciplinary narratives in any field of study”, emphasizing their capacity to influence public discourse and shape both public narratives and overarching meta-narratives (Baker 2006:39-42). These four types of narratives are interconnected and possess a dynamic nature. Through paratextual mediation, publishing agents can frame and adjust their narratives (stories) to “fit their own identities, and conversely, they will tailor ‘reality’ to fit their stories” (Somers 1994: 618).

Paratext functions as a crucial domain for the (re)framing of narratives, serving not only as a site of transition but also of transaction, “a privileged place of pragmatics and a strategy, of an influence on the public” (Genette 1997:2). Its impact often resides in the realm of influence, or even manipulation that is experienced on a subconscious level (Genette 1997:409).

Paradigm or basic assumption

Ahimsa-Putra (2016) characterizes a paradigm as a cohesive collection established through the logical connections of concepts at the cognitive level. This collection of concepts is referred to as a framework of thought.

Consequently, this framework can be utilized by individuals to reflect on their thoughts, enabling them to comprehend, interpret, and elucidate various issues or realities encountered in life. The present study is grounded in two basic assumptions regarding the interplay between individuals, their surroundings, and the narratives that emerge within those surroundings. The first assumption posits that translation is viewed as a form of reframe or (re-)narration that actively constructs rather than merely represents the events and characters in another language. Translators and interpreters do not simply facilitate cultural interactions, but they create translations and simultaneously influence the development, alteration, transformation, and spread of these narratives through their translation decisions (Baker 2014:159). The second assumption proposes that narratives typology provides a significant framework for examining how translated narratives can either reinforce or challenge particular ideologies and worldviews.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

The material and formal objects

As the material object typically refers to the subject of investigation, whereas the formal object pertains to the specific aspect examined within the selected material object (Albertazzi, 1996). The material object of this study is identified as Stuart Robson's Canto 2 of *The Wedhatama* – Working Paper 4, *Koninklijk Instituut Voor Taal-, Land- En Volkenkunde*⁴ (KITLV 1990), and other prevailing narratives. Conversely, the formal object focuses on the narrative typology that enhances our comprehension of the construction and dissemination of narratives in translation, as well as the role of translators and interpreters in mediating these narratives across various contexts.

Data collection and analyzing technique

As the study belonged to library research, it attempted to find out relevant data related to Baker's socio-narrative paradigm on literary

⁴ The KITLV serves as a research institute committed to examining societal challenges, with a particular emphasis on the histories and legacies of colonialism in the Caribbean, Southeast Asia, and the Netherlands.

translation. The data were collected by closely reading the paratextual information of the source text, *Serat Wedhatama*, and of the translation, *The Wedhatama*, and other scientific writings related to the works. Those data were selected and categorized to be analyzed to achieve the goal of the study. The basic assumptions were analyzed by investigating data obtained from books and journal articles, the ephitexts, that explicate a set of concepts of Baker's socio-narrative paradigm. The procedure was conducted to understand the framework of thought developed by Baker on the socio-narrative of literary translation. Moreover, the analysis was also developed to discover narrative typologies of paratexts, including peritexts and ephitexts, as Gérard Genette (Genette 1997) posits that paratexts can be classified into two main categories: peritexts and epitexts. Peritexts refer to components that are found directly within the publication, including titles, subtitles, forewords, and blurbs on dust jackets, etc. Conversely, epitexts encompass elements that exist outside the physical confines of the publication, such as book reviews, interviews with the author, and catalogs from publishers, etc.

4. ANALYSIS

Ontological Narratives (Personal Narratives)

Robson asserts that his translation of the Javanese poetic work, *Serat Wedhatama*, aims to reach a wider audience, particularly those unfamiliar with Javanese, Indonesian, or Dutch. This endeavor is intended to enhance the understanding of *Serat Wedhatama* through translation. He emphasizes a fundamental duty of philologists: to make texts accessible via interpretation and elucidation (Robson 1990:1). His philological explorations led him to conclude that the precise date of *Serat Wedhatama* remains uncertain. However, he posits that it likely dates to the late 1870s, towards the conclusion of Mangkunagara IV's reign. Furthermore, he identifies intertextual connections between *Serat Wedhatama* and several works, including Mpu Tanakung's Sutasasana 'Instruction for Sons' (1465), the Nitisastra, Niti Sruti, Niti Praja, as well as more contemporary texts such as Wulang Rêh, Wulang Sunu, Wulang Estri, and other compositions by

Pakubuwana IV (reigned 1788-1820), in addition to the *Sanasunu* by Yasadipura II (composed in 1819).

