

# SASTRA

DAN

# PERKEMBANGAN MEDIA



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MASLIKATIN

UDARTOMO MACARYUS



# SASTRA DAN PERKEMBANGAN MEDIA

Perkembangan masyarakat dan kebudayaan, telah menyebabkan adanya evolusi media sastra. Kemajuan teknologi komunikasi, berpengaruh terhadap penciptaan sastra, karena sastra pun kemudian menggunakan kemajuan teknologi itu. Dalam evolusi dan/ atau revolusi kebudayaan itu, ciptaan media baru berdampak mengurangi penggunaan media lama, namun media-media lama ternyata masih tumbuh secara simultan di tengah kemajuan-kemajuan media mutakhir (multi-media). Di tengah media sastra *cyber*, masih ada media sastra lisan, media sastra buku, dan media sastra jurnalistik.

Ibarat lampu lilin atau teplok yang tidak bisa digantikan oleh listrik. Sastra dengan perkembangan media yang ada, memiliki pendukung atau penggemar sendiri-sendiri. Dengan demikian, semua media sastra dapat tumbuh berdampingan, tanpa saling menafikan satu sama lain  
(Prof. Dr. I.B. Putera Manuaba, M.Hum.).



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# SASTRA DAN PERKEMBANGAN MEDIA

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# SASTRA

## DAN

# PERKEMBANGAN MEDIA

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Tim Editor :

Novi Anoegrajekti

Heru S.P. Saputra

Titik Maslikatin

Sudartomo Macaryus



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# MACAN LUCU: INDONESIAN SATIRE ON MILITARISM

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## Abstrak

Teks bukan hanya kalimat, melainkan juga gambar, ujaran, bahkan kebiasaan masyarakat. Keberadaan patung *Macan Lucu* di Koramil Cisewu Garut dimaknai berbeda di masyarakat. Harimau yang idealnya liar justru dimaknai lucu di ruang siber. Patung yang tersenyum lebar dengan badan gemuk, sama sekali tidak mencerminkan imaji ideal seekor harimau. Menariknya, patung itu ditujukan sebagai simbol militerisme. Harimau, yang dikonsepsikan militer sebagai citra warisan budaya Sunda yang kuat, justru dipahami sebagai kelucuan di internet. Itu adalah bentuk satir, ironi, karnival, serta *kitsch* sebagai simbol kultural yang resisten terhadap mitos yang ideologis. Apa yang didiktekan oleh subjek kekuasaan nyatanya justru dimaknai berbeda dari objeknya. Ada celah pendiktean mitos dan definisi yang justru membawa kemungkinan makna lain untuk muncul. Kemungkinan itu adalah keseharian yang tak dapat direduksi oleh representasi, mitos, bahkan definisi. Selalu ada resistensi dalam tiap pendiktean. Tulisan ini membahas relasi antara *Macan Lucu* dan militerisme Indonesia. Melalui analisis tentang resistensi kultural, *Macan Lucu* tidak hanya sekedar lelucon tanpa makna, melainkan anti-mitos terhadap militerisme. Kondisi-kondisi virtual dunia siber memperluas lingkup teks dan memungkinkan kebebasan kemungkinan makna lain. Singkatnya, *Macan Lucu* adalah makna yang lain; keberlainan melampaui definisi yang didikte oleh militer.

**Kata kunci:** keseharian, Macan Lucu, militerisme, mitos, satir

## A. INTRODUCTION

In 2017, there was a viral image about a funny sculpture in Garut, West Java. This sculpture is a tiger located in front of *Komando Rayon Militer (Koramil)* Cisewu, Garut. What made it funny is its posture of body and grinning face. The image has been so viral that it has been shown not only as virtual memes, but also in television news.<sup>1</sup> People thought that it was funny not just because of its cute face but also that it is a tiger. More than that, the sculpture was located in front of military office. The sculpture was meant to represent the spirit of Indonesian military in that area. Tiger was chosen because of its relation with Sundanese culture, image of a fierce animal, and also symbol of military itself. However, the sculpture was considered funny rather than fierce or wild. Tiger which is translated in Indonesian language as *macan* then added *lucu* translated as funny to show that it was an extraordinary tiger sculpture.

