

VII. When words become bodies: magic spells, embodiment, and gender

This chapter aims to discuss relations between language practices and embodiment by analyzing magic spells that are believed to affect the bodies or bodily experiences of magic recipients. This category of magic belongs to ‘personal magic’ (*ilmu pribadi*) that is performed for personal well-being and self-protection. Personal magic includes ‘beauty magic’ (*ilmu pemanih*) to promote one’s beauty, ‘thick magic’ (*ilmu kebal*) to strengthen a person’s body for self-protection, and ‘contraception magic’ (*ilmu tagamang*) to keep the female body from undesirable pregnancy. Another category of personal magic involves ‘love magic’ (*ilmu pengasih*), ‘hate magic’ (*ilmu pembenci*), and ‘defeating magic’ (*ilmu penunduk*), all of which are supposed to control others’ feelings and desires by penetrating others’ boundaries.

Petalangan people view magic spells as penetrating the magic recipients’ bodies. In contrast to social magic, personal magic does not require mediators for performance and should not be performed in public.¹ Rather, people perform this genre of magic spells such as beauty spells and love spells for themselves in private settings—beauty spells to read to the performers’ skins; love spells directed at others’ minds. In their belief, repeated applications of magic spells to the body transform the words into “flesh and bones” (*daging tulang*), because the magical words transfer desirable qualities of objects to designated bodies. People also conceptualize love spells as holding sway over the feelings and desires of others by penetrating their boundaries (cf. Weiner 1984).

¹ If the personal magic consists of a necessary step for public rituals, a shaman’s help is required. Wedding ceremonies, for example, require a *tukang andam* (a magician for a bride’s make-up) to cast beauty spells for the bride before the wedding ceremony.

How does language affect the body? Many ethnographers of shamanic healing practices have discussed the healing power of language. Analyzing Kuna child-birth chants, for example, Lévi-Strauss argues that the chants provide an interpretive tool by which Kuna women understand their experience of giving birth (Lévi-Strauss 1963). Other anthropologists, however, have pointed out that the ritual language is usually unintelligible to the patients and its meanings are contingent on the social contexts of the performance (Laderman 1987, Sherzer 1983). By focusing on ritual as a form of performative act, a number of anthropologists have shifted attention from text to context, from language as a cognitive system to the social use of language. This performance-oriented approach concentrates on the relationships between complex elements such as musical components, gesture, and dance that interact with one another to make the ritual performative in its contexts (Atkinson 1989, Bloch 1974, Laderman 1987, 1991, Tambiah 1973, 1981).

By critiquing the notions of language as “transparently and autonomously performative,” Briggs (1994: 140) draws close attention to the metapragmatic aspects of ritual performance that mediate a shaman’s linguistic competence and the contextual meanings of the performance. Inspired by Foucault’s notion of body-discourse relationship—not merely that of ‘meaning’ but of ‘power’ (1980), Briggs focuses on social power operating in the relationship between a curer and his patients during the performance of the Warao healing ritual (Briggs 1994, 1996). At the same time, he is concerned with denotative meanings that generate supernatural and social power. By shifting focus onto grammatical patterning or denotative meanings of ritual speech through which subject and object, as well as different degrees of agency and power, are

emergent, he argues that both denotative and “non-sense” meanings are important for an understanding of the ritual performance through which power relations among the participants are shaped and transformed (Briggs 1996).

Unlike healing rituals, Petalangan personal magic is not performed in public, nor does it require curers as mediators. Monologic recitations of magic spells are believed to exert power over targeted bodies by penetrating them. Instead of shaping different power relations among participants as found in public performances of healing rituals, private recitations of the spells project and introject imaginary figures of self vis-à-vis others in a series of imaginary scenes where different modes and degrees of agency and power are emergent and constituted by specific linguistic devices and grammatical patterning.

The Petalangan practices of personal magic spells can be examined in three dimensions—recited texts, acts of reciting, and metapragmatics. I will analyze the textual organization of the magic spells to demonstrate cultural representations of the body and desires reflected in the texts. Reciting the spells can be analyzed as a mode of practice or action to embody and enact the magical power embedded in a specific verbal formula. Based on Judith Butler’s notions of discursive construction of gender and the body (Butler 1990, 1993), I will analyze texts and social uses of the spells to examine how cultural notions of the body and desire are linguistically constituted through performances of the magic spells. As a critique of Butler’s universalized concept of performativity, as well as that of common Western ideas of desire as immediately emanating from the individual, this chapter will demonstrate Petalangan notions of the body and desire as linguistically mediated and socially embedded in relations of power.

Discursive Construction of Gendered Body

Inspired by Butler's notions of gender as performance (Butler 1990), recent language and gender studies have paid increasing attention to the performative power of language² in relation to gender and sexuality³ (Hall and Bucholtz 1995, Livia and Hall 1997). According to Butler, gender is not a pre-given or fixed attribute of a subject but rather an identity category created and constituted through the subject's "repetition of acts" (Butler 1990: 140) where the subject repeatedly "cites" and "performs" conventional traits and features of a specific gender so as to be culturally recognized as having specific attributes of men or women (ibid). Gender conventions, thus, are enabling as well as constraining factors for gender performativity.

By the same token, Butler argues that the materiality of the (sexed) body is also discursively constructed (Butler 1993). Focusing on the intelligibility and accessibility of sex and the body, she argues that sex (that is, the biological attributes of men and women) always presupposes its social significance (that is, gender). People recognize a person's body either as male or female based on the presupposition of conventional or stereotyped features of the male and female bodies. According to Butler, even the materiality of the body, that is, the "fixity of the body; its contours; its movements" (ibid: 2), corporeal

² Originating from Austin's speech act theory (Austin 1962), the term 'performative' refers to a constitutive or creative function of utterance. The words are not just descriptive; they also act upon the world (cf. Searle 1969). For a discussion of 'performativity,' see Hall (2000).

³ By *sexuality*, I refer to the quality or state of being sexual (Merriam Webster's Collegiate, 10th edition). In Petalangan society, however, there is no equivalent term for sexuality, they only have terms for men (*jantan*) and women (*betino*) respectively.

elements that are assumed to exist prior to cultural construction of gender, are also bound up with signification. She argues that the issue of the body is neither presuming nor negating materiality (ibid: 30). Instead, she calls attention to the fact that the process of delimiting and contouring the body as prior to any signification itself constitutes materiality (ibid). The (sexed) body, or its materiality, then is not a biologically pre-given basis of gender but emerges as a product or effect of gender (ibid: 3)⁴

As a critique of Butler's universalized notion of a discursive construction of gender and the body (cf. Hall and Bucholtz 1995, Livia and Hall 1997), I will analyze ethnographic accounts of specific language practices and their social contexts to demonstrate more localized and culturally specific ways that the body and desires are discursively constructed. Given that beauty spells and love spells are mainly employed in Petalangan gender relations, especially in courtship, I will sketch the Petalangan gender relations briefly and discuss each genre of magic spells respectively.

Men and women in Petalangan society

Many feminist anthropologists have argued that gender relations in Southeast Asia are relatively egalitarian, drawing on the "prevalence of women's landholding, control of finances, and control of agricultural resources" (Blackwood 2000: 8) in matrilineal societies in Southeast Asia, where women have traditionally controlled matrilineal land (Stivens 1996, Peletz 1996). By examining a rural village of the Minangkabau society of West Sumatra, a society well-known for its matrilineal kinship

⁴ Butler's discussion does not lead to the conclusion that materialization is caused or originated by language. Rather, she implies that language mediates materialization, the process of which itself is constitutive of materiality.

system, Blackwood demonstrates Minangkabau women's power as heirs and heads of sublineages: They "create and recreate households and matrilineal relations in which they are privileged with certain economic and social rights that men lack" (Blackwood 2000: 191). She emphasizes the senior women's power, because they control agricultural production and labor in the village. "The senior women's control of land and house enables her to control both sons' and daughters' labor and to make claims to husband's labor and earned income. Although there are differences across rank and income, women invoke matrilineal ideology to maintain their dominance." (ibid: 81).

Historically linked to Minangkabau society, Petalangan society also shows evidence of a matrilineal kinship system. Petalangan lineage relations, agricultural production, and heritage system are organized through the mother-daughter link. Nevertheless, in contrast to women in the rural Minangkabau society examined by Blackwood, Petalangan women do not have control of agricultural labor—they have land ownership, but no organizational authority to produce laboring power. As a result, I met several women in Desa Betung who had wide lands, but could not produce agricultural products due to lack of a labor force.

Petalangan men and women engage in distinctive domains of labors. Men undertake occasional but highly intensive and visible tasks, such as fishing and cutting trees in the forest,⁵ while women engage in less intensive but ongoing and unmarked tasks, such as farming, rubber-collecting, child-rearing, and other domestic works.

