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Dialectical of Islam and Javanese Culture in Suluk Saloka Jiwa by Ranggawarsita

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Abstract---Efforts to find the intersection of Islam and Javanese culture have occurred since a long time ago. One of the efforts was Javanese literary texts that dialects within those two entities. Ranggawarsita figure is an intensely Javanese poet voicing the problem. Through his work, *Suluk Saloka Jiwa*, written in the XIX Century, Ranggawarsita tells Sang Hyang (God) Vishnu from Java who studied to Sheikh Usman Najid from Turkey. As a result, a dialectic that Sang Hyang Vishnu, in *wadag* (physical) remains Javanese but spiritually has become an Islamic or monotheist. This article is a philological research of the text of *Suluk Saloka Jiwa* by Ranggawarsita. With the hermeneutic approach, the author tries to uncover the meaning of the texts (mythical poetry form in Javanese literature). And the spirit of the text can be a model of a cultural strategy seeking the intersection of Islam and Java.

Keywords---culture, Islam Javanese, Ranggawarsita, Suluk Saloka Jiwa.

Introduction

The issue of tolerance remains an urgent problem for pluralistic societies - especially in terms of religion - as in Indonesia. Various attempts were made to deal with the problem. Among these efforts are finding common ground (*kalimah sawa*) among the religions. However, the search for common ground often hits a thick wall when each side feels superior to the other. Beyond it, the confronting problem is that the intersection search is feared will undermine the authenticity

of a religion's teachings. This is then reflected in the emergence of religious purification movements, especially among Moslems. Therefore, it is necessary to find a way to build an open, egalitarian religious practice, without sacrificing the authenticity of religion (Sugyaningsih & Mardiana, 2017; Zohdi, 2017; Suryasa, 2019).

In the past, especially in the after-Demak Moslem Kingdom era, this kind of problem has also occurred, especially when the hegemony of coastal ascendancy (the North Coast of Java Island) has begun to weaken and budge to the hinterland. It happens because of the character between coastal communities and the agrarian hinterland is clearly different. When transportation still relies on the sea, coastal areas were clearly more benefited and more likely to get along with many parties, especially foreigners. That way, coastal communities were more dynamic, cosmopolitan, adaptable and quick to accept new values.

The incoming of Islam, as a value system, was clearly new at the time. Before, the Javanese (Nusantara) community were Hinduism and Buddhism, in addition to indigenous cultural values. In accordance with environmental conditions and social structure, the teachings of Islam is faster growing and integrated in coastal communities. When the Majapahit Kingdom collapsed and stood Demak Kingdom, the growth of Islam became more and more hegemonic. In addition to the historical factor of the role of Islamic advocates, because Demak's position lies in the coastal area. But when Demak's hegemony began to recede and the ascendancy budge to south, Islam inevitably had to share it with old values (Hinduism, Buddhism and other local values) still held by the inland Java (Supriyadi et al., 2012; Aryanti, 2015; Taylor & Peace, 2015).

In the middle of such a situation, the new authority of the after-Demak Kingdom of Islamic kingdom, especially the Islamic Mataram Kingdom, must still need to develop their territorial integration. In its position in the inland, inevitably makes Mataram Islam must begin to calculate the local forces of the inland community, the main base of its power buffer. However, the strong coastal forces with its Islamic features should not be ignored. From here, efforts to find the intersection between Islam and Java began to be encouraged. Cultural strategies to build value encounters are through "subversion" of value through literary works. Serat *Suluk Saloka Jiwa* may be said to be born in this kind of situation (Peters, 1976; Woodward, 1999; Simuh, 2019).