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<sup>1</sup> Detik.com, 2017, *Bertampang Lucu, Patung Macan Koramil Jadi Viral*, inet.detik.com/cyberlife/d-3447407/bertampang-lucu-patung-macan-koramil-cisewu-jadi-viral, accessed October 17<sup>th</sup> 2018.



The Image of *Macan Lucu*

Since the sculpture was assumed differently from what it was expected, other values followed. Representation of military becomes funny, cute, and even so well related to community. From military side, they said that it was such wrong sculpture. They blamed the sculptor that he built such cuteness. They took down *Macan Lucu*, destroyed it into pieces, and changed it into a more fierce one. Interestingly, netizens felt sad about it. Common people thought that its cute face was so entertaining and it may build closer and better relationship between military and society. While netizens thought that the tiger sculpture was funny and cute as an entertainment, military was upset because it has lost its meaning to show a symbol of fierce, wild, and strong spirit.<sup>2</sup>

The above condition of *Macan Lucu* actually is not only about funniness or cuteness of the sculpture, but also an interesting relation between netizens and military. The question is, what kind of perception shown between people and military in *Macan Lucu*? It is the satire of militarism. *Macan Lucu* is desire of the people, but actually it is not desired at all. The vast perceptions in virtual world has opened other wider possibilities of assumptions in real world. This paper reviews relations between *Macan Lucu* and militarism in Indonesia. *Macan Lucu* came as cultural resistance of myth desired by military. There is such disconnection between condition and definition. The condition between what is defined in reality and want to be dictated has lost its conformity as a myth. *Macan Lucu* is such anti-myth condition of military desired definition.

## B. Discussion

### 1. *Macan Lucu* and Its Open Condition in Cyberspace

The rapid flowing of information and globalization have made internet such a space for people to move.<sup>3</sup> The internet space, or usually described as cyberspace, contains cyber persona as identity of people in this space. The identity is not constant, but flexible depends on what issues that people talk about. Digital identities are identified through conditions which are different from real world. Human beings in real world are constituted as subjects of the world. We can say that in digital world, people are also seen as digital subjects who voluntary

<sup>2</sup> Detik.com, 2017, *Alasan Patung macan Lucu Diganti Tak Cerminkan Kebangsaan*, news.detik.com/berita/d-3449745/alasan-patung-macan-lucu-diganti-tak-cerminkankebangsaan-leluhur, accessed October 17<sup>th</sup> 2018.

<sup>3</sup> Philip Smith and Alexander Riley, 2004, *Cultural Theory: An Introduction*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, p. 136.

attach to the world as well as participate in active schemes. Sometimes, what it means with subject is not really autonomous one. People are subjected and also decentered from the world. They are in the digital world and also live the rules inside. The conditions are different between digital and real world. We can refer certain places in digital world which are really related to real world, but some of them are just like arenas for people to interact with each other.

At this point, the differences may also bring some adjustment between those two worlds. Subjects which are mentioned to be fully conscious in real world are doubted since their bodies and minds percept differently. What really happens in real world could affect digital world and it works reversely too. Culture which builds identities is also different. Digital world could not be said to be so normative since it encompass many more values than real world. The world shapes identities which are uncertain to people and their both actions and interactions. It is not certain whether such actions could build sense of belonging to the society or not. It may contain many values, but it is beyond good and bad, even it still consists of several fixed understanding. Here, we could not say about subjects anymore, since everyone is subject constructed by digital world. It is rather to say on digital entities. The entities do not limit to certain people because organizations and communities are involved too. Indeed, it brings several hopes about equality since digital world objectifies subjects. Since everyone has access to digital world, people could participate on them. Society comes to be important in digital world described as digital society.

Some theorists would say that digital world is different from real world. This perception actually does not omit the relations between them. Here, we do not discuss whether it is utopia or dystopia to tell that which world is better, since those are conditions in everyday life. Digital world is another phase after energy revolution.<sup>4</sup> It also broadens the concepts of culture as values are getting diversified too since identities are not just only collective shares. Therefore, this space is so open that any issues may arise. The virtual condition not only extends scope of text, but also enables freedom for possibility of other emerged meanings. Cyber persona, or even named as netizens, do not just talk about it but also share, comment, or even spread it to real world. Plurality on identities of cyber space affects issues being talked so that it also brings in another effect on culture and how people make of it.