Although Petalangan society is matrilineal like the Minangkabau society, the economic

⁵ Men usually build their own houses on the river or in the forest and live there while doing work such as fishing and cutting trees for timber companies. Once a week, they will return home to the village where their wives and children live.

conditions of Petalangan women are different from those of Minangkabau women. In contrast to the rice cultivation practiced by the Minangkabau people, Petalangan swidden farming, fishing, and rubber-collection do not draw on a collective and organized labor force. Rather, Petalangan ecological-economic activities are more independent—that is, carried out by the individual, instead of depending on the labor of other family members.

Even though a matrilineal clan consists of a practical unit of economic activities and everyday practices, the Petalangan matrilineal system works more apparently at the level of ideology. For example, in recent land disputes between Petalangan communities and agribusiness companies or governmental officers, some village women have participated in political rallies (*demo*) against the police, claiming Petalangan rights to ancestral land by emphasizing Petalangan people’s “matrilineal tradition.” During my stay, I interviewed women who had participated in these rallies, and found that they did so at their husbands’ direction. One woman told me that her husband had “ordered” (*su’uh*) her to participate in the demonstrations. Obviously, Petalangan males utilize their matrilineal tradition and foreground women in the rallies to personify and justify their claims to ancestral lands. Therefore, Petalangan society shows an interesting combination of male dominance and matrilineal tradition.

Reason (akal) and Desire (Nafsu): Islamic Gender Ideology

Ideologically, Petalangan people describe the relationship between men and women as that of *akal* (reason) and *nafsu* (desire), as most Muslims explain gender relationship with such⁶ (cf. Siegel 1969, Peletz 1994). These notions originate from

⁶ Originating from Arabic, *akal* and *nafsu* refer to ‘reason’ and ‘desire’ in Indonesian as well as in Malay.

Islamic gender ideology. Akal means reason, rationality, and intelligence, while nafsu refers to passions, desires, and bodily instincts (Peletz 1996). While animals only have nafsu, humans possess both of these components and akal controls nafsu. Akal distinguishes humans from the rest of the animal world.

Akal and nafsu refer to conflicting human traits residing in a human body, which are core symbols in Malay societies in general. These concepts provide the local communities with the ideas of “the essence and dynamics of human nature, social relations, and the world at large, all of which is to say that they are central to the local ontology” (Peletz 1994: 88). These concepts are not only applied to gender relationships, but extend to the moral dichotomy of being ‘good’ (*baik*) or ‘bad’ (*bu’uk*).⁷ Islamic religious practices, such as observing the Fasting Month of Ramadan and reciting verses of the Koran, are intended to control bodily desires through reason (*akal*) in the form of practicing faith in God. The practice of fasting is an ascetic training for “suppressing desires” (*tahan nafsu*) to strengthen one’s own spirituality, while the recitation of the Koran is to strengthen one’s rationality through language use.

Petalangans uphold the necessity for emotional controls and restraint of bodily instincts as dictated by the Islamic precepts of spiritual potency and control of desires. They conceptualize bodily desires and feelings as so vulnerable or changeable that the boundaries of body appear flexible and even blurred. The protection of one’s own self-boundary from others’ malicious intent is accomplished by creating and strengthening

⁷ Petalangans agree on the presence of good aspects in nafsu. In this case, the concept of nafsu is broken down into more detailed categories, such as 1) *nafsu almara* (desire of the evil, referring to anger, rage, hatred and so on, including emotional responses to others’ behavior), 2) *nafsu lawamh* (desire of the animal, meaning bodily instinct), 3) *nafsu mulhama* (desire of wanting, which can be good or bad), 4) *nafsu metoma’ina* (desire of angel, meaning healthy or clean desire). Among these desires, ‘desire of angel,’ which is suitable for God’s guidance, is the best. The good desire, however, always presupposes the regulation of ilmu (knowledge, or science that refers to rational thinking).

one's rationality and spirituality through language use, such as recitation of spells, prayers, and Koranic verses,⁸ which usage is similar to Islamic notions of self-ascetic training to suppress bodily desires and instincts by strengthening one's own spiritual potency. However, while the Islamic practice is oriented inwardly to self-ascetic training in control of one's own desires, the practice of magic spells is more likely to be outwardly focused to protect one's own body from any possible dangers arising from others' desires.

The power of a person is accumulated and concentrated through ascetic exercises and self-control, which practice leads in turn to further self-control as well as to control over the will of others, and to supernatural power (Anderson 1972, Brenner 1994). According to Anderson (1972), both personal power and spiritual power reveal themselves through diverse signs of one's refined (*halus*) demeanor, such as calm and refined speech, and poise and restraint in all situations. On the other hand, those who lack spiritual potency tend to be susceptible to their emotions, and desires, and so are unable to control them (Anderson 1972, Brenner 1994, Keeler 1987).

In Islamic societies, women are seen as incapable of refined, controlled demeanor and behavior, because women are thought to be more bound to their material context and bodily desires, and so less suitable for asceticism (Djajadiningrat-Nieuwenhuis 1987, Hartley 1990). In the dominant Islamic gender discourse, "women are less controlled and restrained than men insofar as they are more prone to gossiping and desiring material possessions, and are otherwise more closely tied to the 'baser' things in life" (Peletz 1994: 93).

⁸ Tsing (1993) also points out the importance of language to create rationality in protecting vulnerable bodies from sorcery among the Banjar of Kalimantan (1993: 183-184).

Therefore, the accepted view of the differences between men and women is that this greater “animality” leads to a spiritual weakness in women as compared to men. Women are thought to have a weaker ‘will force’ (*semangat*) or ‘spirit’ (*jiwa*), whereas men have a stronger one. Since the bodily instincts and desires are under the control of this will force, women are more prone to their bodily desires or instincts, resulting in women’s vulnerability and susceptibility to pollution and illness.⁹ As a corollary, it is believed that men have more reason than women, and women more desire than men. Therefore, women should be under the control of men, as desires are controlled by reason (cf. Tsing 1993, Peletz 1996).¹⁰

Practical Gender Representations—Alternative Discourses on Men

As could be expected from the differences that many scholars assert between the ideological and practical aspects of gender representations in other Malay societies (cf. Brenner 1994, Peletz 1994), Petalangan gender representations are not fixed or unified but heterogeneous depending on subject, and situational to and contingent on contexts. Despite the dominant gender ideology outlined above, women themselves portray men as having more desires and greater lack of self-control, which leads men to be more easily triggered by others’ temptations, especially by other women’s excessive sexuality. Men spend money for their own pleasure, while women strive to maintain family stability through restraint of their own desires and pleasure. These practical representations of

⁹ Banjar women’s susceptibility to illness parallels the Petalangan case. Tsing (1993) wrote, “women are those who can never do a good job of controlling bodily desire or protecting the boundaries of the body. As a result, women are much more sceptible to illness. They are seen as more involved with food and sleep than are men” (1993: 184).

¹⁰ See Schimmel 1997 for the detailed gender representations and images reflected in the Koran.

men and women bring about the notions of men's irresponsibility for family and household.¹¹

Alternative representations of men as less restrained in desires and more prone to self-indulgence, however, do not devalue men's positions and privileges. On the contrary, these perceived traits lead Petalangan women to fear being abandoned by their men because men are easily lured away by other women. During my stay in Desa Betung, people frequently expressed their concerns about the increasing numbers of *janda*, meaning "widows" or "divorcées" in the village, an increase resulting not from the husbands' deaths but from diverse forms of abandonment.¹² People informed me that many of them had experienced divorces in their own marriages because of men's extramarital affairs. Some of the village men have multiple wives at the same time, a practice justified by Islamic marriage custom—men are allowed to marry up to four wives concurrently, insofar as they can "feed and clothe" the wives and their children. The number of wives sometime implies the husband's wealth and high social prestige,¹³ or at least proves his large store of 'esoteric knowledge' (*ilmu*) to attract others. As an

¹¹ In the Negeri Sembilan society of Malaysia, men are also described as irresponsible toward households and family in their relational roles of brother, husband, and father. In everyday life, such a 'relational category' is more significant in representing men than the 'arelational' category of 'male' (*lelaki*) (cf. Peletz 1994).

¹² The majority of young widows in Betung are those who got married to outsiders. With the government immigration program, increasing numbers of outsiders, especially from Java, have worked in Petalangan communities and some of them have married local women. Upon finishing their work contract, however, these men tend to leave the village and return to their own families in Java, with their local wives and children left behind in the village. Petalangan people have developed a stereotype of Javanese men as being "less restrained in sexual desire" (*tidak tahan nafsu*). "They [Javanese men] are not able to restrain their desires and have an inclination to indulgence in sex. If a Javanese man sees a beautiful girl, he cannot help marrying her shortly after" (a female informant (50+) in Betung).

