

THE WAYANG AND THE ISLAMIC ENCOUNTER IN JAVA

Roma Ulinnuha

A Lecture in Faculty of Ushuluddin, Study of Religion and Islamic Thoughts,
UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta. Email: romaullinnuha@yahoo.com

Abstrak

Penelitian ini membahas hubungan antara wayang dan proses penyebaran Islam. Wayang adalah fenomena budaya Jawa yang digunakan oleh para wali pada sekitar abad ke-15 dan ke-16 sebagai media dakwah Islam. Tulisan ini fokus pada Serat Erang-Erang Nata Pandawa yang mengulas tentang karakter Pandawa dalam hubungannya dengan Islam.

– تبحث هذه المقالة عن دور مسرح العرائس (Wayang) في دعم انتشار الإسلام في جاوة –
إندونيسيا. يعد مسرح العرائس ظاهرة ثقافية جاوية، وقد بحج دعاة الإسلام الأوائل (الأولياء
التسعة) في استخدامها كوسيلة إعلامية لنشر الإسلام في القرنين الخامس عشر والسادس عشر
الميلادي. وتركز المقالة على تحليل احد حكايات مسرح العرائس الشهيرة، وهي حكاية
سرات إرانغ-إرانغ ناتا فاندواوا (Serat Erang-Erang Nata Pandawa)، وعلى
الانحص تحليل دور الشخصية الرئيسة في الحكاية (وهي الامير فاندواوا) في نشر الإسلام في
جاوة.

Keywords: Wayang, Serat Erang-Erang, Javanese, Wali

A. Introduction

It has been an interesting stance to discuss the relationship between religion and community in terms of the variety of possibilities of some unique emergences in the process. While people regards religious realms a total guidance that relates the

weakness of human being to the powerful—the Covenant, Javanese people, views religion providing a set of beliefs, symbols and rituals which have been faced a rigorous encounter along with the development of communities in the past, in the present and in the future. The dawn of Islam in Java shared the experience of this relationship, found in why and how the *wali* used the *wayang* in supporting their religious types of activities under the authority of the Court of Demak.

The research discusses the relationship between the *wayang* and the role of *wali* ‘Saint’ in spreading Islam under the patron of the Court of Demak from the fifteenth to the sixteenth centuries. There have been some research conducted on the same field, but this aims at discussing the *wayang* as the phenomena of cultural heritage of the Javanese descendents and inhabitants, while the *wali* ‘Saint’ is framed as the element of religious representation in Java at the time.

The writer did not discuss the whole aspect of the *wayang*, but it emphasizes the way the *wali* formulates the *wayang* in a certain elements such as characters of *Pandawa*. The *wali* relates the five characters of *Pandawa* to the teaching of Islam becomes the fact of the history however as far as I know there had not been a discussion of these elements conducted in relation to a certain cultural theoretical framework. To support the thesis, the writer discusses the manuscript of “Serat Erang-Erang Nata Pandawa” as a document supporting the use of symbolism of *Pandawa* into the teachings of Islam.

Doing the transformation by using the *wayang*, the *wali* utilized this excellent Javanese representation as a medium encountering their mission. The phenomena would give a notion that studying religion could not be separated from the *habitus*—religion, social, economic, and political aspect of society. The relationship between the two entities—religion and culture, would lead to the emergence of a wider implication of the notion in Indonesia Islam particularly in Java.

This research uses library research using the historical and cultural perspective. The data gathered would be analyzed to discuss the relation between the the *wayang* and the *wali* found in the instance of the *Pandawa* under the patron of Demak Court in the 15th – 16th centuries Java. It is beneficial to discuss the *wayang* as a Javanese media serving as a mediation found in the *wali*’s initiative to mingle it with the aspects of Islam. This essay has concentrated on the reflection of the *Pandawa* in “Serat Erang-Erang Nata Pandawa” serves as an evidence of the struggle of the characters in the journey of their life. The writer uses the elaboration of the *Pandawa* found in the reflection of the “Serat Erang-Erang Nata Pandawa” document to the

inquiry the *wali* uses the *pandawa* as the symbolism of the five pillars of Islam in the *wayang* performance.

