

UNEARTHING NUSANTARA'S CONCEPT OF RELIGIOUS PLURALISM Harmonization and Syncretism in Hindu-Buddhist and Islamic Classical Texts¹

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Abstract

This article sheds light on the formulation of pluralism based on the reading of classical Javanese texts by choosing some excerpts of Hindu-Buddhist literature called kakawin and later Islamic works called serat and babad. Dynamic practices of syncretism and harmonization of local and foreign religious traditions are found in the excerpts of Sutasoma, Kertagama, Deva Ruci, Babad Tanah Jawa, and Centini. From reading of these messages, this writing finds that since the old time of Singasari and Majapahit, harmonization and syncretism of many religious traditions has been practiced as an essential part of the concept of pluralism. Hindu-Buddhist came first in the older literature and later Islamic elements added the complexity of syncretism. This study also finds that Hindu-Buddhist figures are reenacted in the Islamic literature with modifications. The accounts of the famous Javanese saint Sunan Kalijaga reflects the older source of Sutasoma, Ken Arok, Bhima, and other figures. Their stories tell us about the relativism of evil and good, in which evil is not annihilated but converted into goods. This article is an example of

¹ This article is a modification of “Bhinneka Tunggal Ika (Harmony in Diversity): Exploring an Indigenous Theology of Pluralism Based on the Roots of Classical Texts of Nusantara Exploring” presented at the AICIS (Annual International Conference on Islamic Studies), held by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Indonesia, Manado, September 3-6, 2015.

our endeavor that pluralism can be formulated based on local wisdom such as reading classical texts with the spirit of reinterpretation of indigenous virtues with a fresh perspective.

[Artikel ini mencoba menemukan rumusan pluralisme dengan membaca ulang teks klasik Jawa dengan memilih bagian tertentu dari sastra Hindu-Buddha yang disebut kakawin dan karya Islami yang disebut serat dan babad. Praktik dinamis sinkretisme dan penyelarasan antara tradisi keagamaan lokal dan asing ditemui dalam Sutasoma, Kertagama, Deva Ruci, Babad Tanah Jawa, dan Centini. Dari hasil bacaan teks-teks di atas, tulisan ini menemukan bahwa sejak masa kuno Singasari dan Majapahit, penyelarasan dan sinkretisme antara banyak tradisi keagamaan telah dipraktikkan sebagai bagian penting dari konsep pluralisme. Hindu-Buddha datang pertama lalu disusul oleh karya Islam yang menambah nuansa sinkretis. Studi ini juga menemukan bahwa tokoh Hindu-Buddha diceritakan ulang dalam karya Islam dengan berbagai modifikasi. Cerita tentang Sunan Kalijaga mencerminkan sumber yang lebih tua seperti Sutasoma, Ken Arok, Bhima, dan tokoh-tokoh lain. Kisah mereka mengajarkan kepada kita tentang relativitas antara kejahatan dan kebaikan; kejahatan tidak dimusnahkan tetapi diubah menjadi kebaikan. Artikel ini merupakan contoh usaha untuk merumuskan konsep pluralisme berdasarkan kebijakan lokal dengan membaca kembali teks-teks klasik dengan semangat penafsiran ulang ajaran lokal dengan perspektif baru.]

Keywords: pluralism, syncretism, classical Javanese text, relativism of good and evil, harmonization of religious traditions

A. Introduction

The formulation of pluralism, by which I mean the process of harmonizing diversity and differences,² is never monolithic. European

² See for the definition of pluralism, such as Courtney Bender and Pamela E. Klassen, "Introduction: Habits of Pluralism", in *After Pluralism: Reimagining Religious Engagement* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2010), pp. 1–28; Ole Riis, "Modes of Religious Pluralism under Conditions of Globalization", *Democracy and Human Rights in Multicultural Societies; Democracy and Human Rights in Multicultural Societies*, ed. by Matthias Koenig and Paul de Guchteneire, (Hampshire, U.K.: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2007), pp. 251–66.

and American scholarly traditions relate the concept of diversity to democracy, secularization, and governmental issues,³ by which religion, politics, and other human interests in various aspects of modern society are managed.⁴ Given such a broad area of pluralism, this writing focuses on one aspect of pluralism, which is the way in which the plural reality is perceived in the text. This article also presents that Indonesian religious tradition is unique and rich with local creativity and harmonization of various elements, from which we can read a different formulation of pluralism based on reinterpretation of old texts.⁵ This article hence focuses on understanding of diverse reality in the texts. It should be noted that various efforts have been made to formulate the plural reality of Indonesia since the birth of the nation.⁶ Many leaders realized that the nation of Indonesia, which consists of various islands, which also become homes to diverse traditions, cannot be managed only by a policy with a single and homogenous perspective. The Indonesian intellectual tradition indeed offers a unique concept of religious pluralism.⁷ For them Indonesian religious diversity should be understood differently from the way the same religions were practiced elsewhere in the world.

³ James A. Beckford, *Social Theory and Religion* (Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 104. .

⁴ Puett T, "Managing Religion: Religious Pluralism, Liberalism, and Governmentality", *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, vol. 48, no. 3 (2013), pp. 317–27.

⁵ Al Makin, *Challenging Islamic Orthodoxy: Accounts of Lia Eden and Other Prophets in Indonesia* (Dordrecht, Holland; Cinnaminson [N.J.]: Springer, 2016); Al Makin, *Keragaman dan Perbedaan, Budaya dan Agama dalam Lintas Sejarah Manusia* (Yogyakarta: Suka Press, 2016).

⁶ I did propose to reread classical Indonesian text with a fresh spirit in my previous work, see Al Makin, "Are there Any Indonesian Philosophers? Dealing with a Common Question and Possible Answers", *Ulumuna*, vol. 20, no. 1 (2016), pp. 1–28.

⁷ Greg Barton, *Gagasan Islam Liberal di Indonesia: Pemikiran Neo-Modernisme Nurcholis Madjid, Djohan Effendi, Ahmad Wahib dan Abdurrahman Wahid, 1968-1980* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1999); Abdurrahman Wahid, *Islamku, Islam Anda, Islam Kita: Agama Masyarakat Negara Demokrasi* (Jakarta: Wahid Institute, 2006); A. Singgih Basuki, *Pemikiran Keagamaan A. Mukti Ali* (Yogyakarta: Suka Press, 2013); Al Makin, "Pluralism in Education: a Study of Mukti Ali's Thought", in *Education in Indonesia: Perspectives, Politics and Practices*, ed. by Rommel A. Curaming and Frank Dhont (Yogyakarta: FIS UNY Press, 2012); Ann. Kull, "Piety and Politics: Nurcholish Madjid and his Interpretation of Islam in Modern Indonesia", Ph.D. Dissertation (Lund: Dept. of History and Anthropology of Religion, Lund University, 2005); Munawir Sjadzali, *Islam dan Tata Negara: Ajaran, Sejarah, dan Pemikiran* (Jakarta: Penerbit Universitas Indonesia, 1990).

This article, however, limits itself only to unearth the concept of religious pluralism, referring to the way in which plural and diverse religious traditions is harmonized in classical text found in Hindu-Buddhist and Islamic tradition. This paper argues that pluralism is indeed contained in these texts, a conclusion drawn from the way in which we appreciate the texts, from which we learn the previous wisdom in religious traditions which harmonize differences leading to creativity in giving birth to new traditions. The reading of the texts finds that Islamic tradition coming later to the archipelago does not erase the previous Hindu-Buddhist traditions, but accommodate and adapt them to a new spirit. What we discover is that the same old narratives are commonly reinterpreted with new messages. We will read some excerpts from Sutasoma, Kertagama, Dewa Ruci, Centini, and Babad Demak which teach us wisdom of syncretism and harmonization of religious figures and narratives.⁸

B. Contextualizing Foreign Narratives

Since the fourteenth century, the Nusantara (the archipelago of Indonesia) witnessed contextualization of religious and spiritual Indian narratives in the local cultures and traditions. At that time, Buddhism and Hinduism in Java was no longer purely Indian culture penetrating the archipelago,⁹ as the case of later Islam in Nusantara was not purely Middle Eastern product, but the dominant religious traditions were contextualized in local traditions.¹⁰ Various Indian narratives were

⁸ Javanese syncretic religious practices have been observed by many anthropologists, such as Clifford Geertz, *Islam Observed: Religions Development in Morocco and Indonesia*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968); Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java* (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1960); Robert W. Hefner, *Hindu Javanese: Tengger Tradition and Islam* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1985); Mark Woodward, *Islam in Java, Normative Piety and Mysticism in The Sultanate of Yogyakarta* (Arizona: The University of Arizona Press, 1989).