¹³ In urban settings, however, men having multiple wives are more likely to be blamed for their being "not modernized" (*tak modern*) or having a "boorish" (*kampungian*) attitude. In rural settings, however, this practice is still significant in displaying one's wealth and power.

example, I present the episode of the Petalangan village leader's third marriage and the villagers' diverse interpretations of the case.

<Episode: a village leader's third marriage>

During the time of my stay in Betung, the village head, who already had two wives, was newly married to another woman in Pekanbaru. He then divorced his second wife in the village, for fear of criticism from the urban Malays, who were involved in current Petalangan land disputes with companies and the government. Nevertheless, the village head's third marriage was not criticized by either his fellow villagers, or his wives. Rather, the villagers were amused at his great sexual capacity to attract a third wife despite his old age, which in turn triggered fear of their leader's strong spiritual potency as proved by his third marriage. His first wife even expressed her gratitude to her husband for not divorcing her, because this at least guaranteed the husband's financial support for her and her children.

In the same way that the Javanese conceptualize power as revealing itself through a person's refined demeanor and behavior (Anderson 1972), so the Petalangan conceive of power as emphasizing the person's sociality and desirability to attract others; the more spiritual potency a person has, the more people flock to that person. Men's successful courtship of women also represents an aspect of their spiritual capability.

Gender and Mobility

As mentioned above, men and women in Petalangan society engage in different economic activities. With recent economic development, the distinctions between men's

and women's economic activities have become more apparent, especially in terms of their mobility and opportunities for employment. Many young people, especially young adult males, leave their villages for the city to find better jobs. Consequently, mobility has become a distinctive feature of male activities.

Mobility also incorporates sources of power. Traveling to other places means that the traveler acquires "experience" (*pengalaman*) and "knowledge" (*ilmu*). Many of my village informants proudly reported their experiences of trips to other places to learn more magic spells (*monto*) and gain esoteric knowledge (*ilmu*). The further they go, the more they learn. This notion of "accumulating experiences" (*tamba pengalaman*) through traveling is prevalent in Petalangan society, and the experienced people are regarded as having great power and potency. Given that the traveling itself requires a person to risk facing possible threats and dangers, the successful completion of traveling indeed proves one to have power and bravery to secure and protect oneself from the malicious intentions of others and possible dangers.

Politically, it is crucial for Petalangan male leaders to associate with powerful outsiders to promote their own hierarchy and power in the villages, as well as to formulate their ethnic identity and to claim their land ownership and heritage (see Chapter III). Because of increased negotiations with outside forces, Petalangan male leaders strive to establish wider connections with outsiders such as urban Malay intellectuals, government officers, and agribusiness company personnel. Specifically, the male leaders' connections with the companies imply more opportunities for economic profits. In fact, many companies located in the Petalangan communities give "honorariums" (*honor*) to Petalangan leaders for their being mediators between local

people and the companies. Sometimes, the honorariums are in the form of a salary paid by month.¹⁴ Many adat leaders have been reported to receive diverse forms of bribery from the companies for smooth penetration into Petalangan local territories. Mobility thus also represents men's political and economic power.

Men's mobility, however, threatens women's positions in the village. Men's freedom to go anywhere, especially men's frequent traveling to urban areas, has increased the possibility of their meeting with other women. As a result, village people have diverse stereotypes of "other women" in urban areas and these stereotypes reveal the differences between men's and women's perspectives. Men tend to think that urban women are more "polite" (*sopan*) in talking and behaving with others and have good manners when serving men. Village women, however, have developed a stereotype of urban women as being "coquettish" (*centil*) and "eager for sex" (*gatal*). The village women even call the urban women "long necked jugs [for their sexual desires]" (*geleta*) or "women who have a strong desire for men" (*betino ga'ang*).

These stereotypes are also applied to the village women who have a strong tendency for "travelling" (*jalan*)¹⁵, as well as for being very aggressive in courtship. As reflected in Petalangan women's stereotype of the urban women, most of "dangerous" women are those who are away from their own families and households. Those women who are described as having excessive sexuality and passions by Petalangan women are "autonomous" women, who are not titled "wives," "mothers," or "daughters" of the

¹⁴ For example, at the time of my research, the village head of Betung was receiving "honorariums" from 12 companies every month, for an approximate total of Rp. 2,400,000. Given that the average salary per month for a college educated white-collar employee of a foreign company was around Rp. 1,000,000 (approx. \$100) in 1998-1999, the village head's income was very high by Indonesian standards.

¹⁵ *Jalan* literally means "a road" or "walking" in Indonesian and in Malay.

family (cf. See Brenner 1994 for Javanese case). Women in “mobility,”—that is, away from home or “independent”—have also been negatively stereotyped.

Women’s restricted mobility causes disadvantages that curtail their privileges. Their lesser experience of “social interactions” (*bergaul*) with others leads men to think of their wives as ignorant of etiquettes and social skills when dealing with people, especially in serving their husbands. Their wives do not know how to speak politely to others—“they are only good at yelling at husbands and kids with loud voice. They don’t know how to wear clothes and how to make up.” Therefore, while men’s mobility increases the possibility of temptations by other women, women’s restricted mobility causes their ignorance of etiquette, leading to a negative stereotype of village women as less modern. This different power of mobility between men and women thus dictates their different positions and privileges in the village.

Magic and gender relations

Most Petalangan informants report that they start to learn magic spells around the age of 15 to 17. Boys are more likely to form a peer group with their close friends and relatives, and to make further trips to other villages in order to find proper teachers of desired magic and spells. Girls, on the other hand, tend to learn magic spells from their female relatives in their own matrilineal clans, alone or in pairs. Since the Petalangans consider magic spells an important resource for dealing with the opposite sex, they prefer not to reveal their magic spells to the opposite sex. People say that they do not want to give “arms” (*senjata*, which means magic spells) to “enemy” (*musuh*, which means the

opposite sex). Therefore, it is easier to learn such magic spells from elders of the same sex, rather than from those of the opposite sex.

Since it is believed that the efficacy of magic spells is decreased if they are taught to other people, people are reluctant to reveal magic spells. In the case of love and beauty spells, elder people are willing to teach the youth in exchange of material goods, because elder people are supposed to stop using love and beauty magic. The genre of beauty and love magic is also called “youth magic” (*ilmu muda*), because it is for courtship between boys and girls. Once married, people are not allowed to use this category of magic. Yet, rumors and gossip about old people’s use of magic spells are recursively reported, a transmission that is considered undesirable, on the grounds it may cause a danger of excessive sexuality in the community.

In the following section, I will analyze the textual organization of two categories of Petalangan magic spells believed to work on the body. The first category includes magic spells for one’s own body, including an unmarried women’s genre of beauty spells, and a married women’s genre of “obscene magic spells” (*monto cabul*). The second category includes love spells for the bodies, emotions and desires of others. Stereotypically, women are thought to use beauty spells frequently than men, while men use love spells more. This stereotype reflects Petalangan discourses on gender differences in courtship. Men are aggressive in achieving desired partners, while women tend to be attractors, casting magic spells and conjuring others.

The spells analyzed in this chapter were selected from a collection of magic spells that I gathered during my field research in 1998-1999. The majority of the spells were collected at Desa Betung of Petalangan communities. Through consultation and

interviews with people from other villages, I found that practices of magic spells are common throughout the Petalangan society and that the textual structures of the magic spells are similar in spite of some lexical variations from spell to spell.

Beauty Spells: Allocating Agency in the Body

The first beauty spell is called “the Prayer of Tall Sialang Tree.” As “young magic,” only unmarried women are allowed to use this spell. If a married woman uses this spell, they say, there would be fights between men who are attracted to her, which sometimes leads to her divorce or village men’s death.