B. The Oretical Review

Symbol, as Geertz argues, is sometimes an aspect of reality, sometimes of its representation. Asad signified it stating that Geertz elaborates symbol producing two kinds of dispositions, moods and motivation.¹ The Javanese takes the *wayang* (a shadow puppet theatre) as one of their significant symbols in fulfilling the need of spiritual inquiries. Some may even regard the existence of the *wayang* as a real encounter between human and the transcendent handed down over generation by their ancestors.

Basically, communities bear inherently system of belief covering human's ideas and thoughts. It constitutes human conception on God, the spiritual beings (cosmology), the making of nature and universe (cosmogony), on the presence and characteristic of spiritual power, ancestors' spirits, natural power, and other spiritual matters. Koentjaraningrat states that in common ground the system of belief could be found in a form of sacred literature, either oral or written. The sacred literature includes doctrinal aspect, its philosophy, sacred stories, and mythology in a form of a prose or poetry. It depicts much the life of God or Goddess, spirit, and other spiritual beings.²

The *wayang* performance is one of the Javanese cultures that represented the belief of the society. The teaching of wisdom, the relation with the spiritual existence outside the humans as well as an instrument of eradiating the evil spirit found in the presence of the *wayang* performance. The belief system, as Tylor argues that it deals with the human's conception on spirit after death. Likewise, Preusz adds the significance of rites and ceremony in the realm of the system. In doing these elements, human beings considers that they could either materially or spiritually fulfill their both needs and life's goal.³ In the other side, the rites serve as a social function intensifying the solidarity aspect of the society. Durkheim states the fundamental aspect in the society is the need to intensify its collective awareness done by

¹ Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), p. 33.

² Koentjaraningrat, *Sejarah Teori Antropologi* (Jakarta: UI Press, 1987), p. 81.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

conducting sacred rites.⁴

The performance of the *wayang* describes the rites and the ceremony in the system of belief in Javanese realm. The *wali* utilizes the *wayang* as an instrument of recalling the awareness of the social unity in the Javanese mindset. This explains the inquiry why the *wali* used the *wayang* as a medium in delivering their mission. The process would bring the notion of the mission's offer without any firm exposure or mental force since it serves the performance of the *wayang* as its social function.

To the issue of the spiritual being, Kruyt argues that human beings also consider the spiritual things outside their existence. It underlines the notion that if the spiritual beings are neglected, they would get angry with people surroundings. This belief system is called *spiritism*. Similarly, R.Otto also theorizes that all system of beliefs include a spiritual concept (*mysterium*), which is regarded as the super-huge (tremendum) and sacred (sacer) by human beings. In a concise word, it could not be depicted in human language since it could not be accomplished by human grasp of thoughts. It would reveal the adoration attitude and attract human beings' attention.⁵

Furthermore, symbolization is viewed as an unconscious or at least a semiconscious process through which new information is integrated into the conceptual apparatus. Sperber's theory leads to the elaboration on myth, ritual, social interaction, and other aspect of daily life. As Lehman points out, symbol shares a connection between its inherent or literal meaning and what it stands for or its symbolic meaning. Turner also states that a symbol may have more than one meaning, and it should be applied meticulously in a particular situation in a certain society.⁶

The *wayang* therefore serves as a cultural performance that represents the rites, the belief, and the philosophy of the Javanese. The symbol of the *wayang* may relate the intention of the *dhalang* (the performer) to the designated meaning in a particular moment in the Java.

C. The Dawn Of Islam And Circumstances In Java In The 15th And 16th Century

The coming of Islam was in a coincidence to the shifted power of Kingdoms—the increase of Malacca and the rise of Demak. Demak, therefore, linked its authority

⁴ Koentjaraningrat, *Sejarah Teori Antropologi...*, p. 97.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 64-66.