What makes *Macan Lucu* specific and special is its conditions. First condition is its place in cyberspace. The term *Macan Lucu* is so viral that people may see it easily in internet. People then do not just see, but also share and comment about the sculpture. It built such specific discourse in cyberspace. Once it is asserted, it may bring in many possibilities afterwards. People may see it as usual thing while others may see it as interesting and unique as well. Cyberspace, which is so open, provides many possibilities for anything to appear including this funny tiger. Its informal condition also reflects everyday life which asserts people's openness to many things. It is not formal at all since it does not need certain structure but plural conditions to make it realized.<sup>5</sup> Rapid flowing of information is also such cause for the issue to come. What is known by someone, once it is spread, could be seen by anyone in internet. Its vast condition of cyber and space as well do not contradict, but widen perceptions from what is known into what could be understood.

Second condition is its relation with real life. Brought from real life, the image may reflect both same and different perceptions. The same perception is seen from how the sculpture is considered abnormal, or even funny, from other usual tiger images. Definition of tiger, which is a fierce and wild animal, has lost its meaning because of *Macan Lucu*'s grinning face and fat body. What is defined is so different from the reality itself. This perception also spreads to cyberspace which considers the image to be funny too. The different perceptions asserted that the sculpture actually has been there years ago but no one share about it. Cyberspace provides such

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<sup>4</sup> Alfathri Adlin, *Kata Pengantar*, in Budi Hartanto, 2013, "Dunia Pasca-Manusia: Menjelajahi Tema-Tema Kontemporer Filsafat Teknologi", Depok:Kepik, p. ix.

<sup>5</sup> Chris Barker, 2014, *Kamus Kajian Budaya* (terj.), Yogyakarta: Kanisius, p. 134.

vast space for an issue to be known by other people in other further places.<sup>6</sup> In real life, people just thought that the sculpture was wrongly interpreted as military symbol. No one labeled it as “Lucu” because they just name it as other tiger sculpture. No one made memes about it or spread it as another symbol of funniness and cuteness. No one tries to make fun from military conditions. People just think that it is funny while sharing it to others is another thing. Cyberspace indeed widened the conditions by giving it new name as an event that is out of normal conditions.

Third condition is its different interpretation on military. The sculpture actually is built to represent spirit of Indonesian military and Sundanese cultural heritage. Tiger is considered as brave, fierce, wild, and strong instead of funny and cute animal. The sculpture is actually also understood for the spirit so that people know the meaning behind it too. There is a definition which is wanted to be told by military and understood by people. However, *Macan Lucu* explained different interpretation of the definition. Netizens first saw that *Macan Lucu* is a tiger sculpture that was different from other normal tiger statues.<sup>7</sup> Its stripes in the sculpture still showed that it was a tiger but its grinning face pointed a funny and even friendly animal. Moreover, the sculpture was placed in front of military office. Some values that wanted to be put in the sculpture also lost in its interpretations. What military wanted by building the statue has been destroyed by the condition of *Macan Lucu*.



The Destroying of *Macan Lucu* by Local Military

## 2. *Macan Lucu* as A Cultural Resistance

The image of *Macan Lucu* reflected idea of cyberspace. Cyberspace may come in two sides; as same and different from real life. In this case, *Macan Lucu* shows both aspects reciprocally. People could not ignore its condition of real places, but they may share it widely in other space. That condition shows spectrum of realities. Netizens may have different desire when they come as cyber persona in digital space. Some people want to actualize themselves, while others try to find any other entertainment different from real life. Cyberspace then shows widening possibilities which affect freedom of people. Since the freedom is wider, other meanings may arise too. There is no such certain continuation between real life and cyberspace. *Macan Lucu* is such discontinuation between definition and reality.

*Macan Lucu* is a reality that reflected desire of people. It was given a name different from usual tiger or *macan*, because it still include characteristic of tiger but in different interpretation. The grinning face and fat body is the opposite of fierce and brave figure. The desire of the sculptor wanted to make different tiger statue, while *Macan Lucu* is what people wanted to see in cyberspace. On the other hand, military thought that the statue was wrong as it was not desired at all. They rejected *Macan Lucu*, destroyed it, and changed it with the

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<sup>6</sup> Smith and Riley, p. 137.