⁹ Andrea Acri and Roy Jordaan, “The Dikpālas of Ancient Java Revisited A New Identification for the 24 Directional Deities on the Śiva Temple of the Loro Jonggrang Complex”, *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, vol. 168, no. 2/3 (2012), pp. 274–313; Roy E. Jordaan, “The Śailendras, the Status of the Kṣatriya Theory, and the Development of Hindu-Javanese Temple Architecture”, *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, vol. 155, no. 2 (1999), pp. 210–43.

¹⁰ Makin, *Keragaman dan Perbedaan*, p. chapter 7.

rewritten using old Javanese language (known as *kakawin*). The word derives from *kawi-kanya* (Sanskrit) with additional *ka* in the beginning and *in* in the end. The term refers to a new meaning as *belles-lettres* (beautiful work).¹¹ These works were also deemed highly as poetry belonging to royal palace tradition. The category of *kakawin* includes *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata*, *Arjunawibaha*, *Harinwangsa*, *Bharatayuddha*, *Gatotkacasraya*, *Smaradabana*, *Sutasoma*, and others.

The early adaptation of Indian narratives, such as the story of the war of *Bharatayudha*, is still reenacted in the archipelago in various forms until today.¹² The story of the war of *Bharatayudha* between five heroes (*Pandava*) against their hundred cousins (*Kurava*) has been used in various occasions to explain philosophy, morality, and ethics of some real conflicts occurring in Java. Among the oldest uses of the tale to represent a real war is in the story of the war between Panjalu and Jenggala in old Kediri in the eleventh-twelfth century, in which Panjalu claimed victory in the inscription of Ngantang (*Panjalu Jayati*). In the inscription, the victorious king thanks the support of the people of Ngantang in defeating the enemy. The handsome hero Arjuna, famous for its skill in archery and use of other weapons, is used somehow to describe the greatness of king Jayabhaya, whereas his enemy, known as Hemabhupati (old brother ruler), represents the defeated side of Pandava.¹³ This means that the contextualization of *Bharatayudha* since these days did take place. Indeed the *kakawin Mahabharata*, written by Mpu Panuluh in 1157 and finished by Mpu Sedah during the end of Jayabhaya's rule, celebrates the victory of the war achieved by Panjalu. It is noteworthy that the war in the Indian tales took place between family members, as was the war between Panjalu and Jenggala, whose rulers were descendants of king Airlangga of Kedhiri. The real war between the two brothers took place in 1135. Thus, the process of adaptation of the Indian *Mahabharata* yields another unique understanding in that the narrative should not be understood

¹¹ *Belles-lettres*, originally French expression, refers to fine works valued for its artistic or aesthetic aspects, such as poetry, fictions, essays, or drama. The term can also simply refer to literature in general.

¹² G.J. Resink, "From the Old Mahabharata to the New Ramayana Order", *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, vol. 131, no. 2/3 (1975), pp. 214–35.

¹³ Slamet Muljana, *Tafsir Sejarah Negara Kretagama* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2006), pp. 46–51.

literally, but Nusantara's context has been inserted in the story.

Until today, the war of *Mahabharata* has been reenacted in Nusantara in many forms and presentations, plays, dramas, literatures, and philosophies. The unavoidable war for justice is understood not in order to annihilate the evil enemy, but it is waged in order to perform *dharma* (duty). In this regard, good and evil is not clearly defined; those who stand in one side do not always represent good, whereas those who stand in the other side are not merely evil. The truth is not dominated by either side of the two warring factions. However, the enemy consists of good persons, like Bhishma son of Gangga and Karna daughter of Kunthi who stand in the Kurava side, Pandava's enemies. This understanding of the war and the concept of good and evil of course contains some seeds of relativism, according to which enmity does not necessarily determine the status of good and evil. To put the point differently, truth is not dominated by one side only in conflicts, and good and evil do not lie in one's choice of faction, but in the performance of *dharma*.

This writing takes *kakawin Sutasoma* as another salient illustration of classical text which contains some seeds of harmonization. The *kakawin Sutasoma* has been studied by Sugriwa, Ensik, Santoso and Zoetmulder who indicate clearly that the work contain Buddhist tradition, which, however, accommodates another Siva tradition. The famous symbol of Indonesia *bhinneka tunggal ika* (diversity in unity) adopted by nowadays Indonesia is originally taken from this *kakawin*, which fully reads (139.5):

*Rwaneka dhatu winuwus wara Buddha wiswa
Bhineki rakwa ring apan kena parwanosen,
Mangkang jinatwa kalwan siratatwa tunggal,
Bhineka tunggal ika tan hana dharmma mangrwa*

It is said that Buddha and Siva are different in form
They are indeed different but how do we know their difference in
appearance
The teachings Buddha and Siva taught are different too
They are indeed different but they are in essence one, (but) there is no
mixture of dharma.¹⁴

It is noteworthy that the syncretic Buddhism and Hinduism appear

¹⁴ Mpu Tantular, *Kakawin Sutasoma*, trans. by Dwi Woro Retno Mastuti and Hastho Bramantyo (Jakarta: Komunitas Bambu, 2009), pp. 504–505.

many times in many texts originating from old Javanese tradition. This indicates that at least blending of, or concept of harmonious relation between, the two Indian traditions, represent the contextualization of Indian tradition in the local Javanese context.¹⁵ Pure Buddha and Pure Hindu are not the case of Majapahit's religious tradition, as there is no pure Islam in Demak's, Mataram's, Yogyakarta's and Surakarta's religious traditions. The religions coming from the foreign lands met local traditions. Doctrine and theology accommodate local cultures leading to a unique blending and giving birth to *kakawin*. In this vein, the *Kakawin Sutasoma* by Mpu Tantular tells us the modification of Sidharta Gautama's spiritual and adventurous journey in the person of crowned prince Sutasoma, who, like prince Sidharta, abandoned a royal palace to look for a true enlightenment. In doing so, Sutasoma set a journey to a jungle in which he met various evil figures (*kala*) whom he fought. Sutasoma defeated them without annihilating them, but converting these enemies into friends and disciples. This is another concept of harmony in that two different categories good and evil should not annihilate each other, but evil can be converted into good.

The following is an excerpt of Sutasoma (147.21) about the end of evil character Kala who then becomes a virtuous Kala:

*Sang hyang Kala sireka tandwan umaluy Pasupati tekap ing topadhara,
Sang sri bhupati Rtanakanda matemah Jinapariwara ring Jinalaya,
Tan len kirtti bhatara Buddha juga hetu nira mari makanggraksasa,
Yeka hetu nirang watek hyang athibhakyamuji gati bhatara Gottama*

Not long after that Kala becomes
Hyang Puspate due to its successful deep contemplation (topadhara)
King Ratnakanda becomes a guardian of Buddha in Jinalaya
He is no longer raksasa
(evil giant) in appearance, as a result of Bhatara Buddha's bless
So that he is so devoted to him and in the service of Bhatara Gotama.¹⁶

The conversion of an enemy into a friend and disciple is also a common motif found in the later Javanese Islamic narratives. For example, Sunan Kalijaga (described below), whose original name is Raden

¹⁵ Angela Hobart, "The Enlightened Prince Sutasoma: Transformations of a Buddhist Story", *Indonesia*, no. 49 (1990), pp. 75–102, accessed 13 Jul 2015.

¹⁶ Tantular, *Kakawin Sutasoma*, pp. 536–537.