⁶ Mark R. Woodward, *Islam in Java: Normative Piety and Mysticism in the Sultanate of Yogyakarta* (Tucson: the University of Arizona Press, 1989), pp. 43-44.

to the shifted belief of society—the fall of Hindu-Buddha influence and the rise of Islam. Islam became the predominant religion of maritime Southeast Asia except for most of the Philippines. In Java, Islamization was not fast at first because it tends to see the presence of strong Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms. Their decline in the fifteenth century stimulated the expansion of Islam.⁷

It is quite clear that the spirit of age at the time is the vast range of possibility of the people interacted with multi dimensional cultural basis. Javanese—particularly in the coastal region, even more experienced the rich relationship. Traders, workers and sailormen coming from various places of origin may interrelate for the aim of commerce, fortune and exploration.

It is significant to note that Demak is considered as the successor of the previous Majapahit authority and the first Sultan of Demak, Raden Patah, is depicted as the son of the Majapahit's last king by a Chinese princess. The fall of Majapahit is conventionally placed at the end of the fourteenth century.⁸ Raden Patah, then, tried to open the *madrasah* (an Islamic school) and *Pesantren* (an Islamic boarding school) in Glagah Wangi well-known as Bintoro. Demak soon became the capital of the Palace. As the center of people activities, the *Masjid Agung* was built in 1 Dzulqoidah 1428 H.⁹

This transition, I think, fertilized the land of Java with miscellaneous intersects. The Javanese beliefs mingled with the coming influence of Islamic values. The shifted power from Majapahit to Demak itself signaled the center of influence from Hindu-Buddhist entity to the Islam nuance. The background would blend the type of society in Java from cultural, societal and religious frameworks.

The coming of Islam in Java did not face rejection from Javanese custom and tradition. It is the method of the teaching which suits the local tradition. The spreading of Islam needs a support from the authority (the Sultanate) as at the same time the authorities also need Islam entity to support the power. The strength of Islam is immense in the rising of Demak and the fall of Majapahit influence.¹⁰ The relational aspect between authority and the religious entity would lead the

⁷ Nicholas Tarling, *Religion and Popular Beliefs in The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia*, Vol. I (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, tt), p. 330.

⁸ M.C. Riklifs, *A History of Modern Indonesia since c. 1200, third Edition* (California: Stanford University Press, 2001), p. 41.

⁹ Solichin Salam, *Sekitar Walisanga* (Kudus: Menara Kudus, 1960), p. 19.

¹⁰ Samidi Khalim, *Islam dan Spiritualitas Jawa* (Semarang: Rasail, 2008), p. ix.

alternative strategies in dealing with how to meet the two different elements.

D. The Allegory Of *The Wayang* Under The Court Of Demak

Arguing on myth and the performance, Laurie J. Sears states that the exploration of Javanese Ramayana and Mahabharata traditions begins from the premise that myth, history, and story live on in cultures in complex ways. Definitions of myth identify it with fable and universal experience; mythic as an adjective implies characters and tales that appear larger than life. All these meanings converge in Javanese shadow theatre traditions and the stories people tell about them.¹¹

Sears continues to say that certainly the Mahabharata tales that form the major repertoire of the Central Javanese shadow theatre are myth in the sense of fable. The stories tell the exploits of heroes and heroines—the battle fought, the maidens won, the heroes fallen. Because shadow performances are patron-sponsored, puppeteers shape performances to fit the tastes of those who sponsor them. But these stories of Java serve many purposes as they move between story and myth and between myth and history.¹²

In this sense, the *wayang* is used by the authority of the Court of Demak as a means of communication and mission. The way the *wali* delivered the performance in spreading the teaching of Islam was supported by the Court of Demak. Shadow performance then play stories and attribute serve as allegories rather than myth or tradition because allegory became a necessary strategy for historical survival in the society.¹³

The term *wayang* could be derived from Javanese word meaning the people's imitation made of a skin, a paper or a wood gathered to perform a story. Ismunandar states that Javanese resembles their ancestors as the *wayang* characters in a form of *wayang kulit* in the era of Hinduism process of development.¹⁴ Sunan Giri and Pangeran Trenggono (the Sultan of Demak) made wayang size into a smaller scaler, while all characters were completed with the gold type of fashion in 1477. The performance is a media—whether it is held

¹¹ Laurie J. Sears. *Shadows of Empire: Colonial Discourse and Javanese Tales* (London: Duke University Press, 1996), p. 17.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 18.