Robson's personal reflections also shed light on the ambiguous authorship of *Serat Wedhatama*. He finds it peculiar that, despite its recognition among subsequent generations, the work lacks a date and is represented by a solitary manuscript in the Mangkunagaran Library, especially when compared to the multiple manuscripts of other didactic texts attributed to Mangkunagara IV. He concludes that the work is indeed associated with him, suggesting that it was authored by R.M. Ng. Wiryakusuma. Supporting this view, In 1963, R. Tanojo, in the introduction (*Pambuka*) to his *Weddha Tama djinarwa*, provided additional context, noting that Wiryakusuma served as a *mantri langenpraja* (Minister of Arts) in the Mangkunagaran Palace, an official tasked with overseeing the arts.

Moreover, a manuscript of the *Wédhatama* housed in Leiden (Cod. Or. 6486) contains a note in Dutch stating 'Copy of a manuscript belonging to Mr. D.A. Rinkes,' with a pencil annotation indicating 'the original made by Mangkunagara IV in Surakarta'; another hand, in lighter pencil, has crossed out the name Mangkunagara and replaced it with 'R.M.Ng. Wiryokusuma' (Robson 1990:5).

Ultimately, the personal narratives challenge the long-standing perceptions held by the public for centuries, as *Serat Wedhatama* was authored by Mangkunegara IV. In this instance, the translator, who underscores a crucial responsibility of philologists, confronts societal beliefs by questioning and scrutinizing widely accepted notions to foster critical thinking and potentially alter those beliefs by presenting evidence and promoting different perspectives.

Public Narratives

In the 1870s, Central Java experienced a period of tranquility and the Mangkunagaran flourished under the capable leadership of Mangkunagara IV, who successfully established the sugar factories of Tasikmadu and Colomadu. This era was not marked by significant turmoil or crises. However, it was undeniably a time of transformation and even challenges. The railway

connecting Surakarta to Semarang was established in 1870 and was soon extended to Yogyakarta, significantly enhancing interactions with the vast world. At the same time, the area of land leased by Europeans for the cultivation of various crops within the principalities was steadily increasing, posing challenges for Mangkunagara IV in maintaining control over his territories (Robson 1990:18).

Public narratives are attached to cultural and institutional formations larger than the single individual, to intersubjective networks or institutions (Baker 2006:35), encompassing stories related to workplaces, governments, and nations (Somers 1994:619) Robson put his commentary in his translation as he asked whether the poem is merely about a philosophy of life or mystical experience, or whether there may be more, at an even deeper level. He insisted that some clues are to be found by looking at the time and place in which the poem was written, as they may, directly or indirectly, have provided its author with the inspiration or impulse to write, under the glory of Mangkunegaran.

As public narratives are intrinsically linked to the frameworks and principles of organizations, communities, and societies, Robson asked whether the poem is merely about a philosophy (Ismanto 2023) of life or moral education (Fuady et al. 2022) or whether there may be more, at an even deeper level, normative aspects proposed by the ruling class. The narratives frequently encompass both objective accounts and notions of how things "should be," thereby shaping behavior and social norms as proposed by the ruling class.

Meta-Narratives

Panembahan Senapati vs the Prophet

The Mataram Kingdom emerged from land bestowed upon Ki Pemanahan by Sultan Hadiwijaya of the Pajang Sultanate in recognition of his loyalty and service. This grant was awarded to Ki Pemanahan after he and his son successfully murdered Arya Penangsang of Jipang. The land was primarily forested areas, referred to as *alas Mentaok*⁵ (Mentaok forest). Over

⁵ *Alas Mentaok* (Mentaok Forest) was not directly awarded to Sutawijaya. It was given to Ki Ageng Pemanahan, the father of Sutawijaya (also known as Panembahan Senapati) by Sultan Hadiwijaya, for

approximately seven years, Ki Pemanahan established Mataram, which subsequently became known as Kota Gede, a new center of power, but it remained under the dominion of the Pajang Sultanate. Gradually, Mataram evolved into a kingdom that eventually eclipsed the Sultanate of Pajang during the reign of Pemanahan's son, Sutawijaya. Upon the death of Ki Ageng Pemanahan in 1584 AD, his son Sutawijaya succeeded him. Sutawijaya demonstrated considerable military acumen, successfully consolidating control over the Mataram Kingdom after engaging in conflict with the Pajang Sultanate, thereby establishing Mataram as an autonomous kingdom (Zamzami, 2018), which is estimated to have occurred between 1578 and 1588 AD.