The legacy of Kedhung Kol

Serat *Suluk Salokan Jiwa* is the work of Raden Ngabehi (R.Ng.) Ranggawarsita (1802-1873 C / 1728-1802 Jv). However, as Simuh writes, it is thought as a derivative of Ranggawarsita's work, with not included the descendant's name. What is certain, this work is mentioned as the legacy of Kedhung Kol (Yasadipuran), a place that is now located at east of Pasar Kliwon, Surakarta. This is revealed in two closing stanzas:

*Tamat sampun
panedaking serat
luluri wijangan*

*wijang-wijanganing wiji
winih sangking Kedhung Kol saloka jiwa
Wit anurun katiten kaping nem nuju
Jumadilakirnya
Ehe sengkalaning warsi
titengeran cipta catur ngesthi tunggal*

The freely meaning of the two verses quotation is: "The decline of *serat suluk* have finished, preserving utterances, teachings and *Saloka Jiwa* (Song of Soul) of Kedhung Kol heritage. The decline begun on the sixth of Last Jumadil of Ehe year with the number 1841".

Because of those who live in Kedhung Kol are not only Ranggawarsita, but also their ancestors, both Yasadipura I and his son Yasadipura II, who is Ranggawarsita's grandfather, then this work might be a legacy of his great grandfather and grandfather. If this opinion is true, the descendors are almost certain of Ranggawarsita himself, since he was born in 1802 C and died in 1873 C (and the year of decline of the *suluk*, in 1841, is also expected to be Christ). The first time this *suluk* was published by Albert Rusche & Co. Publishers, in 1915, in Javanese form of *sekar macapat*.

In addition to that opinion, there is another opinion which says that the year 1841 is actually still referring to the Javanese year, which was commensurate with the year 1911 C. If this is true, then the manuscript of *Suluk Saloka Jiwa* published by Albert Rusche & Co is certainly the original work of Ranggawarsita, but its descendant is precisely someone else, since Ranggawarsita was dead. It could have been made for the preparation of publication at Albert Rusche & Co. Publishers, considering the decline year (1911) coinciding with the publishing year (1915).

However, judging from its characteristics, this book seems to be the original work of Ranggawarsita. Among these characteristics, for example, the presence of *candrasangkala* or *suryasangkala*, namely the number of years incarnated in sentences that match the problem or purpose written in his essay. Called *candrasangkala* if refer to the years of Java, while *suryasangkala* refer to the year of Christ. In *Suluk Saloka Jiwa*, *candrasangkala* or *suryasangkala*, there is a sentence in the closing stanza". *Cipta catur ngesthi tunggal*", which means the year of 1841. Other features, is the existence of *sandiasma*, the name of the undisclosed authors in various inserts in sentence or *gatra* (part/verse) or in on (stanza). In Kamajaya's note, the Ranggawarsita poet is a pioneer in this regard. *Sandiasma* is contained in the following quotation:

*rarasing gita wiyata
dénata ngastawa ngastuti
ngayut waluyéng jiwangga
berat tyas murta birai
ijrah ijiring dhiri
rongkot rungsiting pangangkuh
galong gèlènging cipta
warsitaning pra-muslimin
sinukarta rong gatra trus warsitaya.*

Words or syllables in bold print in the above quotation together will refer the name of Raden Ngabei Ranggawarsita. Therefore, in this paper, Suluk Saloka Jiwa is seen as the original work of Ranggawarsita.

The end of “*Kapujanggan*” literary

Ranggawarsita is a palace poet of Kasunanan Palace Surakarta Hadiningrat. As a palace writer, he certainly still inherited the literary tradition of *kapujanggan*, the literary tradition of the palace, a kind of state writer, who wrote for the sake of the palace or kingdom. In fact, in many places, Ranggawarsita is often named as a poet or the last poet in the tradition of Javanese palace. However, the title of the last poet is often regarded as a myth, as if after him there is no longer a Javanese poet (palace). In fact, there is still a palace poet after him, who served as an *abdi dalem* writer (clerks) in the palace. There is also an opinion which says this (last) poet is related to the fact that after Ranggawarsita's death, the king no longer raises a poet (author) to write down his thoughts. Another interpretation, this title as part of the myth to give legitimacy of the "Islamic" path Ranggawarsita, because this title reminds the existence of the last prophecy (*khatamul anbiya*) carried by Prophet Muhammad SAW in Islamic teachings (Horikoshi, 1980; Haake, 1989; Sawitri et al., 2021).