¹³ Laurie J. Sears. *Shadows of Empire...*, p. 12.

¹⁴ R.M. Ismunandar, *Wayang: Asal Usul dan Jenisnya* (Semarang: Dahara, 1994), p. 9-12.

in the court or outside it—to attract people gathering in a particular location at the time. This strategic media is vital since it would also become the rope in which ties the communal type of society. Javanese, I believe, utilizes this not only as mere elements of culture, but also as an instrument to recall people awareness on being Javanese.

The development of the *wayang* in Javanese land even started earlier at the beginning of 12th century when King Purrawisesa from Jenggala, oversized the wayang kulit in a lontar basis. The King was a *dalang*—the one who performs or leads the story telling—himself, conducted the state of the arts in line with ‘gamelan’. The habit of ‘*mendalang*’ then spread over the member of the palace. The *wayang kulit* actually has been found in Java since the seventh century, taking its role in the higher strata of society at the time.

As mentioned earlier, prior to the 16th century, Javanese land was occupied by Majapahit Hindhu. Islam has found giving a deep influence to Demak’s circumstances although it was a region as a part of Majapahit. Rahardjo states that there were some pious figures spreading the teaching of Islam in Java called the *wali*¹⁵. In *Babad Tanah Jawi*, the names of the *walis* are known: Sunan Ngampel-Denta, Sunan Kudus, Sunan Muria, Sunan Bonang, Sunan Giri, Sunan Kalijaga, Sunan Siti Jenar, Sunan Gunungjati, and Sunan Walilanang. Riklefs points out that the word *wali* is Arabic meaning ‘saint’, but the title *sunan* is from Javanese probably similar to *subun* meaning ‘to do honour to’.¹⁶ Javanese tradition attributes the Islamization of Java to nine preachers (*wali-sanga*).¹⁷ The religious teaching of Islam was being transformed through the acts of mission by *the wali*. The Javanese still and always links the contribution of *the wali* introducing the Islam.

In relation to the mission of the teaching of Islam, Sunan Kalijaga was famous in performing the *wayang*. Ismunandar (1994) argues that the *wayang* has been used widely by the *wali* spreading their teaching of Islam.¹⁸ His background was not far from Majapahit power. He is the son of Tumenggung Wilatikta having a name

¹⁵ Supratikno Rahardjo, *Kota Demak Sebagai Bandar Dagang di Jalur Sutra* (Jakarta: DwiJaya Karya, 1994), pp. 18-19.

¹⁶ M.C. Riklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia since c. 1200, third Edition* (California: Stanford University Press, 2001), p. 12.

¹⁷ Nicholas Tarling, *Religion and Popular Beliefs in The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia*, Vol. I (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, _____), p. 331.

¹⁸ R.M. Ismunandar, *Wayang: Asal Usul dan Jenisnya* (Semarang: Dahara, 1994), p. 96.

Raden Sahid married to a sister of Sunan Gunungjati.¹⁹ Likewise, Haryanto states that the development of *wayang kulit* shared a correlation to the development of the teaching of Islam held by Sunan Kalijaga.²⁰ The massive introduction of a totally new performance of *the wayang* is an evidence of the activity Sunan Kalijaga conducted that needed to be considered in the face of the barrier of the culture.

There is a tendency to compromise Islam and the previous belief –Buddhism or Hinduism in a form of cultural apparatus such as *the wayang* with its plots based on the great Indian epics adapted to Javanese tradition. The characters are represented by flat leather puppets, elaborately carved and painted, ‘which are brought to life’ by a puppeteer (*dalang*), who moves the puppets and makes them talk. The Muslim prohibition against the representation of the living beings is avoided by giving the puppets a very peculiar shape.²¹ This mode of negotiation happens between the previous cultures of Hindu-Buddhist, the Javanese values, and the Islamic influence.