Robson inserted an important paratextual interpretation of Canto II verse 1. A prime example is introduced, an individual who faithfully followed the prescribed path, serving as the most distinguished model of such adherence. At this point, another pivotal concept emerges *laku*, which denotes a 'rule of life, discipline, and ascetic practice' is reiterated and the concept must be pertinent to the Javanese people: *tumrap ing wong tanah Jawi*. The figure highlighted is Panembahan Sênapati (Sutawijaya), esteemed as the 'Great Man' of *Ngeksiganda* (Mataram Kingdom). He is recognized for founding the Mataram Dynasty. His significance lies in his ability to amass the spiritual authority necessary for his rule, achieved through stringent ascetic practices that involved seclusion from human interaction and the denial of basic needs such as food and sleep. Consequently, even *Ratu Kidul* (the Queen of the Indian Ocean) acknowledged that her power was surpassed by Sênapati, known as *prabhawa lan wong agung Ngèksiganda* (authority and the great man of Mataram). His dominion extended over both the human realm and the spiritual domain governed by *Ratu Kidul*, solidified by an agreement ensuring that his descendants would inherit his power, contingent upon their self-discipline. This legacy has endured, resulting in his successors also becoming formidable leaders who governed Java as kings (Robson 1990:51).

he successfully assassinated Arya Penangsang in 1554. Sutawijaya, with his father's help, then cleared the forest and established the village of Mataram, which later became the capital of the Mataram Kingdom.

Meta-narratives are often referred to as the 'master narratives' that provide a framework for understanding the historical context in which contemporary individuals and groups function. These narratives serve as a lens through which social scientists analyze and interpret the events and dynamics of a particular era. According to Somers (1994:619), these overarching narratives not only shape the way we perceive history but also reflect the dominant themes and ideologies of the time, influencing the actions and beliefs of modern actors. Paratextual elements presented by Robson, in this case, contrast the figures of the king and the prophet (Mohammed). Serat Wedhatama portrays the king as an individual endowed with the capacity to gather the spiritual authority essential for his governance, a feat accomplished through rigorous ascetic disciplines that necessitated isolation from social contact and the renunciation of fundamental necessities like food and rest, while imitating the prophet (Mohammed) leads someone to making such an effort that one is flat out" means working or doing something, means working or doing something with maximum effort, at full speed, or all out and it implies being exhausted⁶ or depleted from the intensity of the work or activity.

Kejawen versus Pure Islam

Robson presented an interpretation of Canto II verse 7 in his Introduction, reflecting the "grand narratives of a particular era" (Somers 1994:619), namely *Kejawen* (Islamic Javanism) as a noble social class's identity versus Islamic Puritanism (pure Islam). Many individuals from rural areas adjacent to the centers of Hindu culture embraced Islam, integrating it with their local customs. This fusion resulted in a distinctive form of Islam in the rural regions of Java, characterized by its adaptation to Hindu traditions, commonly referred to as syncretic Islam or *Kejawen* (Javanism). The syncretic or *Kejawen* belief system encompasses elements and concepts from Hindu-

⁶ /If you insist on imitating //The example of the Prophet, / /Oh, my dear, you overreach yourself: / (Robson 1990:51)

Buddhist traditions that lean towards mysticism(Ricklefs 2006:35), amalgamating these with Islamic tenets.

The *Kejawen* community members, although they did not strictly adhere to religious practices such as prayer, fasting, or the aspiration to perform the pilgrimage, they maintained a belief in the core principles of Islam. The narrative competed with movements conducted by Arabic traders and Javanese people who had performed hajj and brought the idea of pure Islam. In the period in which the missionaries set foot in Java, rapid changes occurred due to Islamization and Islamic Puritanism, which made Islam spread further into the interior of Java. The presence of the Dutch mission, incredibly, reinforced Muslim identity, and the *Kejawen* religion became less fluid (Kruithof in Prihantono, 2024: 277). On the contrary, a significant number of illiterate communities began to give up practicing the Five Pillars and reaccepted beliefs and rituals of traditional origin. In his 1886 book on *Kejawen* (Javanese Islam), *Brieven over de Islam, vanuit de binnenlanden van Java* (Letters on Islam from the Interior of Java), Poensen observed that although pure Islamic communities did exist, the vast majority still practiced *Kejawen*—those who did not live in a Mohammedan fashion but followed ancestral traditions (Kruithof in Prihantono 2024: 277). In this case, according to Robson's Introduction, the narrative was produced and reproduced by *ndara* (noble class of Mataram descendants), a royal poet of Mangkunegara Palace, who suggested the right way that should be followed, and the author also showed the way that should not: the Prophet. Moreover, the young were warned: *Rèhné ta sira Jawi / sathithik baé wus cukup*, "It is sufficient for you, as a Javanese individual", to adhere to at least a minimal portion of the teachings of the Prophet.

Having clearly pointed out the way that should be followed, the author also shows the way that should not: some take as an example the Prophet, and make this an excuse for showing off, even though they comprehend little of the elements of Islam. The young are warned off this course, in the well-known lines *Rèhné ta sira Jawi / sathithik baé wus cukup*, 'Seeing that you are Javanese, just a little will be enough' (II.10). Being Javanese makes a difference: there is no need to go to excessive lengths in your observance of Islam (Robson 1990:14).