However, on the other side, the title of this *pujangga* (poet) seemed to be an irony for the collapse of literary tradition *kapujanggan* due to cultural transformation that developed at the time. The transformation of the culture was not triggered by the hegemonic power of the colonial government, so that the Javanese kings no longer required the legitimacy of its *pujangga*, but by the power of the colonial government-in this case the Dutch East Indies government. The description of cultural transformation of the collapse of the literary tradition of *kapujanggan* was clearly described by the Japanese historian Takashi Shiraishi in his dissertation *An Age Motion: Popular Radicalism in Java, 1912-1926* (1990).

Shiraishi said that no situation describes cultural transformation in Surakarta in the IX century other than the place occupied by Ranggawarsita at that time. In accordance with his position as a palace writer, he legitimized power through his superior language abilities. However, on the other side, because of the politics condition in the Surakarta Kasunanan Palace at that moment, the prestige of the istama's poetry began to fade. It is because the legitimacy of power is no longer determined by the presence of the poet (author of the palace), but by the Dutch (as the colonial power continues to plunge in the palace). This has an impact on the cultural sector. Javanese cultural patrons were no longer in the palace, but turned to Dutch Javanologists and Indo-Javanese-Chinese communities who developed a modern Javanese literature (Simuh, 2016; Shiraishi, 2019; Shihab, 2001).

Thus, as Takashi Shiraishi points out, it not only marks the end of tradition of *kapujanggan*, but also the end of the Javanese writers patronizing the palace (Mataram), but to the Javanologists, who are predominantly Dutch. However, Ranggawarsita's position as a palace writer remains important to underline, although in fact it is in a mild position, at least to place Ranggawarsita's works in Javanese political culture and its position which still officially a court palace.

Moreover, the beauty of the language of Ranggawarsita's works, as also recognized by Takashi Shiraishi, has set the artistic standard of this day, therefore his position remains legendary.

Beyond that, Ranggawarsita's work are also disseminated through the printing process, making it more accessible to a wider audience, including to Dutch Javanologists and Indo-Java-Chinese communities. This is in contrast to previous poets, whose work is mostly still hand-copied. For this position, Ranggawarsita's work seem to have a stronger sociological effect, which is not merely his position as a palace poet but also his artistic achievement factor.

Contents and teachings of *Suluk Saloka Jiwa*

From the beginning this manuscript was motivated by the spirit of dialectics, the spirit of finding the intersection of Islam and Java. In the opening of the text, Ranggarsita writes: "*Anyariosakên nalika Sang Hyang Vishnu puruhaita dhumatêng Sang Padhita Ngusman Najid, karanganipun Suwargi Radên Ngabêi Ranggawarsita, Pujangga Agêng ing Nagari Surakarta Adiningrat*". Literally, meaning to tell when Sang Hyang Vishnu studied to Ulama Ustman Najid, written by the late Raden Ngabei Ranggarsita from Negeri Surakarta Adiningrat.

Once upon a time, a Hindu god Vishnu was driven by a great sense of desire for the intersection between Hindu (Javanese) and Islamic teachings, willing to travel long distances, across the seas and land, to come to Rum (Turkey), one of the centers of the Islam country, who was under Daulah Ustmaniyah authority. For that purpose, Vishnu changed his name to Seh Suman. He also adheres to two religions at once, born as a Hindu, but his mind has become Islam.

Thus, after such a long and exhausting journey, Seh Suman came in the Land of Rum. Incidentally, when he arrived at Rum, Seh Suman was able to attend the deliberations of the great renowned Sufi scholars in Rum led by Sheikh Uthman Al-Naji (the Javanese called Seh Ngusman Najib). The deliberations of the guardians aim to match the six mursid (Sufi teacher): Seh Ngusman Najid, Seh Suman (Lord Vishnu), Seh Bukti Jalal, Seh Brahmana, and Seh Takru Alam.