The coming of Islam in Java did not face rejection from Javanese custom and tradition. It is the method of the teaching which suits the local tradition. The spreading of Islam needs a support from the authority (the Sultanate) as at the same time the authorities also need Islam entity to support the power. The strength of Islam is immense in the rising of Demak and the fall of Majapahit influence.²² The relational aspect between authority and the religious entity would lead the alternative strategies in dealing with how to meet the two different elements.

E. The *Pandawa* Instance and Five Pillars of Islam: a Reflection in *Serat Erang-Erang Nata Pandawa*

The limitations of this study are clear: it needs a further study in terms of digging the Javanese manuscripts comprehensively to support the thesis. I would like to point out that unfortunately I am unable to determine from the data the further information on the precise time when the *Serat Erang-Erang nata Pandawa* was written. Notwithstanding its limitations, this study does suggest the significant relationship between the development of religion, the artifact of culture and the

¹⁹ Ageng Pangestu Rama, *Kebudayaan Jawa: Ragam Kebudayaan Kehidupan Kraton dan Masyarakat* (Yogyakarta: Cahaya Ningrat, 2007), pp. 126-127.

²⁰ S. Haryanto, *Bayang-Bayang Adiluhung*, (Semarang: Dahara, 1995), p. 195.

²¹ Nicholas Tarling, *Religion and Popular Beliefs...*, p. 333.

²² Samidi Khalim, *Islam dan Spiritualitas Jawa*, (Semarang: Rasail, 2008), p. ix.

history of Javanese society.

As Sears states that because the stories can be used to comment on the vicissitudes of daily life, and this commentary changes with each telling, it becomes increasingly difficult to fix the ‘meaning’ of any story. Each story has the potential to be renewed in each telling, and each new telling leaves its traces on the story told. The persistent ability of stories both to charge and change past and present marks the constitution and celebration of these stories as allegories. But the power of allegory lies in its very ambiguity: “Thus in allegory the ambivalence occurs between the power to lend the meaning to things on the one hand, and the inability to fix this meaning essentially on the other.”²³

The *wayang* under the Court of Demak reign had been used to indicate the shadow performances often appear as allegories. The use of Javanese Mahabharata tales as a metalanguage for politics, court mission, and entertaining repartee is manifest.

In the Javanese realm, the Javanese people have a tendency to share their openness and tolerance to the other entity. Harsya W. Bachtiar states that the Javanese tolerance reflects the view that all religions teach the morality to the people who affirm it.²⁴ This could be traced in the *wayang* as one of significant Javanese cultural aspect, although it is derived from Hindhuism legacy of culture.²⁵ According to Bastomi (1993), the essence of Javanese culture is formulated in a word—the *wayang*, as if it were an axiom a particularly to Javanese observer. Understanding and studying it is the ultimate condition or *condition sine qua non* in conducting a study of the culture of Java.²⁶ The *wayang* is seen proportionally as intersects of culture dispersion—the Indian, the archipelago and the act of the Javanese in the history of its appearance. The change is manifest since it gives its fullest essence of the on-going process of the development.

Since Javanese generally gets interested in appreciating the *wayang*, the *wali* used it supporting the teaching of Islam in relatively different areas of coverage.²⁷ It is in the *wayang*, models of life and human characters could be understood. This

²³ Laurie J. Sears, *Shadows of Empire: Colonial Discourse and Javanese Tales* (London: Duke University Press, 1996), p. 11.

²⁴ Harsja W Bachtiar, *The Religion of Java: Sebuah Komentar* (Jakarta: Pustaka Jaya, 1981), p. 529.

²⁵ R.M. Ismunandar, *Wayang: Asal Usul dan Jenisnya* (Semarang: Dahara, 1994), p. 96.

²⁶ Suwaji Bastomi, *Nilai-Nilai Seni Pawayangan* (Semarang: Dahara, 1993), p. 1.

²⁷ Purwadi, *Babad Tanah Jawi* (Yogyakarta: Alif, 2001), p. 28.

is done without having a force tension.²⁸ From this perspective, I draw a significant motive in which the the *wali* applying the *wayang* as the media of the teaching.