Sahid, a son of ruler Wilwatikta descended from Majapahit, is said to have been a famous leader of gang of robbers in a forest between Demak and Pati, Central Java. Once Sunan Bonang walked through the forest and met Sahid and his gang who had intention to take Sunan Bonang's possession. But Raden Sahid failed to do so, as Bonang showed his miracle turning some fruits of palm tree into gold. Raden Sahid repented from his sinful deed and became an important Islamic leader and saint, venerated throughout Java until today.¹⁷ It should also be noted that Kalijaga is also known for his creativity in mingling Javanese tradition and Islamic teachings. And a vital lesson learnt in the *kakawin* and later Islamic *serat*¹⁸ is that victory can be achieved not through the annihilation of enemies but through converting them into disciples. Sutasoma's story is indeed revived in Sunan Kalijaga's.

It is noteworthy that the story of *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* is not only rewritten in various *kakawin*, but also played in various shadow puppet shows in Bali and Java. Like Mahabarata's, Sutasoma's content is also represented in many statues, and played in Bali's shows.¹⁹

In the story of Sutasoma (9. 1), the prince travels to find truth:

*Ndan sang sri naranathaputra caritan sira teka ri hujung nikang wukir,
Lilatut hiring ing geger-geger angungkulli pasawaban ing lebak-lebak,
Gerong-gerong rong predung ing jurang gumuruh atri banu nika sakeng rubur wukir,
Syok-syuk sabda nikang taben kapawanan kadi pasurak I sabda ning tasik*

Let us return to the story of the prince (Sutasoma), who reached the peak of a mountain easily. He also passed foothills, valley of rice fields, deep caves, and canyon with flowing water from the peak of a mountain. Creak is the sound of trees blown by wind, and ocean wave's swash sounds like people's shouting.²⁰

The two Indian tales *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* remain popular in Javanese literature and performance. The two stories are often modified and contextualized in different times. Not only are the two reenacted

¹⁷ W.L. Olthof (ed.), *Babad Tanah Jawi, Mulai dari Nabi Adam Sampai Tahun 1647*, trans. by HR Sumarsono, Aning Floberita and A. Yogaswara (Yogyakarta: Narasi, 2014), pp. 35–36.

¹⁸ *Serat* literally refers to writing, or in later Javanese language, to letter. But it generally means *belles lettres* similar to *kakawin* but with using later Javanese language.

¹⁹ Hobart, "The Enlightened Prince Sutasoma."

²⁰ Tantular, *Kakawin Sutasoma*, pp. 36–37.

in the Hindu and Buddhist spirit, but they are also revived in the later Islamic literature and performance with adaptation of them to Islamic teachings. Nevertheless, like *kakawin*, *serat* also refers to Javanese belles-lettres which also perpetuates the concept of contextualization of Indian Hindu-Buddhist stories. One of the examples of this genre is *Serat Dewa Ruci*,²¹ coming to circulation since the nineteenth century. In the work, Majapahit's romanticism of *kakawin* is recalled.

*Sérat Dewaruci punika ing ngajéng mawi tembang Kawi Sékar Agéng, anggitanipun Émpu Widayaka ing nagari Maménang, inggih ing Kadhiri.
Émpu Widayaka wau inggih Ajisaka, timuripun nama Jaka Sangkala,
putranipun Émpu Anggajali, ibunipun putri ing nagari Najran, tanah Ngarab.
Sarta Ajisaka wau siswanipun Sang Maolana Ngusman Ngajid, raja
pandhita dihya ing nagari Banisrail Ngarab.*²²

This is *Serat Dewaruci* composed in Kawi language with the style of Sekar Ageng by Empu Widyaka who lives in Kediri.

Empu Widyaka is also known as Ajisaka, when young known as Jaka Sangkala, son of Empu Anggajali; his mother came from Najran, the Arab land. Ajisaka was a disciple of Maulana Uthman Ajid, a priest king in the country of Israelite Arab.

The quotation above shows a vital concept of pluralism in the form of harmonizing different elements in Nusantara. That is, old Buddhist and Hindu tradition was reshaped in a new Islamic fashion, in which some figures and stories remain essentially similar to the previous versions, but new Islamic messages are inserted. The *Dewa Ruci* takes Bhima, one of five brothers (Pandava) of Mahabharata epic, as the main character. The *Serat* tells us that Bhima, like prince Sutasoma of Majapahit's narrative, looks for wisdom and enlightenment by taking some dangerous adventures. In the case of *Dewa Ruci*, Bhima was under the guidance of guru Druna, respected by two warring factions: Pandava and Kurava. As a sign of his obedience to his guru, Bhima heeded Druna's advices, notwithstanding the teacher's bad intention to harm the disciple. Many, however, advises Bhima to ignore his teacher's treacherous plan in that Druna wants

²¹ A.H. Johns, "From Buddhism to Islam: An Interpretation of the Javanese Literature of the Transition", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 9, no. 1 (1966), pp. 40–50, accessed 12 Jun 2015.

²² *Punika Sérat Dewaruci ingkang Sampun Mawi Wrédi* (Kediri: Tan Gun Swi, 1928).

nothing but to annihilate Bhima before the break of Mahabharata war, as Druno sides with Kurawa's gang, the enemy of Pandava. The story goes that Druna commands Bhima to look for holy water (*tirta perwita*) to achieve a mystical perfection. Bhima then comes to the mountain Candradimuka, whose caves are guarded by two giants Rukmuka and Rukmakala whom Bhima fights and defeats, but Bhima still fails to find the water. The guru then commands Bhima to go to a deep ocean. Bhima believes that the *tirta* is real and as a good disciple he obeys his teacher. In the deep ocean, Bhima is faced with *naga* (giant snake) which he kills with his miraculous thumb's nail. Then he delves into the deeper ocean, in which he finds God Ruci (Dewa Ruci), a smaller version of himself. Bhima's dangerous journey resembles that of Sutasoma, a spiritual and adventurous journey which becomes a model for later Javanese literature.

*lampabe Sang Wrekodhara | lajéng ngambah praptanirèng wanadri | ririh ing rèh
gandrung-gandrung | sukanirèng wardaya | tirta éning pamungkas wékasing guru
| tan nyipta bayaning marga | kacaryan kang dèn ulati ||*

The journey of Wrekodhara passed through heavy jungle, happily and wholeheartedly he seeks for water as commanded by his teacher (Druna), he does so fearlessly and sincerely.

C. Local Narratives

Keep in mind that Majapahit's *belles-lettres* presents not only adaptation, or rewriting, of the Indian tales into Nusantara contexts, but the archipelago also produces another genre which tells local events, figures, characters and narratives. However, the old Buddhist and Hindu tradition still survives in the local narratives, which still echoes the way in which some ingredients, local and foreign elements, mix. I would like to argue in this vein that syncretism is an essential part of pluralism in Nusantara in which text and context, teachings, dogma, and tradition blend, a formula in which new traditions are reproduced, innovated, and invented. Indeed, harmonization, adaptation, innovation, and creativity lead to syncretism, according to which original dogmas are modified leading to the birth of new hybrid religious traditions. Nusantara is the place where various forms of syncretism come and go. When Buddhism and Hinduism came to the archipelago, local traditions contribute to

the new religious creativity; or to put it differently, the two religious traditions contribute to a plural religious tradition in the archipelago. Interestingly, Islam, as a new religion which came four centuries after the Indian religious tradition gradually winning the hearts of Nusantara's people, does not erase the earlier tradition, but the later tradition adds the complexity of previous syncretism. An obvious difference between the adaptation of Mahabharata, or Sutasoma, and local narratives below is seen in the narratives, characters, and figures. But, a salient similarity between the adaptation of foreign tales and invention of local narratives is in the wisdom of blending various religious traditions, moral, ethics, and philosophy of harmony in diversity. In short, the two genres of *belles-lettres* promote a harmony in diversity in the form of syncretism.