Such is the summary of the story of *Suluk Saloka Jiwa* as summarized by Simuh. According to Simuh, this book seems to be "inspired" by the deliberative traditions of the *wali* or the Sufi scholar to discuss the prevalence of *kasampurnan* or *makrifat* in the world of *tarekat*. Similar opinions are present in Dr. Alwi Shihab's dissertation at Ain Syams University, Egypt, *Al Tashawwuf Al-Islami wa Atsaruhu fi Al-Tashawwuf Al-Indunisi Al-Ma'asir*. But, in Shihab's dissertation, the characters names are written according to Arabic spellings. Seh Suman wrote as Sulaiman, Seh Ngusman Najid wrote as Shaykh Ustman Al-Naji. Even so, the plot is not different. Both also mention that Ranggawarsita's work has a close affinity with the effort to synchronize the teachings of Islam and Java (Hinduism), the essence of Javanese mysticism teachings (Fakhry, 2009; Moules, 2002; Nurwibowo, 2008).

The *Serat Suluk Saloka Jiwa* speaks of the world of creation, from which human comes and where it will return (*sangkan paraning dumadi*). It seen from the

results of conversations of six Sufis in the Land of Rum who was also attended by Seh Suman or Lord Vishnu. Therefore, Seh Suman concluded that indeed between the teachings of Islam and Java have parallelism.

According to Ranggawarsita, as illustrated by the results of the six Sufi conversations, God is before all things exist. The first created by Allah is *al-nur* which then radiates from him the land, fire, air, and water. Then was created a body consisting of four elements: blood, meat, bones, and ribs. The fire becomes four kinds of soul/lust: *aluamah* (in Arabic spelling *lawwamah*) which is emit black; anger (*ammarah*) emits red; *supiah* (*shufiyyah*) are yellow and *mutmainah* (*muthma'inah*) is white. From the air becomes *nafas*, *tanaffus*, *anfas* and *nufus*.

This creationism is obviously very influential on the mystical tradition of Javanese (mysticism) which indeed takes from the teachings of Islam that combine with local culture. The concepts of the soul (*nafs*) are also demanded in the Sufism Islamic tradition, as developed by Al-Ghazali. In regard to the sorting of *an-nafs* (lust), Al-Ghazali divides seven kinds of passions, namely *mardhiyah*, *radhiyah*, *muthmainah*, *kamilah*, *mulhamah*, *lawwamah*, and *ammarah*. However, the evolving teaching of Javanese mysticism is not seven kinds of lust, but still four lust above.

A physician-Javanese intellectual from Semarang, Paryana Suryadibrata, in 1955, once wrote an essay "Kesehatan Lahir dan Batin" in five series in *Media Magazine* Yogyakarta. For example, he calls four different levels of human lust: *ammarah* (egosentros), *supiyah* (eros), *lawwamah* (polemos), and *muthmainah* (religios). The concept of the four lust was then widespread among the Javanese mysticism extensively, even affecting the non-Muslim Javanese mysticism. Therefore, it is not wrong if Alwi Shihab mentions the figure of Ranggawarsita as the father of Javanese mysticism or *Kejawen*.

Syncretism or an Islamic variant?

So, what is the dialectic of Islam and Java as reflected in *Suluk Saloka Jiwa*? Is it true that Ranggawarsita, with his works of *suluk*, has brought a form of Islamic-Javanese syncretism? So, is it possible that the spirit of finding the intersection of a religion can be used as a cultural strategy design to build the pattern of inter-religious relation in Indonesia today? These questions may not be taken lightly, as the complexity of the problem. The true is, each of the above questions has a correlation with the context of each, depend on how an interpreter takes a point of view (Thohir et al., 2021; Howell, 1976; Errington, 1985).