This correlates to the *spiritism* of the Javanese to realize the otherness. They assume that the performance of the *wayang* could serve as a system of unconsciousness fulfilling both material and spiritual needs. The situation in Java at the dawn of Islam around the 15th to the 16th centuries coincides with the strategy of mission gathered by the the *wali* called *Walisanga*.

The *wali* introductory approach in teaching Islam to Javanese community should be conducted in such a way so that the ritual of Java is still present without neglecting the foundation of Islamic elements of teaching. This, Sujamto states as the indication of aspect of plurality in Javanese fashion, becomes one of the medium of the teaching.²⁹ One of the *walis* serves as a native Javanese is Sunan Kalijaga.

Seeing the Javanese circa 15th and 16th centuries was in the typical situation, I am of the opinion that it is a significant role of Sunan Kalijaga both representing two entities—a man of religion and a man of culture. The *walisanga* assigned him spreading the teaching of Islam through the *wayang*. Fortunately, the young *Sunan* learnt the rope to a physical defence, literature and gamelan. It was so since he was well-educated in Wilatikta authority in Tuban.³⁰

In the *wayang* realm, the *Pandawa* is a representative of good side of characters in contrast to the *Kurawa*. It symbolizes the virtues of human existence. Using these pointers, Sunan Kalijaga started to introduce the five pillars of Islam into the minds of Javanese. This signifies the Javanese openness to other entity. Because the case is essential in Javanese *zeitgeist*, he resembles the five characters of the *Pandawa* into those five elements of Islam. The oldest character of *The Pandawa* is *Puntadewa* that symbolizes *Syahadat* or ‘Confession; witness’; *Bima* represents *Shalat* or ‘an obligatory praying’; *Arjuna* is as *Zakat* or ‘alms’; *Nakulo* and *Sadewo* resemble Ramadhan ‘Fasting’ and ‘Pilgrimage to Mecca’.³¹

The allegorical way carried out by the *Sunan* is actually based on the mystical mindset. The former Majapahit has used to implement for a long time the mystical belief in the line of Hindu and Buddha teachings. The evidence is the application

²⁸ Frans Magnis Suseno, *Wayang dan Panggilan Manusia* (Jakarta: Gramedia, 1995), pp. 4-5.

²⁹ Sujamto, *Reorientasi dan Revitalisasi: Pandangan Hidup Jawa* (Semarang: Dahara, 1992), pp. 16-17.

³⁰ R.M. Ismunandar, *Wayang: Asal Usul dan Jenisnya* (Semarang: Dahara, 1994), p. 97.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 98.

of the title of ‘Sang Maharaja Syiwa Budha’. This consciousness spreads out tightly in the Javanese domain to seek pathways in the road of the two religious teachings. Their behavior and norms are seen under the paradigm of the *Pandita* and *Bhiksu*. The ultimate being of the belief is the ‘Sang Hyang Widhi’ which becomes the basic idea of the Javanese mysticism.

The relation between the characters and the teaching of Islam is also a part of Majapahit grand design in the continuous era. The strategy of the Sunan under the patron of the Demak Court is the instance of transformation in the Javanese realm, since the Javanese society has been settled down in the era. Islam—coming as a new entity to the Javanese, needs to be approached in terms of the situational mode to response the built-in consciousness found in the previous legacy—the Majapahit’s Hindu and Buddha.

This type of approach is strategic to the teaching, since it would easily be absorbed by the Javanese society at the time. The symbolization of the *Pandawa* to the five pillars of Islam is believed vastly happened in the dawn of Islam in Java at the time, Sunan Kalijaga’s formula recalls the memory of Javanese awareness. Using the *wayang*, I argue that Sunan Kalijaga utilizes it as a supporting aspect in the Javanese play performance. The *wayang* serves as a social function to deliver solidarity amongst society. It underlines the *wali*’s introductory approach in teaching Islam to Javanese community that keep it in a balance of the ritual of Java and the foundation of Islamic elements of teaching.