Spell 1: The Prayer of Tall Sialang (bee-hived) Tree (*Doa Sialang Lobe*)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Bismillahirrahmanirrahim</i> 2. <i>Minyak si tuang-tuang</i> 3. <i>Tuang dalam kual</i> 4. <i>elok enda aku dipandang</i> 5. <i>bagi anak bidodari</i> 6. <i>Limau aku si Ajo Gagang</i> 7. <i>Tumbuh saompun tasobe</i> 8. <i>elok endah aku dipandang</i> 9. <i>makai doa Sialang Lobe</i> 10. <i>memakai aku nan lobe</i> 11. <i>bajalan aku nan lobe</i> 12. <i>bakato-kato aku nan lobe</i> 13. <i>gilo somuo uang nan amai</i> 14. <i>sumuo anak sidang manusia</i> 15. <i>katuonya Si Co'am Balik Gilo</i> 16. <i>sagolo uang amai</i> 17. <i>sedang kan Allah lagi sayang</i> 18. <i>sedang kan Muhammad sudah gilo</i> 19. <i>aku mamakai doa Sialng Lobe</i> 20. <i>Kabul Allah Kabul Muhammad</i> 21. <i>Kabul Bagindo Rasullullah</i> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In the name of God, 2. oil is pouring and pouring 3. pouring in a pot. 4. Pretty and beautiful, I am seen, 5. like an angel from heaven. 6. My lemon is King Gagang (stalk) 7. grown in the widest garden. 8. Pretty and beautiful, I am seen, 9. [I] use the prayer of Great Sialang. 10. Clothing, I am the best. 11. Walking, I am the best. 12. Speaking, I am the best. 13. [Driven] crazy, all crowded people, 14. every group of human being. 15. Their leader is Mr. Turning Crazy Choam, 16. all crowded people, 17. while Allah also loves [me], 18. while Muhammad is already crazy. 19. I use the prayer of Great Sialang. 20. Bless [me] Allah, bless [me] Prophet Muhammad 21. His Majesty, the Messenger of God |
|---|---|

Parallelism: framing devices

The words of ancestors embedded in verbal formula are believed to activate a range of agents in the world of spiritual beings. The magic can be effective only when a spell evokes powerful spiritual beings successfully according to their desired goals. The scene of invocation (cf. Kuipers 1988)¹⁶ is thus very essential in most magic spells, and calls out different spiritual beings according to their varying purposes. This scene of ‘invocation’ frames and contextualizes the recitation of the prayer to be interpreted as a specific genre of magic spells. The most commonly found linguistic devices are framing devices (cf. Goffman 1974) through which a current speaker’s speech is displayed as detached from immediate pragmatic context of ‘here and now.’ Influenced by Islam, most of the spells show a typical opening phrase of Islamic prayers, by addressing the name of “Allah” in the texts. This spell is framed in Islamic opening and closing remarks. By framing the spell as uttered “in the name of god,” this locates the present speaker as an “animator of God.”

Example VII-1: First framing: opening-closing Remarks

<i>1. Bismillahirrahmanirrahim</i>	1. In the name of God	Opening ↑↓ Closing
<i>20. Kabul Allah Kabul Muhammad</i>	20. Bless [me] Allah, bless [me] Prophet Muhammad	
<i>21. Kabul Bagindo Rasullullah</i>	21. His Majesty, the Messenger of God	

The second framing is found as a parallel in repeating the spell’s title in lines 5 and 19. These sentences define the very action which the speaker is engaged in, as repeating a specific ancestors’ words.

¹⁶ Kuipers(1988) analyzed a text of Sumba prayers as similar to their everyday colloquial speech act of social visiting, which comprises three scenes of ‘invocation,’ ‘propositoin,’ and ‘resolution’ (p.107). By ‘scene’, Kuipers refers to a unit that shows a coherent theme and temporal perspective (ibid.).

Example VII-2: Second framing: repetition of the spell's title

1. <i>Bismillahirrahmanirrahim</i>	1. In the name of God		
5. <i>makai doa "Sialang Lobe"</i>	5. [I] use the prayer of "Great Sialang"	← Title	
19. <i>Aku memakai doa Sialang Lobe</i>	19. I use the prayer of "Great Sialang"	← Title	
20. <i>Kabul Allah</i> <i>Kabul Muhammad</i>	20. Bless [me], Allah, Prophet Muhammad		
21. <i>Kabul Bagindo Rasullullah</i>	21. His Majesty, the Messenger of God		

We also find the use of Pantun, a traditional quatrain of Malay poetry in Example VII-3, which displays an alternate rhyme patterning coupling in lines. This pantun style enhances the spell's poetic structure, and increases its formality. The first line of Pantun typically describes items used as media for magic, such as oil, lemon, betel nuts, and so on.¹⁷ For example, lines 2 through 3 portrait the scene that "oil" is pouring in the pot, and lines 6 thorough 7 describe a "lemon" which is in a garden. These lines describe the attributes of the items for magic media as well as their locations. Through these descriptions, the speaker "I" in the spells is objectified and located in a specific context of the magic performance.

2. <i>Minyak si tuang-tuang</i>	2. Oil is pouring and pouring,
3. <i>Tuang dalam kual</i>	3. pouring in a pot.
4. <i>elok enda aku dipandang</i>	4. Pretty and beautiful, I am seen,
5. <i>bagi anak bidodari</i>	5. like an angel from heaven.
6. <i>Limau aku si Ajo Gagang</i>	6. My lemon is King Gagang (stalk)
7. <i>Tumbuh saompun tasobe</i>	7. grown in the widest garden.
8. <i>elok endah aku dipandang</i>	8. Pretty and beautiful, I am seen,
9. <i>makai doa Sialang Lobe</i>	9. [I] use the prayer of Great

Example VII-3: Couplets of "the Prayer of Great Sialang"

¹⁷ Oil, for example, is usually uttered in a beauty spell because of its 'shining' attribute. People use lemons for purifying magic or beauty magic, because of their acidity. Betel nuts, as a symbol of exchange, are used as a medium for love magic targeted at others.

Petalangan beauty spells are believed to transfer desirable qualities of objects or desirable situations of a speaker to the real world. Most beauty spells rarely employ directive words, such as “command,” “warn,” or “order” to direct supernatural power at the speaker’s intentions. Instead, the speaker’s wished-for result is declared as truth in the text. Consequently, the beauty spells explicitly describe detailed desirable physical qualities of a speaker.

In Example 4, the speaking subject “I” appears as engaging diverse bodily acts in lines 10 through 12—“dressing,” “walking,” and “speaking,” which are “best.” Use of passive voice in “pretty and beautiful, I am seen” in lines 4 and 8 projects “I” as an object of desire.

•Attributes of a speaker : *ba-* (attributive verbal prefix)

10. <i>memakai aku nan lobe</i>	10. Clothing, I am the best.
11. <i>bajalan aku nan lobe</i>	11. Walking, I am the best.
12. <i>bakato-kato aku nan lobe</i>	12. Speaking, I am the best.

•Speaker’s appearance : *di-* (passive verbal prefix): object of desire

4, 8. <i>Elok endah aku <u>dipandang</u></i>	4, 8. Pretty and beautiful, <u>I am seen</u>
--	--

Example VII-4: Performer’s Bodily Activities

This beauty spell projects imaginary figures who engage diverse bodily activities and experiences. Although this beauty spell is commonly used between girls and boys in courtship, the bodies and bodily activities reflected in this spell are not sexed. Yet, the bodies are different in terms of agency—a performer as an object of desire, and others are subjects of desire.

Married Women's Obscene Magic Spells

During my field research among the Petalangan people, many Petalangan women told me that they recite specific spells before and after having sexual intercourse in order to increase sexual satisfaction for their spouses.¹⁸ Before sex, a woman recites the spell “Opening (bodily) desires” (*buka hawa nafsu*) to herself in order to invoke her desire. Afterwards, she recites the spell called “Locking Fatima’s door” in order to “lock the body” (*kunci badan*) for self-protection from any danger caused by the sexual intercourse.

The magic spells are recited when they take baths. Because people take a bath twice a day, in the morning and in the afternoon, they recite the “Opening desires” during the afternoon bath prior to the night’s potential sexual encounters. “Locking Fatima’s door” is recited in the following morning bath after the sexual encounter. Sometimes the magic spells are recited to the water with which they take a bath. Magic spells should be recited privately and quietly so that others cannot hear the spells. Although various versions of spells may exist under the same titles, the spells show similar internal structure despite their minor variations of lexical changes; thus I have selected the most typical examples to illustrate Petalangan women’s spell practices.

Internal organization of magic spells

An analysis of “The Prayer of the Seven Tastes” (Spell 2) also reveals the similar framing devices through which a particular speaker’s utterance follows the standard

¹⁸ Men are also reported to use magic for sexual intercourse. Unlike women’s *Monto Cabul*, however, men’s magic is said to enhance their sexual stamina. Men’s magic is more likely to use medicine or exercise, while women’s magic uses spells.

structure of ancestral authority. A highly formulaic structure displays the immediate ever-changing performances as self-evident and as having transcendental authority separate from the intentions of particular speakers.