The assumption that the Javanese mysticism as reflected in *Suluk Saloka Jiwa* is a form of syncretism between Islam and Javanese (Hinduism) may be said to be a general and dominant opinion. Moreover, from the beginning Ranggawarsita himself - through his work - as if it has given legitimacy that there is indeed a parallelism between Islam and Hinduism. This is as reflected in the following quote:

*Yata wahu
Seh Suman sareng angrungu*

Pandikanira
sang panditha Ngusman Najid
langkung suka ngandika jroning wardoyo
Sang Awiku
nyata pandhita linuhung
wulange tan siwah
lan kawruhing jawata di
pang-gelare pangukute tan pra beda

It freely means: "When Seh Suman (Vishnu) hears the teachings of Ngusman Najid, his heart is joyfull. The scholar has a really high science, his teaching was not different from the teachings of the gods (Hinduism). Disclosure and brevity are no different from the science of longing. On this statement, many experts argue that Ranggawarsita has legalized a "double religion" for the Javanese, that is, the birth remains Hindu but inward becomes Islam, because between Hinduism and Islam there is indeed a theological harmony. For example, as Simuh states, "Thus, according to Ranggawarsita, there is no obstacle for Javanese *priyayi* to adopt a double religion such as Vishnu: Born remained Hindu while the mind follows the guidance of Islam".

Such interpretation is not released from the socio-cultural context of the moment. This is inseparable from the cultural strategy adopted by the Islamic palaces in after-Demak Java, which seeks harmony between the strong coastal communities with the teachings of Islam and the rural people who still firmly hold beliefs sourced from Hinduism, Buddhism and local belief. These efforts have been made systematically, mainly since and by Sultan Agung, the third king of Mataram Islam. One of the effort is, Sultan Agung changed the Saka (Hindu) calendar into a Javanese calendar, which is a combination of Saka calendar system and Islamic calendar system (Hijriah).

However, is it true that Javanese Islam is a form of Islamic syncretism with the teachings of Hinduism, Buddhism and Javanese beliefs? The dominant opinion is, especially for those who follow the "*santri-priayi-abangan*" theory of Clifford Geertz as reflected in the monumental *The Religion of Java*. However, another expert researcher on Islamic, Mark R. Woodward, who conducted more recent research than Geertz, in the 1980s, came to another conclusion. Woodward, who had previously studied Hinduism and Buddhism, found no Hindu and Buddhist elements in the Javanese Islamic system. "There is no Taravada system, Mahayana, Siva, or Vaisnava that I studied that it appears to contain (Javanese Islam) except some equations. very trivial," writes Woodward.

For Woodward, Javanese Islam - later implied as *kejawen* - is not a syncretism between Islam and Javanese (Hinduism and Buddhism), but is just another variant of Islam, as well as developing Arabic Islam, Indian Islam, Syrian Islam, Moroccan Islam, and others. The most striking of Javanese Islam, he argues, is that its speed and depth penetrate the most advanced or sophisticated Hindu-Buddhist community. The change took so quickly that the Javanese seemed unaware of the transformation of the theological system.

Thus, the conflict that arises within the existence of Javanese Islam is not an inter-religious conflict (Islam versus Hinduism and Buddhism), but the internal

conflict of Islam, between normative and cultural Islam, between sharia and sufism. In this connection, Mark R. Woodward writes: "Religious dispute (Islam in Java) is not based on different acceptance of Islam by Javanese from various social positions, but on the old question of Islam on how to balance the law and mystical dimension (Fauzan & Rohmadi, 2021; Filladsen & Jordenzen, 2020).