<sup>7</sup> Kumparan.com, 2017, *Berganti Rupa Harimau Cisewu dan Macan Lucu Cisompet*, [kumparan.com/@kumparannews/berganti-rupa-harimau-cisewu-dan-macan-lucucisompet](http://kumparan.com/@kumparannews/berganti-rupa-harimau-cisewu-dan-macan-lucucisompet), accessed October 17<sup>th</sup> 2018.

figure what they desired to be. This condition is stated between the desire and the desired. It is not just about active and passive form of verb but also contains cultural meanings of power relations.

Desire is power itself. Netizens have such power to interpret *Macan Lucu* as such funniness and cuteness. It is everyday culture, not high culture.<sup>8</sup> They wanted it as it is, which brings in another knowledge for them. Their knowledge of funniness and cuteness is similar to the sculpture. *Macan Lucu* fitted with netizens' desire as what people wanted. People appreciated it even though the figure was not similar, or even totally different, from real animal's images. As desired, military was described here. Military would like to show the tiger sculpture to represent their spirit. They want the sculpture as they desired so that people's knowledge could be defined too by the desired meanings. *Macan Lucu* is not what military desired. The sculpture was failed to fulfill the task of definition as to synchronize the knowledge of military between people's thought and military's itself.

*Macan Lucu* itself reflected diachronic idea between signified and signifier. The signified aspect indicates fixed ideas about military and its animal symbols. The signifier aspect shows the reality of the sculpture and appreciation from netizens.<sup>9</sup> Those two aspects are different and what *Macan Lucu* made of them. The sculpture is the resistance of cultural meanings. It brought in such ornamentation out of dogmatic understandings.<sup>10</sup> It wanted to get out of what has been dictated to it. The military rejected and destroyed it, but netizens appreciated its existence. The sculpture belonged to the military, but netizens owned it once it became *Macan Lucu*. The face and body of *Macan Lucu* is the aspects that escaped from the dictations of what tiger should be.

*Macan Lucu* is such tactic that moves out of strategy. The sculpture is reflection of everyday life that drifts from modern structure. Everyday life consists of various complexities instead of fixed definitions. It is not perfect at all but still contains cultural meanings as appreciated by netizens. It escapes the dictation of myth defined to it. *Macan Lucu* wanted to represent itself without any defined representations. By living the name of *Macan Lucu* given by netizens, it transforms the definition in militarism into such resistance against the myth. *Macan Lucu* is anti-myth.

### 3. *Macan Lucu* and Its Mashed-Up Contexts

Condition of *Macan Lucu* related to contexts rather than concepts. The contexts are cyberspace and its other possible meanings. Its contextual idea is otherness, which is different from fixed and dictated idea seen in defined and described concepts. Seen from its diachronic idea, *Macan Lucu* consists of mashed-up contexts. It was related to figure of tiger, sculpture of tiger, grinning face and fat body of that sculpture, cultural heritage of the tiger, military definition about the tiger, military perspective on tiger sculpture and *Macan Lucu* itself.<sup>11</sup> From those various contexts, *Macan Lucu* is other which contains such otherness.<sup>12</sup> It is different from any other, but still related to those former concepts. The sculpture is related to anti-myth condition which is also reflected from desired definition. It is also point of desire as context which myth rejected in certain definition.

Today, text is no longer merely sentences but also images, speech, and habits of society. Text is the scene of the audience.<sup>13</sup> The appearance of *Macan Lucu* in Koramil Cisewu Garut is a text interpreted differently by the community. It is a form of satire, irony, carnival, and *kitsch* on cultural symbol as such resistance to myth.

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<sup>8</sup> Simon During, 2005, *Cultural Studies: An Introduction*, Routledge:New York, p. 7.

<sup>9</sup> BBC.com, 2017, *Internet Menangisi 'Matinya' Macan Lucu Cisewu*, [www.bbc.com/indonesia/trensosial-39288096](http://www.bbc.com/indonesia/trensosial-39288096), accessed October 17<sup>th</sup> 2018.