Spell 2: “The Prayer of the Seven Tastes” (*Doa Tujuh Aso*)

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. <i>Bismillahirrahmanirrahim</i> | 1. In the name of God |
| 2. <i>Kunyit ku, kunyit abu</i> | 2. My <i>kunyit</i> (turmeric), <i>abu kunyit</i> |
| 3. <i>Di tanam di janke kayu awo</i> | 3. Planted at the roots of <i>awo</i> trees |
| 4. <i>Kuat sombu daging basombu</i> | 4. Strongly cured, flesh cured |
| 5. <i>Aku mamakai “Tujuh Aso”</i> | 5. I use “Seven Tastes” |
| 6. <i>untuk membuka hawa nafsu badan ku iko</i> | 6. to open desire in this my body |
| 7. <i>Kok duduk taaso-aso</i> | 7. If [he] stands, let [my vagina] be felt and felt [by him] |
| 8. <i>Kok togak taaso-aso</i> | 8. If [he] sits, let [my vagina] be felt and felt [by him] |
| 9. <i>Lubang puki aku iko</i> | 9. This hole of my vagina |
| 10. <i>Sataun jalan da'at</i> | 10. [If he goes] One year trip on land |
| 11. <i>Tigo bulan palayi'an</i> | 11. [If he goes] Three months fishing on the ocean |
| 12. <i>Lubang puki aku iko taaso-aso jo</i> | 12. Let my vagina be felt and felt [by him], too. |
| 13. <i>Sapuluh cai bini,</i> | 13. [Even if he] Ten times looks for wives, |
| 14. <i>Satui cai kondak</i> | 14. [Even if he] one hundred times finds girlfriends |
| 15. <i>Tak ado sasodap lubang puki aku iko</i> | 15. There is nothing as tasty as this hole of my vagina |
| 16. <i>Dik < nama ></i> | 16. [His] sister, <name > |
| 17. <i>Barkat aku mamakai tuju aso</i> | 17. Bless me who uses “Seven Tastes.” |
| 18. <i>Kabul Allah, Kabul Muhammad</i> | 18. Please bless [me], Allah, the Prophet Muhammad |
| 19. <i>Kabul Bagindo Rasullullah</i> | 19. His Majesty, the Messenger of God |

The Islamic opening and closing phrases frame the spell. Despite its minor lexical variations, most magic spells are internally framed by these Islamic phrases. The second framing device is employed through the repetition of the spell’s title, found in lines 5 and 17; *Aku memakai doa ‘Tujuh Aso’*, (“I use the prayer of the Seven Tastes”). Framing the speech as “Seven Tastes” allows the utterance to appear as a repeating phrase of the ancestors’ words, detached from the speaker’s immediate pragmatic context

. The typical first scene of spells is to invoke supernatural power in order to communicate with the spiritual world. This scene also links “I” projected in the spell to a current speaker who is “reciting” the magic. Spells for “embodiment” tend to employ

metapragmatic utterances, defining the speaker’s activity of speaking embedded in a specific verbal formula.

We also find the use of paired couplet from lines 2 through 5 of “the Prayer of Seven Tastes” as shown below (Example VII-5).

<p>2. <i>Kunyit ku, kunyit abu</i> 3. <i>Di tanam di janke kayu awo</i> 4. <i>Kuat sombu daging basombu</i> 5. <i>Aku mamakai “Tujuh Aso”</i></p>	<p>]</p>	<p>2. My <i>kunyit</i> (turmeric), <i>abu kunyit</i> 3. Planted at the roots of <i>awo</i> trees 4. Strongly cured, flesh cured 5. I use “Seven Tastes”</p>
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Example VII- 5 : Pantun (couplets) of “the Prayer of the Seven Tastes.”

By layering the words with immediate repetitions, as in line 2, “*Kunyit ku, kunyit abu*” and line 4 “*Kuat sombu daging basombu,*” this Pantun style emphasizes the spell’s poetic structure (Example VII-6).

<p>2. <u><i>Kunyit</i></u> <i>ku, kunyit abu</i> 3. <i>Di tanam di janke kayu awo</i> 4. <i>Kuat <u>sombu</u> daging <u>basombu</u></i> 5. <i>Aku mamakai “Tujuh Aso”</i></p>	<p>2. My <u><i>kunyit</i></u> (turmeric), <i>abu <u>kunyit</u></i> 3. Planted at the roots of <i>awo</i> trees 4. Strongly <u><i>cured</i></u>, flesh <u><i>cured</i></u> 5. I use “Seven Tastes”</p>
--	--

Example VII- 6: Immediate repetition of the words

The poetic structure of pantun typically appears as immediately following the opening phrase of the spells. The first line of pantun typically describes items used as media for magic, such as oil, lemon, betel nuts, and so on. Beauty spells usually refer to “oil” (*minyak*) in their first pantun lines, because oil “shines” (*berseri*).¹⁹ In the above

¹⁹ ‘Shining’ is an important component for beauty by Petalangan standard.

example, “turmeric” is uttered as a medium of the magic, accompanied by the description of the object’s qualities and attributes, as well as their locations in lines 2-3.

By describing a specific medium of magic, the speaking subject “I” in the spells is objectified and located in a specific context of magic performance. The use of pantun style enhances the poetic quality and formality of the spells. While increasing ambiguity in referential meanings, the use of poetic style enhances symbolic and iconic qualities of the spells. Viewed from Petalangan everyday speech, on the other hand, uses of the pantun style implies the beginning part of conversation between two parties, because pantuns are conventionally exchanged when people pay a visit to others, while accompanying with offering betel nuts to each other. Pantun plays a role of greetings or preliminary talk to begin actual conversation between participants.

In the following Example VII-7 taken from “the Prayer of the Seven Tastes”, lines 7 through 14 demonstrate the structure of canonical couplets.²⁰ Semantically, this spell repeats the imagined activities of the male counterpart,²¹ the speaker’s husband (A), expanded by diverse descriptions of the activities that he undertakes such as “standing,” “sitting,” and “going on a trip.” (In example VII-6, these activities are schematically represented using A1 through A6.)

²⁰ Parallelism is one of the most prevalent forms of ritual speech found across societies. See Fox 1971.

²¹ Despite the fact that indexical pronouns for the counterpart do not appear within the text, I translate the omitted subject as “he,” based on the self-referential term, “*Dik*” in line 16. *Dik* (younger sibling) is an everyday address term or a self-referential term for a girlfriend or a wife.

A (n): Husband's activity: (He) does (something)
 A': Duration of the activity
 X: Husband's sensations: (He) cannot help feeling (the speaker's body)
 Y: The speaker's body

7. <i>Kok duduk</i> <i>taaso-aso</i>	7. If [he] stands, [let my vagina] be felt and felt [by him]	A1+ X
8. <i>Kok togak</i> <i>taaso-aso</i>	8. If [he] sits, [let my vagina] be felt and felt [by him]	A2+X
9. <i>Lubang puki aku iko</i>	9. This hole of my vagina	Y
10. <i>Sataun jalan da'at</i>	10. [If he goes] One year trip on land	A'+A3
11. <i>Tigo bulan palayi'an</i>	11. [If he goes] Three months fishing on the ocean	A'+A4
12. <i>Lubang puki aku iko</i> <i>taaso-aso jo</i>	12. Let this hole of my vagina be felt and felt, too [by him]	Y+X
13. <i>Sapuluh cai bini,</i>	13. [Even if he] Ten times looks for wives,	A'+ A5
14. <i>Satui cai kondak</i>	14. [Even if he] one hundred times finds girlfriends	A'+A6
15. <i>Tak ado sasodap</i> <i>lubang puki aku iko</i>	15. There is nothing as tasty as this hole of my vagina	Y

Example VII- 7: Canonical organization of “the Prayer of the Seven Tastes”

As shown in the example above, the husband's activities of the text are organized as A1 through A6. This organization is also modified by stative verbs; *taaso-aso* (be felt and felt) which is marked by X and produces the structure of [(A1+X) (A2+X)] //[(A'+A3)(A'+A4)]//[(A'+A5)(A'+ A6)]. The husband's activities are thus expanded and paired by adding the semantically equivalent description of activities, which enhances poetic structure of the magic spell.²²

Furthermore, each pair is followed by the phrase indicating the present performer's body (Y), with the indexical words of the first person form *aku* (“my”) and deictic pronoun *iko* (“this”)(Example VII-8).

²² See Keane 1997a for the importance of parallelism in ritual speech. See Fox 1988 for a review of general anthropological perspectives on parallelism.