However, it must be admitted, it is not easy to conclude whether *Suluk Saloka Jiwa* teaches syncretism of Islam and Hindu-Buddhism or not. It requires further and deeper research. However, Woodward's opinion that the religious problem in Java is more about normative Islamic conflict and cultural is not without reason, indeed the references of the concept of nafs (lust) as written by Ranggawarsita is difficult to search from the Hindu literature, Buddha or genuine Javanese beliefs, but it would be easier to search by referring to Islamic Sufism literature, as developed by Al-Ghazali, As-Suhrawardi, Hujwiri, Qusyayri, Al-Hallaj and other Islamic Sufi figures.

The fear that Javanese Islam is likely to "diverge" from standard Islam is not only feared by modernist Islamists, but other groups trying to unearth Javanese Islam and try to match it with standard Islamic sources. An intellectual of NU, the motor of the Liberal Islam Network (JIL), Ulil Abshar-Abdalla, when commenting on *Serat Centhini*, said in the Javanese texts (in this case *Serat Centhini*) Islam became the main element underlying the whole story, but the teachings of Islam had "Re-reading" with a native perspective (Java) which is of course different from Islam standard. In this case, Islam is no longer the "big text" that "shaped" Javanese culture in accordance with the standard Islamic orthodoxy canon. However, on the contrary, in Javanese texts, it is true that the Javanese act freely to "reread" Islam without any clumsiness and fear of "perverting" the official Islamic canon (Saddhono & Hartanto, 2021; Amaliah et al., 2015). In Javanese texts, the Islamic and Javanese relations seem so "natural" on the surface, the implicit tone of a smooth, almost imperceptible "resistance", in Ulil Abshar-Abdalla's terms, does not impress "heroism" at all.

Perhaps it is, a typical way of resistance (dialectic) of the Javanese facing foreign penetration. In the prevailing popular Javanese proverb, "*Ngluruk tanpa bala, menang tanpa ngasorake*" (invaded without troops, wins without lowering the opponent). Islam seems to have experienced victory in Java, but in fact Islam has been "subverted" in such a way, using Islam itself, so that actually who still appears as the winner is Java.

Conclusion

In the end, in the context of Islamic-Javanese dialectics, in the context of the *Serat Suluk Saloka Jiwa*, describes more about the variant of Javanese Islam, as is Moroccan Islam, Syrian Islam, Indian Islam, and so on, rather than Javanese-Islamic syncretism. This is because, the terms in Javanese Islam are more traced to the classical Islamic literature, mostly the teachings derived from Sufism (*Tasawuf*), rather than searching for Hindu-Buddhist sources for example. The opposition to Javanese Islamic teachings (*kejawen*) more reflects the contradiction between "substantive Islam versus "normative Islam." Javanese Islam prefers "Islamic substance" without losing its Javanese identity. External life is still Java,

but inwardly has already *tauhid* (Islam). Indeed "subversive resistance" in this respect appears, so that the teachings of Javanese Islam seem to "deviate" from official Islam (which tends to be normative, sharia-oriented).

In a way to search the intersection between Islam and Java is unnecessary to use "us" versus "them" approach, and not to put "Javanese" and "Islam" in oppositional, vis-à-vis, and non-dialogue positions. If we have vis-à-vis Islam and Javanese, in fact we have unwittingly participated in legitimizing the conflict. If that's the case, in the context of building inter-party tolerance, we are not actually giving a resolution, but rather an anti-solution. Therefore, in this context, the resolution should look for other approaches. And the approach that deserves to offer is a transformative approach, which is transforming from the "mythical" to the "epistemological" way of thinking.

The transformation of "mythical" thinking to "epistemological" is to bring the natural mind of people from "not in distance" to nature to a "in distance" with nature. In distance with nature, can give human an objective assessment of the universe. This is of course different from the "mythical" way of thinking, man is "controled" by nature. Therefore, when they fail to give rationality to natural phenomena, such as volcanoes, hurricanes, flash floods, then they thought that the nature is wrathful. In the end, it's only myths thinking. By thinking epistemologically, distance from nature, human can give a rational picture of nature, and then cultivate it, for the welfare of mankind. Nature also turns into something functional useful.

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