Koentjaraningrat delineates the four distinct social strata within Javanese society: *ndara* (nobles), *priyayi* (bureaucrats), *wong dagang*

(merchants), and *wong cilik* (the commoners)(Koentjaraningrat, 1963). The *ndara* class was characterized by their ability to assert their identity as rulers over the other three strata. This class was further subdivided into various ranks and titles, based on their degree of kinship with one of the four royal families. The *priyayi* class held positions within the government and was structured according to a bureaucratic hierarchy, including both lower- and upper-ranking *priyayi*. The *ndara* (nobles), representing the most significant social class in this context, produced and reproduced narratives that were regarded as "the highest wisdom" (*Wedhatama*) (Robson 1990:18), specifically intended for the youth within their social class.

Conceptual Narratives

In the introduction, Robson revealed that *Serat Wedhatama* references both Islam and the Middle East, but it did not mention the West or Europeans. On the other hand, Robson noted that the Mangkunegaran Palace had interactions with Europeans, and the Mangkunegaran were well-known for their receptiveness to European influences. Politically, since the conclusion of the Java War in 1830, the Dutch maintained a firm grip on the Javanese princes. He believed that the Mangkunegaran Palace reflected an inward turn and an effort to assert cultural superiority in domains where outsiders would likely lack understanding and, therefore, could not interfere, upholding Javanese values and ideals of sophistication, reinforcing the court's belief that their lifestyle and worldview were superior and deserving of protection against external influences. Robson also believed that the essence of *the Wedhatama* conveys a profound sense of cultural identity of the noble class.

Our conclusion has then to be that the message of *the Wedhatama* is one of cultural identity. It says: We are Javanese, and we should be true to ourselves and follow our own way in the realm of spirituality, in order to find the power that our ancestors had and which is our right by inheritance. This is *the Wédhatama*, 'the highest wisdom' (Robson 1990:18)

5. CONCLUSION

While mediated paratexts seek to "explain translational choices concerning wider social and political contexts" (Baker 2014:154), Robson (1990) presents his interpretation confronting prevailing narratives, supposed

to be “true” narratives by the majority. He presented personal reflections in his translation, as well as shedding light on the personal narrative of the ambiguous authorship of *Serat Wedhatama*, the source text of *The Wedhatama*. He produced public narratives presenting some clues to be revealed by looking at the time and place in which the poem was written, as they might have provided its author with the inspiration or impulse to write, under the glory of the Mangkunegaran. He encompassed stories related to governments, the Mangkunegaran, which flourished under the capable leadership of Mangkunagara IV, and stories about confronting meta-narratives: Panembahan Senapati versus The Prophet, and *Kejawen versus pure Islam*. Ultimately, Robson also presented conceptual narratives, saying that the *Wedhatama* conveys a profound sense of cultural identity of the noble class.

The findings of this study prove that paratexts in translation play a crucial sociocultural role in influencing the production and interpretation of the original work by the translator. The findings of the study reinforce the previous studies, as paratextual constituents reflect translators' particular ideologies, viewpoints, and interpretations of the original work. Both this study and Freeth's (2021) demonstrate that paratexts within translated works provide significant insights into the portrayal of the 'other' for new audiences. Furthermore, both investigations emphasize the unique paratextual representations in translated literature, underscoring the critical role of paratexts in distinguishing between literary creation and the reception by translators, who are regarded as the initial readers. The findings of this research, in conjunction with those of Freeth (2022), also suggest that a translator's proactive efforts to promote their own work result in increased translator visibility. This observation highlights the importance of transcending Venuti's notion of both visibility and invisibility, advocating for a more sophisticated understanding of the various roles that translators play in bringing literary works to new audiences. Ultimately, the results of this study, when considered alongside those of Aly et al. (2025), indicate that paratexts function not only as essential instruments for examining the

ideological and sociocultural underpinnings of translated texts but also as mechanisms for evaluating the sociocultural impacts on their reception.

This study focuses on a comprehensive framework that encompasses a narrative typology alongside the diverse forms of mediation carried out by translators. However, it is important to note that this study does not delve into specific elements such as the ideologies held by the translator and the publisher. Furthermore, it intentionally excludes the complex negotiations that take place among the publisher, individual translators, and the readers of translated texts. Instead, the emphasis is placed solely on the reinterpreted paratextual narratives crafted by the translator, which are influenced by their unique interpretations of the source material. In the same vein, future research may explore the influence of the paratextual constituents, such as introduction, prefaces, blurbs, and comments, on the reception of the target readers and the ideology and worldview of translators and publishers. Hence, the paratextual constituents may guide target readers in interpreting the translation and enrich the broader cultural narratives, thereby actively participating in the meaning-making process.

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