The allegory of the Pandawa’s character to the five pillars of Islam is interesting since it is easily accepted among the Javanese people. The first character is the oldest *Pandawa* named *Puntadewa* or *Samiaji*. It becomes the allegory of the *Syabadah* or confession, the first teaching of Islam. As the oldest, he leads and directs his younger brothers in the wisdom of life that is similar to why the first teaching here serves a central issue in the life of Muslim. Without having commitment to *Syabadah* or confession, the acts of Muslim would be useless. *Puntadewa* has a heirloom called *jimat Kalimasada* which is beneficial to keep him alive. As long as he holds the heirloom, it is impossible for him to die.

Jimat Kalimasada is identical with the word ‘kalimah syahadat’ which acts as the first and the most significant aspect of the Islamic point. Applying the *syabadah* and the heirloom of *Kalimasada* in his performance, Sunan Kalijaga actually attracts the attention of the society and at the same time he recalls the memory of society to its awareness of *the wayang* culture. The strategic position of the *wayang* in *Javanese* culture

becomes manifest in the practice of the performance.³²

Using symbolization is also a way in which the present culture of the time did not directly confronted with the new teaching of Islam. Likewise, the mediation is found in Majapahit era when two different entities—Hindu and Buddha—are mingled in the Court of the time. Hitherto the model inspires the religious entities an alternative approach in delivering mission to almost any religious backgrounds.

The second character of *Pandawa* is *Bima* or *Werkudara*. *Bima* is the character which could not be separated from his standing act. He could only stand whatever acts are carried out, thus he could not sit down. This is the phrase in which the character symbolizes to the second teaching of Islam—the *Shalat* or praying. It is true for every Muslim that obligatory praying is one of the most significant teachings in the belief since there is a Prophet Muhammad's tradition stated that "For those who conducting the *Shalat* is the Muslim who strengthen the Islamic religion, but those who are not would be considered as the one who destroys Islamic construction". *Bima* also uses the common level of Javanese language or 'Ngoko' to address any characters from the God, the priest to the average characters. In the other word, he speaks single level of language to the other characters regardless their backgrounds, positions and authorities. To *shalat* teaching, the act is also has one level of language whoever the person is.³³ This tendency of the culture and religion relationship may lead us to the significance of moderation in the teaching of religion. Once the society understands it, it is quite possible developing the essence of religion.

Without being in a symbolism framework, the teaching of *shalat* is an impossible exposure among the Javanese. It is through *Bima* that the representation of *shalat* could be attached deeply so that it is quite familiar for the Javanese people to accept it. The symbol type of approach serves a smooth way abridging the diversity.

The third teaching of Islam is *Zakat* or alms. The character of Arjuna is represented to this act of delivering goods to others. It is Arjuna who consciously behaves in such a humble traits so that his action or speech does not hurt anybody else. His positive character is shown in the way Muslim should share their belongings. The property is not the mere right of the individual but it is also inherent in it the individual obligation sharing it to the others. The *zakat* is allegorized to Arjuna so that the teaching of Islam is safely delivered without neglecting the presence of

³² *Ibid.*, p. 99.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp.99-100

cultural aspect.³⁴

The last two characters of *Pandawa* is *Nakula* and *Sadewa*. The idea why these characters resembles the teaching of obligatory fasting and *Haji* or Pilgrimage are that the presence of the two in the *wayang* performance. It is essential that the presence of the two in the story is frequently rare in comparison to the other characters.³⁵

To the allegorical view of the *Ramadhan* fasting and the *Haji* or Pilgrimage, the two points of Islam is not carried out in everyday's matter. *Ramadhan* fasting is done once a year in giving a chance of Muslim to a resolution. After months of ordinary life, it is in *Ramadhan* that one could take a look back to the months before. While *Haji* is obligatory for those who could afford it, there is no exposure for those who could not. The application of *Ramadhan* and *Haji* in the teaching of Islam did not force directly the Javanese rather it is conducted in introducing the good deeds of Islam.

Eventually, the instance of –the *Pandawa*, serve a significant mode of thinking in the Javanese awareness. The *wali* attributes it as an allegorical part of the *wayang* performance to meet the both end—the religious and cultural entities. In general sense, I underline this type of approach could be utilized by any religious representations dealing with the cultural entity.