7. <i>Kok duduk taaso-aso</i>	7. If [he] stands, [let my vagina] be felt and felt [by him]	
8. <i>Kok togak taaso-aso</i>	8. If [he] sits, [let my vagina] be felt and felt [by him]	
9. <i>Lubang puki <u>aku iko</u></i>	9. <u>This</u> hole of <u>my</u> vagina	Y
10. <i>Sataun jalan da'at</i>	10. [If he goes] One year trip on land	
11. <i>Tigo bulan palayi'an</i>	11. [If he goes] Three months fishing on the ocean	
12. <i>Lubang puki <u>aku iko</u> taaso-aso jo</i>	12. let <u>this</u> hole of <u>my</u> vagina be felt and felt [by him] too.	Y
13. <i>Sapuluh cai bini,</i>	13. [Even if he] Ten times looks for wives,	
14. <i>Satui cai kondak</i>	14. [Even if he] one hundred times finds girlfriends	
15. <i>Tak ado sasodap lubang puki aku iko</i>	15. There is nothing as tasty as <u>this</u> hole of <u>my</u> vagina	Y
16. <i><u>Dik</u> <name></i>	16. <u>Sister</u> <name>	

Example VII-8: Indexical elements embedded in couplets (Y: speaker's body)

Line 16 of the above excerpt (Example VII-8) names and locates the speaker as *Dik* (sister). Given that *Dik* is a common Petalangan address term for a wife, by naming the speaker herself as *Dik*, the present performer of "I" is finally objectified and positioned as the target man's wife in a specific 'here and now.' As organized in the formulaic structure, however, the speaker "I" remains actively embedded in the unchanging "ancestors' words." Figure 12 schematizes the internal organization of "The Prayer of Seven Tastes."

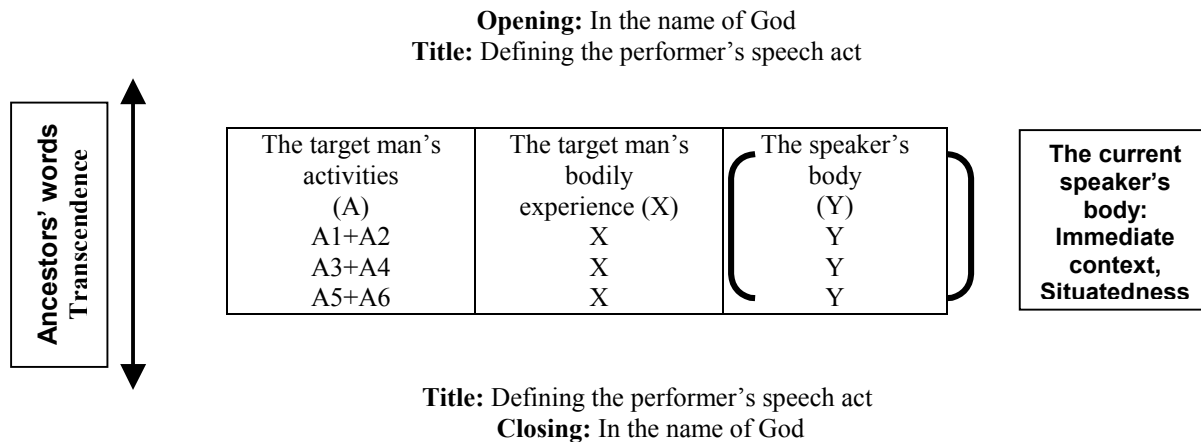


Figure 12. Internal organization of The Prayer of the Seven Tastes

The internal structure of the text reveals the present speaker as an animator of ancestors and god. The highly formal and poetic internal structure of the spell provides a set of interpretive frameworks by which the present performance is understood as a recitation of the ancestors' unchanging words, and as detached from the immediate ever-changing context. Use of indexical pronouns embedded in the whole structure of framing, however, retains the link between the current speaker and the original speakers.

Social construction of the female body in relation to men's sexual experience

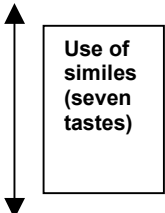
Another magic spell, "Locking Fatima's Door" (*Kunci kati Fatima*) is recited to protect the female body from any possible danger of men's sexuality.²³ Given that *Fatima*

²³ In Petalangan women's view, having sex could harm the women's bodies. This perspective is frequently expressed in their anxiety that they would have a "watery" (*beaye*) and "not-dried" (*tidak koing*) vagina because of excessive sex, which is usually caused by the husbands' strong appetite for sexual relations.

is one of the most common female names in Petalangan society, this name has become a generic term for woman²⁴. Fatima's door also metaphorically refers to the female genitalia. By analyzing Spell 3, I will argue that the female body is socially constituted and constructed, and that its representation is mediated by conventional Petalangan notions of the female body and sexuality.

Spell 3. "Locking Fatima's door" (*Kunci kati Fatima*)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Bismillahiramanirahim</i> 2. <i>Cup takacup-kacup</i> 3. <i>Tumbuh di padang sibui-bui</i> 4. <i>Takacup kacup-ku</i> 5. <i>Sotollah Allah tatogak dii</i> 6. <i>Aku mamakai "Kunci katiFatima"</i> 7. <i>Sompit belubang ja'um</i> 8. <i>Koing abu dapur</i> 9. <i>Kosang sabut sekoping</i> 10. <i>Hangat sepoti tempuyung</i> 11. <i>Podeh sepoti lado bepatah</i> 12. <i>Asin sepoti ga'am seisak</i> 13. <i>Lomak sepoti
nio nan gulo</i> 14. <i>Pintu sogo si patima</i> 15. <i>Apo nan pulang ke o'ang</i> 16. <i>Ambe sepoti ketopang nio</i> 17. <i>Sojuk sepoti ayi di dapur</i> 18. <i>Itulah nan pulang ke o'ang</i> 19. <i>Aku makai "Kunci kati Fatima"</i> 20. <i>Sotollah</i> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In the name of God 2. <i>chup takacup</i> (sounds of jingling scissors), 3. Grows in the foaming field. 4. <i>Takachup</i>, my <i>kacup</i>, 5. In the name of Allah who stands by himself 6. I use "Locking Fatima's door" 7. Tight like the eye of a needle 8. Dry like ashes in the kitchen 9. Fresh (crisp) like a chip of coconut husk 10. Hot like charcoals of palm trunk 11. Spicy like a piece of chili 12. Salty like a pinch of salt 13. Greasy and sweet
like coconut milk and sugar 14. <i>Fatima's</i> heaven's door 15. What returns to others are, 16. Tastelessness like a coconut's hull 17. Coldness like water in the kitchen 18. Those are what return to others 19. I use "Locking Fatima's door." 20. In the name of Allah |
|--|---|



In "Locking Fatima's Door," lines 7 through 13 demonstrate the construction of the female body in relation to the men's sexual experience. In this spell, diverse similes describe female genital organs as having "seven tastes"²⁵ or palpable characteristics, such as tight, dry, fresh (crisp), hot, spicy, salty, as well as greasy and sweet. This spell recites

²⁴ Not only in Petalangan society, but also in other Muslim societies, Fatima is a common female name. Since the biblical Fatima is the fourth daughter of Muhammad and the one most beloved by her father (cf. Schimmel 1997), many Muslims name their daughters after her.

²⁵ In Petalangan conventions, the female genital has been described as having "seven tastes" (*tuju aso*).

the names of objects that possess appropriate qualities of the seven tastes. These similes, however, describe neither the physical figures of female genitalia, nor the women's experience or feelings. Rather, the similes serve to constitute a partner's sexual experience, following conventional notions of the seven tastes of a generic woman's vagina.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 6. <i>untuk membuka hawa nafsu badan ku iko</i> | 6. to open desire in this my body |
| 7. <i>Kok duduk</i> | 7. If [he] stands, [let my vagina be] |
| <i>taaso-aso</i> | felt and felt [by him] |
| 8. <i>Kok togak taaso-aso</i> | 8. If [he] sits, [let my vagina be] felt and felt [by him] |
| 9. <i>Lubang puki aku iko</i> | 9. This hole of my vagina |
| 10. <i>Sataun jalan da'at</i> | 10. [If he goes] One year trip on the land |
| 11. <i>Tigo bulan palayi'an</i> | 11. [If he goes] Three months fishing on the ocean |
| 12. <i>Lubang puki aku iko taaso-aso jo</i> | 12. Let my vagina be felt and felt [by him] too |
| 13. <i>Sapuluh cai bini,</i> | 13. [Even if he] Ten times looks for wives, |
| 14. <i>Satui cai kondak</i> | 14. [Even if he] one hundred times finds girlfriends |
| 15. <i>Tak ado sasodap lubang puki aku iko</i> | 15. There is nothing as tasty as this my vagina |
| 16. <i>Dik <nama></i> | 16. [His] sister, <name > |

Example VII-9. Men's bodily sensations in "the Prayer of the Seven Tastes"

Example VII-9 above also shows how the female body is constructed through male sensations in the spell. As examined in the above section, this spell is recited in order to "open desire" in the female body (line 6). Throughout the text, however, we cannot find any description of female desire. Instead, we find the male counterpart's sexual experience as shown in lines 7 through 14. The use of stative affix of 'te(r)-' in 'taaso-aso' implies the passive state of feeling, such as "cannot help feeling" in lines 7 and 8. This makes the hidden subject of the sentence emerge, not as an agent, but as an experiencer-subject. Thus, the locus of women's desire is found, not in their internal bodies or selves, but rather in men's sexual experiences.