One example of local narrative composed by a Majapahit's poet is *Negara Kertagama*, known also as *Desawarnanna* (a detailed description of various villages during the rule of Hayam Wuruk and Gajah Mada in the kingdom of Majapahit), a piece written by pseudo name Mpu Prapanca, whose original name is perhaps Dang Acarya Nadendra who held an important position as *dharmadyaksa kasogatan* (spiritual advisor) in the royal palace of Majapahit during Hayam Wuruk-Gajah Mada's reign. It is said that Nadendra left the office due perhaps to political factor taking place inside the palace and chose to live in a quiet village, where he finished the *kakawin*. However, the work reflects his acquaintance with the king Hayam Wuruk who travelled across villages in Java. Through the work, Nadendra (Nada-Indra) pours praises to the king as the representation of God Siva on earth, mentioning his generosity, wisdom, courage, just rule, and noble pedigree.

The spirit of pluralism, through the symbol of diversity in unity, can be found in the beginning of the work, which reads:

O my praise and worship from a humble man to the feet of the Protector of the universe Siva-Buddha Janma-Bhatara who is always tranquil in contemplation Sri Prawatanata, Protector of the poor, king of kings in the world Dewa-Bhatara, imaginary above imagination, but is present on earth [*trans mine*].²³

The king in the old Majapahit concept is the representation and reincarnation of God Siva-Buddha, who receives praises from the writer.

²³ Muljana, *Tafsir Sejarah Negara Kertagama*, p. 337.

In other verse the poet says:

As such are praises of poets to the king who transforms history, Sri Nata Rajasanagara, Sri Nata Wilwatikta who rules the state, the reincarnation of Dewa-Bhatara, who erases the people's misfortunes, to whom all people of Java and Nusantara are submissive.²⁴

Unlike *Sutasoma* which adapts Sidharta's spiritual adventure into Majapahit's context, *Kertagama* presents local historical figures and characters. However, the teachings and morality of the two *belles-lettres* remain Buddhist and Hindu messages, particularly the Buddha-Siva syncretism. The work promotes not only tolerance and understanding to each other but amalgamation of the two. In this vein, seeds of pluralism, by mean of syncretism, can be discovered. Keep in mind that Majapahit is a great empire with the claim of sovereignty over various islands in the archipelago. In the *Negara Kertagama* chapter (*pupuh*) 13 and 14, the sovereignty includes some main islands of Sumatera, Kalimantan, Java, Sulawesi, and parts of today Singapore and Malaysia. Chapter 15 also mentions the neighboring countries becoming alliance to Majapahit, such as Campa, Kamboja, Siam, Ayudhapura, and Darmanagari.

Like *Sutasoma*, *Kertagama* tells the story of adventure, which involves two local figures: Prapanca the poet who penned the work and Hayam Wuruk the king who is described in reality and in poet's imagination. The story goes that Hayam Wuruk set a journey to many villages allowing Prapanca to come with the royal entourage to document the trip. The poet, however, finished the work later after he quitted his assignment in the palace and lived in a quite village. In the exile, the poet describes himself as longing for the royal activities.

To keep the stability and unity of the empire's vast areas, it appears that the kingdom held the principle of pluralism, which of course had its own meaning and context of the old Java. It seems that holding only one religious dogma or uniform faith and tradition was less preferable to guard the integrity of the vast areas with diversity. But the principle of harmony in diversity served as a glue tightening islands with different people, language, ethnicity, and religious traditions. Of course, this is our own later reinterpretation. Yet new reinterpretation remains needed.

The *Negara Kertagama* also informs us the history of Majapahit and

²⁴ *Ibid.*

its predecessor Singasari, stories which can later be found in *Serat Pararaton* (discussed below). Chapters 41-42 tells the story of Kertanegara, the last king of Singasari, who upheld law highly and arrested criminals for the sake of stability and security of the country. Chapter 42 reads:

Far from arrogance and negligent, the king are both alerted and wise and he understands all administration since Kali time. He practices the religion of Buddha and contemplation, following forefathers... (chapter 42.3)

...The king was devoted to the foot of Skayamuni, upholding Pancasila, with its practices, holding rites Gelaran Jina known as Jnyanabadreswara. Mastering philosophy, grammar, and other religious knowledge (chapter 43.2)

He devoured all knowledge of spirituality, first of all he delved into tantra Subuti, understood by heart, with worship (puja), contemplation (yoga and samadi), for the sake of salvation of the kingdom. Avoiding sorcery, but fulfilling the common people's prosperity (chapter 43.3).²⁵

The rulers in Java from Singasari to Majapahit were devoted to Buddhist and Siva traditions. In this regard, the principle of diversity in unity can be returned to as early as Singasari. One of the songs in *Kertagama* explains (chapter 56.1-2):

Temple serving as king's tomb was built by Sri Kertanegara, the forefather of the current king (Hayam Wuruk), (in the temple) only his corpse lied, because he embraced two religions (Siwa-Buddha)

The temple's feet is shaped in Siva style, but its peak has Buddha (statue), highly erected, inside the temple there is a statue of Siva, beautiful... and the statue of Maha Aksobya adorned with crown incomparable in beauty (to others)

But these have gone; but they deserve the fate, as their place should be in Nirvana.²⁶

The above passage is perhaps the most obvious evidence of the mingling two religions embraced by the kings and rulers in Java from Singasari to Majapahit. This syncretism was perhaps a local innovation of religious tradition in Java, where two dogmas and traditions were united—a syncretism which is represented in the phrase *bhinneka tunggal ika*.

Majapahit was a kingdom with a plural society. However, caste

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 367.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 376–377.

system and stratification in society is recorded in *Kertagama* (81: 3-4):

All members of castes upheld (religious) teachings
All ministers and high officials fulfilled the duties of the state
All princesses and princes behaved appropriately and sincerely
Waisya and sudra happily fulfilled the dharma
Four castes were born and based on High God
All obeyed the order of the king
[Showing] good behavior and [including] all three low levels
Candela, mleca, and tuca tried to erase their faults
That is the way the administration under the king Sri Nata.²⁷

Turning our attention to *Serat Pararaton* which also contains another local narrative, telling us the accounts of Singasari's and Majapahit's rulers. Unlike *Sutasoma* and *Kertagama*, the *Serat* has no name of the composer(s). What we know is that the text was republished many times, since Brandes in 1879, Hadjowardojo in 1965, and Padmapuspita in 1966. It is likely that *Pararaton* was produced much later. In terms of style, it seems also clear that the *Pararaton* does not use the poetic and metric style of *Sutasoma* and *Kertagama*, but it narrates stories. Nor does the language show similarities to the works composed during the time of Majapahit, but rather indicates the Javanese language of a much later time. What is more, most of the stories are not supported by historical evidence, but legends, myths, and extraordinary tales. However, by this fact it does not mean that we should dismiss all of the *Serat*'s contents, as the *Serat* is part of Javanese *belles-lettres*, for which there must be some ways to appreciate the text.

The most important character in the *Pararaton* is the figure of Ken Arok, the founder of Singasari.

Sira Bhathara Brahma siranggiling-ilingi rowanganirayugaba. Wuwusing mangkana, ana ta wong apappanganten anar sdheng akuranasih. Lanang aran sira Gajapara, wadon aran sira Ken Endhok. Angulabaken tatanan maring sawah. Sira Ken Endhok angirimi laki aran Gajahpara. Araning sawah ngening angirim ring Ayuga. Pradesanira Ken Endhok aran ring Pangkur. Tumurun sira irihka Bhathara Brahma asanggama lawan Ken Endok. Enggenira juga ning Lalateng.

God Brahma was wandering around to find a mate to have a son. After

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 395.

that, a newly wedded couple were making out. The male's name was Gajahpara, whereas the female's was Ken Endok. They cultivated plants in a field. Ken Endok sent (a meal) to Gajahpara; the field's name is Ayuga. Ken Endok's village is called Pangkur.