Those representations are pivotal seen in the reflection of “*Serat Erang-Erang Nata Pandawa*” that depicts the struggle of the five characters in *Pandawa* in carrying out the *dharmā*. The five characters bear the witness of supporting each other in the moments of joys and sorrows in the world and the here-after.

In the initial part of the *Serat*, the writer takes the first and the fourth of *Asmaradana* representing the manifestation of the struggle and the unity of *Pandawa*.³⁶

1. Makrityaasmara makingkin,
Marna reh nata Pandhawa,
Ri sedheng murweng wiraos,
Amusara in pirembag,

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.100-101

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.101-102

³⁶ Moelyono Sastonyatmo, *Serat Erang-Erang Nata Pandawa*, trans. (Jakarta: Proyek penerbitan Buku Sastra Indonesia dan Daerah), p. 219.

Wedharing kira-kira,
Aprasetya ari catur,
Tan pisah sabaya pejah

4. Metyaken sukaning galih,
Saesthining kang wardaya,
Pinatah in papatute,
Samya memuhung remaksa,
Ing kadangira tuwa,
Turing ka jumeneng ratu,
Den tetep salajunira

The first part of *Asmarada* indicates the sorrow of the five *Pandhawa* “..marna reh nata Pandhawa, ri sedheng murweng wiraos..”. The sorrow comes from *Puntadewa*’s failure in controlling his evil passion, so that the *pandawa* lose the country of *Astina* to the hand of *Prabu Suyudana* of *Kurawa* in a dice gaming. Starting the moment, the five *Pandawa* pledged to support each other until the death do them apart. This is depicted in “...amusara in pirembag, wedharing kira-kira, aprasetya ari catur, tan pisah sabaya pejah..”.

The fourth part of *Asmaradana* depicts the love and care of the five characters of *Pandawa*. It is stated in “..metyaken sukaning galih, saesthining kang wardaya, pinatah in papatute, samya memuhung remaksa”. They keep asking the oldest brother –Prabu Puntadewa or Yudhistira becoming the King of *Astina* forever in the future. It is written in “..ing kadangira tuwa, turing ka jumeneng ratu, den tetep salajunira”.

The two excerpts of the *Asmarada* in *Serat Erang-Erang Nata Pandawa*, serve as the philosophical essence in which it depicts the struggle and the unity of the *pandawa* in performing the *darma*. This, I argue, becomes a fundamental reason the way the *wali* used the depiction of *Pandawa* to the teaching of Islam. The struggle of the five characters of *Pandawa* is in line to the struggle of Muslim in performing the five pillars of Islam. The religious figures represent this notion to carry out the mission to the Javanese society.

F. Conclusion

The research constitutes the notion that religious activities serve its nuance as

an integral part of culture. Society as a cultural subsystem deals with particular rites, norms, and arts. The representation of the culture could be functioned as the media to support the religious activities.

Javanese always and still continue their linkage of life to the spiritual beings and existence. This could be best seen in the *wayang*—a type of Javanese play performance. As the essence of Javanese culture, its existence was seen even strategic in the perspective of the *walisanga* in the 15th to 16th centuries Java. Sunan Kalijaga, one of the Javanese representatives in the *walisanga*—utilizes the *wayang kulit* introducing the aspect of Islamic teaching to the Javanese.

The study shows that the Court of Demak utilizes the *wayang* as an allegory to maintain the mission and the communication. Using the allegory, Sunan Kalijaga serves as a mediator in compromising the two entities—the *wayang* as the symbol of Javanese culture and Islam as the religious teaching of the *walisanga*. Realizing its function as the mode of solidarity among the Javanese, Sunan Kalijaga particularly applies the spiritual and philosophical teaching of Islam in the *wayang* and symbolizes the five characters of the *Pandawa* to the five pillars of Islam. The depiction of *Pandawa* struggle found in *Serat Erang-Erang nata Pandawa* serves as a reflection to the inquiry of the reason the religious figures uses the *wayang* in conducting their mission.

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