Social construction of the female body in contrast to other women's bodies

The speaker's female body also appears in contrast to those of other women. In example VII-10 of the "Prayer of the Seven Tastes," lines 13 and 15 claim that the performer's sexual capacity is qualitatively superior to any other women.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 13. <i>Sapuluh cai bini,</i> | 13. [Even if he] Ten times looks for wives , |
| 14. <i>Satui cai kondak</i> | 14. [Even if he] one hundred times finds girlfriends |
| 15. <i>Tak ado sasodap lubang puki aku iko</i> | 15. There is nothing as tasty as this my vagina |
| 16. <i>Dik < nama ></i> | 16. [His] sister, <name > |

Example VII-10. "The Prayer of the Seven Tastes"

- | | |
|--|--|
| 15. <i>Apo nan pulang ke o'ang</i> | 15. What returns to others are, |
| 16. <i>Ambe sepoti ketopang nio</i> | 16. Tastelessness like a coconut's hull |
| 17. <i>Sojuk sepoti ayi di dapur</i> | 17. Coldness like water in the kitchen |
| 18. <i>Itulah nan pulang ke o'ang</i> | 18. Those are what return to others |

Example VII-11. "Locking Fatima's door"

Drawing on the spell "Locking Fatima's Door," in Example VII-11, the performer's body is compared to other women's bodies, which are 'tasteless' in line 16 and 'cold' in line 17. The female body and desires are thus represented as constructed through male erotic sensations as well as through a comparison with other women's bodies, drawing on conventional Petalangan representations of "seven tastes" of the female body.

I have examined two categories of Petalangan beauty spells—one is for unmarried women (Spell 1), and the other is for married women (Spell 2 and 3). These two categories of the spells are different in that the one does not describe any sexualized body

or desire, while the other refers to the female genitalia and men's erotic sensations. However, both categories are similar in that they do not describe physical differences in the female body, or female desire. Rather the spells aim to evoke desire in others' bodies, and make other people feel or act, while the performer does not engage in any direct activity.

Love Spells: Desire as Spiritual Potency

Next spell is one of love spells called "the Prayer of Inviting Life Force" (*Doa Si Kundang Mayo*). This spell is believed to activate a spiritual agent called "White Angel who Invites Life Force" who takes a target person's soul to a speaker.

Spell 4: The Prayer of "Inviting Life Force" (Doa Si Kundang Mayo)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Bismillahirrahmanirrahim</i> 2. <i>pinangku si gaganjolalai</i> 3. <i>tanam di ate kubu</i> 4. <i>nyawo di dalam obuk solai</i> 5. <i>bangkit bangun <Si Anu> tidu</i> 6. <i>aku mamakai doa Si Kundang Mayo</i> 7. <i>tibo di da'a mangalolak</i> 8. <i>tibo di ati mayang podih</i> 9. <i>tibo di bonak mangamuncang</i> 10. <i>hak, bangkit, bangun</i> 11. <i>engkau,</i>
<i>Malaikat Putih Si Kundang Mayo</i> 12. <i>mintak dudukkan</i> 13. <i>mintak togakkan</i> 14. <i>mintak bawokan</i> 15. <i>aku komai</i> 16. <i>gilo siang dengan malam</i> 17. <i>gilo potang dengan pagi</i> 18. <i>ayam kukuk sangkonyo aku</i> 19. <i>muai bakicau sangkonyo aku</i> 20. <i>Kono doa monto ku iko</i> 21. <i>Berkat Lailahaillallah</i> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In the name of God 2. My <i>Pinang</i> (areca nuts) swings back and forth 3. planted on a grave. 4. A soul is in a string of hair, 5. Wake up and stand up, <someone> who is sleeping, 6. I use the prayer of "Inviting life force." 7. [It] arrives in the blood, [making it] boil. 8. [It] arrives in the heart, [making it] painful. 9. [It] arrives in the spine, [making it] shake. 10. Haii! Wake up and stand up 11. you, "White Angel Inviting Life Force" 12. [I] ask [you] to make [him/her] sit. 13. [I] ask [you] to make [him/her] stand. 14. [I] ask [you] to make [him/her] return, 15. back to me. 16. Crazy, day and night, 17. crazy, morning and afternoon. 18. If a chicken is crackling, he/she remembers me. 19. If <i>Muai</i> (a bird) is singing, he/she remembers me. 20. Get hit by my spell. 21. Bless [me]. There is no god but Allah. |
|---|---|

This spell shows the same internal organization as in other spells. The spell is framed by an Islamic opening phrase (line 1), pantun (lines 2-5), defining speech act (lines 6 and 20), and closing remarks (line 21).

7. <i>tibo di da'a mangalolak</i>	7. [It] <u>Arrives</u> in the blood, [making it] boil.
8. <i>tibo di ati mayan podih</i>	8. [It] <u>Arrives</u> in the heart, [making it] painful.
9. <i>tibo di bonak mangamuncang</i>	9. [It] <u>Arrives</u> in the spine, [make it] shake.
10. <i>Hak bangkit bangun</i>	10. Haii! Wake up, and stand up,
11. <i>Angkau Malaikat Putih Si Kundang Mayo</i>	11. you, White Angel Inviting Life Force.

Example VII- 12: Spiritual agent acts upon a target person's body

The spell projects images of a person who is experiencing physiological changes in lines 7-9, which are preceded by the word “arrive” (Example VII-12). Itemizations of body parts and their physiological changes project a scene wherein a spiritual agent acts upon the target person. Use of the second person pronoun in line 11 ensures that the speaker successfully invokes the spirit agent in the current pragmatic context.

12. <i>Mintak <u>dudukan</u></i>	12. [I] ask [you] to make [a target person] sit
13. <i>Mintak <u>togakan</u></i>	13. [I] ask [you] to make [a target person] stand
14. <i>Mintak <u>bawokan</u></i>	14. [I] ask [you] to make [a target person] return

Example VII-13: Speaker's Speech Act (ask) + *-kan* (causative verbal suffix)

The spell describes the target person as engaging in bodily acts, such as “sitting,” “standing” and “returning” in lines 12-14 (Example VII-13). With the causative suffix ‘-kan,’ the target person's activities appear as totally controlled by outer forces.

- Spell 1: “I” in others' perception

4.8. <i>Elok endah aku dipandang</i>	4.8. Pretty and beautiful, I am seen
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- Spell 2: “my body” in others' sensations

12. <i>Lubang puki aku iko taaso-aso jo</i>	12. let this hole of my vagina be felt and felt [by him] too.
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- Spell 4 : “I” in other's thinking

18. *Ayam kuku sangkonyo aku*
19. *Muai bakicau sangkonyo aku*

18. A Chicken crackling, he/she remembers me,
19. Muai is (a bird) singing, he/she remembers me.

Example VII-14: Focalization of the speaker

In Example VII-14, the speaking subject “I” does not perform any direct accusative acts. But the speaker appears as an object of desire. The speaking “I” is focalized through others’ perception, feeling, and thinking. Except for married women’s obscene spells, the beauty and love spells are commonly used in courtship. However, the spells are not linked to sexed bodies, or sexual desire. Obscene spells are said to “open” desire in the female body, but the spells do not describe the female sexual desire. Rather, the spells project imaginary figures who are different in agency—a performer as an object of desire, and others who perceive and desire the performer.

Example VII-15: Hierarchy of Others (Spell 1)

13. *gilo somuo uang nan amai*
14. *sumuo anak sidang manusia*
15. *katuanya Si Co'am Balik Gilo*
16. *sagolo uang amai*
17. *sedang kan Allah lagi sayang*
18. *sedang kan Muhammad sudah gilo*

13. [Driven] Crazy, all crowded people,
14. every group of human being.
15. Their leader is Mr. Turning Crazy Choam.
16. All crowded people.
17. While Allah also loves [me],
18. while Muhammad is already crazy,

The Petalangan notions of desirability are related to social hierarchy. As Example VII-15 shows, Spell 1 projects others as hierarchically structured, from a group of people (lines 13-14), its leader “Mr. Turning Crazy Choam” (line 15), and even to Allah (line 17) and Muhammad (line 18). A superior desires an inferior.