God Brahma descended there and made love with Ken Endok in a place called Lalateng field.²⁸

The above passage indicates a mythical and legendary element in the *Pararaton*. Ken Arok considered as the forefather of later kings in Singasari and Majapahit was descended from God Brahma. Apparently, this understanding is a unique interpretation of many earlier writings in claiming that kings are representation of God Siva, Wisnu, and Brahma descending to and ruling the earth. Ken Arok's miracle and extraordinary quality as a human being and the forefather of all Majapahit's kings are repeated in many stories. His position is unique, because his bad conducts are accompanied by God's blessing as a chosen man to rule Java. He is evil but at the same time extraordinary. So the concept of good and evil in this story, like the stories of earlier *kakawin*, mingled. Indeed, Javanese literature often treats good and evil not as a clear cut division in human being, but often times the two opposing categories met and mixes in a single person. Ken Arok owns both virtuous and evil characters; or to put more precisely, an evil figure but blessed by Gods, seen in the following passage:

Tinundbung sira Ken Angrok denira Janggan. Akara madya ratri patundungira janggan. Kaget sira Ken Angrok, atangi pupungun sira Ken Angrok. Anuli metu aturu ring palang-alangan ing jaba. Wineton denira janggan maring jaba. Katinggalan ana murub ing tengah alang-alang.

Ken Arok was expelled by his teacher during a midnight. Ken Angrok was shocked and woke up. Then he went out and slept in the (wild) grasses outside the house. When the teacher looked outside, he found light radiating in the mid of grasses.²⁹

Ken Arok was known as a robber, living in a forest and roaming around roads. The victims of his crimes were numerous. He unsurprisingly became a fugitive, whom villagers and rulers looked after wanting only

²⁸ Agung Kriswanto (tran.), *Pararaton, Alib Aksara dan Terjemah* (Jakarta: Wedatama Widya Sastra, 2009), pp. 12–13.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 22–23.

to arrest him. But his quality and strength were above human beings. He always escaped from all difficulties and troubles, as he was protected by Gods. As God's son, he did wrong but was always protected. His safety and victory were guaranteed. This account also resembles the story of Sunan Kalijaga, a later venerated Islamic saint, who was once a robber. Arok, like Kalijaga, is a symbol of Javanese syncretism, the spirit of his creativity and bold attempt to mix Javanese cultures and foreign elements is memorized by later generations.

In the *Pararaton* the role of Buddhist monk, Arok's guru, is visible in this passage:

Dadi ana bhujangga Boddha swapaka ri Panawijen lumaku Mahayana. Atapa ring setraning wong Panawijen Apuspapata sira Mpu Purwa. Sira ta anak-anak stri tunggal duk derengira Mahayana. Atyanta ring lityhayuning putrinira. Abaran Ken Dhedhes.

There was a teacher Mahayana Buddhist monk who lived in Panawijen and contemplated in the graves of the people of Panawijen. The Brahmin was called Mpu Purwa. Before becoming a Mahayana monk, he had a pretty daughter named Ken Dedes.³⁰

This Ken Dedes was later taken by Tunggal Ametung the ruler of Tumapel, whom Ken Arok later killed with the dagger made by Mpu Lohgawe. After Ametung's death, Ken Dedes married Ken Arok and gave birth to many Singasari's kings.

From the beginning the *Pararaton* strengthens previous texts of combining two religious traditions: Siva and Buddha:

Tumuli sira Ken Angrok inastwaken prabhu ring Tumapel. Araning nagara ring Singhasari. Abhisekanira Sri Rajasa Bhathara Sang Amurwabbumi. Ingastyan dening bhujangga Sewasogata kang Saking Daha

Then Ken Arok ascended to the throne in Tumapel. The state was called Singasari. His title is Sri Rajasa Batara Sang Amurwabbumi. His coronation was witnessed by Siva-Buddhist monks from Daha.³¹

According to *Pararaton* the famous king of Kertanegara, the last king of Singasari was crowned with name Batara Siwa Buddha, a clear

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 38–39.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 52–53.

indication of syncretic Sivaism-Buddhism.³²

The *Pararaton* also tells us that Majapahit continued the religious tradition of Singasari. From the work, we also learn that the effort of uniting Nusantara was attempted during Singasari's time. But it is the Majapahit which achieved the unity. The *Pararaton* also records the famous *phalapa* oath delivered by Gajah Mada:

Tan ayun amuktiha phapala sira Gajah Mada. Lamun uwus kalah nusantara ingsun amuktiyapala. Lamun kalah ring Gurun, ring Seran, Tanjungpura, ring Aru, ring Pahang, Dampo, ring Bali, Sundha, Palembang, Tumasik, Samana isun amukti palapa. Sira sang mantra sama lungguh ring panangkilan pepeke. Sira Kembar apamleh ring sira Gajah Mada annuli inguman-uman. Sira Baja kang amulubi, milu apamleh. Sira Jabung Terewes, sira Lembu Peteng gumuyu. Tumurun sira Gajah Mada matur ing talampakanira bhathara ring Koripan. Runtik sira katadbahan, kabuluban denira Arya Tadhah. Akeh dosanira Kembar. Sira warak ingilangkan. Tan ucapan sira Kembar sama mati. Tumuli Pasundhan Bubat.

Gajah Mada would never taste any *phalapa* (pleasure),³³ (Gajah Mada said that) "except after I conquer Nusantara," then he would enjoy (the pleasure). If Gurun, Seran, Tanjungpura, Aru, Pahang, Dampo, Bali, Sunda, Palembang, Tumasik, are defeated, he would enjoy the *phalapa*. During the time he delivered the oath, all ministers gathered in a hall. Kembar looked at him down, and then humiliated him. So did Baja who added humiliation to him. Jabung Terewes and Lembu Peteng laughed at him. Gajah Mada then descended and met the king in Kahuripan. He was angry but Arya Tadhah cooled him down. (In fact) Kembar committed many sins including the murder of Warak. Soon after Kembar died, the war against Sunda in Bubat broke.³⁴

It is noteworthy that the essence of unity and diversity can be found in Gajah Mada's oath. The oath preserves the names of various

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 68–69.

³³ In old Javanese language *phalapa* literally refers to the fruit of coconut (kelapa), which is a vital ingredient of Javanese cuisine. This perhaps means that Gajah Mada abstained from any other spices not only coconut in his dish. In the old time of Nusantara, the practice of *puasa* (abstaining) from foods were common. It is likely that Gajah Mada practiced *mutih* (eating only rice without spices) to show his spirit and endeavor to achieve his goal to unite Nusantara under Majapahit's power. Another possibility is that Gajah Mada abstained from any pleasure (including sex), so that the prime minister lived in celibacy as do monks and priests.

³⁴ Kriswanto (tran.), *Pararaton, Alib Aksara dan Terjemah*, pp. 106–107.

islands and kingdoms in Nusantara which the prime minister wanted to bring under Majapahit's sovereignty. It is not hard to imagine that these islands had their own diverse cultures and traditions, notwithstanding clear influence of Hindu-Buddhist on Nusantara and the fact that Islam has come to the northern parts of Sumatera island. Thus, to unite these diverse islands the policy of respecting diversity should be adopted, without stressing a mere uniformity. The dream of uniting these islands implies respecting differences.

D. Islamization: Accommodating the Past and Embracing the New

So far this paper presents two kinds of *belles-lettres*: 1) the adaptation of Indian tales with Nusantara tastes, such as *Sutasoma* and *Mahabharata*; 2) the indigenous narratives, such as *Negara Kertagama* and *Pararaton*, which report the local events and narration. Both genres show the plural reality of Nusantara, but particularly the second genre presents a harmonization of diverse realities. Another *belles-lettres* discussed in this article is 3) Islamization of the old tales (both Indian tales and indigenous narratives). The last process is unique in that islamization does not deny the values of pluralism by mean of harmonization, according to which, the Hindu-Buddhist traditions are not erased but retained and yet adorned with Islamic garments. Once again, the coming of Islam in Nusantara as particularly shown in the narratives of the *belles-lettres* is not an abrupt conversion leading to a clear cut division between the Hindu-Buddhist past and new Islamic teachings, but the new Middle Eastern religion was regarded as a continuation of the past. There was no significant break between pre- and post-Islamic time in Nusantara. According to the narration of the *belles-lettres*, Islamic Demak, Pajang, Mataram, Surakarta, and Yogyakarta are not directly linked to Mecca and Medina, Baghdad, Damascus or Turkey, but these Islamic powers claimed to have carried on the heritage of Hindu-Buddhist Majapahit. Various genres of *belles-lettres* justified the power of later Islamic ruler (*sultan*) with that of old Majapahit.