<sup>10</sup> During, p. 67.

<sup>11</sup> Detik.com, 2017, *Patung Macan Koramil Cisewu dan Warisan Budaya Pajajaran*, [news.detik.com/berita/d-3450299/patung-macan-koramil-cisewu-dan-warisanbudaya-pajajaran](http://news.detik.com/berita/d-3450299/patung-macan-koramil-cisewu-dan-warisanbudaya-pajajaran), accessed October 17<sup>th</sup> 2018.

<sup>12</sup> Marilyn Motz, *Material Culture and Heritage*, in Gary Burns (ed.), 2016, "A Companion to Popular Culture", Oxford:Wiley Blackwell, p. 197.

<sup>13</sup> Robert Stam, *Cultural Studies and Race*, in Toby Miller (ed.), 2001, "A Companion to Cultural Studies", Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, p. 479.

What is dictated to society by the subject of power owners may be understood differently by the object. There is a gap in desired myth and definition, while it is a possibility for another meaning. The possibility is everydayness that cannot be reduced by representation, myth, or narration; *Macan Lucu* is not a joke without meaning but anti-myth against militarism.

As a satire, *Macan Lucu* is a ridicule to expose perceived social idea. It is such sarcasm that constructs different meaning from reality.<sup>14</sup> In this issue, *Macan Lucu* is another way to say about tiger. This tiger is not fierce at all, but built through what society described as funny. This satire turned over the condition of wilderness into a funny condition. It is also such criticism about tiger which is rarely seen now but easily understood in *Macan Lucu*. It draws particular meaning of tiger that is an animal, but out of its main idea of being wild. *Macan Lucu* is a satire to its natural condition. It is not an animal at all. It is a statue built to be put in front of military office. It does not possess the nature of tiger, but its attributes are attached there. *Macan Lucu* may trigger such laughter, but it does not come without any process at all. As a satire, this image was preceded with how people compare between this tiger and real image of wild one. After the comparison, this image brought in laughter because there are many differences as results. People did not laugh without reason, but because of *Macan Lucu*'s differences to real image of tiger. People asked to themselves and others how could there was a statue of tiger with funny image of wilderness. They do not try to change their perception about both *Macan Lucu* and real tiger. They left them as they were.<sup>15</sup> They named the image as *Macan Lucu* as a satire to real tiger.



*Macan Lucu* (left) and The New Tiger Sculpture (right)

*Macan Lucu* is also a irony. Compared to satire, irony emphasizes on the different situation and background of an image. It consists of underlying issue beside merely comparing as satire. Irony rejects definitions.<sup>16</sup> Beside its different meaning from real image of tiger, *Macan Lucu* is also an irony towards military. The statue was supposed to show military's spirit, but came to be a big laughter. It is such an irony that military, which related to hard power, was disgraced by such funny statue. The difference, between what military desire and the reality, has made military as a laughter too. Military could destroy *Macan Lucu* afterwards but its ridiculeness was still remembered.<sup>17</sup> It is because irony is not about ideology which wanted to be applied. It is totally an observation of language that shows contradiction of meanings. The grinning smile and fat body of *Macan Lucu* are

<sup>14</sup> Zoja Pavlovskis-Petit, *Irony and Satire*, in Ruben Quintero, 2007, "A Companion to Satire", Oxford:Blackwell Publishing, p. 512.

<sup>15</sup> Pavlovskis-Petit in Quintero, p. 513.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 517

<sup>17</sup> Medijabar.com, 2017, Terlalu Lucu, Patung Macan Koramil di Subang Diturunkan, [www.medijabar.com/daerah/terlalu-lucu-patung-macan-koramil-disubang-diturunkan.html](http://www.medijabar.com/daerah/terlalu-lucu-patung-macan-koramil-disubang-diturunkan.html), accessed October 17th 2018.

expressions of irony to military situation behind that statue. Those expressions are situated beyond normal knowledge. There are no military personnel or any symbol that related to such grin and fatness. They are serious people. However, *Macan Lucu* came as a possibility of other recognized knowledge. Netizens did accept the funny military situation but the military refused it. It is also another irony beside condition of *Macan Lucu* itself. Military which is stated to be partner of society did not want to be ashamed by society. The military rejected the symbol that they built themselves. People already tried to accept the opposite of what military really mean but military said no way about it. Military may be upset if the statue was made to ridicule them. However, the statue is in their office and built to represent their spirit. People just interpret that they are the symbol of military itself, but it is wrong. It left *Macan Lucu* with bitterness of being funny though.