What Do They Do with Words? : Desire and Desirability

Petalangan women say that they use love spells to deal with their fear of being abandoned by their husbands. Men's mobility—their freedom to go anywhere—is a threatening factor for Petalangan women. Men have more opportunities to meet other women outside the village, while women cannot circulate and socialize freely because of their restricted mobility. A major gender difference in courtship asserts that “men are brave (*bo'ani*) enough to achieve desired partners, while women are ashamed (*malu*) to express their own feelings to their lovers.” Petalangan customary law regulates dating as well. Girls and boys are not allowed to meet each other at night. If caught, their families are required to pay a fine to leaders of the village, because they disobeyed the customary law and thereby shamed the village. Then, the boy and the girl are forced to marry to each other.

From this point of view, Petalangan women think that the use of magic spells is more “suitable”(*cocok*) for women, because they can be performed in private and personal circumstances. The spells are powerful enough to activate the spiritual agents beyond women's limited social boundaries. Through the authoritative ‘ancestors’ words,’ women are said to acquire ‘spiritual vision’ (*pandangan batin*) that is free to move around despite women's physically restricted mobility. “While we do not see our husbands with the eyes, we could see them in mind. Once we seize them in our 'spiritual vision,' then they would never leave us.”

The desire to use the spells is social. Petalangan customary law defines one of the parental duties as that of arranging for their children's marriages. Petalangan parents say

that they would feel shame if their daughters could not find spouses at an early age, around 15 or 16. The desire to find spouses does not merely emanate from individual needs, but is also based on social desirability.

Petalangan women say that they use obscene magic spells for the fear about being abandoned by the husbands. More strictly, women fear the shame that they would face from other family members and neighbors, who would slander and despise them if their husbands were to leave. In fact, many women in the village have been divorced or left by their husbands. These women have become “ashamed” (*malu*) in their social interactions with other villagers, because they have been abandoned. Fear of humility and deprivation leads them to recite magic spells. Petalangan women say, “City women put on make-up, while we wear magic spells.”

Petalangan women, therefore, believe that they must satisfy the husbands’ sexual desires in order to keep their families as well as their marriages intact. They say that although they may feel a lack of sexual appetite, they make an effort to “open desire.” They do so by appropriating the conventional notions of the female body as determined by the men’s sexual experience, not as internally owned by women. By reciting magic spells, therefore, women can achieve or control their own sexual desires, allowing women to appear ‘rational,’ in contrast to the Islamic gender dichotomy where men represent reason, and women represent desire.

Social Desirability: Petalangan Notions of Power and Agency

The notion of social desirability is central to understanding the Petalangan construction of social life as well as the sexual self. With an emphasis on spiritual potency, ‘appeal’ is a more dominant way of exercising power than ‘assertion’ in social encounters, as Petalangan society emphasizes social unity and interdependence (cf. Anderson 1972). Power is not an attribute of a person but a divine energy that reveals itself as radiance of light, while power in the Western sense is identified with “activity, forcefulness, getting things done, instrumentality, and effectiveness brought about through calculation of means to achieve goals” (S. Errington 1990: 5). As in other Southeast Asian societies that have shown different notions of power, a person with spiritual potency attracts people and makes them act. Engaging in a direct activity only reveals the person’s lack of spiritual power.

Given this background, women’s practices of beauty spells and love spells are not only expressions of female marginality, but also can be viewed as enabling powers to invoke specific sentimental intimacy in social encounters. Recently, as government-sponsored palm oil plantations and logging companies entered the Petalangan territories, Petalangan people have experienced a loss of ancestral land. During the land disputes with powerful outsiders, many male elder leaders told me that they use beauty spells when they try to “appeal” to powerful outsiders.

This can be explained as efforts to establish personal affective bonds with outsiders by recourse of female dependence on male’s protection and care to solicit nurturance and protection from superiors. They used to say some of their successful

negotiations were because of their beauty spells. When I was there for my field research, they used to tell me that their beauty spells are powerful enough to attract people, even foreigners like me. My presence among them appeared as a proof of their spiritual potency. Their practices of beauty spells to evoke a specific sentimental intimacy or compassion become one of the important tools by which Petalangan people manage and manipulate others. Meanings of practices of Petalangan beauty spells and love spells are not fixed but emergent and contingent to social contexts.

Strathern argues that gender symbolism plays a crucial role in people's conceptualization of the social world (Strathern 1987: ix). Just as the sibling relationship between brother (*abang*) and sister (*adik*) as a metaphor for romantic relationships recurs across diverse expressive genres of the Petalangan people, the trope of seduction and solicitation becomes a primary means for describing the diverse transformations of Petalangan power relations. Such power relations with superiors, including supernatural beings, nature, and powerful outsiders, employ the metaphor of female marginality to describe the people's collective sense of marginalization from the powerful center.

In the Petalangan view, becoming an "object of desire" is another mode of agency, as it solicits spiritual power and attracts others. This notion of agency is in contrast to the common Western dichotomy between women as subordinated objects of desire and men as actors who control and dominate. The importance of desirability in Petalangan society illustrates another type of agency. Petalangan relations of power thus appear not as a simple dichotomy of subordination and resistance. Rather, Petalangan marginality is negotiated and actively interpreted contingent on the context, as people transform and interpret their marginal positions in terms of female dependency on male

protection and care. It is within this framework that Petalangan people attempt to solicit attention and economic support from powerful outsiders including the urban Malay elites and company managers, as well as from the state.

Agency in Magic Spells

The Petalangan spells reflect this notion of agency. Throughout the beauty and love spells, the agency of speaking subject “I” is not apparent. “I” as an agent only appears in describing the subject’s speech activities as repeating the ancestors’ words or invoking a spiritual agent.

1. Repeating Spells’ Titles (Spell 1, 2, 3, 4).
“I use the Prayer of X”
2. Invoking Spiritual Power (Spell 4: 12-14)
“[I] ask [a spiritual agent] to do X”

Example VII- 16. “I” as an Agent: Describing Speaking Activities

Given that all of these lines describe the subject’s speech activity itself, the speaker’s agency is restricted to the activity of repeating ancestors’ words. Moreover, the high formality of the magic spell infuses textual authority into the spells so that it appears unchanged from generation to generation.²⁶ The present speaker is an animator of the original speakers. As reflected in women’s obscene magic spells, for instance, in using the name of Fatima, a collective term for women, in Spell 2 and 3, or by framing the present utterance in the name of God, the individual speaker’s agency disappears only to

²⁶ This process is explained by the term of *entextualization* (cf. Briggs and Bauman 1990, Kuipers 1990). According to Kuipers (ibid: 4), *entextualization* is a process “in which a speech event is marked by increasing thoroughness of poetic and rhetorical patterning and growing levels of detachment from the immediate pragmatic context.” The authority of performance is explained as being constituted through this entextualization process.

reappear as collective feminine subjectivity, or as coming from higher sources of authority.

With framing devices and poetic structure, the speaker's utterance appears as embedded in the ancestors' words. The speaker's agency is not an attribute or power through which the speaker asserts control over action. Rather, it is found in the very act by which the speaker ascribes one's agency to the higher sources of power, embedded in a specific type of magic formula.

Unlike Butler's universalized notions of performativity that focus primarily on the "reiteration" of discourse and pay less attention to its contextually contingent meanings, the ethnographic accounts of Petalangan magic spells draw attention to the multiple functions and meanings of the language practice as emergent in specific social contexts. In this respect, the analysis of Petalangan practices of magic spells brings the issues of agency back to discussion, whereas Butler's emphasis on the discursive construction of gender and the (sexed) body has largely discounted the agency of the subject (Butler 1990, 1993. cf. Hall 2000: 186). For example, in Petalangan women's practices of obscene magic spells, they redefine and represent their desires and sexuality as being socially embedded and culturally performed, which renders the Petalangan women's desires and sexuality as a social requisite in fulfilling their wifely role. This directly contrasts the dominant Islamic gender ideology of "irrational" women. Petalangan women's agency operates in producing new meanings of female bodies and sexuality in specific social contexts, while simultaneously embedded in the discursive limit.

In conclusion, Petalangan practices of magic spells demonstrate the multiplicity in forms and degrees of agency. Unlike the conventional Western notions of agency that

emphasizes individual will and intentions (cf. Ortner 1984, 1996), Petalangan people acquire agency by denying their individual intentions as well as by invoking the authority of “the ancestors’ voices” embedded in a specific type of magic formula. Agency is located in making others “act,” rather than engaging direct activity. Agency is not an attribute or power through which they assert control or authorship over action. It is found in the very act in which they ascribe their agency to the higher sources of power, such as ancestors’ words and God, as demonstrated in their magic spells.