In many stories, revelation (*wahyu*) pursued by Islamic figures who sought for power in the later Islamic era is connected to the golden past of Majapahit more than to the previous Islamic dynasties in the

Middle East. The *laku* (spiritual pursuit) to achieve the dream of power to rule Java resembles the earlier traditional Hindu-Buddhist tales. For example, Jaka Tingkir the ruler of Pajang, or Senapati the founder of Mataram, according to *Babad Tanah Jawa*,³⁵ always recalled the greatness of Majapahit for their legitimacy to rule Java. In this vein, harmonization and adaptation appear in the accommodation of the non-Islamic past and modification. This attitude shows not only tolerance of non-Islamic past but also readiness to appreciate differences in faiths in Nusantara. Indeed, 'Islam' in Nusantara is different from other 'Islams' practiced in other parts of the Middle East as Clifford Geertz finds.³⁶ The version of Islam in the archipelago is deeply rooted in the way in which the religion mingled with Hindu Buddhist basic elements. Hindu-Buddhist becomes a foundation upon which Islam has later been established.

The most obvious example of Islamization as recorded in the *belles-lettres* of *Babad Tanah Jawa* is an attempt to tell the accounts of power in Java from Adam to the time of early Dutch colonialism. The beginning of the *Babad* shows the spirit of syncretism which reads:

This is the story of the kings in the land of Java, from Prophet Adam, who had son Sis; Esis had son Nurcahya who had son Nurasa. Nurasa had son Sanghyang Wening, who had son Sanghyang Tunggal. Sanghyang Tunggal had son Batara Guru, who had five children: Batara Samba, Batara Brama, Batara Maha-Dewa, Batara Wisnu, Dewi Sri. Batara Wisnu became the king in the island of Java crowned as Prabu Set. The kingdom of Batara Guru was located in Sura-Laya.³⁷

The above passage mentions a version of genealogy, different from that of *Pararaton* which returns the origin of power in Java to Ken Arok. But the *Babad's* version combines the older Hindu-Buddhist tradition and new Middle Eastern religious tradition, namely Islam. The connection of old Javanese God and Goddess and Israelite prophets shows the spirit of acceptance of the past and insertion of a new innovation, a combination which becomes a new syncretic theology.

Whereas *Pararaton* describes the history of Singasari and Majapahit, *Babad Tanah Jawa* does so for Islamic kingdom Mataram (particularly

³⁵ *Babad* refers to another genre of later *belles-lettres* which presents historiography or hagiography of power in Java.

³⁶ Geertz, *Islam Observed*.

³⁷ W.L. Olthof (ed.), *Babad Tanah Jawi*, p. 1.

Surakarta) down to the Dutch's time. Interestingly, the later work seems does not realize the reading of the earlier work. Nor does the *Babad* cite any parts of the *Pararaton*. What is also clear is that the *Babad* gives a different account of Majapahit. For *Babad*, rather than returning to the genealogy of Majapahit kingdom and the founder of Singasari Ken Arok, the origin of power in Java derives from Sunda, Pajajaran.

After the collapse of kingdom Pajajaran, Raden Sesuruh becomes the king of Majapahit, whom the people of Java obeyed. Arya Bangah took a new name Arya Panular. Ki Wira was appointed as the prime minister with title Patih Wahan. Ki Bandar and Ki Nambi became ministers.³⁸

The unawareness of the composer(s) of *Babad* of the previous sources (such as *Negara Kertagama* and *Pararaton*) is seen in the *Babad*'s version of the pedigree of Hayam Wuruk and the story of Gajah Mada, which reads:

King Adining Kung had son Hayam Wuruk, who had son Lembu Amisani, whose prime minister was Deming Wular. Lembu Amisani had son Bra Tanjung, who had son Raden Alit, who after becoming the king took a new title Brawijaya, whose prime minister was Gajah Mada.³⁹

The above information describes the way in which the composer(s) of the *Babad* failed to see other earlier sources. In fact, earlier *Negara Kertagama* and *Pararaton* give clear information that Gajah Mada was Hayam Wuruk's prime minister not Brawijaya's, a much later king of Majapahit. However, this does not mean that Majapahit's spirit of pluralism and seeds of harmonization inherent in its religious tradition disappeared in the later Islamic tradition. It is true that some Majapahit's knowledge, such as those contained in the *Sutasoma* and *Negara Kertagama*, lost during Islamic kingdom of Demak, Mataram, or Surakarta, but the myths of the greatness of Majapahit survived and was used to justify the power of later Islamic kingdoms. Justification includes the practices of syncretism, by retaining symbols, traditions, and myths of Majapahit. To put the point differently, syncretism as an essential value of pluralism of the past Hindu-Buddhist heritage was passed on in the new Islamic tradition.

As *Pararaton* regards Ken Arok as the founder of Singasari and

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

forefather of Majapahit, *Babad* does so to Joko Tingkir regarded as the founder of Pajang Islamic kingdom and main patron of Mataram. Interestingly, Joko Tingkir's legitimacy of power lies in his genealogy which returns to Majapahit. He was son of Ki Kebo Kenongo in Pengging, descended from Majapahit's Brawijaya. But after embracing Islam, Ki Kebo Kenongo, a disciple of famous syncretic and mystic Sekh Siti Jenar, founded a *jamaah* (community of followers) performing Friday prayers in Pengging.⁴⁰ On the other hand, his brother Kebo Kanigoro still embraced Buddhism, so that he was cremated after his death. It appears that the Islamic sultanate Pajang's legitimacy of power has two sources, the Majapahit and the older kingdom of Demak, whose first ruler Raden Fatah is also believed to be a son of Majapahit's king Brawijaya. Indeed, all kings of Islamic kingdoms legitimated their power by linking themselves to Majapahit through genealogies, surprisingly including the famous saint Sunan Kalijaga through his father Wilwatikta. It stands to reason to argue that Majapahit became an ideal model of later culture, power, and religion in Islamic era of Java. In short, not only was Majapahit remembered, memorized, and perpetuated, it also served as an archetype to follow.

In *Serat Centhini* Sunan Kalijaga is described as a saint of Java who participated in clearing forest Glagahwangi, an area of the future kingdom of Demak, where he Islamized king Amarta Yudhistira, the oldest brother of Pandava in the story of *Mahabharata*. The story goes that during the clearing of the virgin jungle, many frustrated as the trees grew again after being cut down. Sunan Kalijaga was entrusted by Sunan Giri, one of nine saints of Java, to find the cause. Kalijaga then found a giant man contemplating under a banyan tree, namely Yudhistira who wished nothing but to die easily. He failed to do so as he held *jamus kalimasada* (secret weapon in his right hand). He neither dared to open the weapon or read the inscription in the weapon. Kalijaga helped the king to read, which is surprisingly the Islamic testimony, "there is no God but God, and Muhammad his Messenger." After reading this testimony, the king died peacefully.⁴¹ The work in the forest continued. This story tells us the symbolic process of Islamization in Java during early Demak

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

⁴¹ Ngabei Ranggasutrasna, Yasadipura II, and Sastradipura, *Centhini, Tambanngaras-Amongraga*, vol. 2, ed. by Darasuprpta (Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 2008), pp. 154–157.

kingdom in which Islamization is not a total conversion but adaptation. The Indian tale, as mentioned earlier, is harmonized in order to adapt to the new context of Javanese Islam. The story of *Mahabharata* remains influential in Java, but a creative innovation leads to the emergence of a new Islamized version, in which figures, characters, and narratives carry new messages. The Javanese *belles-lettres* has the awareness of the past Hindu and Buddhist heritage and oftentimes with intention to retain the heritage but delivered with a new message. The literature does not cut the contemporary from the past, but connect both with a new way.