More than just satire and irony, *Macan Lucu* is a carnival. It is a celebration of difference both in internet condition and funniness of the statue. People leave their problems in real life and laugh to this image. They understood that the image of *Macan Lucu* is totally different from real tiger but they did not really mind about it. People left their modern life, came together to internet, and laugh to the image together too. They are united because of this ridiculous image. They did not think that it is a serious matter to see a grinning tiger, compared to what military thought about it. *Macan Lucu* is such exaggeration of real image of tiger and internet condition of it. Even it is still unknown who is the sculptor of that statue, the image surpassed the real idea of a tiger. A tiger, which has straight and firm body, was drawn to be fat. Its roaring face, which shows its fierce and wild behavior, was considered in grinning face. If traditional carnival related to a feast, *Macan Lucu* is also a feast of people's desire of laughter. The sculptor succeeded to make people laugh by exaggerating the image of tiger. The carnival is not a celebration of ideology of sameness, but illogical difference. It breaks apart oppressive and moldy forms of thought and cleared the path for the imagination and the never-ending project of emancipation.<sup>18</sup>Sometimes people wear mask in real carnival. So does *Macan Lucu* with its funny face and fat body. It maybe such serious issue for militarism, but it is just considered as difference for netizens.

Moreover, *Macan Lucu* is a *kitsch*. A *kitsch* is not regarded as high art but popular one.<sup>19</sup> It does not need curator to say that it is aesthetic because its funniness is an art itself. Art is nothing if people ignored it. Yet, *Macan Lucu* got people's attention. It is so cheesy that its humorous aspect may be ordinary of people. It is just a meme from thousands of memes in internet. It does not require people to put distance between their judgment and the art itself. It consists of spontaneous idea of ridicule. It is emotional rather than systemic. It is still a statue, but its meaning goes beyond it. It may be fake compared to real image of tiger, but its purpose is deep as it is socially constructed in everyday language. *Macan Lucu* does not ignore its difference to real image of tiger, but its instant funniness enrich idea of tiger itself. It maybe cliché, but it requires to be seen as itself. It is a thing that is aesthetic rather than seen from the theory of art. It is the celebration of differences.<sup>20</sup> It may also be cheap, but it brings in special meanings of funniness to society.

*Macan Lucu* is not monolithic at all. It is related to its mashed-up context between ideology, real image of tiger, grinning face, fat body, and many more. It does not relate to only one image, but it could assert many understandings. *Macan Lucu* is meaning of other; otherness of meaning over established definitions. It is beyond definition of military symbol and real image of tiger. It is combination of both of them as a *kitsch*. It is an art of sarcasm which could only be found in particular idea of ordinariness. It is the humor of everyday, that is not dictated but experienced. It is experience of everyday life; stays inside the concept but loosely moves among contexts. *Macan Lucu* is not just a joke, but resistance of usualness and routines. It is not meant to be defined because it goes beyond logic. It is illogical that smiling face is symbol of military and face of tiger. It is

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<sup>18</sup> Smith and Riley, p. 221

<sup>19</sup> John Storey, 2015, *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction*, London:Routledge, p. 6.

<sup>20</sup> Storey, p. 4.

disconnection between signified and signifier. It is its own sign that could only be understood through its difference from real image.

## C. CONCLUSION

*Macan Lucu* is not just a joke of internet meme. This statue is a resistance of military symbol and reflection of ordinariness. This condition of cyberspace reflects how it is assumed differently as object from subject's view. As cultural resistance, it is desire of people rather than what is desired to be. It is a satire, iron, carnival and *kitsch*. It is full of meanings because of its complexity between reality and its funniness. *Macan Lucu*, even it has been destroyed, still live as experience of difference between desire of netizens and ideology of militarism.

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