Serat Centhini is an Islamic manuscript written in 1814-1823 by a team (Ranggasutrasna, Yasadipura II, and Sastradipura) led by crowned prince Adipati Anom Amangkunegara III, who became king Paku Buwana V (1820-1823). To finish the work, the writers collected materials across Java from Banyuwangi, Central Java, to West Java reaching Anyer. Sastradipura went to Mecca to perform *hajj* earning the new title Kyai Haji Muhammad Ilhar, who mastered Sufism, Arabic language, and other Islamic sciences. The *Serat* contains various syncretic concepts. But to begin with, the *Serat* sounds like *Sutasoma*, telling us the journey of Sekh Amongraga with his disciples Jayengresmi, Jayengraga, Kulawariya, and Nuripin. All stories relate the experiences of these figures covering broad themes ranging from religion, history, education, geography, architecture, philosophy, symbols, society, politics, law, ethics, legends, medicine, customs, flora and fauna, art, family, to sexual relations. All the descriptions in the *Serat* are given in great details, leading many to consider that this *Serat* serves as an Encyclopedia of Javanese culture consisting of twelve volumes, with each volume reaches 350 pages. This book is indeed the thickest work in Javanese literature.

Apparently, Hindu-Buddhist cultural heritage of Majapahit is well preserved in *Centhini*, although during the writing of this work Islam was widely accepted in Javanese society. For example, *Centhini* fluently explains two levels of Buddhist disciples: *Upasaka* (lay people) and *Sangha* (monks). The first level practices *Pancasila* (fives prohibitions: killing, lying, stealing, bothering others, committing adultery, and drinking wine). Note that the term *Pancasila* was mentioned many times in both *Sutasoma* and *Negara Kertagama*. Modern Indonesia adopts this word to refer to the five principles held by the modern Indonesian state. The second level

of Sangha practices *asthasila* (eight prohibitions: the above-mentioned fives and three more prohibitions: eating too much, worldly pleasure, and luxurious accessories).

Another part of *Centhini* also describes that Buddhist and Islamic teachings should be combined in order to achieve moral and spiritual perfection:

Islamic shariah and Buddhist tradition should be combined in accordance with hadits and examples of prophets' life (*serat ambiyah*). To worship the Great God (Hyang Agung), one has to perform prayers (*ikram*) and approach God (*munajad tubadin*). Miracles is shown by particular person who has more characters than other human beings in approaching God, guarding his heart, and being patient in accepting destiny and doing nothing to spoil physical needs.⁴²

The combination of old wisdom and new teachings was possible because Islam embraced by the early Muslims in Nusantara was guided by Sufi wisdom. Sharia was heeded and performed but only according to local wisdom. Keep in mind that according to *Centhini*, sharia reaches only the skin of truth, not its core or kernel. *Centhini* explains the teaching of *kawula gusti* (the unity of servant and God) in many times and ways. The true value of *kawula-Gusti* stresses improving character of human being not merely performing prayers. And prayers are held not to exclude other human beings (with different faiths) but to include them in our petition to God. For *Centhini*, *kawula-gusti* means "the existence of God in the two Islamic testimonies (*syahadatayn*) met and mix in the form of teaching of *kawula Gusti*." The two (God's existence and testimony) are no different. But both are not similar and in unity. Both cannot be differentiated, and only one of the two cannot be explained separately. To see the unity, one should use conscience (*rasa*).⁴³

It is noteworthy that *Centini* stresses the importance of Sufism, which teaches openness. Advice from *Centhini* reads: "follow the examples, to know the veranda toward self, and to follow the ethics. Shariah is deemed highly; [whereas] *tarekat* is a passage towards reality (*kejatmikaan*). *Hakekat* guides toward truth (*kesejatian*). *Makrifat* makes

⁴² Pakubuwana V, et al., *Centhini, Tambangraras-Amongraga*, ed. by Marsono, vol. 9 (Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press, 2006), p. 108.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 12: 144.

the veranda perfect toward the true veranda. God the holy brings always truth. *Shariah* deals only with physics; [whereas] tarekat is a path to heart; *hakikat* enlightens heart, the reality; *makrifat* gives sight to God's essence, presence in absence (*isbat nafi*).⁴⁴

For *Centhini*, shariah is not sufficient to accommodate the Hindu-Buddhist past, but Sufism is the right path where various teachings, traditions, and wisdom can be accommodated. Sufism, by which one can go beyond the institutionalized religion, is a way of conversion without erasing the past and at the same time committing to the new.

The most important Islamic figure which has inspired later Sufi with the attitude of embracing differences and diversity in the history of Islam in Nusantara, and particularly in Java, is Sunan Kalijaga. Once again, the accounts of this saint revive the earlier Hindu-Buddhist motifs in adventure, miracle, and pluralist attitude toward diversity. Like Ken Arok, Sunan Kalijaga was known as a robber before conversion into piety and commitment to morality. Both Kalijaga and Arok were protected by God, a belief according to which the two were immune from mistakes and were saved by their gurus. Miraculous journey of both figures are also similar, albeit both embraced different faiths. All in all, in the mythical and legendary level, all above mentioned genres of Javanese *belles-lettres* tell us the figures who relentlessly search for truth: Sutasoma, Ken Arok, Sunan Kalijaga, Cebolang, Bima, and Sekh Amongraga. All present wondering men searching for truth for which these men fought enemies.

E. Islamic Sainthood

Many legendary tales of *Wali Sanga*⁴⁵ repeated in many *Babad*, *Serat*, and other genres of classical Javanese *belles-lettres* contain the spirit of pluralism, by mean of syncretism, harmonization, adaptation, and accommodation. Looking at these works, it is reasonable to argue that Javanese Islam has evolved through the method and approach of retaining

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 12: 12, 207.

⁴⁵ *Wali Sanga* refers to nine saints believed to have lived in Java from East to West Java. They were responsible for introducing Islam in the island with the method of mingling local cultures and new Islamic teachings. In doing so, they also stood side by side with various rulers in many Islamic kingdom from Banten to Mataram. In short, not only do these nine saints serve as symbols of Islamization, but they were also supporters of new emerging Islamic powers.

old mystical symbols of Majapahit and yet introducing new Islamic narratives, an approach which gives different characteristics of Islam in Nusantara from other 'Islams'. In this vein, the complexity of the stories of nine saints lies in various elements of many traditions, among which is at least local Javanese, Hindu-Buddhist, and Islamic spirit. Take *Babad Demak*, for instance, in explaining the pedigree of Islamic saints, the work relates Islamic saint Sunan Ampel to Majapahit's blood.

*Kawiwitan rikala Prabu Brawijaya kang ginubel marang kang garwa
Kang garwa kang lagi prihatin, Ratu Dwarawati kang tansah sinanggeng karma
Kawarnaba ana satunggaling pawongan trab Rasul kang bakal nurunaken Wali Jawa
Aran pandhita Mustakin hiya Seh Maulana kang akrama Siti Asmara, Wrujune
kangjumeneng nata ing Campa. Banjur peputra siji kakung aran Raden Rachmad.
Raden Rachmad kepingin kepanggih mring kang uwa kang ginarwa sang Prabau
Brawijaya in Majalengka. Katampa kanthi renaning penggalih.
Amarga Raden Rachmad beda ing agami. Banjur keprentabake ing Ngampel
ajejuluk Sunan Ngampel.*

The (story) begins with Prabu Brawijaya (Majapahit) who was approached by his wife.

The wife queen Dwarawati was sad but always influential to her husband. Once lived a man with the blood of the Prophet (Muhammad) whose descendants would be a saint in Java.

His name is Mustakin that is Sekh Maulana who was married to Siti Asmara, the youngest daughter of a king in Campa. The couple had son named Raden Rachmad.

Raden Rachmad wanted to meet his auntie (Dwarawati) who married Prabu Brawijaya in Majalengka. (Coming to Majapahit) he was welcomed sincerely.

Because Raden Rachmad embraced a different religion, he was commanded to live in Ngampel crowned with a new name Sunan Ngampel.⁴⁶

Almost all of these Javanese saints had mixed blood of Arab and Javanese, at the same time they are somehow connected to Majapahit. In this regard, local narratives tell us that these saints respected the old Hindu-Buddhist power of Majapahit. The climax of the stories of acculturation effort made by these saints is found in the figure of Kalijaga whose fame lies in his innovation in adapting *wayang* (shadow

⁴⁶ *Babad Demak, Terjemahan Bahasa Jawa* (Yogyakarta: Yayasan Kebudayaan Islam Indonesia and Institut Agama Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga, 1997), p. 1.

puppet show) and *gendhing* (Javanese traditional song) into the Islamic spirit. However, before becoming a respected saint and teacher of all kings in Java, Raden Sahid (the original name of Kalijaga), like Ken Arok in *Pararaton*, was a robber and trouble maker. The two figures Sahid and Arok are indeed comparable as in the following passages.

Kanggo nuruti butuh Raden Sahid nuli mbebegal ngadhang ing dalan ngerbat sanguning kang lumaku

To fulfill his needs Raden Sahid then became a robber, stood on streets and robbed those who passed by.⁴⁷

Sahid is said to have liked cock fighting and gambling and then fallen into a bankruptcy, due to which he sold all his possession, which also soon ran out. He then decided to become a robber; and with his gang, he stopped many people passing by a road in a forest near Demak. The story of this rebellious figure sounds similar to that of Ken Arok who was also a robber, thief, and rebel leader. An excerpt from *Pararaton* reads:

Alawas anger irika, anawala wong amalintangan. Sab sira maring kapundungan amamaling sira Pamahlantenan

After staying for a while (in the village Lulumbang) he (Arok) robbed those who passed by. He then went to Kapundungan and became a thief in Pamalantenan.⁴⁸

According to the stories of the two, both Arok and Sahid found spiritual teachers who loved and guided them to the straight path. The story of their repentance is also recorded in a rather similar way. People hated the two, but holy teachers envisioned their greater roles in the leadership of Javanese society.

Interestingly, the stories of the two figures involved the role of palm tree (although two different kinds of palm tree). Whereas Arok's story presents *tal* (a palm tree which produces sugar and alcoholic beverage still found in East Java today), Sahid's story uses *kolang-kaling* (a palm tree which produces sago). In Sunan Kalijaga's account, the palm tree's fruit was turned into gold, a trick used by Sunan Bonang to impress the robber Kalijaga.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁴⁸ Kriswanto (tran.), *Pararaton, Alib Aksara dan Terjemah*, pp. 25–27.

Sira njaluk jungkat iki? Iki ora akeh pangajine. Lamun sira karem donya kang linuwih mara...alapen kae kencana inten kang amancur minangka ganjaring Hyang

Sukma

Sanalika wob kolang-kaling kang tinuding Jeng Sunan malih dadi emas inten gumebyar. Raden Sahid banget gumune nganti kamitenggengen, ora bisa ngucap.⁴⁹

You asked this (golden) comb? This has no value. If you want wealth more than this...find a diamond given by Great God

Suddenly, some fruits of the palm tree pointed by Sunan turned into shining gold and diamonds. Raden Sahid was so impressed so that he kept still and was speechless.

The older story of Arok reads as follows:

Kaveruhan binuru-binuru kakepang tan wrub ta paranira angungsi. Amamanek ta sira ring niting tal ring pinggiring kali. Karabhinan kawruhan yan amamanek ing tal, tinunggu dening wong Kapundungan i sor tinabuhan kajar. Tal punika winadung den kang amburu ring sira.

Samangka ta sira anangis. Asambat ingkang ayasa dharma ring sira. Dadi sira amiresep sabda ring awing-awang. Kinon sira amranga roning tal pinaka hlaranira kawatgen margahanira anglayang maring sabrang wetan.⁵⁰

When chased and sieged by the people he (Arok) had no idea how to save himself. He climbed a palm tree in a river's bank, but the people of Kapundungan waited him (under the tree) until dawn. They who chased him then cut the tree.

He (Arok) cried and complained to those who created him. Suddenly, he listened to a mysterious voice commanding him to pick up two leaves of the palm tree used as wings in left and right hands which enabled him to fly crossing the river and reaching the east bank.

Not only do the accounts of Islamic sainthood in the *Babad* and *Serat* belong to Islamic spirit, but they also repeat and retain older holy men's accounts described in the earlier Hindu-Buddhist *belles-lettres*. In the Sunan Kalijaga's legendary stories we can find not only Islamic teachings but also the remnants of older tales. The accounts of Sutasoma, a prince who looked for enlightenment, sound like Siddharta's journey. But at the

⁴⁹ *Babad Demak, Terjemahan Babasa Jawa*, p. 3.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

same time, Sutasoma also showed rebellious character in abandoning the palace and choosing to wander around forest, mountain, and caves. Sunan Kalijaga's accounts to a certain extent echo this spiritual adventure. The story goes that Kalijaga disliked his father's *kadipaten* (royal house) and chose to mix with common people and committed cockfighting, drunk, and gambling. Unlike Kalijaga, Arok's legitimacy did not come from royal pedigree, but it is much greater as he directly was God Brahma's son.

F. Conclusion

The seeds of pluralism, by which I mean syncretism, harmonization, and adaptation of old and new religious traditions, developed in Nusantara from Hindu-Buddhist *kakawin* to Islamic's *Serat*, *Babad*, and other genres of indigenous writings. Since the Hindu-Buddhist era, religious tradition in Nusantara adopted a syncretic approach which leads to innovation and creativity in giving birth to a unique religious tradition. Hindu-Buddhism (Sivaism) was a syncretic product of modification of Indian religious teachings and was further harmonized with local Javanese tastes. This can be seen in the adaptation of *Sutasoma*, telling us the story of prince who sought for enlightenment through wondering around in a wild nature. The story of Prince Siddharta Gautama was translated into, and contextualized in, Javanese situation. *Mahabharata*, of whose figures is Bhima, was also translated into Javanese and later developed with Islamic message and spirit such as in *Serat Dewa Ruci*. Another salient form of pluralism presents local tales, such as Arok, Javanese kings, Sekh Amongraga, Sunan Kalijaga, and other indigenous characters in which old and new religious teachings: Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam are blended. In practice, creativity and innovation appreciate differences. Indeed, from the history of Majapahit we learn that such a complex society (as Gajah Mada's oath *phalapa* indicates) likely tolerated differences in religious traditions. Appreciating diversity in the syncretic practices can be interpreted as essential values of pluralism which are shown in the texts produced during the era.

What is more, Nusantara's distinguished syncretic Islam has developed since the kingdom of Demak, Mataram, Pajang, Surakarta, and Yogyakarta as reflected in the *Serat* and *Babad* in which myths, legends, and other Hindu-Buddhist tales were reenacted in Islamic fashion.

Islamic religious tradition connects the previous Hindu-Buddhist's; and the Islamic texts show no clear cut division between the two. The stories reenacted in the Islamic belles-lettres continued the past. The accounts of Sunan Kalijaga and other Islamic saints mirror the past stories of Hindu-Buddhist Gods, Goddess, and other holy figures. Sutasoma's way of wondering around to find enlightenment is presented again in the later literature in the figures of Arok, Jaka Tingkir, Senopati ing Ngalaga, Bhima Suci, Kalijaga and others. Indeed, later Islamic *belles-lettres* still retains characters, narratives, and Hindu-Buddhist figures. As shown above, the story of Kalijaga's rebellious acts resembles those of Ken Arok in many ways.

Local wisdom of pluralism lies not only in tolerance of different elements in religious tradition, appreciation and accommodation of other faith, but also in mixing, adopting, and adapting the past and welcoming the new. This wisdom becomes the spirit of later process of Islamization in which differences between pre-and post-Islamic eras were blurred. What is more in the texts, Nusantara's Islamic identity does not return to its origin of the religion in the Middle East but to the Hindu-Buddhist past in Majapahit. Indeed, Nusantara offers its own formulation of pluralism.

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